



HELLO THERE,

If you're reading this then you're about to see a sneak peek of my upcoming children's book, *The Story of Art Without Men: An Illustrated Guide to Amazing Women Artists*.

I've spent my life visiting galleries and museums. I'd go with my friends on a Saturday or with my big sister during half term. As a result, I became enraptured by this subject – called 'art history' – which tells the history of the world through the people who chose to paint, sculpt, photograph or weave it.

Art history became my way of understanding big historical events, like wars or revolutions, or how people felt – despite them living in an entirely different time and place to me – through the portraits they painted.

But as I explored more, I realized that the way the subject was told wasn't exactly true to history. Because it somehow left out half the population: women.

Did you know that just 1% of London's National Gallery is made up of art by women? Or that the Royal Academy of Arts has only hosted one exhibition by a woman in their main galleries – despite it being open since 1768?

When I realized I couldn't name twenty women artists off the top of my head, I decided to do something about it. Aged twenty-one, I started an Instagram account called The Great Women Artists, to share my findings about all the amazing women artists working now and throughout history. I turned it into a podcast, exhibitions, newspaper columns, and then in 2022 a book for adults: *The Story of Art Without Men*.

Now, I've turned my audience to children and couldn't be more excited. Because – no matter who we are or where we're from – art is for everyone. In this book, beautifully illustrated by Ping Zhu, and with hundreds of accompanying images of artworks, I take my little reader through 500 years of art history.



From the Italian Renaissance to the present day, each chapter is divided up into different movements across the globe. For example, we look at Surrealism – a movement born out of the horrors of the First World War in Paris, where artists turned to their imaginations and away from the broken world around them for inspiration. Or Brazilian Modernism – formed a hundred years after Brazil gained independence from Portugal, which saw artists conjure a new language away from anything European.

Most chapters are also accompanied with an Art Task to help the reader understand how the movement relates to their life, and to invite them to make their own version of the art they are reading about. For example, in the Abstract Expressionism chapter, we look at how artists collaborated with their poet friends by making drawings of their words. These will also be a great guide for teachers wanting to integrate art into their classrooms.

At the beginning of the book, I also provide my reader with an ‘art historian’s toolbox’ – including suggestions for what to ask when looking at an artwork, or why it might be relevant to readers despite the artwork being made in a totally different context.

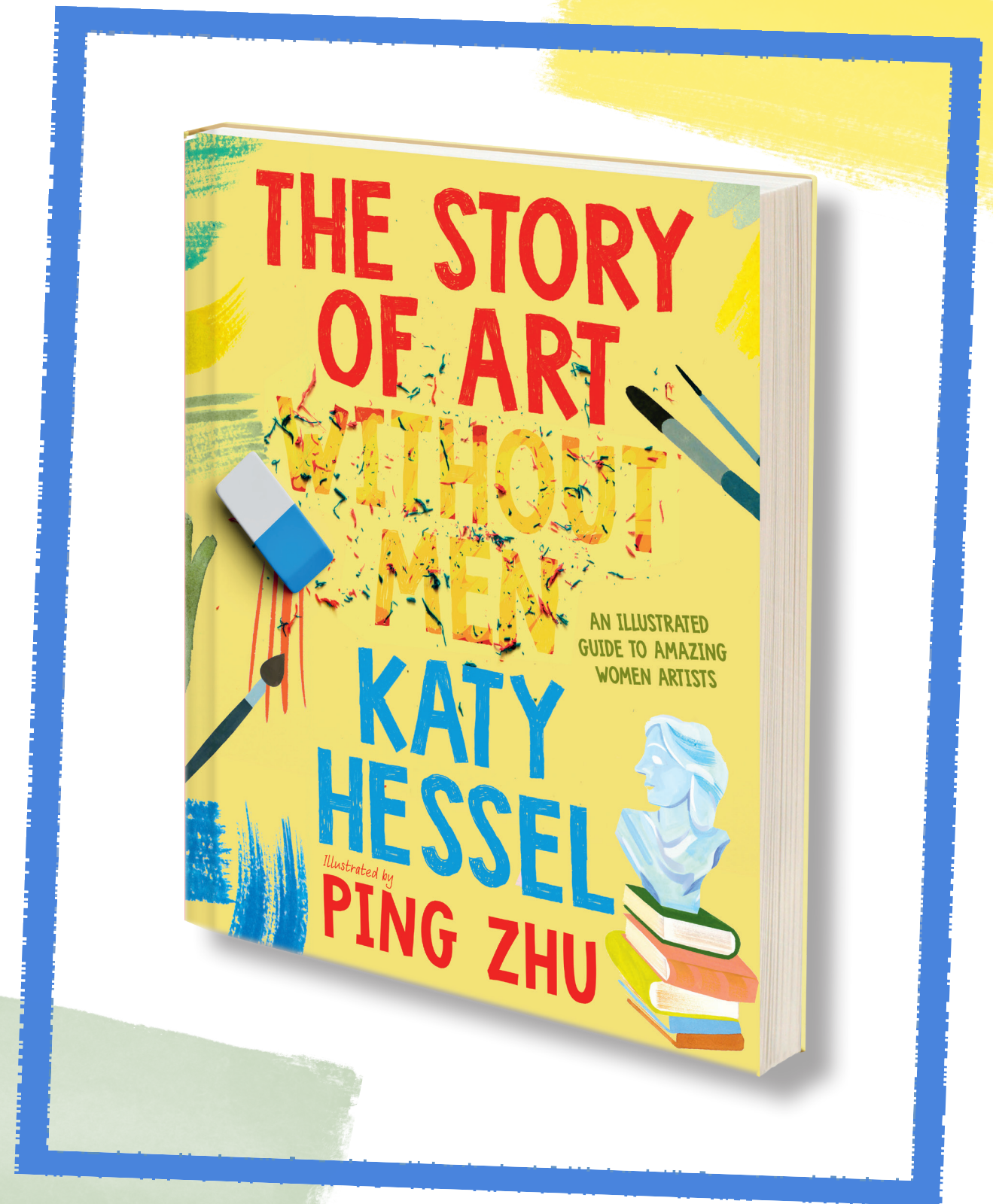
One of my favourite artists in the book is a Japanese-American artist: Ruth Asawa. She was known for her looped wire sculptures that, when lit, create extraordinary shadows. She once said:

