

Fall 2026

Women in the Arts

NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF WOMEN
IN THE ARTS



DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

Moving forward, moving up, and moving on are central themes for this autumn at NMWA.

We look forward to opening *Routed West: Twentieth-Century African American Quilts in California* on September 18. This exhibition tells a uniquely American story. Between 1940 and 1970, millions of African Americans left the Southern United States in what became known as the Second Great Migration. Hundreds of thousands of people arrived in California, bringing quilts as well as their quilt-making traditions with them. *Routed West* brings together over eighty quilted objects by more than seventy individuals with ties to the San Francisco Bay Area—remarkable works that tell stories of community resilience and creativity.

Visitors to NMWA this fall also will be able to experience a major new public art installation by Beverly Pepper (1922–2020) just outside the museum’s doors, complemented by a focus exhibition and new film about the sculptor in our first-floor Long Gallery. *Beverly Pepper: Ten Monumental Sculptures* is a collaboration with the DowntownDC Business Improvement District and Beverly Pepper Studio. It showcases Pepper’s innovative large-scale works in weathering steel and is the fifth installation of the New York Avenue Sculpture Corridor project. This partnership furthers NMWA’s longstanding commitment to sharing public art by great women artists in the heart of Washington, D.C.

On a personal note, as my retirement date approaches at the end of 2026, I have been deeply gratified to gather with museum supporters, trustees, and visitors who have passion for and confidence in NMWA’s bright future. As one season moves into the next, we are reminded that change and transition are part of life . . . and for this unique and wonderful museum, the future holds amazing opportunities!

WITH HEARTFELT APPRECIATION,

Susan Fisher Sterling
The Alice West Director

CHAMPION WOMEN THROUGH THE ARTS

MUSEUM INFORMATION
1250 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005

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

MAIN
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SHOP
202-783-7994

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTER
202-783-7365; lrc@nmwa.org
MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS
866-875-4627

HOURS
Tuesday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.;
Closed on Mondays and select
holidays; Library open Tuesday–
Friday, 12–4 p.m. and first Sundays,
10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Café open Thursday–
Sunday, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

ADMISSION
NMWA Members free, Adults \$16,
D.C. residents \$13, Visitors 65 and
older \$13, Visitors 21 and younger
free, Visitors with disabilities plus
one free. Please visit the website for
details on discounts for educators,
military, visitors with native/tribal
affiliations, and SNAP/EBT holders.

Free Community Days are the first
Sundays and second Wednesdays
of every month.

WOMEN IN THE ARTS
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On the cover: Emma Hall (Sweet
Home, Arkansas), *Untitled (Double
Wedding Ring)* (detail), ca. 1940;
Cotton; hand-pieced; 71 x 71 ½ in.;
Bequest of the Eli Leon Living Trust,
BAMPFA; Photo by Kevin Candland



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Routed West: Twentieth-Century African American Quilts in California

Through more than eighty quilted objects, this exhibition tells the story of Black women leaving the Jim Crow South who stitched a legacy of survival, connection, and resilience across generations.

ELAINE Y. YAU

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Child's Play: Metaverse

A large-scale photograph by Julie Blackmon in NMWA's collection exemplifies the artist's approach to blending art history and humor in meticulously composed images.

VIRGINIA TREANOR

"[Quilts'] textures, patterns, and softness can capture memories and stories that would otherwise remain intangible."

ROUTED WEST, P. 8



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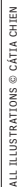
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Cátia Chien was awarded the 2026 Caldecott Medal for her exuberant illustrations for *Fireworks* (Clarion/HarperCollins, 2025), written by Matthew Burgess. The picture book follows two siblings on a steamy hot Fourth of July in an environment based on New York City's Chinatown, and the artist used materials including

Saar's works are held in the collections of numerous institutions worldwide, including NMWA. Several current exhibitions celebrate her centennial year, including *Betye Saar's Black Dolls* at the New York Historical (through October 4, 2026) and *Betye Saar: Drifting Toward Twilight* at the Huntington (through November 30, 2027). In 2025, Saar, her

A new report from Artnet and the Association of Women in the Arts (AWITA) exposes the structural barriers that mid-career women arts

professionals face. *Hardwiring Change: Buying Back Time* is the second installment of a long-term research series examining gender equity and career sustainability for women in the art world. Information from more than 2,000 survey respondents revealed that 50.6 percent of women ages thirty-five to forty-four are considering leaving the art world within the next five years, citing structural barriers related to gender, race, or class; administrative burdens; and inadequate pay and job security. The findings point to solutions including fair pay, greater transparency in decision-making, mentorship, and better tools to manage unsustainable workloads.

In Memoriam: Pat Steir

Artist Pat Steir, renowned for her innovative "Waterfall" paintings, died March 25, at age eighty-seven. Born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1938, Steir studied art at the Boston University College of Fine Arts and Pratt Institute, in Brooklyn, where she received a BFA in 1962. She worked as an illustrator and book designer, taught illustration and painting, and became a founding member of the feminist art journal *Heresies* as well as the Printed Matter artists' book shop.

With her gestural abstract paintings, she sought to introduce elements of nature and chance into her art. In creating these works, she often poured paint from a can or loaded brush, allowing it to flow down



Genesis Belanger, *Lady Justice Unbiased* (detail), 2026; Cast patinated bronze; Presented by Public Art Fund in *Genesis Belanger: Heads or Tails* at City Hall Park, New York City, through November 15, 2026



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAT STEIR ESTATE, NEW YORK, NY



PHOTO BY ETHAN KAPLAN; COURTESY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO ARTS COMMISSION

Top: Pat Steir in her studio with panels for *The Brueghel Series (A Vanitas of Style)* (1984); Bottom: Ana Teresa Fernández, *Mareas*, 2026; Steel and polycarbonate resin; James R. Herman Cruise Terminal Plaza, Pier 27, San Francisco

a contrasting canvas. "I was trying to make paintings that made themselves," she once said. Steir is represented in NMWA's collection by the large-scale painting *Waterfall of a Misty Dawn* (1990), which features poured and spattered pale gray paint over a variegated black background. Characteristically of her practice, the painting combines minimalist and conceptual approaches to achieve a powerful, atmospheric result.

Tidal Wave

Responding to its natural surroundings on San Francisco's Embarcadero waterfront, Ana Teresa Fernández's *Mareas* (2026), meaning "tides," connects land and sea through a vibrant sculptural archway. The permanent public artwork was commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission and the Port of San Francisco. Its steel arches support vivid blue resin panels that evoke the refracting patterns of light underwater.

Culture Watch

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// EXHIBITIONS

CALIFORNIA

Maren Hassinger:
Living Moving Growing
Berkeley Art Museum and
Pacific Film Archive
Through November 29, 2026
<https://bampfa.org>

Hassinger's most significant retrospective to date presents her work in sculpture, performance, video, and installation from the early 1970s to the present.

MARYLAND

She Speaks—Black Women Artists and the Power of Historical Memory
Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, Annapolis
Through January 16, 2027
<https://bdmuseum.maryland.gov>

Celebrating Black women as leaders and visionaries throughout history, this exhibition features a range of works—from portraits to installations—by Black women artists.

MASSACHUSETTS

Stories on the Planet:
Asagi Maeda
Fuller Craft Museum,
Brockton **RM**
Through November 8, 2026
<https://fullercraft.org>

The Japanese metalsmith's wearable art, intricately engraved and enameled, features miniature sculptural worlds that offer reflections on everyday life.



MINNESOTA // Installation view of Ziba Rajabi: *Belly Laugh at a Funeral*; On view at the Minneapolis Institute of Art

PHOTO BY CHARLES WALBRIDGE; COURTESY OF THE MINNEAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART



MISSOURI // Berthe Morisot, *Study at the Water's Edge*, 1864; Oil on canvas, 23 7/8 x 28 3/4 in.; On view at the Saint Louis Art Museum

COLLECTION OF BONNIE HODES 2026.03; PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM

MINNESOTA

Ziba Rajabi: *Belly Laugh at a Funeral*
Minneapolis Institute of Art **RM**
Through October 25, 2026
<https://new.artsmia.org>

An immersive exhibition featuring wall hangings, paintings, and a soundtrack invites visitors into a contemplative space exploring life after grief and the solace of community.

