

Compiled by MaryAnn Zeppetello with additional contributions from WISH members

Some of the women below were Artists and Painters during the Renaissance

Lavinia Fontana--August 24/1552 -August 11/1614--61 years old

Lavinia was a Bolognese painter known for her portrait paintings. She was taught by her father. Regarded as the first female artist who had a career. Her family depended on her income from commissions. Her husband acted as her agent and raised their 11 children. She may have been the first female artist to paint female nudes. She had a PhD. from Bologna University. Pope Paul V sat for her.

[Women in History - 24 August - NCRI Women Committee \(ncr-iran.org\)](http://ncr-iran.org)

[Paintings by Lavinia Fontana - Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lavinia_Fontana_-_Portrait_of_a_young_woman.jpg)

[Lavinia Fontana on USEUM](http://useum.com)

[Lavinia Fontana | Italian painter | Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lavinia-Fontana)

[Lavinia Fontana \(August 24, 1552 — August 11, 1614\), Italian painter | World Biographical Encyclopedia \(prabook.com\)](https://www.prabook.com/encyclopedia/Lavinia-Fontana)



Fede Galizia-- born before 1578 ---died 1630

Fede learned to paint from her father, Nunzio Galiza. She first came to notice at the age of 12, a miniature painter. She was commissioned to paint miniatures and portraits. One of her paintings hangs in a Sarasota, Fla. Museum. She also made altar pieces and still-lives. One of her 1602 paintings is considered the first known still- life by an Italian artist. She is recognized as a pioneer of still life paintings. She never married. She lived a happy life and had a successful art career. In 1690 she died of the plague in Milan.

[Fede Galizia | Art, Biography & Art for Sale | Sotheby's](#)

[Fede Galizia | Nicholas Hall](#)

[Galizia, Fede \(1578–1630\) | Encyclopedia.com](#)

[Category:Fede Galizia - Wikimedia Commons](#)

[Fede Galizia - Bing video](#)

Sofinisba Anguissola-- 1532-1625-- born in Cremona--93 years of age

Sofinisba had a well-rounded education. She had an apprenticeship with local painters. This set a precedent for women to be accepted as art students. During her lifetime she traveled to Rome to meet Michelangelo. She became the official court painter of King Philip 11 of Spain. She died in Palermo, Sicily at the age of 93. Some of works hang in the U.S.

There is a YouTube Video you might want to check out. "Out of the Shadows."



Properzia de'Rossi--1490-1530

We suggest you look her up and read her extensive bio. You will not be disappointed. To whet your curiosity here is a short version.

She was one of 40 women artists of her time.

She was a sculptor born in Bologna. She studied painting, music, poetry and classical literature. She is known for her sculpture of miniatures done on apricots, peach and cherry stones. (Imagine that!!) Her most famous being the "Crucifixion" on a peach pit. She later turned to marble sculpture and beat her male rivals for church commissions.

Her life was tumultuous, being accused of vandalism of a private garden in 1520 and an assault of another artist. She was tormented by an unrequited love for a nobleman. She owed a debt to the hospital for victims of the plague in 1529 which explains her lack of artistic output and the bankruptcy she experienced. She died before the age of forty, bankrupt and without close friends or family.

We celebrate **Fede Galizia** (1578-1630). She learned to paint from her father, Nunzio Galizia. She first came to notice at the age of 12 as a miniature painter. She was commissioned to paint miniatures and portraits. She also made altar pieces and still-lives. One of her 1602

paintings is considered the first known still- life by an Italian artist. She never married, and lived a happy life and had a successful art career. Her beautiful images of fruit recall our first mother, the earth, and remind us to cherish our mothers this Sunday and all days!

[#mothersday #italianheritage #womenartists](#)

[#WishWednesday](#)

See more of Fede's art at

<https://www.tuttartpitturasculturapoesiamusica.com/...>

[image description: A detail of "Judith with the Head of Holofernes" (1596), in which the figure of Judith is believed to be a self portrait of Galizia.]



