Maureen Lester was a student in my Women and the Visual Arts course in this past winter quarter. Her term paper, "Artemisia Gentileschi's *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting (La Pittura)*," was written in response to an assignment that asked students to compare and contrast the treatment of one painting by Baroque artist Artemisia Gentileschi in both scholarly and fictional literature. Maureen's term paper, which was unquestionably the most scholarly, sophisticated, and well-written for that course, examined the conventions of self-portraiture and the question of inspiration. To dispute Susan Vreeland's fictional attribution to Orazio Gentileschi (Artemisia's father) the role of the conceptual "genius" behind the radically new iconography of this painting, Maureen investigated the specifically female shift in its approach to self-portraiture. Since the Renaissance male painters had depicted their artistic genius by showing themselves working at an easel accompanied by a second figure, the muse of painting; in an act of striking originality, Artemisia conflated female painter and female muse into a single figure that bears her own likeness. In her excellent paper, Maureen discussed in detail the iconography of this painting—both self-portrait and allegory of painting—and the scholarly controversies that still surround it.

The Akyuz/Ozmen Award is an annual writing award initiated in 1997 to recognize an outstanding student achievement in feminist scholarship. The award is named for Su Akyuz and Aysegul Ozmen, RIT graduates in Computer Graphic Design, who won the 1996 Best of Show Award in the Adobe Flash Point Student Design Contest. Their feminist video, "Perception," was produced under the supervision of Prof. Tina Lent, College of Liberal Arts, and Prof. Bob Keough and Prof. Malcolm Spaull, College of Imaging Arts and Sciences. The Akyuz/Ozmen Award is funded by a grant from Adobe Systems Incorporated in recognition of their achievement.

Comments and Congratulations

Thank you, Tina.