

The Suffragette as Militant Artist

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Suffragette artists & suffragette attacks on art

A gift from **The Emily Davison Lodge**, 2010

Dare to be Free!

Information collated and artistic impressions created in response to
archival material by Olivia Plender & Hester Reeve

With thanks to –

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Created and published by **The Emily Davison Lodge**, 2010

Lillian Forrester (S/1676411),
pale, hair brown, eyes grey.

Has been convicted of damaging
Manchester Art Gallery, and in L



Lillian Forrester

Evelyn Manesta (S/160001), age
pale, hair fair, eyes grey.

Was convicted with Lillian For
pictures in the Manchester Art C

age 34, height, 5ft 5 1/2 in., complexion
with a hammer, pictures in the
London of breaking windows



Evelyn Manesta

age 26, height 5ft 2 in., complexion
master of damaging, with a hammer,
Gallery.

Suffragette Attacks on Art

Suffragettes	Date	Location	Artwork	Tool!
Solo Suffragette (possibly Ethel Cox, alias of Gwendoline Cook, who is on a M.O.D file held by the National Gallery archives as a suspected slasher and not mentioned in any other reported incidences)	1894	The Royal Academy	Stanhope Alexander Forbes' "The Quarry team"	Umbrella
Sylvia Pankhurst (artist and one of the WSPU leaders)	14/1/13	St Stephen's Hall, Parliament Buildings	"Speaker Finch being held in the chair"	Lump of concrete
A productive artist throughout the campaign, Sylvia Pankhurst nonetheless doubted, "...whether it was worthwhile to fight one's individual struggle...to make one's way as an artist, to bring out of oneself the best possible, and to induce the world to accept one's creations, and give one in return ones' daily bread, when all the time the real struggles to better the world for humanity demand another service."				
Evelyn Manesta, Lillian Forrester & one other (Sarah Jane/Jennie-Baines?) (Forrester had taken part in the 1911 window smashing)	3/4/13	Manchester Art Gallery	Smash glass of 13 paintings, damage: Frederick Leighton's " Captive & Andromache," Geroge Frederic Watts' "Paolo & Francesca" and "The Prayer," Arthur Hacker's "Syrinx"	Hammer

<p>Mary Richardson aka "Slasher Mary" (artist, mouse,* suspected arsonist & had taken part in the 1911 window smashing campaign)</p>	<p>10/3/14</p>	<p>National Gallery</p>	<p>Velázquez "Rokeby Venus" (The Toilet of Venus) The painting had been purchased in 1906 for £45,000.</p>	<p>Butcher's Chopper – 5 slashes across the nude's body. (Attached to chain of safety pins and hidden up her sleeve. She initially pretended to be sketching. This is the most famous art attack of the suffragette campaign)</p>
<p><i>"I have tried to destroy the picture of the most beautiful woman in mythological history as a protest against the Government for destroying Mrs Pankhurst, who is the most beautiful character in modern history. Justice is an element of beauty as much as colour and outline on canvas. Mrs Pankhurst seeks to procure justice for womanhood, and for this she is being slowly murdered by a Government of Iscariot politicians."</i> Mary Richardson's statement via the WSPU.</p>				
<p>Mary Wood (alias of Mary Aldham)</p>	<p>4/5/14</p>	<p>The Royal Academy</p>	<p>John Singer Sargeant's "Henry James" (Henry James had spoken out against the vandalism of artworks)</p>	<p>Hatchet</p>
<p><i>"I have tried to destroy a valuable picture because I wish to show the public that they have no security for their property nor for their art treasures until women are given political freedom."</i></p>				
<p>Mary Ansell (also part of the 13/10/08 'rush' on the House of Commons, the 1911 window smashing campaign & a big animal rights campaigner)</p>	<p>12/5/14</p>	<p>The Royal Academy</p>	<p>Herbert von Herkomer's "The Duke of Wellington" (his grandfather had had his windows smashed by men fighting for the vote)</p>	<p>Chopper (In prison, Mary Ansell suffered force feeding 236 times)</p>
<p>In a statement to the WSPU Ansell claimed she was protesting against the privileged treatment in prison of the Ulster terrorists compared to suffragettes and against the sexual abuse of women.</p>				

