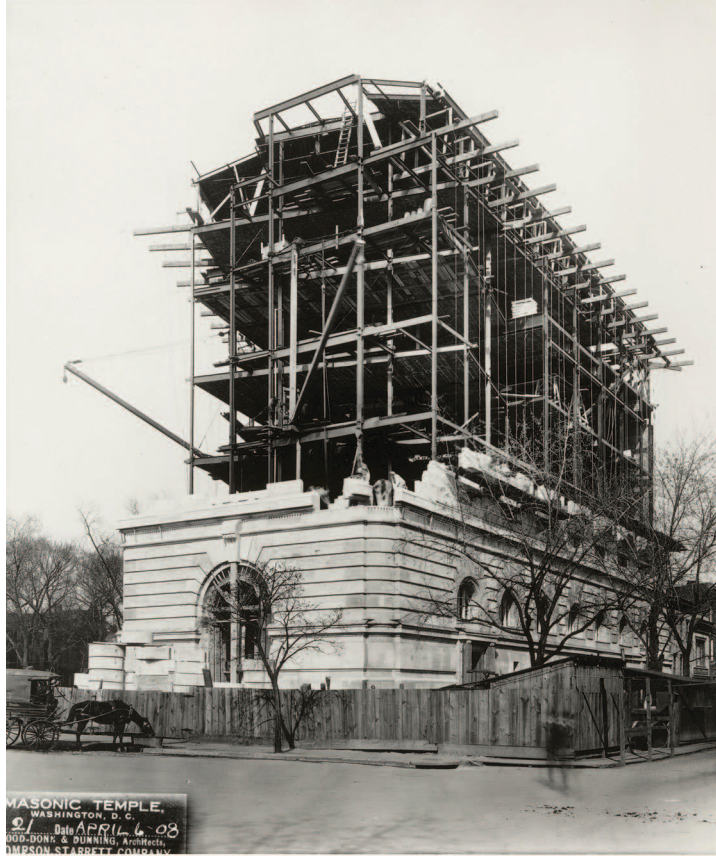




During construction



As the Town Theatre



During construction, 1908

As the Town Theatre, ca. 1982

If These Walls Could Talk

Completed in 1908 as a temple for Freemasons, a male-only fraternity, this edifice has a storied history. Over the years, it witnessed secret Masonic rituals and public film premieres. In 1987, it became the only museum solely dedicated to women's creative contributions.

Take a closer look

Notice the exterior's stately Renaissance Revival elements—overall symmetry, solid base, arched windows, and Doric columns. Inside, find gilded lions and cornucopias—symbols of NMWA's spirit of ferocity and fecundity—and the two-story proscenium, or arch, that once framed a movie screen.

Something to talk about

After your visit, walk by 1201/1225 New York Avenue, NW, and examine its architectural style. Completed in 1993, this building echoes the details of the Women's Museum façade. What similarities do you notice? Why might an architect mirror characteristics of an older neighbor into their design?

Who knew?

The Great Hall appeared as a backdrop for R2-D2 and friends in the fan flick *Star Wars: Revelations* (2005) and as the German Embassy in *Loose Cannons* (1990), starring Dan Aykroyd and Gene Hackman.



Edna St. Vincent Millay



Eva Le Gallienne



Edna St. Vincent Millay, ca. 1927

Eva Le Gallienne, ca. 1927

Ready for a Close-Up

In much of her work, **Berenice Abbott (1898–1991)** depicts progressive residents of burgeoning cities. Her portraits feature asymmetrical compositions, dramatic lighting, and unusual poses. They defy conventions and celebrate new ideas about society, art, and identity.

Take a closer look

An adopter of straight photography, Abbott rarely manipulated her negatives. She provided an honest representation of each sitter instead of an idealized image.

In her own words

"The world doesn't like independent women, why, I don't know, but I don't care."

Who knew?

The artist pictured influential, creative women of her day. These portraits honor Edna St. Vincent Millay, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and feminist activist, and Eva Le Gallienne, lesbian actress and advocate of noncommercial theater.

