

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Jill Klein on the Keenly Observant Maria Sibylla Merian

Julie Hébert · Wednesday, July 5th, 2017

Greetings, Cultural Weekly readers!

Summer days are here and things are hopping at **Look What She Did!** Our first out-of-town shoot was a roaring success and we came home from the Bay Area with raw footage for 15 new interviews which we'll be sharing with you over the coming months. Up in Silicon Valley, we had a warm and wonderful Friendraiser hosted by board members Mary Pacifico Curtis and Michael Miller. And down home in L.A. Jill Klein and I gave a talk at the Archer School for Girls (where we're planning to do a shoot in the fall), mentoring high school girls in the making of our fun and inspiring videos. Attendee Cat Oriel, our new youth blogger, will be [posting about the process](#) throughout.

Speaking of the ever-delightful Jill Klein... she's featured in our latest interview telling us about Maria Sibylla Merian, a brilliant, self-taught botanical illustrator and entomologist from the 17th century who followed her own path in life, passionate and unstoppable. A truly courageous and bold female. You're going to love her. Watch, enjoy, and share this story with someone you know who loves bad-ass women.

– Julie

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Jill Klein on the Keenly Observant Maria Sibylla Merian

Maria Sibylla Merian's gorgeous drawings of the life cycles of plants, spiders, snakes, butterflies and other insects changed the way we see them. An independent-minded 17th century German, she was one of the first people– male or female– to insist on the validity of studying bugs. Her drawings and scientific observations were based on facts rather than the normal approach of the day– applying popular moral codes stressing male dominance in deference to God. Hmmm... a real scientist.



Jill Klein discussing Maria Sibylla Merian's amazing natural history achievements and displaying her masterwork, "Insects of Suriname".

And did we mention Merian openly rebuked slavery and colonialism in her published writing? An

act of social criticism unheard of at the time. She also tinkered with her own birth control, giving birth only twice, and with intention. Jill Klein charms us with the tale of this exceptionally focused female who altered the course of entomology.

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