



NATIONAL MUSEUM of WOMEN *in the ARTS*

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Nine New Acquisitions Celebrate National Museum of Women in the Arts' 30th Anniversary Year



WASHINGTON—The National Museum of Women in the Arts ([NMWA](http://www.nmwa.org)) announces recent major collection acquisitions in celebration of the beginning of the museum's 30th-anniversary year. Newly acquired works by Yael Bartana, Berthe Morisot and Faith Ringgold are currently on view in the museum's collection galleries, and works by Louise Bourgeois and Lalla Essaydi will be on view in *REVIVAL*, an exhibition of contemporary sculpture, photography and video, from June 23 to Sept. 10, 2017.

"We are delighted to have strong support from generous donors and members who made these acquisitions possible. Their contributions have enabled us to add new, diverse and increasingly global artworks to the collection—from late 19th century painting to contemporary times," said NMWA Director Susan Fisher Sterling. "These important acquisitions greatly enrich the thematic reinstallation of our collection galleries for the museum's 30th anniversary."

New Acquisitions:

Louise Bourgeois (b. 1911, Paris; d. 2010, New York City)

Spider III, 1995

Bronze, 19 x 33 x 33 in.

Gift of Wilhelmina Cole Holladay

The spider is Bourgeois's most famous motif. The resurgence of the spider in sculptures from the mid-1990s attests to the primacy of this creature in the artist's imagination as well as her obsessive interest in the nature of the maternal experience. Bourgeois associated the spider with protectiveness and frequently remarked that her mother, Joséphine, shared spiders' admirable attributes: patience, industriousness and cleverness. In a 2007 interview, she stated, "My works are portraits of a relationship, and the most important one was my mother."



Although Bourgeois perceived a protective, nurturing quality in spiders, she understood that they can evoke a fearful response in others. The cast-bronze medium allowed her to create a rough surface

texture that gives this spider a dynamic, pulsating quality that captures arachnids' characteristic skittering motion.

Yael Bartana (b. 1970, Kfar Yehezkel, Israel)

What if Women Ruled the World, 2016

Neon, 98 1/2 x 38 1/2 in.

Museum purchase, Belinda de Gaudemar Acquisition Fund, with additional support from the Members' Acquisition Fund

This neon sculpture is related to Bartana's current film and performance project *What if Women Ruled the World*. Extending the ending of Stanley Kubrick's film *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), which proposed a new realm in which women outnumber men by a ratio of 10:1, Bartana imagines a culture where women seek solutions to humanity's most urgent problems. While the sculpture is emblematic of this alternative world, its resonance with current public discourse is powerful.



Bartana's work spans video, photography and installation. She often appropriates raw documentary materials and blends these with fictional elements. She represented Poland at the 2011 Venice Biennale with an installation of three films that followed a movement to repopulate Jews in Poland.

Lalla Essaydi (b. 1956, Marrakesh)

Bullets Revisited #3, 2012

Three chromogenic prints mounted to aluminum, 60 x 48 in. (each panel)

Purchased with funds provided by Jacqueline Badger Mars, Sunny Scully Alsup and William Alsup, Mr. Sharad Tak and Mrs. Mahinder Tak, Marcia and Frank Carlucci, and Nancy Nelson Stevenson

Essaydi's photography reflects an iconography that stretches as far back as the Orientalist imagery of 19th-century artists. Her female figures often are enveloped in Islamic calligraphy applied in henna, which adorns their skin and garments. In *Bullets Revisited #3*, the elaborate decorative patterns



that cover and surround the figure's body are composed of silver and golden-colored bullet casings that evoke symbolic violence and refer to Essaydi's fear about growing restrictions on women in a new post-revolutionary era following the Arab Spring.

With multi-layered references to cultural, social and political identities, this triptych is also self-reflexive about the medium itself. The uncropped film borders allude to the artifice of photography and emphasize its ability to create false realities.

Berthe Morisot (b. 1841, Bourges, France; d. 1895, Paris)

***Jeune Femme en Mauve (Young Woman in Mauve)*, 1880**

Oil on canvas, 28 x 23 in.

Gift of Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long

Berthe Morisot was one of two women artists who regularly exhibited with the Impressionists in Paris in the 1870s and 1880s. Many of the artist's best-known works depict individual women, and *Jeune Femme en Mauve (Young Woman in Mauve)* is one of Morisot's characteristic and distinguished works of art.



Although she often relied on friends and family members as sitters, Morisot did not intend her paintings to be interpreted as portraits. Her images offer a glimpse into the daily lives of upper-middle-class French women and are expressive studies of color and light.

