

# Can the Blockbuster Exhibition Crisis Become an Opportunity for Women Artists? Six Lessons from the Prado Museum

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## ABSTRACT

La pandemia causata dal Covid-19 ha aggravato la crisi preesistente del modello espositivo blockbuster. Alla ricerca di alternative, molte delle maggiori gallerie d'arte del mondo hanno rivolto il loro sguardo verso una rivalutazione critica delle loro collezioni da una prospettiva di genere. La mostra *Invitadas* (Museo del Prado, Madrid, ottobre 2020-marzo 2021) è un buon caso di studio di questi tentativi. Tuttavia, la sua ricezione non è stata quella che il Prado si aspettava: la mostra ha provocato rabbia e delusione, e le storiche dell'arte femministe sono state estremamente critiche nei suoi confronti. Questo articolo analizza la ricezione di *Invitadas*, in modo da trarne indicazioni per altri musei che vogliono esplorare la prospettiva di genere come alternativa al modello di mostra blockbuster.

## KEYWORDS

Museo, genere, blockbuster, donne artiste, mostre.

## About the blockbuster model and its (recurrent) crisis

Although flourishing from the 1960s onwards, the blockbuster exhibition model is maybe as old as the museum institution itself.<sup>1</sup> This crowd-attracting formula, based on temporary displays of universally known artefacts and artists, has arisen equally enthusiasm and criticism amongst the museum sector. Some of its advantages are its boost in visitor numbers and its potential to grow the museums' profile and

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<sup>1</sup> For a history of the blockbuster, see: Haskell, 2000. See also: Adams, 2014.

reputation, attracting new sponsors and generating direct and indirect income.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the investment and cataloguing efforts involved in the preparation of blockbusters usually lead to major conservation works, scientific research and advances in scholarship.

On the negative side, the model is only within the reach of a few major art galleries, all of them placed in cities attracting thousands of international tourists. Blockbusters require heavy investment and a nightmarish amount of planning, involving years of fundraising, loan negotiations, government permissions and troublesome shipping – with its associated carbon footprint –.<sup>3</sup> The expenditure and complexity of these arrangements make museums financially dependent on the income obtained from ticket sales, thus meaning that a failed blockbuster can bankrupt an art gallery. Furthermore, the volume of curatorial commitment required tends to hinder research and display on the museums' own collections, thus deterring the connection with local communities, and impeding the fulfilment of the social and educational duties that should be the core of the museums' mission. However, the blockbuster's most important disadvantage is its perpetuation of the "Vasarian way" of making art history: by nurturing the traditional myth of the artist as a genius, blockbusters dismiss the weight of the social structures and the conditionings involved in the production and valuation of art, thus leaving the artistic creations of whole sectors of humankind unrepresented and invisible.<sup>4</sup>

These and other setbacks have regularly been signalled as indicators of the unsustainability of this model. Since as early as the 1980s, and especially during periods of financial crisis, voices within the sector have cyclically predicted the crisis of the blockbuster and announced its death, whilst denouncing the need to review the museums' paradigm, remedying its dependence on international tourism and shifting its focus towards public value instead of financial revenue.<sup>5</sup> However, during the Covid-19 crisis, the deficiencies of this system have become particularly evident: the cancellation of major shows, together with the absence of tourists and the restrictions in the mobility of people and artworks, have laid bare pre-existing concerns regarding inclusion, social justice, ecological impact and lack of plurality in museums.<sup>6</sup> The budget cuts and the staff shortages have also contributed to a shift towards permanent collections and local audiences, whilst the successive closures have evidenced the need to strengthen the museums' digital resources and their accessibility.