Berenice Abbott, *Edna St. Vincent Millay*, ca. 1927; Vintage silver print, 11½ x 9¾ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay

Berenice Abbott, *Eva Le Gallienne*, ca. 1927; Vintage silver print, 4½ x 6¾ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © Berenice Abbott



Après la tempête (After the Storm)



Drama Queen

Though known as an actress, Sarah Bernhardt sculpted more than 50 works. Always dramatic, Bernhardt posed for photographs wearing her “sculptor’s outfit,” which included a long lace-trimmed jacket, trousers, and low-heeled pumps.



Après la tempête (After the Storm), ca. 1876

Take a closer look

Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) transformed cold marble into smooth and wrinkled skin, frothy sea foam, and a coarse fishing net. Complex both in technique and narrative, this sculpture is considered by critics to be Bernhardt's most ambitious work.

Something to talk about

In *Après la tempête*, a woman from the north coast of France cradles her grandson after a storm at sea has passed. Look carefully at Bernhardt's handling of the figures. What evidence suggests this story might have a happy ending? A tragic one?

Who knew?

Ever the eccentric, Bernhardt kept a menagerie of animals in the walled garden of her London home. In fact, she sold this work to purchase a cheetah, a wolf, and six chameleons—one of which rode on her shoulder.

Sarah Bernhardt, *Après la tempête (After the Storm)*, ca. 1876; White marble, 29½ x 24 x 23 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth



The Highland Raid



The Highland Raid, 1860

Grazed and Confused

Acclaimed for her sympathetic renderings of fauna, French painter **Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899)** led an unconventional life. The bold Bonheur smoked, rode astride, and collected an animal menagerie. She even obtained legal permission to wear trousers, allowing her easier access to her subjects.

Take a closer look

Bonheur's attention to details reinforces the overall mood of this painting. Glazed eyes, gaping mouths, and striding legs imply distress and haste. Ominous gray clouds compete with the sun while oblique rain showers, blowing grass, and windswept spittle underscore blustery conditions.

In her own words

"I care nothing for the fashionable. A portrait painter has need of these things, but not I, who find all that is wanted in my dogs, my horses, my hinds, and my stags of the forest."

Who knew?

The artist sketched her subjects from life before composing paintings in the studio. Her subject matter was an unusual choice since 19th-century female painters typically rendered portraits and domestic subjects.

Rosa Bonheur, *The Highland Raid*, 1860; Oil on canvas, 51 x 84 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth



Spider III



Spider III, 1995

Spider Woman

Late in her career, **Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010)** revisited themes from her past. She drew her first spider in 1947. When Bourgeois returned to the motif in the mid-1990s, she depicted these eight-legged creatures in two and three dimensions, at large and small scales.

Take a closer look

Take a moment to view *Spider III* from various angles. Consider how these changes in perspective affect the details you notice and your response to the work.

Something to talk about

While spiders can be a source of fear or anxiety for many, Bourgeois recognized her mother's characteristics in these protective, resourceful creatures. What do they evoke for you? Which animal would you choose to represent you? Why?

In her own words

"‘The female spider’ has a bad reputation—a stinger, a killer. I rehabilitate her. If I have to rehabilitate her it is because I feel criticized."

Who knew?

Before her own work graced galleries and museums, Bourgeois introduced visitors to her artistic predecessors as a docent at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

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



Young Girl with a Sheaf



Amazing Grace

In *Young Girl with a Sheaf*, Camille Claudel depicted a female figure leaning against a bundle of wheat. Claudel was able to study from nude models, rare for a 19th-century woman. As a result, she rendered the human form with intimacy and grace.



Young Girl with a Sheaf, ca. 1890

Take a closer look

Camille Claudel (1864–1943) originally modeled this piece in clay and then cast it in bronze. Looking closely, we can see where she manipulated the clay to achieve different textures.

