

# SPACE TO SOAR

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE  
NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS







"I have long believed that the arts reflect our shared humanity and that women are central to that story. Our museum's building symbolizes — and houses — women's great contributions to the history of art, past and present. We have a responsibility to future generations to ensure it is restored and renewed."

WILHELMINA COLE HOLLADAY  
Founder





Great art has the power to change the way we see. It can arouse emotion, alter perspective, spark conversation, or reveal deeper insights about who we are and what we stand for. But to work its magic, the art itself must be seen.

For centuries, women artists have created works of profound meaning and beauty. Yet in the nearly half a millennium since the advent of museums, women's art has been all but missing from public display and the stories and contributions of women artists absent from art history.

From its home in the nation's capital, the National Museum of Women in the Arts has given prominence to the fierce women artists who refused to let society define their place. Thanks to Wilhelmina Cole Holladay and her husband Wallace — and their bold and ambitious vision of collecting art by women and creating a museum for its permanent display — our Renaissance

Revival building is now the locus of a worldwide movement that champions women in, and through, the arts.

The importance of our mission has attracted international attention, as well as champions from every occupation and across political and geographic divides. **NOW IS THE TIME TO RESTORE THIS LANDMARK BUILDING SO IT MAY REACH ITS FULL POTENTIAL TO SHOWCASE THIS SINGULAR COLLECTION AND SERVE AS A SITE TO CONVENE ADVOCATES AND INSPIRE THEM TO ACTION.** By uniting to support our \$55 million campaign, we can ensure our building's integrity and remake its interior to match our mission. There is no better way to honor our founders and give our museum the opportunity to reach new heights.





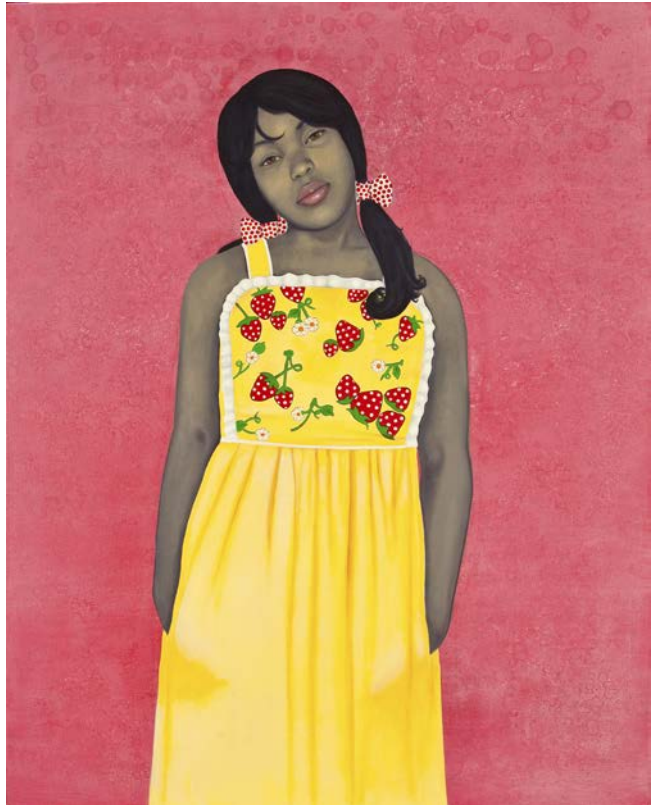
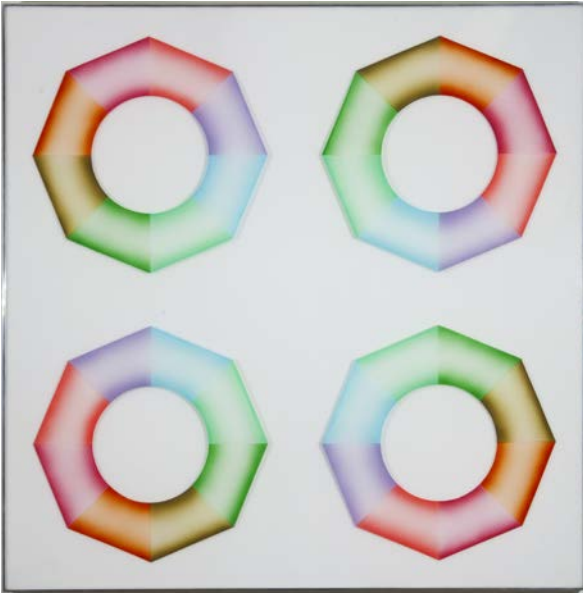
# MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD

Passion. Intensity. Equality. Independence. Refuge.  
Relevance. Empower. Advocate. Enlighten. Provoke.  
Excite. Inspire. Breathtaking. Uncomfortable.  
Visceral. Cool. Compelling. Brave. Defiant.

These are just some of the words visitors use to describe the emotions and experiences that surround an encounter with the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the only major museum in the world dedicated solely to recognizing the creative achievements of women. Since our founding in 1987, when we opened the world's eyes to the cumulative splendor of women artists, we have used art as a lens to examine the great issues of our time and shape the cultural conversation.

“More than half of all visual artists working today identify as women. Yet approximately 13% of all the art hanging on the walls of U.S. museums is by women artists. Since before our doors opened in 1987 — and every day thereafter — our core business has been inclusion and equity. I see the museum as a shining beacon of light and reason.”

SUSAN FISHER STERLING  
Alice West Director, National Museum of Women  
in the Arts





# UNLEASHING THE ART |

At a time when the average person is still hard-pressed to name even five female artists, NMWA brings the generative work of artists into the light, beginning with the great women painters of the 16th through 18th centuries. Artists such as Lavinia Fontana, court painter to Pope Paul V, who produced masterpieces while raising 11 children. Or Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun, Marie Antoinette's favorite painter, and one of only three women invited to join the French Académie des Beaux-Arts.

It is a privilege to ensure these "Old Mistresses" get their rightful due and exciting to introduce audiences to the incredibly talented women who follow in their footsteps — women such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Frida Kahlo, Louise Bourgeois, Judy Chicago, and Amy Sutherland, to name just a few. Breaking the bonds of chronology, we organize our galleries thematically to engage the ideas that shape human life, to juxtapose the historic with the contemporary, and to ensure that women of all races and backgrounds receive proper representation.

Our groundbreaking exhibitions look at topics in fresh ways and highlight work never before seen.

In 2002, NMWA found a cache of paintings by women artists in the attic of St. Petersburg's State Hermitage Museum in great disrepair. NMWA paid for conservation, then displayed the art on our own walls. Today, the paintings hang in their rightful place in the Hermitage. For the widely acclaimed *Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea*, we brought together more than 60 Renaissance- and Baroque-era masterworks from across Europe and the United States, and encouraged people of all faiths to explore the concept of womanhood as represented by the Virgin Mary. Affirming our embrace of art in all its forms, the museum is also host to an array of performing artists each year.

More than 5,500 artworks created by women form a collection unique in the world, but NMWA is only able to show a fraction of the art at any given time. The campaign will elevate the exhibitions we can stage, increase the number of objects we can display, and make our historic home better able to accommodate large-scale contemporary pieces.





# ADVANCING SCHOLARSHIP |

Behind every artist is a story. How did life influence art and vice versa? How and where were they taught? How do scholars and critics interpret their work? Women were largely written out of art history, making a resource such as the museum's Betty Boyd Dettre Library and Research Center invaluable. The center has painstakingly amassed a collection of more than 18,500 books and print resources on women in art and, through its archives, preserves the papers and primary records of women artists. Library users can access online resources to connect with a broader array of tools. And throughout the year, museum workshops help audiences not only learn more about art but also learn how to make art themselves.

