Contemporary Co-Production with Historical Collaborative Feminist Precedents: Exploring community-led exhibition-making through *The Famous Women Project*

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Contemporary Co-Production with Historical Collaborative Feminist Precedents: Exploring community-led exhibition-making through *The Famous Women Project*

This article examines *The Famous Women Project*, a 2019 co-production initiative at Tate Exchange, through its engagement with three feminist precedents: the *Famous Women Dinner Service*, Cicely Hamilton's *A Pageant of Great Women*, and regional post-suffrage pageants. It argues that these historically rooted, participatory practices prefigure contemporary co-production frameworks by modelling democratic intent, equitable collaboration, and valuing diverse forms of knowledge. Analysing the project's development, partnerships and public-facing activities, the article demonstrates how co-production can function simultaneously as method and critique, offering an ethically engaged approach to feminist exhibition-making and expanding representational possibilities within British arts institutions.

Keywords: Feminist Art History, co-production, participatory curation, suffrage pageants, *Famous Women Dinner Service*, tate exchange, community engagement, institutional critique

Introduction

In recent years, co-production has emerged as a transformative methodology within curatorial and museum practice, offering new ways to engage publics, decentralize authority, and reconfigure institutional power dynamics. Co-production holds particular promise as a method for working towards feminist exhibition-making, where questions of representation, collaboration, and historical redress are central. The term co-production can be problematic. At the 2024 British Art Network conference, 'Curatorial Reimaginings', participants discussed the origin of the term in medical treatment and its various negative connotations for health service users, and wondered whether different terminology might be used instead.[1] The general consensus was that there is now a shared set of key understandings of the term co-production in both the realms of curatorial practice and for museum users, and in the funding sector, which makes it desirable for continued use.[2] A key to positively reinforcing curatorial and critical usage of the term might be to reconfigure our understanding of the term with reference to more positive historical models from the arts.

This article explores the potential of co-production as a feminist curatorial strategy through an in-depth case study of *The Famous Women Project*, a collaborative initiative staged at Tate Liverpool in 2019 as part

of the Tate Exchange programme. Drawing on the historical feminist precedents of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant's *Famous Women Dinner Service* (1932–34) and early twentieth-century suffrage and post-suffrage pageants, the project foregrounds art and exhibition-making that is participatory, transdisciplinary, and radically hospitable.

The rediscovery of the *Famous Women Dinner Service* in 2017 catalysed a renewed interest in feminist visual genealogies and the commemorative strategies employed by women artists. Bell and Grant's ceramic plates, commissioned by Kenneth Clark, subverted the conventions of decorative art and domestic display to foreground a transhistorical and transnational pantheon of influential women. Structured into four categories, Women of Letters, Queens, Beauties, and Dancers & Actresses, the service invited its viewers to engage with a diverse array of female figures, many of whom were marginalized or omitted from dominant historical narratives. The artists' intervention, delivered in the same year Clark became Director of the National Gallery, constituted a subtle but potent act of institutional critique, challenging entrenched gendered hierarchies of cultural value and public visibility.

Parallel to this material artistic legacy, the project also drew on the performative traditions of feminist pageantry, particularly Cicely Hamilton's *A Pageant of Great Women* (1909) and the regional post-suffrage pageants of 'Noble Women' staged throughout the interwar period. Collaboratively produced by women's groups across Britain, these pageants offered revisionist histories that celebrated women's achievements in the arts, sciences, politics, and religion. Often staged in local venues and involving large casts of volunteers, these pageants exemplify a model of cultural production that foregrounded community participation, intersectional representation, and regional specificity. As Amy Binns' research into interwar pageants has shown, the diversity of characters and categories included reflected the values and aspirations of the women who designed and performed them, offering a compelling historical precedent for contemporary co-production.[3]

The Famous Women Project sought to mirror the inclusive and generative structures of these feminist antecedents by developing a framework that engaged a wide range of collaborators including art-historians, independent researchers, academics, artists, students and schoolchildren, Girl Guide groups, and members of the public. Through workshops, lectures, and participatory art-making, the project invited audiences to select and celebrate culturally influential women, culminating in the creation of a new artwork: *The Modern Pantheon*, a 13-place dinner service featuring contemporary figures chosen through open voting. This process foregrounded the democratic intent of co-production, allowing participants to shape the content and direction of the project while creating content that reflected their own values, role models, and aspirations.

The Tate Exchange residency provided a platform for this work but also revealed limitations and tensions inherent in inter-institutional collaborations and the work of co-production. While the gallery space enabled visibility and access, the project's relationship with Tate

Liverpool remained largely transactional, with limited engagement from curatorial staff and partial integration into the gallery's broader programming. This dynamic underscored the challenges of enacting co-production within established institutions, where structural inequalities and entrenched hierarchies may inhibit genuine collaboration. The dynamically democratic and participatory co-production methods we engaged to create *The Famous Women Project* contrasted with the more prescriptive ways participation was managed during our tenure and the methods used by the Tate Exchange programme, which was described as an 'open experiment ... trailing new participatory programmes'.[4] The feminist nature of our project constituted an active form of institutional critique within the gallery, highlighting gaps in representation in the artwork on display and the products sold in the gift shop, and demonstrating the potential of feminist co-production to reimagine curatorial practice including audience engagement.

By situating *The Famous Women Project* within the lineage of feminist visual cultures and aligning it with contemporary co-production frameworks, such as those developed by National Museums Liverpool, this article argues for a historically grounded, ethically engaged approach to feminist exhibition-making. It demonstrates how co-production can serve as a tool for redressing historical absences, amplifying marginalized voices, and fostering inclusive forms of cultural remembrance. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing debates in visual cultures around the politics of representation, the ethics of collaboration, and the transformative potential of feminist curatorial strategies.

The Famous Women dinner service[5]

In 1932, art historian, museum director and private collector of contemporary British art Kenneth Clark commissioned Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant to create a large-scale dinner service.[6] As a prominent figure within twentieth-century British Art, Clark aspired to own a stylish dinner service suitable for lavish parties with the elevated company he kept, indicating the ongoing prestige of bespoke dinner plates as symbols of social class and cultural capital. Clark's inspiration for the commission came from eating 'on a blue and gold Sèvres service made for the Empress Catherine of Russia' at a dinner hosted by another art world luminary, the dealer and collector Joseph Duveen.[7] In his autobiography, Clark recorded his surprise at the overtly feminist and political nature of the set Bell and Granted presented in 1934:

it turned out differently to what we had expected. Instead of a gay cascade of decorative art like the best Savona, Duncan and Vanessa conscientiously produced forty-eight plates each of which contained the portrait of a famous woman (Bloomsbury asserting its status as a matriarchy).[8]

