

Ten Tough Women Artists Who Stand Up to the Bad Boys

BY *Robin Cembalest* POSTED 10/29/13

In a male-dominated art season, here's where to find female artists who cut, change the rules, explore new horizons, and do it gangsta-style



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Word is the bad boys have taken over the New York art world this fall.

"This is an art season that could make you think that the feminist movement never happened," art critic Deborah Solomon [said on WNYC](#) last month.

The fall lineup—[Balthus](#) at the Met, [Magritte](#) at MoMA, [Chris Burden](#) at the New Museum, [Robert Indiana](#) at the Whitney, [Robert Motherwell](#) at the Guggenheim, and [Mike Kelley](#) at MoMA PS1—makes it seem as though the bad boys are not the artists, but the people who program the city's art museums with a depressing consistency of race and gender. It made Solomon wonder out loud if it's time to change the rules. Should museums, she asked, be forced to give equal time and space to women?

The question had bloggers [Whitney Kimball](#) and [Walter Robinson](#) speculating whether mandatory affirmative action for women, like the kind [Title IX](#) offers for college sports, [could get museums](#) to change their tune—or at least the conversation. But no law could stop Gagosian, to mention one recent, much discussed [example](#), from [putting 34 men plus Kim Gordon](#) in its [current London group show](#). Or solve the incredible [whiteness](#) of most of America's art museums.

There's some good news, though. Women might be finally getting credit for [cave painting](#), for one thing. Also, the feminist sensibility is alive and well in other art venues around New York, if you know where to look. Here are ten examples:

Honorable Mention: A Head of Her Time?

We can't conclude a post about tough women without a shout-out to the Art Institute of Chicago, where Artemisia Gentileschi's most violent and famous painting is on loan from the [Uffizi](#).

Gentileschi's *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (ca. 1620), the iconic, gruesome scene that is often interpreted as revenge for the artist's rape, is the centerpiece of "[Violence and Virtue](#)," an exhibition up through January 9. The show explores the painting in the context of Gentileschi's career, and looks at the ways other Renaissance and Baroque artists depicted Judith, the [biblical heroine](#) who saved the Jews by seducing the Assyrian commander and severing his head.



Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, ca. 1620, oil on canvas.

COURTESY GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI, FLORENCE.