Your support will help the museum maintain these valuable physical resources while adding the online and search capacities that reflect the ways people currently access information. It will also enable us to offer informal spaces where people can continue the all-important learning begun in our galleries.

WHAT IF  
W  
O  
M  
E  
N  
RULED THE  
WORLD



# FORGING CHAMPIONS |

“Our reach and impact have been extraordinary. Staff from the Tate in London came here to collaborate and learn. This museum is a great convener. While it starts with the art, we attract women committed to broader issues.”

WINTON HOLLADAY  
Vice-Chair of the Board, National Museum of  
Women in the Arts

Illuminating the work of women artists is critical to our mission, but only one part of our cause. Great art is a prism through which we can examine the relevant and sometimes polarizing issues of today. What can the arts do to combat violence against women? How can the arts help to improve the environment? Through our Women, Arts, and Social Change program, we emphasize the arts as a catalyst for social change. Female artists and leaders from diverse fields come together in a curated conversation to stimulate innovative thinking and channel passions into actions.

To seed interest in women and art across the world, NMWA has 22 committees working at the grassroots level to advocate for women artists. Every two years, these leading women come together in Washington to network and help promote the work of under-appreciated artists from around the globe.

By supporting this work, you enable empowerment even beyond the worlds of art and advocacy. Visitors of all genders and ages who experience the museum expand their creative horizons. By telling art's full story, we dispel stereotypes and reinforce the reality that talent and leadership have no gender. The ability to spark that powerful shift in perception is, perhaps, our greatest legacy.

The museum's permanent home sits at the center of a global effort to champion these ideas. Appropriate space to convene, converse, educate, and present is essential to who we are — and what we can be.







# THE BEST ART DESERVES THE BEST FRAME

The National Museum of Women in the Arts has hit its stride. Membership and attendance are up, and we increasingly draw advocates to our mission for social change. Our collections are growing and more grassroots communities are coming on board. Thanks in large part to our efforts, the percentage of art by women artists displayed in major museums is slowly rising, but there is a very long way to go.

The greatest opportunity to extend our mission and leverage our growth is to restore the building we call home. This renewal will support our forward momentum, ensure the permanence of our mission, and safeguard the collection for our children and grandchildren.

Built in 1907, NMWA's landmark home started life as a Masonic Temple and, before the Holladays rescued it, housed an adult-film parlor. A space that first excluded and then exploited women has come to symbolize women's fight for equality. Three decades of daily use, a burgeoning collection, and tremendous advances in technology necessitate changes to our historic building. To thrive and grow, we must upgrade and renovate our space, ensuring it meets the needs

of today's visitors and advocates. Comprehensive engineering and architectural studies specify how we get there. After years of due diligence, we see our future clearly.

"The bones of this building are good. It is a majestic structure — timeless and beautiful. To protect the collection and better enable NMWA to educate and engage the world, we must upgrade the envelope and the performance of the systems and make better use of the interior space. Revitalizing the building is all about positioning the museum for the future."

| SANDRA VICCHIO  
Architect



## Enhancing the Visitor Experience

Imagine a restored building where outdoor sculpture and video engage visitors before they enter. Upon entering the sweeping Great Hall, a completely redesigned visitor experience awaits, beginning with an orientation gallery that tells stories of women artists woven into a revised history of art that NMWA helped write. We will help people navigate through the building by creating easy-to-understand pathways through ADA-accessible spaces where personal comfort and amenities — including a lactation suite — will await our guests.



## Putting More Art on Display

New and enlarged gallery spaces will increase the number of exhibitions we mount, the art we display, and the ways in which we display it. Uninterrupted walls with new surfaces will better honor the artists' intent and offer improved sight lines and vistas. LED technology will throw more light with less heat, thus illuminating and preserving the art at the same time. Reconfigured space will allow for more and better storage, as well as a photo studio and prep space to help ready traveling exhibitions.