Something to talk about

Claudé and Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923), also in the museum's collection, were contemporaries. Their works highlight two distinct styles yet share some similarities. Find Bernhardt's *Après la tempête (After the Storm)* (ca. 1876). What do they have in common? How are they different?

Who knew?

Claudé studied and collaborated with noted French sculptor Auguste Rodin. Scholars believe she contributed to some of his works, including *The Gates of Hell* (1880–1917) and *The Burghers of Calais* (1884–95).

Camille Claudel, *Young Girl with a Sheaf*, ca. 1890; Bronze, 14½ x 7 x 7½ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth



Portrait of a Noblewoman



Dear Dowry

The sumptuous garments and jewels adorning this woman in her wedding portrait are part of her dowry—the wealth she brings to her marriage. Unlike this sitter and other women of the day, Lavinia Fontana did not have to meet this requirement because of her earning potential as an artist.



Portrait of a Noblewoman, ca. 1580

Take a closer look

The nobility of Bologna sought **Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614)** for portrait commissions. Her ability to portray fabric textures and intricate jewelry—seen clearly in this work—appealed to her status-conscious patrons.

Something to talk about

During the Renaissance, portraits were never simply created to represent the likeness of the sitter. Consider Fontana's handling of costume, expression, and pose. What do such details communicate about this young woman's character, mood, and social standing?

Who knew?

Incorporated symbols suggest this sitter embodied qualities of an ideal 16th-century bride. The marten pelt suspended from her waist signifies fertility—this animal reproduces prolifically. The cross pendant, high collar, and affectionate dog represent piety, modesty, and loyalty.

Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Noblewoman*, ca. 1580; Oil on canvas, 45¼ x 35¼ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth



Will-o'-the-Wisp



Will-o'-the-Wisp, ca. 1900

Into the Woods

While lauded for co-founding Newlyn Art School, **Elizabeth Adela Armstrong Forbes (1859–1912)** met resistance from a society that believed women shouldn't pursue careers. Forbes's life wasn't a fairy tale, but she depicted a few, as in this work and her children's book *King Arthur's Wood* (1904).

Take a closer look

Will-o'-the-Wisp is a triptych—a work comprising three sections—with an elaborate frame. Follow elements like the intertwining trees, scampering mice, and lyrical language across the surfaces to piece together the story inspired by William Allingham's poem "The Fairies" (1850).

Something to talk about

The artist's color choices affect the mood of her painting. How does this painting make you feel? Do you think this fable will have a happy ending?

Who knew?

This painting is named after a natural phenomenon of phosphorescent light seen hovering over marshy land. It also refers to an elusive person or thing.

Elizabeth Adela Armstrong Forbes, *Will-o'-the-Wisp*, ca. 1900; Oil on canvas, 27 x 44 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photo by Lee Stalsworth





A Natural Beauty

Throughout her career, Barbara Hepworth stressed the influence of landscape on her art. From an early age, she often traveled in the countryside of Yorkshire, England, with her father, a county civil engineer and surveyor.



Merryn, 1962

Take a closer look

Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975) created *Merryn* by carving directly into alabaster, seeking to reveal and celebrate this stone's distinctive qualities. Notice the subtle shifts in opacity and variegation—from milky white to warm golden tones.

Something to talk about

Imagine that this sculpture was made out of a different material like shiny silver, textured tires, or pink plastic. Would you like it more or less than Hepworth's stone version? Why?

Who knew?

The title of the sculpture references St Merryn, a town on the northern coast of Cornwall, England. St Merryn is about 80 miles from St Ives, the location of Hepworth's home and studio from 1949 until her death, now known as the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden.

Barbara Hepworth, *Merryn*, 1962; Alabaster, 14½ x 7¼ x 15½ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © Barbara Hepworth; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth



Valerie Jaudon

Bay St. Louis



Avalon



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Bay St. Louis, 1973

Avalon, 1976

Inferior Decorating?

The 1970s art world deemed “decorative” works—associated with the feminine in Western cultures—superficial. Defying that notion, **Valerie Jaudon (b. 1945)** reinterpreted designs from undervalued handcrafts such as Islamic tile, Byzantine mosaics, and Turkish embroidery.

Take a closer look

Jaudon favors organized compositions and gestural brushstrokes. In *Bay St. Louis*, blocks of vibrant color hint at an underlying order. *Avalon*'s monochromatic palette and areas of bare canvas emphasize silver shapes. Her impasto, or thick application of paint, activates each work's surface.

Something to talk about

One art historian called Jaudon's art both uninhibited and disciplined. In what ways do you think her paintings address this duality? Do you think one quality dominates? Why or why not?

Who knew?

The artist's titles often reference towns in her home state of Mississippi.

Valerie Jaudon, *Bay St. Louis*, 1973; Acrylic on canvas; 72 x 72 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © Valerie Jaudon

Valerie Jaudon, *Avalon*, 1976; Oil and metallic paint on canvas; 72 x 108 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © Valerie Jaudon/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



The Springs



The Springs, 1964

Different Strokes

Abstract Expressionism, considered America's first avant-garde movement, combined abstract form and subjective content. *The Springs* by **Lee Krasner (1908–1984)** illustrates the emotional handling of paint, line, and color that defined the style.

Take a closer look

Krasner built up the surface of *The Springs* through a combination of narrow and broad brushstrokes, daubs of paint squeezed directly from tubes, and wide swaths applied with a palette knife. Unpainted areas reveal bare canvas, creating a sense of layering and depth.

In her own words

"Traditionally women have not produced great art, but this is because of social views rather than any in-born ability. A woman must face prejudice in this field, and must be perhaps one and a half times as good as her male counterpart to gain recognition."

Lee Krasner, *The Springs*, 1964; Oil on canvas, 43 x 66 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © 2015 The Pollock-Krasner Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York





The Concert, ca. 1633

Pitch Perfect

Laughter and song fill the merry paintings of **Judith Leyster (1609–1660)**. The only female artist of her time to have a workshop in her native Haarlem in the Netherlands, Leyster created intimate interior scenes known as genre paintings.

Take a closer look

Though the smiling group looks casual and relaxed, spot the woman carefully keeping time with her raised right hand. The three musicians must work together to remain in harmony, possibly a reference to the value of self-restraint.

Something to talk about

Scholars suggest this painting is a self-portrait of Leyster singing with her husband and friend playing instruments. What musical memory would you choose to immortalize in a work of art?

Who knew?

Leyster's name means "lead star," a common Dutch term for the North Star. The artist often included a star along with her initials when she signed her works. Don't go stargazing here though, as *The Concert* does not include her stellar stamp.

Judith Leyster, *The Concert*, ca. 1633; Oil on canvas, 24 x 34¼ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay



Joan Mitchell

Sale Neige



Orange



Sale Neige, 1980

Orange, 1981

Forces of Nature

Joan Mitchell (1925–1992) often found inspiration for her subject matter in urban and bucolic landscapes, from her native Chicago to a country home in Vétheuil, France.

Take a closer look

Mitchell contrasted areas of thick pigment with sections of bare canvas, playing with our perceptions of surface and depth. Crisscrossing brushstrokes create visual rhythm. Despite their seeming spontaneity, Mitchell's paintings evolved over months.

In her own words

"My paintings are titled after they are finished. I paint from remembered landscapes that I carry with me—and remembered feelings of them.... I could certainly never mirror nature. I would like more to paint what it leaves me with."

Who knew?

Sale Neige (French for "dirty snow") references the artist's early memories—gazing at frozen Lake Michigan, falling through the ice in a sledding accident, and being a champion figure skater.

Joan Mitchell, *Sale Neige*, 1980; Oil on canvas, 86¼ x 70⅞ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © Estate of Joan Mitchell

Joan Mitchell, *Orange*, 1981; Oil on canvas, 63¼ x 51 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Conservation funds generously provided in honor of Ed Williams by his family; © Estate of Joan Mitchell





Birds of a Feather

Berthe Morisot was an original member of the Société Anonyme, the group we know as the French Impressionists. Like her male contemporaries, she used a painterly style to capture immediate visual experiences.



