

IT'S A WOMAN'S WORLD

WOMEN ARTISTS

BACKGROUND FOR IT'S A WOMAN'S WORLD TOUR

It's a Woman's World tour was designed for a large group that comes to the museum six times a year and has been doing this for many years. The tours last 1 ½ hours. I tried to show art that was newer to Mia or loans to Mia as well as some other long time pieces. I intentionally left out pieces by women artists that I know the group has seen many times like Berthe Morisot and Vigee Le Brun.

I started with the poster of the Guerilla Girls that says "horror on the national Mall-Thousands of women locked in the basements of D.C. museums. I have attached a link to the article on the sources page.

We talked about how it has taken hundreds of years for women artists to gain recognition for their talent. The struggle continues for many women artists who currently do not command the prices that male artists command or have the presence in museums and galleries that male artists have experienced. There are many statistics in the article.

When showing the Arts and Crafts woodblock prints of women artists, we talked about the process of woodblock printmaking and the various stages of creating the artworks. We talked about the influence that Japanese printmaking had on the Impressionists and later artists.

We also talked about how during the Arts and Crafts era people were rejecting the machine produced objects of the industrial age in favor of a return to traditional craftsmanship, like printmaking. We made the connection to our current times when people are rejecting mass consumerism and mass production for unique and hand-crafted objects. I attached an article in the sources about this topic.

At each piece we would first discuss the artwork including the subject, the technique, etc. the and the background of the artists. The discussions included how some women worked as teachers and other jobs to support themselves while they created art on the side. Some women were born into wealth that

allowed them get the education and practice their art. We talked about the challenges of attending art schools for women.

For more contemporary women artist, we talked about how their art allows them to express who they are and how their lives have shaped their art.

The list I included is longer than we could get to but I thought I would share my research with you on this.

List of tour artworks

Eliza Draper Gardiner, In the Park, color woodcut 1915-25

Margaret Jordan Patterson, Windblown Trees 1916

Elizabeth A. Colborne, Lumber Mills in Bellingham Bay 1933

Cecilia Beaux Mrs. Beauveau and Her son Adolphe 1896

Lila Cabot Perry, The Picturebook N.D.

Frances Cranmer Greenman, Self Portrait, 1923

Clara Gardner Mairs, Halloween 1920

Alice Neel, Christy White

Renee Stout, Crossroads Marker with Little Hand Reaching, 2015

Julie Mehrutu, Entropia, 2004

Elizabeth Catlett, Black is Beautiful, lithograph 1968

Dorothy Tanning, Tempest in yellow, 1956

Leonora Harrington, Dear Diary- Never Since We Left Prague, 1955

Sylvia Fein, The Tea Party, 1943

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith,, What is an American? 2003

Maria Montoya Martinez, Pot, 1920-40

ELIZA DRAPER GARDINER IN THE PARK, COLOR WOODCUT 1915-25

Eliza Draper Gardiner was born on October 29, 1871 in Cranston, Providence, Rhode Island. She studied art at Friends School in Providence and then the Rhode Island School of Design in 1893, graduating in 1897 and then in Europe where she studied further with Charles Woodberry, learning printmaking. Gardiner's specialty was color woodcuts of children. She was influenced by the color woodcut printmaker and teacher Arthur Dow, whose work she saw in a show at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 1895. She began exhibiting her work in 1910 and her black and white blockprints (she worked with both woodcut and linocut) in 1915, with an exhibition at the Berlin Photographic Co. in New York in 1916, where she showed 7 prints. She continued to exhibit on the East Coast throughout the 1920s and 30s.

After teaching art, beginning in 1892 at the "Moses Brown School" (formerly the "Friends School) Gardiner taught relief printmaking, watercolor and drawing for thirty-one years at the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, beginning in 1908. She was also adept at lithography and worked with George Miller to produce a series of 10 lithographs in 1932. Over her lifetime she created 59 color blockprints, 15 black and white blockprints, 5 etchings and 10 lithographs.

She was a member of the Massachusetts graphic arts group, the Provincetown Printmakers. A publication about the artist's work, containing reproductions and biographical material, "Eliza Draper Gardiner: Master of the Color Woodblock", was published in 1987 by the Newport Art Museum, Rhode Island. She was active in the Provincetown Art Association, Print Makers Society of California, Providence Watercolor Club, American Color Print Society and the Philadelphia Woodcut Society. Her work is represented in the Detroit Institute of Art, Bibliotheque Nationale, Rhode Island School of Design, and the Philbrook Art

Center.