### Shining a Brighter Light

Having established the museum as a beacon, we embrace technology as the means by which we will exponentially amplify its light. One of the greatest advantages of taking the building down to the studs is the opportunity to wire it to the latest specifications. Those who visit in person will be able to engage with the art through creative interactives, while enhanced wireless access will allow them to pose questions and download answers on their mobile devices. Cutting-edge technology will enable us to serve as the hub of an ever-expanding network, bringing the museum's treasures to distant audiences, hosting important conversations remotely, and collaborating with national and international organizations to convene like-minded individuals across the world.



### Increasing Capacity to Engage

Improvements to the space will also help us bring the world to audiences here at home. The Performance Hall will benefit greatly from better lighting and acoustics, and we will increase our capacity to stream live programming. The Library and Research Center will feature salon-style reading spaces, and we will be able to foster intimate and long-distance conversation through a learning commons fitted for video conferencing. Budding artists can learn by doing in a custom makerspace. Finally, we will restore the building's august exterior to protect the art and ensure a comfortable and safe experience for the people within.

With your help, we will have a completely redesigned and re-engineered building that honors our founders' vision for the museum; provides a world-class, 21st-century visitor experience; and strengthens both mission and potential.





# WHERE MOMENTUM MEETS OPPORTUNITY

By restoring this historic place, we recommit to the cause and the values we champion. We have a building whose stature is commensurate with our work, a building that can hold its own in a city filled with monuments, in a world where monuments to women are few and far between.

The National Museum of Women in the Arts was born from an auspicious act of philanthropy, and donors make our work possible today. We ask you to join in this great effort to secure our home. For the world needs our voice, and our voice needs a permanent platform from which to soar.



COVER: Installation view of the New York Avenue Sculpture Project with Niki de Saint Phalle's *Les Trois Graces (The Three Graces)*, 1999; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

INSIDE FRONT COVER, PAGE 12: Photos by Thomas H. Field

PAGE 2, PAGE 14 (RIGHT), PAGE 15 (RIGHT): Photos by Kevin Allen

PAGE 4: Photo by Daniel Schwartz

PAGE 6: Clockwise from top left:

Judy Chicago, *Pasadena Lifesavers Red #4*, 1969–70; Sprayed acrylic lacquer on acrylic, 60 x 60 in.; NMWA, Gift of MaryRoss Taylor in memory of Carlota S. Smith; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

Amy Sherald, *They call me Redbone but I'd rather be Strawberry Shortcake*, 2009; Oil on canvas, 54 x 43 in.; NMWA, Gift of Steven Scott, Baltimore, in honor of the artist and the 25th Anniversary of NMWA; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

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; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Leon Trotsky*, 1937; Oil on Masonite, 30 x 24 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of the Honorable Clare Boothe Luce; © 2012 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Image by Google

Berenice Abbott, *New York at Night*, 1932; Gelatin silver print, 22 x 17 3/8 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of The Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, DC; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Noblewoman*, ca. 1580; Oil on canvas, 45 1/4 x 35 1/4 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Funding for the frame generously provided by the Texas State Committee; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

PAGE 8, PAGE 15 (LEFT): Photos by Emily Haight

PAGE 10: Yael Bartana, *What if Women Ruled the World*, 2016; Neon, 98 1/2 x 38 1/2 in.; NMWA, Museum purchase, Belinda de Gaudemar Acquisition Fund, with additional support from the Members' Acquisition Fund; © Yael Bartana; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

PAGE 14 (LEFT): Photo by Rick Reinhard

PAGE 16: Rendering by Sandra Vicchio & Associates, LLC with Marshall Craft Associates, Inc.

The National Museum of Women in the Arts brings recognition to the achievements of women artists of all periods and nationalities by exhibiting, preserving, acquiring, and researching art by women and by teaching the public about their accomplishments.

# SPACE TO SOAR

Development Office  
1250 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-266-2813  
[www.nmwa.org](http://www.nmwa.org)

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE  
NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS