

# Riding Against Patriarchy: Gloria Sarfowaa's Self Portraiture in Appropriated Historical Equestrian in Contemporary Feminist Portrait

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## ABSTRACT

Equestrian portraiture has historically upheld gender norms by depicting powerful men and excluding women artists. 17th and 18th-century equestrian portraits of women depicted them as passive objects, often overshadowed by their male counterparts. These portraits reinforced traditional gender roles and upheld the patriarchal hierarchy prevalent during that time. This paper examines how Ghanaian contemporary artist Sarfowaa challenges patriarchal traditions through feminist self-portraiture in appropriated historical equestrian paintings. Through visual analysis of composition, techniques, symbols and contextualize selected artworks, this article explores how Sarfowaa subverts the equestrian genre by inserting herself into these male-dominated paintings. Her self-portraits provide a powerful statement of resistance that reclaims authority and agency for women. By contextualizing Sarfowaa's work within feminist art movements and theory, this paper analyzes how her art dismantles traditional gender roles and norms. The results demonstrate that Sarfowaa's portraits further the aims of feminist portraiture through their bold questioning of patriarchal power structures. This research expands current scholarship on the intersections of art, portraiture, feminism, and political resistance. It appeals to academics, artists, and audiences interested in the capacity of contemporary art to drive social change.

## 1. Introduction

The historical context of patriarchal norms in the art world can be traced back centuries. In Western art, women were often excluded from formal artistic training and were not allowed to attend art schools until the late 19th century. This exclusion (Nochlin, 1971) meant that women were unable to participate fully in the artistic discourse of the time, and their work was often dismissed or ignored.

Furthermore, the art world was dominated by male artists, patrons, and critics, who held the power to determine what was considered "good" art and who was allowed to participate in the art world. This patriarchal power structure ensured that women artists were marginalized, their

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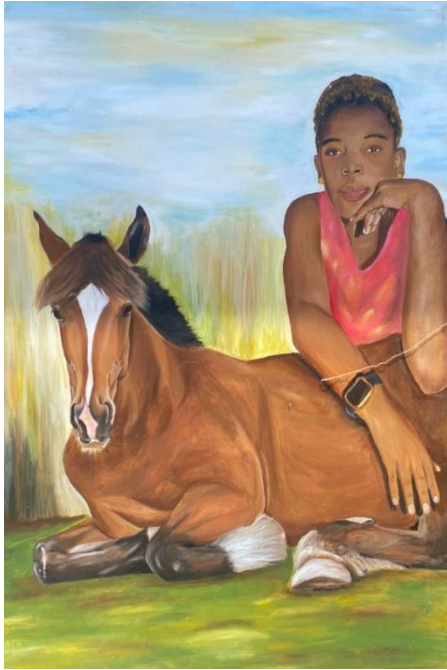
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work often ignored or deemed "inferior" to that of their male counterparts (Chadwick, 2012, pp.36-38).

The gendered and class-based implications of art were also evident in the types of subjects and themes that were deemed acceptable for artistic representation. Wealthy and powerful men were often the subjects of portraits and other works of art, while women and marginalized groups were often depicted in subservient roles or not represented at all (Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341).



*Figure 1. Sarfowaa's self-portrait (equestrian)*

Sarfowaa's self-portraiture in appropriated historical equestrian (Figure 1) in contemporary feminist portrait is a powerful statement of resistance against patriarchal power structures. Sarfowaa subverts the equestrian portrait genre, which historically depicted powerful men on horseback, by positioning herself on horseback and dressing in masculine clothing.

The pose, attire, and surroundings in Sarfowaa's self-portrait are rich in meaning and symbolism. Sarfowaa's confident and assertive pose challenges traditional ideas of femininity, while her masculine clothing subverts gender norms and expectations. The horse, a symbol of power and strength, reinforces Sarfowaa's message of resistance and defiance.

