

PROMISE AND REALITY OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT EXPLORED THIS APRIL IN EXHIBITIONS OF CONTEMPORARY AND 19TH-CENTURY ART



Kerry James Marshall, *Souvenir II*, 1997. Acrylic, collage, and glitter on unstretched canvas banner, 108 x 120 inches. Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. Purchased as the gift of the Addison Advisory Council in honor of John ("Jock") M. Reynolds's directorship of the Addison Gallery of American Art, 1989–1998, 1998.16

Andover, MA (April 11, 2022) – The Addison Gallery of American Art will explore the promise and the reality of the American experiment in two exhibitions opening this April—*Past Is Prologue: History in Contemporary Art* and *Regarding America: 19th-Century Art from the Permanent Collection*. Each exhibition looks at the past, and its continuing reverberations in the present, through a different lens.

Past Is Prologue assembles works that mine the past, using American history and the art of the Western world to explore issues of gender, identity, memory, race, and truth. The exhibition features new and recent acquisitions, with paintings, prints, sculptures, and photographs, by artists including **Sadow Birk, Nicholas Galanin, Sally Mann, Kerry James Marshall, Cara Romero, Yinka Shonibare, Keris Salmon, and Kara Walker**, among others. Whether photographing historic sites, adopting imagery from art history and print media, or citing specific historical events or figures, the artists reveal personal and shared connections between the complex past of the United States and its cultural and political present.

Regarding America will examine art of the 19th century, an era of discovery and innovation that witnessed the rapid and seemingly boundless expansion of America’s footprint and ambition, but was also a time of conflict, upheaval, brutality, and inequality. The exhibition presents more than 100 paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, and sculptures with works by **Albert Bierstadt, Mary Cassatt, Thomas Eakins, Alvan Fisher, Martin Johnson Heade, Winslow Homer, Harriet Hosmer, Eastman Johnson, Timothy H. O’Sullivan, John Singer Sargent, Elihu Vedder**, and other artists, offering critical insights into this transformative and contradictory century that was a seedbed for the aspirations and issues we still wrestle with in our own time.

Allison Kemmerer, the Mary Stripp and R. Crosby Kemper Director of the Addison Gallery of American Art and curator of *Past Is Prologue*, said, “In a time that makes introspection unavoidable, we are collectively searching into the past to help inform our present, how we got here and where we are going, and where we don’t want to go again. The contemporary artists in *Past Is Prologue* delve into the haunting question of how we are marked by the past and how we can imagine a future we want to inhabit.”

Gordon Wilkins, the Addison’s Robert M. Walker Associate Curator of American Art and curator of *Regarding America* added, “Together the works in *Regarding America* offer starkly different perspectives on what it means to be ‘American’ and reveal a fundamental truth: there is no universally shared American experience. As Walt Whitman, a quintessential voice of the 19th century said, ‘America contains multitudes.’”

Generous support for *Past Is Prologue* has been provided by the Mollie Bennett Lupe and Garland M. Lasater Exhibition Fund. *Regarding America* is generously supported by the Sidney R. Knafel Fund.

***Past Is Prologue: History in Contemporary Art* is on view April 16 through July 31, 2022.
Regarding America: 19th-Century Art from the Permanent Collection is on view April 23 through July 31, 2022.**

About the Addison Gallery of American Art

Devoted exclusively to American art, the Addison opened in 1931 and holds one of the most important American art collections in the country. Its collection includes more than 25,000 works by artists such as John Singleton Copley, Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, George Bellows, Georgia O’Keeffe, Jackson Pollock, Jennifer Bartlett, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Kerry James Marshall, and Mark Bradford, as well as photographers Eadweard Muybridge, Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, Sally Mann, Dawoud Bey, Carrie Mae Weems, and many others. The Addison Gallery, located in a stand-alone building on the campus of Phillips Academy—a residential school of

grades 9 through 12 in Andover, Massachusetts—offers a continually rotating series of exhibitions and programs, all of which are free and open to the public.

The Addison is open to the public 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, and 1 – 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free. Masks are required.

For more information, call 978-749-4015, or visit the website at www.addisongallery.org.

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