

## THE BMA ACQUIRES WORKS BY BARBARA CHASE-RIBOUD, OLETHA DEVANE, MARY LOVELACE O'NEAL, LAURA ORTMAN, WENDY RED STAR, SHINIQUE SMITH, AND MARTINE SYMS, AMONG OTHERS

*BMA also announces extension of 2020 Vision Initiative Into 2021*

BALTIMORE, MD (June 24, 2020)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) announced today new acquisitions made as part of its *2020 Vision* initiative, which includes a commitment to only purchase works by female-identifying artists this calendar year. Among the highlights entering the collection are mixed-media sculpture and paintings by **Barbara Chase-Riboud, Oletha DeVane, Janiva Ellis, Bessie Harvey, Suzanne Jackson, Mary Lovelace O'Neal, and Mary T. Smith**; video and animation by **Nathalie Djurberg, Laura Ortman, and Martine Syms**; works on paper by **Vivian Browne, Barbara Regina Dietzsch, Wendy Red Star, Nellie Mae Rowe, Shinique Smith, and Gerda Wegener**; photographs by **Delphine Diallo and Mariette Pathy Allen**; and design objects and textiles by **Barbara Brown, Greta Grossman, Zandra Rhodes, and the women of Gee's Bend**. The BMA has committed a budget of approximately \$2.5 million to the effort and will continue to make announcements regarding new acquisitions throughout the year. In addition to the purchases made as part of *2020 Vision*, the BMA has received gifts of works by **Nancy Graves, Red Grooms, Deborah Kass, Paul Klee, Kenneth Noland, and Georges Rouault**, among others. A full list of 2020 acquisitions will be available at [artbma.org/2020](http://artbma.org/2020) on Monday, June 29.

The BMA also announced today that it will extend its *2020 Vision* exhibitions and programming into 2021. The contemporary exhibitions that opened in March 2020, including those of works by **Candice Breitz, Zackary Drucker, Katharina Grosse, Valerie Maynard, and SHAN Wallace**, among others, will be extended to January 2021. Exhibitions that were otherwise slated to open this year as part of the museum's focus on the achievements of female-identifying artists and leaders will now unfold throughout 2021, ensuring that the public has an opportunity to engage with the work as originally envisioned. Within this new schedule, the much-anticipated **Joan Mitchell** retrospective will premiere at the BMA in spring 2021 and then proceed to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, where it will open in fall 2022, followed by additional stops on the tour. The BMA hopes to reopen in fall 2020 and will release a comprehensive exhibition schedule when the date is confirmed.

"The development of the *2020 Vision* initiative has served as an important catalyst to consider widely and deeply the narratives that the BMA is telling and those that we yet need to tell more fully and boldly. The acquisitions announced today capture the spirit and effort undertaken by our curatorial team to continue to rectify critical omissions in our collection and also within the broader history of art, which in its recording has systematically diminished and underrepresented the incredible achievements of artists who are also women, Black, Indigenous, and persons of color. I am excited by the quality and range of artworks entering our collection and by our continued efforts to reflect the true diversity of creative endeavor and innovation through time," said Christopher Bedford, BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. "I am equally pleased that we will be able to share the spectrum of exhibitions and programs developed for our *2020 Vision* over the course of the next 12 months and very much look forward to welcoming back our audiences as soon as possible."

In spring 2018, the BMA deaccessioned seven works that represented redundancies within its contemporary holdings. The proceeds from the sale of these works are being used to purchase new works of art, produced from 1943 to the present day and with a particular focus on the work of female artists and artists of color. Today's announcement

includes several works to come into the BMA's collection with these funds, bringing the total number of acquisitions to more than 60 works. Among the prior acquisitions made with these funds are works by Firelei Báez, Charles Gaines, Isaac Julien, Mary Reid Kelley, Wangechi Mutu, Senga Nengudi, Ebony G. Patterson, Faith Ringgold, Amy Sherald, Carrie Mae Weems, Jack Whitten, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

The following are highlights from today's announced acquisitions:

- **Barbara Chase-Riboud. *Malcolm X #15*. 2017.** Barbara Chase-Riboud (American, b. 1939) is one of the foremost sculptors of the 20th and 21st centuries, best known for producing distinctive hybrid works of cast metal and cascading fiber elements. *Malcolm X #15* is one of the largest and most dynamic sculptures in a wider series of steles made of cast bronze and silk that memorialize activist Malcolm X. The series was first inspired by the artist's energizing experience at the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival in Algeria.
- **Oletha DeVane. *Saint for My City*. 2007–2010.** In her mixed-media works, Baltimore-based artist Oletha DeVane (American, b. 1950) transforms simple vessels into richly adorned totems that address her sustained investigation of broader notions of spirituality. *Saint for My City* acknowledges the collective mourning for victims of gun violence in Baltimore. The black woman—a figure who is all but absent from the canon of American sainthood—is represented here as the iconic healer of an ongoing and painful history. This work was on view in the artist's 2019 exhibition at the BMA and is part of a wider series of *spirit sculptures*.
- **Barbara Regina Dietzsch. *Narcissus* and *Blue Morning Glory*, both c. 1760.** Born into an artistic family in Nuremberg, a major center for botanical illustration, Dietzsch (German, b. 1706), specialized in watercolor and gouache drawings of animals and plants. At the time, women artists were discouraged or barred from learning how to render human anatomy from life; instead, botanical illustration was an area where they could flourish. Dietzsch enjoyed an international reputation during her lifetime and her flower drawings are considered among the most accomplished examples of botanical art in 18th-century Europe.
- **Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg. *One Need Not be a House, The Brain has Corridors*. 2018.** Mixing animation, sculpture, and sound, Nathalie Djurberg (Swedish, b. 1978) and her partner Hans Berg (Swedish, b. 1978) create psychologically charged scenes and situations that engage with human desires and instincts. *One Need Not be a House, The Brain has Corridors*, which was shown as part of the BMA's exhibition of their work in winter 2019, captures the duo's distinctive style of filmmaking and dynamic use of clay animation and atmospheric sound effects and scores.
- **Gee's Bend Quilts. 1950s–c. 1970.** With the support of the Souls Grown Deep Foundation, the BMA has purchased five quilts made by a close-knit community of master craftswomen from the area in and around Boykin, Alabama, better known as Gee's Bend. These works were selected as five distinct examples of artistic experimentation: "*Diamond in Square*"—*twelve-block variation* (1950) by Pearlie Irby Pettway (American, c. 1898–1955); *Four-block strip quilt* (1960s) by Loretta Pettway (American, b. 1942); *Blocks and Strips* (1971) by Nell Hall Williams (American, b. 1933); *Nine applique\_blocks —"Tulip" variation (quiltmaker's name: "Chestnut Bud")* (1960s) by Lucy Mingo (American, b. 1931); and *Housetop* (c. 1970) by Lucy T. Pettway (American, 1921–2004).
- **Greta Grossman. *Three-armed Table Lamp*. 1948–1949.** By the time she arrived in Los Angeles in 1940, Greta Grossman (American, 1906–1999), had already become the first woman to win an award from the Swedish Society of Industrial Design. Trained in woodworking, metal, ceramics, and textiles, her furniture and objects

made in the U.S. were inspired by California's arid deserts, tiered canyons, and the ocean. This three-armed, tri-colored lamp is one of her most sophisticated designs and was the kind of work that led to her inclusion in MoMA's 1952 exhibition *Good Design*.

- **Suzanne Jackson. *Night Birds - Singing Nests*. 2019.** Throughout her multidecade career, Suzanne Jackson (American; b. 1944) has worked across the visual arts, theater, and dance, as well as run an early seminal art space in Los Angeles. While her earlier paintings often depicted figures within natural and fantastical settings, Jackson's recent work embodies the wonder of nature by experimenting with materials from her environment, expanding the possibilities of painting. *Night Birds - Singing Nests* exemplifies the originality of this expansive vision and the delicate and profound beauty of her work.
- **Mary Lovelace O'Neal. *Forbidden Fruit (Lust in the Medina series)*. c. 1990.** Mary Lovelace O'Neal (American, b. 1942) creates paintings that blur the boundaries between abstraction and figuration and individual expression and social history. *Forbidden Fruit*, which captures O'Neal's brilliant use of color and texture, is inspired by the artist's memories of travels in North Africa in the late 1970s, where she was particularly drawn to the patterning, color, and form of women's clothing.
- **Laura Ortman. *My Soul Remainer*. 2017.** White Mountain Apache musician, composer, and artist Laura Ortman (American, b. 1973) experiments with cross-disciplinary, genre-bending approaches to music and performance, drawing on both her classical violin training and Indigenous musical traditions. The single edition video, *My Soul Remainer*, was among the standout works of the 2019 Whitney Biennial and captures Ortman playing the violin in the lush mountain landscape near Eagle Nest, New Mexico, while ballet dancer Jock Soto variously adopts the roles of reverential audience and active respondent.
- **Wendy Red Star. *1880 Crow Peace Delegation*. 2014.** Wendy Red Star (Apsáalooke [Crow], b. 1981) explores and knits together archival and oral histories into more fulsome and accurately multidimensional chronicles. *1880 Crow Peace Delegation*—a seminal work in her oeuvre—comprises 10 images and accompanying texts by the artist, and gives voices to five of the six Crow members who traveled to Washington, D.C., to discuss the U.S. government's drastic reduction of Crow territories, a process that continued from 1851 until 1905.
- **Nellie Mae Rowe. *Woman Flying a Butterfly Kite*. 1981.** Nellie Mae Rowe (American, b. 1900) embarked on an artistic career in sculpture and drawing later in life, having spent 48 years as a field hand and domestic worker. *Woman Flying a Butterfly Kite* captures Rowe's autobiographical approach to her drawings—depicting the artist walking barefoot uphill towards green pastures with heavily fruited trees—and encapsulates her gestural approach and exuberant use of color. As with much of Rowe's works, the seemingly simple scene is imbued with deep personal meaning, referencing the artist's feelings about confronting death.
- **Martine Syms. *Notes on Gesture*. 2015.** Working primarily in film and video, Martine Syms (American, b. 1988) weaves together wide-ranging meditations on blackness with specific references from art history and the media, from cinema to television to the internet. *Notes on Gesture*—a critical work in the development of the artist's practice—features collaborator Diamond Stingily isolating and performing gestures associated with representations of black women, as they are appropriated, repeated, circulated, and imitated.

## **THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART**

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000-square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20<sup>th</sup>-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

The BMA's Sculpture Gardens are open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum building is temporarily closed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Connect with us online at [artbma.org](http://artbma.org) and through social media with #ARTBMA • [Stories](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Instagram](#) • [YouTube](#)

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