The Cage, 1885

Take a closer look

The Cage exemplifies the late style of **Berthe Morisot (1841–1895)**, featuring dynamic brushwork and fragmented color. The raw canvas, visible near the frame, suggests that the artist worked swiftly and spontaneously to capture a fleeting moment.

Something to talk about

Morisot rendered domestic spaces and activities instead of cafés and boulevards favored by her male peers, as these were considered inappropriate subjects for women. She applied impressionist techniques to her everyday life. What might you depict in a still life to reflect your surroundings?

Who knew?

In addition to Morisot, three other women were closely associated with the French Impressionist circle: Marie Bracquemond (1840–1916); Mary Cassatt (1844–1926), also in the museum's collection; and Eva Gonzalès (1849–1883).

Berthe Morisot, *The Cage*, 1885; Oil on canvas, 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 15 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photo by Lee Stalsworth



Staffelsee in Autumn



Breakfast of the Birds



Staffelsee in Autumn, 1923

Breakfast of the Birds, 1934

Moody Hues

Gabriele Münter (1877–1962) favored landscapes and interior scenes as subject matter. A prominent figure in German Expressionism, she manipulated formal elements to render her emotional responses to subjects rather than their precise physical appearance.

Take a closer look

Münter applied paint in broad, thick strokes. She did not model objects in light and shadow. Instead color, outlined by dark lines, creates dimension and structure.

Something to talk about

Color, for Münter, served expressive purposes by creating a sense of atmosphere or capturing the essence of an experience. What mood does she evoke with the vivid palette for an autumnal landscape? With a muted, almost monochrome interior for a winter scene?

Who knew?

The artist collected Bavarian folk art called *Hinterglasmalerei*. These images painted on the reverse side of glass featured black contour lines filled with bright pigment.

Gabriele Münter, *Staffelsee in Autumn*, 1923; Oil on board, 13¼ x 19¼ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © 2015 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Gabriele Münter, *Breakfast of the Birds*, 1934; Oil on board, 18 x 21¼ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © 2015 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn



Anna Claypoole Peale

Nancy Aertsen



Still Life with Strawberries



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Nancy Aertsen, ca. 1820

Still Life with Strawberries, ca. late 1820s

Details, Details

Anna Claypoole Peale (1791–1878) excelled at painting watercolor-on-ivory portrait miniatures and still lifes. The delicate detail and intimate scale of her pieces beckon viewers closer.

Take a closer look

Notice the rich, warm hues—like scarlet red and chestnut brown—Peale used to enliven her subjects and create depth. Her deft choice and application of color ensured Peale's reputation for precise naturalistic renderings.

Something to talk about

Portrait miniatures and still lifes each require skills distinct to the medium and style. How does Peale's brushwork and handling of space differ in these two works?

Who knew?

While Peale learned the technique of watercolor-on-ivory painting from her father, the art form was pioneered by another woman artist, Rosalba Carriera (1675–1757), also in the museum's collection.

Anna Claypoole Peale, *Nancy Aertsen*, ca. 1820; Watercolor on ivory, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{1}{2}$ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

Anna Claypoole Peale, *Still Life with Strawberries*, ca. late 1820s; Oil on canvas, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{4}$ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photo by Lee Stalsworth



Still Life of Fish and Cat



Still Life of Fish and Cat, after 1620

The Cat's Meow

Clara Peeters (1594–after 1657) helped pioneer the genre of still-life painting. She was also the first artist known to feature fish. Her arrangements of food, flowers, vessels, and the occasional feline influenced later artists.

Take a closer look

The artist's ability to replicate the appearance of things was key to her success. Note her judicious application of white paint to create the illusion of moist eyes, oysters' brackish baths, opalescent scales, and translucent shrimp shells.

