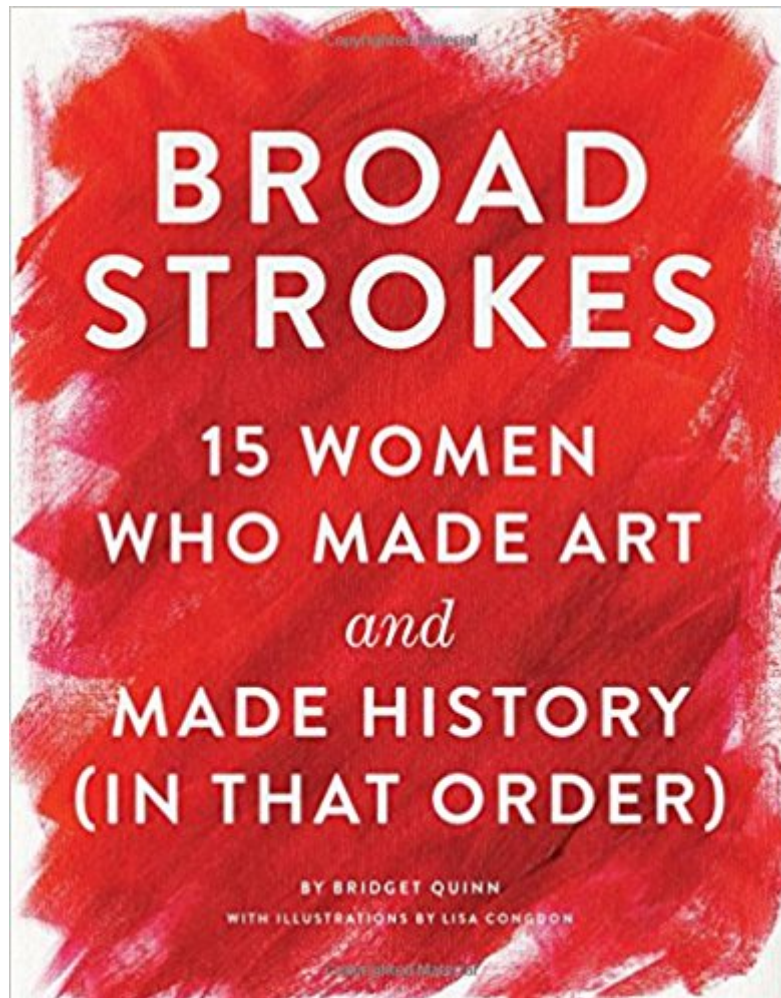




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# Broad Strokes: 15 Women Who Made Art And Made History (in That Order)



## Synopsis

Historically, major women artists have been excluded from the mainstream art canon. Aligned with the resurgence of feminism in pop culture, *Broad Strokes* offers an entertaining corrective to that omission. Art historian Bridget Quinn delves into the lives and careers of 15 brilliant female artists in text that's smart, feisty, educational, and an enjoyable read. Replete with beautiful reproductions of the artists' works and contemporary portraits of each artist by renowned illustrator Lisa Congdon, this is art history from 1600 to the present day for the modern art lover, reader, and feminist.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Meet some of the artists in *Broad Strokes*:  
"Often I'll be surprised at even what I could think, self-righteous goody-two-shoes that I am." - Kara Walker  
"Whenever there was a free moment, I would sit down and do some work. Sculpture is like farming. If you just keep at it, you can get quite a lot done." - Ruth Asawa  
"I want to go back to my eighth grade dream of being an artist. Because if I don't do it now, then when will I??? Why delay the truth in your heart?" - Susan O'Malley, age 24

From the Introduction At a cocktail party not long ago, a friend asked what I was working on. I'm writing about artists I love, I said happily. Which artists? She asked, grinning and sipping her cocktail. I imagine she pictured a fierce Mission muralist or half-naked performance artist. I got no further than a single word - Baroque - when she lowered

her drink. "The worst class I took in college was art history," she said. "So. Boring." "Maybe you had the wrong teacher," I said, about to add a titillating art historical tidbit when she caught sight of something more interesting over my shoulder and moved on. It strikes me that we might need a little caveat here before getting started. Can we agree at the outset to lay down our qualms about Ye Olde Arte Hystore at the door of this book? Put them down. Walk away. Let us agree that together we shall fear no corsets, nor nursing saviors, nor men in top hats and cravats, nor vast expanses of peachy dimpled thighs. Let us withhold judgment until we know more.

"A terrific essay collection with quick and pithy profiles of famous and not-famous women artists • Alice Neel, Louise Bourgeois, Lee Krasner, Kara Walker, etc. Spunky, attitudinal, SMART writing, excellent color reproductions. • Susan Stamberg, NPR Named a Top 10 Spring 2017 Book in Memoirs/Biographies by Publishers Weekly "Your Art History 101 syllabus just got a lot more fun. • O, the Oprah Magazine "In her entertaining and accessible debut, Quinn mixes biography, art history, and women's studies to shed light on 15 women artists. | The color reproductions add to this book's appeal, giving readers a chance to appreciate the artists' work as well as Quinn's upbeat writing. • Publishers Weekly "Can you name five women artists? That question, which launched a recent social media campaign, receives a beautiful answer in art historian Quinn and illustrator/writer Congdon's accessible and intimate tour of 15 female artists from the 17th century to the present. • Library Journal "As its title suggests, *Broad Strokes* isn't stuffy. There's plenty of scholarship here about women artists over the centuries, but Quinn combines her research with a lively, breezy tone that turns her subjects into more than feminist symbols. They're masters in their own right, bold and brilliant despite the limits they faced. • Christian Science Monitor

Bridget Quinn is a writer, art history scholar and educator. She lives in San Francisco where she's a contributor and advisory board member for *Narrative Magazine* and a member of the San Francisco Writers' Grotto. Lisa Congdon is a Portland, Oregon-based artist and author.