Figure 1. Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, *Famous Women*, circa 1932-4, dinner service set of fifty portrait plates, 25.5 and 23.5cm diameter, ceramic. Copyright the Estate of Vanessa Bell, courtesy of Henrietta Garnett, and Estate of Duncan Grant. All rights reserved, DACS 2017. Digital image courtesy of Piano Nobile (Robert Travers Works of Art Limited).
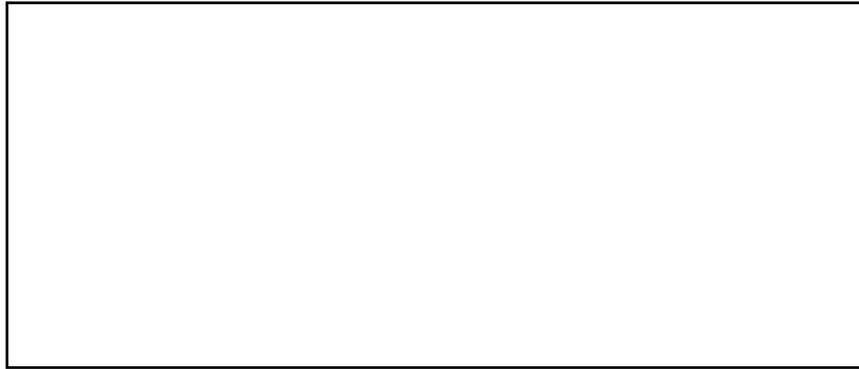
Bell and Grant had significantly reinterpreted Clark's existing brief. Their 50 hand-decorated Wedgwood plates shown in Figure 1 engineered 'an artistic and discursive platform for sexual politics and women's histories' that radically decentred received narratives of gender, history and prestige.[9] *Famous Women* was delivered in the same year that Clark became both Director of the National Gallery and Keep of the King's Pictures. This hopeful and provocative work embodied the artists implicit criticism of the narrow representation of artists in contemporary collection practices and exhibition-making at National institutions.

Reconfiguring power relations at Clark's dinner table of culturally and financially wealthy men, the *Famous Women* plates include a wide geographical spread and several queer figures. Structured around four sections of 12 plates: 12 Women of Letters, 12 Queens, 12 Beauties, and 12 Dancers & Actresses, the service invites an imagined community of transhistorical women together to share their stories. Two additional plates represent the artists, bringing a professional woman artist (although Elizabeth Siddal is included in the set, there is no category for artists), and queer male artist to the table. Table 1 shows the complete set of figures in the dinner service.

As well as a plate each for themselves, Bell and Grant divided the service into four sections:

Cicely Hamilton's *A Pageant of Great Women* (1909)

Pageants were a form of popular entertainment that became widespread in Britain in the early twentieth century.[10] Suffrage campaigners immediately saw their potential as a platform for enacting revisionist histories that would support their campaign for women's legal emancipation. Many public demonstrations organized by suffrage associations included an element of pageantry, and this continued to provide a template for post-suffrage women's organizations.[11]

Three collaboratively produced public events formed the background to the creation of Cicely Hamilton's play *A Pageant of Great Women*, which celebrated the achievements of individual women categorized by

Table 1.   The *Famous Women* portrait plates.

Women of Letters	Queens
Jane Austen	Catherine the Great
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	Christina of Sweden
Charlotte Bronte	Cleopatra
George Eliot	Queen Elizabeth I
Fanny Kemble	Eugenie
Murusaki	Jezebel
Dorothy Osbourne	Marie Antoinette
Christina Rossetti	Mary Queen of Scots
George Sand	Queen Mary
Sappho	Queen of Sheba
Madame de Stael	Empress Theodora
Virginia Woolf	Queen Victoria

Beauties	Dancers and Actresses
Beatrice	Sarah Bernhardt
Miss 1933	La Camargo
Sarah Churchill	Mrs Campbell
Madame Princess de Matternich	Eleanor Duse
Lola Montez	Greta Garbo
Pocahontas	Nell Gwyn
Madame Recamier	Mrs Jordans
Rachel	Mrs Langtry
Elizabeth Siddal	Anna Pavlova
Agnes Sorrel	Sarah Siddons
Helen of Troy	Marie Taglioni
Simonetta Vespucci	Ellen Terry

profession (e.g. Actresses), and in turn became the model for many other similar pageants performed by women's groups throughout the twentieth century. The first was a demonstration in June 1908 when women marched from the Embankment to the Albert Hall 'carrying red-and-white banners'.[12] For the second, 'Women's Sunday of June 21 1908, the Artists Suffrage League created 70 banners representing women's professional organizations including nurses, artists, gymnasts, gardeners and graduates, and individuals like Joan of Arc, singer Jenny Lind, Marie Curie, Elizabeth Fry, Mary Moser, Angelica Kauffman and 'Victoria, Queen and Mother'.[13] The third event was held on April 27 1909, when the ASL organized 'The Pageant of Women's Trades and Professions' as an entertainment during the International Suffrage Alliance's Quinquennial Meeting in the Albert Hall. The pageant consisted of a procession of 'voteless' professions and tradeswomen.[14]

Hamilton created *A Pageant of Great Women* collaboratively with her partner Edith Craig. The dedication reads: 'To Edith Craig, whose ideas these lines were written to illustrate'. The work synthesized many of the elements of these suffrage demonstrations to create a script based on a series of tableaux. *A Pageant of Great Women* was performed in full or in

part by at least at least 14 different groups from a range of suffrage societies throughout England between 1909–12.[15] Containing few speaking parts, and composed of a series of independent tableaux (see Figure 2 for a 1910 image of the 'Group of Warriors' tableaux) bookended by opening and closing arguments rather than a continuous narrative plot, the format of *A Pageant of Great Women* is inherently flexible and adaptable:

Prologue: the main characters of Justice, Prejudice and Woman are introduced in a tableau.

Opening Scene: 'Pursued by Prejudice', Woman kneels before Justice to plead for emancipation. The subsequent scenes unfold as part of her argument, with Woman presenting the achievements of notable historical figures and addressing Prejudice and Justice directly to advocate for gender equality.

The Learned Women Enter

The Artists Enter

The Saintly Women Enter

The Heroic Women Enter

The Rules Enter

The Warriors Enter (see Figure 2)

Conclusion: Woman and Justice have a concluding conversation where Justice judges Woman worthy to attain freedom, and Woman vows to remain worthy.[16]

The six tableaux of great women, plus 3 speaking characters total 47 parts, all in historic costume, requiring a large stage and a huge amount of preparation and support. However, Hamilton was open to the pageant being adapted, reduced, and performed to suit the capacities and requirements of each women's group. In her 2006 article, Katherine Cockin surveyed the regional adaptations of *A Pageant of Great women*, revealing that 'the circumstances of the development, adaptation and performance … provide an insight into the dynamics of local suffrage activism'.[17] In

Figure 2. *Group of Warriors: Pauline Chase as Joan of Art; Elizabeth Kirby as Boadicea; Munci Capel as Ranee of Jhansi, Frances Wetherall as Agnes of Dunbar*, in Cicely Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women* (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1910), facing page 47.

demonstrating its regional adaptability, Cockin shows that at some venues the play was performed in its entirety, whereas at others only specific tableaux were staged as part of a bill of entertainments comprising a festival or fundraiser. Cockin also reveals evidence of possible changes to characters in regional productions and writes that 'Hamilton, as author, did not object to the development or replacement of characters in the play'.[18]

Post-suffrage regional pageants of *Noble Women*

Following the granting of the vote for women over 30 with minimum property qualification in 1918, and for all UK citizens in 1928, hundreds of pageants of 'Noble Women' were performed in the interwar years. Aside from promoting women's past achievements, these performances helped contemporary women shape and consolidate their new role as enfranchised citizens. Women-led organizations such as the Girl Guides, Women's Institutes, and women's groups within non-conformist churches and Temperance groups were enthusiastic organizers. Their pageants continued the work of decentring hegemonic political and cultural narratives through celebrating alternative histories featuring women scholars, leaders and campaigners who had particular significance to the women in the regional settings where the pageants were performed.[19]

   Due to their social, cultural and local interest, these pageants were often reviewed in local newspapers. Research by Amy Binns at the British Newspaper Archive disclosed descriptions and characters lists for 32 pageants (though Binns found references to '117 separate pageants or tableaux' overall, only 32 had identifiable character lists).[20] This research identified commonly recurring categories were Bible Characters, Champions of Freedom and Liberty, Pioneers of Christianity and spreaders of Life and Truth, Emancipators of Women and Women of Great Renown. [Figure 3: Photograph of Hatfield House Lane Methodist's Pageant of Noble Women, c. 1920–1939.] Table 2 shows a list of characters from a 1932 pageant given by the ladies of Birchcliffe Baptist Chapel, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, identifying 5 categories containing variable numbers of women.

