

Spring 2023

Women in the Arts

NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF WOMEN
IN THE ARTS





DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

I'm so pleased to share that the museum will reopen to the public on October 21. As you will read in this issue, our top-to-bottom renovation is on schedule, and we are planning celebratory events and exhibitions to welcome you back.

When you visit, you'll see all that we have done to reimagine the building: new spaces for programming, expanded galleries, and improved ADA accessibility, as well as exhibitions and a new collection installation that highlight the profound talents of women artists.

In tandem with our work to bring this multi-year project to fruition, I also am excited for what we have planned for this spring.

Our annual gala takes place at the Embassy of Italy on April 14. That evening, we will present NMWA's Achievement Award for Excellence in the Arts to Cecilia Alemani, curator of the 59th Venice Biennale. Alemani's 2022 exhibition included 80% women and gender-nonconforming artists—a landmark "first" in the Biennale's 127-year history and something we all can celebrate!

We have also extended *Lookout: Katharina Cibulka* through April 30, and our calendar of online events includes musical programs, book club, and an array of art talks.

These programs affirm that NMWA is the center of a worldwide movement that champions women through the arts. Our iconic home can hold its own in a city filled with monuments, and by restoring our historic building, we recommit to the museum's mission and values.

We have raised more than \$63.5 million to date toward our goal of \$67.5 million. NMWA was born from an auspicious act of philanthropy, and friends like you make our work possible today. Please join in this great effort with a gift to our *Space to Soar* campaign.

WITH GRATITUDE,

Susan Fisher Sterling
The Alice West Director, NMWA

CHAMPION WOMEN THROUGH THE ARTS

MUSEUM INFORMATION
1250 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20005

TEMPORARY MAILING ADDRESS
1615 M Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036

WEBSITE
<https://nmwa.org>
BROAD STROKES BLOG
<https://nmwa.org/blog>

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SPACE TO SOAR
The museum's building is closed through fall 2023 for a top-to-bottom renovation. For more information, check <https://nmwa.org>.

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On the cover: Abigail Tyler Oakes, *Hudson River Landscape* (detail), 1852; Oil on canvas, 14 × 20 in.; NMWA, Gift from the Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art (Museum Purchase, Anna E. Clark Fund)

Director's photo: © Michele Mattei

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“While news photographers were often anonymous, Beals promoted herself through skillful photographs and daring escapades.”

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**Handle with Care:
A Conversation
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Kristen Loudermilk**

Paintings by Abigail Tyler Oakes and Clementine Hunter received conservation treatments that provide insight into their histories.

ALICIA GREGORY



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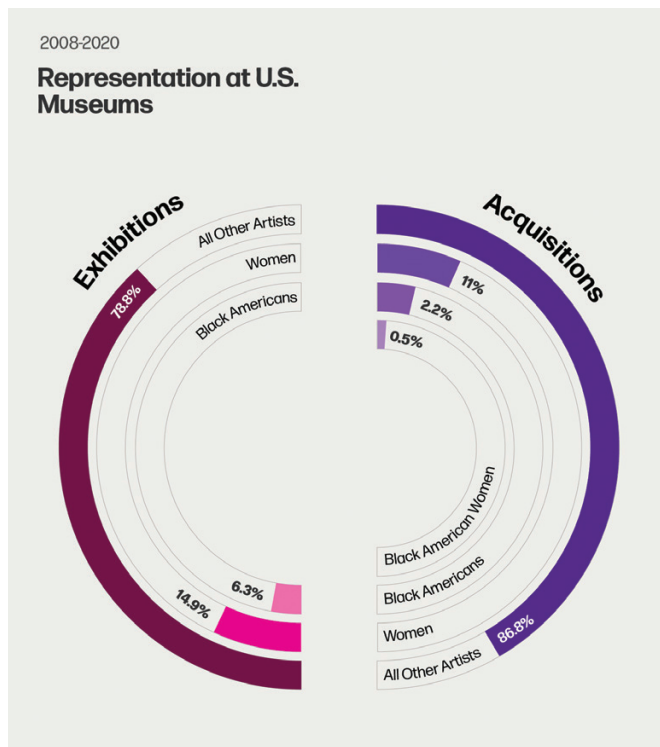
**Jessie Tarbox Beals:
Trailblazing
Photographer**

Beals, the first published woman photojournalist in the U.S., was continually striving for the perfect shot.

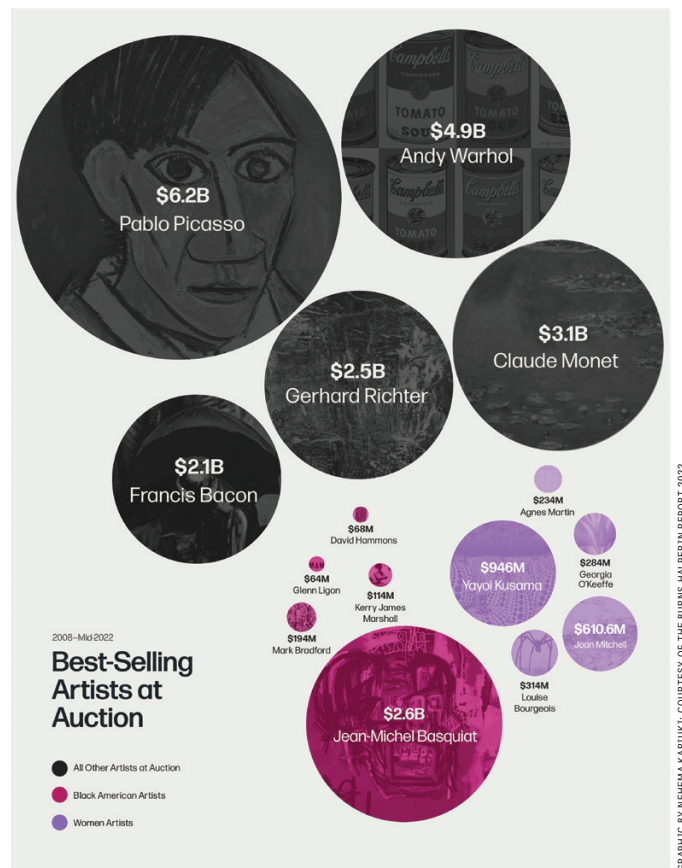
ORIN ZAHRA

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The Burns Halperin Report shares statistics about the representation of women and Black American artists in U.S. museums' exhibition schedules and collection acquisitions, as well as the highest-selling works at auctions worldwide



By the Numbers

In December, *Artnet News* published the newest Burns Halperin Report, in which journalists Charlotte Burns and Julia Halperin dug into statistics on the representation of women and Black American artists in the art world. They examined data on art acquisitions and exhibitions from thirty-one U.S. museums—a variety of sizes and locations—as well as auction results worldwide.

