

[Fontana at National Museum of Women in the Arts](#)

[Fontana at the Met](#)

[Fontana at The Walters](#)



Lavinia Fontana, *Self-portrait at the Clavichord with a Servant*, 1577
Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome

[Lavinia Fontana of Bologna \(1552-1614\)](#) was on view at the National Museum of Women in The Arts in 1998, featuring 25 of her paintings, engravings, and drawings made in Italy and France.

The Museo Nacional del Prado installed [A Tale of Two Women Painters: Sofonisba Anguissola and Lavinia Fontana](#) in 2019. The exhibition was presented at the museum's bicentenary and brought together 65 works by both pioneering artists.

[Lavinia Fontana: Trailblazer, Rule Breaker](#) was a major exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland, the first monographic exhibition on the artist's work in over two decades. The exhibition followed a major research and conservation [project](#) spearheaded by the museum. Watch a [talk](#) with the curator of the exhibition, Dr. Aoife Brady, presented concurrently with the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and read an article about the exhibition in [The Art Newspaper](#). Select reviews were also published in the [Burlington Magazine](#), [The Brooklyn Rail](#), and [The Irish Times](#).

The Getty acquired two major paintings by Fontana in 2023, which went on view at the Getty Center. [Watch a talk](#) with Dr. Aoife Brady, curator of Italian and Spanish art at the National Gallery of Ireland, about the works.

"Lavinia Fontana and Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni: Talented 16th Century Women" was [published](#) by the National Gallery of Art by Katy Hessel in 2023, in honor of Women's History Month.

"Art in Short: Lavinia Fontana, Renaissance Woman" by Magnolia Molcan at the [Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco](#) and "Lavinia Fontana, the Self-Fashioned Painter" by Ed Simon for [Hyperallergic](#) were both published in 2024.

In 2025, a small museum in France [discovered and reattributed](#) a Fontana painting that was wrongly attributed to a male painter. Another work was [recently discovered](#) at auction and went on display at Strawberry Hill House.



Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Pregnant Woman, Possibly a Self-Portrait*, circa 1592-1604
Private Collection



Lavinia Fontana (Italian, 1552-1614)

Three Graces, 1603-1604

Oil on slate

Private Collection; L2025:45.5

Lavinia Fontana had the unusual opportunity to study painting with her father, Prospero Fontana (1512-1597), who was a prominent member of the 16th century School of Bologna. She quickly became a sought-after portraitist, creating a career as a painter while her husband raised their family of eleven children. In 1603, Fontana moved to Rome, where she was appointed Portraitist in Ordinary at the Vatican and elected as the first woman to the Accademia di San Luca. **Three Graces** is one of her allegorical paintings, featuring the Greek goddesses who were said to define beauty. As a woman artist, painting the female nude was particularly rare at the time, and Fontana may be the first professional female artist to depict the subject in Western Europe.

On view September 10 – December 14, 2025