Plautilla Nelli-- Florence, Italy-- 1524-1588 . Sister Plautilla Nelli was a self-taught nun-artist and first known female Renaissance painter in Florence. Born to a wealthy family. She became a nun at 14 years of age and was the prioress of the convent Santa Caterina da Siena three times. It was managed by the Dominican Friars of San Marco, led by Savonarola who promoted devotional paintings by religious women to avoid sloth. The convent became a center for nun artists Her sister, also a nun, wrote a life of Savonarola. She lacked any formal training, and her male figures are said to have "female characteristics" Her religious vocation prohibited study of the nude male. Most of her works are large scale which was most uncommon for woman to paint during that period.

Barbara Longhi--1552-1638--Ravenna, Italy

She came from a family of painters, she assisted her father, Luca Longhi with large altar pieces and copied many of his works, Her "Virgin With The Sleeping Child" is at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. Her works reflect the intense religious ideals of the Counter-Reformation.

Subject: Women of Achievement in the 15th century

Here are the names of some of the women who made their mark in the 1400s in what became Italy.

Trotta da Toya--known as Trotula-- wrote about the ailments of women.

Francisca diVesta-- physician

Margarita da Venosa-- surgeon

Isabella da Orca--surgeon

Clarice diDivisio da Foggia-- eye surgeon

Adelmota of Carrera-- obstetrician from Padua

Antonia Daniello--Italian-Jewish physician

Dorotea Bucco--1360-1436 held a chair of medicine and philosophy at the U. of Bologna over 40 years from1390, a chair her father held before her.

Mercuriade-- well known 14th century surgeon

Dorothea Bucca--1360-1436

Not much is known about her. She succeeded her father a chair of medicine and philosophy department at the University of Bologna, the oldest known University. She did that from 1390-1430. She also taught philosophy there.

Adelmota of Carrara was an obstetrician from Padua. I could find no further information on her.

Clarice diDirisio, from Foggia, lived in the 15th century. She was an eye surgeon educated at the University of Salerno, only licensed to treat female patients.

I researched Artemisia Gentileschi who lived in the 17th Century and I found a treasure trove of information including many of her works. Too much to send. So I urge you to look her up. Apparently, she has been found by the art community and there is a movie of her in the making.

She was an artist and a defender of women. She was raped by one of her father's friends and had to undergo pain in the trial (they tightened tape around her fingers so they would hurt and kept on exerting pressure. (They also examined her vagina in court to ascertain her virginity.) This was to test whether she was telling the truth. (Seems like little has changed.) The rapist was convicted and sentenced but never served.

Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta , known as Lady Gaga, is an American singer, songwriter, and actress. She began playing the piano at age four when her mother insisted she become "a cultured young woman", then began performing at 14 singing at open mic nights and



acting in school plays. She studied at Collaborative Arts Project 21, dropping out to pursue a career in music. In a 2014 interview, Gaga said she had been raped at age 19, for which she has suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder but credits support from doctors, family and friends with helping.

Lady Gaga isn't an Italian citizen but identifies as an Italian American because both of her parents' families originated from Italy. She takes deep pride in her Italian roots and proudly shares her heritage during interviews and talk show appearances.

<https://youtu.be/UjcEUsArMps>

Gaga is an activist and philanthropist and in April 2020, she curated the televised benefit concert, One World: Together at Home, to benefit the World Health Organization's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund raising \$127 million dollars. She was nominated for best actress for her role in, "A Star Is Born." She is quoted as saying, "Some women choose to follow men. and some women choose to follow their dreams."

Christina dePizan (1363-1434) was born in Venice and was a writer of several books,(available on Amazon!) She strongly challenged misogyny and the stereotypes about women. She completed 41 pieces during her 30 year career, from 1399-1429 as Italy's first professional writer. She was an early feminist who used language to portray the important role of women in society. She was educated at the University of Bologna. Two of her books are "The Moral Defense of Women." and "The Love Debate Poems."



Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman to run for the vice president in the United States. Her mother was a first generation Italian American seamstress and her father was an Italian immigrant. She graduated from high school at 16 and put herself through law school. She served in the United States House of Representatives from 1979 to 1985, and was the Democratic Party's vice presidential nominee in 1984, running alongside former vice president Walter Mondale; this made her the first female vice-presidential nominee representing a major American political party. Listen to her acceptance speech!

<https://youtu.be/Lw0MF-I85XE>



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wealthy family, she became a nun at 14 years old and was a prioress of the convent Santa Caterina da Siena. It was managed by the Dominican Friars of San Marco, who promoted devotional paintings by religious women to avoid sloth. The convent became a center for nun artists. She lacked any formal training, and her male figures are said to have "female characteristics", as her religious vocation prohibited study of the nude male. Most of her works are large scale, which was most uncommon for women to paint during that period.

To see some more of her work, visit

<http://advancingwomenartists.org/artists/plautilla-nelli>

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[image description: self portrait of Nelli in nun's garments, with her right hand raised.]



Laura Maria Caterina Bassi Veratti (Laura Bassi), was born in 1711. Bassi was Europe's first female physicist. Known to be the first woman awarded a doctorate in science, the second woman in the world to earn a Doctor of Philosophy Degree, and the first woman to hold a salaried teaching position at a university. She also popularized Newtonian mechanics in Italy.



Giuliana Tesoro, was born in Venice. She was denied entry to Italy's university system due to the promulgation of the Fascist Racial Laws which targeted her as a Jew. In 1939, she emigrated to the US. She earned her Ph.D at 21 years old from Yale University. She became a successful organic chemist, achieving more than 120 patents. In her field, she is best known for creating fire-resistant fibers and improving permanent press properties in textiles.



Levi-Montalcini was a pioneering scientist in neurobiology, and received a joint Nobel Prize for her discovery of nerve growth factor (NGF). As a teenager, she became interested in medical science after seeing a close family friend die of stomach cancer. When Germans invaded Italy in 1943, her family fled to Florence where they survived the Holocaust under false identities. Using a makeshift laboratory in her bedroom, she continued her research on nerve fibers in chicken embryos. She received many scientific awards and accolades throughout her life, and became the first Nobel Laureate to reach the age of 100. She died in 2012 at the age of 103.



Maria Montessori, was an Italian educator and founder of the Montessori educational system. In 1896, Maria was the first woman in Italy to graduate from the University of Rome for medicine. Montessori scorned conventional classrooms, where “children, like butterflies mounted on pins, are fastened each to his place.” She sought, instead, to teach children by supplying concrete materials and organizing situations beneficial to learning with these materials. Her pedagogical methods are still in use today, and her legacy as an Italian author, educator, and physician developed new frontiers for women in medicine.



ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI (1593-1656)

Artemisia started painting in her father's workshop, showing very early her talent. She was the first woman to become a member of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Florence.

Her paintings are famous for the strong, brave, powerful female characters she depicted – mainly biblical or mythical heroines – and for the characteristic use of colors.

The women in Artemisia's paintings are very different from the stereotypical shy and elegant woman depicted in the artworks of the time.

Artemisia was raped when she was very young by her tutor and Orazio's coworker Agostino Tassi. She had to suffer a very long trial against her rapist, during which

she was tortured in order to prove her virginity and her innocence. After the trial, her father arranged a marriage between his daughter and a Florentine painter, Pierantonio Stiattesi, to save Artemisia's social respectability.

When in Florence Artemisia blossomed as a mature artist, became a successful court painter under Cosimo II de' Medici and established friendly relationships with artists and intellectuals like the artist Cristofano Allori and the scientist Galileo Galilei.



