

## The Visible Third: Female Artists' Participation in the Portuguese Contemporary Art World

**Authors :** Sonia Bernardo Correia

**Abstract :** This paper is part of ongoing research that aims to understand the role of gender in the composition of the Portuguese contemporary art world and the possibilities and limits to the success of the professional paths of women and men artists. The field of visual arts is gender-sensitive as it differentiates the positions occupied by artists in terms of visibility and recognition. Women artists occupy a peripheral space, which may hinder the progression of their professional careers. Based on the collection of data on the participation of artists in Portuguese exhibitions, art fairs, auctions, and art awards between 2012 and 2019, the goal of this study is to portray female artists' participation as a condition of professional, social, and cultural visibility. From the analysis of a significant sample of institutions from the artistic field, it was possible to observe that the works of female authors are under exhibited, never exceeding one-third of the total of exhibitions. Male artists also enjoy a comfortable majority as gallery artists (around 70%) and as part of institutional collections (around 80%). However, when analysing the younger age cohorts of artists by gender, it appears that there is representation parity, which may be a good sign of change. The data shows that there are persistent gender inequalities in accessing the artist profession. Women are not yet occupying positions of exposure, recognition, and legitimation in the market similar to those of their male counterparts, suggesting that they may face greater obstacles in experiencing successful professional trajectories.

**Keywords :** inequalities, invisibility of the woman artist, gender, visual arts

**Conference Title :** ICSGS 2021 : International Conference on Sociology of Gender and Society

**Conference Location :** London, United Kingdom

**Conference Dates :** June 28-29, 2021