Eliza Draper Gardiner died on January 14, 1955 in Edgewood, Rhode Island, USA.

MARGARET JORDAN PATTERSON WINDBLOWN TREES 1916

Margaret Jordan Patterson began her formal art studies at Pratt Institute with Arthur Wesley Dow in 1895. As was the case for many artists working at the turn of the century, her interests eventually took her to Europe. Throughout her lifetime Patterson returned to Europe for extended stays in Italy and France.

It was in Paris that she learned to make color woodcuts from American artist Ethel Mars. Creating her first prints in 1911, Patterson originally used color woodcuts as a way to reproduce her paintings. Eventually the tables turned and her watercolors served as preliminary studies for her prints. She made very exacting studies in which color and composition were worked out before transferring the work to woodblock.

The effects of atmosphere and light attained in *Coast Cedars* illustrate Patterson's acute skill in manipulating the inking and printing of woodblock. In making the sky lighter at the horizon line and the water deep blue, Patterson achieves the effect of spatial depth. As was true for Frances Gearhart, Patterson frequently printed with a lavender blue key block (or major color element) instead of the more traditional black. The muted tones soften the outlines between colors, achieving a more harmonious color scheme. Her skillful use of color gives the viewer the very real sensation of warm sun on a beach. The coastal subject matter is particularly interesting given Patterson's history. She was the daughter and granddaughter of sea captains and was in fact born at sea, off the coast of Indonesia.

During World War I Patterson served as the director of the art department at a girls' school in Wellesley, Massachusetts. She also taught art in public schools in Boston, Massachusetts and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In the 1930s floral still lifes began to supplant landscapes as her main subject. In the still lifes, Patterson explored further the relationship between color and form. While the pieces were by no means abstract, they relied less on subject matter and more on the formal elements of composition.

Patterson had a number of exhibitions in Paris in the teens. Later in her life she exhibited in both Boston and New York. Among her awards was an honorable mention at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915 and a medal from the Philadelphia Watercolor Club in 1939. Today Patterson's work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Cleveland Art Museum and the Oakland Art Museum.

**ELIZABETH A. COLBORNE
LUMBER MILLS IN BELLINGHAM BAY 1933**

Elizabeth A. Colborne was born on 15 Feb, 1885 in Chamberlain, Brule County, South Dakota. She was raised by relatives in Bellingham, Washington after both her parents died while in their early 40's.

In 1903 she studied art at Pratt Institute in New York with Arthur Dow and Walter Perry and her love for design began. She returned to Washington in 1905 to work as an illustrator, but returned to New York to teach at the Decorative Designers of NY.

In 1910 she studied at the National Academy with Mielatz, Henri and Rockwell Kent and continued an active career as a children's book designer and illustrator. In 1924 she studied woodblock printmaking at the Art Students League with Allen Lewis.

She spent her time between NY and Washington and returned to Bellingham full time in 1933 where she participated as an artist in the WPA. She became a member of the National Association of Women Artists. In 1940 she went to work for Boeing, retiring in 1948

Elizabeth Colborne died on 21 Feb, 1948, Seattle, Washington.

**CECILIA BEAUX 1855-1942
MRS. BEAUVEAU BORIE AND HER SON, ADOPHE 1896
KUNIN COLLECTION L2014.234.412**

American portrait artist in the manner of John Singer Sargent. She was a near contemporary of Mary Cassat where they both received their training at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. She was the first woman to have a regular teaching position at the Academy.

She was an independent woman, successful and made a living for herself. She turned down a few marriage proposals. Eleanor Roosevelt called her, “the American woman who has made the greatest contribution to the culture of the world.”

At age 32 in 1887 she went to the Paris and studied at the Academie Julian under Fleury and Bougueareau. She saw the art of the Impressionists and tried their techniques in her portraits but she remained a realist painter. She returned to the US in 1889.

She moved to New York and had many clients from Washington DC. She painted the elite and famous. She sketch President Teddy Roosevelt, a Catholic Cardinal and many women and children of wealthy families.

She later moved to Glouster MA in Green Alley, a community of her wealthy friends.

