Sankey Diagram Insights

Looking at the multi-layered sankey diagram, we were able to gain a lot of insight from the story it told about the artists represented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. For each category (Gender, Nationality, Decade), there was something new to learn from the data visualizations.

Gender was by far the most lopsided category, with a ratio of over 6:1 male to female artists that had art displayed at the Museum. This massive disproportion was not surprising, as the Decades in which these artists were born had been known to be extremely biased towards the male gender, while not many women had the opportunity to pursue their passions such as art. Something interesting to note was that most of the female artists represented were born in the 1900s while very few were born in the 1800s, further suggesting this stereotype existed beyond the past century. On the bright side, we can see that America has the most links of female artists with 10, while the only other two came from Germany and Britain with one each. This may suggest that America was the most progressive when it came to women's rights and giving fair opportunities regardless of gender, which aligns with what history tells us.

The category Nationality provided some more insight into the demographics of artists represented at the Museum. The thing that popped out the most was that Americans had the most artists at the Museum by far compared to any other nationality. This could suggest bias by the Museum by taking more local artwork or suggest that there must have been a big culture around art back in America during the 19th and 20th centuries. Furthermore, looking at the variety of nationalities across the diagram and understanding that we filtered for nationalities with over 20 artists, we identified that most nationalities were from either the Americas or Europe, with very little representation of other continents like Asia, Africa, or Oceania. This is intriguing and possibly exposes bias in the Museum's selection process, or could also be because of cultural reasons. As Asians, we know that nowadays pursuing a career in art is frowned upon by Asian parents and Asian culture because of the lack of compensation potential compared to other careers, and this may have been the case back then too. This could apply to not just Asians, but people from Africa and Oceania as well. Lastly, many of the major European countries had similarities in terms of the number of artists represented at the Museum, and this tells us that the art culture in Europe at the time was prevalent across all major European countries.

In terms of Decade patterns, we noticed that there were not many young artists being represented, the latest decade with over 20 artists being 1980 - we attributed this to a generational shift away from physical art or art in general over the years. In addition, we saw that the 1800s didn't have as many artists in comparison to the 1900s, possibly due to their art not being as well preserved over time or the Museum wanting to focus more on newer artworks (hence the name "Contemporary"). Lastly, we noticed that there were more artists who were born in the 1930s and 1940s, and we were curious to see if this was somehow correlated to WWII. Regardless, there were many insights that we were able to take away from the diagram.