In our current instability, it is adventurous to predict whether the current Covid-19-related limitations will lead to a reassessment of the blockbuster model or the museums' aims. However, it is exciting to observe the sector's use of imaginative solutions to inspire audiences, or its explorations of hot topics such as decolonisation, racial justice and gender equity, at a time when financial resources and physical access are extraordinarily limited. Such explorations have not been immune to controversy: an excellent example would be the failed Baltimore Museum of Art's attempt to deaccession a Warhol in order to acquire paintings by black artists to diversify its permanent collection (Kenney, 2020). Both the initial decision and its sudden halt have triggered a true revolt in the US art world, evidencing that the status quo of the museum ecosystem needs much more than a pandemic to change its path. A comparable stir – but this time regarding

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<sup>2</sup> For the advantages of the blockbuster, see: Carlsson, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> For the blockbuster crisis, see: Brown, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> For the interaction between museums and women artists, see Nochlin, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> See: Beck, 2001; Bradburne, 2001; Freedberg, 1987.

<sup>6</sup> A discussion on the subject was organised by the Association for Art History in 2020.

the display of women artists and the understanding of gender in major art galleries - has occurred with the exhibition *Invitadas* at the Prado Museum (Madrid), which will be discussed in this article.

## Museums and gender nowadays

Before getting into details, it is worth stating that *Invitadas* is not an isolated event, but the fruit of an era. In the last few years, several of the major Western art galleries have started taking steps to rebalance their boards and their collections from a gender perspective, as well as to rewrite their narratives towards a less sexist approach to art history. Indeed, there is much to be reversed in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century roots of the museum institution: to cite just a few examples, 87% of the artworks held by major museums in the US are signed by men, whilst the world's biggest exhibition space, the Louvre, only displays a total of 42 artworks by female artists amongst its 5,387 exhibits, which equals an embarrassing 0,78 % of the total (Topaz et al. 2019; Haut Conseil pour l'Égalité, 2018). Regarding the presence of women in decision-making roles, the situation is not much better: in Spain, men hold nearly two thirds of the managing roles in art museums, and no woman has managed a national art gallery since the end of Maria de Corral's (b.1940) directorship of the Reina Sofia Museum (1991-1994) (Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, 2018). In the UK, women still only make up a third of the National Museum Directors' Council membership (National Museum Directors' Council, 2020).

The combination of social pressure and the field-specialised demands of collectives such as Museums and Gender, together with the work of ICOM on the subject, have led major museums to start taking steps towards reversing their gender inequity.<sup>7</sup> For instance, last year the MOMA in New York rearranged its gallery 503 so that Picasso's (1881-1973) *Demaiselles d'Avignon* (1907) now faces a new dialogue with works by the female artists Faith Ringgold (b.1930) and Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010), thus raising questions about "representations of women, power, and cultural difference" (MoMA, 2020). In Paris, the Musée d'Orsay has also rearranged its permanent collection to specifically highlight women artists. Berlin's Alte Nationalgalerie has acknowledged its responsibility in the invisibilization of women artists through the 2019 exhibition *Fighting for Visibility. Women Artists in the Nationalgalerie before 1919*. All these examples evidence that the display of women artists can effectively become an impactful alternative to the blockbuster model.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated this ongoing trend. The intermittent closure of museums during lockdown periods - with the subsequent cancellation or delay of most of the blockbusters programmed - have awarded curators with an unexpected period to rethink collections, to create or rebuild online resources, and to reflect about controversial narratives in permanent displays. Reopening periods have had to face the triple challenge of mobility restrictions, constant rescheduling and severe financial shortages. Consequently, multiple of the museums' programme reinventions for 2020 and 2021 have relied on short-distance loans or redispays of the museums' permanent collections, necessarily oriented to local audiences, who cannot be attracted via the already familiar masterpieces usually on display. In this context, many art galleries are finding out that taking female artists out of the storerooms can become a cost-efficient way to gain interest from local visitors. For instance, the Palazzo Reale in Milan has relied mostly on other Northern-Italian museums for its exhibition *Ladies of Art. Women's histories between '500 and '600* (planned for

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<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, the work carried out by ICOM under Gender and Equity in Museums, or The Inclusionum (details in bibliography).

autumn 2020, delayed until January 2021), whilst the Musée de Louxembourg (Paris) will soon present an exhibition of French women artists between 1780-1830.

