FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  October 17, 2023

National Museum of Women in the Arts Reopens
October 21, 2023, after major renovation

Transformed building features bold exhibitions and public programs

Opening weekend offers free admission and activities for all ages

WASHINGTON—The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA)—the world’s first major museum solely dedicated to championing women artists—reopens on October 21, 2023, after a two-year renovation, revealing a transformed building, powerful exhibitions and engaging public programs. NMWA reimagined its historic home at 1250 New York Avenue in Washington, D.C., to offer flexible exhibition spaces for immersive exhibitions, a versatile studio/classroom area and
improved accessibility for visitors. To celebrate the grand reopening weekend on Saturday, October 21, and Sunday, October 22, 2023, NMWA will host special festivities on Saturday and offer free admission all weekend.

“After two long years, we are excited to reopen our doors to our extraordinary community. As we welcome visitors back to enjoy expanded galleries, increased capacity for hands-on workshops and improved accessibility, I believe you’ll find the renovation has been worth the wait,” said Director Susan Fisher Sterling. “We are deeply grateful to our supporters, who have secured the future of NMWA for generations to come.”

Closed for construction since August 2021, NMWA has transformed its landmark 1908 Classical Revival building while honoring its legacy, with improvements to its façade, interior spaces and infrastructure. NMWA’s renovated galleries open with innovative presentations that were not previously possible at the museum. The inaugural exhibitions and remixed collection installation highlight new opportunities: nearly 40% of the works on view are being exhibited for the first time at NMWA, including nearly 70 works from the museum’s collection.

“With the reopening of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, residents and visitors have one more fantastic reason to visit Downtown D.C.,” said D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser. “Art and artists, and the stories they tell, add so much to the vibrancy and color of D.C. Now, we are D.C. proud to, once again, have this incredible museum dedicated to uplifting and championing the stories of women,” said Mayor Muriel Bowser of the District of Columbia.

“NMWA has received a remarkable outpouring of gifts from individuals, foundations and corporations totaling $69 million to date, with $1 million left to raise,” said Board Chair and Campaign Steering Committee Chair Winton Holladay. “This momentous achievement is even more gratifying due to the support of so many new patrons, who continue to join the campaign every day.”

**Transformed Building**
The project, designed by Baltimore-based architectural firm Sandra Vicchio & Associates, is the museum’s first full renovation since opening in 1987. The team restored the roof and grand brick-and-limestone exterior in accordance with the D.C. Historic Preservation Office. They made updates to the Great Hall and mezzanine, preserving the iconic spaces while improving functionality for art displays, programs and events. Gallery spaces are enlarged by more than 15%. Structural supports concealed above ceilings and within gallery walls can now accommodate the size and weight of monumental sculptures. The galleries’ new layouts offer both broad vistas and intimate niches to highlight works of different scales.

The new Gloria and Dan Logan Learning Commons features the MaryRoss Taylor Exhibition Galleries; the Betty Boyd Dettre Library and Research Center, with a public reading room; and the
Susan Swartz Studio, which provides flexible space to host hands-on workshops, open studio sessions, school groups and curated conversations. The Mars Performance Hall is upgraded with state-of-the-art technology and new furnishings to enhance the presentation of talks, films and performances.

Less visible but significant infrastructure updates enhance the visitor experience, including accessibility improvements in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, new amenities and upgraded technologies. Augmented wireless and interactive connectivity in the galleries enrich visitors’ discovery and learning opportunities. Upgrades to collections storage, lighting, climate control and security technology support long-term art conservation as well as energy efficiency. Though not open to the public, the Denise Littlefield Sobel Art Storage Facility and Institutional Archive enhances NMWA’s ability to care for its current collection and provides room for future growth. New passenger elevators support movement throughout the building.

