

THE (MISSING) FEMALE ARTISTS

Neither in the Sculpture Collection nor in the collection of Byzantine art in the Bode Museum can any work of art be attributed to a specific female artist

In the 1933 catalogue of Spanish and Italian sculpture in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (today the Bode Museum), Dr. Frida Schottmüller attributed a marble relief with the profile of a man to the female Bolognese sculptor Properzia de' Rossi (1490–1530) (fig. 5-1). This artist had already been the only female sculptor included in the famous book by Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), frequently described as the first art historian biographer of the great Italian Renaissance artists, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani* (*Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*). The marble relief was considered as having been lost in the Second World War. In the course of preparations for this exhibition project, it was able to be located in Russia. In the meantime, the work was extensively examined and is now ascribed to an anonymous Emilian artist in the 16th century.¹

Based on the current state of research, neither in the Sculpture Collection nor in the collection of Byzantine art in the Bode Museum can any work of art be attributed to a specific female artist. However, this does not establish with any certainty that these collections actually do not have any works of art produced by women. Rather, in many cases historical sources and specific research work are lacking. Thus we encourage our readers, when faced with descriptions such as »Unknown artist« or »Workshop«, to consider that they might, in fact, be female artists. Despite the obstacles placed in the way of women artists since time immemorial, international research in particular has long proven without a doubt that during the course of history, women frequently played a part in European artists' workshops.

¹ We sincerely thank Marco Scansani for his generosity in providing this as-yet-unpublished research finding to the project »The Second Glance: Women«.

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Italy [Emilia]

Portrait of man, 16th century

Marble [Carrara], 42 × 28,5 cm

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