   One of the most striking results of Binns' research into these pageants is that no two groupings are exactly the same.[22] Binns concluded that:

> although it is possible to list who was chosen, it is much more difficult to know why they were chosen, and what was their significance to their audiences. Newspapers carried cast lists but not interviews with producers and only rarely commentaries. Lacking a complete script, we cannot know how these characters were represented.[23]

In some cases, there is an obvious connection to the region or the interests of the particular women's group. The sheer variety of women represented, and the large number of women involved in the many groups that worked together to research, write, create sets and costume,

Figure 3. *Photograph of Hatfield House Lane Methodist's Pageant of Noble Women, c. 1920–1939.* Copyright Picture Sheffield, Sheffield City Archives. Image reference: s03153.
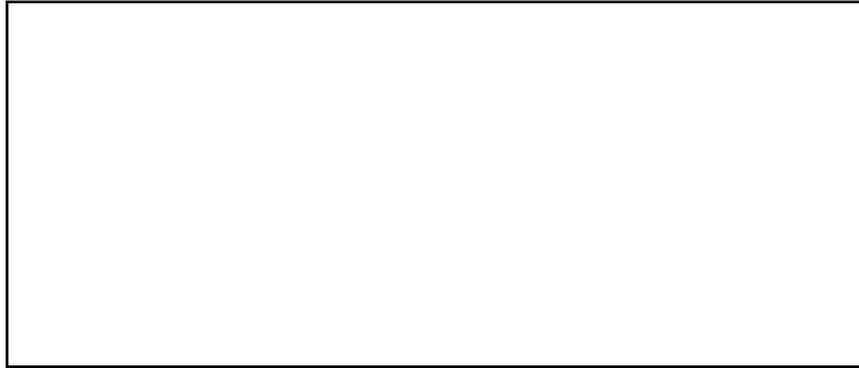
Table 2.   Pageant characters, Birchcliffe Baptist Chapel, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire.[21]

Group 1: Bible Characters	Group 2: Champions of Freedom and Liberty
Miriam (Aaron's sister, a prophetess)	Boadicea
Deborah (a warlike prophetess who led an Israeli army)	Margaret Wilson (a Scottish martyr)
Ruth and Naomi (devoted mother- and daughter-in-law often used as an emblem of sisterhood)	Madame Rowland (a political activist of the French revolution)
A Woman of Samaria (five times married and living with a sixth, she was chosen by Jesus to spread the good news)	Lady Jane Grey (one of the most learned women of her day)
Lydia (a wealthy trader who was converted by Paul)	Dr Elsie Engliss (a Scottish doctor and suffragist)
	Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, which was credited with having sparked the American Civil War).

Group 3: Pioneers of Christianity and spreaders of Life and Truth	Group 4: Emancipators of Women
Bertha Queen of Kent (aka Saint Aldeburgh)	Hypatia (a Greek philosopher and mathematician)
Genevieve (said to have saved Paris from Attila the Hun)	St Cecelia (patron saint of music, she refused to marry)
Susannah Wesley (mother of John and Charles Wesley, foemmaunders of Methodism)	Charlotte Bronte
Katherine Booth (preacher and co-founder of the Salvation Army)	Mary Somerville (a science writer)
Monica (the mother of Saint Augustine)	Harriet Martineau (a sociologist and politician)
Mary Slesser (a Scottish missionary to Nigeria who promoted women's rights)	
Group 5: Women of Great Renown	
Queen Elizabeth I	
Joan of Arc	
Frances R Havergal (a religious poet and hymn writer)	
Elizabeth Browning	
Helen Keller (a deaf-blind American author, political activist and lecturer)	
Frances Willard (an American educator, temperance reformer and women's suffragist)	

promote, and perform pageants of noble women throughout the twentieth century, indicate the implementation of active collaborative principles that foreshadow both the methodology and underlying aims of co-production.

Comparing the scale, positionality, precedents and methodologies of the *Famous Women* dinner service, *A Pageant of Great Women* (1909), and post-suffrage regional pageants of *Noble Women*

Compared to the scale and explicit political ambition of both the suffrage and post-suffrage publicly performed pageants, Bell and Grant's Famous Women is ostensibly very different: a small-scale private commission created for a single individual – albeit a hugely culturally powerful public figure whose intention was for a very small but disproportionately influential audience to view it.[24] The scale of Hamilton's *A Pageant of Great Women* is far larger. Performed at large venues such as the Scala, London (capacity 1139) and the Royal Albert Hall as part of the national suffrage campaign, the 12 subsequent regional performances greatly enhanced the number of participants and audience members it reached. [25] Analysis of the 117 post-suffrage pageants that Amy Binns uncovered indicate smaller, less centralized and culturally prestigious settings. Binns states that performances were held at venues that 'places these events as largely organized by working-class or lower-middle-class women, generally church or chapel-going.[26]

Despite their shared subject matter, the positionality of the creators and audiences for these works were also vastly different. The following biographical characterizations are highly reductive, but useful to demonstrate these contrasts. Bell and Grant were artists and members of the affluent, highly cultured and queer Bloomsbury group, and their patron was a leading member of the Western European and North American interwar cultural elite. Hamilton and her partner Edith Craig (designer and stage manager for each production of *A Pageant of Great Women*) were lesbian women, leading figures in women's political movements and suffrage theatre, and part of a group of queer women writers and actors associated with Ellen Terry and Smallhythe Place. The primary audience for their *A Pageant of Great Women* were women and supporters already associated with the suffrage cause.[27] Performances tended to take place in large, central civic theatres. Binns' analysis of post-suffrage pageants of 'noble women' suggest that both participants and audiences were part of smaller, more localized, regional community groups: 'this was largely a working-class and provincial movement, with a particularly Nonconformist flavour through the Baptist and various Methodist churches'.[28]

Despite these differences in scale and the positionality of both creators and audiences, there are a number of overlapping figures between the *Famous Women* plates with Cicily Hamilton's *A Pageant of Great Women*, and it seems likely that Bell and Grant drew some inspiration from these earlier celebrations of women's histories.[29] Further

cementing this connections, is Hamilton's original title *A Tableaux of Famous Women* which was used for the prototype performance held at Caxton Hall in April 1909.[30]

The imperialist patriarchal 'structures, priorities, processes and practices' of museological and academic disciplines enshrined during the establishment of civic museum and universities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have functioned to maintain a power imbalance that perpetrates inequalities in the arts and society.[31] Each of these projects worked with their audiences to identify and redress power imbalances and inequalities and reconfigure established practices. Each invited famous/great/noble women to showcase their achievements at the metaphorical historical table or tableaux, and rather than objectifying or idealizing them in isolation on static display in a museum, prompted audiences to discuss or enact imaginative and factual reconstructions of their lives and achievements. By presenting the historical women as part of broader groups they avoided restrictive ideas about the isolated achievements of exceptional women and celebrated the depth of the field of women's histories. We were fascinated by the power of these projects to redress inequalities by collaboratively re-presenting histories overlooked by museological and academic knowledge production, and we sought a means to create a public participation project to investigate them.