‘Art will make people better, more highly skilled in thinking and improving whatever business one goes into ... It makes a person broader.’

And that is why we need art in our life.

Enjoy the book!

Love, Katy



BAROQUE AND BOTANY

**'I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT
A WOMAN CAN DO.'
– ARTEMISIA
GENTILESCHI**

As we leave the Renaissance and enter the 1600s, things in Europe get dramatic. Countries on the northern side of Europe (like England and the Netherlands) began breaking away from the Catholic Church. So, in response, the Catholic Church did everything it could to keep people following its faith.



The most effective way of doing this? Storytelling, of course. So artists painted biblical scenes, which, at times, could be bloody and terrifying (think scary movies, but 400 years ago). Even simple stories were told in dramatic pictures.

This was a style called the **BAROQUE**. And the paintings of this era included stormy skies, pitch-black backdrops, and bold, contrasting light effects.



Because of the success of the women we learned about in the previous chapter, women artists in the 1600s could become celebrities. And while women in the Renaissance tended to picture themselves as 'poised' and 'elegant', those in the seventeenth century had a different attitude. They appear strong and unafraid.

The greatest artist of this era was the mighty **ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI**. She was born in Rome in 1593, the eldest daughter in an artistic family. When she was 12 her mother died, so she was tasked with raising her three younger brothers. As her father was an artist, they hung out together in his studio, which was where Artemisia fell in love with painting and learned how to mix paint from pigment.

DID YOU KNOW?

Back then, paint tubes didn't exist, so artists had to crush rocks to make a powder, known as pigment. They mixed this with egg or water to turn it into liquid paint.

Born in the west of England in 1700, **MARY DELANY** started out as a seamstress, sewing flowers on to her friend's jackets. But when she was 70 years old, she saw a red geranium beside a red piece of paper, and was inspired. She became a pioneer of collage, and she went on to produce more than 1,000 flower collages!