LILA CABOT PERRY 1848-1933
THE PICTUREBOOK N.D.
KUNIN COLLECTION L/2014.234.525

An American painter who worked in the American Impressionist style making portraits and landscapes in the manner of her mentor Claude Monet. She was an early advocate of the French Impressionist style and helped improve its reception in the US. She was born into a prominent Boston MA family whose friends included Louis May Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 1867 she traveled to Paris with her family and studied painting. In 1874 she married Thomas Perry a Harvard alumnus scholar and linguist. His granduncle was Commodore Matthew Perry. They had three daughters.

They moved to Paris in 1887 and she enrolled in the Academie Colarossi and later the Academie Julien under Fleury. She had two paintings accepted to the Society of Independent Artists in Paris. She then became friends with Mary Cassat,

Camille Pissarro and Claude Monet. Between 1889 and 1909 she and her husband spent their summers at Giverny with Monet where she was very influenced by the style of Monet. She returned to Boston and received prestigious awards for painting there and also in Paris.

FRANCES CRANMER GREENMAN 1890-1981
SELF PORTRAIT 1923 76.61

She was an American portrait painter, critic and columnist. She was born in a log cabin in Aberdeen South Dakota. Her father was a judge and her mother a suffragist. She was named for Frances Willard a famous suffragist. At age 15 she attended the Wisconsin Academy of Art and later the Corcoran School of Art in Washington DC. She studied in New York with William Merritt Chase and Robert Henri. She moved to Minneapolis in 1910s. She went to New York for several years then returned to Minneapolis as an established painter of society portraits by the 1920s. She made portraits of Hollywood stars, including Mary Pickford, politicians including MN governor Karl Rovaag and socialites.

She taught at the Minneapolis School of Art from 1941 to 1943 and also at the art Institute of Chicago. Her style was bold and informed by modernism. She worked as an art critic for the Minneapolis Tribune. She died in Medina MN in 1981.

CLARA GARDNER MAIRS 1878-1963
HALLOWEEN 1920
OIL ON CANVAS 45.34

Born in Hastings MN, her father built the first grain mill in Dakota County. Her father died and her mother moved Clara and her siblings to Saint Paul. She attended college in Washington DC and also trained at the St. Paul School of Art. She then attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Art. She again returned to St. Paul and formed the Art League of St. Paul. She met Clement Haupers and they became lifelong companions showing their art together. They traveled to Paris and studied at the Academie Colarossi and Academie Julian. They toured Italy and Algiers before returning to Minnesota. She then started printmaking. She won many awards for her art in Minnesota.

ALICE NEEL 1900-1984
CHRISTY WHITE
KUNIN COLLECTION L2014.234.511

American portrait artist known for paintings of women, friends, lovers, family, artists and poets. She has an expressionistic use of line and color, psychological acumen and emotional intensity. She saw the Abstract Expressionist but kept her own unique style.

She was raised in a middle class family in Philadelphia. She attended art classes at night and later attended the Philadelphia School of Design for Women. In school she rejected the popular movement of Impressionism and adopted the style of the Ashcan School of Realism.

She married a Cuban painter Carlos Enriquez in 1924 in Pennsylvania and soon after moved to Havana. There she embraced the nontraditional avant garde movement.

Their daughter Santillana was born in Havana and they moved to the US before her first birthday. The baby died of diphtheria. Two years later their daughter Isabetta was born. Two years later, her husband took Isabetta to Cuba without her knowledge or permission. After these losses, Neel suffered depression was hospitalized and attempted suicide. This death and loss of children and husband infused her work with themes of motherhood, loss and anxiety for the rest of her career.

During the Depression, Neel was one of the first artists to work for the Workers Progress Administration.

RENEE STOUT BORN 1958
CROSSROADS MARKER WITH LITTLE HAND REACHING, 2015
2016.2

Renee Stout (born 1958) is an American sculptor and contemporary artist known for [assemblage](#) artworks dealing with her personal history and [African-American](#) heritage.^[1] Born in Kansas, raised in [Pittsburgh](#), living in [Washington, D.C.](#), and strongly connected through her art to [New Orleans](#), Stout has strong ties to multiple parts of the United States. Her art reflects this, with thematic interest in African diasporic culture throughout the United States. Stout was the first American artist to exhibit in the Smithsonian's [National Museum of African Art](#).