Something to talk about

Most still lifes feature inanimate objects, but Peeters included a cat, a common pet at the time. How does its presence affect your experience of the painting?

Who knew?

As one of the few women working professionally as a painter in Europe at the time, Peeters should be considered a trailblazer. Owing to her gender, her life and artistic contributions went largely unrecorded by history.

Clara Peeters, *Still Life of Fish and Cat*, after 1620; Oil on panel, 13½ x 18½ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay



Roses, Convolvulus, Poppies, and Other Flowers in an Urn on a Stone Ledge



Flower Power

Dutch artist Rachel Ruysch was a court painter, wife, and mother of 10 who remained artistically active into her 80s. Her vibrant floral pieces made her one of the most celebrated artists of her day.



Roses, Convolvulus, Poppies, and Other Flowers in an Urn on a Stone Ledge, ca. late 1680s

Take a closer look

Paintings by **Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750)** reward close inspection. She renders blooms and foliage with precise details and naturalistic textures. Typically her floral arrangements are also astir with ants, butterflies, beetles, and other insects.

Something to talk about

Ruysch's still lifes are anything but motionless. How has her use of color, composition, and lighting added visual energy and drama to this work?

Who knew?

Ruysch grew up amid one of Europe's great Curiosity Cabinets. Assembled by her scientist father, it contained preserved anatomical specimens, exotic birds, insects, and plants. Exposure to such items may have encouraged the accuracy with which she rendered individual flowers.

Rachel Ruysch, *Roses, Convolvulus, Poppies, and Other Flowers in an Urn on a Stone Ledge*, ca. late 1680s; Oil on canvas, 42½ x 33 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth





Painting Prodigy

Elisabetta Sirani was a prolific young painter from the progressive city of Bologna, Italy. Trained as an artist by her father, Sirani produced almost 200 artworks between the age of 17 and her untimely death 10 years later.



Virgin and Child, 1663

Take a closer look

In this painting, **Elisabetta Sirani (1638–1665)** portrayed an intimate moment between a loving mother and child. Mary wears a turban favored by Bolognese peasant women. The garland of roses foreshadows both the crown she will wear as Queen of Heaven and her son's crown of thorns.

Something to talk about

In painting this Christian subject, Sirani emphasized the humanity rather than the divinity of the Holy Family. If you did not know the title of the work, would you still recognize the subject? Why or why not?

Who knew?

Sirani completed paintings very quickly. But her speed, together with her gender, led to accusations that her father was lending a hand. To counter this suspicion, Sirani opened her studio, inviting the public to observe her at work.

Elisabetta Sirani, *Virgin and Child*, 1663; Oil on canvas, 34 x 27½ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Conservation funds generously provided by the Southern California State Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth





Home Grown

Known for creating large, hand-built vessels, Margaret Tafoya favored local materials, techniques, and imagery. Devoted to pottery traditions native to the Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico, she refused to use a potter's wheel.



Jar, ca. 1965

Take a closer look

Margaret Tafoya (1904–2001) decorated her pottery with relief carvings of traditional symbols. Examine the jar closely to locate imagery Tafoya incorporated.

Something to talk about

The artist's highly polished pots blur the line between utilitarian object and artwork. Consider items in your own home. In which pieces do you value function over form? Vice versa?

In her own words

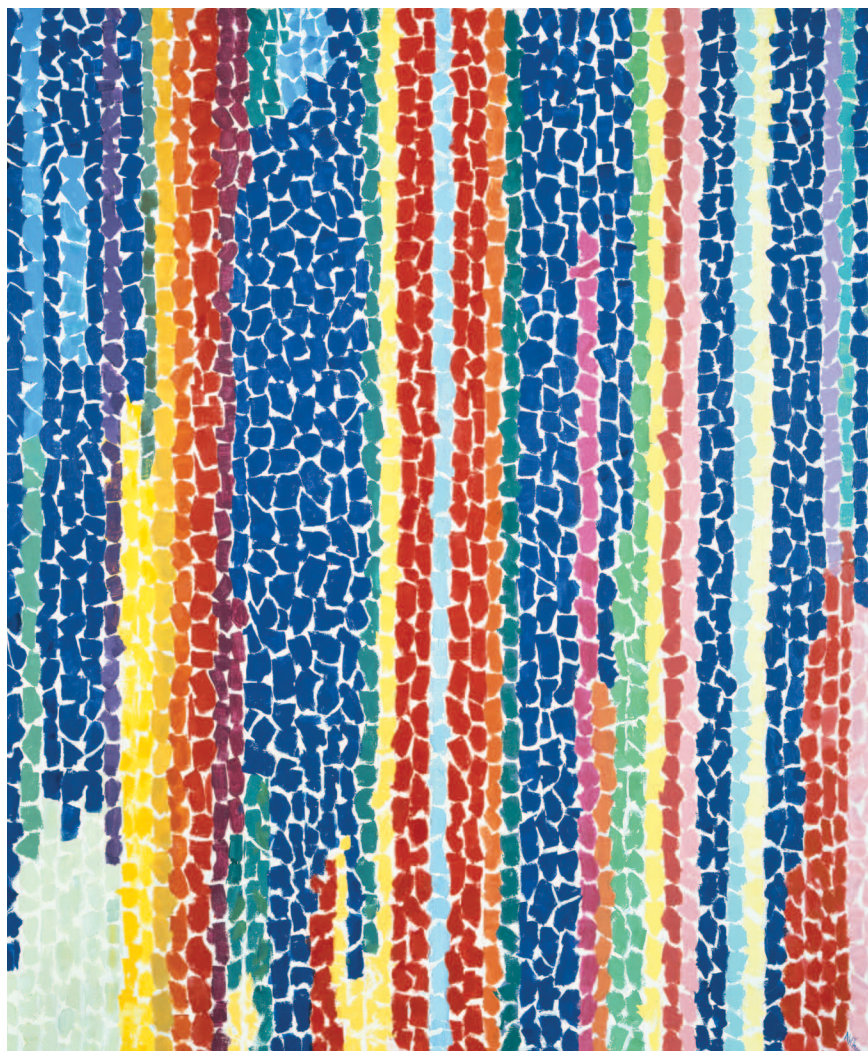
"When I was small, like all pueblo children, we sit around Mother's side when she is making pottery. We get a piece of clay and try to make animals or maybe bowls...and whether we knew it or not, through our playing with clay we learned pottery making."

Who knew?

Tafoya's family reflects the matrilineal heritage of her craft. Her mother, Sara Fina Gutierrez Tafoya (1863–1949), developed the pottery style now associated with the Santa Clara Pueblo. Margaret's daughter, Lu Ann Tafoya (b. 1938), also in the museum's collection, continues the tradition.

Margaret Tafoya, *Jar*, ca. 1965; Blackware, 17 x 13 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © Margaret Tafoya





Late Bloomer

After more than 35 years as a D.C. public school teacher, Alma Woodsey Thomas retired to focus on painting. She developed her signature style in her mid-70s. At 80 years old, Thomas became the first African American woman to have a solo exhibition at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art.



Iris, Tulips, Jonquils, and Crocuses , 1969

Take a closer look

Alma Woodsey Thomas (1891–1978) created paintings that appear quite structured, but individual brushstrokes reveal her spontaneity. Find evidence of her working process, including faint vertical pencil lines and overlapping colors. Observe the overall effect of the palette and pattern.