Jami Porter Lara (b. 1969, Spokane, Washington)

***LDS-MHR-2LBR-0216CE-06*, 2016**

***MHB-6SBR-0916CE-01*, 2016**

***LDS-MHB-LPBR-0916CE-03*, 2016**

***LDS-MHB-WVBR-0617CE-09*, 2017**

Wood-fired clay, dimensions variable

Museum purchase: Members' Acquisition Fund

Jami Porter Lara refers to her works as “contemporary artifacts,” in which she combines the shape of the contemporary plastic bottle with ancient ceramic techniques. These vessels are hand-built using the coiling method of pottery production. After the clay vessels dry, Porter Lara burnishes them with a flat stone to achieve a high sheen. Then, she fires them in an outdoor pit. During this “reduction” process, flames and oxygen are kept away from the pottery, causing the clay bodies to turn black.



Porter Lara's forms are at once familiar and enigmatic. They retain stylistic elements of the plastic bottle, but their complexity evokes symbolic or ritualistic objects. This ambiguity heightens the connection between these contemporary works and relics of the past. It also prompts the viewer to question assumptions about cultural distinctions between art and artifact. Many of Porter Lara's works were featured in the recent NMWA exhibition *Border Crossing: Jami Porter Lara*.

Faith Ringgold (b. 1930, New York City)

American Collection #4: Jo Baker's Bananas, 1997

Acrylic on canvas with pieced fabric border, 80 1/2 x 76 in.

Purchased with funds donated by the Estate of Barbara Bingham Moore, Olga V. Hargis Family Trusts and the Members' Acquisition Fund

Faith Ringgold is well known for originating the African American story quilt revival in the late 1970s. In combining the “high” art practice of painting with the “craft” of quilt-making, Ringgold creates objects that defy stereotypical categorization. Ringgold’s quilts fuse together textiles—traditionally the domain of women—with painting on canvas. In this way, Ringgold’s narrative works are a reflection of the traditions of her own family, such as sewing, which she learned from her mother, as well as of larger African American cultural traditions.



Often, Ringgold’s stories are told over multiple quilts; *Jo Baker's Bananas* is from one of these series, *The American Collection*. In this story quilt, Ringgold depicts the famous African American dancer Josephine Baker (1906–1975), who became a stage legend in France, where she lived most of her life. Baker’s figure is represented five times across the top of the quilt, implying a sense of movement across a stage. The so-called “Banana Dance” that she performed in 1926 at Paris’s Folies Bergère music hall cemented her fame. Offstage, Baker supported the burgeoning Civil Rights movement in the United States and used her fame and fortune to bolster support for the cause.

National Museum of Women in the Arts

The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) is the world’s only major museum solely dedicated to celebrating the creative contributions of women. The museum champions women through the arts by collecting, exhibiting, researching and creating programs that advocate for equity and shine a light on excellence. NMWA highlights remarkable women artists of the past while also promoting the best women artists working today. The museum’s collection includes over 5,000 works by more than 1,000 women artists from the 16th century to the present, including Mary Cassatt, Frida Kahlo, Alma Thomas, Lee Krasner, Louise Bourgeois, Chakaia Booker and Nan Goldin.

NMWA is located at 1250 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C., in a landmark building near the White House. It is open Monday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sunday, noon–5 p.m. For information, call 202-783-5000 or visit nmwa.org. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for visitors 65 and over and students, and free for NMWA members and youths 18 and under. Free Community Days take place on the first Sunday of each month. For more information about NMWA, visit nmwa.org, [Broad Strokes Blog](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

American Airlines is the official airline of the museum’s 30th Anniversary.

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Louise Bourgeois, *Spider III*, 1995; Bronze, 19 x 33 x 33 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wilhelmina Cole Holladay; Art © The Easton Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Yael Bartana, *What if Women Ruled the World*, 2016; Neon, 98 1/2 x 38 1/2 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts; Museum purchase, Belinda de Gaudemar Acquisition Fund, with additional support from the Members' Acquisition Fund

Lalla Essaydi, *Bullets Revisited #3*, 2012; Three chromogenic prints mounted on aluminum, 66 x 150 in. overall; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Purchased with funds provided by Jacqueline Badger Mars, Sunny Scully Alsup and William Alsup, Mr. Sharad Tak and Mrs. Mahinder Tak, Marcia and Frank Carlucci, and Nancy Nelson Stevenson; © Lalla Essaydi

National Museum of Women in the Arts Founder Wilhelmina Cole Holladay standing near Berthe Morisot, *Jeune Femme en Mauve (Young Woman in Mauve)*, 1880; Oil on canvas, 28 x 23 in.; Gift of Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long; Photo © 2017 Margot Schulman

Jami Porter Lara, *MHB-6SBR-0916CE-01*, 2016; Wood-fired clay, 10 x 6 1/2 in. diameter; Museum purchase: Members' Acquisition Fund; Photo by Addison Doty

Faith Ringgold, *American Collection #4: Jo Baker's Bananas*, 1997; Acrylic on canvas with pieced fabric border, 80 1/2 x 76 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Purchased with funds donated by the Estate of Barbara Bingham Moore, Olga V. Hargis Family Trusts and the Members' Acquisition Fund; Photo by Lee Stalsworth