

Introduction

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The women whose lives and works are discussed in this collection shared many common concerns, including their pursuit of a professional life outside of academia. Their art historical training resulted from their individual study as well as travel and conversations with artists, art historians, critics, writers, and thinkers. All were gifted linguistically, most often in French, German, and Italian, but also sometimes in Latin and classical Greek. Influenced by Madame de Staël, herself a cosmopolitan intellectual with an active salon, as well as by the heroine of her novel *Corinne*, these women authored reviews of art exhibitions, guides to international and national art galleries, and manuals on art as well as fictional and non-fictional travel books. While they often lived in expatriate communities, most commonly either in Italy or Germany, for months or years, it was their encounters with Continental art historians, artists, and museum professionals that influenced their interest in and promotion of artists identified as the 'Primitives'. In their public lives they were motivated by an abiding interest to educate the public about art, and many of them were also staunch supporters of the 'Woman Question'. By contrast their private lives were more diverse. They adopted a range of positions from a radical independence, then identified as masculine, to a more traditional mode of wifely identity.

Resources on these lives include entries in the *Dictionary of Art Historians* and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as well as *Women as Interpreters of the Visual Arts, 1820–1979*, ed. by Claire Richter Sherman and Adele M. Holcomb (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981). More recently, see the special issue of *Visual Resources*, 33.1–2 (2017), on Women's Expertise and the Culture of Connoisseurship, co-edited by Meaghan Clarke and Francesco Ventrella.

Where possible, days and months have been supplied for births and deaths; similarly, wherever possible, a likeness of the woman under review has been supplied. We would be delighted to hear from readers who can supply any information currently lacking.