What did they find? Unfortunately, they wrote, “statistics show that the perception of progress is largely a myth.” Looking at museums, just 11 percent of collection acquisitions between 2008 and 2020 were created by female-identifying artists, and 2.2 percent were by Black American artists. Since women comprise 50.5 percent of the U.S. population, and Black Americans 13.6

percent, these figures fall far short of reflecting the country's diversity. Dispiritingly, just 0.5 percent of museum acquisitions were of work by Black American women artists. They also found that museum acquisitions of art by women peaked in 2009 across the years they studied.

They identified a few brighter spots: Museums of contemporary art collected a more representative range of art—48.2 percent work by women and 8.8 percent work by Black Americans—than encyclopedic museums and university museums. In addition, museum exhibitions of work by female-identifying artists grew more prevalent over the years (though the trajectory was not consistent).

On the auction side, where work by women artists represented just 3.3 percent of

sales, Burns and Halperin wrote about volatile trends and the concentration of sales on just a handful of popular artists. Bottom line? Their detailed reports reveal a lot of room for improvement.

In Memoriam



Dorothy Iannone, 2002

Boston-born, Berlin-based artist Dorothy Iannone, whose works celebrate female sexuality and erotic love, died on December

26 at age eighty-nine. For six decades, she created paintings, sculptures, and artist's books in a bold style that drew from Japanese woodcuts, Greek vases, Egyptian art, the *Kama Sutra*, Buddhism, literature, and film. Often, her art married hand-lettered text and visuals, communicating personal narratives, such as the early days of her affair with artist Dieter Roth, which she documented in *An Icelandic Saga* (1978–86). Subjected to censorship early in her career and underappreciated by institutions until the early 2000s, the artist had her first U.S. solo exhibition in 2009 at the New Museum. A retrospective will open later this year at the MIT List Visual Arts Center. NMWA's collection includes four of Iannone's abstract paintings from the early 1960s.



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS KNIGHT, COURTESY OF THE PUBLIC ART FUND, NY

Women Watching

New York City's Public Art Fund celebrates women artists with current installations at home and, for the first time, abroad.

A series of twelve new photographs by Aida Muluneh (b. 1974) is installed through May 21 on more than 330 bus shelters across New York, Boston, and Chicago, as well as

Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, where the artist lives. In *This is where I am* (2022), Muluneh, who was born in Ethiopia, examines her experience as an immigrant and refugee, reflects on political regimes she has lived through, and explores themes of history, politics, and place. The series incorporates motifs central to Muluneh's practice, including

the eye, which references the way people bear witness to political and social injustices.

In New York City's Doris C. Freedman Plaza, at the southeastern entrance to Central Park, an eighteen-foot-tall bronze sculpture by Bharti Kher (b. 1969) reflects the artist's cross-cultural identity and her appreciation for India's rich

material culture. *Ancestor* (2022), a universal mother figure, holds her hand in a *mudra* blessing as the heads of twenty-three children emerge from her body. "A Mother in a public space is so needed right now as a site of refuge and a keeper of wisdom," Kher said. *Ancestor* is on view through August 27.

JOIN US! Champion women through the arts with NMWA membership

A woman in a blue dress stands next to a large artwork of a woman blowing a bubble. Another woman in a striped shirt and black hat is taking a photo of the artwork. The background is a pink wall with a grid of small framed artworks.

SIGHTS AND SOUL TRAVELS
Tours and Vacations for Women

A night view of a city street with statues and buildings. A woman is walking in the foreground. The scene is illuminated by streetlights and building lights.

866-737-9602
www.sightsandsoul.com

Culture Watch

// EXHIBITIONS

ALABAMA

A Beautiful Mess: Weavers & Knotters of the Vanguard
 Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
 Through April 14, 2024
<https://mmfa.org>

A diverse group of women artists use utilitarian materials to push the boundaries of fiber art, while confronting issues of racism, sexism, patriarchal systems, and climate change.

CALIFORNIA

Celia Álvarez Muñoz: Breaking the Binding
 Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego
 March 16–August 13, 2023
<https://mcasd.org>

This career retrospective features Muñoz's immersive installations, photographic series, and book projects that often draw on her experience as a resident of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

CALIFORNIA // Celia Álvarez Muñoz, *Petrocuatl*, 1988; Mixed media; On view at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego



COURTESY OF PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

ALABAMA // Jacqueline Surdell, *Orange 2*, 2018; Braided cotton cord, steel curl bar, and 15-pound weight, 104 × 59 × 15 in.; On view at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts



PHOTO BY ADAM REICH

WASHINGTON, D.C. // Sylvia Snowden, *Shell; Glimpses #22*, 2010–12; Acrylic on canvas in two parts, overall 60 × 60 in.; On view at the Rubell Museum D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sylvia Snowden
 Rubell Museum D.C.
 Ongoing
<https://rubellmuseum.org>

Inspired by her daughter, Snowden's series "Shell; Glimpses" features the artist's signature tactile surfaces as well as lush color and brushwork that reflect Shell's energy and spirit.

IOWA

Chunghi Choo: Visionary
 Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
 Through October 8, 2023
<https://crma.org>

A celebration of the work of Choo, a jewelry maker and metalsmith from Incheon, South Korea, this exhibition highlights the sense of movement and dynamism in her art.

MICHIGAN

Vitality and Continuity:
Art in the Experiences
of Anishinaabe, Inuit, and
Pueblo Women

Detroit Institute of Arts
Through January 6, 2024
<https://dia.org>

In a series of three off-site
exhibitions, themes of
mothering, making, art world
success, spirituality, and
continuity recur across
generations of Anishinaabe,
Inuit, and Pueblo women.

NEW YORK

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith:
Memory Map
Whitney Museum of
American Art
April 19–August 2023
<https://whitney.org>

In this comprehensive exhibition,
drawings, prints, paintings, and
sculptures highlight the artist's
role as a leader of dialogues
around land rights, racism, and
cultural preservation.

OHIO

Georgia O'Keeffe,
Photographer
Cincinnati Museum of Art
Through May 7, 2023
<https://cincinnatiartmuseum.org>

With nearly 100 photographs
by O'Keeffe, alongside selected
paintings and drawings,
this exhibition illuminates the
artist's use of the camera
to further her modernist vision.

