

THE BMA KICKS OFF 2020 VISION CELEBRATION WITH *BY THEIR CREATIVE FORCE: AMERICAN WOMEN MODERNISTS*

BALTIMORE, MD (September 5, 2019)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) today announced the first exhibition of its year-long *2020 Vision* initiative to celebrate female-identifying artists. *By Their Creative Force: American Women Modernists* features 20 works by artists such as Elizabeth Catlett, Maria Martinez, and Georgia O’Keeffe to recognize the innovative contributions women artists have made to the development of American modernism. The exhibition is on view October 6, 2019–July 5, 2020.



“This exhibition presents a survey of women artists from a variety of geographic regions and socioeconomic backgrounds to tell a more inclusive story of American modernism,” said Christopher Bedford, BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “It also demonstrates the BMA’s long history of acquiring works by women artists and our commitment to showcasing accomplished artists from this community, both efforts the museum is amplifying in 2020 and beyond.”

By Their Creative Force refers to a quote from British author Virginia Woolf, who argued in 1929 that women’s creativity had been repressed and neglected to such a degree that the resulting pent-up energies were due to burst through: “by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force...” Drawn primarily from the BMA’s collection, the selection of painting, sculpture, printmaking, and ceramics spans four decades to showcase women artists’ engagements with the major art movements of the 20th century, including Cubism, Surrealism, and Abstract Expressionism. The subjects include figures, still lifes, landscapes, and non-representational abstraction. Notably, several of the artists—including Simone Brangier Boas, Grace Hartigan, Elsa Hutzler, Helen Jacobson, Amalie Rothschild, and Grace Turnbull—were based in Baltimore for much of their careers.

Among the exhibition highlights are *Pink Tulip* (1926) and *Waterfall I* (1952) by Georgia O’Keeffe, one of the most successful American modernists, best known for her boldly innovative renderings of flowers, landscapes, and cityscapes. Elizabeth Catlett’s print *Domestic Worker* (1946) shows the artist working to promote social change. Catlett was banned from the U.S. during the McCarthy era and lived and worked in Mexico. Grace Hartigan’s *Red Bowl* (1953) is a blend of figuration and abstraction that was initially exhibited by the artist under the pseudonym George Hartigan to avoid discrimination she might face as a woman. After 1955, she began exhibiting under her real name and in 1965 she became director of the Hoffberger School of Painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art.

The accomplishments made by many of the historically less-recognized women artists in *By Their Creative Force* are also acknowledged here. Marguerite Zorach was one of the few American women artists whose work was included in the groundbreaking 1913 Armory Show. Maria Finkelstein exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1928 and 1930. Gertrude Greene was a founder of American Abstract Artists and helped establish the Unemployed Artists Group (later known as the Artists Union). Simone Brangier Boas was one of the founding members of the Sculptors’ Guild and her work was included in the 1939 World’s Fair American Art exhibition. Helen Jacobson was the only Marylander invited to show in the *Art: U.S.A.: 59* exhibition at the New York Coliseum.

By Their Creative Force: American Women Modernists is part of the BMA's year-long 2020 *Vision* initiative highlighting women artists and collectors, and includes works by Rebecca Salsbury James, Irene Rice Pereira, Florine Stettheimer, and Eva Zeisel, in addition to the artists previously mentioned. The exhibition is curated by Virginia Anderson, BMA Curator of American Art, and generously supported by the Sigmund M. and Mary B. Hyman Fund for American Art.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000-square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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Image: Grace Hartigan. *Red Bowl*. 1953. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Gift of Herman Jervis, New York, in Memory of Dorothy B. Jervis. © The Baltimore Museum of Art / Estate of Grace Hartigan