Suffragettes	Date	Location	Artwork	Tool!
Freda Graham	22/5/14	National Gallery	5 x paintings by Giovanni Bellini	Loaded cane
<i>In court, Freda declared that she attacked the pictures, "as a protest against King George's illegal and unconstitutional action in refusing to receive a legal deputation of women...what are five pictures compared to 80,000 pictures which are shamefully defaced, damaged and degraded by men each night?" (The Day 26/5/14)</i>				
Mary Spencer	22/5/14	The Royal Academy	George Clausen's "Primavera" (A female nude)	Butcher's cleaver - cuts the painting in two
<i>The Day 26/5/14 reported that when in court, Spencer had declared to the judge that attacking property was the only option left for women to express their views since they respected life too much to even lay a finger on it.</i>				
Maude Edwards	23/5/14	The Scottish Academy, Edinburgh	James Lavery's portrait "George V" (This had been hung in the 'Great Room' surmounted by gold curtains and a crown. Two days earlier, Emmeline Pankhurst had attempted to lead a deputation to the king but had been repulsed)	Hatchet – slashing the king below the left breast
Ivy Bonn (mouse)	3/6/14	Doré Galleries	2 paintings in the Bartolozzi exhibition	Hatchet
<i>"The militants hold that they are at war with the British government, basing their right to rebel on the axioms that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God...Not even the extreme violence to which the suffragettes have gone is bad enough to justify the continued refusal of the vote. At least, I think this must be the opinion of the newspapers, for they seldom report even this kind of violence as it happened, but embroider on it. Take the case of Miss Ivy Bonn, who, on June 3, destroyed two valuable paintings in the Dore Galleries in Bond Street. According to some of the newspapers, she turned on the manager of the gallery and 'rained blows on him with a hatchet.' Of course, this is nonsense, for if she rained blows on a man with a hatchet, in a jiffy he would have been reduced to mince meat and she would have been tried for manslaughter." Mary Windsor, writing in Public Life (US), 1914.</i>				

Bertha Ryland (had taken part in the 1911 window smashing campaign)	10/6/14	Birmingham Museum of Art	Romney "Master Thornhill" (on loan and which had been deliberately hung high so only a man could reach it)	Butcher's cleaver
<i>"...I attack this work of art deliberately as a protest against the government's criminal injustice in denying women the vote, and also against the government's injustice in imprisoning, forcibly feeding, and drugging suffragist militants..."</i>				
Annie Hunt (alias of Margaret Gibb)	17/7/14	National Portrait Gallery	John Everett Millais' "Thomas Carlyle"	Butchers Cleaver
<i>At her trial Hunt claimed, "this picture will have an added value and be of great historical interest, because it has been honoured by the attention of a militant."</i>				
<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>	Wallace Collection	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>
<i>unknown</i>	6/12/13	Liverpool exhibition	<i>unknown</i>	£2,000 worth of damage
<i>unknown</i>	6/12/13	Rusholme Exhibition	<i>unknown</i>	£15,000 worth of damage

*The term 'mouse' was a colloquial term for a suffragette who had been released from prison under 'The Cat and Mouse Act' (officially 'The Prisoners Temporary Release for Ill Health Act') passed in 1913. The government cruelly evaded responsibility for the deteriorating condition of suffragettes by making hunger striking legal; no longer force feeding the women who undertook such a protest in jail, the government released hunger striking suffragettes when they were on the point of collapse, only to re-arrest them once full health had been recovered. Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of the WSPU and who underwent at least 10 hunger strikes, famously gave speeches when a 'mouse' from a stretcher.





She tried to destroy
Chore, destroyed the
beautiful woman in
as a protest against
for destroying Mr.
the most beautiful
history. In a

Picture of the most
mythological history
of the Government
of Pankhurst who is
character in modern
by Richardson





SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 1911

WHY WE WANT THE VOTE:

THE WOMAN ARTIST.

BY EDITH M. MASON-HINCHLEY.

