



Peace Offerings: May 2026

UN DAYS OF ACTION

15th May 2026: International Day of Families

15th -21st June 2026: Cervical Screening Awareness Week

19th June 2026: International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

20th June 2026: World Refugee Day

30th July 2026: World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

'The NHS has a problem with basic, everyday sexism and an appalling culture of medical misogyny'

Harsh words indeed. This is opening sentence to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care's forward to The Renewed Women's Health Strategy for England, published in April 2026. The document suggests that more than 8 in 10 women have reported occasions when healthcare professionals did not listen to them. This can result in serious conditions being missed, as in the case of Jessica Brady, whose diagnosis of Stage 4 cancer was only made after 20 visits to her GP. Jess's Rule was launched in her memory in September 2025. This requires GP teams to "reflect, review and rethink" if a patient presents three times with the same or escalating symptoms.

Of course, many women receive excellent care but recent reviews of maternity services, for example, and the health inequalities faced by women from ethnic minorities show that there is scope for improvement. As Professor Dame Lesley Regan, Women's Health Ambassador for England,

says when we get it right for women, everyone in society benefits. You can find the Renewed Women's Health Strategy at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renewed-womens-health-strategy-for-england>

Cervical screening awareness week, 15th-21st June 2026: early detection saves lives

Cervical screening can help prevent cancer and save lives.

We now know that the human papilloma virus (HPV) causes almost all of the main types of cervical cancer. All children aged 11-13 in the UK can now get the HPV vaccine, and it's also available free to people up to the age of 25 who missed the vaccine when they were offered it. However, there are other risk factors, such as age, smoking and family history. It's never been more important for women to take part in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme. We need to share information about the importance of cervical screening; there's always great information at

<https://eveappeal.org.uk/campaigns/cervical-screening-awareness-week>

Sisters' stories

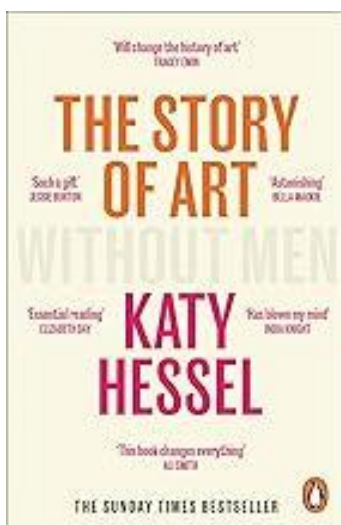
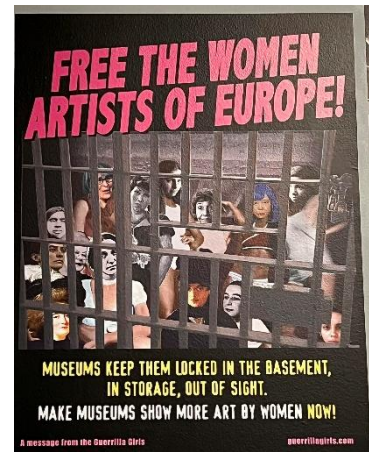
Art is a powerful medium through which the stories of women and girls can be told. I was very moved during a recent visit to Tate Modern by an installation called Burning Country 1998-2020. The work is



by an Indonesian artist called Arahmaiani and refers to events in the late 1990s in Indonesia when demonstrations against the then President led to 3 days of racially motivated violence against the Chinese Indonesian communities. Around 1,500 people were raped or murdered. The painting is 'a memorial for the souls of the

women who were violated and killed' and seeks to promote healing and reparation for past violence. In the catalogue for an exhibition of her work, Arahmaiani writes that "art should challenge the status quo and provoke thought. It is a means to question our reality and inspire change" and she campaigns around issues such as democracy, equality, women's liberation, freedom of faith and speech, and the environment.

Women have been involved in the making of art throughout history, but their work is often overlooked and undervalued. The Guerilla Girls are a group of anonymous artist activists who work to expose gender and ethnic bias in art and to share stories of overlooked artists. They mostly work through posters, exhibitions and stealth, with their work appearing unexpectedly on the walls of institutions. Some of their work is also on display at Tate Modern and it will make you laugh and then despair at the inequalities still faced by women artists.



If you are interested in women and art, Katy Hessel's work is great. She runs The Great Women Artists podcast and her book, *The Story of art Without Men* was published in 2024. I also highly recommend *Men to Avoid in Art and Life* by Nicole Tersigni. This combines examples of fine art with captions that illustrate those moments when a man offers advice to a woman which she doesn't want and certainly doesn't need. The results are hilarious but oh so true! Be warned, though, some captions are not for the easily offended.