Inaugural Exhibitions & Reimagined Collection
Visitors experience art the moment they enter the building. The rotunda features a dramatic six-foot-tall hanging sculpture by Joana Vasconcelos, as well as paintings by self-taught American artist Clementine Hunter and Indigenous Australian artist Audrey Morton Kngwarreye. On view in the Great Hall are a series of black-and-white prom portrait photographs by Mary Ellen Mark and large-scale architectural photographs of sumptuous spaces by Candida Höfer. Portraits and self-portraits of women from across the centuries fill the mezzanine, with Eva Gonzalès’s Portrait d’une jeune femme (Portrait of a Young Woman) (1873–74), Frida Kahlo’s iconic Self-Portrait Dedicated to Leon Trotsky (1937) and Zanele Muholi’s photograph Katlego Mashiloane and Nosipho Lavuta, Ext. 2, Lakeside, Johannesburg (2007), among others.

NMWA’s inaugural major exhibition, The Sky’s the Limit, features contemporary sculptures and immersive installations by 13 international and U.S.-based artists. A rare survey of large-scale work by women from the last two decades, the exhibition showcases 33 sculptures dating from 2003 to 2023 by artists Rina Banerjee (b. 1963), Sonya Clark (b. 1967), Petah Coyne (b. 1953), Beatriz Milhazes (b. 1960), Cornelia Parker (b. 1956), Mariah Robertson (b. 1975), Alison Saar (b. 1956), Davina Semo (b. 1981), Shinique Smith (b. 1971), Johanna Unzueta (b. 1974), Joana Vasconcelos (b. 1971), Ursula von Rydingsvard (b. 1942) and Yuriko Yamaguchi (b. 1948). Works dangle from the ceiling, cascade down walls and extend far beyond their footprints on the gallery floor. Monumental scale and a bold approach to materiality are combined with handwork, repetition and unconventional materials to achieve maximum impact. On view through February 25, 2024, the exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue.

To complement the grand scope of The Sky’s the Limit, NMWA presents two focus exhibitions. Hung Liu: Making History highlights nine works by the renowned Chinese-born American artist (1948–2021), who transformed her canvases and prints into evocative memorial sites for women and children. Impressive: Antoinette Bouzonnet-Stella focuses on the 17th-century French artist’s
series of 25 prints from 1675, *The Entrance of the Emperor Sigismond into Mantua*, installed in a unique wrap-around presentation. Both exhibitions are on view through October 20, 2024.

An extensive collection reinstallation, *Remix: The Collection*, offers thematic and provocative combinations of works from NMWA’s holdings that span six continents and six centuries. The reconfiguration of the gallery spaces creates compelling sightlines between works, inviting discussion and new insights. Visitors are greeted at the *Remix* entrance by Niki de Saint Phalle’s joyful, five-foot-tall sculpture *Pregnant Nana* (1995), an archetypal representation of femininity. Favorites from NMWA’s collection are presented thematically in nine groupings. For example, “Seeing Red” juxtaposes unexpected pairings, including artworks by 16th-century painter Lavinia Fontana and contemporary mixed-media artist Alison Saar, that dramatically illustrate how a single color can express energy, unease, power or abundance. “Home, Maker” features artworks that redefine domestic life and overturn traditional distinctions of quality and craft, including an ironic contemporary “vintage” tea set by Cindy Sherman and Mickalene Thomas’s rhinestone portrait inspired by her glamorous mother. “Elemental” presents work by Marisol, Ana Mendieta, Joan Mitchell and Remedios Varo that reference core elements of nature. Highlights of the collection also include paintings by Lee Krasner, Alma Woodsey Thomas and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, as well as sculptures by Sonya Clark, Barbara Hepworth and Laure Tixier.

To inaugurate the museum’s new Learning Commons and research center, *Holding Ground: Artists’ Books for the National Museum of Women in the Arts* features nine new works inspired by NMWA’s mission, created by book artists Alisa Banks (b. 1961), Adjao Jackson Burrowes (b. 1957), Julie N. Chen (b. 1963), Suzanne Coley (b. 1965), Ibé Bulinda Crawley (b. 1959), Colette Fu (b. 1969), Kerry McAleer-Keeler (b. 1971), María Verónica San Martín (b. 1981) and Maricarmen Solis (b. 2000).