## The Prado Museum from a gender perspective

It is now time to have a look at the Prado within this context. Indeed, despite being the world's fifth biggest art gallery, women occupy little space at Spain's most renowned museum: of the about 1,300 artworks currently in display, only ten are signed by female artists (Bueno et al., 2019; Díaz, 2012). The acquisition policy has not done much to reverse this situation: of the 673 artworks acquired during the last twenty years, only ten (equivalent to 0.4% of the total) were made by women: of these, seven were donations and only three were purchases (Matos, 2020). In the last decade, the Prado has spent over 25.000.000€ in art, of which only about 65.000€ were spent in female artists (MAV, 2020). Gender imbalance in decision-making roles may be one of the reasons underpinning such policies: throughout over 200 years of history, the Prado has never had a female director, and its current board features under a 30% of women (MAV, 2020).

With this unpromising starting background, - and following the trend initiated by institutions like the ones mentioned above - during the last few years also the Prado has been trying to rescue women artists from its storerooms as an alternative to the blockbuster model. Such exhibitions, however, have been rare, with only two attempts before *Invitadas*: one devoted to the Flemish still life painter Clara Peeters (2016), and another to Sofonisba Anguissola and Lavinia Fontana (2019). Neither of them was considered to set a good example from a gender perspective: despite the museum's huge size, Peeters' paintings were cramped together in one single room, whilst the collective display of Anguissola and Fontana was considered to diminish the individuality of both artists, overlooking the significant differences in their styles, periods and artistic personalities (De la Villa, 2016; Díaz, 2020; Serrano de Haro, 2020). As we will discuss below, *Invitadas* has repeated some of these mistakes, thus stressing the pressing need to extract lessons from these events.

### *Invitadas*, an overview

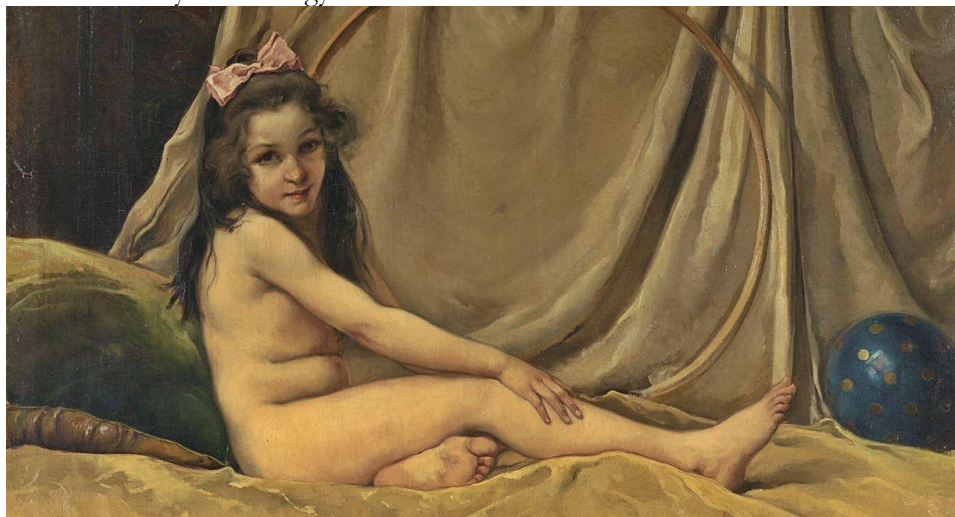
*Invitadas* (which the Prado has translated as “Uninvited Guests”, although it literally means just “Female Guests”) was the Prado's first temporary show since its reopening. The large exhibition, scheduled between October 2020 and March 2021, featured 133 artworks divided into 17 thematic areas and was curated by Carlos G. Navarro, a Prado expert in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish painting. It articulated two different discourses into the same exhibition space: its first section was devoted to the misogyny in Spanish 19<sup>th</sup>-century art, whilst the last rooms featured 46 artworks by women artists of this period, 22 of them coming from the Prado's storeroom (Díaz, 2020). In the curator's words, one of the aims was to explain “how the State – and the middle classes – came to fix on and publicly value certain images, prototypes and clichés that eventually became a collective imagination in which women were always represented in certain ways” (Jones, 2020). About the second section, Navarro argued that the official art system reduced women's artistic production “to decorative elements like still-life and flower painting” (ibid.).