Combining vestigial African American customs and street culture with the theatrical and carnivalesque, Stout's oeuvre consists of handmade assemblages,

installations and tableaus, vibrant paintings, prints, and photographs – all of which are employed in the creation of complex narratives featuring characters conceived by the artist. Her artistic influences include [Yoruba](#) sculpture, and the [nkisi](#) (sacred objects) of the Central African [Congo Basin](#), which she first saw at the [Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh](#) in her youth.

Stout's sculptural installations often include materials used in the practice of voodoo. Handmade potions, roots and herbs, found objects, bones, and feathers are combined with painted and sculptural elements.

Crossroads Marker with Little Hand, Reaching, 2015

Renée Stout

Metal, glass, wood, pigments, other materials

THE BLYTHE BRENDEN ENDOWMENT FOR ART ACQUISITION 2016.2
G375

Renée Stout transformed a found piece of wood into a boat, a symbol of the slave trade. At the same time, the boat is a vehicle for African symbols and beliefs that were carried, along with people, to America. The cross, for instance, is an important Kongo sign that refers to the crossroads between the world of the living and that of ancestors and spirits—hence the work's title. Stout finds inspiration in African cultures to create art that encourages self-examination, self-empowerment, and self-healing.

JULIE MEHRUTU

Entropia (review), 2004

Julie Mehretu; Publisher: Co-published by Highpoint Editions, Minneapolis; Publisher: Co-published by Walker Art Center, Minneapolis , Minneapolis

Color screenprint and lithograph

THE RICHARD LEWIS HILLSTROM FUND 2004.185

Not on View

Painter and printmaker Julie Mehretu finds inspiration for her imagery in the complex infrastructure of the constructed world. Entropia (review) typifies Mehretu's long-standing interest in using architectural language to express ideas of power, particularly how power is conveyed in public spaces. Visually complex, her print combines decontextualized elements of maps, diagrams, plans, and architectural drawings of

socially-charged spaces--streets, plazas, airports, government buildings, schools, parks--with Mehretu's personal language of signs and symbols. She refers to these layered, multidimensional compositions as "psycho-geographic" abstractions, essentially hybrids of various urban structures, settings, and identities that call to mind multicultural and global concerns of contemporary society, especially the cultural and political role of power.

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Julie Mehretu was born in 1970 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She studied at University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar (1990–91), earned a BA from Kalamazoo College, Michigan (1992), and an MFA from Rhode Island School of Design, Providence (1997). She was a resident of the CORE Program, Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1997–98) and the Artist-in-Residence Program at the Studio Museum in Harlem (2001).

Mehretu's paintings and drawings refer to elements of mapping and architecture, achieving a calligraphic complexity that resembles turbulent atmospheres and dense social networks. Architectural renderings and aerial views of urban grids enter the work as fragments, losing their real-world specificity and challenging narrow geographic and cultural readings. The paintings' wax-like surfaces—built up over weeks and months in thin translucent layers—have a luminous warmth and spatial depth. Their formal qualities of light and space are made all the more complex by Mehretu's delicate depictions of fire, explosions, and perspectives in both two and three dimensions. Her works engage the history of nonobjective art—from Constructivism to Futurism—posing contemporary questions about the relationship between utopian impulses and abstraction.

ELIZABETH CATLETT
BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL, 1968
LITHOGRAPH

Sculptor and printmaker Elizabeth Catlett used her art to advocate for social change in both the U.S. and her adopted country of Mexico for almost three-quarters of a century.

The granddaughter of former slaves, Catlett was raised in Washington, D.C. Her father died before she was born and her mother held several jobs to raise three children. Refused admission to Carnegie Institute of Technology because of her race, Catlett enrolled at Howard University, where her teachers included artist [Loïs Mailou Jones](#) and philosopher Alain Locke. She graduated with honors in 1935 and went on to earn the first MFA in sculpture at the University of Iowa five years later.

Grant Wood, her painting teacher at Iowa, encouraged students to make art about what they knew best and to experiment with different mediums, inspiring Catlett to create lithographs, linoleum cuts, and sculpture in wood, stone, clay, and bronze. She drew subjects from African American and later Mexican life.