Using a Co-production Framework for *The Famous Women Project*

Attempting to mirror the radically hospitable structure of these feminist antecedents, we generated a framework using co-production methodologies. We firstly aimed to co-produce new knowledge and interpretation about these existing works through working equitably with multiple collaborators. The next element was to invite different audiences to select and celebrate the culturally influential women that they admired and their achievements.

We then attempted to use these explorations to structure the co-production of new artwork, dialogues and engagement projects responding to both the historical works and the new research into the women our contemporary audiences admired. We worked alongside academics, arts educators, post graduate researchers, undergraduate History of Art and Museum Studies students from LJMU, undergraduate Fine Art students from UCLAN, school children of various ages from across the country, girl guide groups, the Fawcett society, and the general public. Our proposal for Tate Exchange residency at Tate Liverpool was accepted, and, in April 2019, we spent a week in the 1st floor gallery.

Co-production, which has been used increasingly within museums and galleries over the past decade, is recognized as equitable collaboration between museums and communities.

Hatchwell and Salter define it as:

an umbrella term for the different ways in which curation, collections research, interpretation, and engagement can be developed through dialogue and collaboration between museums and their many publics.[32]

As a methodology, co-production works to decentre outmoded models of knowledge transmission that traditionally operate at museums, where curators are positioned as the single source of authority and programming is predicated on educating an uninformed public.

Within co-production processes, audiences are recognized as an intersectional body of individuals, whose subject positions are far from homogenous. Careful co-production builds relationships that recognize, value and share different forms of expertise, experience, and knowledge that are essential for effective governance, programming and evaluation.

The 'Framework for Co-production' developed in 2023 by National Museums Liverpool and the University of Leicester acknowledges Co-Production as a process that requires the sustained operation of agreed principles by both the host institution and their stakeholders. In this document, NML undertake to:

work with our stakeholders to create networks, alliances and long-term relationships ensuring that a wide range of lived and professional experience drives all our decision-making.

Engaging with our partners and audiences in a range of ways, our aim is that co-production – deep, intensive and ethical partnership working with communities, groups and individuals including those traditionally under-served by museums – becomes our primary way of working, our default setting. We will need to devote time to this work and learn to work in new ways with one another and with our partners.[33]

NML's core principles for enacting co-production in an equitable manner state that these processes must be:

– Democratic in intent, co-production is about reconfiguring established power relationships, challenging inequality and working together to improve society.
– It is when individuals and groups influence public services from conception right through to governance, delivery and evaluation.
– It demands that we build equitable and reciprocal relationships and that we generate mutual benefits.
– Co-production brings together different forms of experience and knowledge – both lived and learnt – to generate better outcomes and mutual support.[34]

The *Famous Women* plates and pageants of great and noble women had a similar purview to disrupt received histories and redistribute knowledge and modes of transmission of knowledge. Whilst each of the projects supersedes simple categorization, each extends invitations towards enhancing democracy within society and the arts, and more just outcomes that are radical in their inclusivity and generosity.

As Hatchwell and Salter note, within a co-production model 'preexisting power dynamics and structural issues around access pose challenges for open dialogue and collaboration'.[35] These issues were present

within our *Famous Women Project*, and we also recognized acknowledge their existence within our precedents. For example, as academics working with undergraduate students, a previously existing power dynamic existed; and in turn, our position as external partners running an independent project in the Tate space was underscored by minimal direct contact with the Tate Liverpool curatorial team.

In the case of the *Famous Women* plates, Bell and Grant were contracted artists working on a commission. Clark did not particularly warm to the work, and despite repeated efforts to locate it, it was not accessible to the public for over 8 decades. *A Pageant of Great Women* charged an entry fee and may not have reached audiences not already interested in the suffrage movement. The small-scale and local nature of the post-suffrage pageants perhaps indicate the most genuinely equitable model of co-production of these works; however, the women represented were drawn from a more focussed selection related to the nature of the community groups. Yet despite being produced in an era when co-production principles were not an acknowledged modes of practice, and in the case of the initial pageants when women were not legally recognized as citizens, we viewed these projects as aspirational, if imperfect, examples of historical co-production work that enacted principles of equality and collaboration, and sought to improve conditions and change the way knowledge was constituted and shared.

The NML principles for co-production gives us a comparative framework to examine the extent to which these historic projects fore-shadowed contemporary co-production methodologies. The following section will show how both the pageants and plates, and subsequently our 'Famous Women Project' share the concepts behind this contemporary framework.

Identifying principles congruous with the aims of co-production embedded in A Pageant of Great Women (1909), post-suffrage regional pageants of Noble Women, and the Famous Women dinner service

Co-production can reconfigure established power relationships by posing a challenge to inequality and seeking to rectify a lack of recognition and representation for marginalized groups of people. Inherently democratic in intent, *A Pageant of Great Women* had the explicit aim of gaining licence for women to participate in democracy, thereby reconfiguring established power relationships, challenging inequality and working together to improve society. The historical women represented in *A Pageant of Great Women* were largely selected to draw attention to exceptionally talented or powerful notable women who had made major, but often overlooked, contributions to the course of history in the fields of arts and sciences, as well as saints, rulers, warriors and heroines.

Once women's suffrage had been achieved, post-suffrage pageants attempted to provide models for women actively and responsibly participating in a democratic society. The historical women represented in the regional post-suffrage pageants performed in the interwar period give an

insight into the values of the working and lower middle-class women in the societies who staged them, and whose voices rarely appear in the records. Their 'noble women' reflected their own aspirations. Rather than celebrated aristocrats or beauties, they frequently portrayed women whose causes were close to those of their own societies, and who were courageous, opinionated and outspoken in the promotion of the rights of women and the disadvantaged, or Christian causes.

The pageants drew recognition for women who have influenced public services and advocated for women's legal emancipation and right to access public services. The early pageants were used by suffrage groups, and later pageants by a diverse range of women's groups who were involved in governance, delivery and evaluation of services for women in regional communities, which were reflected in the pageant design. Building equitable and reciprocal relationships and using the performances to generate mutual benefits for the co-producers and wider society are deeply embedded within the histories of twentieth-century pageantry. Pageants functioned to unite communities, disseminate skills and training, celebrate local oral histories, and raise funds for local projects in towns throughout England. The projects we look to drew explicitly on these facets of pageantry.