A series of misunderstandings – perhaps exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic – together with several research mistakes and the deficient communication strategy adopted by the Prado have led to a very

controversial reception of *Invitadas*, especially from gender experts. The association MAV (*Women in the Visual Arts*), which hosts over 500 feminist scholars and visual arts professionals working towards the improvement of opportunities for women in the arts in Spain, devoted a special issue of their online journal *M-Arte Y Cultura Visual* to thoroughly analyse the shortages of *Invitadas* from a gender perspective (2020). All these articles coincide in summarising *Invitadas* as a lost opportunity to improve gender balance at the Prado. Instead, this article will demonstrate that the mistakes committed by the museum mean the acquisition of an experience, and as such, they can also be seen as a gained opportunity: a lesson for the future of any museum wanting to take advantage of the blockbuster crisis to become a more inclusive and egalitarian institution. The following paragraphs will summarise some of the criticisms against *Invitadas* in the form of lessons that museums worldwide can apply to their own exhibitions and gender policies.

## Lesson 1: the gender perspective

It is striking that the Prado's hitherto most important effort to critically review its collection and its own history has been carried out without relying in any specialist in gender studies. As Baiges (2020) and López Fdz. Cao (2020) point out, on the first section of *Invitadas* (dedicated to 19<sup>th</sup>- century misogyny), women are just an iconography, and not the protagonists of a story: most of the women portrayed do not even have a name, being named only with the somewhat careless adjectives that the curator has awarded them: "naked", "intruders", "lost", "censored", "mannequins", "castaways", "copyists"... (Méndez Baiges, 2020; López Fdz. Cao, 2020). A gender-informed exhibition would have surely replaced value judgments for a more accurate 21<sup>st</sup>-century terminology.



Pedro Sáenz (1863-1927), *Chrysalis* (1897). Prado Museum, Madrid.

Regarding the second segment of the exhibition (displaying works by female artists), Tejeda (2020) and Diaz (2020) complain that the museum seems to have made efforts to deny the importance of women in the history of Spanish art: instead of displaying original artworks by modernist women artists from its permanent collection, such as the avant-garde sculptor Eva Aggerholm (1879-1959), the Prado has exhibited up to eleven copy exercises (some of them made as a hobby by the Spanish queen Elizabeth II (1830-1904), thus mixing and equating amateur and professional artworks), whilst for the original pieces,



several labels insist on highlighting the similarities with the style of male artists or their dependence on them. Fdez.-Cao (2020) complains that the conscious commitment to demonstrate the setbacks of 19<sup>th</sup>-century women artists has led to the omission of important female achievements of the time, such as the scholarships granted to women artists by the provincial councils and the creation of women's clubs. Again, a gender approach would have provided audiences with a broader panorama, focused not only on the limitations of 19<sup>th</sup>-century women artists, but also on their successes. These examples evidence that museums should rely on gender historians to create resources informing audiences about the social, political and cultural context in which women artists lived and worked.

Beyond exhibitions, it is worth remembering that museums, as public institutions, must legally abide to gender equity. In Spain, they are bound to the 2007 Equality Act, whilst at an EU level, the Gender Equality Strategy prevails. This implies the obligation to exercise transparent policies on gender issues, as well as to offer gender training to their staff, whilst ensuring that exhibition contents are not sexist. These laws also stipulate gender parity in museum decision-making bodies: if actually implemented, such parity would not only be a helpful tool regarding gender perspective in exhibitions, but would also influence decision-making processes such as the purchase of artworks, the event programming, the permanent displays and the design of public engagement activities.