MISSOURI

Women Impressionists and the Land
Saint Louis Art Museum
October 17, 2026–
January 10, 2027 **RM** **Q**
<https://slam.org>

This exhibition, featuring works on loan from NMWA, spotlights landscape and nature imagery in the work of women Impressionists, including Marie Bracquemond, Mary Cassatt, Blanche Hoschedé-Monet, and Berthe Morisot.

NEW YORK

Hopi Kachina Dolls:
Blessings for a
Balanced World
Brooklyn Museum
October 2, 2026–April 18, 2027
<https://brooklynmuseum.org>

Historical kachina dolls and contemporary works by Hopi women artists illuminate the enduring cultural significance of the kachina tradition through women's perspectives.



NEW YORK // Hopi Sa'lakwmana Tihu (Salako Maiden Kachina Doll), late 19th century; Cottonwood and pigment; On view at the Brooklyn Museum

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, MUSEUM EVERETT COLLECTION 1994, MUSEUM COLLECTION FUND, 04.297.5543; PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM



UNITED KINGDOM // Ana Mendieta, *Imagen de Yágul*, 1973; C-print on paper; On view at Tate Modern

OKLAHOMA

Raven Halfmoon:
Flags of Our Mothers
Oklahoma Contemporary,
Oklahoma City
November 18, 2026–
May 24, 2027
<https://oklahomacontemporary.org>

Halfmoon's monumental ceramic sculptures honor Indigenous women and Caddo traditions, exploring ancestry, identity, resilience, and the enduring power of matrilineal histories.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Pat Steir: Gravity Makes
the Image
Columbia Museum of Art **RM**
Through January 3, 2027
<https://columbiamuseum.org>

Bringing together key paintings from across Steir's career, this exhibition investigates the role of gravity, chance, and gesture in her meditative abstract compositions.

International

UNITED KINGDOM

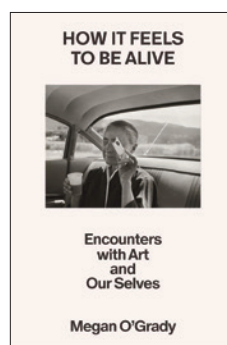
Ana Mendieta
Tate Modern, London
Through January 10, 2027
<https://tate.org.uk>

More than 120 works—including films, sculptures, paintings, photographs, and performances—emphasize Mendieta's groundbreaking engagement with the body, landscape, identity, and belonging.

RM North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) or Reciprocal Organization of Associated Museums (ROAM) benefits for NMWA members at the Explorer level and above

▣ See works from NMWA's collection

// BOOKS



How It Feels to Be Alive

"We look at art reflexively: it returns our gaze, imprinting us with it, leaving residues and abrasions," writes Megan O'Grady in *How It Feels to Be Alive: Encounters with Art and Our Selves* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2026). Across five chapters, each anchored by the work of a single artist—Agnes Martin, Carrie Mae Weems, Barbara Kruger, Pope.L, and Beverly Pepper—O'Grady crafts interconnected reflections on the art itself, the artists' lives, and her own. She deftly threads these topics while exploring art history's movements, lore, and intimacies—the humanness of it all. For O'Grady, art cannot be separated from its maker. She considers Martin's quiet grid works alongside the artist's struggles with mental illness and her long periods of off-grid isolation in New Mexico. An accomplished critic and essayist, O'Grady has interviewed several of her subjects and incorporates excerpts from conversations with Weems, Kruger, and Pepper. Throughout, she draws connections to other artists who offer templates for existing in a complicated world. As she writes, "Ordinary life could be sublime when someone—an artist, a friend—cared enough to take the world you knew so well and hand it back to you remade."

// Alicia Gregory



The Woman Question 1550–2025

A vast exhibition of nearly two hundred works at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw surveys the work of historical and contemporary women artists. The title, "a rallying cry for revolutionary and suffragist movements," references the early texts that formed the foundations of feminism. In the catalogue, *The Woman Question 1550–2025* (Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2025), curator Alison M. Gingeras and other contributors both interrogate and underscore the need for exhibitions that focus on art by women. Gingeras writes, "As long as patriarchal structures persist—whether in art museums, legislatures, or social imaginaries—these exhibitions remain crucial." In essays and entries on featured works, the dense volume covers broad territory including philosophy, artistic themes such as depictions of war, and recent research on Antwerp artist Mayken Verhulst (ca. 1518–1599). Contributors emphasize the need for an intersectional approach that respects the specificity of individual experiences and expression. As art historian Griselda Pollock writes, knowing about women's "desire to share both pain and joy and sheer artistic intelligence . . . is necessary for us to become, finally, genuinely human in our complexity."

// Elizabeth Lynch

Educators' Corner

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Resource Roundup: Abstract Thinking

NMWA educators recently began a project to share our work more widely by transforming exhibition-specific teacher resources into evergreen digital ones. Historically, our team has developed resources for educators in conjunction with temporary special exhibitions, which meant that—despite representing significant research and time—they might be used for only a few months. Yet, they include related art in NMWA's collection and address topics that still meet the needs and interests of students and teachers. We knew they could be adapted and shared with enthusiastic colleagues.

Our initial efforts focused on two lesson plans created for the exhibition *Magnetic Fields: Expanding American Abstraction, 1960s to Today*, which opened at NMWA in October 2017. Developed in collaboration with two veteran metro-area visual arts educators, the lessons introduce abstract art and encourage thoughtful observation, creation, and written reflection. Alma Woodsey Thomas (1891–1978), a favorite collection artist for many visitors because of her strong ties to Washington, D.C., also featured in *Magnetic Fields* and anchors both lessons.

In “Abstracting the Natural World,” students in grades three through five explore NMWA's two Thomas paintings, *Iris, Tulips, Jonquils, and Crocuses* (1969) and *Orion* (1973). They discover that Thomas drew inspiration from the natural world and expressed her feelings through color, shape, pattern, and line. While the original version of this lesson explored Thomas's art alongside abstract works temporarily on view at NMWA, the revised



PHOTO BY JOY ASISCO-SMITH

A museum visitor enjoys Alma Woodsey Thomas's *Iris, Tulips, Jonquils, and Crocuses* (1969)

New digital educator resources introduce abstract art and encourage thoughtful observation, creation, and written reflection.

version recontextualizes her work with examples by Lee Krasner (1908–1984) and Joan Mitchell (1925–1992), whose abstract paintings in NMWA's collection also reference the natural world. The lesson culminates with students creating a collaborative collage inspired by Thomas's signature style, as well as writing individual haikus, a traditional form of Japanese poetry that takes nature as its subject.

“Abstraction from Different Angles” introduces students in grades nine through twelve

to the role of art critic, asking them to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate artworks by Thomas, Georgia Mills Jessup (1926–2016), and Mildred Thompson (1936–2003), giving particular attention to the ways artists render emotions and ideas abstractly. Students also create their own artwork inspired by one of the featured artists and reflect in writing on a classmate's work using their newly honed analytical skills.

Now on the website, both lessons feature blocks of content to organize material visually and highlight critical thinking actions, such as “Describe” and “Create.” Carousels include images of featured artworks; elsewhere, details of selected artworks reveal paint texture and brushwork. Throughout, hyperlinks take users to artist profiles and artwork information to learn more. Though written for use in school classrooms, these



resources are also adaptable to informal learning environments.

With these lessons, NMWA continues its progress toward ensuring that educator resources are fully accessible and easily searchable, an effort begun last year with the launch of the updated Art, Books, and Creativity curriculum. With ongoing support from the museum's digital engagement team, NMWA educators continue revising our inventory of existing resources and will continue to add content to the website in the year to come.

To browse these educator resources, visit <https://nmwa.org/learn/for-educators/curriculum-resources>.

Dedicated Donor

// MARICHU VALENCIA



Valencia with a Yayoi Kusama sculpture on Japan's Naoshima Island, during a trip with NMWA's Director's Circle

"I SEE NMWA AS AN EQUALIZER,"

says NMWA Advisory Board member Marichu Valencia.

"To me, the cornerstone of the museum is its education and engagement around women who have contributed to the progress of our society through their creativity, passion, and perseverance."