Sarfowaa's self-portraiture challenges the lack of representation of women in equestrian portraits and asserts her own power and agency as a woman artist. By appropriating and subverting the equestrian portrait genre, Sarfowaa is able to challenge patriarchal norms and values.

Sarfowaa's self-portraiture in appropriated historical equestrian in contemporary feminist portrait serves as a powerful example of feminist resistance, challenging patriarchal power structures and subverting the equestrian portrait genre.

## **2. Historical context of equestrian portraits**

### **2.1. Origins and evolution of equestrian portraits in Western art**

Equestrian portraits have a long history in Western art, dating back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who depicted their rulers on horseback (John, 2001). In the Middle Ages, equestrian portraits were used as a symbol of power and status for knights and other members of the aristocracy.

During the Renaissance, equestrian portraits became more popular as a way for rulers and other powerful figures to assert their dominance. Artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer created highly detailed equestrian portraits, which depicted their subjects in elaborate clothing and surrounded by symbols of power and wealth (Campbell, 2012).

In the Baroque period, equestrian portraits became even more ornate and grandiose, with artists like Peter Paul Rubens and Diego Velázquez creating larger-than-life portraits of their royal patrons on horseback (Baroque: Art, Architecture, Sculpture, 1998).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, equestrian portraits continued to be popular, with artists like Jacques-Louis David and George Stubbs creating iconic depictions of powerful figures on horseback. However, as photography became more common, equestrian portraits became less popular and were replaced by photographic portraits (Rosenthal, 2003; Carrier, 2000).

Despite their declining popularity, equestrian portraits remain an important part of Western art history, and their influence can be seen in contemporary art and popular culture.

### **2.2. Gendered and class-based implications of equestrian portraits**

Equestrian portraits have historically been gendered and class-based (Chadwick, 2012, pp. 36-38; Parker and Pollock, 2013; Nochlin, 1971), with wealthy and powerful men commissioning these works to assert their status and influence (Rosenthal, 2003; John, 2001). The equestrian portrait genre has been traditionally associated with masculinity, with men depicted on horseback as symbols of power, strength, and virility. Women, on the other hand, were rarely depicted in equestrian portraits, as they were considered too delicate and fragile to ride horses (Chadwick, 2012, pp. 36-38). Commenting on the above statement, the artist said “My artwork portrays women as powerful possessing both physical and moral strength in nature. Sitting on the horse which depict power and authority of a leader on a canvas which keeps me going in life” (Sarfowaa, 2022).

The class-based implications of equestrian portraits are also evident, as these portraits were often commissioned by the wealthy and powerful to assert their dominance over others. The elaborate clothing and surroundings depicted in these portraits were meant to convey wealth and status, with the subjects often surrounded by symbols of power, such as hunting dogs or hunting trophies.

The gendered and class-based implications of equestrian portraits have contributed to the marginalization of women and marginalized (Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341) groups in the art world. Women have been excluded from the equestrian portrait genre (Chadwick, 2012, pp.36-38), and their representation in art has often been limited to subservient roles or as objects of desire. The class-based implications of equestrian portraits have also contributed to the marginalization of working-class and marginalized groups (Nochlin, 1971), whose lives and experiences were often excluded from the art world.

Moreover, the gendered and class-based implications of equestrian portraits serve as a reminder of the ways in which art reflects and reinforces societal power structures and the need for feminist and other marginalized voices in the art world.

### **2.3. Lack of representation of women in the equestrian portrait genre**

Women have historically been excluded from the equestrian portrait genre, with few examples of women depicted on horseback in Western art. The equestrian portrait genre has been traditionally associated with masculinity, with men depicted on horseback as symbols of power, strength, and virility. Women, on the other hand, were rarely depicted in equestrian portraits, as they were considered too delicate and fragile to ride horses.

