

NEW BRITAIN MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART TO PRESENT
In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut
March 19–June 14, 2020

NEW BRITAIN, CONN., March 6, 2020— The New Britain Museum of American Art (NBMAA) is proud to present *In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut*. Curated by Fritz Horstman, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, this landmark presentation will be the first museum exhibition to explore Anni Albers's diverse output during her 44 years in Connecticut as well as the artist's first major solo exhibition at a U.S. museum in 20 years. Focusing on the innovative work and writing she produced in Connecticut from the 1950s through the end of her life, *In Thread and On Paper* will include an extensive body of textiles, wall hangings, commercial collaborations, and works on paper, as well as the artist's loom, historic ephemera, and an interactive weaving wall that bring her work to life.

Known for her pioneering graphic wall hangings, weavings, and designs, Anni Albers (1899-1994) is considered the most important textile artist of the twentieth century, as well as an influential designer, printmaker, and educator. In its scope and focus, *In Thread and On Paper* will explore in-depth the innovative work that she created following her move to New Haven in 1950, building from and expanding upon her experiences at the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College. The exhibition will reflect upon Albers's integration of traditional weaving techniques with new, cutting-edge materials and technologies to create mass-producible fabric patterns, "pictorial" weavings, and an extensive selection of print work—a medium with which she experimented in unprecedented ways while developing further as a highly original abstract artist. Albers's textiles and works on paper will be considered in the context of her landmark book of 1965, *On Weaving*, which helped establish the subject as a serious area of academic study.

The exhibition will include two important pictorial weavings, including *Black-White-Gold I*, 1950, and *Two*, 1952, which each demonstrate an extraordinary level of technical expertise, while setting up the theme of visual syncopation that runs through much of her work for the next forty years. Albers began making pictorial weavings while at the Bauhaus and continued into the 1960s. Though only a few dozen were ever created, their importance in elevating weaving as an art form cannot be overstated; generations of weavers, painters, and artists of all varieties have since looked to these groundbreaking works for inspiration.

In Thread and On Paper will bring to life Albers's remarkable practice in diverse ways. A loom used by Albers will be installed in the gallery and, periodically throughout the show, will be activated by a weaver who will reproduce samples of Albers's textiles for visitors to see and touch. The exhibition will also feature an interactive table displaying geometric tiles that visitors can manipulate to recreate Albers's patterns or invent their own. Finally, the exhibition will provide visitors with an opportunity to collaborate on the creation of a large-scale "Weaving Wall," an interactive, community-based installation that will allow visitors to produce a monumental weaving inspired by Albers's colors, materials, and designs. Audiences can see, learn, experience, and create as part of this extraordinary tribute to Anni Albers's legacy.

A related project – *Pliable Plane: Anni Albers* – will be on view at The Glass House in New Canaan, CT from April through December 2020. For more information, visit <http://theglasshouse.org/whats-on/pliable-plane-anni-albers/>.

In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut is part of 2020/20+ Women @ NBMAA presented by Stanley Black and Decker with additional support provided by Bank of America.

In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut is made possible by the generosity of The Coby Foundation, Ltd.

Exhibitions at the NBMAA are made possible thanks to the support of the Special Exhibition Fund donors, including John N. Howard, Sylvia Bonney, Anita Arcuni Ferrante and Anthony Ferrante, Marian and Russell Burke, and The Aeroflex Foundation.

We also gratefully acknowledge the funding of Brendan and Carol Conry, Irene and Charles J. Hamm and Carolyn and Elliot Joseph.

About Anni Albers

Born in Berlin, Anni Albers studied weaving at the Bauhaus beginning in 1922, eventually joining the faculty in 1929. Her innovative textiles from this period combined geometric abstractions with weaving, creating works that were at once functional and aesthetic. In 1933, Anni and her husband Josef emigrated to North Carolina, where they took teaching positions at the newly formed Black Mountain College. At Black Mountain College, she elaborated on the technical innovations she devised at the Bauhaus, developing a specialized curriculum that integrated weaving and industrial design. In 1949, she became the first weaver to have a one-person show at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the exhibition *Anni Albers: Textiles* subsequently traveled to 26 venues throughout the United States and Canada. Following the Alberses's move to New Haven, Connecticut, in 1950, Albers shifted her focus primarily to her studio, spending the 1950s creating fabrics for commercial production, writing, and further developing her "pictorial weavings," culminating in the exhibition *Anni Albers: Pictorial Weavings* at the MIT New Gallery, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1959. The show traveled to the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh; the Baltimore Museum of Art; Yale University Art Gallery; and Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. Transitioning to printmaking in the 1960s, she spent the next two decades creating designs that pushed that medium in new directions, while still creating designs for commercial textiles. She died in 1994.

