CENTENNIAL REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE AND THE ARTS
Local : National : Transnational

School of Literature and Languages, University of Surrey, UK
29–30 June 2018

supported by the British Association for Victorian Studies
and the Feminist and Women’s Studies Association UK & Ireland

DAY 1: FRIDAY 29 JUNE 2018

9:15am  **Registration** (MS building, Foyer/Room 81MS02)

9:45-10am  **Welcome** (Room 80MS02)

   Speakers: Christopher Wiley, Charlotte Mathieson, Lucy Ella Rose
   (University of Surrey)

10-11am  **Keynote Address** (Room 80MS02)

   ‘Pictures and Politics: The Art of Suffrage Propaganda’

   Elizabeth Crawford, OBE (Independent Scholar)
   Chair: Lucy Ella Rose (University of Surrey)

11am-11:30am  **Coffee break** (Room 32MS03)
### Parallel paper session 1

#### Visual Identity and Stereotypes (Room 80MS02)
Chair: Michelle Rushefsky (University of Surrey)

Brigitte Dale (Brown University, Rhode Island), ‘Radical Actors: The Women’s Social and Political Union’s Staging of the Suffrage Campaign’

Anne Anderson (Art Historian, Writer, Broadcaster, and Lecturer; University of Exeter), ‘Declaring One’s Colours: Suffrage and Visual Identity’

Katy Birch (Prifysgol Aberystwyth University), ‘“Spectacles and galoshes and a forty-five inch waist”: Moving Beyond the “Ugly Suffragette” Stereotype in Women’s Writing for *Punch*’

#### From Local to Transnational Suffrage (Room 81MS02)
Chair: Gursimran Oberoi (University of Surrey and Watts Gallery)

Rosie Everritt (Project Archivist, Surrey History Centre) and Holly Parsons (Project Officer, Surrey History Centre), ‘Surrey Heritage, “The March of the Women: Surrey’s Road to the Vote”’

Anna Maria Barry (Royal College of Music Museum), ‘Scoring the Women’s Suffrage Movement at the Royal College of Music’

Aneta Stepień (Trinity College Dublin), ‘The Polish fight for suffrage and its echoes in Ireland: The case of militant suffragism’

### 1-2pm
**Sandwich Lunch** (MS building, Foyer)

### 2-3:30pm

#### Painting and Politics (Room 80MS02)
Chair: Patricia Pulham (University of Surrey)


Gursimran Oberoi (University of Surrey and Watts Gallery), *She Shall Be Called*

#### Ethel Smyth, Suffrage, and Transnationality (Room 81MS02)
Chair: Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

Erica Fedor (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), ‘Shoulder to Shoulder: Ethel Smyth’s Transnational Feminist Networks’

Marleen Hoffmann (Berlin, Germany), ‘It seemed to me my first duty to signify I was one of the fighters’: Ethel
**Woman: Allegory and Feminism in G. F. Watts’s Art**
Michaela Jones (Royal Holloway, University of London), ‘Christiana Herringham: Art and Suffrage Intertwined’

**Smyth’s suffrage activities and her Suffrage music**
Angelika Silberbauer (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Austria), ‘Between nations and hero worship: Discursive practices in the life of Ethel Smyth’

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3:30pm-4:15pm  **Tea break** (MS building, Foyer)
(4pm Adjourn to PATS building)

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4:15-5:15pm  **Roundtable Discussion** (PATS building, Studio One)
*A discussion featuring contemporary artists who have developed recent projects on themes of women’s suffrage.*

Speakers:
Jacqueline Mulhallen (Actress and Playwright, Lynx Theatre and Poetry)
Lucy Stevens (Creator/Performer, ‘Ethel Smyth: Grasp the Nettle’)
Kate Willoughby (Actor, Writer, and Creative Director of ‘#Emilymatters’)
Christopher Wiley (Academic and Writer, Woking Community Play Association)

Convener: Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

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5:15pm  **Break** (PATS building, Lower Foyer)

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5:30-6:15pm  **Recital of Readings on Women’s Suffrage and the Arts** (PATS building, Studio One)

**Lucy Stevens**, Extract from 'Ethel Smyth: Grasp the Nettle' *From Act 2: Smyth meets Mrs Pankhurst. Incorporating extracts from Smyth’s songs ‘On the Road’ and ‘The March of the Women’.*

**Jacqueline Mulhallen**, Extract from ‘Sylvia’ *Sylvia Pankhurst paints women workers.*

**Su Moberly** (MA Creative Writing graduate, University of Surrey)  *Reads her poems ‘When they hand me my degree’ (or ‘Blue*
Broc Silva (MA Creative Writing student, University of Surrey) 
Reads his poems ‘Equitable Quantitative Equality’ and ‘A Number On A List’.

Kate Willoughby, ‘#Emilymatters’ 
Using the experience of suffragette Emily Davison to inspire and motivate others that votes and voters matter.

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| 6:15pm| **Wine Reception** (PATS building, Lower Foyer) 
(sponsored by the School of Literature and Languages) |
| 7pm   | **Conference Dinner** (MS building, Lakeside Restaurant)            |

**DAY 2: SATURDAY 30 JUNE 2018**

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<tr>
<td>10am</td>
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**Women’s Suffrage in/and Music** 
(Room 80MS02) 
Chair: Eleanor March (University of Surrey)

- Codee Spinner (University of Pittsburgh, PA), ‘Chamber Music, Brass Bands, and Division in the U.S. Women’s Suffrage Movement (1900–1920)’
- Amy E. Zigler (Salem College, North Carolina), “If it is anything it is ... Suffragette!”: An Historical and Stylistic Examination of Ethel Smyth’s String Quartet in E minor’
- Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey), ‘Ethel Smyth, Music, and the