TEXAS

Las Hermanas Iglesias
Blanton Museum of Art
Through July 9, 2023
<https://blantonmuseum.org>

Through textile, collage, and
sculpture, sisters Lisa and

Janelle Iglesias—who both
gave birth during the COVID-19
pandemic—honor the com-
plexity of reproductive and
caregiving experiences.

International

GERMANY

FEMME FATALE:
Gaze—Power—Gender
Hamburger Kunsthalle
Through April 10, 2023
<https://hamburger-kunsthalle.de>

Artists examine the femme
fatale stereotype, ranging
from Pre-Raphaelite portrayals
(Evelyn De Morgan) to con-
temporary feminist and queer
perspectives (Nan Goldin,
Mickalene Thomas).



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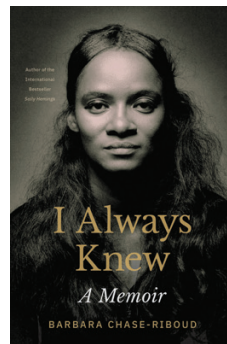
UNITED KINGDOM // Alice Neel,
Self-Portrait, 1980; Oil on canvas,
53 ¾ × 39 ¾ in.; On view at the
Barbican Centre

UNITED KINGDOM

Alice Neel:
Hot Off The Griddle
Barbican Centre, London
Through May 21, 2023
<https://barbican.org.uk>

More than seventy of Neel's
vibrant paintings—including
T.B. Harlem (1940) from
NMWA's collection—celebrate
figures who were often
marginalized in society.

// BOOKS



I Always Knew: A Memoir

In 1957, eighteen-year-old
Barbara Chase-Riboud left
Philadelphia for a fellowship
at the American Academy
in Rome. The trip launched her
career as an artist and writer
as well as a correspondence
with her mother, Vivian Mae,
that continued for decades as
Chase-Riboud moved to Europe
after her Yale art school
graduation. *I Always Knew:
A Memoir* (Princeton University
Press, 2022) relies on that
correspondence, which lasted
until Vivian Mae's death in 1991,
to tell her life story obliquely.
Her letters are interspersed
with short reflections on events
of the time, including the civil
rights movement and Vietnam
War, and her perspective as
a Black American living abroad.
Chase-Riboud's affectionate
correspondence is full of chatty
updates on her travels ("Mom I'd
do it again if I had the chance—
even though my knees are now
shaking," on a teenage solo trip
to Egypt), later her children
("you'd better start preparing to
be a grand-maman"), and outfits
she wore to high-profile society
events. Her early vivacity gives
way to an adulthood with
constant motion and searching
in her personal life, sculpture
practice, and writing—a full and
fascinating life.

// ELIZABETH LYNCH



It Won't Always Be Like This

In the opening scene of Malaka
Gharib's second graphic
memoir, *It Won't Always Be
Like This* (Ten Speed Press,
2022), nine-year-old Gharib
stands in the entrance to her
father's Cairo apartment,
surrounded by her suitcases for
a summer visit, as he reveals
that he has remarried. Next, we
meet kind, playful Hala for tea
in Gharib's grandmother's lush
garden, as the author wonders
how they will fit into each
other's lives. So begins Gharib's
exploration of family, culture,
and self during her annual
summer visits to Egypt. Her
breezy, unassuming illustrations
bring the country to life and
share poignant memories of
time spent with her stepmother:
Gharib teaching Hala (incorrect)
Lisa Loeb lyrics; Hala waxing
Gharib's eyebrows (and mus-
tache) with boiled and cooled
honey; the duo dancing in bed
with just their hands. As much
as this is Gharib's coming-of-
age story, it is also Hala's—as
a wife and mother attempting
to find herself and her indepen-
dence. Gharib's choice to both
begin and end the book with her
stepmother—and dedicate it to
her—places Hala, unexpectedly,
at its very heart.

// ALICIA GREGORY

Education Report



NMWA's educators are planning for the fall, when we can welcome visitors back to programs like youth tours with dedicated docents and crafty happy hours



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE L. GAYOSO, NMWA

PHOTO BY EMILY HAIGHT, NMWA

Space to Make

As NMWA's renovation nears completion, the Education team is eager to return to the spaces and revisit the artwork we love so much. As we reconnect with the familiar, there will be additional galleries to explore, objects to discover, and an Education and Public Programs Studio to activate, as part of the museum's new fourth-floor Learning Commons.

This new studio will be NMWA's first designated space for hands-on making. It presents exciting possibilities, though it also raised questions about how best to organize, supply, and invigorate this type of space. Senior Educator Adrienne (Addie) L. Gayoso began conversations with colleagues around the country in January 2022 to learn how like-minded organizations have used their studios. With this advice and support, we're excited to bring back signature in-person programs, such as Firsthand Experience Workshops, as well as develop new offerings.

"I used to think sculpture was challenging to talk about with a group, but now I think it is a great theme! Thank you."

// Virtual educator workshop participant

Space to Wonder

Devoted to facilitating visitor-centered experiences with art, NMWA educators craft open-ended questions to spark conversations. We also turn to existing tools, such as Harvard Project Zero (HPZ) Thinking Routines. Founded at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1967 with a focus on learning in and through the arts, HPZ has developed more than eighty thinking routines. These sets of questions or

steps are used to support and scaffold looking, thinking, and talking about art.

These highly adaptable routines appear in NMWA programs for a range of audiences. They provide the foundation for our DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative Art and Humanities for Every Student program, "Thinking Routine Thursdays," which we continue to expand and offer virtually during the building's closure. During docent training, this toolbox provides entry points as we explore artworks and artists with our trainees, allows them to reflect on their training experiences, and may be incorporated into the tours they'll build in the future.

Most recently, this collection of questions supported "New Year, New Artwork," a virtual educator workshop offered in partnership with the Professional Development Collaborative at the Washington International School. During this program on January 31, we welcomed thirty educators

from near (D.C., Maryland, and Virginia) and far (Arizona, California, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Bermuda). Through HPZ, we explored works of art that were recently acquired for NMWA's collection, making connections to other collection works as well as our participants' work as educators.

Space to Grow

As always, we're looking forward to keeping the conversations going, whether virtually in the coming months, with programs like biweekly Art Chats, NMWA's tenth annual Slow Art Day (April), and a residency at Visual Thinking Strategies' Look Club (May), or in the galleries and Education and Public Programs Studio when we welcome visitors back into the building.

Dedicated Donor

// SOON-YOUNG YOON



A SERIES OF United Nations conferences in the late twentieth century connected women artists around the world to each other, and then to NMWA, leaving an indelible impact on the museum's history and archives. Soon-Young Yoon, U.N. representative for the International Alliance of Women, played an integral role in the conferences, as well as the festivals of women artists that were held in concert with them from 1980 through 1995. She ensured that materials from the festivals were preserved by giving them to NMWA's Library and Research Center (LRC).