COLLAGE

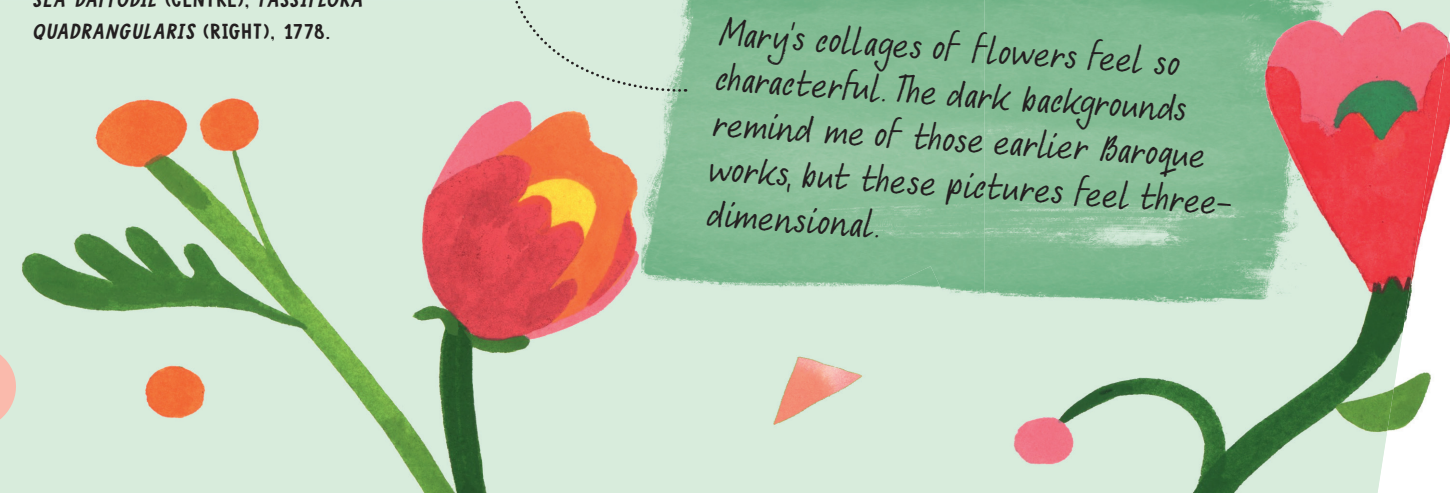
A technique involving the cutting and pasting of paper, which is put together to make a picture.

Collage can be a great way of capturing the life of flowers, making them seem realistic. Think about how many layers of petals there can be on a flower. Try doing the same with paper – adding coloured layers to build up a picture – and you can end up with something that looks just like a flower.



MARY DELANY, GERANIUM ZONALE (LEFT), SEA DAFFODIL (CENTRE), PASSIFLORA QUADRANGULARIS (RIGHT), 1778.

Mary's collages of flowers feel so characterful. The dark backgrounds remind me of those earlier Baroque works, but these pictures feel three-dimensional.



Another artist who broke new ground in the natural world was **MARIA SIBYLLA MERIAN**, born in Germany in 1647. In 1691, she set sail from Amsterdam to South America. She was an entomologist (someone who studies insects) and in South America she sketched and painted creatures that Europeans had never seen before. These included creepy-crawly spiders, blooming butterflies and a host of glorious insects.

As in art, women in science have often been overlooked throughout history. So it's amazing to think that a woman's detailed drawings helped Europeans learn about species from across the globe.



MARIA SIBYLLA MERIAN, POMEGRANATE AND MENELAUS BLUE MORPHO BUTTERFLY, 1702-3.

Whether they were recreating large-scale biblical scenes or painting pictures of flowers, during the Baroque (and beyond!) women always came up with ways of seeing things anew.



IMPRESSIONISM

Some pictures look like they've been painted in an instant, or smashed into shards of colour. Sometimes, the painting might look like it's moving – maybe because of the wisps of paint swirling around the canvas or the flickers of white that appear like sparkling reflections.

Paintings like this belong to a movement called Impressionism. The artists of this movement, working mainly in Paris in the late 1800s, liked to create an 'impression' of their subject, as opposed to something that looked realistic.

Back then, these artists were thought of as rebellious and were often dismissed by snooty art critics (who saw their work as too modern). They were even banned from some museums! So, these enterprising artists set up their own exhibitions in alternative places, like photography studios. The first of these exhibitions took place in 1874.

At this point in time, everything was changing. A new century was approaching and the **INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION** was booming. This was a period of great change, when machines and new inventions came along such as cars, telephones and high-speed trains.