"Life is so full and beautiful," said a woman artist; "there is endless joy to be had in it, there should be no room for suffering and deprivation and wrong. But I see pain and want and crime, over and over again, that need not be. Somehow, men have not succeeded in ordering things so as to prevent the wickedness and waste. The help we try to give is ineffectual and futile without legal authority and support. We insist, now, that we shall take a proper share in and responsibility for the work of the world. By the vote, we shall make or unmake laws through our elected representatives. Laws are needed that shall embody high ideals of fair homes and the upbuilding of a great race by every means in our power. We want laws to deal equitably with both sexes, not to press harder on the woman than on the man. To both they should temper justice with mercy. Oh! I have such faith in women," she said; "the larger hope, the greater sympathy is theirs. The pity is that this old world should so long have been denied the use of it."

"Life is so hard," another woman painter said. "We cannot create, we cannot imagine, for the haunting horror and the want and the cruelty of things about us. All that is beautiful in art is the outcome of man's joy in love or religion. We protest against the hideousness of things as they are; the dirt, the starvation, the sordidness of method and the blatant commercialism of every branch of industry and art. We want the vote to make that protest effective. We are not content any longer to say to men, 'These things ought not to be.' For ourselves, we say they shall not be, any longer than we can help! Great changes are needed, and better conditions of existence will become reflected in our art and breed new artists from amongst us."

These might have been two needs of the same voice

Suffragists were interested in the woman artist because she was a type of skilled and independent woman, with attributes of autonomy, creativity and professional competence, which were still unconventional by contemporary criteria. But she was also of interest because the question of women's cultural creativity was constantly raised by their opponents as a reason for denying them the vote. 'How many times,' as Mary Lowndes [artist] asked in *The Common Cause*, 'have women been reminded - in season and out of season, in conversation, by platform speakers, in print - that their sex has produced no Michaelangelo, and that Raphael was a man?'