A resolution from the U.N. General Assembly created four World Conferences on Women supporting global gender equality. The first was held in Mexico City in 1975. After that, a group of women artists joined in, using the occasions

"The archival collections from the international festivals of women artists enliven NMWA's archives and fascinate researchers. Our thanks to Soon-Young Yoon for her support, partnership, and enthusiasm for sharing our mission with the world."

// NMWA Director
Susan Fisher Sterling

to share their ideas and art. They planned festivals of women artists to take place at the three conferences that followed: in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995). Yoon says, "I think that is the beauty of the role that the U.N. plays in world politics—it's neutral ground. The Mexico conference was a starting point, and then in Copenhagen we saw a flourishing of activity among women artists, as well as musicians, writers, and poets."

Yoon has always been conscious of how political and global events can shape individual lives, describing herself as a "citizen of the world." Born in North Korea, she fled with her family as a young child, settling in Michigan. She studied French and anthropology at the University of Michigan, then took a position at Ewha Woman's University in Seoul, South Korea, teaching and helping to establish a women's studies program. Next—fulfilling a dream—she worked for UNICEF and other initiatives of the U.N. During her long career with the U.N., she has worked on issues including gender equity, public health, and climate change.

Starting with the 1980 World Conference on Women, Yoon worked with the U.N. Secretariat, and then for the 1995 conference, in Beijing, she moved to a tandem nongovernmental group, the NGO Forum. She found her work on the Beijing conference especially memorable—with a relatively small team, Yoon and her colleagues coordinated a gathering of approximately 30,000 people in Beijing

at the NGO Forum, while an additional 20,000 people gathered with the U.N. Her work included liaising with numerous artists and groups who wanted to be represented at the gathering—they planned exhibitions, performances, and more. Yoon's hope was to promote cultural exchange, "to build on the concept of collective culture, and give meaning and dignity to all artists who participated."

Following the 1995 conference, Yoon signed over a trove of archival materials to NMWA's LRC. The files hold artwork shown at the festivals, ephemera such as flyers and posters, and correspondence from the primary festival organizers, who included Nancy Cusick, Mal Johnson, Cynthia Navaretta, Ellouise Schoettler, and Susan Schwalb. The archives show how the festivals grew and how they helped women artists to meet and learn from each other. NMWA also held an exhibition of art from the collection in 1996, and, as Yoon describes, "women from all over the U.S. came to celebrate."

In recent years, with support from the Pinkerton Foundation, NMWA staff members have worked on digitizing these materials to share them more broadly, and researchers have visited to review them. A NMWA presentation about the archive, given in honor of International Women's Day in 2022, is available on YouTube.



RENDERING BY SANDRA VICCHIO & ASSOCIATES, LLC, WITH MARSHALL CRAFT ASSOCIATES, INC.

Reopening in October

Take Part in NMWA's Renewal

Winton S. Holladay

It's official: the museum will reopen to the public on Saturday, October 21. After our building's two-year closure and top-to-bottom renovation, we are thrilled to announce plans to welcome visitors back into our beautifully reimagined spaces. With expanded galleries to share more art, a new studio for hands-on classes and programs, and improved infrastructure and accessibility, NMWA's building will provide a warm welcome and a wonderful home—once again—for our mission championing women artists.

Inaugural Exhibitions

When the museum opens its doors, visitors will find *The Sky's the Limit* in our second-floor galleries. The core of this exhibition is a group of never-before-exhibited large-scale sculptures from NMWA's collection, along with additional immersive works by contemporary artists. *The Sky's the Limit* features thirteen artists, including Petah Coyne, Cornelia Parker, Mariah Robertson, Shinique Smith, Joana Vasconcelos, and Ursula von Rydingsvard. Sculptures will hang from the ceiling, arc across walls, and project outward from corners, in an installation that would not have been possible before our renovation.

On the museum's completely redesigned fourth floor, we will present an exhibition of newly commissioned artists' books in the completely re-envisioned Library and Research Center, plus two focus exhibitions in new galleries. *Hung Liu: Making History* explores the legacy and oeuvre of the renowned Chinese-born American artist (1948–2021). It features a selection from NMWA's deep collection of Liu's paintings and works on paper. The other exhibition showcases an exquisite historical work: a narrative frieze in a series of thirty-three prints by French artist Antoinette Bouzonnet-Stella (1641–1676), *The Entrance of the Emperor Sigismond into Mantua* (1675).

We also look forward to sharing the breadth of the museum's world-class collection and improved technology

Opposite: Visitors will be welcomed back to NMWA's iconic Great Hall

throughout the building. A series of newly commissioned videos profiling women artists, created by NMWA and the award-winning film company Smartypants, will feature artists Ambreen Butt, Sonya Clark, Colette Fu, the Guerrilla Girls, Graciela Iturbide, Delita Martin, Rania Matar, and Alison Saar. On the museum's third floor, collection favorites will be presented in nine thematic groupings, highlighting connections between historical and contemporary works of art. I can't wait for you to see it all.

Renovation Progress

As you may imagine, construction crews have been working busily to finish the project. There is activity from the upper floors of the museum—where walls are being finished between galleries and offices—to the basement—where teams have installed mechanical systems and built a redesigned art storage space. Recent accomplishments include:

- On the exterior, the construction team continues to work on envelope restoration and historic preservation, including recoating terra cotta friezes on the building façade. These friezes, which wrap around three sides of the building, feature symbols and imagery from the building's first life as a Masonic temple.
- On the gallery levels, newly installed walls and ceilings are purpose-built to display art. Supports tucked behind walls and ceiling panels will efficiently secure works, providing the museum's curatorial and exhibitions teams greater flexibility and freedom in their installation plans.

Below: NMWA Director of Operations Gordon Umbarger and architect Sandra Vicchio examine finishes on the building's historic frieze



You can make a difference in this transformative project. Already, extraordinary friends have given \$63.5 million toward our goal of \$67.5 million. Please help us over the top!

- In the Great Hall, one of the museum's best-loved and iconic spaces, marble floors and historic ceiling moldings have been carefully preserved since the beginning of the project. Crews are now updating technology and finishes in the space. It will provide a spectacular welcome to visitors this fall.

Mark Your Calendar!

These highlights are just the beginning of what you will find at the "new NMWA." Our grand reopening will feature events for audiences of all ages. We also look forward to announcing the programs and events that will activate our new Education and Public Programs Studio and revitalized Performance Hall.

