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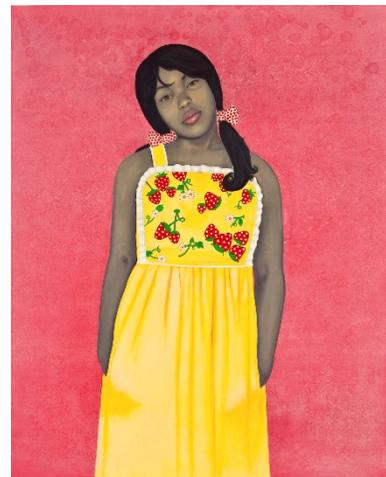
October 25, 2021

**National Museum of Women in the Arts Lends Collection Highlights to  
National Gallery of Art During Building Renovation**

**WASHINGTON**—While the National Museum of Women in the Arts ([NMWA](#)) undergoes a comprehensive renovation to its historic building, 11 highlights from its collection will be loaned to the National Gallery of Art. Works by women artists including Lavinia Fontana, Eva Hesse, Frida Kahlo, Clara Peeters, and Amy Sherald have been installed throughout the National Gallery’s iconic East and West Buildings. These special installations position NMWA’s paintings and sculpture in conversation with works from the National Gallery’s own permanent collection.

“The National Museum of Women in the Arts’ mission to champion women artists never stops. We’re offering great virtual and off-site programming while our building is closed, and we’re delighted that our partners at the National Gallery of Art are exhibiting NMWA collection works to share that inimitable in-gallery experience of great art,” said Susan Fisher Sterling, director, National Museum of Women in the Arts.

“The National Gallery is honored to provide a temporary home to treasures of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. We are grateful to the Board and staff of the National Museum of Women in the Arts for making these loans possible,” said Kaywin Feldman, director, National Gallery of Art. “As a result, our visitors can experience additional works by groundbreaking women artists, while regular visitors to the National Museum of Women in the Arts can see their favorites in a new context alongside counterparts from our collection.”



### **Works on Loan**

NMWA will lend 11 works from its collection, listed below by installation location:

#### ***West Building, Main Floor***

##### **Gallery 33: Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Costanza Alidosi* (c. 1595) and *Portrait of a Noblewoman* (c. 1580)**

While women artists were quite rare throughout Europe during the Renaissance, Lavinia Fontana built a successful career painting in Bologna, Italy, in the 1500s. The liberal northern Italian city produced an exceptional number of women artists in addition to Fontana, including the sculptor Properzia de' Rossi and the painter Elisabetta Sirani. These two portraits depict, respectively, Costanza Alidosi, a noblewoman married to a senator who was a close associate of the Medici family, and an unknown woman of similar social status. Both portraits illustrate Fontana's ability to render sumptuous textiles and jewels in astonishing detail.

##### **Gallery 37 (on view in Spring 2022): Elisabetta Sirani, *Virgin and Child* (1663)**

Elisabetta Sirani was one of several successful women artists in Bologna of the 1600s. An independent painter by age 19, Sirani ran her family's workshop and supported them with her art. Sirani's *Virgin and Child* shows Mary as an affectionate young mother tenderly embracing her child. Sirani's virtuoso brushwork is clearly visible in the Virgin's white sleeve, thickly painted to emphasize its rough, homespun texture.

This work will be installed in 2022 following its inclusion in *By Her Hand: Artemisia Gentileschi and Women Artists in Italy, 1500–1800* at the Wadsworth Atheneum and Detroit Institute of Arts. The exhibition is organized by Eve Straussman-Pflanzer, curator and head of Italian and Spanish paintings at the National Gallery.