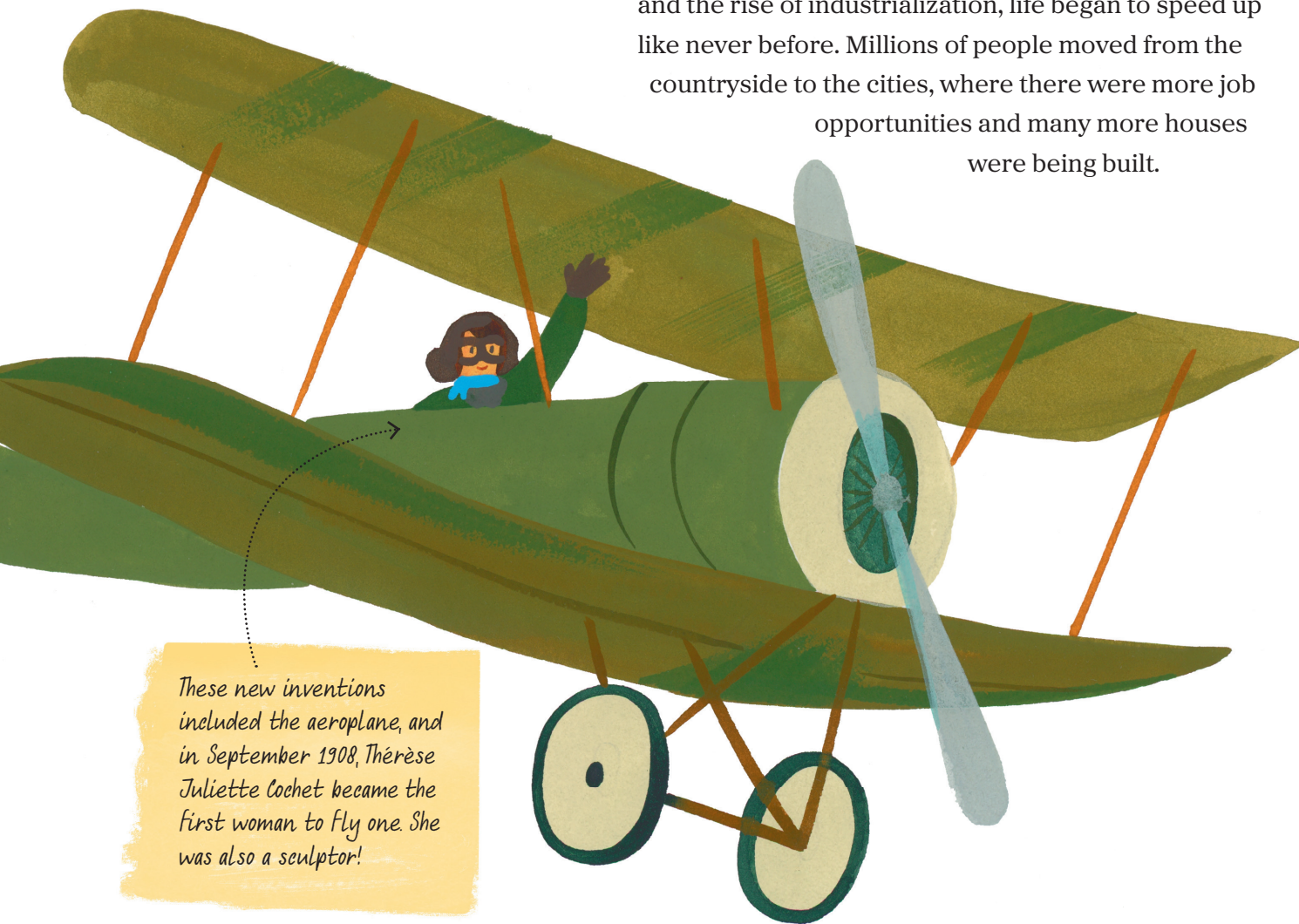


The camera was becoming popular, as was the new 'moving picture' (also known as films). Artists were inspired to capture the speed of a new world, and this helped pave the way for Impressionism.

Paris was at the centre of this movement. The city had been rebuilt and redesigned between 1853 and 1870 by a man named Georges-Eugène Haussmann. Narrow medieval streets had been replaced with sweeping boulevards (long, wide roads). Embellished, ornate details had also been added to street lamps and Métro stations. Grand theatres were built to serve French high society – known as the *bourgeoisie*.

MACHINES AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The dawn of the 1900s was also the dawn of many incredible inventions. Because of new technologies and the rise of industrialization, life began to speed up like never before. Millions of people moved from the countryside to the cities, where there were more job opportunities and many more houses were being built.



These new inventions included the aeroplane, and in September 1908, Thérèse Juliette Cochet became the first woman to fly one. She was also a sculptor!

Can you imagine being in a high-speed car for the first time? Or whizzing through the ocean on a motorboat? How about making a telephone call, instead of waiting weeks to receive a letter?

Artists were fascinated by these modern machines, and captured their effects – and the way they were changing people’s lives – in art. Some did this with a technique called **ABSTRACTION**.