About the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

Established in 1971, The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation is devoted to preserving and promoting the enduring achievements of both Anni and Josef Albers, and the aesthetic and philosophical principles by which they lived. It serves as a unique center for the understanding and appreciation of the arts and of all visual experience—with the combined legacies of Anni and Josef Albers at its heart. The Foundation carries out its mission by working on exhibitions and publications, primarily focused on the art of Anni and Josef Albers; assisting with research; and supporting education. It conserves the Alberses' art and archives, and serves as an information resource for artists, scholars, students, and the general public. www.albersfoundation.org

About 2020/20+ Women @ NBMAA

In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut is part of the New Britain Museum of American Art's 2020/20+ Women @ NBMAA initiative, a year-long series of groundbreaking exhibitions devoted exclusively to women artists, beginning January 2020. 100 years after women gained the right to vote, only 27% of major exhibitions are dedicated to women artists worldwide. Challenging underrepresentation and celebrating diversity, artists featured will include Kara Walker, Anni Albers, Shantell Martin, Yoko Ono, Nancy Spero, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Carrie Mae Weems, Jennifer Wen Ma, and more. Additional information is available on our website: <https://nbmaa.org/exhibitions/2020>

About the New Britain Museum of American Art

The New Britain Museum of American Art is the first institution dedicated solely to acquiring American art. Spanning four centuries of American history, the Museum's permanent collection is renowned for its strengths in colonial portraiture, the Hudson River School, American Impressionism, the Ash Can School, as well as the important mural series *The Arts of Life in America* by Thomas Hart Benton. The singular focus on American art and its panoramic view of American artistic achievement, realized through the Museum's extensive permanent collection, exhibitions, and educational programming, make the New Britain Museum of American Art a significant resource for a broad and diverse public.

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SOURCE: New Britain Museum of American Art

Exhibition Related Programs

Members' Opening Reception, Wednesday, March 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Includes remarks by exhibition curator Fritz Horstman, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, and NBMAA Director and CEO Min Jung Kim, as well as a live weaving demonstration on a historic Anni Albers loom by Karis Medina, Associate Curator, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.

Community Day | NBMAA Birthday, Sunday, April 5, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

NBMAA's Annual Birthday Celebration, museum opening free of charge.

Live weaving demonstration by Karis Medina, Associate Curator, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1-3:30 p.m.

NBMAA Education Department will present related hands-on art activities in Museum.

Lecture | Anni Albers: Experiments, Thursday, April 9, 5:30-7 p.m.

Exhibition curator Fritz Horstman and Karis Medina, Associate Curator, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.

Live Weaving Demonstrations, Saturdays, April 11, May 2 & 9, 1-3:30 p.m.

Living weaving demonstrations by Karis Medina, Associate Curator, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, and Maria Shevelkina, Researcher and Archives Assistant, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.

Adult Studio Workshop | Exploring the Art and Design of the Bauhaus, Thursdays, April 2, 16, 23, 30, 6-8 p.m.

Workshop series based on the legendary curriculum of the Bauhaus, the German school of art and design where Albers both studied and taught, with exhibition curator Fritz Horstman, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.

Lecture | Fritz Horstman on Anni Albers, Presented by The Glass House, Monday, April 27, 6-8 p.m.

Exhibition curator Fritz Horstman, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.

New Canaan Library, New Canaan, CT

Film | Weavers of Maheshwar (2016), Thursday, April 30, 1-2 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.

Select shorts directed by Keya Vaswani and Nidhi Kamath, Storyloom Films, Jaipur, Rajasthan-India

Lecture | An Evening with Robert Gregson | Anni and Josef Albers in Connecticut, Thursday, May 14, 5:30 -7 p.m.

Film | Bauhaus Women (2019), Thursday, May 28, 1-2 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.

Directed by Susanne Radelhof, Koberstein Films, Berlin, Germany

Community Day Closing Event, Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Museum open free of charge all day to coincide with CT Open House Day and Anni Albers's Birthday.

Live weaving by exhibition curator Fritz Horstman, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1-3:30 p.m.

NBMAA Education Department will present related hands-on art activities in the Museum.

Gallery Talks and Curatorial Conversation, Wednesdays, 1-1:45 p.m.

April 22, Curatorial Conversation, Lisa Williams, Associate Curator, NBMAA

May 20, Exhibition curator Fritz Horstman, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

Walk-in Tours of Anni Albers exhibition, Weekly, Saturdays, 1-2 p.m.

Art Cart, Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.-noon

On select Saturday mornings throughout the run of the exhibition the Art Cart will have an exhibition-related weaving activity.