##### **Gallery 44: Clara Peeters, *Still Life of Fish and Cat* (after 1620)**

Clara Peeters was one of the most innovative still-life painters working in the Netherlands in the early decades of the 17th century. Only about 40 paintings by her are known today, nearly all featuring flowers, food, and tableware arranged on a tabletop or ledge. Peeters was the first European artist to paint still lifes of fish, a subject that acknowledges the vital importance of seafood in the diet and merchant economy of the north and south Netherlands in the 17th century. The fish depicted in this painting were all freshwater species common to the rivers and canals of the Netherlands. Still-life artists sometimes included a living animal like a parrot, monkey, or, in this case, a cat, to introduce a sense of vitality and unpredictability into an otherwise static composition. Crouching, with its ears perked, Peeters's feline seems poised for action.

The painting is shown near other Dutch and Flemish still lifes of the period by Jan Brueghel the Elder and Gerret Willemsz Heda. The National Gallery's own painting by Peeters, *Still Life with Flowers Surrounded by Insects and a Snail*, will be on view a few galleries away in *Clouds, Ice, and Bounty: The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund Collection of Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Paintings*, opening October 17, 2021.

##### **Gallery 60A: Sarah Miriam Peale, *Susan Avery and Isaac Avery* (1821)**

Sarah Miriam Peale was part of the Philadelphia-based Peale family of artists. The youngest daughter of James Peale, who initially trained her, Sarah was also influenced by her uncle, Charles Willson Peale, and cousin, Rembrandt Peale. After experimenting with still lifes and miniatures, Peale exhibited her first full-size portrait at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1818. Six years later she and her sister Anna Claypoole Peale, a miniaturist, became the first two female members of the Academy. Sarah Miriam Peale went on to operate active

portrait studios in Baltimore and St. Louis, where she was commissioned to create likenesses such as this pair of paintings, which are likely wedding portraits of a prosperous Philadelphia couple. Peale's meticulous attention to detail is evident in the subjects' luxurious accessories—Susan's earrings, heart-shaped pendant, and tortoiseshell hair combs and Isaac's stick pin, watch chain, and gold buttons.

Sarah Miriam Peale's portraits are installed near her cousin Rembrandt Peale's portrait of his brother, *Rubens Peale with a Geranium* (1801). Her father James Peale's *Fruit Still Life with Chinese Export Basket* (1824) and cousin Raphaelle Peale's *A Dessert* (1814) are on view in gallery 69A, while Charles Willson Peale's *Benjamin and Eleanor Ridgely Laming* (1788) is on view in gallery 62.

**Gallery 71: Cecilia Beaux, *Ethel Page (Mrs. James Large)* (1884) and Ellen Day Hale, *June* (c. 1893)**

Sparked by a childhood interest in art, by the age of 18 Cecilia Beaux was a professional artist, making lithographs and painting on china while studying in Philadelphia at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. In 1888, she decided to focus on portraiture, and left to study in Europe for 19 months. Upon returning to Philadelphia, Beaux found success painting portraits of prominent writers, politicians, and artists. Some of her most powerful portraits, however, are those of family and friends, like her portrait of Ethel Page. The painting is installed with the National Gallery's portrait by Beaux, *Sita and Sarita* (c. 1921). Made later in her career following her time in Paris, the depiction of the artist's cousin Sarah Allibone Leavitt shows the influence Beaux's exposure to French impressionism had on her style. Seen together, the portraits illustrate Beaux's ability to imbue her female subjects with wit and intelligence.

Beaux's contemporary Ellen Day Hale also studied in Philadelphia at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts before venturing to France in the late 1880s. Like Beaux, Hale went on to balance teaching with life as a professional artist. While Hale made landscapes and large religious murals, she specialized in figure studies, such as *June*. Made following her studies in France, the painting shows the influence of the impressionist style. Like the 17th-century Dutch masters whose work she admired, Hale excelled at depicting solitary women in light-filled interiors, absorbed in domestic pursuits.

