

TRACCIA 1 - PROVA SCRITTA ING – ITA

TRADURRE IN ITALIANO:

Lavinia Fontana is credited by many as the first female painter in Europe to have achieved commercial success. Such success was obtained in the face of considerable adversity; in many ways, Fontana defied the odds. In sixteenth-century Italy, women were frequently denied acceptance into important artists' academies and guilds (as indeed to other areas of public life). For the most part, they were not permitted to represent themselves in business negotiations. Furthermore, the great thinkers of the time tended not to consider female artists as part of the canon. In his influential series of biographies of Renaissance masters, Giorgio Vasari devotes only one of 142 chapters to a woman.

Despite the many hindrances, Fontana maintained an impressively active career. Having rejected the genres traditionally deemed appropriate for female artists, such as flower painting, Fontana is thought to have been the first woman to paint large-scale public altarpieces. She was awarded many illustrious commissions and honours over the course of her life, and worked under the patronage of several popes. A seventeenth-century writer claimed that her fees equalled those of renowned court painters of the time such as Anthony van Dyck. Among her long list of achievements, Lavinia Fontana is the first documented female artist to have had her own workshop. However, little is known about the artist's practices or how this workshop might have functioned.

Though Lavinia Fontana is discussed by more early Italian biographers than any other sixteenth-century woman artist, these authors tell us very little about her working methods.