Please plan to join us in celebration on October 21, and thank you for your partnership during this exciting time.

// Winton S. Holladay is the chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

// SPACE TO SOAR

NMWA's landmark 1908 building will reopen in October after a major \$67.5 million renovation.

This once-in-a-lifetime project will support our forward momentum, ensure the permanence of our mission, and safeguard our collection for our children and grandchildren. None of it would be possible without the support of valued friends and donors.

As we prepare to welcome you back to NMWA for the grand reopening, we invite you to be part of this transformative project by making a gift in support of our "Space to Soar" capital campaign.

We thank the extraordinary friends of the museum who have made gifts and pledges already, bringing us ever closer to our goal. Visit <https://nmwa.org/capitalcampaign> to learn more about this historic project; to make your gift, contact Angie Clexton at 202-979-1920 or aclexton@nmwa.org.

Calendar

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// EXHIBITIONS

Lookout: Katharina Cibulka
Extended through April 30;
On-site façade installation

Collection on the Move
During NMWA's renovation, visit highlights from the collection at the National Gallery of Art and Baltimore Museum of Art and in special exhibitions around the world. Learn more at <https://nmwa.org/collection-on-the-move>.

Online exhibitions
Revisit favorite NMWA exhibitions and more at <https://nmwa.org/whats-on/exhibitions/online>.

// KEY

- F** Free
 - M** Free for members
 - R** Reservation required at <https://nmwa.org>
 - O** No reservations required
 - E** Exhibition-related program
 - V** Virtual/online program (Please note that the time zone for all online programs is Eastern Time)
- Automated speech-to-text transcription is enabled during most virtual programs. To request additional access services, please check the online calendar for contact information or email accessibility@nmwa.org. Two weeks' notice is appreciated but not required.



PHOTO BY KEVIN ALLEN

Above: Katharina Cibulka at NMWA with her installation *SOLANGE #27, 2022*; Now extended through April 30

Right: Enjoy a live performance by Crys Matthews during The Tea on June 2



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Daily / Weekly / Monthly

During the museum's building renovation, programs take place online unless otherwise noted.

Art Chats @ Five

- FRI** EVERY OTHER FRIDAY 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMRE V**
Jump-start your weekend with art! Join NMWA educators for informal 45-minute art chats about selected artworks from NMWA's collection.

The Tea

- FRI** SELECT FIRST FRIDAYS 12–1 P.M. // **FMOV**
Women musicians perform original work via livestream, followed by a short interview over a cup of tea.

NMWA xChange

- TUE** SELECT SECOND TUESDAYS 12–12:45 P.M. // **FMRE V**
Join NMWA educators, curators, and special guests as they talk about art and its intersections with timely social topics and issues.

March

3/17 Art Chat @ Five

- FRI** 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMRE V**

3/21 Art Impacts: Moving Toward a Sustainable Future

- TUE** 1–2 P.M. // **FMRV**
Art industry advocates in the U.K. and U.S. share their expertise on environmental sustainability.

3/31 Art Chat @ Five

- FRI** 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMRE V**

April

4/6 Art Talk Live: Elizabeth Catlett

- THU** 5:30–6:30 P.M. // **FMRV**
Explore connections between NMWA's collection and the Gadsden Arts Center & Museum exhibition *The Art of Elizabeth Catlett: From the Collection of Samella Lewis*.

4/7 The Tea: Hayley Fahey

- FRI** 12–1 P.M. // **FMOV**
This session of The Tea features Hayley Fahey, whose sound is a unique blend of pop, soul, and Americana, delivered with her dynamic range and bluesy tenderness.

4/7 Art Chat @ Five

- FRI** 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMRE V**

4/14 Spring Gala

- FRI** 6:30 P.M. // **R**
Join co-chairs Anita McBride and Patti White and Honorary Diplomatic Chair Ambassador of Italy Mariangela Zappia at the museum's largest annual fundraising event honoring Cecilia Alemani, artistic

Visit <https://nmwa.org> for reservations, a complete calendar of events, and more information.

director of the 59th Venice Biennale. Contact gala@nmwa.org for tickets and sponsorship. Held at the Embassy of Italy.

4/15 Slow Art Day

SAT 1–2:30 P.M. // **FMRV**

Slow Art Day is an international event encouraging people to visit art spaces—virtually or in person—and look at art slowly. Register in advance, look slowly at selected artworks, and join us to discuss the experience.

4/21 Art Chat @ Five

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMREV**

4/30 Fresh Talk: Work on the Walls with Women Muralists and Graffiti Artists

SUN 4:30–6 P.M. // **RE**

Join us for a conversation with artist MISS CHELOVE, whose art was recently featured on NMWA's building, and artists Nekisha Durrett and Michelle Angela Ortiz. Reservations required. \$25 general admission, \$20 for members, students, and seniors. Held at Planet Word.

May

5/1 MakeHER Summit Workshops

MON 10 A.M.–4:30 P.M. // **R**

Designed for creative entrepreneurs at all levels, this day of in-person workshops will inspire participants to achieve their goals. Registration required. \$15 general admission, \$10 for members, students, and seniors. Held at 1615 M St. NW.

5/3 NMWA Look Club: Week 1

WED 3–4 P.M. // **FMRV**

Join NMWA educators for their month-long residency with Visual Thinking Strategies Look Club Online. During weekly sessions in May, educators facilitate discussions highlighting images from the museum's collection.

5/5 The Tea: Heather Mae

FRI 12–1 P.M. // **FMOV**

Award-winning singer-songwriter Mae is known for evocative vocals and rhythmic piano as well as lyrics that address complex topics including mental health, LGBTQ+ issues, and women's rights.

5/5 Art Chat @ Five

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMREV**

5/9 NMWA xChange: Trailblazer and Rule Breaker Lavinia Fontana

TUE 12–12:45 P.M. // **FMRV**

Aoife Brady, curator of Italian and Spanish art at the National Gallery of Ireland, discusses the gallery's upcoming exhibition of portraiture by Lavinia Fontana, considered the first woman artist to achieve professional success outside of a court or convent.



Join writer Addie Tsai and NMWA staff to discuss her novel *Unwieldy Creatures* (2022) on June 15

5/10 NMWA Look Club: Week 2

WED 3–4 P.M. // **FMRV**

5/17 NMWA Look Club: Week 3

WED 3–4 P.M. // **FMRV**

5/19 Art Chat @ Five

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMREV**

5/24 NMWA Look Club: Week 4

WED 3–4 P.M. // **FMRV**

5/31 NMWA Look Club: Week 5

WED 3–4 P.M. // **FMRV**

June

6/2 The Tea: Crys Matthews

FRI 12–1 P.M. // **FMOV**

Matthews blends Americana, folk, jazz, blues, bluegrass, and funk into a bold performance punctuated by honest lyrics that speak to themes of social justice.