In 1946, a grant from the Rosenwald Foundation enabled Catlett to move to Mexico City with her husband, printmaker Charles White. There she joined the Taller de Gráfica Popular, an influential and political group of printmakers. At the Taller, Catlett met the Mexican artist Francisco Mora, whom she married after divorcing White and with whom she had three sons.

Catlett taught at the National School of Fine Arts in Mexico City from 1958 until her retirement in 1976, producing realistic and highly stylized two- and three-dimensional figures. Her subjects ranged from tender maternal images to

confrontational symbols of the Black Power movement, to portraits of Martin Luther King Jr. and the writer Phyllis Wheatley.

During the past 40 years, museums and galleries have held more than 50 solo exhibitions of Catlett's sculptures and prints, including important retrospectives in 1993 and 1998. Catlett continued to make art through her mid-90s, while dividing her time between New York and Cuernavaca.

DOROTHY TANNING

TEMPEST IN YELLOW, 1956

The daughter of Swedish émigré parents, artist and writer Dorothea Tanning was born on 25 August 1910 in the United States in the town of Galesburg, Illinois. At the age of sixteen 'Dottie', as she was then known, joined the staff of the Galesburg Public Library as a library assistant.¹ There, she was deeply influenced by the books she encountered, and she entertained the idea of a purely literary career to the extent that in her memoirs she recalled: 'If there was anything at all that troubled my certain destiny as a painter, it was the Galesburg Public Library'.² In 1928 she began studying at Knox College, a local liberal arts institution, before moving to Chicago in 1930 and enrolling at the Chicago Academy of Art. However, she attended the course there for only three weeks, and thereafter was largely self-taught as an artist.³

In 1935 Tanning moved to New York, where she began working as a freelance illustrator, creating advertisement designs for Macy's department store and other clients until the early 1940s. In December 1936 she visited Alfred H. Barr Jr's ground-breaking exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* at the Museum of

Modern Art, which included work by the likes of Eileen Agar, René Magritte, Max Ernst, Meret Oppenheim, Marcel Duchamp and Louis Aragon.⁴ The surrealist works she saw there had a profound effect on Tanning and she felt an affinity with the artists on show. As she later recalled, ‘here in the museum is the real explosion, rocking me on my run-over heels. Here is the infinitely faceted world I must have been waiting for. Here is the limitless expanse of POSSIBILITY, a perspective having only incidentally to do with painting on surfaces.’⁵

Tanning travelled to France in July 1939 with letters of introduction to artists including Ernst, Chaim Soutine, Yves Tanguy and Pablo Picasso. She arrived in Paris in August and, with the country on the brink of war, found the city empty of the artists with whom she had hoped to be acquainted, and she returned to New York.⁶ She did, however, meet Ernst in December 1942 while he was selecting work for Exhibition by 31 Women, organised by Peggy Guggenheim, his then wife, at her Art of this Century Gallery in New York. Ernst visited Tanning’s Manhattan studio on the advice of gallerist Julien Levy and selected her painting Birthday 1942 for the exhibition, as well as suggesting the work’s title. Tanning went on to have her first solo show at Levy’s New York gallery in April 1944.

In a double wedding with artist Man Ray and dancer Juliet P. Browner, Tanning and Ernst married in October 1946. They moved to the town of Sedona, Arizona, which Tanning had first visited in May 1943, apparently as a retreat from the busy New York art scene.⁷ Set within a group of huge red rocks in the Verde Valley and Upper Sonoran Desert of Northern Arizona, Sedona captivated Tanning’s imagination:

Reader! Imagine the pure excitement of living in such a place of ambivalent elements. Overhead a blue so triumphant it penetrated the darkest spaces of your brain. Underneath a ground so ancient and cruel with stones, only stones, and cactus spines playing possum.⁸

While she and Ernst were building their house there in 1946–7, Tanning wrote ‘Chasm: A Weekend’, a short story that would eventually become the novel Abyss, first published in 1949 and then again in 1977 and 2004.⁹ Visitors to Tanning and Ernst in Sedona included artists and writers such as Duchamp, Roland Penrose, Lee Miller, Tanguy, Kay Sage and Dylan Thomas. Following a move to France in 1949 the couple lived in Paris and then in Provence, but continued to visit their house in Sedona throughout the 1950s.