Completely engrossing, deeply moving and inspiring. I learned so much and yet it never felt didactic. It's the kind of book where you want to run out and grab your friend and ask, "Did you know....?!?"

Can you believe that...?!?" It's the kind of book that makes you want to go to a museum, a gallery to view art, and then to roll up your sleeves and make art yourself. Do yourself a favor and get this intimate, memorable book, post-haste!

A lively, richly detailed introduction to fifteen fine artists who have been needing more ink for a long time. Bridget Quinn could have written yet another collection of biographies of the usual suspects -- Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, Georgia O'Keeffe, Frida Kahlo -- but instead she introduces us to some lesser known names. Written in a chatty style laced with a lot of autobiography, "Broad Strokes" is aimed more at the general public than art historians. She clearly loves great art, and she makes that love contagious. "Broad Strokes" makes you want to high-tail it to the nearest art museum.

Never would I have fathomed an art history expose could be so entertaining as well as informative. Bridget is a hilariously talented writer with a one two knockout punch that awakened me to hidden worlds of unparalleled wonders. Her feminism is ever so devilishly sweet, so accurately aimed and right on target. I enjoyed the introductory paintings of each of the fifteen artists profiled. The brief historical settings set the stage for each star artist beautifully. Then the reader is rewarded with an intimate dance. The passionate illumination of these 15 artists provides a profound impact on correcting art history and for that I have a new awareness and am most grateful. Thank you, Bridget Quinn, Lisa Congdon and Chronicle Books!!!!!!

Broad Strokes is a fabulous re-visioning and revival of 15 notable women artists, diverse in their media, their histories, and their motivations. Yet Quinn finds a through line for all of them anchored in her own discovery of their work at different times and places in her life. I've never read this kind of wonderful hybrid of memoir, art history and feminist scholarship and it left me wanting more of all of it from the author. I was especially struck by how Quinn foregrounds the motherhood journey of all of these artists, noting that almost all of them suffered the untimely loss of their own mothers, died themselves on the precipice of motherhood (Paula Modersohn-Becker and Susan O'Sullivan Malley), or managed to keep making art despite houses full of children (Judith Leyster, Ruth Asawa). What art historian does that? Goes digging for the names of the children of a French Revolution-era portrait painter (one of whom tragically died), wonders and muses about what it is like to go on creating art in a roomful of children, or how a mom with 5 kids might make time in 17th century Holland to paint a stunning still life of a single tulip?

She's breaking new ground here herself with an inquisitive, empathic mode of art historical inquiry. Quinn's own position as a wife and mother balancing her creative time with nurturing time helps us understand the epic struggle of these women artists as they boldly expressed their passions. I also love how Quinn turns the erudite into the approachable. She refers to the Greek sculpture Laocoon and then urges the reader: Google it! Much to love here, and a manageable amount of images that stay with the reader long after the final page is turned.

I learned so much about women artists from this book--their struggles and their triumphs. Reading about Bridget's own life added so much to this fascinating book. The writing is great and the photos of the art work beautifully done. A must-read for everyone!

If you've found most art history books to be stuffy and boring, Quinn's "Broad Strokes" is for you. It's witty, personal, engaging, conversational and even gossipy -- it feels like she's telling you about a collection of fascinating old friends. She weaves stories from her own life, and her discoveries of these remarkable women artists, into the stories of their lives and artistic work. You won't soon forget this book.

As my daughter, a toddler, begins to experiment with art, I wonder: what female artists can inspire her? Enter Broad Strokes, a delightfully personal and intimate view into the lives and work of some of the world's most influential female artists. This book is monumental and so needed in a world where women's art and creative work is repeatedly marginalized. I cannot wait to read it to my daughter, for her to engage with such critical discourse and images of art that will surely provide her with the needed space and support to continue to explore creativity and feminism.

My keen interest in BROAD STROKES stemmed from a dormant love of history of art carried over from my distant high school days. I am also fierce about all pursuits that revise history to recover the overlooked and forgotten (and women in particular). So I felt eager for the read, and my expectations were exceeded. It's not only a feast for the eyes. The always stirring, sometimes stunning, artwork aside, I appreciated how the author weaves the personal and political throughout this rich read. It's an intriguing braid of memoir, biography and history of women's art. "Art can be dangerous." I did not expect to feel so deeply throughout this read and visual experience. It's impossible not to rage against the (mis)treatment of these women artists (and women overall down through history and right up to the present day)--rape, torture, internment, abuse, disregard. It is

inspiring and instructive that these women channeled all that violence, heartache and rage into making great art. More, they put all their love, spirituality and passion into their work, too. They resisted. They persisted. They triumphed. Alice Neel. Lee Krasner. Louise Bourgeois. Ruth Asawa. Susan O'Malley, and more. Thank you, Bridget Quinn, for returning these women front and center, where they belong. Thanks, also, for reminding us that we can be all that, too.

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