**Female Experience, Politics, and Society** 
(Room 81MS02) 
Chair: Lucy Ella Rose (University of Surrey)

- Michelle Rushefsky (University of Surrey), ‘Florence Farr and the Liminal Female Experience’
- Ellery Weil (University College London), ‘Radical Thoughts in Russell Square: Suffrage Activities and the Bloomsbury Set’
- Kristin Franseen (McGill University, Canada), ‘Women’s Musical Agency and Experiences in Vernon Lee’s Music and its Lovers’
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<th>Suffragette Movement: Reconsidering <em>The Boatswain’s Mate</em> as Feminist Opera’</th>
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<td>12-1pm <strong>Sandwich Lunch</strong> (MS building, Foyer)</td>
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| **Poetry, Theatre, and Women’s Suffrage** (Room 80MS02)  
Chair: Marion Wynne-Davies  
(University of Surrey)  
Marion Wynne-Davies (University of Surrey), ‘Sylvia Pankhurst: Poetry and Politics’  
Rebecca Benzie Fraser (University of Exeter), ‘Suffrage Commemoration, Dramatic Form, and Contemporary Feminist Debate’  
Lewis Church (Queen Mary, University of London), ‘*She Bangs the Drums: Sh!t Theatre Draw on Activist Histories*’ |
| **Narratives of Female Experiences** (Room 81MS02)  
Chair: Michelle Rushefsky (University of Surrey)  
Kate Johnson (University of Surrey), ‘*How The Great Scourge* by Christabel Pankhurst (1913) Illustrates the Connection Between the Literal and Wider Female Sexual Rights Debate’  
June Purvis (University of Portsmouth), ‘The Feature Film *Suffragette*: Whose story does it tell?’  
Eleanor March (University of Surrey), ‘Suffragette prison narratives: The foreignisation of the carceral experience’ |
| 2:30pm-3:15pm **EqualiTees tea break** (MS building, Foyer) |
| 3:15-4:15pm **Keynote Address** (Room 03MS01)  
‘New Dawn Women – Somehow the Tide Keeps Rising’  
V. Irene Cockroft (Exhibition Curator & Lecturer, Author, Historian, London)  
Chair: Charlotte Mathieson (University of Surrey) |
| 4:30pm **Conference Close** |
Abstracts (Keynotes)

V. Irene Cockroft (Exhibition Curator & Lecturer, Author, Historian, London)

‘New Dawn Women – Somehow the Tide Keeps Rising’

Early suffrage campaigners worldwide looked to the dawn of the twentieth century as the dawn of voting rights, and thus human rights, for women. The dawn came, and went, promise unfulfilled apart from New Zealand in 1893 and Australia in 1902.

British all-male parliaments evaded electoral reform in favour of women, in case it advantaged opposition parties. Vote-less women were driven to desperate forms of protest. The new art of cinematography captured suffragette Emily Wilding Davison’s fatal collision with the King’s horse running in the Epsom Derby in 1913.

Visual symbolism was a powerful weapon in the armoury of the British Women’s Suffrage Campaign. Almost every branch of the arts (in which significant numbers of women had gained training) was exploited in reversing male-dominated society’s patronising attitude towards women.

The title of this talk is based on a pro-suffrage postcard depicting the sun rising on a tide of change. Each wave represents an advance in female professionalism. Increasing numbers of working women were being taxed without representation.

In 2014, Surrey conceptual artist Mary Branson was selected to create a monument to the Women’s Suffrage Movement, in the Houses of Parliament. Mary designed a light sculpture symbolising a resplendent sun. It is made up of many smaller suns, representing the many women who devoted their lives to bringing this immense social and political change to pass. Coloured light phases, powered by the tide of the Thames, represent campaign colours adopted by various suffrage societies.

We stand at the dawn of a decade leading to the 2028 centenary of the granting to British women of equal voting rights ‘as they are, or may be, granted to men’. Can twenty-first-century arts accelerate that tide of change, leading to greater equality, inclusivity, and respect for all, sooner?

Elizabeth Crawford, OBE (Independent Scholar)

‘Pictures and Politics: The Art of Suffrage Propaganda’

The early-20th-century women’s suffrage campaign was the most visual of all those conducted by contemporary pressure groups. This illustrated talk will discuss the wide range of art and artefacts – posters, postcards, cartoons, banners, china, and jewellery – created by artists sympathetic to the suffrage cause and reveal something of their creators, a good number of whom lived in Surrey.
Abstracts (Papers)

Anne Anderson (Art Historian, Writer, Broadcaster, and Lecturer; University of Exeter)

‘Declaring One’s Colours: Suffrage and Visual Identity’

The banner (c.1913) embroidered by Gertrude Jekyll (1843–1932), Surrey’s famous artist turned gardener, for the Godalming Branch of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies is worked in scarlet, white, and green, the principal motif being roses. It is said these suffragist colours reflected the movement’s broader aims, Green-White-Red standing for Give Women Rights, although there does not appear to have been an official declaration. This tricolour distinguished the NUWSS from the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU); they officially adopted green, white, and violet in 1908 claiming these colours held symbolic meaning. Apparently, purple symbolised dignity, white purity, and green hope. By arranging the colours in vertical strips, Green-White-Violet, the WSPU tricolour was taken as a cipher that signalled ‘Give Women Votes’. The use of colours to articulate identities, declare ideologies, and provide a rallying point has a long and distinguished history. In this paper I shall explore not only how these colours were used in dress and jewellery, but what messages they articulated. I will embed these hues within a broader history, showing how the WSPU drew on Pre-Raphaelite traditions. I argue the WSPU appropriated the trope of the ‘bohemian girl’, as well as her colours, in order to draw on a well-established rebel artistic tradition. However, by drawing on Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic precursors, subversive women could not be denounced as unfeminine. The WSPU knowingly selected Green-White-Purple as their colours, co-opting meanings already well-established in artistic circles.

Anna Maria Barry (Royal College of Music Museum)

‘Scoring the Women’s Suffrage Movement at the Royal College of Music’

The collections at the Royal College of Music Museum offer much insight into the important relationship between music and the women’s suffrage movement. This relationship is the theme of the Museum’s forthcoming digital exhibition, which celebrates the centenary of the Representation of the People Act. This paper will showcase items from the exhibition, discussing the stories they reveal and raising awareness of the Museum’s rich collections.

Of particular interest is the substantial archive of the Society of Women Musicians (SWM). Established in 1911, the SWM sought to promote and support female musicians and composers. It was to prove extraordinarily successful. Though the Society was ostensibly apolitical, many of its members and associates were involved in the woman’s suffrage movement. Materials in the archive demonstrate that the Society’s leadership carefully negotiated its identity in order to avoid overtly suffragist sentiments, fearing that this would hinder their musical ambitions. Despite this, they continued to pursue a determined feminist agenda – as the exhibition vividly demonstrates.