Something to talk about

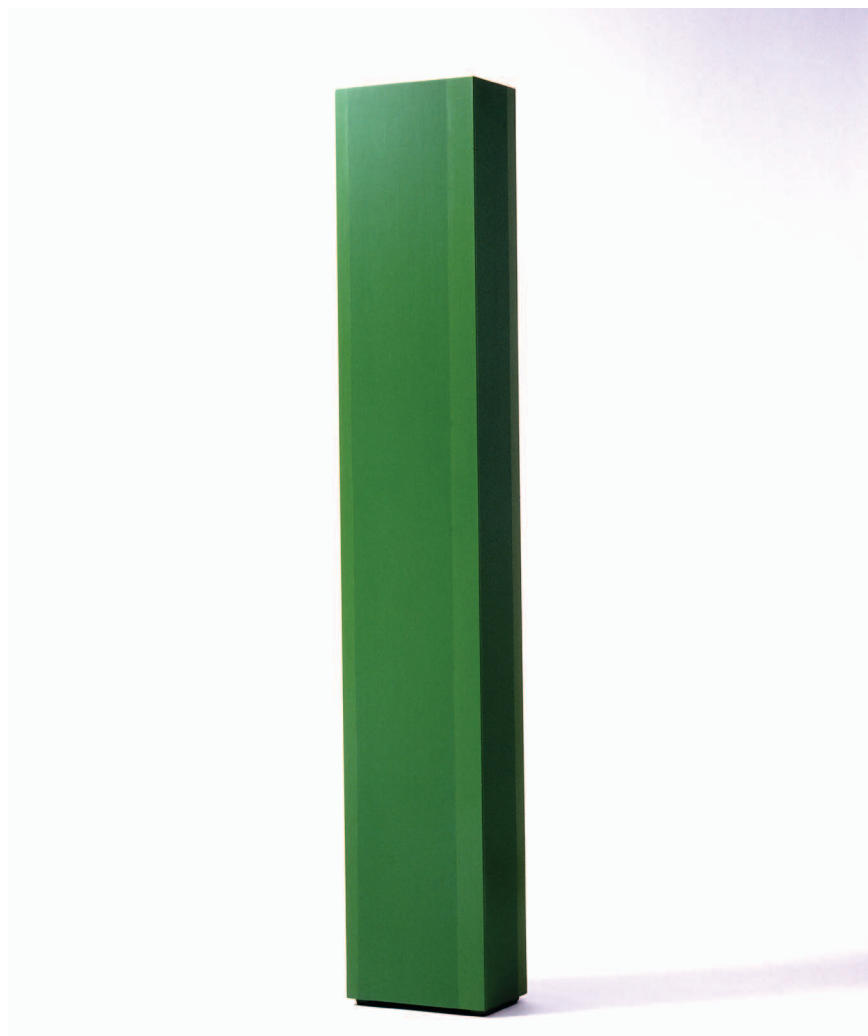
Thomas believed in the expressive quality of color. What mood or idea do her hues convey? How would we experience the work differently if it were monochromatic?

In her own words

"My paintings reflect my communion with nature, man's highest source of inspiration."

Alma Woodsey Thomas, *Iris, Tulips, Jonquils, and Crocuses*, 1969; Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 50 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; © Estate of Alma Woodsey Thomas; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth





Colorforms

Anne Truitt often referenced the natural world through color and title. In Greek mythology, a dryad is a female spirit who inhabits forests, specifically oak trees.



Summer Dryad, 1971

Take a closer look

Anne Truitt (1921–2004) achieved her signature silken surfaces by methodically straining acrylic paint, applying up to 40 layers of pigment, and sanding between coats. View her simple geometric form from different angles, observing the play of light and shadow across its glossy green planes.

Something to talk about

Truitt used sculpture to express abstract concepts like time and human existence. Her works invoke recognizable forms—crucifixes, tombstones, picket fences, solitary figures—to invite associations between the concrete and the intangible. What references does this piece bring to mind?

In her own words

“I conceive the sculptural form in space, as if the color itself came into being as a form.”

Who knew?

The artist created *Summer Dryad* at her studio in the Cleveland Park neighborhood of Washington, D.C., just a few miles northwest of the museum.

Anne Truitt, *Summer Dryad*, 1971; Acrylic on wood; 76 x 13 x 8 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of the Holladay Foundation; © Anne Truitt