As Valencia describes her first encounters with the museum, "I was living in D.C. in the 1980s when NMWA opened its doors. I was impressed by the beauty of the architecture and astonished to see a museum filled with art by women." During her busy career, she was content to be an occasional visitor, but in 2017, while serving on the board of the Delaware Art Museum, she became reacquainted with NMWA. She met Director Susan Fisher Sterling and former Director of National and International

"Marichu Valencia's connection to NMWA stems from her generous spirit, commitment to gender equity, and belief in the power and life-changing beauty of art. I am grateful for her confidence in the museum, enthusiasm for our work, and dedication to carrying the mission forward."

//Director Susan Fisher Sterling

Programs Ilene Gutman, and says, "They were so welcoming and knowledgeable, and I could feel their commitment to advancing NMWA's mission. I knew immediately that I wanted to take an active role in the museum community."

Valencia had retired by that time and, along with her husband, Donald Puglisi, was committed to giving back to the community. The couple are major supporters of the University of Delaware, and, in addition to Valencia's involvement with NMWA and the Delaware Art Museum, she has served on the board of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library and been a longtime supporter of and volunteer with numerous community and outreach organizations.

Originally from the Philippines, Valencia earned a BFA in interior design in Manila. She immigrated to the United States in the 1980s and worked for architectural design companies including Marriott International. Capping her career was a position with the U.S. Department of State designing the interiors of ambassadors' residences. She describes, "I was proud to have that career path. It gave me the opportunity to have a hand in showcasing the face of America through hospitality and design around the globe."

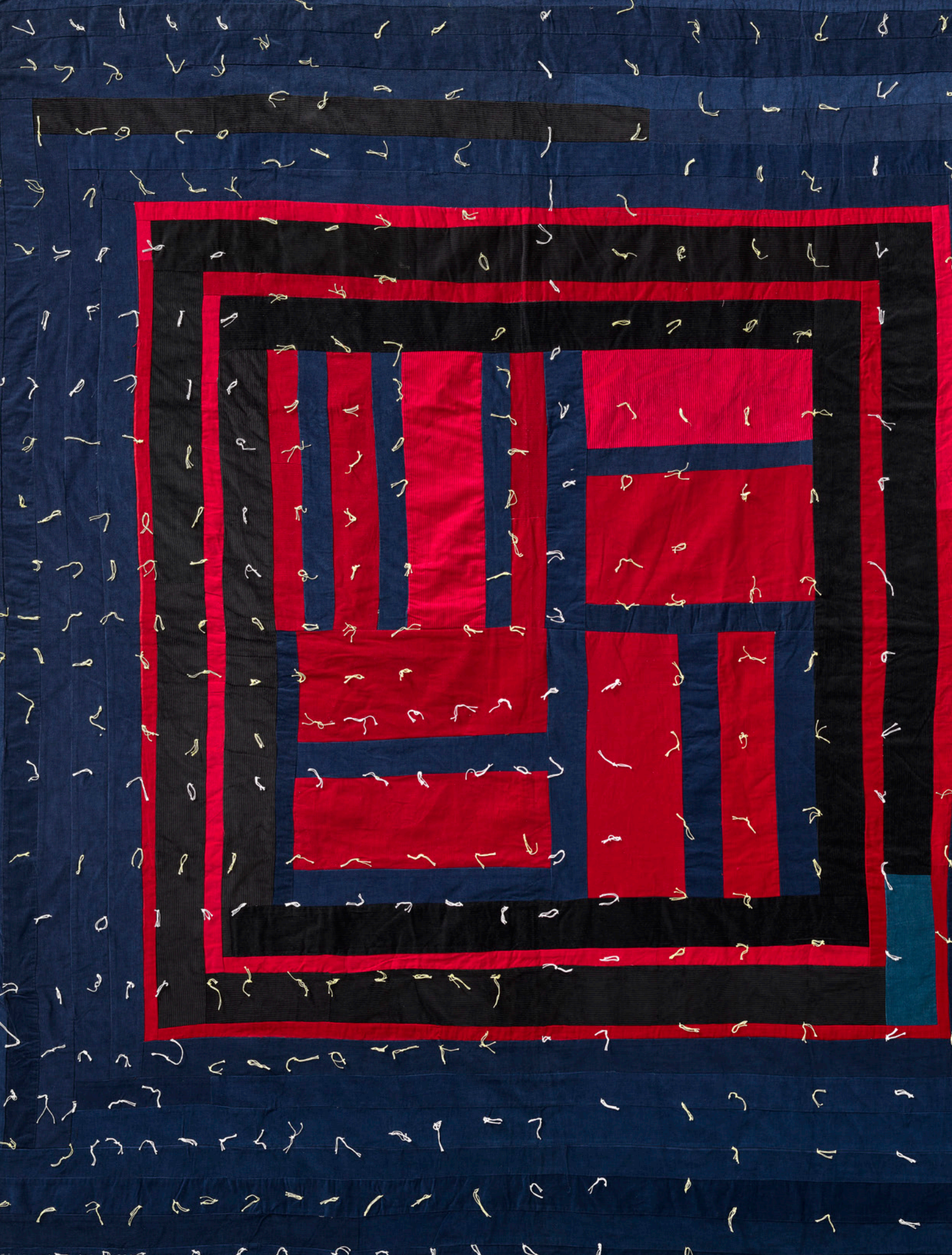
The couple supported NMWA's recent major renovation, and—with her designer's eye for detail—Valencia was thrilled by the result. "It's the details that matter in any design," she says, praising the new uses of space and the gallery lighting that enables a fresh look at artworks.

Another project that garnered Valencia's attention was NMWA's ambitious exhibition *Women Artists from Antwerp to Amsterdam, 1600–1750*.

"I found it to be educational and fascinating," she says. "At the time, their society was a global superpower, and the trailblazing artists used their work to reflect a rich cultural history that resonates to this day."

In addition to programs at the museum, Valencia has relished experiences with NMWA farther afield, including travels with the museum's Director's Circle. An especially memorable trip to Japan took the group to the art-centric islands of Naoshima and Teshima. She describes, "I have been to Japan many times, but I had never been there. We were surrounded by the gorgeous scenic beauty of the islands—such a unique setting for contemporary art." Through all of her experiences with the museum, she says, "Art is the connector, and people are the energy. I am grateful to have forged meaningful friendships through NMWA."

Reflecting on the upcoming retirement of Susan Fisher Sterling, Valencia lauded her transformative work. "Susan is an exceptional leader. I am thankful for her unwavering commitment, wisdom, and work in championing women in the arts. Going forward, I am excited to see how our next leader will build upon this strong foundation, evolving the museum's vision and making its mark in history for the decades to come."





Elizabeth Munn (Ozan, Arkansas), *Untitled*
(*Roman Stripe Medallion*) (detail), ca. 1951–52;
Cotton; machine-pieced and tied, 80 ½ x 70 in.;
Bequest of the Eli Leon Living Trust, BAMPFA;
Courtesy of the Elizabeth Munn Family

ROUTED WEST

Twentieth-Century African American Quilts in California

Elaine Y. Yau

Patchwork quilts by African American makers are a unique kind of archive.¹ Their textures, patterns, and softness can capture memories and stories that would otherwise remain intangible.² This fall, more than eighty quilted objects in the exhibition *Routed West: Twentieth-Century African American Quilts in California* will unfold stories related to Black people's movements westward during the Second Great Migration. Between 1940 and 1980, nearly five million African Americans left the South for urban centers throughout the country, including those along the West Coast.³ Distinct from the earlier arrivals of Southerners between 1910 and 1940, the Second Great Migration to California was defined by the pull of wartime jobs coupled with migrants' determination to flee the "man-made pestilence" of racist terror that surrounded their lives.⁴

Mitchell's work invites us to think about her reflections during quiet periods of patient, careful stitching.

Hattie "Strawberry" Mitchell (Macon, Georgia), *Untitled* (Appliqué with embroidery), Appliqué and embroidered 1906–08, 1914; Quilted and finished ca. 1930; Cotton; hand-appliquéd, hand-pieced, and hand-quilted; 96 x 62 in.; Bequest of the Eli Leon Living Trust, BAMPFA



PHOTO BY KEVIN CANDLAND

Southern Roots

The story of *Routed West* begins in the antebellum South, where life revolved around plantation systems that brutally enslaved Black people to build wealth for white elites through the extraction of cotton, tobacco, and other raw materials. These social relations structure the history of a quilt made by the oldest individual in NMWA's exhibition, Hattie "Strawberry" Mitchell. Mitchell was born into slavery, lived through the Civil War and Emancipation, and remained in service to the family of banker William Johnston of Macon, Georgia, until her death in 1942. She worked as the family house servant.