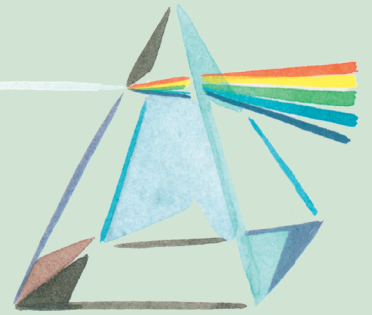
ABSTRACTION

Abstraction involves breaking up an image into shapes, lines and colours.

Have a look at this painting, **ELECTRIC PRISMS** by Sonia Delaunay. Sonia was born in Ukraine in 1885 but, like many artists, studied in Paris. Does it remind you of anything? What does the title suggest?

PRISM

A prism is a see-through 3D shape, with flat sides that can cause light to bend.



SONIA DELAUNAY, *ELECTRIC PRISMS*, 1914.

Notice how, in this painting, there is no specific image, and no beginning or end. See how it’s made up of colourful shapes and lines? These are all features of abstraction.

Don’t you think the strokes of colour also look a bit like musical notes? Artists at this time were fascinated by something called synaesthesia, which is when a person can hear sounds as if they were different colours!

WHAT DO YOU HEAR WHEN YOU LOOK AT THIS PAINTING?

Abstraction also allows the viewer to interpret what they see in their own way. When I look at this work, I feel like I’m in a car winding through a city, stopping at traffic lights, with street lamps all around me. What do you see?

This is **LEONOR FINI**, who was born in Argentina in 1907, and lived in Italy and then Paris. Here she is, dressed like a figure we'd find in her paintings. She really is an embodiment of Surrealism.



LEONOR FINI AT A MASKED COSTUME BALL. 1951.

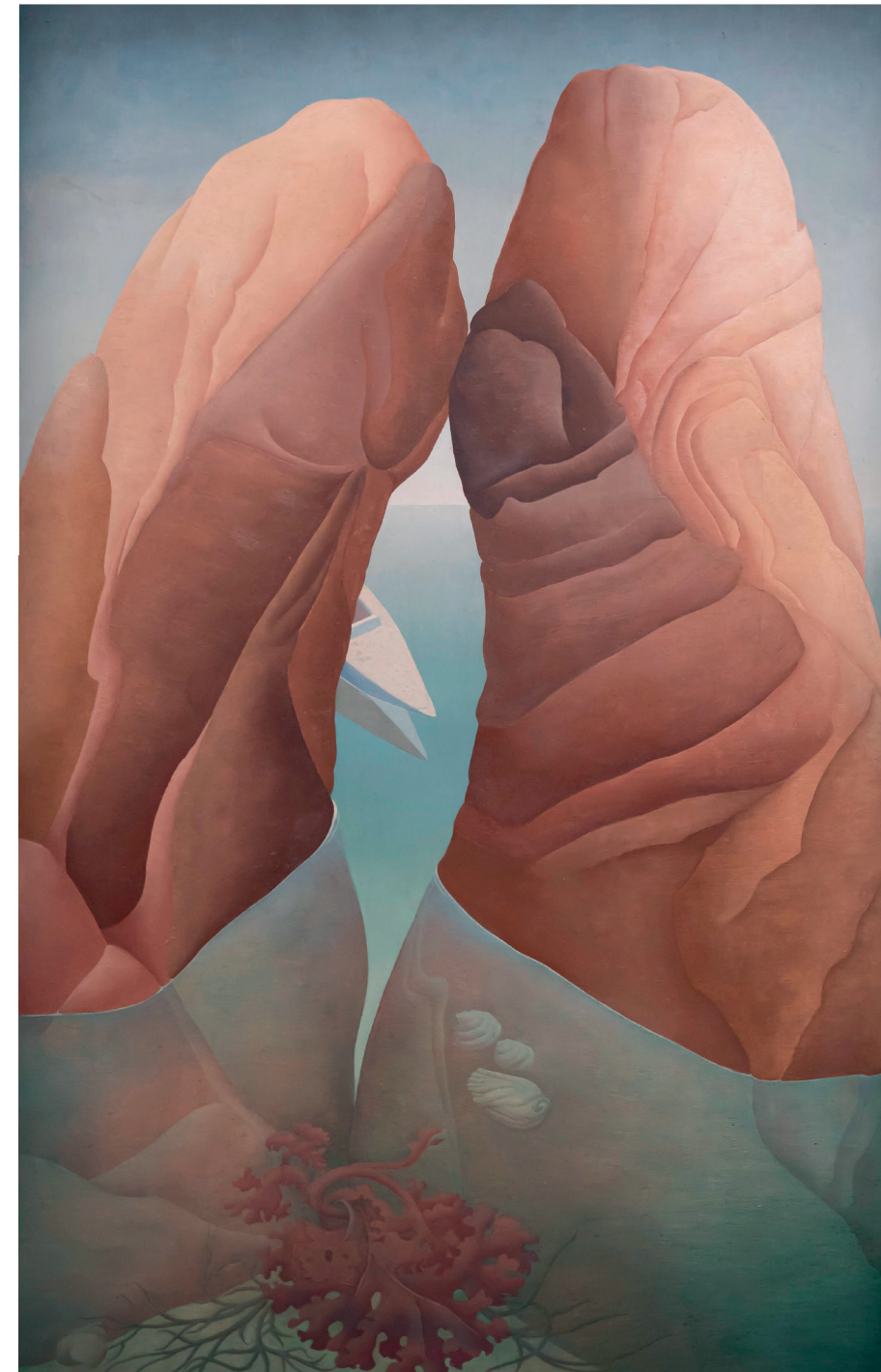
When Leonor was a young girl, she suffered from a case of conjunctivitis, which meant she had to have both eyes bandaged for months. According to legend, this allowed her to look deep into her imagination . . .