The most famous musical suffragette is, of course, Ethel Smyth. The RCM collections also hold much material relating to Smyth, illuminating the important role her anthem
‘The March of the Women’ played in galvanising the women’s suffrage movement. Perhaps most interesting is a portrait of Smyth painted by Neville Bulwer-Lytton – the brother of prominent suffragette Lady Constance Bulwer-Lytton. New research into this portrait will be shared, revealing its multi-layered relationship to Smyth’s suffragism.

Katy Birch (Prifysgol Aberystwyth University)

“‘Spectacles and galoshes and a forty-five inch waist’: Moving Beyond the “Ugly Suffragette” Stereotype in Women’s Writing for Punch’

When Punch is mentioned in histories of the campaign for women’s suffrage it is often depicted as having been consistently hostile, with Punch’s contribution to debates about women’s suffrage being represented exclusively by caricatures of suffragettes as unattractive spinsters. On the other hand, the suffrage campaigner Millicent Garrett Fawcett, in her 1922 book The Women’s Victory and After, described the staff of Punch as having been ‘true and faithful friends’ of the women’s movement. ¹ The reality lies between these two extremes: Punch included a variety of different pieces, some of which expressed opposition to, or support for, women’s suffrage while the majority treated the campaign as a source of humour without declaring allegiance to either side.

In this paper I will focus on the contributions of female writers to the debates about women’s suffrage that played out in the pages of Punch. I will examine pieces by the regular Punch contributors Jessie Pope and Jocelyn C. Lea, as well as a short story contributed by the prominent suffrage campaigner Evelyn Sharp, to explore the representation of the suffragette in women’s writing for Punch. I will examine these writers’ choice of Punch as a platform for their responses to the suffrage controversy in order to ask questions about the kind of political writing that was possible in Punch and the role of humour in representations of suffrage campaigners and their actions.

Lewis Church (Queen Mary, University of London)

‘She Bangs the Drums: Sh!t Theatre Draw on Activist Histories’

Internationally acclaimed performance company Sh!t Theatre are currently developing a new work with the Young Company based at Contact, Manchester. She Bangs the Drums, which will premiere at the Museum of Science and Industry in the city in March 2018, explores the local history of Suffragette and Chartist activity that contributed to the passage of the Representation of the People Act (1918), affording women partial voting rights. This collaborative project is a departure from the two-women shows that have made the company’s name, which include Women’s Hour (2015), Dollywould (2017), and the Fringe First and Total Theatre Award-winning Letters to Windsor House (2016, also published by Oberon Books).

Including material from a new interview with the artists about the project, this paper will discuss how the company has drawn on the history of women’s suffrage throughout the process of development and collaboration with a company of young

people, and how Sh!t Theatre's DIY, queer feminist live art aesthetic relates to a contemporary turn back towards activist histories. This paper forms part of a new research project on the responsiveness of current live art to contemporary cultural politics, and will focus on the feminist imperative of the work, and the significance of engaging with the central concerns of equality at the heart of the suffrage movement one hundred years on. In its development with young people, and as part of a practice of contemporary performance reflecting on the cultural dynamics of the moment, She Bangs the Drums offers valuable insights into the relevance and importance of this history to today’s feminist performance makers, and to those of tomorrow.

Brigitte Dale (Brown University, Rhode Island)

‘Radical Actors: The Women’s Social and Political Union’s Staging of the Suffrage Campaign’

In 1908, the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) led an unprecedented march of 500,000 suffragettes through London’s Hyde Park, clad in violet, white, and green, and termed by one newspaper as ‘a richness and refinement of colour such as the grandest of military pageants has never supplied’. In 1913, the same suffragettes bombed the house of Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd-George, leaving only a hairpin as evidence.

The WSPU began a campaign for women’s suffrage in 1903, ultimately employing militancy and violence from 1909–14. In terms of chronology, nearly half the movement’s lifespan was characterised by nonviolent tactics. Yet, in contemporary media and historical memory, not to mention academic scholarship, the movement is remembered as radical.

Historians always reinforced the suffragettes’ self-proclaimed militancy. But their presence in public, not their violence, made them radical. The suffragettes occupied the same streets as actresses and prostitutes, disavowing Victorian domesticity by dramatising their campaign for a public audience. Historians retroactively characterised the suffragettes as radical because of their violence, but contemporaries did so initially because of their presence.

The thousands of suffragettes, in colour-coordinated costumes, risked their reputations to perform their desire for political participation. We expect ‘radical’ women to be violent so they seem beyond the bounds of feminine expectations. We must recognise what was actually radical at the time—women in public. The suffragettes fought against stereotypes from dissimulative prostitutes, to failed mothers, to lesbians. Stereotypes persist about women and power, which recently led women to march in pink pussy hats instead of tri-color sashes. My research recontextualises the suffrage campaign and argues that long before violence ensued, the suffragettes were radical simply for being there.
Erica Fedor (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

‘Shoulder to Shoulder: Ethel Smyth’s Transnational Feminist Networks’

Ethel Smyth advocated for the annihilation of gendered borders, whether in the voting booth or the concert hall. Both as a composer and an activist, she lived by this ideal. A British composer, Smyth studied music in Germany, composed an opera while living in Egypt, and even served as a radiographer in France during World War I. Establishing herself as a composer required transnational exposure; her involvement in the women’s suffrage movement further demonstrated the transnational reach of her feminist advocacy and activism. In order to beat what she called the “Male Machine” that marginalized both Smyth and her music, she drew upon a carefully-cultivated network of women all over Europe and the United States. I aim to decenter Smyth’s Britishness—one emphasized in much of the literature—by focusing instead on her powerful transnational network of women and the way in which they shaped her feminist activist sensibilities.