According to Johnston family oral history, Mitchell's leaf appliqué quilt was made between 1907 and 1908, following a 1906 trip to France, in which Mitchell accompanied the family and stayed with them at the Hôtel du Jardin. At each of the locations they visited (Champs-Élysées, St. Malo, Jardin du

Luxembourg, and Nice, among others), they collected leaves used by Mitchell as patterns for cotton fabric, which she then arranged and appliquéd onto undyed natural cloth with decorative stitching. She subsequently embroidered the names of the places, tracing Johnston's looping handwriting. The Johnstons named it "Hattie's Leaf Quilt." Though we have scant access to her reflections on this trip, her work invites us to think about how they might have emerged during quiet periods of patient, careful stitching.

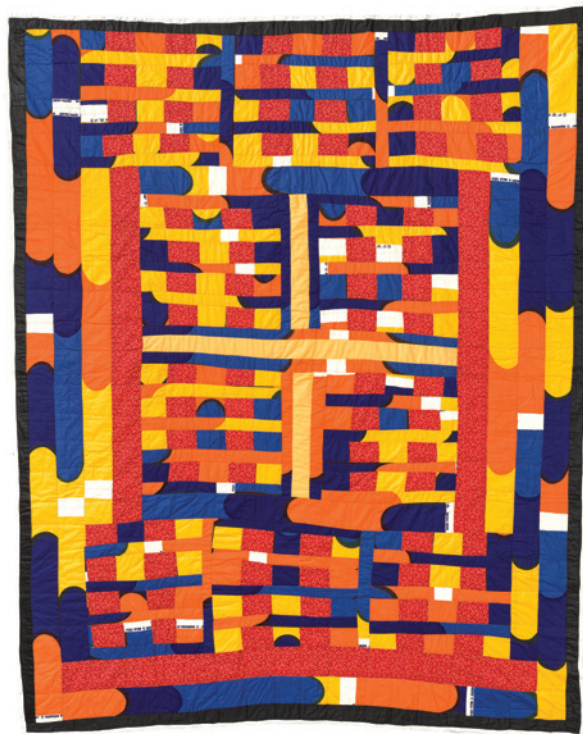
Other quilts on view speak to the creative repertoires of many Black women who were born after Emancipation and whose daughters and grandchildren would carry their traditions out of the South. In the case of Annie Crawford's quilt made of small cotton sacks manufactured to hold tobacco, she gathered her materials over seven years. She washed, dyed, stuffed, and stitched together each group

of five hundred and forty “puffs” to construct her singular creation.⁵ In her hands, the raw materials central to the trafficking of her ancestors shed their commercial markings in a quilt intended for the enjoyment of her descendants, who eventually made their lives in Berkeley, California.

Tending Generations

Quilts—useful and portable objects—could be sent with migrants to keep themselves warm and protected, and to keep connections with loved ones close as they traveled away from home.

These meanings were true for Sherry Ann Byrd, who had carried a love of quilt-making with her since she was a young girl growing up in Texas. She often observed and helped her maternal grandmother, Gladys Henry (affectionately known as “Big Mama”), make quilts, but was unable to nurture this passion as she completed college, married, started a family, and moved to Richmond, California. Intuitively reaching for quilt-making during a period of intense grief, Byrd recalls, “I wrote home to her [Henry] and asked if she would send me some of her already pieced blocks to learn from, [be]cause I was now trying to create my own quilts. She responded with quite a few.”⁶ These blocks show “the offbeat, asymmetrical uniqueness” that Byrd calls “m-provisational”: a word with a sense of swagger and playfulness used to describe quilts created in a “relaxed but fast-paced manner, without a lot of fuss or precision” and made mostly for family use. A later quilt made of salvaged Marimekko fabrics carries a sense of



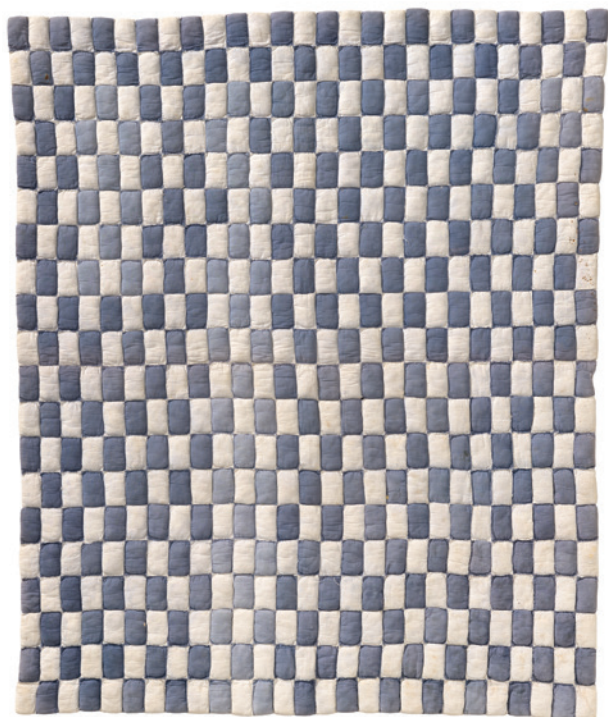
COURTESY OF SHERRY ANN BYRD; PHOTO BY KEVIN CANDLAND

visual dynamism with a relatively limited color palette and the playful curves of the original print.

Technical know-how and improvisational problem-solving were essential skills for Black rural women, who needed to care for their families when opportunities for education and building economic independence were limited. Angelia Tobias made quilts for family and for sale—adapting a family tradition for her own livelihood, as her grandmother Georgia Lee Edwards had two generations before her. She also made Black dolls, participating in the powerful tradition of creating positive images of the self when white ideals of beauty dominated the commercial market.

Carried and Kept

Roland L. Freeman’s pathbreaking book *A Communion of the Spirits: African-American Quilters, Preservers, and Their Stories* recognized quilt-keepers as essential figures in maintaining a quilt’s ties to the past. As his title suggests, preservers—whether they are physical keepers of quilts, storytellers, family historians, teachers of the craft, or all of the above—constitute a core part of the community in which quilts are most alive: alive to the cultural contexts that inform their creation, alive



Left: Annie Crawford (Call, Texas), *Untitled* (Puff quilt with tobacco sacks), 1933–40; Cotton; hand-pieced, 69 x 58 in.; Bequest of the Eli Leon Living Trust, BAMPFA

Above: Sherry Ann Byrd (pieced 1990, Richmond, California) and Irene Bankhead (quilted 1990, Oakland, California), *Cultural Merger at Crossroads, USA*, 1990; Cotton, cotton/polyester blend, and rayon; hand-pieced and quilted; 95 x 75 ½ in.; Bequest of the Eli Leon Living Trust, BAMPFA

to the creative minds of makers, and alive to affirmations and meanings that permeate their fibers.

Growing up in Marion, Louisiana, Alice Neal is one such quilt-keeper. Neal recalled that, especially among poor families, quilts often recorded and safeguarded family genealogies in a culture where family bibles were scarce. After her mother, Mary Bright, died in December 1954, Neal began work on her exquisite portrait quilt, imbuing its design and execution with the memory of her mother. At its center is a figurative portrait of Bright that Neal reproduced from a photograph, using leftover material from a dress Bright had sewn for herself, a lace collar, buttons, and embroidery. She also crafted a replica of one of Bright's hats, which snaps off to reveal a silk cap that she sometimes wore. Four Nine Patch blocks anchoring the portrait's frame symbolize the first pattern that Neal learned from her mother; Stars of Lemoyne blocks appearing just outside the frame are a nod to her lifetime spent in Louisiana. Above Bright's likeness are two Churn Dash blocks, representing the rural labor that provided her family with milk and butter, and below are two stars to invoke one of her favorite hymns, "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?"⁷ Taken as a whole, Neal's quilt offers its tribute in the language of her artistic inheritance.

