FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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National Museum of Women in the Arts Celebrates Acquisition of Two Works by Artist Mildred Thompson

WASHINGTON—The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) announces the acquisition of two works by Mildred Thompson (1936-2003) in celebration of the museum’s 30th-anniversary year. With a career spanning more than four decades, Thompson created paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures with a signature approach to abstraction.

Inspired by the Atlanta-based Thompson’s inclusion in the recent exhibition Magnetic Fields: Expanding American Abstraction, 1960s to Today, the Georgia Committee of NMWA purchased a painting from her “Magnetic Fields” series for the museum. Camille Ann Brewer gifted a second work by Thompson to the museum to honor the memory of the artist.

“We are thrilled that donor Camille Ann Brewer and the Georgia Committee—one of 20 outreach committees around the world that support NMWA—have both donated to the museum’s collection incredible works by Mildred Thompson from the earlier and later parts of her career,” said NMWA Director Susan Fisher Sterling. “It is an honor to announce this gift today, on her birthday, and during the museum’s third annual #5WomenArtists social media campaign, which aims to increase awareness of gender inequity in the art world.”

After living in Europe to escape the racism and sexism that she had experienced in the United States, Thompson moved back permanently and began her series of “Magnetic Fields” paintings in the early 1990s. The painting gifted to NMWA, as well as the series as a whole, reflects Thompson’s quest to create a personal visual language for depicting phenomena and effects not
visible to the naked eye. She studied, and had a longstanding interest in, quantum physics, cosmology and theosophy. Through her art, she sought to connect scientific knowledge and metaphysical philosophy.

Thompson’s interest in scientific phenomena and theories ran counter to expectations of what ‘black art’ should be during her lifetime, causing her work to be chronically overlooked by critics, galleries and museums. Today, thanks to the dedicated efforts of her partner, Donna Jackson, and estate curator, Melissa Messina, her works are finally gaining the recognition that eluded them for so long.

In “Magnetic Fields,” the composition exudes a frenetic, pulsating energy of vivid yellows, reds and blues thanks to Thompson’s command of color theory. Simultaneously, her color choices imbue the composition with an emotional exuberance that complements its scientific inspiration.

Even before the Magnetic Fields exhibition opened, Brewer was inspired to gift the second work by Thompson to NMWA. That work, an untitled “wood picture” from Thompson’s European period, along with the newly gifted painting, mark important additions to the museum’s collection. Thompson’s wood pictures, which she began making in the 1960s while living in Germany, mark the artist’s decision to focus solely on non-representational art-making. Thompson’s use of found wood segments assembled into deceptively simple compositions brought about her first mature series of non-representational sculptural works. Made with salvaged wood, these works combine the aesthetic of Minimalism and found-object assemblage techniques like those of Louise Nevelson. With the addition of these works to the collection, NMWA is able to expand the narrative surrounding abstract artists as well as artists of color.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS
The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) is the only major museum in the world solely dedicated to championing women through the arts. With its collections, exhibitions, programs and online content, the museum seeks to inspire dynamic exchanges about art and ideas. NMWA advocates for better representation of women artists and serves as a vital center for thought leadership, community engagement and social change. NMWA addresses the gender imbalance in the presentation of art by bringing to light important women artists of the past while promoting great women artists working today. The collections highlight painting, sculpture, photography and video by artists including Louise Bourgeois, Mary Cassatt, Judy Chicago, Frida Kahlo, Shirin Neshat, Faith Ringgold, Pipilotti Rist, Amy Sherald and Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun.

NMWA is located at 1250 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. It is open Mon.–Sat., 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sun, noon–5 p.m. Admission is $10 for adults, $8 for visitors 65 and over and students, and free for NMWA members and youths 18 and under. Admission is free the first Sunday of each month. For information, call 202-783-5000, visit nmwa.org, Broad Strokes Blog, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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**Image credit line:** Mildred Thompson, *Magnetic Fields*, 1990; oil on canvas, 62 x 48 in.; Gift of the Georgia Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts in honor of the 30th anniversary of the Georgia Committee and the National Museum of Women in the Arts; ©The Mildred Thompson Estate; Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co., New York