Kristin Franseen (McGill University, Canada)

‘Women’s Musical Agency and Experiences in Vernon Lee’s Music and its Lovers’

Among the case studies included in Vernon Lee’s last book, Music and its Lovers (1933), one finds an intriguing alliance between women’s suffrage and the experience of listening to instrumental music. A respondent identified only as ‘The Suffragette’ directly ties her feelings about music to her activism, noting that ‘I recognize in music some definite emotions pertaining to a crowd... the growl I have heard in crowds at suffrage meetings’, and later writing about Brahms that ‘I think I can distinguish in music secondary sex attributes’. Lee notes that The Suffragette, while untrained in music, appears perceptive in linking instrumental music to her personal experiences.

While prior research on Music and its Lovers (Towheed 2010 and 2013; Mahoney 2015) has focused primarily on Lee’s sources and questionable scientific practices, this presentation examines the centrality of women’s remarks within Lee’s case studies, as well as her own experiments in listening alongside Irene Cooper Willis (who helped her compile the questionnaire and responses) and Kit Anstruther-Thomson (who participated in Lee’s experiments into artistic emotion). Although Lee’s respondents and ultimate theories of musical emotion cut across gender, her lengthy excerpts from her own experiments centre women’s experiences as listeners and scholars with valuable observations into the musical experience. In collecting case studies from within her own social circle of women artists and intellectuals, Lee preserved an important archive of early twentieth-century women’s thoughts about specific types of music, especially when it comes to composers traditionally associated with masculinity (Brahms) and sexuality (Wagner). While Lee admits to sacrificing scientific objectivity in intimating her own strong negative feelings about Wagner in her questionnaire, this encouraged her respondents to reflect and write more freely about sexuality in music in an era that Lee describes as “barely emerged...from Victorian purity, and unsullied by Freudian discussions.”
Rebecca Benzie Fraser (University of Exeter)  
‘Suffrage Commemoration, Dramatic Form, and Contemporary Feminist Debate’

This paper explores Dreadnought Theatre Company’s 2013 centennial re-enactment of the 1913 suffrage pilgrimage from Land’s End to Hyde Park. This case study provides a fruitful example through which to consider how performance style shapes the image of feminism presented in the reimagining of history. The method of organised walking, employed by Dreadnought in this work, promotes a collectivist focus on feminist history. This style sits in sharp contrast to the traditional protagonist-driven structure of mainstream theatrical performance, as is present in Rebecca Lenkiewicz’s contemporary reimagining of the Suffragette movement in *Her Naked Skin*. Addressing Dreadnought’s work in relation to Lenkiewicz’s National Theatre production illuminates how dramatic form foregrounds a focus on the individual or collective in the remembrance of the suffrage movement. Drawing on literature regarding the performativity of walking, I explore how Dreadnought’s method of remembering encourages a focus on the collective, and interrogate how this perspective counters the individualist outlook cultivated by neoliberal strands of feminism and wider social structures.

The practice of organised walking was historically employed by the suffrage movement; their walking activities ranged from collective marching to theatrical pageants. This paper considers how the politics of this mode of performance is different in a contemporary setting, and interrogates the complex layering of time periods and feminist agendas. I situate Dreadnought’s work in the wider cultural landscape of responses to suffrage centenaries, and address the sociocultural politics of works including statues, festivals, and gift shop memorabilia. Through exploration of the representation of the suffrage movement across different art forms, primarily Dreadnought’s pilgrimage, this paper highlights the variety of methods employed for suffrage commemoration in current art works and considers the dialogue between such works and contemporary feminist debate.

Amy Galvin-Elliott (University of Warwick)  

‘This building is intimidating. It reeks of establishment and power... And it was built at a time when my class and my sex would have been denied a place within it because we are deemed unworthy.’ When Laura Pidcock gave her maiden speech in the House of Commons on 27 June 2017, her analysis of the Houses of Parliament was both accurate and relevant. For the women of the nineteenth century, Pidcock’s speech would have been an impossibility. Inherently patriarchal in every way, Parliament was a building designed to uphold a political system characterised by male supremacy, with language, manners, and practices which were also largely inaccessible to women.

In spite of popular suffrage narratives focusing on the significance of the twentieth-century movement, the early nineteenth century also saw women fighting to claim a space in political life. Specifically within Parliament, women were endeavouring to inhabit and define a ‘female’ site in spite of their official banishment from the public galleries of the House of Commons. The ventilator was a small attic space allowing an
uncomfortable and impaired view of the Chamber; it was the only access women had to political debates in the early nineteenth century, and physically represents their cultural and ideological marginalisation from public life. However, in spite of this apparent liminality, the ventilator became a space of nascent female political subjectivity within Parliament. As yet unknown and due to be showcased in Parliament’s Vote 100 exhibition in 2018, a watercolour painting of the ventilator by Georgiana Chatterton depicts vividly this emerging female political subjectivity, consciously conveying female actors as viable subjects within a parliamentary space. This paper proposes a close analysis of the image to illuminate how painting was used to express an emergent female political subjectivity in the building that was the very heart of patriarchal political power.

Marleen Hoffmann (Berlin, Germany)

“If seemed to me my first duty to signify I was one of the fighters”: Ethel Smyth’s suffrage activities and her Suffrage music’

In her autobiographies, the composer Ethel Smyth emphasises that she gave up her musical career in order to devote two years of her life to the Suffragette movement. Music and politics did not seem compatible to her. Looking at what Smyth has done for Emmeline Pankhurst and the Women’s Social and Political Union, one is tempted to believe her autobiographical statement. In her essay about Pankhurst, Smyth wrote about their close relationship and the time she spent with Pankhurst, accompanying her to talks and meetings and hiding her at her home if necessary. Smyth herself started giving political talks and writing articles for suffrage and daily newspapers. After she was imprisoned in Spring 1912, Smyth wanted to withdraw from the movement in order to pick up her career as a composer again. First she tried that unsuccessfully because of ongoing suffrage activities during her stay in Vienna in Winter 1912/13. She spent the next Winter in Egypt where she found sufficient quiet to write her fourth opera, The Boatswain’s Mate. This opera counts as one of her feminist musical works next to the Songs of Sunrise. But not only did Smyth compose feminist works, she also did not stop working as a musician between 1910 and 1912. As part of the Suffragette Census programme, Smyth organised and conducted a concert of her own works on 1 April 1911 at Queen’s Hall, which was repeated because of its success. In general, Smyth’s degree of celebrity rose because of her suffragette activities and her composition of the Suffragette anthem, The March of the Women.