Here's an example of Fini's painting, which translates as **THE PASSENGER**. It's of a woman cloaked in a fantastical, glowing gown, who looks to be riding on a monstrous reptile. Where do you think she is travelling to?



LEONOR FINI, LA PASSAGÈRE, 1964.

Surrealist artists often make us look at traditional art – such as landscapes and portraits – in new ways. One of my favourite examples of someone who did this is Cornwall-based artist, **ITHELL COLQUHOUN**, who was born in India in 1906.



ITHELL COLQUHOUN, SCYLLA, 1938.

Have a look at Ithell's painting **SCYLLA** from 1938. It looks like two rocks in a landscape, under-layered by a sprawling coral reef.

Try looking again: ever glanced down at your legs in the bath, or by the sea? What do you see now?

Over in England, **PAULINE BOTY** was fast becoming the star of British Pop art. Born in London in 1938, Pauline acted in films, often appeared on the radio and, when it came to art, she painted the celebrities of the day. She said they were 'present-day mythology' – ancient Greek gods and goddesses for the modern world.

Her 1963 painting *The Only Blonde in the World* features the film star Marilyn Monroe.

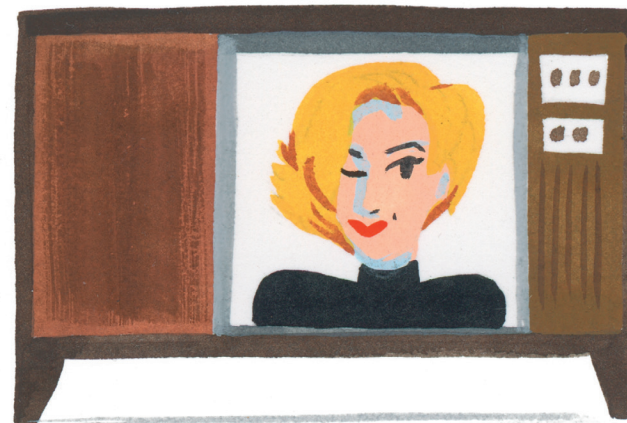
Pauline has painted Marilyn shimmering in a silver dress. I love that she's also painted her with the sun reflecting off her tassels and sequins, bathing her in light and making her appear almost like a statue.



PAULINE BOTY, *THE ONLY BLONDE IN THE WORLD*, 1963.

Look at how she's also framed Marilyn between two green panels, perhaps opening to show us the glamour of Hollywood. But it also reminds me of when the curtains close at the theatre or cinema. By painting this last glimpse of her hero, who died the year before this painting was made, Pauline seems to be wanting Marilyn to last forever, even as the credits roll.

This was, after all, the era of a new phenomenon: colour television. Before this, screens used to be black and white (can you imagine!?), but colour TVs became popular in the late 1960s, and were normal by the 1980s. Artists were amazed and awestruck by technicolour screens, and injected this luminosity into their art.



ART TASK

Do you have any favourite singers or actors? Have a go at drawing them, to create your very own Pop art image...