Collective Caregiving for the Future

The formation of quilt guilds and other quilt organizations, especially from the 1970s onward, points to the inescapable

truth that quilts and the practices around their making have thrived apart from art museums for at least two centuries. Fine arts and modern art museums have been founded on aesthetic hierarchies in which quilts, "women's work," craft, and folk art were marginalized and devalued in comparison with the "fine arts" of painting and sculpture. This marginalization was compounded when African American women artists were the ones struggling for recognition. Because many museums still rest upon colonialist foundations that prize objects over people, structural transformation remains necessary if they wish to respect and include this medium.

Routed West strives to follow the ethics of care that underline the flow and flourishing of quilts within African American communities. It is an ethic that guides how fabrics are salvaged and chosen, puts hands to work to fill physical or emotional needs, cares for past memory as much as present and future kin, and calls forth the quiltmaker's own image of beauty. The stories gathered here include California as part of their journey, but they are not exclusive to the Golden State. The "motherroot" of African American quilt-making carries these complex realities. When we can hold and understand these connections, we may come closer to honoring the lessons of care and repair that quilts carry forward.

// Elaine Y. Yau is associate curator and academic liaison at BAMPFA.

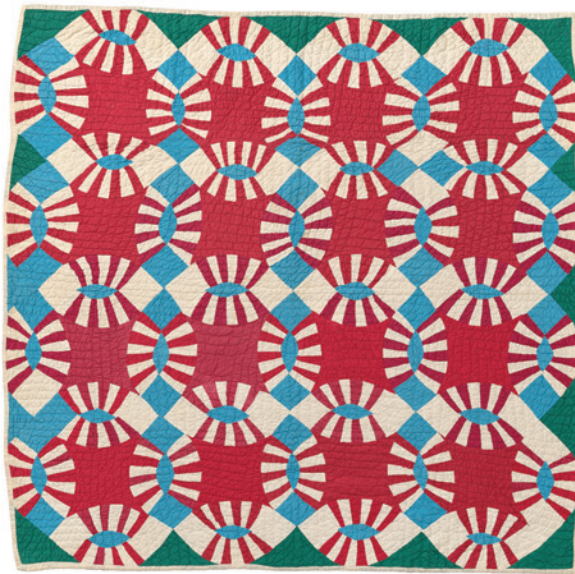


PHOTO BY KEVIN CANDLAND

Angelina Tobias, left to right: *Sleeping doll with braids*, 1996; *Double-sided doll with patchwork clothes*, 1992; *Doll with patchwork clothes and striped hat*, 1992; *Doll with romper and lace trim*, 1996; *Doll with braided pigtails, cap, and red dress*, 1996; *Doll with braided hair and dress*, 1996; *Doll with yellow dress*, 1993; *Doll with jumpsuit and cap*, 1996 (1992 dolls made in Oakland, California, all others Merced, California); Cotton, polyester, rayon, fabric blends, and yarn; all hand-pieced; Dimensions variable; Bequest of the Eli Leon Living Trust, BAMPFA

Left: Alice Neal (Oakland, California), *Mary Bright Commemorative Quilt* (with Dresden Plate, Monkey Wrench, Wild Goose Chase, Fan, Basket of Flowers, Star of Lemayne, Nine Patch blocks), 1955–56; Cotton, buttons, woven hat; appliqué, hand-pieced, hand-quilted; 78 ½ x 62 ¾ in.; Bequest of the Eli Leon Living Trust, BAMPFA

Below: Emma Hall (Sweet Home, Arkansas), *Untitled (Double Wedding Ring)*, ca. 1940; Cotton; hand-pieced; 71 x 71 ½ in.; Bequest of the Eli Leon Living Trust, BAMPFA



Notes:

1. Adapted from Elaine Y. Yau, *Routed West: Twentieth-Century African American Quilts in California* (Berkeley and New York: Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive and Delmonico Books, 2025).

2. "[Quilts] were history as life lived." bell hooks, "Aesthetic Inheritances: History Worked by Hand," in *yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990); reprinted in *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 160.

3. James N. Gregory, "The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview," in *African American Urban History: The Dynamics of Race, Class and Gender since World War II*, ed. Joe W. Trotter Jr. and Kenneth L. Kusmer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 19–38.

4. "Historic Overview," chap. 2 in *Rosie The Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park: General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment* (Richmond, CA: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2008), 179. Accessed April 17, 2024, <http://npshistory.com/publications/rori/gmp-ea-2008.pdf>. Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010), 179.

5. For additional background on Puff quilts, see Judy Anne Breneman, "Those Peculiar Biscuit and Puff Quilts," 2006, <https://quiltindex.org/view/?type=publications&kid=51-149-53>.

6. Sherry Ann Byrd, email correspondence with author, June 13, 2021.

7. Alice Neal, interview by Eli Leon, 1984. African-American Quilt Maker Interviews by Eli Leon, Eli Leon Archives, BAMPFA, CD001, Interview 4-84a, tracks 1–7 and CD002, Interview 4-84b, tracks 1–4.

Routed West: Twentieth-Century African American Quilts in California is organized by the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. The exhibition is curated by Elaine Y. Yau, Associate Curator and Academic Liaison, with Matthew Villar Miranda, Former Curatorial Associate.

Funding for the conservation of the quilt collection was generously provided by Angela and David Filo; a grant from the Bank of America Art Conservation Project, the Save America's Treasures program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Office of the Chancellor at the University of California, Berkeley.

Generous support provided by Art Bridges.

Art Bridges BAMPFA

Presentation of *Routed West* at NMWA is made possible by Jamie Gorelick and Richard Waldhorn, Tara Rudman, Stephanie Sale, The Coby Foundation, Ltd, and FedEx. Additional support is provided by San Francisco Advocacy for NMWA, Lunder Foundation, Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation, and Kravet family of brands.



Calendar

// EXHIBITIONS

Burnished: Pueblo Pottery at NMWA

Through September 27, 2026

Marlo Pascual: Making Something Out of Something

Through February 28, 2027

Routed West: Twentieth-Century African American Quilts in California

September 18, 2026–
January 17, 2027

Beverly Pepper: Land Art and Monumental Sculptures

October 24, 2026–
April 25, 2027

Online exhibitions:
Revisit favorite NMWA
exhibitions and more at
[https://nmwa.org/whats-on/
exhibitions/online](https://nmwa.org/whats-on/exhibitions/online).

// KEY

- F** Free
- M** Free for members
- +** Free for members and one guest
- A** Free with admission
- R** Reservations 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.

Daily / Weekly / Monthly

Advance online reservations are suggested.

Free Community Day

FIRST SUNDAYS & SECOND WEDNESDAYS 10 A.M.–5 P.M. // **FMR**
The first Sunday and second Wednesday of each month, NMWA offers free general admission. Enjoy current exhibitions and the collection galleries. Advance registration is recommended.

Open Studio

FIRST SUNDAYS & SECOND WEDNESDAYS 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **FMO**
During Free Community Days, visit the museum's studio for drop-in art-making. All ages welcome; children twelve and younger require adult supervision.

Collection Highlights Tour

DAILY 2–2:45 P.M., SELECT SUNDAYS 11–11:45 A.M. // **MAO**
During these interactive, docent- or staff-led talks, look closely and discuss artworks from NMWA's collection. Join as often as you like—content varies.

Gallery Talk

MOST WEDNESDAYS 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**
Exhibition-focused, staff-led talks highlight several works on view. Join as often as you like—content varies.

NMWA Nights

SELECT WEDNESDAYS 5:30–8 P.M. // **R**
On the third Wednesday of most months, join a creative and engaging after-hours experience! Peruse the galleries, grab a cocktail, make art, and participate in meaningful activism.

Art Chat

SELECT FRIDAYS 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMREV**
On select Fridays, jump-start your weekend with art! Join NMWA educators online for informal chats about selected works from NMWA's collection and exhibitions.