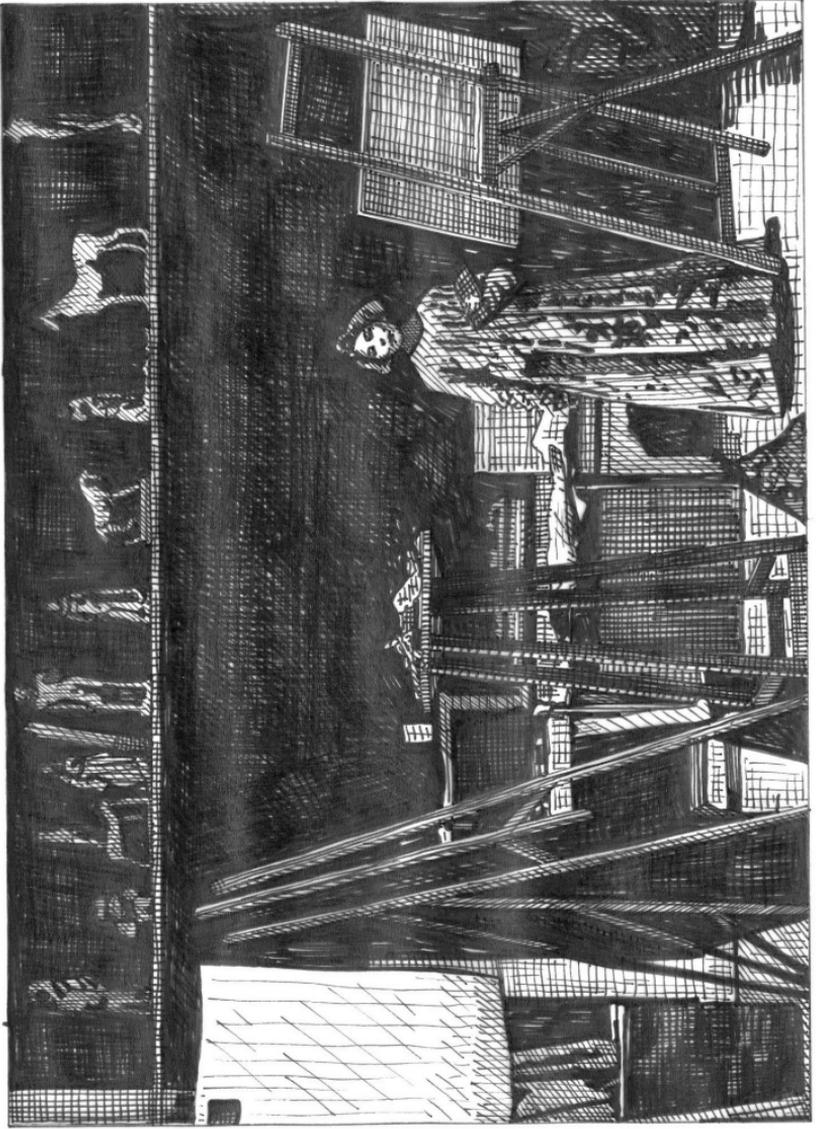


ARTISTS LEAGUE

ALLIANCE

NOT

DEFIANCE



McKenna's Cat "Bill."



WHAT CAT COULD TM
KEEP UP WITH THIS?

Mrs John Bull. Now you greedy boys I shall not give you
any more until I have helped
myself.



Printed & Published by the New York Office of the National Suffrage League











Accompanying Information

Wanted, Forrester & Manesta. MOD poster.

The photograph of Evelyn Manesta is said to be the first surveillance image in British history. In the original photo a policeman is forcing the suffragette into view and twisting her arm (he was then removed from the shot). Manesta is maintaining her resistance by grimacing to distort her face. This 'Wanted' poster was actually produced by the Ministry of Defence once the women were in jail, supposedly as a deterrent to other suffragettes.

Suffragette Attacks on Art

It has been claimed that the iconoclasm of the suffragettes stood as a new phenomenon in making political use of the museum and public art gallery as a site for contesting social values and the rule of law. It has been distressingly hard to find information about the lives of the women who took it upon themselves to carry out these radical acts in their fight for the vote and female emancipation, some still unfortunately remain nameless. Many went under an alias, further complicating the investigation. This chart is the most comprehensive list to date of a thread of history too well covered over. Most of the women would have been members of the WSPU – the Women's Social and Political Union. Founded in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst and lead with her daughters Sylvia and Christabel, the WSPU was the militant contingent of the three main suffragette organisations. During the final week of January 1913 the militancy of the Suffragette campaign had increased and this marks the beginning of the spate of attacks on artworks charted here. Emmeline Pankhurst declared that the suffragettes were 'guerrillists' and warranted employing all the methods of war: "There is something that governments care far more for than human life, and that is the security of property, and it is through property that we shall strike the enemy." Other forms of militancy included burning politicians' homes and race courses, tearing up golf courses by carving out suffragette slogans such as 'Deeds Not Words' across their turf and the smashing of church stained glass windows. Perhaps in part as a result of the death of Emily Wilding Davison, in June 1913 the 'Holy War' of the WSPU resulted in £54,000 worth of damage.

It should be stressed that the suffragettes went out of their way never to harm life during their violent protests. As Emmeline Pankhurst advised Emily Davison before her fateful protest at Epsom, "If you injure the jockey, you injure the movement."

The typical sentence each of the art attackers received was 6 months – a sentence set in regulations for attacks on property but which many judges felt to be too lenient in the case of the attacks on national art treasures. Many galleries closed down after such attacks and when they re-opened a common rule was ‘No muffs, wrist bags or sticks.’ The British Museum, which had also been targeted by militant suffragettes, forbade women entry unless accompanied by a man who could vouch for their good behaviour.

Mary Richardson leaving court.

Mary Richardson’s action was out of worry for the life of Emmeline Pankhurst who had been imprisoned in an underground condemned cell. Pankhurst had already suffered many sentences and hunger strikes, and many feared for her health. The opposite image is from Richardson’s handwritten statement to the WSPU after slashing the Rokeby Venus.

Portrait of Thomas Carlyle, post-Annie Hunt.

The Rokeby Venus, pre-Mary Richardson.

Why We Want The Vote: The Woman Artist, by Edith M. Mason-Hinchley. Excerpt from *The Vote*, the suffragette newspaper, 12/08/11.

Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, Chatto & Windus, 1987.

The Suffragette Atelier ladies with their pallet-banners.

The Suffragette Atelier was founded in 1909 by Clemence and Laurence Hauseman as an arts and craft society, initially grouping women together to make up Laurence’s ‘From Prison to Citizenship’ banner design. Here, members are gathering for a WSPU procession on July 23 1910 (despite the date hand written on the original photo).

Dorothy Johnstone painting fellow art student Anne Finley in their studio.

Banner, The Artist’ Suffrage League, designed by Mary Lowndes.

Mary Lowndes studied at The Slade and trained with the Arts and Craft designer Henry Holiday. She famously declared, ‘Agitation by Symbol’ in *The Common Cause* (a suffragette newspaper) and designed

many of the League's banners. Lowndes founded The Artists' Suffrage League in 1907 to help with the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies demonstration the following month. Its mission was to 'further the cause of women's enfranchisement by the work and professional help of artists.' It held competitions for poster designs (Dora Meeson Coates' poster reproduced further on won a first prize), raised money and created banners for many of the processions.

Experience of the difficulties and contradictions in their situation made many women artists feminists. They needed citizenship as a woman (it was degrading to be in a position of inferiority, as the sculptor Edith Downing argued). They were well aware of the outside pressures that shaped their private time in the studio, and of the remaining restrictions on their careers. The 'swift' response of women artists to the Women's Movement was not the mystery it first appeared.

- Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, Chatto & Windus 1987

Sylvia Pankhurst, daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, and with her sister Christabel a leader of the WSPU. From 1900 to 1902 she studied at the Manchester Municipal School of Art and won several prizes. She later went on to win a scholarship to the Royal College of Art. She contributed many designs and artworks to the cause but was later to say, "As a speaker, a pamphlet-seller, a chalker of pavements, a canvasser on doorsteps, you are wanted: as an artist, the world has no real use for you." In 1913, she broke ties with the WSPU to set up the East London Federation of Suffragettes, which included working women and men (later called the Workers' Socialist Federation).

McKenna's Cat Bill, anon (Suffragette Atelier).

The Suffragette Atelier was sympathetic with the aims of the Arts and Crafts Movement and welcomed any woman into its midst and offered her training in cartoon imagery and wood cut technique (the most direct and economically efficient means of producing propaganda). Chief members wore a uniform of a bright blue workman like coat, a black skirt and a big black bow.

'Political Help' by Dora Meeson Coates (the Artists Suffrage League).

WSPU badge, designed by Sylvia Pankhurst, 1909, showing the 'angel of freedom' logo.

The WSPU is thought to be the first campaigning body to use design and colour to develop a corporate identity.

Marion Wallace-Dunlop, a reputed sculptress and member of the WSPU, holding her homemade stamp.

On 25th June 1909, aged 55, the artist emblazoned - in indelible suffragette purple ink - the following notice on the stone work of St. Stephen's Hall, House of Commons:

“Women's Deputation. June 29. Bill of Rights - It is the right of the subjects to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitionings are illegal.”

When Wallace-Dunlop refused to pay the fine for 'willful damage', she was sentenced to a month in prison. Her radical resistance maintained even in jail. Christabel Pankhurst later reported: “Miss Wallace-Dunlop, taking counsel with no one and acting entirely on her own initiative, sent to the Home Secretary, Mr. Gladstone, as soon as she entered Holloway Prison, an application to be placed in the first division as befitted one charged with a political offence. She announced that she would eat no food until this right was conceded.”