## Lesson 2: interdisciplinary work and museum collaboration

As previously shown, rebalancing the museum institution from a gender perspective is a complex task that requires the combined work of experts with different backgrounds who offer “a multiple reading of what is represented” (MAV, 2020). Plural approaches can facilitate the dialogue between museums and their critics, promoting mutual enrichment: it is not only vital that museums collaborate with scholars in feminist historiography, but also that they listen to more general social demands for equity. In *Invitadas*, the lack of plurality in the investigation has led, for example, to arbitrary decisions such as giving the section referring to Isabel II (legitimate queen of Spain between 1843 and 1870) the title “intruder queens” (Luna et al., 2020). As López Fdez-Cao (2020) puts it, the fact that the exhibition speaks “with a single voice” has narrowed its perspective and reduced its accuracy.

It is true that *Invitadas* had a difficult starting point, as the Prado relied mostly on its own funds, in which, as mentioned, the presence of women artists is very limited. However, the institution is somehow the central gear of Spain's museums, and can rely on regulations that favour the reception of loans from other institutions, many of them located within a short distance. An enhanced dialogue with smaller provincial museums would have facilitated loans of women's art, thus creating a less biased panorama. This is a reminder of the potential of local or regional lending as a tool to overcome both the pandemic setbacks and the crisis of the blockbuster era, whilst promoting collective research and offering audiences the opportunity to see pieces that otherwise would rarely be exhibited. At an international level, the dialogue with other museums is also key to gaining awareness on current sector policies, obtaining information on key gender exhibitions taking place, and getting familiar with the research promoted by international reference organisations like ICOM, which has dedicated its latest research journal to this topic. Owning this information would have spared the Prado director, Miguel Falomir, from pronouncing embarrassing statements like the following: “I challenge anyone to tell me a single museum in Spain or Europe that has had this amount of women's exhibitions in three years” (González, 2020).

### Lesson 3: responsibility and self-criticism

Art mirrors our own humanity, with all its lights and shadows. Museums should not disdain its power to arouse emotions, nor forget the impact that exhibition narratives can have on the feelings of visitors. However, in a dismissal of contemporary sensibilities on the topic, the Prado has decided to recreate the misogynistic values of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century without passing them through the critical filter of our present reality. As Tejada (2020) points out, “narratives are constructed and generated from the discourses of the present. And interpretations are designed by someone; they are not built by themselves” (Tejada, 2020). Curators’ role consists mainly in linking images to construct meaning: as story-makers, they have a power to be employed responsibly. This power has been misused in *Invitadas*, with the effect of downplaying the achievements of 19<sup>th</sup>-century women artists (Serrano de Haro et al., 2020).

As previously discussed, art galleries have the social responsibility and the legal obligation to approach their exhibitions from a gender perspective. This goes beyond the mere “purple washing” in the light of a trend: as González (2020) explains, any gesture “about women” does not automatically become feminist. Throughout their history, museums have taken an active role in the construction of a Western, male-made, white art canon, a construction in which the blockbuster has been a fundamental ingredient. To revise this canon and to create an alternative exhibition model, museums need to be aware that they are working with highly sensitive material susceptible to hurting sensibilities. This exercise of responsibility should also be accompanied by humility and self-criticism: the museum of the post-blockbuster era should be willing not only to question itself, but also to dialogue with its critics and with society as a whole. On the contrary, as MAV denounces, the Prado decision-makers have “disqualified and questioned the rigor and professionalism of the criticisms that come from feminist historiography” (MAV, 2020).