In principle, the pageants advocated for equality for all women, and their simple structure meant that, (in principle), women who were less wealthy or educated could be involved. *A Pageant of Great Women* offered a great many roles, but only three speaking parts, Woman, Prejudice and Justice that required payment. Other roles were part of tableaux performed by volunteers, usually members of local women's organizations, in whichever town was hosting the event. This guaranteed local interest and helped sell tickets. The pageants are congruent with other projects Hamilton was involved with The Actresses' Franchise League (founded 1908 by a group that included Cecily Hamilton), that offered training in public speaking to other suffrage societies.[36] Similarly, the post-suffrage pageants provided a forum for women's groups to engage with aspirational role models and consider their role as enfranchised citizens.

The ways in which Bell and Grant worked to reconfigure established power relationships is covert and targeted. They subverted a commission for a grand dinner service from a culturally elite patron to produce a transhistorical, transnational testament to women's achievements with roots in the suffrage movement that mounts a potent challenge to social inequality and a lack of representation in national arts institutions.

Their work to improve society is less tangible within the twentieth century, yet viewed alongside this lineage of suffrage and post-suffrage pageants with which they overlap, and against other feminist ceramic art projects, it becomes clear that there are many shared aims between the projects. After their 'rediscovery' in 2017, the social impact of the plates became more concrete and widespread. Their cultural significance was recognized by the campaign to buy them for display at Charleston – Bell and Grant's house museum. The purchase was funding by major cultural institutions the Art Fund, Heritage Lottery Memorial Fund, by Piano

Nobile Gallery, and by donations from individual contemporary women who wanted to acknowledge the intervention Bell and Grant's plate have made in cultural history.

Although a small project, privately commissioned work, the artists subverted the patron's expectations and brought 48 historical women to the attention of a powerful figure with a huge influence on public services. In 1934, the year the plates were completed, Clark became both Director of the National Gallery and Surveyor of the King's Pictures, and would go on to become Chairman of both the Arts Council and the Independent Television Authority, and a popular broadcaster on art history. Through highlighting women's achievements and including a transhistorical and transnational selection which includes both creative and politically powerful rulers and patrons of the arts and sciences, Bell and Grant confront significant historical absences and advocate responsibility for more accurate historical accounting in public institutions and programming.

Bloomsbury figures – many of whose work and conversation contributed to the research for this set – shared a humanist set of values that valued the cultivation of 'equitable and reciprocal relationships' that often ran counter to heteronormative models of family and friendship. The metaphor of inviting this transhistorical sorority together around a table invites a queering of domesticity, and decentring of history that generates a recognition of women's achievements in many spheres.

Collective work to trace the origins of many of the women in the set suggest that the artists took inspiration both from a broad range of art historical sources and from an intimate knowledge of projects of twentieth-century projects dedicated to women's enfranchisement and commemoration, including Virginia Woolf's writings, and Francis Birrell's editorship of the 1920s 'Representative Women' series (several figures that overlap with the *Famous Women*, including Sarah Churchill: Duchess of Marlborough (Bonamy Dobree, 1927), Elizabeth B Browning (Irene Cooper Willis), and Rachel (James Agate, 1928)).[37] The connection between the naming of the set and Hamilton and Craig's initial *Pageant of Famous Women*, as well as some overlaps between characters suggests knowledge of the pageants.

The 'famous women' included come from a broad historical and geographical range. Their roles are tremendously varied, and many would now be identified as queer. Bell and Grants' recognition of many modes of 'fame' through the diverse selection of *Famous Women* indicates their appreciation of a broad and inclusive range of experience and knowledge.

Identifying Co-production principles embedded in *The Famous Women Project*

The co-production activity for *The Famous Women Project* was undertaken between the author and Amy Binns as external curators and the stakeholders that we engaged. In terms of Tate Liverpool resources, we were

permitted to use a gallery space on the first floor at Tate Liverpool between the 8–April 13 2019. We were also given a webpage for promotion and some use of Tate Liverpool resources, including AV, tables and chairs, some display surfaces, and pre-arranged use of the loading bay and freight access. Tate Liverpool staff were not involved in co-design or delivery. Further resources such as the use of a replica *Famous Women* set, printed materials, and pottery materials, tools and studios were sponsored by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Liverpool John Moores University and University of Central Lancashire respectively.

The foremost aims of co-production foregrounded by *The Famous Women Project*, and articulated in the National Museums Liverpool framework, are that the work is democratic in intent, building equitable and reciprocal relationships that generate mutual benefits. Co-produced curation in galleries brings together different forms of experience and knowledge to create better outcomes and mutual support and enables individuals and groups to influence public services.

By mirroring the democratic structures and aims of the historical feminist projects, we aimed to coproduce new knowledge and interpretation about existing works through equitable collaboration with multiple partners. The TEX exhibition lasted one week in April 2019, but the project extended far beyond this timeframe. We built relationships with diverse groups. For example, we worked with schoolchildren attending LJMU's National Saturday Club from September 2018. The children studied the *Famous Women* plates as models to learn artistic techniques, reflected on decentred histories, and considered role models important to them. During TEX, their work was exhibited at Tate Liverpool, and their families were invited to participate in activities.

Another example of this sustained engagement that began long before the residence was our work with sixth-form students from Walthamstow School who attended a workshop on the Famous Women and were encouraged to share their ideas and hopes for a more equitable society. In the following weeks, we facilitated discussion of the girls and women they admired and developed a vote on those they considered prominent 'lifesaving difference makers'. Their choices were then commemorated in plates for our 'Modern Pantheon' dinner service (detailed below).

In our capacities as lectures, we engaged our students with the project. After learning about the *Famous Women* plates and about approaches to broadening inclusivity for audiences in museums and galleries during their studies, undergraduate History of Art and Museum Studies students from LJMU chose to contribute at Tate, running workshops, giving talks, and leading handling exercises with replica plates. LJMU Exhibition Studies MA students presented papers at the symposium held in the space. It can be extremely difficult for students to gain experience of the working processes of national galleries and museums. Participating with *The Famous Women Project* invited them into one of these spaces as active partners in co-production of new knowledge and

the creation of equitable and reciprocal relationships between audiences and facilitators.

These explorations structured the coproduction of new artwork, dialogues, and engagement within the Tate Liverpool space. Our team commissioned a new multi-artist artwork named *The Modern Pantheon* to both honour the *Famous Women* plates and to invite 'different forms of experience and knowledge'. Our premise began with a discussion about which women our audiences might hypothetically invite to a roundtable discussion over dinner to celebrate International Women's Day, or who they might choose to celebrate in contemporary dinner service or pageant. We devised a 13-place dinner service and designed ways make choosing our guests widely participatory. We devised four categories of women, reflecting groups from both the *Famous Women* and the post-suffrage pageants. To acknowledge and integrate different forms of experience and knowledge generated by the different groups we worked with, we worked with four different societies of girls and women to devise processes to select and vote on figures. Each voting body selected different procedures to choose their women. Votes were open to all, and our only stipulation was that nominees should be living and British. Table 3 outlines the categories, the women selected and the groups that chose them.

After the results of the votes, Amy Binns worked closely with colleagues and a group of students from the art school at the University of Central Lancashire to turn the nominations into individualized plates. Each student worked on two plates each, incorporating elements of their subjects' work into the designs. For example, Connor Parker used the barbed wire of the Amnesty International logo in the surround of the plate dedicated to its UK director, Kate Allen. This stylized design echoes the decorative flourishes of the Bell Grant service.