The lack of representation of women in the equestrian portrait genre reflects broader societal attitudes towards women and their role in public life (Chadwick, 2012; Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341). Women were often excluded from positions of power and influence, and their representation in art was limited to subservient roles or as objects of desire (Nochlin, 1971, pp. 22-39).

However, there have been some notable examples of women depicted on horseback in Western art. The 17th-century artist Artemisia Gentileschi painted a self-portrait on horseback, in which she depicted herself as a powerful and confident figure (Chadwick, 2012, pp.36-38). In the 19th century, the artist Rosa Bonheur painted a number of equestrian portraits, depicting herself and other women on horseback.

Despite these examples, the lack of representation of women in the equestrian portrait genre serves as a reminder of the ways in which women have been excluded from positions of power and influence throughout history (Chadwick, 2012, pp. 36-28). It also highlights the need for feminist voices in the art world, who can challenge traditional gender roles and subvert patriarchal power structures (Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341).

## **3. Sarfowaa's self-portraiture in appropriated historical equestrian**

### **3.1. Sarfowaa's self-portrait**

The central image in Sarfowaa's self-portrait is a powerful statement of feminist resistance. Sarfowaa is depicted on horseback, dressed in masculine clothing and wearing a helmet (Figure 2). She sits tall and confidently on the horse, with her gaze fixed firmly ahead.

The horse is a powerful symbol of strength and freedom, and its inclusion in the portrait reinforces Sarfowaa's message of resistance and defiance. Sarfowaa's attire is also significant, as it subverts traditional gender norms and expectations.



*Figure 2. Sarfowaa's self-portrait in equestrian*

The masculine clothing and helmet serve to challenge traditional ideas of femininity and assert Sarfowaa's power and agency as a woman artist.

The pose and composition of the portrait are also rich in meaning and symbolism. Sarfowaa's confident and assertive pose challenges traditional ideas of femininity and subverts the equestrian portrait genre, which traditionally depicted men on horseback as symbols of power and dominance. The composition of the portrait, with Sarfowaa positioned in the center of the frame and the horse's head turned towards her, reinforces her message of strength and empowerment.

Sarfowaa's self-portraits offer a powerful means of self-expression and introspection. Through her art, she explores her own identity, experiences, and emotions. These intimate portrayals allow viewers to connect with Sarfowaa on a personal level, creating a sense of authenticity and vulnerability (Wood, 2018, pp. 45-61).

Sarfowaa's self-portraits captivate viewers with their visual impact and technical excellence. Her meticulous attention to detail, use of color, composition, and lighting techniques contribute to the overall aesthetic quality and visual appeal of her work. The mastery of these technical aspects enhances the emotional resonance of her self-portraits, (Giannachi, 2023, pp.14-16).

Sarfowaa's self-portraits delve into profound conceptual themes and offer social commentary. Her work addresses issues of gender, identity, power, and societal norms. By challenging and subverting traditional stereotypes, Sarfowaa provokes thought and encourages viewers to question existing paradigms, (Lowton, 2018).

Sarfowaa's self-portraits evoke a strong emotional response in viewers, fostering empathy and connection. By baring her inner self, she invites viewers to reflect on their own experiences and emotions. The ability to evoke such profound emotional resonance is a testament to the artistic value of Sarfowaa's self-portraiture.

Sarfowaa's self-portraiture holds significant artistic value, encompassing self-expression, symbolism, technical excellence, conceptual depth, and emotional resonance. Through her introspective and thought-provoking artwork, Sarfowaa conveys profound messages and

challenges societal norms. Her self-portraits invite viewers to engage with her personal journey and reflect on their own experiences. By exploring the references provided, readers can gain a deeper appreciation for the artistic merits of Sarfowaa's self-portraiture.

Finally, the central image in Sarfowaa's self-portrait serves as a powerful example of feminist resistance, challenging patriarchal power structures and subverting traditional gender norms and expectations.

### **3.2. Symbolism and implications of Sarfowaa's pose, attire, and surroundings**

Sarfowaa's pose, attire, and surroundings in her self-portrait are rich in symbolism and carry important implications.