### Lesson 4: a comprehensive communication strategy

The dialogue with critical voices, learning from them in order to create more democratic and plural museums, leads to lesson 4: the need to generate mediation tools with audiences and comprehensive communication strategies that cover all aspects of the museum ecosystem and not just the exhibits. In this regard, *Invitadas* has failed on several fronts:

Firstly, intentions and contents should be clearly formulated, both in word-based messages and in images, not only in the museum itself but also in online and media communication (with the latter becoming especially relevant in the current pandemic context, when access to the onsite exhibitions may suffer restrictions). In *Invitadas*, communication errors taking place prior to the inauguration generated expectations that were later disappointed, thus leading to frustration and misunderstandings, especially when colliding with pre-existing demands of Spanish gender scholars. The starting point of such misunderstanding was the museum’s director advertisement of the show as “the Prado’s hitherto most ambitious commitment to draw attention to women both as artists and subjects (sic) of painting” (Museo del Prado, 2020). This claim was supported by a press release announcing a “bold exhibition that vindicates the role of women” (E.I., 2020). The use of feminism as a publicity hook fed the expectations of an exhibition focused on visibilising the women artists hidden in the Prado stores (Luna et al., 2020). Such expectations quickly led to anger once it was realised that *Invitadas* was actually not an exhibition of women artists, nor it displayed portraits of renowned women, being instead mostly a not-so-new depiction of 19<sup>th</sup>-century’s misogyny. The clumsy choice of advertising materials, posters, merchandising and banners has

contributed to increasing the disappointment, with scholars pointing at examples such as the exhibition poster (the painting *Falenas* (1920), by the male artist Carlos Verger Fioretti (1872-1929), whose subject is the old-fashioned cliché of the femme fatale) or the tactless decision to create kitchen aprons out of Jane Clifford's (c.1821-1885?) photographs, to be sold as merchandise of the exhibition in the museum store, in what has been interpreted as symbolically sending women artists back “to the kitchen, where they belong” (Tejeda, 2020).

Secondly, museums should provide clear, accessible and effective information to all kinds of audiences, and not just at an academic level. Although *Invitadas* has an excellent catalogue featuring a plurality of expert voices and making valuable contributions to the scholarship on Spanish women artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, such contributions were not available within the exhibition itself, despite it being the main medium of interaction between the museum and its public (Méndez Baiges, 2020). Last, museums need to implement agile and effective dialogue tools ensuring that public engagement effectively becomes a two-way communication system. In the case of the Prado, the clumsy reactions to criticism - including the hasty organization of a lecture series just as a result of the complaints against *Invitadas* - have led to accusations of “opacity and political corruption”, a very damaging label for a museum that is perceived as the heart of the Spanish art system (La Espigadora, 2020).

## Lesson 5: thorough research

As Suay Atkoy stated during her presidency of ICOM, museums are one of the most trusted institutions in our societies, partly thanks to their “rigorous scientific and academic research” (ICOM, 2020). However, even though the Prado has stated that *Invitadas* is the result of two years of research, the presence of serious mistakes suggests that its inauguration was rushed, perhaps due to the pandemic, perhaps due to other factors such as the publication of *The Invisibles* (Riaño, 2020), which denounced the museum’s longstanding misogyny. The historian Concha Diaz discovered, for example, that the painting *Family Scene* - which the Prado had attributed to the female artist Concepción Mejía de Salvador (n.d.), and which due to its poor state of conservation had been chosen as a symbol of the museum’s mistreatment of women artists - was actually the work of a man (Luna, 2020). Other examples of research failures include the lack of biographical details of several of the women artists exhibited, as well as subjective reinterpretations in the data of their artworks, an example being the unilateral decision to change the title of the work *Head of a Lion* (Rosa Bonheur, 1879) by *El Cid*, ignoring all the documentary evidence pointing against the change (Díaz, 2020). As these examples evidence, by switching from the blockbuster model to a reinvention of their own collections, museums are entering uncharted territory, especially when exhibiting artworks that – like those by female artists - have suffered the continued neglect of “official” art history. The only way to counterbalance this risk is to carry out rigorous research capable of laying the foundations of a more inclusive and diverse way of making art history.





José Jiménez Aranda (1837-1903), *A slave for sale* (1897). Prado Museum, Madrid.