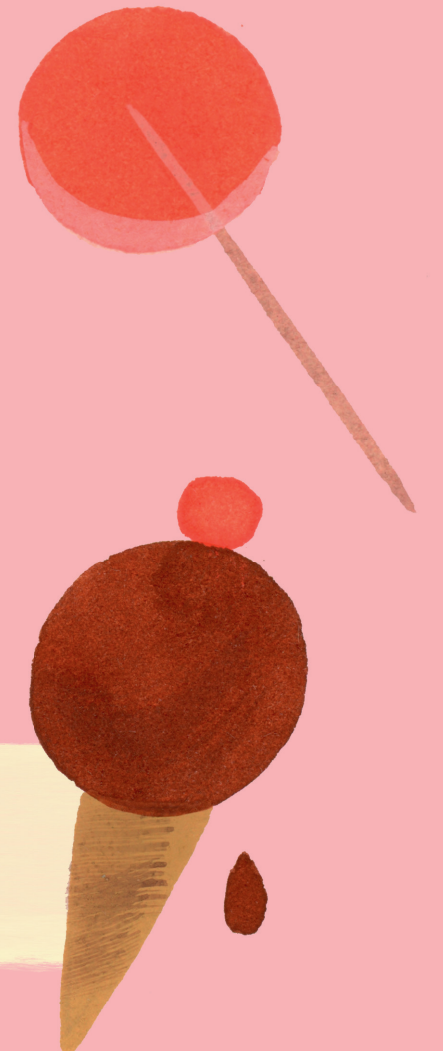
EVELYNE AXELL went by her surname, 'Axell'. She was born in Belgium in 1935, and was fanatical about colour.

This is her painting of a girl licking an ice cream. Look at the clever way Axell has used bright colours to visualize the sweet, zingy taste. Notice how the girl's face is in black and white and her eyes are closed, like she is in a dreamlike state.



EVELYNE AXELL, *ICE CREAM 1*, 1964.

Think about when you last tried something sweet. It can feel like your taste buds are alive with colour!



Despite facing resistance, artists continued to fight. A few years after the 1968 Olympic games, **BARBARA JONES-HOGU**, an artist born in Chicago, USA, in 1938, made a print called *Unite (First State)*, 1969.

With their clenched fists in the air, these activists stand below a colourful sky that has the word UNITE scattered across it. Notice how it's repeated lots of times? It's as if everyone is chanting the word 'Unite' together, showing us the strength of their collective energy – and adding a sound effect to a silent image.



BARBARA JONES-HOGU, *UNITE*, 1971.

Barbara was part of a group of artists in Chicago called AfriCOBRA. They made colourful, joyous artworks that aimed to 'preach positivity to the people'. Full of rhythm, this was a new style that was intentionally different from European painting and sculpture.

CAROLYN MIMS LAWRENCE, born in the United States in 1940, was also part of this group. She made a painting called *Black Children Keep Your Spirits Free*, in 1972. If you look closely, you can see the title is included in the painting multiple times, in lots of different colours.



CAROLYN MIMS LAWRENCE, *BLACK CHILDREN KEEP YOUR SPIRITS FREE*, 1972.

I love this work. Full of bright colour and energy, it's like you can hear the sounds of the drumming and music!

American artist **JUDY CHICAGO**, born in 1939, was also fed up with not learning enough about brilliantly creative women. So, in 1974 she decided to construct a giant artwork, which she called *The Dinner Party*. She assembled a giant triangular table, each side measuring 14 metres long (about the length of a bus!), and set thirty-nine place names on the table that celebrated incredible women from history and mythology.

THIS SOUNDS LIKE MY DREAM DINNER PARTY!

Some of the guests included artists Georgia O'Keeffe and Artemisia Gentileschi, writer Virginia Woolf and abolitionist Sojourner Truth, who fought against slavery. Judy and a team of skilled craftspeople hand-embroidered place settings for all the women, sculpted ceramic plates, and added cups and cutlery.

ART TASK

If you were to design your own version of *The Dinner Party*, who would you choose to honour? Maybe your favourite singer? Or an artist from this book? Or someone in your family?



JUDY CHICAGO. DETAIL OF THE VIRGINIA WOOLF PLACE SETTING (LEFT), *THE DINNER PARTY*, 1974–9 (RIGHT).

