

Top 10 Problematic Issues with the C-File List of Top 15 Male Artists

By Nicole Seisler, January 2020

1. We no longer live in a gender-binary world. Using gender as a way of categorizing art and artists is inherently discriminatory and excludes a large number of individuals.
2. Gender is a meaningless lens through which to view artwork if gender has no bearing on the content of the work itself. In this case in particular, segregating by gender only reinforces arbitrary hierarchies that have always supported male artists, and bolsters a very old patriarchy in the ceramic field.
3. Of course the artists featured here are successful; 12 out of 15 of them were born before 1967. They already have a platform and gallery representation. This is nothing new. Why this list, why now? Why not embrace a more diverse and democratic approach?
4. “We have two lists, one for men and another for women. Without this, only a few women would make the cut, not that they are less than the men, but the market still discriminates.” Market discrimination is no excuse for your own discrimination. We need to embrace inclusion. Make a bigger list or, even better, don’t make a list at all.
5. Who do you think “fine arts” is? Why do you keep referring to fine arts as “they”? Do you mean the art market? Dealers? Collectors? Artists? Am I fine arts? Are you? Who is the “they” you believe “owns ceramics”?
6. Pots are “winning out”? What are pots winning? The more productive conversation revolves around the relevance of the vessel today, the old ceramic tropes it reinforces, and its potential to bolster new conceptual approaches.
7. If myth number 4 is “ceramists would be overlooked and that only ceramics by galleries star artists would be shown” then why reinforce this myth by only listing such star artists?
8. Since this list is apparently “based on two years of studying the ranking of ceramics the fine arts established by the reach of their dealers, international participation in high status art fairs, museum shows and responses from the art media with a little wiggle room,” show us some sources and numbers.
9. If “a new game has begun for the oldest plastic art medium” then we are in need of some new examples. Gabriel Orozco and Ai WeiWei are amongst some of my own favorite artists, but they’ve been at this game for a while. They helped lay a groundwork over a decade ago. Your list is outdated.
10. Copy editing is a must if C-File wants to remain a respected resource.

For further insight into the problematic nature of the Top 15 Male Artists list, please read [the open letter](#) that Julia Haft-Candell has written to C-File.

Read the original Top 15 Male Artists list [here](#).