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Wouldn’t it be nice to think that a gender-delimited list is no longer relevant? It’s true that to be a practicing woman artist today is hardly the struggle it would have been in Mary Cassatt’s era. Women artists are actively acquired by museums and honored with major surveys and retrospectives; recent names in the spotlight include Julia Margaret Cameron, Rineke Dijkstra, Zarina Hashmi, Sarah Lucas, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, Rosemarie Trockel, Carrie Mae Weems, and Francesca Woodman. Collectors pounce on new inventory by Marlene Dumas, Julie Mehretu, and Dana Schutz. Many women artists are doing well, even very well, thanks to committed galleries and ecumenical collectors. Dealers boast of higher private sale prices than public ones for their female artists. Yet there remains a glass ceiling in the salesroom.

Time and again, the specialists and dealers we spoke to emphasized that the prices commanded on the block were by no means a measure of the works in question in terms of critical acclaim or artistic value. Connoisseurs in search of excellence, they say, would be wise to ignore gender outright—especially if considering works of the 50 artists we have highlighted here, whose critical reputations outstrip their value in the marketplace.

The women in this group, ranging from deceased to emerging, were selected because their contributions seem not to have been fully registered by the market. Many of the artists we chose have either a challengingly conceptual practice or a very wide-ranging one that resists easy categorization. Some were simply ahead of their time. To the extent that dollar value has come to determine the actual worth of these objects in circulation, it is our hope that with visibility, more value will accrue to them. —THE EDITORS
**BETYE SAAR | B. 1926 | UNITED STATES**

Coming of age in an era of social inequality, California-based artist Betye Saar has channeled her life experience and tapped into her African roots to create enshrined assemblages and site-specific installations of found objects, family mementos, and fetishes. Many of her works, such as the shadow box *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972, have focused on the stereotyped images of African-Americans—lawn jockeys and black mammites. The former served as hitching posts, while the latter became the subject of kitchen kitch—notepads and saltshakers—that Saar contends prompted fond memories of a dutiful black in the kitchen in the wake of the abolition of slavery. “Saar is a very spiritual artist who has a way of taking found objects and re-empowering them, giving them different meaning,” says Michael Rosenfeld, whose eponymous gallery represents the artist (Roberts & Tilton represents her in California). “I am intrigued with combining the remnants of memories, relics, and ordinary objects,” Saar has said of her work. “It’s a way of delving into the past and reaching into the future simultaneously, the art itself serving as a bridge.”

Saar, whose work is held by MOMA and the Whitney in New York and the Art Institute of Chicago, received the 2014 Edward MacDowell Medal in August. The first European retrospective of her work opens at Museum Het Domein in Sittard, Netherlands, next spring. —AMHS | *THE WEIGHT OF BUDDHA (CONTEMPLATING MOTHER WIT AND STREET SMARTS)*, 2014. MIXED-MEDIA ASSEMBLAGE, 18½ X 7 X 7 IN.

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**ZILIA SÁNCHEZ | B. 1926 | CUBA**

With taut, pale, abstract canvases stretched across modular wooden armatures, the Cuban-born, Puerto Rico-based Sánchez evokes the female form, clefts in the earth, moonscapes, and undulating waves that emerge from the picture plane. Her sculptural paintings are at once Minimalist and sensual—and in some cases are the result of multiyear consideration, as Sánchez is known to return to works time and again to adjust them and add tattoo-like notations. “There has been great institutional interest in her work, and that’s who has been buying it,” says Mary Sabbatino, vice president and partner of New York’s Galerie Lelong, which represents the artist and which offered a solo exhibition of her work, “Heroicas Eroticas en Nueva York,” this past spring. “It is fantastic that Sánchez has been rediscovered, albeit in her late eighties,” says Carmen Melián, senior vice president and senior specialist for Latin American art at Sotheby’s, which has sold her canvases in the $20,000 range. “Her works are lyrical, voluptuous, and strong, and show in many ways the spirit of Latin American women. As more people are exposed to her work, her fame and prices will grow.” —AMHS | *TROYANAS, DIPTICO (TROYANS, DIPTYCH)*, 1975. ACRYLIC ON STRETCHED CANVAS, 67½ X 38 X 6 IN.

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**KAY SAGE | 1898–1963 | UNITED STATES**

A Surrealist painter and one of only a few women who were part of the reputedly misogynistic movement, Sage is known for her ominous oil landscapes, which often incorporate unidentifiable architectural structures set against menacing skies. Having struggled during her life to step out of the shadow of husband Yves Tanguy, Sage’s work is now seeing a surge in popularity. A February auction at Sotheby’s London saw *Le passage*, 1956, which depicts Sage gazing at the horizon, set an artist record of $44.4 million (S7 million), outstripping what seemed a strong estimate at $70,000 ($114,000). “Sage produced only about 200 paintings in her lifetime,” says Debra Wieder, associate director of American art at Hirschl & Adler, “and most of those pieces were bequeathed to museums, making the work extremely rare and desirable.” The gallery had great success exhibiting Sage at the 2013 Art Basel Miami Beach and sells her paintings for $250,000 to $1 million. LACMA’s 2012 exhibition “In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States” included a substantial number of Sage’s works, which are also held by MOMA and the Whitney, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, and the Art Institute of Chicago. —JH | *THREE THOUSAND MILES TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING*, 1947. OIL ON CANVAS, 36 X 28 IN.