This lecture is based on a broad source study and aims at getting an insight into Smyth’s activities as a suffragette and a composer at that time and at questioning her statement that music and politics are incompatible.

Kate Johnson (University of Surrey)

‘How The Great Scourge by Christabel Pankhurst (1913) Illustrates the Connection Between the Literal and Wider Female Sexual Rights Debate’

My paper will address the mobility of the political suffrage texts in the writings of suffragette and WSPU (Women’s Social and Political Union) joint leader Christabel Pankhurst on the sexual rights of wives in The Great Scourge: And How to End It
(1913) by revealing how this text illustrates the influential connection between suffrage aims and the issue of marital sexual infection. This work is a small but important part of my thesis. I will also provide some brief background on Christabel Pankhurst.

Whilst *The Great Scourge* does not focus on the campaign for the vote, Christabel Pankhurst does mention it as part of her aim, saying, ‘In urging that votes for women and chastity for men are the double cure for the sexual disease that is destroying individuals and the race, we are met by the excuse that chastity for men is dangerous to their health, and that immorality is necessary’ (1913, p.49). Pankhurst thereby correlates the political movement for the female vote with the political debate about the rights of wives to be protected from their widespread sexual infection by husbands who used prostitutes. This issue had first been politicised with *The Contagious Diseases Acts* of the 1860s.

My paper will therefore explore how Christabel Pankhurst advises of the destructive sexual conduct of men and oppressive medical and regulatory practises of the state, in her argument for male chastity, as part of broader suffrage aims. It will also briefly explore possible contextual influences upon the *The Great Scourge*, thus emphasising its relevance. By focussing on the writing of a suffrage author, my presentation contributes to this conference’s reinvigoration of historic female discourses and female authorial voices.

Michaela Jones (Royal Holloway, University of London)

‘Christiana Herringham: Art and Suffrage Intertwined’

Christiana Herringham (1852–1929) was a significant figure in the Edwardian art world, leading the British tempera revival and co-founding the National Art Collections Fund. An unusually independent and progressive woman, she took up both art and suffrage causes, often utilising her networks in each to help further the cause of the other.

Dividing her time between London and Guildford, Herringham was active in both local and national suffrage organisations. A dedicated supporter of the NUWSS, she became a vice-president of the newly-founded Guildford branch in 1909. She additionally supported, at various points, the Women’s Freedom League, the WSPU, and the Tax Resistance League.

Evidence of Herringham’s overlapping artistic and suffrage networks can be seen in the collections at Royal Holloway, which includes a rare portrait of Millicent Fawcett’s cousin, Rhoda Garrett, drawn by Herringham. Also within the collection are two portraits of Herringham’s sons by Annie Swynnerton and Ethel Webling. These artists had, alongside Herringham, signed the 1889 Declaration in Favour of Women’s Suffrage. In 1907, Herringham became a founding member of the Women’s Guild of Arts. The organisation’s members included many suffrage campaigners, including Mary Watts. In the same year, Herringham was also a founding member of the Artists’ Suffrage League. Working with the League, Herringham embroidered several banners for the cause. Embroidering these banners allowed her to combine her artistic work

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with her political convictions, without sacrificing her femininity, by employing a traditionally feminine craft.

This paper will utilise research undertaken for my PhD thesis and for the forthcoming exhibition of Herringham’s work, opening at Royal Holloway in January 2019. It will explore how the suffrage movement gave Herringham the opportunity to use her artistic skills and large network of art contacts for political means, and examine how her artistic endeavours and political beliefs were often intertwined.

Eleanor March (University of Surrey)
‘Suffragette prison narratives: The foreignisation of the carceral experience’

The campaign for women’s suffrage saw one thousand women imprisoned, several of whom wrote about their incarceration. Such writing created valuable publicity for the suffrage movement while also drawing attention to another social issue: the prison itself. Prison is a marginal space that renders the prisoner a spatial and social Other—a position that can be likened to the otherness experienced by disenfranchised women. Suffragette prison narratives therefore bear witness not only to the marginalising effects of prison, but also to the subservient position of women in society and to the multiple marginalisations suffered by working-class, female prisoners (see Haslam, 2005; Schwan, 2013). By describing prison conditions and the plight of their fellow prisoners, suffragette prison writers championed the need for prison reform.

Prisoner writing has been likened to translation, as the writer attempts to describe imprisonment to those outside prison, mediating between two cultural contexts (Davies, 1990). This paper therefore adopts concepts from Translation Studies to examine how suffragette prison writers communicate the carceral experience. I argue that such writers employ foreignisation, a translation strategy that emphasises “the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text” (Venuti, 2010, pp.74-75), to imbue their writing with the otherness of prison.

My paper examines foreignisation in suffragette writing about Holloway prison, contrasting texts written by prominent suffragettes after release from prison (Constance Lytton’s 1914 memoir Prisons and Prisoners and Sylvia Pankhurst’s 1913 newspaper testimony), with the prison diaries of lesser-known campaigners Alice Hawkins and Elsie Duval. In analysing these accounts of the prison experience, I demonstrate how suffragette prison writers sought to influence public opinion on prison reform, by bringing life “inside” to those outside the prison walls.

Gursimran Oberoi (University of Surrey and Watts Gallery)
‘She Shall Be Called Woman: Allegory and Feminism in G. F. Watts’s Art’

One of the ultimate challenges facing art historians is to demonstrate art’s influence. This quandary is of particular concern when one considers the living relationship between artistic and social development. In the nineteenth century, Watts’s art coincided with the wider forms of social enquiry and political engagement surrounding feminism. Watts and his wife, Mary Seton Watts, were part of a growing network of
early suffrage supporters and proud patrons championing female creativity and occupation. Watts used the visual arts to express a higher altruistic principle akin to the ideologies of women's suffrage supporters. This paper will provide the first comprehensive assessment of the imagery shared by Watts and the women's suffrage campaign. Following in the interdisciplinary vein of Debra N. Mancroff’s The Pre-Raphaelite Language of Flowers, it will address the significance of allegory in Watts's *She Shall Be Called Woman* to reveal how the depiction of flora and fauna resonated with the campaign's ethos of female empowerment. Watts depicts femininity as a potent force of nature rising up in an explosion of empowering golden light. As Eve soars upwards towards the realm of spirituality, at the base of the painting she is surrounded by a meadow of spring flowers and a swirl of clouds, lilies, and birds. This painting had been championed by feminists for its empowering representation and, perhaps, even inspired their creation of the golden butterfly emblem. Its compelling allegorical language marked an intersection between art and socio-political concerns. By 1910, the suffragette Lettice Floyd provided a print of *She Shall Be Called Woman* to decorate a WSPU shop window in Newcastle. This paper will reveal the complex code of disguised symbolism in Watts’s art and establish how his allegories captured the imagination of the women’s suffrage campaign.