Tanning and Ernst would live in France until the latter's death in 1976, and in this productive period Tanning embarked on a range of artistic projects.

Tanning's first Paris exhibition, held at Galerie Furstenburg in 1954, was crucial in establishing her importance on the Parisian arts scene beyond her connection with Ernst. As she later reflected: 'For me, an artist living in the shadow of a great man, it was somehow crucial.'¹⁰ Around 1955 Tanning's paintings moved away from meticulously rendered figurative dreamscapes, increasingly employing confident gestural flow and movement as well as a more immersive use of figures and space.¹¹ As Tanning recalled in her memoirs, 'Gradually, in looking at how many ways paint can flow onto canvas, I began to long for letting it have more freedom'.¹² This newfound interest in movement came in the wake of her work as a costume and stage designer for the ballets of the Russian choreographer George Blachine – *Night Shadow* (1946), *The Witch* (1950) and *Bayou* (1952).

Tanning's first retrospective took place in Knokke-le Zoute in Belgium in the summer of 1967. In the late 1960s Tanning's practice shifted once again, moving from drawing, design and painting to three-dimensional sculptural works fashioned from soft textiles and found items. Her objects led to the immersive and uncanny three-walled installation *Chambre 202, Hôtel du Pavot* 1970–3 (Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris), which she would describe in 1987 as 'the surrealist work par excellence – and probably the last'.¹³

When Ernst died in Paris on 1 April 1976, aged 84, Tanning was bereft. 'There is no light in the studio,' she wrote, 'nothing moves and the colored jokes are fading fast. The disorder is grievous. (Is the heart condemned to break each day?)'¹⁴ In 1979 Tanning began her return to New York, which she completed in 1980. She published her memoir *Birthday* in 1986, and in 1994 established the Wallace Stevens Award for poetry, to be awarded annually by the American Academy of Poets. She created her last known paintings in 1998 but continued to write, publishing her expanded memoir *Between Lives: An Artist and Her World* in 2001. Her second collection of poetry, *Coming to That: Poems*, appeared in 2011.

LEONORA CARRINGTON

DEAR DIARY – NEVER SINCE WE LEFT PRAGUE, 1955

Carrington was born in [Clayton Green, Chorley](#), Lancashire,^{[4][5]} England. Her father was a wealthy textile manufacturer,^{[4][6]} and her mother, Maureen (née Moorhead), was Irish.^[4] She had three brothers: Patrick, Gerald, and Arthur.^{[7][8]}

Educated by governesses, tutors, and nuns, she was expelled from two schools, including [New Hall School, Chelmsford](#),^[9] for her rebellious behaviour, until her family sent her to [Florence](#), where she attended Mrs Penrose's Academy of Art. She also, briefly, attended St Mary's convent school in Ascot.^[10] In 1927, at the age of ten, she saw her first Surrealist painting in a [Left Bank](#) gallery in Paris and later met many Surrealists, including [Paul Éluard](#).^[11] Her father opposed her career as an artist, but her mother encouraged her. She returned to England and was [presented at Court](#), but according to her, she brought a copy of [Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Giza*](#) (1936) to read instead. In 1935, she attended the [Chelsea School of Art](#) in London for one year, and with the help of her father's friend [Serge Chermayeff](#), she was able to transfer to the Ozenfant Academy of Fine Arts established by the French modernist [Amédée Ozenfant](#) in London (1936–38).^{[7][12]}

She became familiar with [Surrealism](#) from a copy of [Herbert Read's](#) book, *Surrealism* (1936), which was given to her by her mother,^[8] but she received little encouragement from her family to forge an artistic career. The [Surrealist](#) poet and patron [Edward James](#) was the champion of her work in Britain; James bought many of her paintings and arranged a show in 1947 for her work at [Pierre Matisse's](#) Gallery in New York. Some works are still hanging at James' former family home, currently [West Dean College](#) in [West Dean, West Sussex](#).^[13]

Association with Max Ernst

In 1936, Leonora saw the work of the [German surrealist Max Ernst](#) at the [International Surrealist Exhibition](#) in London and was attracted to the Surrealist artist before she even met him. In 1937, Carrington met Ernst at a party held in London. The artists bonded and returned together to Paris, where Ernst promptly separated from his wife. In 1938, leaving Paris, they settled in [Saint Martin d'Ardèche](#) in southern France. The new couple collaborated and supported each other's artistic development. The two artists created sculptures of guardian animals (Ernst created his birds and Carrington created a plaster horse head) to decorate their home in Saint Martin d'Ardèche. In 1939, Carrington painted a *Portrait of*