6/2 Art Chat @ Five

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMREV**

6/15 NMWA Book Club: *Unwieldy Creatures*

TUE 12–12:45 P.M. // **FMRV**

Join author Addie Tsai, NMWA staff, and fellow readers to explore *Unwieldy Creatures* (2022), a biracial, queer, nonbinary retelling of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

6/16 Art Chat @ Five

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMREV**

6/30 Art Chat @ Five

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMREV**

// Education programming is made possible by the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation, with additional support provided by the Leo Rosner Foundation and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the Harriet E. McNamee Youth Education Fund and William and Christine Leahy.

The Women, Arts, and Social Change public programs initiative is made possible through leadership gifts from Denise Littlefield Sobel, the Davis/Dauray Family Fund, the Revada Foundation of the Logan Family, and the Susan and Jim Swartz Public Programs Fund.



Abigail Tyler Oakes,
*Hudson River
Landscape*, 1852;
Oil on canvas,
14 × 20 in.; NMWA,
Gift from the
Trustees of the
Corcoran Gallery
of Art (Museum
Purchase, Anna E.
Clark Fund)

Handle with Care

A Conversation with Conservator Kristen Loudermilk

Alicia Gregory

In preparation for NMWA's reopening in October, two collection works that will be on view for the first time received conservation treatments. Before the paintings *Hudson River Landscape* (1852) by Abigail Tyler Oakes and *Call to Church and Flowers* (1970) by Clementine Hunter debut in the museum's galleries, they each needed extra care. Oakes (1823–ca. 1898) created idealized landscapes like this work, primarily in New York's Hudson Valley. Hunter (1887–1988), who lived and worked most of her life on the Melrose cotton plantation in Louisiana, was entirely self-taught and painted scenes of everyday life around her.

Conservator Kristen Loudermilk spent nearly sixty hours with the paintings while treating them. With NMWA Assistant Editor Alicia Gregory, she discusses her meticulous work, as well as a few interesting discoveries.

Alicia Gregory: Can you describe the major treatments you carried out for each painting?

Kristen Loudermilk: Oakes's painting had previously been lined onto a secondary canvas, which it was separating from. That separation was creating big lumps, they were maybe eight by two and a half inches, on this tiny little painting. I don't usually take linings apart, but in this case, it was warranted because there wasn't any other way to fix the problem. I used a large tacking iron to gently warm the bulged area, then I left it to cool under weights. This completely resolved the deformations.

“I don’t commonly take off varnishes, but this one had begun to crosslink with the painting’s surface. It almost looked like a layer of plastic.”

I had to reline the painting because the canvas itself had become impregnated with the original wax resin lining. That compromises the stability of the fabric, which is just so old and degraded. It doesn’t stretch anymore; the tacking margins were broken. You could almost break the canvas because it doesn’t have any more of its natural strength. The safest option was to reline the painting to keep it together.

I also don’t commonly take off varnishes, but this one had begun to crosslink with the painting’s surface. It almost looked like a layer of plastic. In another twenty or thirty years you might not be able to get it off. For the re-varnish, I used B-72. It has been age-tested in a lab and is very, very stable. This varnish gave the painting an evenly saturated surface without being too glossy or heavy in appearance.

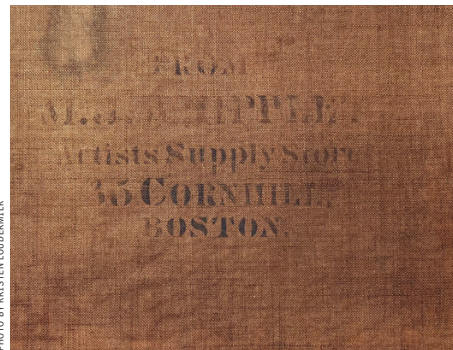
The Hunter painting came to me because it couldn’t be framed properly—the canvas had been stretched so tight that the top and bottom were bowed inward in the middle. The biggest challenge was trying to get that canvas to want to be on a stretcher with ninety-degree corners. I had to stretch it twice, actually. I used a warm tacking iron to try and reduce the hard creases of the original foldover edge. While this significantly softened the creases, they still are slightly visible at the edges. I’d love to see this painting when it’s framed.



Clementine Hunter, *Call to Church and Flowers*, 1970; Oil on canvas, 36 × 48 in.; NMWA, Gift of Dr. Robert F. Ryan



Loudermilk carefully removed the Oakes painting’s original varnish (visible at left)



The stamp on the back of the Oakes canvas revealed that the artist acquired it at M.J. Whipple’s Artists Supply Store in Boston

AG: You spent a lot of time with these paintings—what could you glean about each artist’s technique?

KL: The Oakes painting is just beautiful. Technically, it’s very good. There wasn’t really any evidence, that I could see, of under layers or how she may have laid out the scene. It has a very polished look. There’s also so much texture in it. In the foliage, the foreground, in the rocks and trees. But the sky and water are so nice and smooth. That’s part of what makes the painting so aesthetically beautiful, on such a small scale. I really loved it.

Hunter’s technique on her painting is rock solid. I was initially concerned I would run into trouble as I tried to re-create the edges—that the paint might crack, especially because the trees and grass of her scene are very close to the edge. I had to center it as best as possible and lose as little of the image as possible. But I really didn’t have any trouble. From a conservation perspective, I was very pleased with that.

AG: Were there any surprises in your work?

KL: Once I got the lining off of the Oakes painting, I discovered a stamp on the back of the original canvas. It reads, “From / M.J. Whipple’s / Artists Supply Store / 35 Cornhill / Boston.” From this, we can guess that she went to the store in Boston, selected this pre-primed canvas in the size she wanted, and went home—or on location—to paint that beautiful scene. I’d love to know how she did her painting. From memory? In the setting itself?

// Alicia Gregory is the assistant editor at the National Museum of Women in the Arts.



Antique Shop,
ca. 1910–17; Gelatin
print on linen, 9 × 7 ¾ in.;
NMWA, Gift of Jill and
Jeffrey Stern

Jessie Tarbox Beals

TRAILBLAZING PHOTOGRAPHER

Orin Zahra

Ambition, temerity, and resolve mark the life and career of Jessie Tarbox Beals (1870–1942). A true go-getter and woman of many firsts, she was the first published female photojournalist in the United States, the first woman press photographer, and the first known woman night photographer. Beals's oeuvre captures cross-sections of American life, including architectural icons, gardens, local and national events, children living in poverty, and portraits of presidents and celebrities. With no allegiance to a distinct subject or genre, she created such varied images that her achievements have been difficult to categorize in art history, though throughout her career she challenged prevailing notions about women's abilities.

