

Dear Friends,

Though the NBMAA temporarily closed its doors on March 15th in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, these past few months our staff has been hard at work continuing to fulfill our educational mission, swiftly pivoting to digital content delivery, and in the process both deepening engagement with our dedicated constituents and expanding our reach nationally and internationally to new audiences. Challenging as these times have been, and perhaps likely may continue to be, our team has never been stronger together and our focus never greater in simultaneously responding to the needs of our beloved community while reflecting on the urgent calls for action to create systemic and structural change as part of a paradigm shift we are witnessing and consciously taking part in.

Earlier this year in January 2020 we launched the Museum's 2020/20+ Women @NBMAA initiative celebrating the vital contributions of women artists, while also underscoring the Museum's commitment to championing equity and amplifying diverse voices and perspectives in American art and society. The initiative faces, head on, glaring statistics: among the roughly 8700 artworks in our holdings, only 12% are by female-identifying artists, of which a mere 0.36% are by Black women, and even fewer by Asian American, Latin American, and Native American women. These statistics are not unique to the NBMAA but are characteristic of many museum collections across the country. We have a tremendous amount of work to do to better reflect the complexity and diversity of our nation, and are dedicated to undertaking this work, now more than ever.

The world continues to transform as a result of the collective reckoning we have experienced in race relations in America. We at the NBMAA acknowledge our own history and complicity in racial disparity, as evident in the very make-up of our permanent collection, and intend to hold ourselves accountable to making change. As part of our efforts, in addition to our 2020/20+Women@NBMAA initiative, we have launched Art for Equality, an online resource "hub" including art, literature, documentaries, and information aimed at forging a more equitable future. Marking the centennial of women's suffrage in America, the NBMAA and Stanley Black & Decker will also be launching a series of programs this fall, to honor this historical landmark as well as the importance of exercising one's right to vote.

During the first half of 2020, as two crises convulsed America, we are heartbroken to see our beloved country in pain. For those in search of deep reflection and hope we offer the solace of art and its power to heal. Art has served as a testament to human creativity, innovation, and resilience throughout times of peace as well as crisis. So now more than ever, we feel a responsibility to safely reopen our doors to welcome all who seek respite for their weary hearts.

We thank you, our members and community, for supporting the NBMAA throughout our closure, by participating in virtual programs, accessing our online resources, and giving to our annual fund. As the state of Connecticut lifts COVID-related restrictions, we are thrilled to at last reopen our doors and welcome you back to the Museum in July. In order to make our beloved museum a safe, comfortable place to escape, we are staying well below State of CT restrictions on building capacity to ensure ample space for social distancing, health, and safety. Your safety and well-being is our top priority. Please continue to visit our website for updates.

As always, thank you for your commitment, your support, and your dedication to the NBMAA's success, now and into the future.

Warmly,
Min Jung Kim