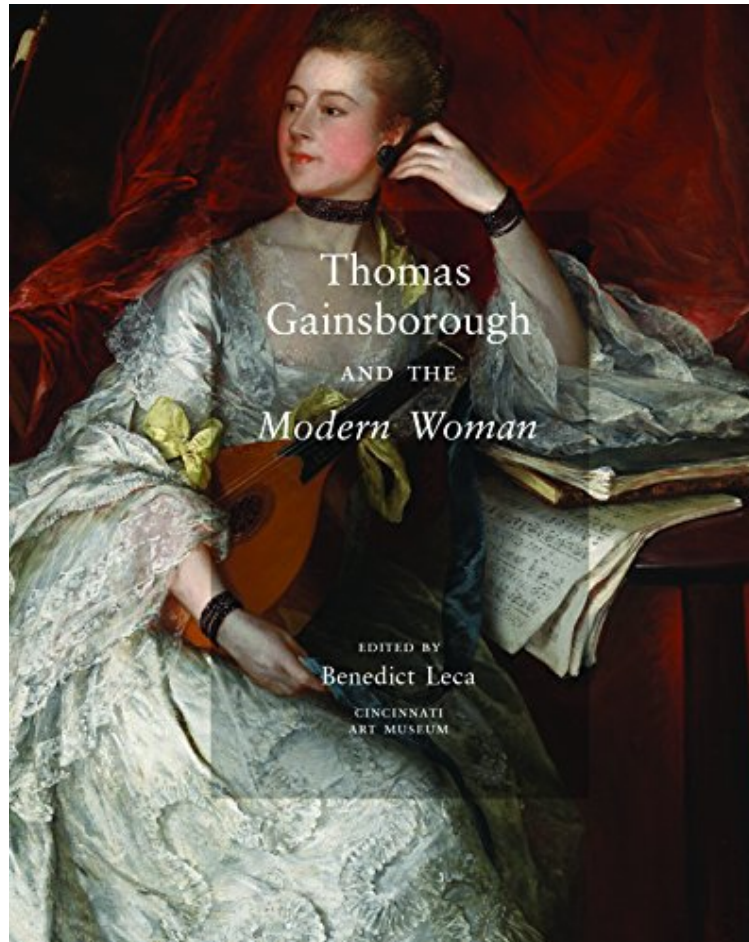


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Thomas Gainsborough and the Modern Woman

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Focusing specifically on Thomas Gainsboroughs portraits of well-known, liberated, society women, Thomas Gainsborough and the Modern Woman draws us away from his predominant reputation as a landscape painter. It shows how such portraits were both an affirmation by Gainsborough of his own position in the artistic world of Georgian England, and of the desire of his famous, and often notorious, sitters to be seen as self-assured progressive women. Author Benedict Leca takes as his starting point the Cincinnati Art Museums famous and newly restored portrait of Ann Ford (1760). Widely considered the finest of the masterpiece portraits created by Gainsborough at Bath in the early 1760s, it typifies the artist's comparatively permissive attitude with regard to how women should be presented, and offers a compelling view of the manner of painting that established the artist as the foremost portraitist of modern life. Featuring portraits from international collections, including Tate Britain, the Metropolitan Museum of

Art, the J Paul Getty Museum and the National Gallery, London, this new volume also includes an essay by Aileen Ribeiro examining the portrait of Ann Ford in detail, and by Amber Ludwig discussing the role of feminine identity in 18th-century London.

A welcome addition to the libraries of scholars and general readers alike. The catalogue's clear prose is supplemented by sumptuous, full-color plates and extraordinarily high-resolution details, offering a worthy substitute for individuals who did not see the exhibition, or a handsome aide-memoire for those who did. Susan M. Wager, *Enfilade* the wealth of illustrations, which include many details of the exhibits, gives the publication a sumptuousness that parallels the experience of the exhibition. Hugh Belsey, *The Burlington Magazine* A book which demonstrates how dress history can illuminate and strengthen discussion of portraiture in galleries and museums. Exceptionally well illustrated. Valerie Cumming, *Costume* The shows catalogue is excellent. *Los Angeles Times*...a compelling read. *Antiques and the Arts Weekly* A beautifully illustrated catalogue. *Antiques and Fine Arts* As an authority on period costume, Ribeiro offers an essay that is rich in observations. *Choice*