“One must school oneself to arrive early and stay through hours of lengthening shadows.”

// JESSIE TARBOX BEALS

Monterey Cypress, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, 1930; Gelatin silver print, 6 7/8 × 8 7/8 in.; NMWA, Gift of Jill and Jeffrey Stern



PHOTO BY LEE STALS WORTH

THIRTY-THREE PRINTS BY BEALS were recently donated to NMWA by Jill and Jeffrey Stern, members of the Photography Buyers' Syndicate, a group of collectors who have given generously to the museum. This varied acquisition of Beals's photographs enriches the museum's collection, and additional promised gifts of the artist's work will enable NMWA to share the breadth and depth of her practice.

Daredevil

Born and raised in Ontario, Canada, Beals moved to Williamsburg, Massachusetts, at seventeen to become a teacher, but transitioned to a full-time photography career in 1900. She began traveling as an itinerant photographer while her husband, Alfred Tennyson Beals, whom she married in 1897, served as her darkroom assistant. After moving to Buffalo to become a staff photographer for the *Buffalo Inquirer* and *Buffalo Courier*, she left to cover the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904, an international exposition showcasing art, culture, agriculture, and technology. At the fair, an emerging photographer like Beals could hope for wide recognition and financial success. Undeterred when papers refused to hire her and questioned her abilities, she managed to procure a restricted permit and disregarded the rules for press photography, roaming and photographing the grounds as she wished.

During her career, Beals would climb bookshelves and twenty-foot ladders in her corset and long skirts while carrying her fifty-pound camera equipment in relentless pursuit of the ideal shot. When officials at the fair deemed it too dangerous for a woman to ascend in a hot air balloon, Beals wrangled her way onboard to capture the fairgrounds from a bird's eye view. For her magnificent panoramas taken

from 900 feet in the air, she earned praise, publication in the prestigious Louisiana Purchase Exposition Bulletin, and a gold medal award for photography.

Her achievements at the fair led her to open a studio in New York City, where she continued expanding her portfolio through her “ability to hustle.”¹ As an anecdote goes, she once made a colonel halt his troops during a parade so she could get her photograph. And in 1906, her assignment to cover an auto racing event by the *New York Herald* was reported under the headline “Woman Photographer Narrowly Escapes Being Run Down While Trying to Get Pictures.” While news photographers were often expected to be anonymous, Beals promoted herself through her skillful photographs and daring escapades.

A Glimpse of the Soul

Greenwich Village became a constant source of creative inspiration for Beals. She made an extensive series featuring the Village, and many of those photographs were marketed and sold successfully as postcards. Her images of bohemian life there included antique shops, studios, curiosity cabinets, cafés, and restaurants, as well as portraits of leading figures from the literary and artistic community. In 1917, she even opened the Village Art Gallery, which served as a space to display artwork and a tearoom for her friends and customers. Her photographs of bohemian personalities and their haunts became so popular that Beals was described as “the official photographer for Greenwich Village” in a 1918 guidebook, *The Little Book of Greenwich Village*.

Beals made her sitters comfortable, studying them until she caught a “glimpse of the soul.” For most of her career, she preferred to use an 8-x-10-inch-format camera with a

highly corrected Dagor Double Anastigmat lens that provided extremely sharp focus. She also taught herself the explosive art of flash photography, which helped to achieve a realistic appearance, though occasionally, she retouched negatives or added a blurring effect, particularly to photographs of women, for a softer or more youthful look. Her portrait of a smiling Rose O'Neill depicts the highest-paid cartoonist of her time and inventor of the Kewpie Doll character. O'Neill, a suffragist and socialite, is seen in a glittering dark gown; light bounces off one bare shoulder and catches the gold locks of her hair. Beals manages to capture her subject's renowned charm and beauty.

In her mature career, faced with increasing competition, Beals briefly relocated to Santa Barbara, where she photographed the estates and gardens of high society individuals. She felt that gardens, like people, possessed unique personalities that were revealed with patience. "One must school oneself to arrive early and stay through hours of lengthening shadows," Beals said. In *Monterey Cypress* (1930), the flat-topped, dense foliage of the tree appears in dramatic silhouette against the sky in the northern California village of Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Legacy

Beals was unconventional in her personal life as in her career. Restless and unfulfilled in her marriage, Beals separated from her husband in 1917, finalizing the divorce seven years later. Unusually for the time, she often left her daughter, Nanette, for lengthy periods while off on shoots. Today we admire the sheer range of her subject matter, but the artist lamented her lack of financial success, which she attributed to her diverse or unfocused portfolio. Despite her renown, her years spent traveling the country and world living a lavish lifestyle, compounded by the Great Depression, brought financial trouble. The artist died in poverty at age seventy-one.



Rose Harris O'Neill,
Mother of the Kewpies,
ca. 1914; Gelatin silver
print, 9 ½ × 7 ½ in.;
NMWA, On loan from
Jill and Jeffrey Stern

While photography was her bread and butter, poetry was a vehicle of self-expression for Beals. In 1937, she wrote in her last poem, "Realization":

Dreams have been mine in many a quiet hour
Of splendid fame and shining stories of gold—
Wealth that would yield a wondrous power—
My name would live wherever names were told.

True to these closing words, NMWA will celebrate Jessie Tarbox Beals in our reimagined collection galleries, which will feature a spotlight on photography. We invite you to experience the art of Beals alongside fellow trailblazers Julia Margaret Cameron, Berenice Abbott, and Louise Dahl-Wolfe upon the reopening of our newly renovated building.

// Orin Zahra is the associate curator at the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Note:

1. All quotes and anecdotes from the artist's biography by Alexander Alland, Sr., *Jessie Tarbox Beals: First Woman News Photographer* (New York: Camera/Graphic Press LTD, 1978).



*View of Fairgrounds
from a Balloon*,
St. Louis World's Fair,
1904; Gelatin silver
print, 6 ¼ × 9 ½ in.;
NMWA, On loan from
Jill and Jeffrey Stern

Committee News

Meet NMWA's New Committee Leaders

NMWA's national and international grassroots committees are dedicated to advancing gender equity in their art scenes and communities. Grace DeWitt, NMWA's national and international outreach programs coordinator, spoke with some of the women leading NMWA's newest outreach groups.

— **Lisa Claudy Fleischman (Wyoming Committee)** has strengthened nonprofit organizations in art, community service, and education throughout her career. She is a member of the NMWA Advisory Board.