Alongside the replica *Famous Women* and *The Modern Pantheon* displays, we created an activity station for visitors to create their own portrait plates. Staged around a large table, echoing the discursive space of a Bloomsbury dinner party, guests were invited to represent a figure they admired or felt compelled to be more like. Teenaged members of the Liverpool John Moores University Art and Design Saturday Club set the tone, providing inspiration by creating and displaying artworks featuring their own heroes presented on plates and roundels. We employed professional artists to co-design and deliver portrait-plate workshops.

Notably, unlike the Famous Women of plate and pageant, visitors tended to select contemporary figures, with a notable percentage choosing family or friends. Popular living choices included the tennis player and fashion designer Serena Williams, and a fictional character in the form of the first female Dr Who. Prominent historical choices were artist Frida Kahlo and activist Rosa Parks. Our special guest, local MP Dame Louise Ellman nominated Liverpool born MP and campaigner for women and children's rights, Eleanor Rathbone (1872–1946), remembering her advocacy on behalf of women and children.

Table 3.   The Modern Pantheon.

Artists [Figure 4]	**Bridget Riley (**Bridget Louise Riley CH CBE, b. 1931). Riley is best known as a leading Op artist. 　**Rachel Whiteread** (Rachel Whiteread CBE, b.1963). Whiteread is primarily is sculptor and was the first woman artist to win the Turner Prize, in 1993. 　**Jenny Saville** (Jenny Saville RA, b.1970) often paints large oil works of female figures. Selected by attendees at the Paul Mellon Centre's research seminar on the *Famous Women* dinner service.
Champions of liberty [Figure 5]	**Marcia Willis Stewart** (Marcia Willis Stewart QC (Hon)) is a civil liberties solicitor. 　**Brenda Hale** (Baroness Hale of Richmond, DPE, PC, b.1945) is a British judge, and became the president of the Supreme Court in 2017. She is the only woman to hold the post of Lord of Appeal in Ordinary in the House of Lords. 　**Marai Larasi** is a campaigner against violence against women. She is the director of Imkaan, a black feminist organization that fights against violence toward women and girls. The Fawcett Society was invited to choose names for the category of 'Champions of Liberty'. They asked for nominations on social media. When they had a list of names the staff were satisfied with, they asked the artists themselves to choose finalists.
Living Inspirations [Figure 6]	**Emma Watson** (Emma Charlotte Duerre Watson, b.1990) is an actress and UN Women Goodwill ambassador. 　Stacey Dooley (Stacey Jaclyn Dooley, MBE, b.1987) is an English television presenter, journalist, documentary filmmaker, media personality, and author. 　JK Rowling (Joanne Rowling CH, OBE, FRSL, FRCPE, FRSE, nom de plumes include JK Rowling and Robert Galbraith, b.1965), is a British novelist, philanthropist, film producer, television producer and screenwriter. The Northwest Girl Guides invited nominations from members and then ran a vote on their own Facebook group, which attracted 86 votes.
Life-saving difference makers [Figure 7]	**Malala** (Malala Yousafzai, b.1997). Malala became the youngest ever Nobel Laureate after she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her advocacy for universal education in 2014. 　**Kate Allen** (b. 1955) is the director of Amnesty International UK. Her work includes sitting on the Foreign Secretary's advisory group on human rights and giving evidence to the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee. 　**Raji Hunjan** (b.1971) is an anti-poverty campaigner. At the time of voting, she was the Chief Executive Office of the Zaccheaeus 2000 Trust, and as of 2023, Director of the Tudor Trust. Following a talk about the *Famous Women* dinner service at Walthamstow Hall School, the sixth form students were invited to vote for three 'Lifesaving difference makers'.
Jo Cox [Figure 8]	Jo Cox & 'More in Common' 　**Jo Cox** (Helen Joanne Cox nee Leadbetter b.1974–2016) 　We wanted to highlight Jo Cox's humanitarian achievements and legacy. Cox, the Labour MP for Batley and Spen, was murdered by a white supremist terrorist in 2016. Since her death, she has become the inspiration for the "More in Common" movement. Chosen by Amy Binns and Hana Leaper.

Figure 4. Artists: *Bridget Riley, Rachel Whiteread, Jenny Saville* from 'The Modern Pantheon', ceramic plates designed and decorated by Callum Baxter, Emily Kelly, Connor Parker, Daniel Nelson, Maria Stuart, and Sally Whitton from the University of Central Lancashire Fine Art BA programme, 2019. Image copyright Amy Binns and Hana Leaper.

Figure 5. Champions of Liberty: *Brenda Hale, Marcia Willis Stewart, Marai Larasi* from 'The Modern Pantheon', ceramic plates designed and decorated by Callum Baxter, Emily Kelly, Connor Parker, Daniel Nelson, Maria Stuart, and Sally Whitton from the University of Central Lancashire Fine Art BA programme, 2019. Image

Figure 6. Living Inspirations: *Stacey Dooley, Emma Watson, JK Rowling* from 'The Modern Pantheon', ceramic plates designed and decorated by Callum Baxter, Emily Kelly, Connor Parker, Daniel Nelson, Maria Stuart, and Sally Whitton from the University of Central Lancashire Fine Art BA programme, 2019. Image copyright Amy Binns and Hana Leaper.

Figure 7. Life-Saving Difference makers: *Raji Hunjan, Malala, Kate Allen*, from 'The Modern Pantheon', ceramic plates designed and decorated by Callum Baxter, Emily Kelly, Connor Parker, Daniel Nelson, Maria Stuart, and Sally Whitton from the University of Central Lancashire Fine Art BA programme, 2019. Image copyright Amy Binns and Hana Leaper.
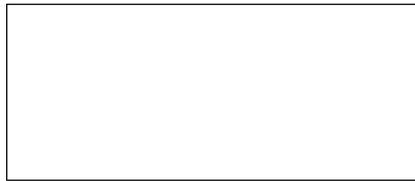
Figure 8. *Jo Cox*, from 'The Modern Pantheon', ceramic plates designed and decorated by Callum Baxter, Emily Kelly, Connor Parker, Daniel Nelson, Maria Stuart, and Sally Whitton from the University of Central Lancashire Fine Art BA programme, 2019. Image copyright Amy Binns and Hana Leaper.

Shaped by open voting and community input, the creation of *The Modern Pantheon*, exemplifies how co-production can generate new visual narratives that reflect lived experience and collective values. Foregrounding feminist principles of equity, intersectionality, and shared authorship, this process positions co-produced art-making as a tool for cultural redress and empowerment.

A Pageant of Great Women was created to advocate for women's suffrage, and the slightly later post-suffrage works, *Famous Women* and Pageants of Noble Women, provided important generative examples for the ways which women began to shape their new identities as enfranchised citizens. The individuals whom our collaborators voted to celebrate in our 'Modern Pantheon' were diverse and dynamic, embodying a broad range of skills and qualities. This is not necessarily reflected in the narrow selections promoted in the popular media, proving that the arts, in all their manifest forms and brows, remain a vital platform for wider representation.