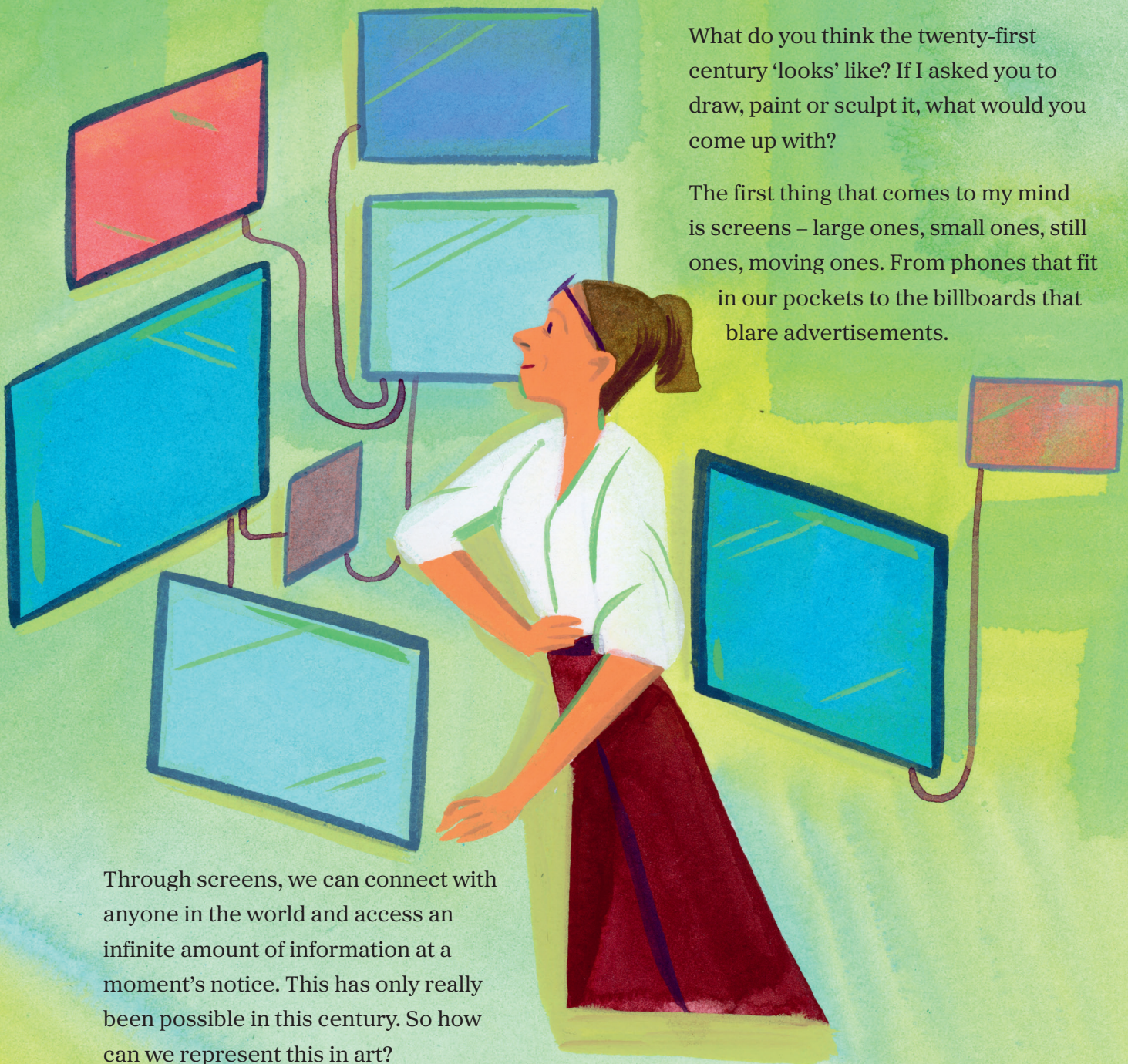
Look closely at the middle of the table, and you'll see the names of 999 more women written on the shiny white porcelain!



ART FOR THE NEW WORLD

What do you think the twenty-first century 'looks' like? If I asked you to draw, paint or sculpt it, what would you come up with?

The first thing that comes to my mind is screens – large ones, small ones, still ones, moving ones. From phones that fit in our pockets to the billboards that blare advertisements.



Through screens, we can connect with anyone in the world and access an infinite amount of information at a moment's notice. This has only really been possible in this century. So how can we represent this in art?

Let me introduce you to **SARAH SZE**, who was born in Boston, USA in 1969. In her art, she creates structures filled with screens of different sizes. Whenever I see her work in real life, it feels like stepping inside a dizzying laboratory.