— **Cecily Cullen (Colorado Committee)** is director and curator of MSU Denver Center for Visual Art, advisor for the Colorado Attorneys for the Arts, and repeated grant panel advisor for the National Endowment for the Arts.

— **Ayako (Aya) Hirota Weissman (Japan Committee)** is senior vice president, senior portfolio manager, and director of Asia strategy for Horizon Kinetics, LLC. She co-chairs the committee with Noriko Kashiwagi, CEO of Broadway Arts and Capital JAPAN LLC, an art and finance consultant, managing director of Oaktree Music Holdings, and founding director of ART PLATFORM TOKYO, a marketing platform for emerging artists.

"The World Economic Forum still ranks Japan 116 out of 146 countries in terms of gender equity."

// Ayako (Aya) Hirota Weissman



Lisa Claudy Fleischman

— **Elizabeth Leach (Oregon Alliance)** is owner and director of the nationally recognized Elizabeth Leach Gallery, which she has led and built over the past forty years.

— **Minal Vazirani (India Committee)** founded Saffronart, a leading international auction house, in 2000. She has been instrumental in establishing and expanding Saffronart's presence in Mumbai, New York, and London.

— **Ginger Voorhees (Washington Committee)** grew up in Alexandria, Virginia. She worked at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and the Seattle Art Museum, before serving for ten years as director of the design committee for the City of Seattle. She is a member of the NMWA Advisory Board.



Cecily Cullen

"I have seen a shift in the representation of women artists in nonprofit spaces, but commercial galleries still favor male artists."

// Cecily Cullen

Grace DeWitt: What led you to support gender equity in the arts?

Ayako (Aya) Hirota Weissman: I was born and raised in Tokyo before the Equal Employment Act. There were very few professional job openings for female graduates, female applicants were put in non-managerial tracks, and female workers were forced to wear uniforms and perform tea-serving duties. Thirty-six years later, the World Economic Forum still ranks Japan 116 out of 146 countries in terms of gender equity.

The majority of Japanese art students are women, but post-graduation, women are not well-represented: 72 percent of collection works in seven major



Ayako (Aya) Hirota Weissman

Japanese museums are by men. I jumped at the opportunity to help correct gender inequity in the Japanese art community by forming NMWA's Japan committee with my longtime friend Noriko Kashiwagi.

Ginger Voorhees: I went to Vassar College in the '70s and studied under feminist historian Linda Nochlin. Back then, it wasn't a matter of women artists being underappreciated. It was like women artists didn't exist. They were the partners, wives, or mistresses to men artists, and when they did create, they weren't given credit for it. Learning under Linda led me to become a NMWA supporter soon after the museum opened.



Elizabeth Leach

"Back then, it wasn't a matter of women artists being underappreciated. It was like women artists didn't exist."

// Ginger Voorhees

Minal Vazirani: In a country where gender inequality underscores virtually every aspect of life, from education to nutrition, art is perhaps the most visible, and simultaneously most subversive, means to drive meaningful change.

One of my key experiences in driving change comes from serving on the board of Aangan, a nonprofit that creates protection systems for India's children, particularly girls. They enable women to lead community groups and amplify unheard voices.

GD: Can you describe the art scene in your committee's region?

Lisa Claudy Fleischman:

There is a dynamic creative community in Wyoming: it comprises galleries, museums,



Minal Vazirani

and public art, and it is supported by an incredible state arts council. One great display was *Bonheur & Beyond: Celebrating Women in Wildlife Art* at our National Museum of Wildlife Art last summer.

"In a country [India] where gender inequality underscores virtually every aspect of life, from education to nutrition, art is perhaps the most visible, and simultaneously most subversive, means to drive meaningful change."

// Minal Vazirani

"I just saw Ginny Ruffner's exhibition at the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, and it reminded me how important it is for women artists to take up space in our museums and galleries."

// Ginger Voorhees

AHW: One bright spot in the very conservative Japanese art world is that the majority of museum curators are women (74%; higher than the 54.4% in the U.S.). Unfortunately, this has not translated into greater representation in museum collections. We hope to change this.

Elizabeth Leach: When I established Elizabeth Leach Gallery in 1981, there was one curator at the Portland Art Museum (PAM) and a handful of galleries. Presently, there are curators in each PAM department, a number of well-respected galleries, and a wonderful cultural community that visits galleries, collects art, and supports institutions.

Cecily Cullen: The Denver art scene is robust and ever-expanding. There is a great network of support for artists, although not in the form of state funding. I have seen a shift in the representation of women artists in nonprofit spaces, but commercial galleries still favor male artists.

GV: One important feature of the greater Seattle area is glass art. I just saw Ginny Ruffner's exhibition at the Bainbridge

Island Museum of Art, and it reminded me how important it is for women artists to take up space in our museums and galleries. Even now, the same few men dominate the glass scene.

MV: The Indian art scene has picked up pace tremendously post-pandemic, and we're seeing growing interest outside of the traditional art centers of New Delhi and Mumbai. This last year, we saw the opening of Jaipur Art Week and the Museum of Art and Photography in Bengaluru, and the return of Dhaka Art Summit and India Art Fair in Delhi. The market has grown by almost 40%, and this is building a growing base of art collectors.

GD: Can you name an artist whose work has affected or inspired you?

LCF: Wyoming-based abstract painter Neltje and nineteenth-century French painter Rosa Bonheur.

AHW: Ai Makita. I appreciate how she challenges accepted norms.

EL: Nan Goldin for her honesty, Justine Kurland for her integrity, Louise Bourgeois for her insight and perseverance, and Ann Hamilton for her ability to call attention to the present.

CC: Sammy Seung-min Lee, who exposes the struggles and joys of motherhood, immigration, language, and ritual. As we move toward equity in the arts, it will be important to embrace the intersectional realities that exist for artists who differ from the ubiquitous white, cisgender male perspective.

Supporting Roles

20

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(all lists as of February 1, 2023)

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Lookout: Katharina Cibulka
Katharina Cibulka's *SOLANGE #27* has been extended through April 30. This work is the second installation in NMWA's *Lookout* project, which activates the museum's building during renovation through large-scale

exterior installations. In vivid pink tulle on white mesh fabric over NMWA's construction scaffolding, the work delivers a powerful feminist message. Online, hear from the artist and see behind-the-scenes footage of the work being created.

Above: Katharina Cibulka, *SOLANGE #27* (installation view, NMWA), 2022; Mesh scaffolding net, tulle, and cable ties, 82 × 82 ft. (25 × 25 meters)