Her pose is confident and assertive, with her back straight and her gaze fixed ahead. This challenges traditional ideas of femininity, which often emphasize passivity and submissiveness. Sarfowaa's pose also subverts the equestrian portrait genre, which traditionally depicted men on horseback as symbols of power and dominance. Her position in the center of the frame and the horse's head turned towards her reinforces her message of strength and empowerment.

Sarfowaa's attire is also significant, as it subverts traditional gender (Figure 3) norms and expectations. She is dressed in masculine clothing, with a jacket, trousers, and boots.



*Figure 3. Sarfowaa's self-portrait in equestrian*

This challenge traditional ideas of femininity and emphasizes Sarfowaa's power and agency as a woman artist. The artist when commenting on the attire and other hidden symbolic ideas said:

“My artwork expresses the ruler of a subject in a way to show how powerful women are when it comes to problem solving. The crown and the attire on me symbolize royalty. I am a royal in every situation or problem that comes my life. I am symbolizing power in my artwork that help me rule every situation in my life” (Sarfowaa, 2022).

The surroundings in Sarfowaa's self-portrait are also significant. She is riding her horse through a forest, which can be seen as a symbol of freedom and escape. This reinforces her message of resistance and defiance, as she is breaking free from traditional gender roles and societal expectations.

Overall, the symbolism and implications of Sarfowaa's pose, attire, and surroundings in her self-portrait serve as a powerful example of feminist resistance, challenging patriarchal power structures and subverting traditional gender norms and expectations.

## **4. Sarfowaa critiquing patriarchal power structures**

### **4.1. Subverting gender roles and expectations**

Sarfowaa's work challenges patriarchal power structures by subverting gender roles and expectations. Her self-portraits reject the passive objectification of women in traditional equestrian portraits and instead showcase women as empowered individuals. Sarfowaa's self-portraits disrupt the established narrative and provide a platform for women's agency and self-expression (Nochlin, 1971, pp. 22-39).

### **4.2. Reclaiming the narrative and visibility**

Sarfowaa's work challenges patriarchal power structures by reclaiming the narrative and visibility of women. In contrast to the equestrian portraits that positioned women as passive objects, Sarfowaa's self-portraits assert women as active participants in their own representation. By taking ownership of her image and story, Sarfowaa disrupts the male gaze and provides a counter-narrative to the historically dominant patriarchal perspective (Mulvey 1975, pp. 13).

### **4.3. Challenging beauty standards and body image**

Sarfowaa's work challenges patriarchal power structures by challenging conventional beauty standards and promoting body positivity. In contrast to the idealized and often unrealistic depictions of women in equestrian portraits, Sarfowaa's self-portraits celebrate diverse body types and embrace imperfections. By doing so, she empowers women to embrace their authentic selves and challenges societal expectations of beauty imposed by patriarchal norms (Wolf, 1991, pp. 17-19).

Through her self-portraits, Sarfowaa challenges patriarchal power structures by subverting traditional gender roles, reclaiming the narrative and visibility of women, and promoting body positivity. By examining her work in contrast to 17th and 18th-century equestrian portraits of women, we can observe a significant shift in representation and empowerment. Sarfowaa's art serves as a powerful tool for dismantling patriarchal norms and creating space for women's voices and agency.

## **5. Artists and artistic practice in feminist portraiture**

### **5.1. Feminist portraiture as a movement in contemporary art**

Feminist portraiture is a movement in contemporary art that seeks to challenge traditional gender roles and power structures by portraying women in a way that is empowering and subversive. Feminist portraiture emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as part of the broader feminist art movement, and has since become an important and influential genre in contemporary art.

Feminist portraiture seeks to challenge traditional representations of women in art, which often objectify and sexualize women or depict them in subservient roles. Instead, feminist portraiture portrays women as complex and multifaceted individuals with their own agency and power. It often incorporates elements of self-representation, with artists depicting themselves or other women in ways that challenge societal norms and expectations.

One of the key themes in feminist portraiture is the idea of reclaiming the female body as a site of power and agency. Artists often depict women in ways that challenge traditional standards of beauty and femininity, emphasizing the importance of individual identity and expression.



Feminist portraiture also frequently incorporates elements of humor and irony, using these tools to subvert patriarchal power structures and challenge societal norms.

Some notable examples of feminist portraiture include Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Stills" series, in which she poses as various female stereotypes from 1950s and 1960s Hollywood films, and Kehinde Wiley's portraits of contemporary African-American women in poses inspired by classical European portraits.

These and others are to portray feminist portraiture as an important and influential movement in contemporary art that challenges traditional gender roles and power structures and emphasizes the importance of individual identity and expression.

## **5.2. Feminist portraiture in challenging patriarchal norms and values**

Feminist portraiture plays a significant role in challenging patriarchal norms and values in contemporary art. By portraying women in ways that are powerful, complex, and multifaceted, feminist portraiture subverts traditional gender roles and power structures, which have historically positioned women as objects of desire or subservient to men (Lippard, 1980; Meskimmon, 2003, pp.25-31; Parker and Pollock, 2013. pp. 336-341).

Feminist portraiture seeks to reclaim the female body as a site of power and agency (Meskimmon, 2003, pp.25-31; Schor, 2010), challenging traditional representations of women in art, which have often been objectifying or sexualizing (Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341). Many feminist portraitists use self-portraiture to assert control over their own image and to challenge societal norms and expectations (Schor, 2010). To add to the above statements Sarfowaa commented that: "Men were given power to rule over this universe, but through that, some men use that power to maltreat women in life. My artwork expresses the masculinity of a subject in a way to question the stereotype in gender as I portray woman as powerful and indomitable for which women can also control man both physical and moral strength" (Sarfowaa, 2022).

Humor and irony are often used in feminist portraiture to subvert patriarchal power structures and challenge societal norms, as seen in the work of artists like Cindy Sherman and Lorna Simpson (Lippard, 1980; Wiley and Choi, 2015).

The feminist portraiture is an important and influential movement in contemporary art that challenges patriarchal norms and values by portraying women in ways that are empowering, complex, and multifaceted (West, 2001, pp.245-261).

## **6. Theories and theorists in feminist art**

### **6.1. Feminist art theory and its development over time**

Feminist art theory is a branch of critical theory that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as part of the broader feminist movement. It seeks to explore the ways in which gender, sexuality, and power intersect in the production and reception of art, and to challenge the ways in which women have been excluded or marginalized in the art world (Harrison and Wood, 2003; Robinson, 2015).

Early feminist art theory focused on the exclusion of women from the art historical canon and the ways in which women's contributions to art had been overlooked or undervalued (Lippard, 1976; Nochlin, 1971). Later, feminist art theory expanded to include issues of race, class, and sexuality, as feminist artists and theorists sought to create a more inclusive and intersectional movement (Betterton, 1996; Pollock, 1988).



Some key themes in feminist art theory include the idea of the female body as a site of power and resistance, the use of art as a means of political and social change, and the importance of collaborative and community-based art practices (Butler, 1990, pp. 70-93; Reckitt and Phelan, 2001).

Feminist art theory has had a significant impact on the art world, inspiring new modes of artistic production and criticism and challenging traditional power structures within the art world (Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341). It has also been influential in the development of other critical theories, such as queer theory and postcolonial theory (Harrison and Wood, 2003).

## **6.2. Theorists and their contributions to feminist art**

There have been many key theorists who have made significant contributions to feminist art theory. This paper is to look at few theorists that have contributed greatly into the feminist's faith and believes.

Linda Nochlin's 1971 essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" is a landmark text in feminist art theory. In it, she argues that the lack of women artists in the art historical canon is not due to any inherent limitations of women, but rather to the social and institutional barriers that have prevented women from pursuing careers in art (Nochlin, 1971, pp.22-39).

Griselda Pollock's work has focused on the intersection of feminism, psychoanalysis, and art history. She has argued that the exclusion of women from the art historical canon is not simply a matter of individual artists being overlooked (Pollock, 1988), but rather a systemic problem that reflects the patriarchal values of the art world.

Judith Butler, although known primarily for her work in gender studies, Butler's ideas have been influential in feminist art theory as well. Her concept of gender performativity, which argues that gender is not a fixed biological category but rather a social construct that is constantly being performed, has been used by feminist artists and theorists to challenge traditional gender roles and power structures (Butler, 1990, pp.79-93).

Lucy Lippard's work has focused on the relationship between art and politics. She has argued that art can be a powerful tool for social and political change, and has advocated for community-based art practices that engage with local communities and social issues (Lippard, 1976).

Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" has been influential in feminist art theory as well as film studies. In it, she argues that mainstream cinema is structured around the male gaze, which objectifies and sexualizes women. Her ideas have been used by feminist artists and theorists to challenge traditional representations of women in art and popular culture (Mulvey, 1975, pp. 6-18).

These theorists and many others have made significant contributions to feminist art theory, challenging traditional power structures and advocating for more inclusive and intersectional approaches to art and criticism (Harrison and Wood, 2003; Parker and Pollock, 2013; Reckitt and Phelan, 2001).

## **6.3. The ways in which feminist art theory informs Sarfowaa's self-portraiture and the broader movement of feminist portraiture**

Sarfowaa's self-portraiture is informed by feminist art theory in a number of ways. Like many feminist artists, Sarfowaa uses self-portraiture to assert control over her own image and to challenge societal norms and expectations. In her self-portraits, she presents herself as a

complex and multifaceted individual with her own agency and power, challenging traditional representations of women in art.

Sarfowaa's self-portraits also reflect the feminist art theory idea of the female body as a site of power and resistance (Betterton, 1996). She often incorporates elements of her identity, such as her race and sexuality, into her self-portraits, highlighting the ways in which these aspects of her identity have been historically marginalized or oppressed.

Additionally, Sarfowaa's self-portraiture incorporates humor and irony, using these tools to subvert patriarchal power structures and challenge societal norms (Meskimmon, 2003, pp.25-31; Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341). By presenting herself in unexpected or unconventional ways, she challenges traditional notions of femininity and beauty, emphasizing the importance of individual identity and expression (West, 2001, pp. 245-261).

Sarfowaa's self-portraiture is part of the broader movement of feminist portraiture, which seeks to challenge traditional gender roles and power structures by portraying women in ways that are empowering and subversive (Parker and Pollock, 2013). Like other feminist portraiture artists, Sarfowaa uses her art to challenge societal norms and expectations, and to assert her own power and agency as a woman (Schor, 2010).

## **7. Implications and future directions**

### **7.1. Significance of Sarfowaa's self-portraiture in the broader context of feminist art**

Sarfowaa's self-portraiture is significant in the broader context of feminist art for a number of reasons. First and foremost, her self-portraits challenge traditional representations of women in art by presenting herself as a complex and multifaceted individual with her own agency and power. This is in line with the feminist art theory idea of the female body as a site of power and resistance (Betterton, 1996).

Additionally, Sarfowaa's self-portraiture incorporates elements of her identity, such as her race and sexuality, into her art, highlighting the ways in which these aspects of her identity have been historically marginalized or oppressed. This is in line with the intersectional approach to feminism that has become increasingly important in recent years, as feminist artists and theorists seek to create a more inclusive and diverse movement (Meskimmon, 2003; Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341).

Sarfowaa's self-portraiture is also significant in the way that it incorporates humor and irony, using these tools to subvert patriarchal power structures and challenge societal norms. This is a common strategy in feminist art, as artists seek to challenge traditional notions of femininity and beauty that have often been used to objectify and marginalize women (Schor, 2010).

Overall, Sarfowaa's self-portraiture is part of the broader movement of feminist art, which seeks to challenge traditional gender roles and power structures by portraying women in ways that are empowering and subversive (West, 2001, pp. 245-261).

### **7.2. Potential impact of Sarfowaa's work on future generations of artists and feminist art movements**

Sarfowaa's work has the potential to have a significant impact on future generations of artists and feminist art movements. By using self-portraiture to challenge traditional gender roles and power structures and to assert her own power and agency as a woman, Sarfowaa is contributing to a legacy of feminist art that stretches back several decades (Betterton, 1996; Meskimmon, 2003, pp.25-31; Parker and Pollock, 2013; Schor, 2010; West, 2001, pp. 245-261).



*Figure 4. Sarfowaa's photography*

Additionally, Sarfowaa's (Figure 4), work may help to promote a more inclusive and intersectional approach to feminism in the art world. By incorporating elements of her own identity, such as her race and sexuality, into her self-portraits, Sarfowaa is highlighting the ways in which these aspects of identity have been historically marginalized or oppressed. This is in line with the growing recognition in feminist art of the importance of intersectionality and diversity (Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341).

Finally, Sarfowaa's work may contribute to the broader feminist movement by challenging traditional gender roles and power structures and by promoting a more inclusive and diverse approach to feminism (Schor, 2010). By using art as a means of political and social change, Sarfowaa is following in the footsteps of many feminist artists who have sought to use their art to challenge societal norms and expectations.

### **7.3. Future directions for feminist portraiture and its potential for social and political change**

Feminist portraiture has the potential to continue to serve as a powerful tool for social and political change (Betterson, 1996; Meskimmon, 2003, pp.25-31; Parker and Pollock, 2013; Schor, 2010; West, 2001; Zeidler, 2019). Here are some potential future directions for feminist portraiture and its impact:

**Intersectionality:** As feminist theory continues to embrace intersectionality; feminist portraiture can continue to expand to include a wider range of experiences and identities. This might include portraits of disabled, or immigrant women, for example, creating a more inclusive and diverse representation of women in art (Parker and Pollock, 2013, pp. 336-341).

**Collaboration:** Collaborative and community-based art practices have become increasingly popular in recent years, and feminist portraiture can continue to embrace this approach. Collaborative portraiture can allow for a wider range of voices and experiences to be represented, and can create a more democratic and inclusive process of artistic creation (Meskimmon, 2003, pp.25-31).

**Activism:** Feminist portraiture can continue to be used as a means of political and social change. By portraying women in ways that challenge traditional gender roles and power structures, feminist portraiture can contribute to larger social and political movements (Schor, 2010).

Digital media: As social media and digital technologies continue to play an increasingly important role in contemporary art, feminist portraiture can continue to embrace these platforms as a means of reaching wider audiences and engaging with social and political issues (Zeidler, 2019).

## 8. Conclusion

In conclusion, Sarfowaa's self-portraiture in appropriated historical equestrian imagery is a powerful example of feminist portraiture that challenges traditional gender roles and power structures. By presenting herself as a complex and multifaceted individual with her own agency and power, Sarfowaa asserts control over her own image and challenges societal norms and expectations.

Through her use of humor and irony, Sarfowaa subverts patriarchal power structures and emphasizes the importance of individual identity and expression. Her incorporation of elements of her own identity, such as her race and sexuality, highlights the ways in which these aspects of identity have been historically marginalized or oppressed.

Overall, Sarfowaa's work is part of the broader feminist art movement that seeks to promote a more inclusive and diverse approach to art and criticism. By using self-portraiture as a means of political and social change, Sarfowaa contributes to a legacy of feminist art that stretches back several decades and has the potential to inspire future generations of artists and feminist activists.

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