## Lesson 6: well-defined long-term goals and strategies

If museums want this revision of their permanent collections to become an alternative to the blockbuster, and if this is to give women artists their place in the history of art, then they should act with the long-term perspective that the Prado seems to be lacking. Scholars have wondered, for instance, what will be the fate of the artworks that have now been researched and restored, on the view that - after all the efforts and money invested in them - there does not seem to exist a plan to exhibit them on a regular basis (De Blas, 2020). Moreover, the ambivalent content and its mixture of concepts (exemplifying 19<sup>th</sup>-century misogyny and in the same exhibition, displaying the work of women artists) have created confusion among the public and the critics, giving the impression that the Prado does not know where to go in gender matters, and feeding the belief that “the institution is actually recreating what it criticizes” (De la Villa, 2020).

This situation leads to the last lesson: exhibiting with a gender perspective should be a structural change and not the fruit of improvisation. The road shall not be smooth for many Western museums, whose collections were built during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, amidst art trends that normalised the sexualisation of girls and the erotic fantasies with enslaved women. Such collections can difficultly be valid for our current times, when social movements such as Me Too and Black Lives Matter are shouting that the time has come for museum to look into their storerooms and start the uncomfortable debate about the future exhibition of these works. Reorganizing these collections and exhibiting them from an egalitarian mind-set requires a coordinated work plan that avoids turning the exhibitions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century into repetitions of the

prejudices of the past (Méndez Baiges, 2020). To keep the pace of times, museums need to accelerate their reassessment of their stores' explosive material, before the shock wave of social change turns against them.

## Conclusions:

We cannot close this article without insisting on the important positive contributions made by *Invitadas*. Perhaps it took a pandemic for the Prado to remodel its blockbuster programming into a revision of its own collections. Perhaps the results have been uneven, but the exhibition has undoubtedly contributed to the research, restoration and display of artworks that would otherwise have languished in warehouses. In addition to the publication of a relevant catalogue, important web resources have now been made available to the public, whose images and extensive explanations are especially relevant in these times of mobility restrictions. Even the criticisms received have had positive consequences, since they have generated debate and demonstrated that alternative models to the blockbuster can create social impact and attract local audiences. Thanks also to these criticisms, the museum has decided to enrich the exhibition with a series of conferences featuring important academics and art historians, together with the relaunch of the international congress "A Century of shooting stars", dealing with women in 19<sup>th</sup>- century Spanish art, which will generate scholarship and educational content on female artists (De Blas, 2020). As de Blas (2020) and Tejada (2020) have stated, *Invitadas* is a "milestone in the history of the Prado, which is not used to receiving political feedback": this may even have the consequence "to mobilize the acquisitions of works by female artists and to renew or rethink what is exhibited in the permanent collections."

However, *Invitadas*' most important legacy extends outside the walls of the Prado, by demonstrating that critical reviews of permanent collections have the potential to move and excite local audiences, and that the alternatives to the blockbuster exacerbated by the pandemic offer opportunities worth exploring beyond the current crisis. By swapping financial investments for a creative, informed, and critical review of exhibition policies, museums have a golden opportunity to speak to forgotten minorities, to discover local talent and to engage new audiences. Storerooms around the world are keeping rich collections deserving to be researched in a way that brings both equity and social justice. The alternatives to the blockbuster can cultivate inclusivity and make art history relatable to our current times, whilst the money and efforts used on securing works of the so-called "geniuses" can instead be spent on discovering new ways of making art history (Adams, 2014).

Museums, as temples of memory, preserve everything that we consider to be worth remembering. In this spirit, they should preserve art that represent us all and from which we all can learn and get inspired. It is only to wonder whether they are ready to assume a change that implies a profound review of their policies. Perhaps, finally, the time for a reconsideration of institutional purpose, financial models, and audience needs has arrived. Perhaps the meaning of 'impact' is also changing. If this is so, museums can now use their imagination, together with a greater sharing of resources and expertise, all enhanced by the digital resources accelerated because of the pandemic.

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