



Women and Abstraction: 1741–Now
Presents an Expansive History of Abstraction in America

Exhibition features work by historically marginalized and overlooked women artists along with art by Ruth Asawa, Helen Frankenthaler, Agnes Martin, Joan Mitchell, Louise Nevelson, Alma Thomas, and others

On View at the Addison Gallery of American Art January 28 through July 30, 2023



Andover, MA (January 26, 2023) – *Women and Abstraction: 1741–Now* offers a nuanced and expansive history of the development of abstraction in America, going beyond the traditional art historical narrative of this movement. The exhibition looks at how women from the 18th century to the present day have deployed the visual language and universal formal concerns of abstraction—color, line, shape, contrast, pattern, and texture—working across a wide variety of media, including painting, textiles, sculpture, photography, drawing, and ceramics.

Drawn almost exclusively from the Addison’s permanent collection, the exhibition features pieces ranging from colonial bed rugs and contemporary textile works by Sheila Hicks, to 19th-century Ojibwe beaded bandolier bags and a 2014 sculpture by Lynda Benglis, combining recognizable masterworks by leading abstractionists with work by historically overlooked women artists and makers, as well as objects that have historically been denied the status of fine art. Featured are pieces by Bernice Abbott,

Candida Alvarez, Ruth Asawa, Margaret Bourke-White, Petah Coyne, Helen Frankenthaler, Ellen Gallagher, Libbie Mark, Agnes Martin, Joan Mitchell, Louise Nevelson, Georgia O’Keeffe, Betty Parsons, Rosamond Purcell, Deborah Remington, Anne Ryan, Hedda Sterne, Toshiko Takaezu, Alma Thomas, Dominique Toya, Penelope Umbrico, and others.

Allison Kemmerer, the Mary Stripp and R. Crosby Kemper Director of the Addison Gallery of American Art said, “*Women and Abstraction* is a quintessential expression of the Addison’s mission: to offer new insights on American art while expanding the art historical canon. Eschewing traditional chronology, hierarchies of medium, and the restrictive definitions of art movements, it encourages us to rethink our preconceived ideas and opens new ways of seeing the art of this country.”

Gordon Wilkins, the Addison’s Robert M. Walker Curator of American Art and curator of *Women and Abstraction* noted, “The important work done over the past decades to illuminate the contributions of historically marginalized women has largely concentrated on white painters associated with the postwar, 20th-century New York school’s abstract expressionism. While Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell, and others among their contemporaries have rightfully been ensconced in the pantheon of great American abstract artists, the works of many more women—from all periods—remain unexamined by scholars and museums alike. This exhibition proposes a different way of looking at abstraction in American art, inviting visitors to draw aesthetic connections across seemingly disparate objects and complicating ingrained notions of what abstraction is and is not.”

Generous support for this exhibition has been provided by the Mollie Bennett Lupe and Garland M. Lasater Exhibition Fund and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation.

Images

Alma Thomas, *Ruth Kainen's Amaryllis*, 1976, acrylic on canvas, 40 1/4 x 35 inches, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA, bequest of Ruth Kainen, 2010.109

Phoebe Denison Billings, *Bed Rug*, 1741, wool worked on wool ground, 95 x 93 1/2 inches, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA, bequest of Henry Perkins Moseley, 1940.25

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 world. 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. on Tuesday through Saturday, and 1 – 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free. For more information, call 978-749-4015, or visit the website at www.addisongallery.org.

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