**June Purvis (University of Portsmouth)**

‘The Feature Film *Suffragette*: Whose story does it tell?’

The feature film *Suffragette* (2015), directed by Sarah Gavron with screenplay by Abi Morgan was highly popular, drawing in large audiences, particularly of women. In some cinemas, women stood up and cheered at the end, in others some cried. Yet some historians were deeply critical, complaining that the film did not accurately represent the suffragette movement in Edwardian Britain while others criticised the absence of women of colour. This paper will explore some of these issues and compare the film with an earlier attempt to portray the suffragette movement on TV, *Shoulder to Shoulder* first shown in 1974. Some reasons will be advanced as to why *Shoulder to Shoulder* had a very positive reception from feminists while *Suffragette*, some 40 years on, attracted more criticisms.

**Michelle Rushefsky (University of Surrey)**

‘Florence Farr and the Liminal Female Experience’

Florence Farr is a forgotten suffragist figure. As such, her feminist works have been overlooked. This paper explores Farr’s feminist doctrine *Modern Woman: Her Intentions* (1910) to discern her views on the position of women in society. I explore Farr’s assertions on where women are in society and where they ought to be. I also explore Farr’s contribution to the woman’s suffrage movement. Whilst her involvement is mostly theoretical, her argument throughout her work reveals a complex relationship to the movement. *Modern Woman* also exposes Farr’s visions of a future that is solely female whilst condemning not only other groups of women, but other classes of women. This paper concludes by evaluating the overall scope of *Modern Woman* and intricacy of first-wave feminism, and the woman’s suffrage
movement. With this paper, I hope to re-establish Farr’s cultural relevance and restore her role in the woman’s suffrage movement.

Angelika Silberbauer (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien)

‘Between nations and hero worship: Discursive practices in the life of Ethel Smyth’

The evolution in the understanding of identity in nineteenth-century Europe, and the exploitation of stereotypes in other cultures to strengthen its own culture, were extensively supported by the discourse surrounding the concept of genius, and the legitimisation by some central (male) figures. From these politically changing fictions based on the idea of “foreign cultures”, divergent worlds of identities and alterities emerged in nineteenth-century Europe – worlds to which Ethel Smyth (1858–1944) could never completely belong. Throughout her life, the members of various nations associated Smyth with cultures foreign to their own: the fact that she, an Englishwoman, had undergone her compositional training in Leipzig led English critics to hear her music as ‘German’; the same works were conversely perceived to be ‘English’ in Germany and Austria as a consequence of her national origin. With the struggle against the increasing political independence of women already waged, a subtly polemic attitude toward women who composed in ‘large forms’, such as opera, also emerged and led to discrimination against Smyth from the cultural bearers of her time in a number of ways. She subsequently began networking with political activists for women’s suffrage and like-minded friends, which, in turn, also facilitated opportunities for performance. Against this background, my focus will contextualise and analyse both Smyth’s own discursive practices of self-placement (e.g. networking with members of various social classes, her self-portrayal in changing autobiographical narratives, etc.) to position herself in Europe’s musical life, and the strategies of music history writings and the contemporary press as attempts to ascribe classification to Smyth. Particular emphasis will be placed on an intersectional approach to viewing the key dimensions of sex/gender, national membership, social origins, sexual orientation, and the political agenda of women’s suffrage. Besides other discursive practices, Smyth’s activity as a composer could be redefined as a form of cultural action that demonstrates the relevance for composing IN the life of a composer.

Codee Spinner (University of Pittsburgh, PA)

‘Chamber Music, Brass Bands, and Division in the U.S. Women’s Suffrage Movement (1900–1920)’

The last decades of the women suffrage’s movement in the United States were rocked by tension. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), a long-running agent dedicated to winning women the right to vote in the US, relied on cultivating images of refinement and restraint through demonstrations of traditional femininity. Led by Carrie Chapman Catt, the NWSA focused on achieving suffrage at the state level through political campaigns and lobbying. Conversely, some suffragists distanced
themselves from the more established and respectable group to form the National Woman's Party (NWP). A conglomerate of several, the NWP’s leading members were Alice Paul, Lucy Burns, and Harriot Stanton Blatch. Paul and Burns spent time in the United Kingdom where they participated in, and learned the militant tactics of, the British movement under the Pankhursts. Their employment of these same tactics several years later in the US demonstrate the transatlantic nature of the movement.

Considering these tensions, I look at the way each organization incorporated music into their campaigns. Music programmes for national conventions and parades were carefully selected. Traditional chamber music was incorporated into formal conferences and conventions while parades called for a more boisterous, bombastic sound—namely, marching brass bands. Brass and woodwind instruments were traditionally gendered as “unfeminine” because of the physical force required from the performer’s body. I argue that by placing women in public spaces with sonically forceful instruments, parades visually and aurally disrupted images of proper femininity. The convention proceedings which I examine were primarily produced by the NWSA. The 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession in Washington, D.C. represents a collaboration between the NWSA, Paul, and Burns. I incorporate archival materials, mainly correspondences and official announcements, obtained at the Smith collection of women’s history housed at Smith College (Northampton, Massachusetts, US).