September

9/2 Gallery Talk: *Burnished*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**

9/6 Free Community Day

SUN 10 A.M.–5 P.M. // **FMR**

9/6 Open Studio

SUN 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **FMO**

9/6 Collection Highlights Tour

SUN 11–11:45 A.M. // **MAO**

9/9 Free Community Day

WED 10 A.M.–5 P.M. // **FMR**

9/9 Open Studio

WED 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **FMO**



Marlo Pascual, *Untitled*, 2013; Digital C-print, 50 1/8 x 40 1/8 in.; On view in *Marlo Pascual: Making Something Out of Something*

NMWA, GIFT OF HEATHER AND TONY PODESTA COLLECTION; © ESTATE OF MARLO PASCUAL; IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CASEY KAPLAN, NEW YORK

9/9 Gallery Talk: Marlo Pascual

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

9/11 Art Chat

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **F M R V**

9/16 Member Preview Day: Routed West

WED 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **M + R E**

Join us for a special preview of *Routed West* and discover how Black women leaving the Jim Crow South stitched a legacy of survival, connection, and resilience across generations. Tours throughout the day.

9/16 Gallery Talk: Burnished

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

9/16 NMWA Nights

WED 5:30–8 P.M. // **R E**

Kick off a new season of NMWA's late-hours series with an exclusive look at *Routed West*, featuring artists from the exhibition. Enjoy cocktails, art-making, and more. \$25 general/\$22 students, seniors, D.C. residents/\$20 members. Free for members at the Explorer level and above. All members can purchase tickets, even if the event is sold out.

9/19 Firsthand Experience: Collage

SAT 11 A.M.–3 P.M. // **R E**

Explore concepts and techniques inspired by *Routed West* in this workshop series (9/19, 10/10, and 11/14). Attend one or multiple sessions. Materials provided; no experience necessary. \$25 general/\$22 students, seniors, D.C. residents/\$20 members.

9/26 Tour: Safe Spaces

SAT 12–12:45 P.M. // **A M R**

Explore the museum's collection during this engaging, interactive tour. Featuring four to six works on view celebrating artists who found peace and inspiration in their surroundings.

9/23 Gallery Talk: Routed West

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

9/23 Artist Talk: The Work Against the World

WED 6:30–7:30 P.M. // **F R**

D.C.-based Afrodescendant artists Zsundayka Nzinga Terrell and Maria-Lana Queen discuss building careers in an art world that rarely centers them, even as they produce work with national and international reach. Moderated by Pulitzer Prize-winning critic Robin Givhan.

9/25 Art Chat

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **F M R V**

9/30 Gallery Talk: Routed West

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**



PHOTO BY DEREK BAKER

Explore Frida Kahlo's legacy in a Fresh Talk on 10/5

October

10/4 Free Community Day

SUN 10 A.M.–5 P.M. // **F M R**

10/4 Open Studio

SUN 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **F M O**

10/4 Collection Highlights Tour

SUN 11–11:45 A.M. // **M A O**

10/5 Fresh Talk: Frida in Theater and Art

MON 6:30–8:30 P.M. // **R**

Join us for a conversation that explores Frida Kahlo's legacy through the lens of the Shakespeare Theatre Company's production of *Frida...A Self Portrait* (10/8 to 11/8), examining the artist's cultural relevance and impact. Followed by a salon-style cocktail hour. \$25 general/\$22 students, seniors, D.C. residents/\$20 members.

10/7 Gallery Talk: Routed West

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

10/7 Film Screening: Artists in Residence

WED 6:30–8:30 P.M. // **F R**

Discover the inspiring story of three women artists who bought a house together in 1950s New York City and forged unconventional lives as artists and mothers. Film run time 93 minutes; followed by a conversation with writer-director Katie Jacobs and composer Emily Wells.

10/9 Art Chat

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **F M R V**

10/10 Firsthand Experience: Hand-Stitching

SAT 11 A.M.–3 P.M. // **R E**

Explore concepts and techniques inspired by *Routed West* in this workshop series (9/19, 10/10, and 11/14). Attend one or multiple sessions. Materials provided; no experience necessary. \$25 general/\$22 students, seniors, D.C. residents/\$20 members.



PHOTO BY JASON DIXSON; COURTESY OF DOWNTOWNDC BID

Enjoy the new installation in the New York Avenue Sculpture Corridor as well as gallery talks (11/4 and 12/2) highlighting *Beverly Pepper: Land Art and Monumental Sculptures* in NMWA's galleries

// KEY

F Free	O No reservations required
M Free for members	E Exhibition-related program
+ Free for members and one guest	V Virtual/online program
A Free with admission	(Please note that the time zone for all online programs is Eastern Time)
R Reservations required at https://nmwa.org	

10/10 Tour: NMWA en Español

SAT 12–12:45 P.M. // **A M R**

Explore the museum's collection during this engaging, interactive Spanish-language tour. Featuring four to six works celebrating artists from around the world who found inspiration at home and abroad.

10/14 Free Community Day

WED 10 A.M.–5 P.M. // **F M R**

10/14 Open Studio

WED 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **F M O**

10/14 Gallery Talk: *Marlo Pascual and Routed West*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

10/14 Curator's Perspective: *Routed West*

WED 6–7 P.M. // **M R V E**

In this members-only online presentation, Elaine Yau, associate curator at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, shares behind-the-scenes insights into the exhibition *Routed West*.

10/17 #5WomenArtists Tour: Mixed Media

SAT 12–12:45 P.M. // **A M R**

On this engaging tour, explore the works of five artists who layer techniques and materials to create one unified artwork.

10/21 Gallery Talk: *Marlo Pascual*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

10/21 NMWA Nights

WED 5:30–8 P.M. // **R**

Enjoy NMWA's late-hours series with cocktails, art-making, and more. \$25 general/\$22 students, seniors, D.C. residents/\$20 members. Free for members at the Explorer level and above. All members can purchase tickets, even if the event is sold out.

10/23 Art Chat

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **F M R V**

10/28 Gallery Talk: *Routed West*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

November

11/1 Free Community Day

SUN 10 A.M.–5 P.M. // **F M R**

11/1 Quilt Documentation Day

SUN 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **F M R**

The African American Quilt Documentation Study Group will document your family quilt, creating a record to help researchers understand its cultural significance. Advance registration is required. To sign up, email AFAMQUILTDQC@gmail.com.

11/1 Open Studio

SUN 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **F M O**

11/1 Collection Highlights Tour

SUN 11–11:45 A.M. // **M A O**

11/4 Gallery Talk: *Beverly Pepper*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

11/11 Free Community Day: Cultural Preserves

WED 10 A.M.–5 P.M. // **F M R**

Join us on this special free community day to participate in Cultural Preserves, an interactive, community-based archival project by D.C.-based artist Holly Bass.

11/11 Open Studio

WED 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **F M O**

11/11 Gallery Talk: *Marlo Pascual and Routed West*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **F M O E**

11/11 Fresh Talk: Holly Bass

WED 6:30–8:30 P.M. // **R**

Multidisciplinary artist Holly Bass unpacks myths and legacies of the Civil War and American identity. Bass explores the power of performance, public participation, and creative archiving. Followed by a salon-style cocktail hour. \$25 general/\$22 students, seniors, D.C. residents/\$20 members.

11/13 Art Chat

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **F M R V**

11/14 Firsthand Experience: Appliqué

SAT 11 A.M.–3 P.M. // **RE**

Explore concepts and techniques inspired by *Routed West* in this workshop series (9/19, 10/10, and 11/14). Attend one or multiple sessions. Materials provided; no experience necessary. \$25 general/\$22 students, seniors, D.C. residents/\$20 members.

11/14 NMWA en Français

SAT 12–12:45 P.M. // **MAR**

Explore the museum's collection during this engaging, interactive French-language tour. Featured works celebrate artists with connections to Francophone communities around the world.

11/18 Gallery Talk: Marlo Pascual

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**

11/18 NMWA Nights

WED 5:30–8 P.M. // **R**

Enjoy NMWA's late-hours series with cocktails, art-making, and more. \$25 general/\$22 students, seniors, D.C. residents/\$20 members. Free for members at the Explorer level and above. All members can purchase tickets, even if the event is sold out.

11/25 Gallery Talk: *Routed West*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**

December

12/2 Gallery Talk: *Beverly Pepper*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**

12/6 Free Community Day

SUN 10 A.M.–5 P.M. // **FMR**

12/6 Makers' Market

SUN 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **FMO**

Join us for a special holiday market featuring goods from women and gender-expansive artists, makers, and small businesses. Shop handmade jewelry, art, ceramics, and vintage finds in NMWA's Great Hall.

