



NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* WOMEN *in the* ARTS

Fact Sheet

MISSION

Founded to redefine traditional histories of art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts is the only museum solely dedicated to celebrating the achievements of women in the visual, performing, and literary arts. The museum honors women artists of the past, promotes the accomplishments of women artists of the present, and assures the place of women artists in the future.

HISTORY

While traveling abroad, Wilhelmina Cole Holladay and her husband, Wallace F. Holladay, admired a 17th-century still-life by Flemish painter Clara Peeters. Upon their return to the U.S., the Holladays sought information on Peeters, but found that the definitive art history text (H.W. Janson's *History of Art*) made no reference to her, or any other female artist. The Holladays began amassing works by women artists in the 1960s, establishing what would become the core of the museum's collection.

Mrs. Holladay incorporated the National Museum of Women in the Arts in 1981 as a private, non-profit museum and it opened its doors to the public in 1987 with its first exhibition of *American Women Artists, 1830–1930*. To underscore its commitment to increasing the attention given to women in all disciplines, NMWA commissioned Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich to write *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra*, inspired by five paintings in the permanent collection, for an inaugural concert. Since then, the museum has presented more than 200 exhibitions of art created by women.

THE BUILDING

Initially drafted by architect Waddy Wood to serve as a Masonic temple, the 78,810-square-foot main building was completed in 1908 and the original structure is on the DC Inventory List of Historic Sites as well as the National Register of Historic Places. The exterior façade in Renaissance Revival style incorporates both Tuscan and Mediterranean design elements, in addition to Masonic symbolism.

In 1983, the museum purchased the building to house its collection and, after extensive renovation, it opened on April 7, 1987. The project received several awards, including the American Institute of Architects' Prize for Excellence in Preservation of Historic Buildings.

In 1993, the museum purchased 5,300 square feet of adjacent property and, after further renovation, the Elizabeth A. Kasser Wing opened in 1997 making the entire facility 84,110 square feet. Not surprisingly, the building has become a Washington landmark.

THE COLLECTION

NMWA's collection features more than 4,500 works from the 16th century to the present created by more than 1,000 artists, including Lavinia Fontana, Alma Thomas, Louise Nevelson, Lilla Cabot Perry and Frida Kahlo, along with special collections of 17th century botanical prints by Maria Sibylla Merian and works by British and Irish women silversmiths from the 17th–19th centuries. Highlights from the collection include paintings by Elisabetta Sirani, Berthe Morisot, Suzanne Valadon, and Alma Thomas; sculpture by Sarah Bernhardt, Dorothy Dehner, Barbara Hepworth, Louise Nevelson, Magdalena Abakanowicz, and Chakaia Booker; drawings and works on paper by Elisabeth-Louise Vigée-Lebrun, Mary Cassatt, Käthe Kollwitz, and Elizabeth Catlett; and photographs by Gertrude Käsebier, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, Nan Goldin, and Anna Gaskell.

Other artists represented include Louise Bourgeois, Lola Alvarez Bravo, Rosalba Carriera, Louisa Courtauld, Petah Coyne, Elaine de Kooning, Lesley Dill, Helen Frankenthaler, Marguerite Gérard, Nancy Graves, Grace Hartigan, Frida Kahlo, Angelica Kauffman, Justine Kurland, Lee Krasner, Marie Laurencin, Judith Leyster, Hung Liu, Maria Martinez, Joan Mitchell, Gabriele Münter, Alice Neel, Sarah Miriam Peale, Lilla Cabot Perry, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Rachel Ruysch, Joan Snyder, and Lilly Martin Spencer.

EDUCATION

To fulfill its mission of educating the public about the artistic accomplishments of women, the museum presents education programs for all age groups. Programs for younger audiences include *Family Days* and *Role Model Workshops*, which connect teenagers with women working in diverse careers in the arts. *Bridging Communities*, a yearlong interdisciplinary arts learning partnership between the museum and culturally diverse public schools, integrates visual and language arts to enhance student communication, literacy, and creativity. In partnership with Pascagoula School District (Mississippi) and Albuquerque Public Schools (New Mexico), NMWA is undertaking *Teachers Connect: Distance Learning in the Arts*, a five-year project that will create a technology-based professional development program to support educators who are implementing arts integration curricula. In addition, NMWA offers many programs for adults that support lifelong learning, including literary events showcasing the achievements of women writers, the Shenson Chamber Music Concert series featuring women performers and composers, and film screenings that introduce the achievements of national and international women filmmakers and media artists. NMWA also produces educational materials, including the model arts integration curricula *Art, Books, and Creativity* (ABC) and teacher resource packets. The museum publishes a member magazine three times a year and books on women artists.

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTER

The Library and Research Center (LRC) provides researchers with information about women visual artists from all time periods and nationalities. It is open to scholars, students, researchers, curators, museum professionals, and the general public. The LRC collection includes 18,500 volumes of books and exhibition catalogues, 50 periodical titles, and more than 1,000 unique and limited edition artists' books. Its *Archives of Women Artists* is comprised of research files on 18,000 individual women artists. These files include résumés, correspondence, reproductions, articles, and other ephemeral materials. The Arts and Entertainment Network Media Library holds approximately 500 videos, DVDs, audio tapes, and other audiovisual materials, including examples of video art, interviews with women artists, documentaries, and films directed by women.

Also available to researchers is The Nelleke Nix and Marianne Huber Collection: The Frida Kahlo Papers, which consists of more than 360 unpublished letters, postcards, notes, clippings, printed matter, and drawings relating to the artist's life and work.

EXHIBITIONS

The museum presents exhibitions that features works from museums and collections around the world. Highlights include: *The Magic of Remedios Varo* (2000), *The Imperial Collection: Women Artists from the State Hermitage Museum* (2003), *Nordic Cool: Hot Women Designers* (2004), *Berthe Morisot: An Impressionist and Her Circle* (2005), *Dreaming Their Way: Australian Aboriginal Women Painters* (2006), *Italian Women Artists from Renaissance to Baroque* (2007), *Role Models: Feminine Identity in Contemporary American Photography* (2008), *Mary Cassatt Friends and Family* (2008), *Fashion Forward: Photographs by Louise Dahl-Wolfe* (2009), *Mary McFadden: Goddesses* (2009), *A Dream ... But not Yours: Contemporary Art from Turkey* (2010), and *New York Avenue Sculpture Project: Niki de Saint Phalle* (2010).

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

In 1984, the museum created its network of national and international committees. NMWA currently has more than 20 outreach committees with more than 1,000 dedicated members throughout the United States and around the world, and will be expanding its network to include new groups. The committees host regional programs and serve as ambassadors for the museum.

FUNDING AND MEMBERSHIP

The National Museum of Women in the Arts is a private, non-profit organization that is funded through memberships, individual contributions, foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, government grants, facility rentals, and retail sales. NMWA members, more than 20,000 strong, come from all over the United States. Membership pulls the largest number of members from California, Virginia, Maryland, New York, the District of Columbia, Florida, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey.

LOCATION, HOURS AND ADMISSION

Located at 1250 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, NMWA is just two blocks north of Metro Center at the corner of 13th Street and New York Avenue, NW. The museum is open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday noon to 5 p.m. Admission for is \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and visitors 65 or over, and free for NMWA members and youth 18 and under.

Updated: 10/11