Aneta Stepien (Trinity College Dublin)
‘The Polish fight for suffrage and its echoes in Ireland: The case of militant suffragism’

Between 1909 and 1911, Constance Markievicz, an Irish artist and a militant suffragette, wrote the column ‘The Woman with a Garden’, in the nationalist-feminist monthly Bean na h-Eireann [Woman of Ireland]. She used the metaphor of a garden and gardening to explore Ireland’s heroic past with the aim of raising the nationalistic spirit and to convey her anti-British sentiments. In November 1909, she wrote ‘The old oak carried my thoughts further afield in sympathy to Ireland’s sister in misfortune, Poland [...] It was on the 29th of November, 1830, that the Polish Revolution broke out in Warsaw’. Poland, as an inspiring example for the Irish nationalist suffragettes, also featured in Markievicz’s ‘Women, Ideals and the Nation’, published as a pamphlet in the same year, where she assured her audience that in Poland: ‘women and men work as comrades, shoulder to shoulder’ for the national cause. Although presented as an equal in the struggle for independence, the Polish militant suffragettes faced criticism and the resistance of different groups of men: politicians, workers, and the military (Gawin, 2015).

This paper discusses the role of the Polish nationalist and militant suffragists in obtaining voting rights for women, focusing on its key figure, Aleksandra Piłsudska (née Szczepińska). Drawing from her memoirs, and other writing related to Piłsudska’s activism, the paper challenges the idealised representation of Polish women’s suffrage in Markievicz’s writing, arguing that the Polish case, due to the historic parallels between both countries, was used by Markievicz, but also by Helen Sheehy-Skeffington (Ward, 2017), to strengthen her anti-colonial and, for most part, anti-British rhetoric. Even though Markievicz drew from the Polish example while Piłsudska was inspired by English suffragettes, their activism shares a number of common features: both drew from their nation’s revolutionary traditions and
Romanticism, both saw the emancipation of women and their countries' independence as a common cause, both underwent military training and actively participated in military operations; the latter played a role in granting votes to women in Ireland and in Poland. The profiles of both activists expose the role the European network played in local women’s suffrage.

Rosie Everritt (Project Archivist, Surrey History Centre) and Holly Parsons (Project Officer, Surrey History Centre)

‘Surrey Heritage, “The March of the Women: Surrey’s Road to the Vote”’

Surrey Heritage has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to explore Surrey’s hugely significant role in campaign for women’s suffrage, in particular the contributions made by local women and men to the cause. This paper will explain how the project, ‘The March of the Women: Surrey’s Road to the Vote’, will bring the county’s suffrage story to wider audiences.

Surrey was home to individuals and groups on all sides of the fierce debate, including pro-suffrage supporters such as Dorothy Hunter and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, activist Dame Ethel Smyth, and anti-suffragist Bertha Broadwood. The county also witnessed key moments in the long-running campaign, including Emily Wilding Davison’s being fatally injured at the 1913 Epsom Derby, and Emmeline Pankhurst’s part in blowing up David Lloyd George’s house at Walton on the Hill. The project will capture these stories and share them with the community.

The gripping tale is being told to the public through a range of events and different media. Delegates will discover how new research undertaken as part of the project, along with the cataloguing of archival material, will unearth Surrey’s hidden suffrage history. We intend to reveal some of the county’s links with suffrage arts from within the archives of Surrey History Centre, as well as in the collections of the partner museums who are joining us in the project. These links include Gertrude Jekyll, Ethel Smyth, Marie Brackenbury, Mary Watts, and Marion Wallace Dunlop, to name a few.

The creation of an ambitious new online resource aims to showcase these connections as part of Surrey’s wider suffrage story. Featuring digitised sources, it will incorporate individual biographies, a timeline, newspaper indexes, and a summary of the campaign scene in every Surrey borough. We aspire to connect existing research and information within the county and to make our suffrage holdings globally accessible to facilitate further research.

Ellery Weil (University College London)

‘Radical Thoughts in Russell Square: Suffrage Activities and the Bloomsbury Set’

While the loosely connected group of early twentieth-century writers and artists known as ‘The Bloomsbury Set’ have been extensively profiled for their artistic and literary contributions, less has been said of their political activities, particularly those surrounding the question of women’s suffrage. This is unfortunate, as the often radical
members of the Bloomsbury Set, which had strong leftist leanings, interacted with the suffrage movement in a variety of fascinating ways.

Some of the Bloomsbury Set were actively pro-suffrage. Beatrice Hastings, a journalist, poet, and novelist, wrote in support of suffrage under one of her many pseudonyms, and attended militant pro-suffrage demonstrations. With Hastings was her lover and fellow Bloomsbury regular, the publisher A. R. Orage, who became one of only two men ever to be arrested for suffrage activities. However, children’s writer E. Nesbit approached the question of suffrage, and feminism in general, from the perspective of her unconventional spiritual beliefs. Though celebrated as a feminist today, Virginia Woolf was ambivalent about the women’s movement of her time. Meanwhile, some of the more aggressive socialists in Bloomsbury rejected suffrage as an inadequate substitute for revolution.

This paper will explore the unique environment that the Bloomsbury set, through their publications and involvement in political activity from a variety of angles, created with regards to the suffrage movement. By looking at the Bloomsbury writings on suffrage, it will examine how the Bloomsbury Set’s political writings confuse traditional notions of pro- or anti-suffrage beliefs, and highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of the political opinions surrounding the suffrage movement.

Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

‘Ethel Smyth, Music, and the Suffragette Movement: Reconsidering The Boatswain’s Mate as Feminist Opera’

The recent release of the first complete recording of Ethel Smyth’s The Boatswain’s Mate (1913–14) (Retrospect Opera, 2016), its staging by Toronto-based Opera 5 as part of the double-bill Suffragette (2017), and the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act invite reconsideration of the relationship between this opera, the broadly contemporaneous leading suffragette activity of its composer-librettist, and feminism. Previous scholarship by Wood (1995) and Wiley (2004) that has explored similar ground has not gone so far as to call into question the popularly-held supposition that the work constitutes a ‘feminist opera’, made primarily on the basis of the overture’s liberally quoting two of Smyth’s own suffrage songs (’1910’ and ‘The March of the Women’) instead of the conventional assortment of themes from the score itself, coupled to the suggestion that the opera’s female protagonist was modelled on Emmeline Pankhurst, with whom Smyth had maintained a close (some believe lesbian) relationship.