12/6 Open Studio

SUN 10 A.M.–4 P.M. // **FMO**

12/6 Collection Highlights Tour

SUN 11–11:45 A.M. // **MAO**

12/9 Gallery Talk: *Marlo Pascual and Routed West*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**

12/9 Author Talk: Jennifer Dasal

WED 6–7 P.M. // **MRV**

In this members-only virtual event, art historian, curator, and podcast host Jennifer Dasal discusses her new book, *The Club: Where American Women Artists Found Refuge in Belle Époque Paris* (2025).

12/11 Art Chat

FRI 5–5:45 P.M. // **FMRV**

12/16 Gallery Talk: *Routed West*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**

12/23 Gallery Talk: *Routed West*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**

12/30 Gallery Talk: *Routed West*

WED 12–12:30 P.M. // **FMOE**

// Education programming is made possible by Sarah Kennedy, the Leo Rosner Foundation, the Hayes Foundation, the Revada Foundation of the Logan Family, and an anonymous donor, with further support provided by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and Elinor Coleman and David Sparkman. 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 and the Davis/Dauray Family Fund, with additional support provided by Anne N. Edwards and the Susan and Jim Swartz Public Programs Fund.



Makers' Market returns for the holiday season—join us during Free Community Day on 12/6 for unique and vintage finds



Julie Blackmon, *Metaverse*, 2022; Archival pigment print, 46 x 60 ½ in.; NMWA, Gift of Vito and Deborah Barbieri

© JULIE BLACKMON; IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Child's Play

Metaverse

Virginia Treanor

Julie Blackmon (b. 1966, Springfield, Missouri) was exposed to photography while studying art at Missouri State University but did not begin her practice in earnest until she was in her mid-thirties. Today she is globally renowned for creating meticulously composed images—such as *Metaverse* (2022), new to NMWA's collection—that explore the complexities of modern family life.

Setting the Scene

Blackmon initially used her own three children as models, posing them in artfully constructed environments. Children have remained the predominant protagonists in her work, although with her children now grown, Blackmon relies on nieces, nephews, and friends. Her colorful, eye-catching tableaus blend humor and unease, capturing the absurd juxtaposition of the two that pervades everyday life, particularly the lives of parents. Blackmon also imbues her images with witty art historical references, taking inspiration from sources such as the light-filled domestic Dutch interiors of Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) and poignant American vignettes by Norman Rockwell (1894–1978).

In *Metaverse*, five figures, all children (although the figure whose legs are visible at the top of the stairs is ambiguous), occupy a room with a wooden staircase. Against the stairs is a seafoam-green-hued upright piano being played by a girl with braids gathered into two ponytails. On the bottom, and widest step, is a boy of about three or four years of age wearing a virtual reality headset and holding its hand controllers. On the stairs' landing, an older boy wearing a baseball cap

is framed in a doorway, one leg braced against the opposite jamb. Ascending (or descending?) the bannister-less stairs is a disconcerted-looking toddler and, disappearing out of the frame at the top, a pair of barefoot legs protrude from a patchwork skirt.

Blackmon lyrically captures what it means to share physical space in the contemporary world, when attention, presence, and connection are all increasingly fragmented. Although they are in the same space, the children, ranging in age from toddler to teen, are each engaged in their own activity. Blackmon has captured this moment as if it is a still frame from a longer video, seemingly poised to resume at any moment. One can easily imagine what comes next: the space filling with the sound of the piano, feet running up the stairs, and a child's whimper. Yet the meaning of Blackmon's images resides in their stillness; a different moment in time would elicit a much different emotion. In *Metaverse*, the consternation of the toddler on the stairs provokes a feeling of anxiety, as does the lack of adult supervision (and the absence of a railing on the stairs!). But toddlers are notoriously mercurial, and this one might have been giggling an instant before or after this moment. An adult might be just outside of the frame or about to enter. It is these ambiguities that fuel Blackmon's work.

More Than Meets the Eye

There is also a timeless quality to Blackmon's images, infused as they are with art historical references. Sometimes these are quite literal, as is the case with *Flatboat* (2022), which was



Julie Blackmon, *Flatboat*, 2022; Archival pigment print, 44 x 53 in.

Blackmon's colorful, eye-catching tableaux blend humor and unease, capturing the absurd juxtaposition of the two that pervades everyday life.

recently acquired by the National Gallery of Art and takes direct inspiration from a nineteenth-century painting in the NGA's collection, *The Jolly Flatboatmen* (1846), by George Caleb Bingham (1811–1879).

In *Metaverse*, these references are more oblique. The domestic interior illuminated through a window or a door frequently appears in the paintings of Vermeer and other Dutch artists of the seventeenth century. The teenager looking out of the doorway recalls the solitary figures of Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) seen from behind as they contemplate what is before them. However, in Blackmon's photograph, it is neither the vastness of nature nor ships in the harbor that captures the boy's attention. In fact, what absorbs him is a mystery, as the doorway is filled with bright white light that obscures the scene. Similarly, the view through the window whose sill he grips is enigmatic. These incongruous elements are at odds with the mundane setting, lending the image a fantastical, otherworldly quality.

Alongside the timeless and transcendental qualities with which Blackmon imbues *Metaverse* are objects that anchor the scene in the present moment. The corporations whose products pervade our daily lives are represented by the virtual reality headset (Meta) and the pink strawberry drink (Starbucks) on the piano. Although no brand names are visible, these items are nevertheless immediately recognizable, so ingrained are they into our zeitgeist.

At Home

With the addition of *Metaverse* to the collection, NMWA's holdings of contemporary photography are greatly enriched. Like other innovators in the medium, Blackmon wields her camera to artfully question the reality it purportedly captures. Visitors will be able to enjoy this work beginning later this fall, alongside other artists' interpretations of domestic themes, in the "Home, Maker" section of NMWA's third-floor galleries.

//Virginia Treanor is senior curator at the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Committee News

20

A Milestone for the Museum and Its Worldwide Advocates

In spring 2027, NMWA marks the fortieth anniversary of its opening, as well as the twentieth anniversary of the museum's first *Women to Watch* exhibition. At the heart of this legacy is NMWA's advocacy network: volunteer committees in twenty-four regions across the U.S. and abroad who organize programs and funding initiatives in service of the museum's mission.

Women to Watch is a dynamic collaboration between the museum and its committees. Organized every two to three years around a theme or medium, *Women to Watch* exhibitions highlight artists who are shortlisted by consulting curators from each participating committee's region; one artist representing each region is selected for the exhibition at NMWA. During seven exhibitions over the past twenty years, the initiative has brought more than 140 women and nonbinary artists to NMWA, often for their first museum presentation. Selected and nominated artists alike have gone on to enter museum collections, secure gallery representation, open solo shows at landmark institutions, and build lasting collector bases—making a major impact on the way museums, galleries, and collectors invest in women and nonbinary artists.

The project's eighth installment, *A Book Arts Revolution*, opens in April 2027. Partner committees worked with local curators to shortlist sixty-two book artists, and guest curator Tia Blassingame selected sixteen to exhibit in Washington, D.C. Artists' books—artworks that often respond to the form of the book, spanning print, paper, and sculpture—have a long history in NMWA's collections, and the museum now holds more than 1,000 of these works.



PHOTO COURTESY OF XOR LUN AND NMWA JAPAN COMMITTEE

Yukie Kamiya, Japan's consulting curator for *Women to Watch 2027*, stands with nominated artists Saya Irie, Sachiko Kazama, Aiko Miyanaga, Hanako Murakami, Tomoko Yoneda, and Committee Chair Noriko Kashiwagi at a celebration hosted by Governor Koike Yuriko in Omotesando Hills, Harajuku, Tokyo



PHOTO BY KIM LUK PHOTOGRAPHY

Nominated artists (left to right) Serena Perrone, Cynthia Lollis, Eliza Bentz, Hannah Israel, and Elieen Wallace participate in a panel discussion organized by the Georgia Committee of NMWA and moderated by Cynthia Nourse Thompson (far right), consulting curator for the project

Committees across the network celebrated their nominated artists in kind. Georgia, Northern California (San Francisco), Japan, and the U.K. mounted regional exhibitions. Committees in Arkansas, Ohio,

and Wyoming traveled theirs across their states. Arizona, Greater Kansas City Area, and Massachusetts groups hosted artist talks and meet-and-greet programs. Washington state organized studio visits, while

New York plans a hands-on printmaking workshop this fall. Elizabeth Ajunwa, liaison curator and director of NMWA's Library and Research Center, collaborated with the Library of Congress on a panel discussion

featuring Mid-Atlantic artists. Northern California (San Francisco) and Massachusetts also held reunions honoring past *Women to Watch* artists.