**East Building, Upper Level**

**Gallery 406B: Eva Hesse, *Study for Sculpture* (1967)**

One of the most influential sculptors of the postwar era, Eva Hesse created minimalist sculptures that explore and transform a panoply of unexpected materials and processes. Hesse mined contradictions, developing sculptures that are simultaneously hard and soft, precise and irregular, or solid and open. In *Study for Sculpture*, a slightly irregular grid of cords with knotted ends hangs off a small, flat surface. This deployment of repeated units finds resonance in the works by Sol LeWitt, Yayoi Kusama, and Agnes Martin on nearby walls. *Study for Sculpture* also joins another sculpture by Hesse from the National Gallery's collection, *Test Piece for "Contingent"* (1969). Together, the two works illustrate Hesse's impressive range of color, scale, medium, and technique.

**Gallery 407D: Amy Sherald, *They Call Me Redbone but I'd Rather Be Strawberry Shortcake* (2009)**

Amy Sherald is renowned for striking portraits that explore the ways people construct and perform their identities in response to political, social, and cultural expectations. Dressed in vibrant clothing and set against subtly modulated abstract backgrounds, the African American

subjects of Sherald's portraits are painted with grayscale skin tones as a way of challenging the concept of color-as-race. The title *They Call Me Redbone but I'd Rather Be Strawberry Shortcake* references racial labeling in its use of the slang term "redbone." Her head tilted to the side, the young woman wears a yellow dress printed with strawberries and daisies; red polka-dot bows secure her pigtails. While the painting's bright palette and patterns are almost playful, the subject's direct, neutral expression suggests a more serious, ambivalent register of feeling. Installed with the National Gallery's recently acquired painting by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, *I See Red: Target* (1992), Sherald's painting, like Smith's, engages in a lively dialogue with classic examples of pop art elsewhere in the same gallery.

#### **Gallery 415B: Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Leon Trotsky* (1937)**

This iconic self-portrait by Frida Kahlo commemorates the artist's brief affair with the exiled Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky shortly after his arrival in Mexico in 1937. Kahlo presents herself elegantly clothed in an embroidered skirt, fringed shawl, and delicate gold jewelry. Flowers and coils of red yarn adorn her hair, while skillfully applied makeup highlights her features. Poised and confident in her stagelike setting, the artist holds a bouquet of flowers and a letter of dedication "with all my love" to Trotsky.

Installed in conversation with surrealist paintings by Yves Tanguy and René Magritte from the same era, Kahlo's self-portrait also shares the space with works by other trailblazing women artists including Georgia O'Keeffe and Barbara Hepworth. Paintings by fellow Mexican modern artists Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros are also on view in the East Building.

#### **National Museum of Women in the Arts**

The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) is the only major museum in the world solely dedicated to championing women through the arts. With its collections, exhibitions, programs and online content, the museum inspires dynamic exchanges about art and ideas. NMWA advocates for better representation of women artists and serves as a vital center for thought leadership, community engagement and social change. NMWA addresses the gender imbalance in the presentation of art by bringing to light important women artists of the past while promoting great women artists working today. The collections highlight painting, sculpture, photography and video by artists including Louise Bourgeois, Mary Cassatt, Judy Chicago, Frida Kahlo, Shirin Neshat, Faith Ringgold, Pipilotti Rist, Amy Sherald and Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Le Brun.

The museum building is closed for a major renovation, with plans to reopen in fall 2023. Visit [nmwa.org/renovation](https://nmwa.org/renovation) for more information. During the building closure, NMWA continues its mission-based work and engages supporters and friends through a [dynamic slate of online programs and events, off-site and virtual exhibitions, and digital content](#). For information, call 202-783-5000, visit [nmwa.org](https://nmwa.org), [Broad Strokes blog](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

#### **Image**

Amy Sherald, *They Call Me Redbone but I'd Rather Be Strawberry Shortcake*, 2009, oil on canvas, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Steven Scott, Baltimore, in honor of the artist and the 25th Anniversary of NMWA, © Amy Sherald; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

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