My paper subjects this headline claim to renewed critical scrutiny, investigating factors including the extent of the indebtedness of Smyth’s libretto to the short story by W.W. Jacobs (from Captains All, 1905) in which it originated; Smyth’s creative process, about which she wrote at length in her auto/biographical books A Final Burning of Boats Etc. (1928) and Beecham and Pharaoh (1935); and her practice of drawing upon pre-existing music at several significant junctures in the score, including the heroine’s central aria ‘What if I were young again’ which is based on the traditional British ballad ‘Lord Randall’, a dialogue between a mother and the son who has been poisoned by his beloved.
Marion Wynne-Davies (University of Surrey)

‘Sylvia Pankhurst: Poetry and Politics’

Sylvia Pankhurst is renowned for her political activism as a suffragette and communist. What is less well-known is that she wrote poetry, publishing two collections, *Writ on a Cold Slate* (1921) and a translation from the original Romanian, *The Poems of Mihail Eminescu* (1930). In addition, there are over a hundred unpublished manuscript poems in the Pankhurst Papers at the International Instituut Voor Sociale Geschiedenis in Amsterdam. This paper sets out to explore some of these poems, in particular the early works (1913–21) in which she describes her own experience of imprisonment and force-feeding. Analysis of the poems reveals Sylvia Pankhurst’s political convictions, but also suggests wider concerns shared by suffragettes. Graphic depictions of the physical violence endured by imprisoned protestors permeate the early works, suggesting both personal suffering and the ways that such pain can be used for propaganda purposes. The language used deliberately avoids the ‘poetic’ – although sometimes with limited success – as it tries to depict material hardships. Finally, there is a sense of the suffragette community, as multiple voices filter through the texts: a collective cause needs a collective voice. The paper ends by arguing that, like other suffragettes, Sylvia Pankhurst employed literary and artistic works in order to help the cause of women’s suffrage.

Amy E. Zigler (Salem College, North Carolina)

“‘If it is anything it is ... Suffragette!’: An Historical and Stylistic Examination of Ethel Smyth’s String Quartet in E minor’

Ethel Smyth’s String Quartet in E Minor is unusual as it is her only chamber work composed during the early twentieth century. Scholars such as Wood and Seddon have mentioned the work, noting its connection to the suffragettes, but few have focused on the entire quartet and its significance as a feminist endeavour. An examination of the quartet is challenging for many reasons: Smyth rarely mentions it in her memoirs, the manuscript is lost, the printed edition contains no programmatic clues, and primary sources such as letters and reviews have been difficult to find.

Private letters and contemporary accounts, however, suggest that the work was both a conscious and unconscious feminist effort. Unlike Smyth’s other compositions, the string quartet was an interrupted project, begun in 19013 and completed by 19134, yet the work is cohesive. Musically, it has more in common with her 1913 song ‘Possession’ and *The Boatswain’s Mate* than her 1901 opera *Der Wald*. Considering the letters and contemporary accounts, this foreshadowing of her later musical style parallels an emerging acknowledgement of gender inequity that culminated when she joined the suffragettes in 1910. This paper explores that parallel through both an historical account of the quartet and a stylistic analysis of the piece, revealing the work to be an expression of her own emerging feminism.

3 While many believe that Smyth began her String Quartet in 1902, the private correspondence between Smyth and Henry B. Brewster reveal that she had actually begun the work in Autumn 1901. See Ethel Smyth to Harry Brewster, 26 October 1901, The Hildebrand Brewster Archive at the Villa San Francesco di Paola, Florence.

4 All accounts that the work was completed in 1912 are from secondary sources. The premiere of the full quartet did not take place until 23 May 1913.
Keynote Biographies

Irene Cockroft

Keynote Address:
‘New Dawn Women – Somehow the Tide Keeps Rising’

Between curating exhibitions, Irene Cockroft writes on the British Arts & Crafts movement and the Women’s Suffrage campaign. Her depth of understanding of the personalities behind these two great movements (her great-aunt Ernestine Mills was a notable suffrage art-enameller) brings history to life. Her book, New Dawn Women (The Watts Gallery), was nominated for the Esmée Fairbairn award for books that make history accessible to the general reader. Art, Theatre & Women’s Suffrage, co-authored with Dr Susan Croft, is a treasure trove of suffrage personalities.

Chapters and articles by V. Irene Cockroft appear in numerous publications, including a lengthy article on The Arandora Star Tragedy in Camden History Review 39 (Annual 2015) published by the Camden History Society; and another in-depth article in The Heraldic Craftsman of October 2016 on the life and work of notable stained glass artist Mary Lowndes (1857–1929). Lowndes was president of the Artists’ Suffrage League and chief designer of heraldic, political banners for the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies.

Whilst raising her own children, Irene combined script-writing for BBC TV Children’s Programmes with authoring a compendium of pre-school activities, Playthemes round the Year (Mills & Boon) and The Happy Christmas Activity Book (Lion). Her Children of Nature series of six books, written to help children understand environmental pollution (illustrated by Guida Joseph and published by Fabbri), has developed a cult following.

Irene is an independent exhibition curator, lecturer, broadcaster, and author.
Elizabeth Crawford, OBE

Keynote Address:
‘Pictures and Politics: The Art of Suffrage Propaganda’

Elizabeth Crawford, OBE is the author of *The Women’s Suffrage Movement: A reference guide 1866–1928* (Routledge), *The Women’s Suffrage Movement: A regional survey* (Routledge), *Enterprising Women: The Garretts and their circle* (Francis Boutle), *Campaigning for the Vote: Kate Parry Frye’s suffrage diary* (Francis Boutle), *The Great War: The People's Story – Kate Parry Frye: The Long Life of an Edwardian Actress and Suffragette* (ITV Ventures), and *Art and Suffrage: A biographical dictionary of suffrage artists* (Francis Boutle). She is the owner of *Women and Her Sphere*, a business selling antiquarian books, postcards, pamphlets and ephemera by and about women, and of the website [womanandhersphere.com](http://womanandhersphere.com). She was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2018, with a citation for 'services to education; for enhancing the public understanding of women's history in general and the women's suffrage movement in particular'.
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CENTENNIAL REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE AND THE ARTS
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