

Kate Pankhurst

FANTASTICALLY

GREAT

WOMEN

ARTISTS
and their
STORIES

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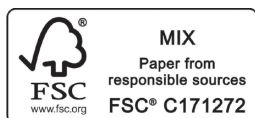
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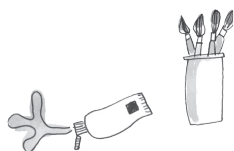
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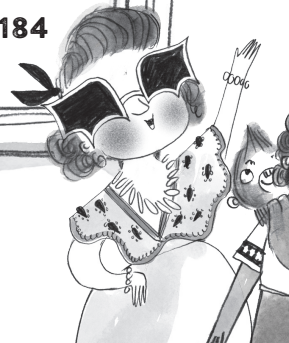


For fantastically
great Luna.



Contents

Women in Art	1
Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun	5
Frida Kahlo	28
Amrita Sher-Gil	48
KÄTHE KOLLWITZ	67
DAME LAURA KNIGHT	86
Emily Kame Kngwarreye	110
Faith Ringgold	131
PEGGY GUGGENHEIM	149
The Exhibition of Exceptional Artists	170
GLOSSARY	172
Further reading	176
Thank you!	178
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	184





people everywhere, and she's considered to be one of the greatest painters of the works – and rightly so. However, people are much less likely to have come across **Emily Kame Kngwarreye**, who didn't discover painting until she was in her eighties, but went on to be the first Aboriginal woman to hold a solo show in Australia.

There are exceptional women artists all over the world – so why doesn't everyone know their names?

For centuries, there were rules that stopped women from working as artists. They weren't allowed to become artist's **apprentices**, so they couldn't get proper training. Even if women learned the skills themselves, many artists' guilds, (which are a bit like exclusive clubs), wouldn't accept them as members, meaning they didn't have a licence to work legally.

There were also strict instructions about what women were allowed to show in their work. But many women rebelled. In the 1700s, **Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun** turned heads when she painted women ... smiling. Critics were horrified! But Élisabeth soon became one of the most sought after portrait artists of the time, and a favourite of Queen Marie Antoinette of France.

A century later, **DAME LAURA KNIGHT** caused a stir when she pictured herself painting a naked woman. Laura didn't care, she wanted to show that women had the right to paint whatever they were inspired by.

These kinds of rules are based on old-fashioned stereotypes about women and how they should behave. The kind that say that women should stay at home and look after their children, rather than pursue a career. This lifestyle would never have suited **Amrita Sher-Gil**.

Bold and rebellious, she spent her life travelling and meeting people, and had lots of boyfriends and girlfriends. She challenged the accepted artistic style of her native India and created one of her own.



Women have also used art as a form of protest. **KÄTHE KOLLWITZ** risked her life by creating art that showed the destruction of war. When the Second World War began in 1939, the Nazi Party burned lots of her work.

In the USA, **Faith Ringgold** created enormous, powerful paintings that challenged racism and **segregation**. Both women hoped their art would inspire change.

But there are still barriers in women's way. Most of the world's galleries are run by men, and women are often not given the same exhibition space and opportunities that men are.

Luckily, there are women who are determined to change that. **PEGGY GUGGENHEIM** created one of the most important collections of modern art in history, and hosted the first all-female modern art

show in 1943, featuring a few of the women you'll find in the following pages. This book tells the stories of some of the most talented female artists the world has ever seen. They lived at different times and came from many different countries and backgrounds, but they have a few things in common ...




They were **imaginative, strong-minded** and **fearless**. They never **gave up** on their **dreams**.

And not only did they change people's ideas of what makes powerful art, they transformed people's beliefs about what women can do.

Prepare to be inspired!

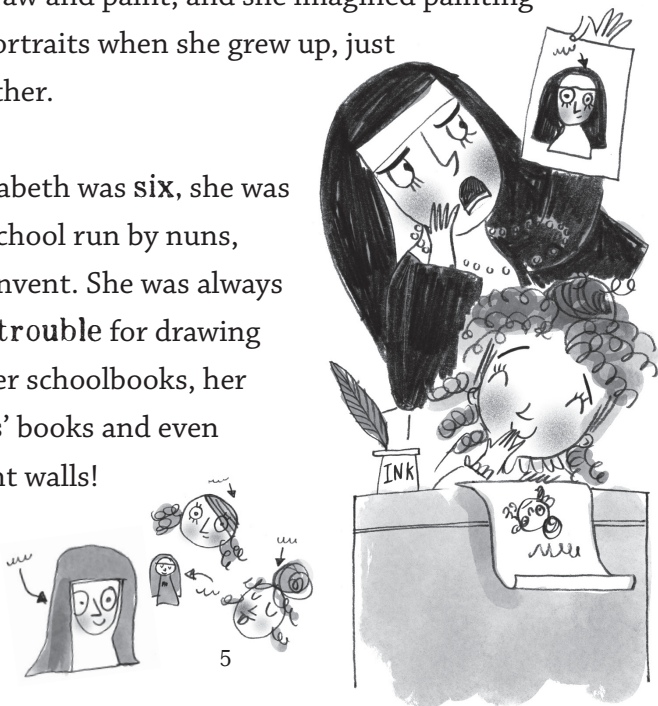
ÉLISABETH LOUISE VIGÉE LE BRUN

The ARTIST WHO changed
the FACE of PORTRAITURE



Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun was born in Paris, France, in 1755. Her father, Louis Vigée, was an artist, and Élisabeth shared his creative flare. As a child, she loved to draw and paint, and she imagined painting people's portraits when she grew up, just like her father.

When Élisabeth was six, she was sent to a school run by nuns, called a convent. She was always getting in trouble for drawing faces on her schoolbooks, her classmates' books and even the convent walls!





Élisabeth's teachers might have found her continuous drawing frustrating, but her father always encouraged it. When she was **eight**, she did a little sketch of a man, and her father told her it was brilliant.

She never forgot what her father said, and kept the drawing **all her life**.



"You will be a **PAINTER**, my child, if there ever was one."