Tate Exchange's invitation into the institution to generate own programme allowed us to consolidate our work in a dedicated gallery and attract some visitors from Tate Liverpool's general audiences. There were career development advantages for participants, such as harnessing the cultural status of the institution for their portfolios. However, these advantages reinforced, rather than significantly reconfiguring established power relations between the gallery and its publics. The gallery provided a platform for an externally co-produced residency that supplemented institutional EDI criteria, without directly engaging with our work to challenge inequality.

The contrast between the existing Tate Liverpool hang and the feminist and intersectional selection of works and programmes that constituted *The Famous Women Project* drew attention to blind spots in representation throughout the gallery's hang. For example, Simon Patterston's *The Great Bear* lithograph (1992) was installed whilst *The Famous Women Project* was in residence. *The Great Bear* uses the design model of the London Underground Map to commemorate cultural figures, replacing station names with: 'the names of engineers, philosophers, explorers, planets, journalists, footballers, musicians, film actors, saints, Italian artists, sinologues (Chinese scholars), comedians and "Louis" (French kings)'.[38] Although this piece is relatively recent, like the *A-Z of Great Modern Artists* by Andy Tuohy sold downstairs in the Tate Liverpool shop, disproportionately few of the figures featured are women. This contrast consolidates the importance of challenging orthodox curatorial approaches, and the ongoing need to draw attention to cultural works that focus on women's narratives. One of the exceptions to the overriding sense of women's artwork being largely absent from the gallery space was Hannah Wilke's 1978 ceramic piece *Elective Affinities* in the upstairs gallery, which further deepened our sense of the importance of decorative lineage and play for depictions of women's histories and bodies. Nearby, at Open Eye Gallery, the 209 *Women Series: A History of Parliamentary Portraiture* marked a century of women's

suffrage, offering a parallel example of feminist commemoration developed through collaborative practice.

The Famous Women Project demonstrated effective methodologies for reconfiguring established curatorial approaches, challenging inequality, and working democratically. By participating in Tate Exchange, we hoped to demonstrate alternative models for curation that could influence curatorial methodologies used in public museums and galleries. Through evaluation with the gallery, sharing analysis with Higher Education and Museums professionals, and publishing reflections on the project, we hoped to contribute to conversations around governance, delivery, and evaluation of research and collaboration between galleries and universities.

Impediments to co-producing the *Famous Women Project*

The unconventional feminist methods devised by Bell and Grant, and the pageant-makers presented some obstacles to presenting them in a gallery context with limited resources. Concealed from the public gaze in private collections until 2017, Bell and Grant's recently rediscovered *Famous Women* plates have been valued at £1.5 million. Their value and fragility meant that it was implausible for us to lend them for display for this type of unsecured exhibition. Here, we were helped to find a solution by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. In November 2018, the PMC hosted a *Famous Women* 'dinner party' event to screen the film they co-funded and published, together with the Yale Centre for British Art called '*The Famous Women dinner service: In Conversation with Contemporary Art*' about the legacy of the plates. Knowing of our plans for further educational use, the Centre generously allowed us to repurpose this facsimile set of plates at our Tate Exchange. The replicas had the added advantage of providing handling opportunities, which has been a brilliant tool that allowed visitors to engage with the portraits on the plates in a direct fashion not often available in conventional exhibitions, as well as signposting the existence of the originals.

A second hurdle to conventional display was the performative nature of the pageants and scarcity of available records. Amy Binns' research has shown that although costumes were generally created by the performers, there were often few speaking parts and any costumes and scripts that existed have disappeared with the years. What remains, however, are newspaper photographs, and short articles recording participants and the roles they played. We used these images to project our own tableau, inviting visitors to the gallery to take a photograph of themselves amongst these historical women, joining in their cause through an act of transhistorical solidarity. Given more resources, we would have held costume-making and pageant-writing workshops. This would allow us to emulate the lived experience of one of the most important aspects of the pageants and provide the garb of the most frequent figures for visitors to restage these performances.

The project exposed the limitations of co-production work within existing museum and art gallery contexts. Tate's evaluative online summary states that TEX was produced 'through collaboration with colleagues from across Tate, a community of Associate organisations, artists and our visitors'. However, in the case of *The Famous Women Project*, engagement with Tate employees was mostly limited to practical arrangements. This may be indicative of Tate Exchange Liverpool and other engagement programmes being positioned as peripheral to the main exhibitions programme.[39]

Co-production, by definition, aims to redistribute authority and foster equitable collaboration between institutions and communities. Tate Liverpool's provision of a venue and some resources was extremely valuable. However, without actively participating in planning, decision-making, interpretation, or the labour of funding or running the project, traditional hierarchies placing the institution at the centre of power were maintained with Tate positioned as a benefactor and the project as beneficiaries not partners. This provided an unforeseen opportunity to reflect on the challenges of embedding coproduction within established institutional frameworks, particularly where principles of shared authority are not embedded within the infrastructure.

Conclusion

The Famous Women Project demonstrates how feminist exhibition-making can be reimagined through co-production methodologies rooted in historical precedent. By drawing on the *Famous Women Dinner Service* and suffrage and post-suffrage pageants, the project foregrounded collaborative, inclusive, and transdisciplinary approaches to visual culture. These hospitable and democratic feminist antecedents offered a framework for engaging diverse publics in the creation and interpretation of cultural memory.

The project's co-production methodology enabled participants to actively shape the narrative, selecting and celebrating influential women through research, dialogue, and art-making. This process culminated in *The Modern Pantheon*, a contemporary dinner service created through open voting and community engagement. The result was not only a new artwork but a living archive of feminist values, aspirations, and solidarities. It exemplifies how co-production can generate visual narratives that reflect the lived experiences and priorities of marginalized and multiply-marginalized groups traditionally excluded from institutional decision-making.

Through some of our activities, *The Famous Women Project* invited audiences to picture themselves next to historical women, fostering transhistorical solidarity and critical reflection. It shows that feminist co-production is not simply a strategy for inclusion, but a means of reconfiguring how knowledge is produced, shared, and valued in visual culture. It invites museums to become spaces of dialogue, not authority; spaces of collaboration, not control.

Ultimately, the project affirms that feminist exhibition-making thrives when it is participatory, intersectional, and rooted in historical awareness. It calls for curatorial practices that honour the past while actively shaping more equitable futures. In doing so, it contributes to a growing movement within visual cultures that seeks to democratize the museum and expand the possibilities of feminist exhibition-making.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. The NHS animation "The World of Co-Production and QI" maps out some of the difficulties in approaching co-production and suggests way that equitable co-production might be instated: "It is easy to feel uncomfortable and overwhelmed, especially when our familiar ways of behaving are disrupted." NHS England, https://www.england.nhs.uk/always-events/co-production/. (accessed February 6, 2025).

2. "Welcome, Drafts and Rapid-Fire Presentations" podcast episode from the 2024 British Art Network conference "Curatorial Reimaginings," https://shows.acast.com/curatorial-reimagin ings-british-art-network-conference-2024/episodes/692839acbf7b14be1c8ecadb (accessed December 15, 2025).

3. Binns, "New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants," Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

4. Anna Cutler, "Foreword" in "Practice in Experiments: Learning from the evaluation of Tate Exchange Year One," p.2, no publication details, accessed via Tate.org.uk/tate-exchange (accessed December 12, 2025).

5. For a full material description and analysis of the social and historical contexts of the set see Hana Leaper, "The Famous Women Dinner Service: A Critical Introduction and Catalogue," British Art Studies, Issue 7, (accessed February 3, 2025).