Max Ernst as a capture of some ambivalences in their relationship.^[7] This portrait was not her first Surrealist work though. Before that, between 1937–1938, Leonora painted [*Self-portrait*](#) also called *The Inn of the Dawn Horse*. It is now exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Sporting white jodhpurs and a wild mane of hair, Carrington is perched on the edge of a chair in this curious, dreamlike scene, with her hand outstretched toward the prancing hyena and her back to the tailless rocking horse flying behind her.

Leonora Carrington (1917-2011) is considered one of the greatest and most neglected British Surrealists. Her life story is a fascinating one: she abandoned her family for a painter about 20 years her senior (and married), she lived in Mexico, and kept on painting even when she was 90.

She was the only daughter (she had three brothers) of a Protestant textile magnate from Lancashire, England and his Irish Catholic wife Maurie. Although she said *Our family weren't cultured or intellectual – we were the good old bourgeoisie, after all*, the family lived in a sinister mansion, an imposing edifice which often featured in her later paintings. The parents were very different in character, her workaholic father didn't approve of Leonora, or Prim as the family called her, going to an art college, but her mother intervened and eventually Leonora went to study Old Masters in Florence (if you look at her paintings you can see the love for gold, vermilion and earth colours inspired by the Italian painting).

When she returned from Italy, her father wanted to marry her off. He launched her as a debutante and held a ball in her honour at the Ritz (!!!!!), and she was even presented to King George V !!!!! Leonora despised it, however, and she poured out

her loathing of the debutante season into a surreal short story *The Debutante*. And then a breakthrough moment arrived: in 1936, when Leonora was 19, the first surrealist exhibition opened in London. As she recalled: *I fell in love with Max [Ernst]'s paintings before I fell in love with Max*, it was like an epiphany. She met him later in person at a dinner party and fell in love head over hills. They left London already together to settle in Paris but Leonora had to share Ernst with his wife with whom he was still spending time, but at that point she Leonora didn't mind. She plunged into Paris and art: *from Max I had my education: I learned about art and literature. He taught me everything. She met [Picasso](#): A typical Spaniard – he thought all women were in love with him, [but] well, I certainly wasn't. Though I liked his art.*” And [Salvador Dalí](#): *“I met him by chance one day in André Breton's shop. He certainly wasn't extraordinary then: he looked like everyone else. It was only when he went to America that he started looking extraordinary.*

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“Take me to the Mexican embassy!”

In 1938, right before the outbreak of the WW2, Ernst left his wife and the couple moved to Provance. It was a great time of artistic creativity, one painted the other and Leonora also took up writing. Their idyll was shattered by the arrival of the Nazis who considered Jewish Ernst as an enemy alien and subsequently interned him. Sorrowful Leonora fled to Spain where she had a mental breakdown and ended up in a psychiatric hospital in Santander. Leonora’s father tried to get her out of the hospital and have her admitted to a sanatorium in South Africa instead. She didn’t want that and while waiting for a boat with her father’s business contacts, she escaped and jumped into a taxi. *Take me to the Mexican embassy!* she shouted. It was the first place that came to her mind, as she thought of her friend from Paris, Renato Leduc, who had been a Mexican diplomat. The only solution to her predicament he could think of was to marry her. So they did.

SYLVIA FEIN

The Tea Party, 1943

Sylvia Fein

Egg tempera and oil on board

THE JAMES FORD BELL FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT FOR ART ACQUISITION 2017.49

G376

World War II (1939-45) transformed the lives of Sylvia Fein and her friends. The Tea Party was created during the height of the war and shows the artist in the role of Alice, from Lewis Carroll’s 1865 fantasy novel *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, at a table set for absent friends. Fein leans against a rock formation that swells and writhes with the suggestion of concealed images—birds, lizards, faces, hands—as though the very earth were unstable and ready to change itself and challenge her understanding of reality. A card on the table is inscribed “WKS/Hawaii,” revealing the picture’s dedication to her husband, fighting in the Pacific. Fein’s self-portrait as Alice suggests magical thinking and the will to have control over the whims of fate.

