

Press release

For immediate release

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2020/20 Women @ NBMAA

Announcing a year of innovative and inspirational work by American women artists at the New Britain Museum of American Art

From January 2020 through January 2021, the New Britain Museum of American Art (NBMAA.org) will present [2020/20 Women @ NBMAA](#), a year-long series of seven groundbreaking exhibitions devoted exclusively to the presentation of works by women artists. The exhibitions, which honor the centenary of women's suffrage in America, provide a twelve-month platform for female artists in the context of this milestone year.

The artists selected represent diversity in race, ethnicity, age, experience, multiple perspectives, cultural backgrounds, career, geography, and medium. Kara Walker, for example, explores race, gender, violence, and identity in representations of the African American experience. Anni Albers is considered the most important textile artist of the 20th century, as well as an influential designer, printmaker, and educator. Shantell Martin's work is unique in her innovative and multidisciplinary output – combining art, commerce, and technology, while Jennifer Ma's interdisciplinary practice bridges installation, public art, performance, and community engagement. Helen Frankenthaler has long been recognized as one of the great American artists of the 20th century.

The Museum will also present two group thematic exhibitions as part of the 2020 year-long program. One exhibition, *Anything but Simple: Shaker Gift Drawings and the Women Who Made Them*, features rare Shaker "Gift" or "Spirit" drawings created by women between 1843-57, which are unique to the Shakers and to American religious culture. The other exhibition, entitled *Some Day is Now: Women, Art, and Social Change*, marks the centennial of American women's suffrage and features artists including Yoko Ono, Nancy Spero, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Carrie Mae Weems, and the Guerrilla Girls, among others, whose work advocates for social empowerment and change. Individually and collectively, the works by these artists challenge and inspire women and people of all genders, races, and ethnicities.

Why Women Artists – the Director's View

"The arts and cultural heritage of our great metropolitan centers and of cities like New Britain as well as other small towns, villages, and rural communities tell a quintessentially American story," explains Min Jung Kim, Director of the New Britain Museum of American Art.

“The NBMAA has always been committed to reflecting various American visual expressions.”

Kim explains why a year-long focus on diverse women artists is so unique at an institution dedicated to American art. “The picture of American art of the 21st century is one of a rich and varied diversity, reflecting America’s evolving national identity. To be truly ‘American’ now means to embrace diversity. Yet 100 years after women were granted equal voting rights by the 19th Amendment, women artists are still significantly under-represented – not only in the NBMAA’s collection, but in most of the nation’s art museums.” According to the National Museum of Women in the Arts (<https://nmwa.org/advocate/get-facts>) the artists in most museums collections’ are 87% male and 85% white. Only 27% of major exhibitions are devoted to women artists world-wide.

Kim continues, “Our initiative challenges this underrepresentation by celebrating the innovative work and outsized impact of female-identifying artists throughout American history. And we are doing this in one of the oldest museums of American art in this country.”

About the New Britain Museum of American Art

The New Britain Museum of American Art (NBMAA) traces its beginnings to the New Britain Institute, which was chartered in 1853 to foster learning by a community of newly arrived immigrants who worked in the city’s numerous factories. In 1903 John Butler Talcott, former New Britain mayor and chairman of the Institute’s building committee, established the first purchase fund for “original modern oil paintings.”

The NBMAA collection has grown to more than 8,300 works of art dating from 1739 to the present. With particular strengths in colonial portraiture, the Hudson River School, American Impressionism, and the Ash Can School, not to mention the important mural series *The Arts of Life in America* by Thomas Hart Benton, the collection remains a primary source of inspiration for many of the museum’s exhibitions and programming.

Exhibitions continue to strike a balance between the historic and the contemporary, reflecting an American narrative comprised of a multiplicity of cultures, races, ethnicities, and perspectives. As one of the first institutions dedicated solely to American art, the New Britain Museum of American Art continues to play a vital role in illuminating our nation’s diverse heritage and artistic advancements.

For more information about the Museum, visit www.NBMAA.org

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