However, *Women to Watch* is only one dimension of what NMWA committees accomplish. Year-round, committees organize programs such as studio visits, museum tours, and art trips; amplify #5WomenArtists and other NMWA initiatives; recognize Women's History Month and International Women's Day; build partnerships for the museum; and give back through artworks and funds. Recently, Southern California took members to Palm Springs, and New Mexico members went to Taos. Oregon hosted NMWA Director Susan Fisher Sterling, and Mississippi held its Honored Artist Luncheon. Chile visited the National Library and released its newest artist interview. Les Amis



PHOTO BY JESSICA MONROY FOR DREW ALITZER PHOTOGRAPHY

At the California College of the Arts, curator Jaime Austin (center) stands with artists (left to right) Amy Tavern, Adia Millett, Julia Goodman, Lava Thomas, Davina Semo, Katherine Vetne, Rhonda Holberton, Genevieve Quick, and Cathy Lu, who were featured in the exhibition *Reunited*, organized by San Francisco Advocacy to highlight nominated artists from past *Women to Watch* exhibition cycles

(France) wrapped its eleventh artist-entrepreneur mentoring cohort and its 2025–2026 artist dinner series.

For forty years, NMWA committees have put the museum's

mission into practice. Their efforts and NMWA's are complementary halves of the same story, in which women and nonbinary artists are front and center.

Learn more about *Women to Watch 2027* at <https://nmwa.org/book-arts-revolution> and about the committees' activities at <https://nmwa.org/support/committees>.

Member News

Help NMWA Build a Bolder Future with a Legacy Gift

The Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay Legacy Society honors

friends who designate NMWA as a beneficiary in their estate plans. Like the museum's founders, members of the

Legacy Society have an enormous impact, enabling NMWA to continue to offer trailblazing programs and advocate for

women artists well into the future. Contact Ally Damante at 202-783-7985 or adamante@nmwa.org to learn more.

Give the Gift of Membership

This holiday season, treat your friend or loved one to NMWA membership, a meaningful gift that lasts all year. Membership unlocks access to art, community, and thought-provoking programs. Plus, your gift supports gender equity in the arts, amplifying the voices of women and nonbinary artists when it matters most. Learn more at <https://nmwa.org/support/membership>.



Members enjoy a tour led by NMWA Education Assistant Micah Koppl during Member Preview Day for *Making Their Mark: Works from the Shah Garg Collection*

PHOTO BY ANGELA B. PAN

Museum Events

22



PHOTOS 1-7 BY MYKL MAKES

A Successful Spring Luncheon Series

In May, NMWA held the third event in its new Spring Luncheon Series, which gathered supporters together with extraordinary leaders, artists, and visionaries to benefit the museum. Following luncheons that featured fashion designer Lela Rose and put art historian Katy Hessel in conversation with collector Komal Shah, the final event, "The Art of Innovation," featured a conversation between Sky Kelley, former president of Pantone, and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Robin Givhan. Their discussion explored the

intersection of art, color, and innovation, highlighting the far-reaching effects of creativity. Attendees enjoyed the festivities and look forward to celebrating the museum's fortieth anniversary in 2027.

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Spring Luncheon Series: The Art of Innovation

1. Sky Kelley and Robin Givhan speak about creativity and innovation
2. George White, NMWA Director Susan Fisher Sterling, and Patti White
3. Bonnie Feld and NMWA Board Chair Winton S. Holladay
4. Muriel Gregory and Lisa Gregory stand with a painting by Mildred Thompson
5. Vocalist and poet Alexa Patrick, Sky Kelley, and Glory Edim
6. Lucretia Adymy Risoleo and Diann Martin
7. Catherine Guttman-McCabe, Sue J. Henry, and Adam Warshavsky

NMWA Nights: May 2026

- 8-9. Attendees at NMWA Nights strike a pose in front of our community wheat-pasting wall and enjoy the exhibition *Making Their Mark: Works from the Shah Garg Collection*
10. A dance performance from The Lion's Den

May Community and Wellness Events

11. Attendees find strength and calm at Cello Yoga during a performance by Adia Adams
12. Tara Aura leads a meditative sound bath
- 13-14. Participants in the Big Cake Exchange admire their handiwork; bakers Jill Nguyen and Tiffany MacIsaac welcome them to the event

Fresh Talk: Andrea Bowers

15. NMWA Assistant Curator Hannah Shambroom and artist Andrea Bowers discuss Bowers's practice and work on view in *Making Their Mark*
16. Guests enjoy cocktail hour after the event



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We thank supporters of the Space to Soar capital campaign, whose generosity enabled the museum's major building renovation. Although we can only list donations of \$20,000 and above due to space limitations, we are grateful to all donors.

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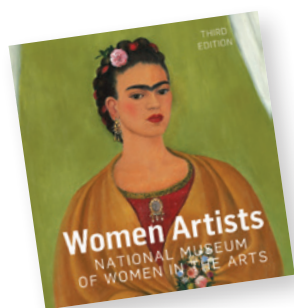
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Lists as of August 1, 2026

Museum Shop

Shop NMWA online at <https://shop.nmwa.org>

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Women Artists Tiny Folio

The third edition of the museum's Tiny Folio—updated with new works by diverse global artists—celebrates the museum's collection in a giftable miniature volume. 4.3 x 4.7 in. Hardcover, 336 pages. \$12.95/Member \$11.65

Pixel Quilt Journal

Featuring artwork inspired by quilt blocks, mosaic tiles, and traditional textile patterns, this notebook has a velvet-touch soft cover. 150 lined pages. \$12/Member \$10.80



Quilted Sunglass Case

This quilted cotton case keeps your eyewear snug and scratch-free. 7.5 x 3 in. Magnetic flap closure. \$16.95/Member \$15.26

Faith Ringgold Puzzle

Try piecing together Ringgold's *Sunflower Quilting Bee at Arles* (1996), a lithograph celebrating African American women as they display a quilt. 1,000 pieces. \$24.95/Member \$22.46



Routed West: Twentieth-Century African American Quilts in California

The first publication dedicated to African American quilts in California, this catalogue features full-color images and new research. Hardcover, 272 pages. \$65/Member \$58.50

Quilted Pattern Tumbling Blocks

A colorful twist on the classic stacking game, perfect for game nights and gifting. Includes fifty-four wooden blocks. 11 x 3.4 x 3.4 in. \$34/Member \$30.60



NMWA Cap

This vintage-inspired, off-white baseball cap features the museum's name and founding year in blue embroidered lettering. Cotton twill; adjustable back strap. \$36/Member \$32.40

"Life of Shapes" Bandana

Lightweight and breathable, this bandana features hand-drawn designs and hand-rolled edges. Includes cotton storage pouch. 70% cotton, 30% silk blend. 25 x 25 in. \$70/Member \$63



// COMING SOON

Beverly Pepper

Land Art and
Monumental Sculptures

October 23, 2026–April 25, 2027

In celebration of the new public art installation *Beverly Pepper: Ten Monumental Sculptures* just outside the museum's front doors, NMWA highlights Pepper's innovative practice in a complementary focus exhibition.

Renowned for her groundbreaking use of weathering steel, sculptor Beverly Pepper (1922–2020) most often worked at a massive scale, evoking sensations of both energy and

strength. Visitors will marvel at her monumental outdoor works in the New York Avenue Sculpture Corridor and proceed inside to discover more. NMWA's exhibition presents several gallery-scaled sculptures by Pepper, including works from the museum's collection, as well as a film about the artist featuring newly discovered archival footage.



Beverly Pepper, *Medea, variation 2*, 2015; Weathering steel, 24 x 24 x 12¾ in.; On loan from Beverly Pepper Studio LLC