When the status of a political prisoner was not granted, Wallace-Dunlop went on hunger strike –becoming the first to do so in England's modern era. Afraid that she might die and become a martyr, it was decided to release her after fasting for 91 hours. Soon afterwards other imprisoned suffragettes adopted the same strategy. This led to the authorities force feeding the women –an intrusive and extremely painful operation, as the second image suggests. Marion Wallace-Dunlop also designed many parades for the WSPU, most notably working with fellow artist-suffragette Edith Downing (stone throwers in the window smashing campaign of 1911 would go to collect their underskirt bags and rocks from Edith's studio on Tite Street). Dunlop and Downing designed 'The Historical Pageant' and 'The Pageant of Empire' (as part of the famous 'Coronation Procession' of 17/5/11), and they designed the 'Prisoners Tableau' for the 18 June 1910 'Prison to Citizenship Procession'. 700

suffragette prisoners mobilized for the procession, with laces and banners - the *Daily Mail* observed that the spectacle was a “stroke of genius.” Enthroned on the tablea of young girls was the artist and arsonist, Elsie (Mary) Howey who had been chosen as the most suitable representative for all suffragettes. On 5 September 1909, as Lord Asquith (the liberal PM) was leaving Lympne Church, he was accosted by three WSPU members, Jessie Kenney, Elsie Howey, and Vera Wentworth. One of the three struck him repeatedly. Later that day, the same trio approached the Prime Minister’s party on a golf course...That evening two stones were thrown through one of the windows of the house in which Asquith was dining.

Woman chalking pavements.

A cheap and economic way to promote suffragette meetings and announcements was to chalk them directly onto the pavement. One artist who became particularly well known for this was Marie Brackenbury.

WSPU Holloway brooch, designed by Sylvia Pankhurst, 1909.

It was described as ‘the Victoria Cross of the Union’ and awarded to released WSPU prisoners.

Marjorie Annan-Bryce dressed as Joan of Arc, Coronation Procession, 1911, and lead by Elsie Howey. The costumes for this procession were created in the studio of Marie and Georgina Brackenbury.

A Checklist of Suffragette Artists

Harriet Adkins (ASL)
May Barker (ASL)
Mary Bartels (WSPU)
Clara Billing (ASL)
Georgina Brackenbury
Marie Brackenbury
Amy Katherine Browning
Hedley Charlton (ASL)
Dora Meeson Coates (ASL)
Helen Dorothy Copsey (SA)
Catherine Cautauld (SA)
Edith Craig (SA)
Hilda Dallas (WSPU)
Edith Downing (WSPU)
Joan Harvey Drew (ASL)
Marion Wallace Dunlop (WSPU)
Mary Sargant Florence (ASL)
Barbara Forbes (ASL)
Emily Ford (ASL)
Joan Fulleylove
Violet Garrard (ASL)
Duncan Grant (ASL)
Mrs Herringham (ASL)
Olive Hockin
Clemence Housman (SA)
Laurence Housman (ASL)
Louise Jacobs (SA)
Louise Jopling (SA)
Joseph Hope (SA)
Mary Lowndes (ASL)
Ernestine Mills
May Morris
Edmund Hort New
Bertha Newcombe (ASL)
 Sylvia Pankhurst (WSPU)
A.Patriot, pseudonym of Alfred Pearce (WSPU)
Isobel Pocock (SA)
Ada Paul Ridley (WSPU)
Bethia Shore (ASL)
E.Shute (ASL)
Pamela Coleman Smith (SA)

Louisa Thomas-Price
Jessica Lloyd-Walters (SA)
Caroline Watts (ASL)
Mary Wheelhouse (ASL)
Bessie Wigan (ASL)
E.B.Willis (SA)
E.Hartley Wilson
W.F.Winter (ASL)
Alice Bolingbroke Woodward (ASL/WSPU?)
Poyntz Wright (SA)

- Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, Chatto & Windus, 1987

Authors' Note:

As well as Lisa Tickner's book, referenced above, we would like to recommend Rowena Fowler's article, *Why Did Suffragettes Attack Works of Art?*, *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Winter), 1991.

Davison Lodge



The inaugural meeting of **The Emily Davison Lodge**, April 2010; Olivia Plender & Hester Reeve conversing over Emily Davison's purse and return ticket to Epsom.

‘to perpetuate the memory of a gallant woman by gathering together women of progressive thought and aspiration with the purpose of working for the progress of women according to the needs of the hour.’

Closed since the 1940's, **The Emily Davison Lodge** has now been reinstated by Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve (2010).

Celebrate

*EMILY
DAVISON
DAY*

JUNE 4TH