6. Vanessa Bell's unpublished order book records the request for: "36 large plates, 12 smaller plates, 36 side plates, 12 soup cups & saucers, 1 salad bowl & stand, 2 junket dishes, 6 oval dishes at different sizes, 2 sauce boats & stands, 4 pepper pots, 4 salt pots, 4 mustard pots, 2 sauce tureens & stands & handles, and 3 Liverpool jugs".

7. Clark, *Another Part of the Wood* 245–6.

8. Ibid., 248.

9. Hana Leaper, "The Famous Women Dinner Service: A Critical Introduction and Catalogue," British Art Studies, Issue 7, https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-07/hleaper (accessed February 3, 2025).

10. For example, *The Sherborne Pageant* of 1905 was attended by 30,000 visitors, and was one of a serious of regional pageants celebrating English towns. The Sherborne Pageant 1905 | Historical Pageants (accessed August 19, 2025)

11. Binns, Amy (2018), Appendix 1, *New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants* Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

12. Shirley Neale (2001) Mrs Beatrice Cundy, née Adelin Beatrice Connell, 18,751,949, *History of Photography*, 25:1, 61–67, DOI: 10.1080/03087298.2001.10443437 (accessed January 29, 2025).

13. Mary Lowndes, Suffrage banner commemorating Victoria, "Queen and Mother," 1908, London Museum, https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/suffrage-banner-commemorating-victoria-queen-and-mother-lowndes-mary/4QGhVXhQdM44RQ?hl=en. (accessed January 23, 2025).

14. For a description of this pageant, see Shirley Neale (2001) Mrs Beatrice Cundy, née Adelin Beatrice Connell, 18,751,949, *History of Photography*, 25:1, 61–67, DOI: 10.1080/03087298.2001.10443437 (accessed January 29, 2025).

15. The last recorded performance uncovered by researchers working on the AHRC-funded 'The Redress of the Past: Historical Pageants in Britain' projects was 2 February 1912 at the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool performed by the WSPU and Pioneer Players, "Striking Spectacle:

Mrs Pankhurst At Liverpool," *London Evening Standard*, 5 Feb. 1912, 13. However, researchers speculate it is possible that performances continued until the 1914 World War.

Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alex Hutton, Paul Readman, "The Pageant of Great Women," The Redress of the Past, http://www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/1629/. (accessed October 1, 2025).

16. Cicely Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women*, (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1910), https://archive.org/details/pageantofgreatwooohami (accessed December 8, 2025).

17. Cockin, Katharine. 2005. "Cicely Hamilton's Warriors: Dramatic Reinventions of Militancy in the British Women's Suffrage Movement." *Women's History Review* 14 (3–4): 527–42. doi:10.1080/09612020500200437 (accessed October 1, 2025).

18. Katharine Cockin. 2005. "Cicely Hamilton's Warriors: Dramatic Reinventions of Militancy in the British Women's Suffrage Movement." *Women's History Review* 14 (3–4): 527–42. doi:10.1080/09612020500200437.

19. Binns, Amy (2018) *New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants* Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

Western Gazette. *Masque of Noble Women*. 20 December 1935, p. 9.

20. Binns, Amy (2018) *New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants* Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

21. Binns, Amy (2018), Appendix 1, *New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants* Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

22. Amy Binns lists the name of each character and how often they appear in the 32 performances of pageants for which she found archival evidence.

Binns, Amy (2018), Appendix 2, *New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants* Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

23. Binns, Amy (2018), *New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants* Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

24. The simplicity of even this narrative is complicated by the fact that Jane Clark, whose support for her husband's endeavours has gone largely without acknowledgement, project managed the commission with Vanessa Bell. Letters between the two women indicate that Jane knew and appreciated the challenging feminist direction taken by the artists. Letters from Bell to Jane Clark are in the Yale collection and are quoted by Leaper in https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-07/hleaper.

25. Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alex Hutton, Paul Readman, "The Pageant of Great Women," The Redress of the Past, http://www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/1629/ (accessed October 1, 2025).

26. Binns, Amy (2018), *New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants* Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

27. Katherine Cockin writes: while the constituency of the audience is assumed to have been female supporters of women's suffrage, there is evidence from advertised ticket prices that children also attended some performances'.

Cockin, Katharine. 2005. "Cicely Hamilton's Warriors: Dramatic Reinventions of Militancy in the British Women's Suffrage Movement." *Women's History Review* 14 (3–4): 527–42. doi:10.1080/09612020500200437.

28. Binns, Amy (2018), *New Heroines for New Causes: how provincial women promoted a revisionist history through post-suffrage pageants* Women's History Review 27 (2), 221–246.

29. Further work beyond the scope of this paper is necessary to investigate the level of connection more thoroughly. It is clear that both artists were loosely connected with suffrage movements and had associates who were directly involved. Grant produced a popular suffrage poster *Handicapped! i*n 1909, featuring a young man lounging in a speeding sailboat labelled "votes," whilst a women struggles to make headway rowing a boat impeded by rough waves. There were also many further interpersonal connections between Bloomsbury, and Hamilton's group of queer creative friends and relatives, especially Ellen Terry.

30. Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alex Hutton, Paul Readman, "The Pageant of Great Women," The Redress of the Past, http://www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/1629/ (accessed September 29, 2025).

31. National Museums Liverpool, Co-Production Framework, June 2023, p.2, https://player.flipsnack.com/?hash=OTc1OUFBRkY4RDYrdmgzcXV1eDRvdA%3D%3D&p=1. (accessed January 21, 2025).

32. Sophie Hatchwell and Gregory Salter, "Introduction: Co-production in regional collections," *Midlands Art Papers*, Issue 7, https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/projects/midlands-art-papers/issue-7/introduction-co-production-in-regional-collections. (accessed December 16, 2024).

33. National Museums Liverpool, Co-Production Framework, June 2023, p.14, https://player.flipsnack.com/?hash=OTc1OUFBRkY4RDYrdmgzcXV1eDRvdA%3D%3D&p=1. (accessed January 21, 2025).

34. 'Principles', National Museums Liverpool, Co-Production Framework, June 2023, p.4–5, https://player. flipsnack.com/?hash=OTc1OUFBRkY4RDYrdmgzcXV1eDRvdA%3D%3D&p=1. (accessed January 21, 2025).

35. Sophie Hatchwell and Gregory Salter, "Introduction: Co-production in regional collections," *Midlands Art Papers*, Issue 7, https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/projects/midlands-art-papers/issue-7/introduction-co-production-in-regional-collections. (accessed December 16, 2024).

36. Rebecca Cameron "'A somber passion strengthens her voice': The Stage as Public Platform in British Women's Suffrage Drama", *Comparative Drama*, 50 (2016), 293–316.

37. Ten researchers undertook work to identify sources for each portrait. A full catalogue is available online Hana Leaper (ed.), *Vanessa Bell/Duncan Grant, "Famous Women"*;(London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2017). The Famous Women Dinner Service | British Art Studies (accessed October 2, 2025).

38. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/patterson-the-great-bear-p77880 (accessed January 24, 2024).

39. Tate Exchange 2016–2021,www.tate.org.uk/tate-exchange (accessed December 8, 2025).

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