Nancy Pelosi was born March 26,1940. Her mother was Anunciata D'Alesandro and father was Thomas D'Aleandro,
Nancy grew up in an area of Baltimore known as Little Italy, a neighborhood which was a Democratic Party

stronghold, largely working class and largely Roman Catholic. Nancy carries on the family tradition of being involved in politics, Her father served in Congress and was the mayor of Baltimore for 12 years. She graduated from Trinity College She married Paul Pelosi and together they have five children. Focusing on raising her family, slowed her ascent in Democratic Party. She began by volunteering but rose in the ranks and in 1987 she became a member of the House of Representatives. In 2002 , Pelosi was selected to be the Democratic Leader of the House , making her the first woman in history to earn the honor. Four years later, she was chosen to be the speaker of the House, another first for a woman. On February 7, 2018 , Pelosi stood for some eight hours and seven minutes to protest legislation that lacked protection for "Dreamers", a record dating back to at least 1909. Pelosi was elected for a fourth term as speaker in January 2021, with a 216-208 vote.

Marisa Tomei was born December 4, 1964 in Brooklyn, NY. to Adelaide Bianchi , an English teacher and Gary A. Tomei a trial lawyer. Her father's ancestors are of Italian descent from Calabria and Campania; her mother's are from Tuscany and Sicily. Her parents often took her to Broadway shows which whetted her appetite for acting. She had many acting gigs, off b'way and TV but her big

break came in the movie, "My Cousin Vinny " in 1992 which won her a Best Supporting Actress Oscar. Her many performances have earned her many awards from numerous film societies for Best Supporting Actress, a third Academy Award Nomination. as well as nominations for a Golden Globe and a BAFTA. She holds dual citizenship, US and Italy. One of her quotes "I'm not that big a fan of marriage as an institution and I don't know why women need to have children to be seen as complete human beings."

Ella Tambussi Grasso was born in 1919 died 1981. Her parents were Italian immigrants who settled in Windsor Locks, Conn. She was raised largely by her grandparents. She attended local schools and later received her B.A and M.A. from Mount Holyoke College in Mass. Ella chose a life of politics for herself. From 1952 to 1957, she served in the Conn. House of Representatives . In 1958 voters elected her to the office of Conn. Secretary of State. In 1970 she was elected to the US Congress , a position she held until 1975 when she was elected Governor. She became the first woman governor elected " in her own right." Married in 1942 to Thomas Grasso, mother of two children. She died at age 61 of Ovarian Cancer. She received the Medal of

Freedom in 1981 and in 1993 she was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.

Angela Bombace was born in February, 1898 and died in April, 1975. She was born in Brazil to Guiseppina Calabrese and Antonio Bombace , immigrants from Leonforte Sicily and Cannitello, Calabria. The family migrated to NYC in 1901 and settled in East Harlem. Angela and her sisters became garment workers Together they also attended meetings held by anarchists, socialists and members of the Industrial Workers of the World. Angela became a union member, staff member and officer of the International Ladies Garment Workers. She was an officer of the organization from 1917-1972. She was a key organizer in the dressmakers strike of 1919. Angela lost custody of her two sons (by her first husband) due to her labor activism, but remained close to them throughout her life. In the late 1920 she met and fell in love with an Italian immigrant, anarchist and tailor by trade, who played an active role in the defense of Sacco and Vanzetti.

She became a union organizer for the ILGWU in Baltimore. In 1956 she became the first Italian- American woman elected Vice-President of the ILGWU and a member of of the General Executive Board. She was appointed to Commission on Status of Women by John

Kennedy in 1962. She fought anti-Semitism, and racism against black union members, Was a member of the ACLU.

She died of ovarian cancer.

Susan Sarandon

Valerie Bertinelli

Talia Shire

Susan Lucci

Joy Behar

Kaley Cuoco

Kelly Ripa

Lady Gaga

Madonna

Liza Minelli

Mira Sorvino

Nancy Sinatra

Some women to research

Caterina Van Hemessen

Fede Galizia

Antonia di Palol diDono