On view on the ground floor, *In Focus: Artists at Work* presents a series of commissioned videos profiling women artists in the museum’s collection. Created by NMWA and the award-winning film company Smartypants, the videos feature the Guerrilla Girls, Delita Martin, Rania Matar and Alison Saar for the first several months, followed by Ambreen Butt, Sonya Clark, Colette Fu and Graciela Iturbide in the second iteration, set to premiere in summer 2024.

**Support**

To date, NMWA has raised $69 million, surpassing its initial goal for the project, and will continue fundraising to reach a capital campaign goal of $70 million. The museum’s “Space to Soar” capital campaign is directed by a steering committee of NMWA trustees, advisors and senior museum staff and is supported by gifts from individuals, foundations and corporations. In addition, the project has received federal and city funding through competitive grants from Events DC, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
The Sky’s the Limit is underwritten by Presenting Sponsor Denise Littlefield Sobel. Research funds were provided by Marcia Myers Carlucci, and exhibition catalogue support comes from The Deborah Buck Foundation. Remix: The Collection is sponsored by Lugano Diamonds. Additional funding is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Sue J. Henry and Carter G. Phillips Exhibition Fund, and the Clara M. Lovett Emerging Artists Fund. Impressive: Antoinette Bouzonnet-Stella and Hung Liu: Making History are supported by Stephanie Sale and the members of NMWA. Holding Ground: Artists’ Books for the National Museum of Women in the Arts is made possible by a generous bequest from Marjorie B. Rachlin. In Focus: Artists at Work is supported by the members of NMWA. Project design is made possible through the generous support of Denise Littlefield Sobel, with additional funding provided by Jamie Gorelick and Richard Waldhorn. Display screens contributed by Sony Corporation of America.

Reopening Celebration
NMWA celebrates its grand reopening weekend on Saturday, October 21, and Sunday, October 22, 2023, with a full day of festivities on Saturday and free admission throughout the weekend made possible by the generosity of Bank of America. Among the activities will be art-making, interactive events, performances and spotlight tours of special exhibitions and newly renovated spaces. A full schedule of events and workshops also has been announced for the fall.

Tickets
Timed tickets are required and are available online. Tickets will be released on the first Tuesday of each month for the following month. NMWA will be open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., until 8 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, and closed on Mondays and select holidays.

After the free opening weekend on October 21–22, admission is $16 for adults, $13 for D.C. residents and visitors ages 70 and over and free for visitors 21 and under and for those with disabilities. Admission is free the first Sunday and second Wednesday of each month; timed tickets are also required for free days, and advance reservation is recommended. Group tours and visits for school-aged children are available.

Shop
The Museum Shop offers a curated selection of art books, apparel, jewelry, homewares, accessories and more, including products created specifically for NMWA in collaboration with women artists and designers.

National Museum of Women in the Arts
The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) is the first museum in the world solely dedicated to championing women through the arts. With its collections, exhibitions, programs and online content, the museum inspires dynamic exchanges about art and ideas. NMWA advocates for better representation of women artists and serves as a vital center for thought leadership,
community engagement and social change. NMWA addresses the gender imbalance in the presentation of art by bringing to light important women artists of the past while promoting great women artists working today. The collection highlights a wide range of works in a variety of mediums by artists including Rosa Bonheur, Louise Bourgeois, Lalla Essaydi, Lavinia Fontana, Frida Kahlo, Hung Liu, Zanele Muholi, Faith Ringgold, Niki de Saint Phalle and Amy Sherald.

NMWA is located at 1250 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. Beginning October 21, it is open Tues.–Sun., 10 a.m.–5 p.m., until 8 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month and closed on Mondays and select holidays. Admission is $16 for adults, $13 for D.C. residents and visitors 70 and over, and free for visitors 21 and under. Admission is free the first Sunday and second Wednesday of each month. For information, call 202-783-5000, visit nmwa.org, Broad Strokes blog, Facebook or Instagram.

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