Sylvia Fein (Scheuber) is an American [surrealist](#) painter and author, born November 20, 1919, in [Milwaukee, Wisconsin](#).^{[1][2][3]} She studied painting at the [University of Wisconsin–Madison](#), where she became part of a group of [magical realist](#) painters, including [Gertrude Abercrombie](#), Marshall Glasier, [John Wilde](#), Dudley Huppler, and [Karl Priebe](#).^{[4][5]} During this time, newspapers described Fein as “Wisconsin’s Foremost Woman Painter.” Inspired by the [quattrocento](#), Fein paints in [egg tempera](#), which she makes herself.^[1]

Early life and education

Fein was born on November 20, 1919, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was the second of three children. Her parents were Alfred Fein, an attorney, and Elizabeth Fein, a pianist.^[3] During her youth, Fein described herself as being a quiet child, and stated in an interview that while in school, "I was always considered dumb. Artistic ability when I was growing up was not a great thing anybody was looking for. They were looking for scholastic ability ... and I didn't talk a lot, but that was not recognized, it was just put down that you weren't too smart academically."^[6] After graduating from high school, Fein hoped to attend college, but the family could not afford to send her to college. As a result, Fein spent a year working to raise the money needed to attend college. It was during this time that she was introduced to William “Bill” Scheuber (1918-2013), her future husband. Soon after, Fein enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where Scheuber was also enrolled.^[3]

Though initially wanting to enroll in the Art program, Fein would later recall her sister saying to her, "Yes, but you'd never get a job when you got out of college, so you should enter the home ec[onomics] school and at least then you could become a teacher."^[3] The following year however, Fein changed majors and began to study painting. While completing her program, she was introduced to John Wilde, Gertrude Abercrombie, Marshall Glasier, Dudley Huppler, and Karl Priebe, all of whom would later be referred to as the “surrealists of the Midwest.” On May 30, 1942, Fein and Scheuber were married, shortly before Scheuber joined the United States military and left to fight in [World War II](#).^[3]

Life in Mexico

In 1943, Fein moved to [Mexico](#) after her husband was away on military service so she could recuperate from pneumonia. She planned to visit her mother in [Mexico City](#), but Fein was convinced by a classmate to travel to [Ajijic](#) on the shores of [Lake Chapala](#), where she lived and painted for three years. Even 60 years later, Fein says that since her time in Mexico in 1943, she has “loved Mexico and could cry on the return because I have the dust of Mexico on my heart.” During her time in Mexico, Fein was part of group exhibitions at the Villa Montecarlo, and she completed paintings for her first solo exhibition at the Perls Galleries in [New York City](#). Along with painting, Fein helped rebuild the adobe house in which she had her studio, taught English to young people, and started an embroidered blouse industry for women. She also provided paper, pencils, and crayons to children in exchange for exotic insects.^[7]

Return to the United States

When her husband returned from the war, the couple lived in Mexico City for a little bit and then drove back to the U.S. with Fein's paintings in the back seat. Fein's first solo exhibition was a great success and received praise in *The New Yorker*. In the 1946-47 Whitney Annual exhibition, Fein's work was shown alongside that of [Max Ernst](#), [Roberto Matta](#), and [Jackson Pollock](#). Upon returning to the United States, Fein and Scheuber moved to [East Oakland, California](#). By that time, Fein and Scheuber had purchased a boat and began to go boating in the [California Delta region](#).^[3] These boat trips gave her inspiration to begin work on her landscapes and seascapes of California.^[6] She completed her MFA at the [University of California, Berkeley](#) in 1951.^[7]

Writing career

In the late 1970s, Fein took a break from painting and wrote two books.^[3] The first book, *Heidi's Horse*, offers an analysis of the development of her daughter, Heidi Scheuber. The book chronicles Heidi's drawings throughout her childhood, from the ages of two to fifteen.^[8] Her second book, *First Drawings: Genesis of Visual Thinking*, is about the basic patterns that appear throughout human art, both historically and during childhood development.^[9] Fein's hope with *First Drawings* was to showcase the relationship between the art done by children and the cave paintings of the [Paleolithic period](#).^[3]

Return to painting

Fein began painting again in the early 2000s, and she exhibited a selection of both her recent and earlier work in 2014.^{[1][10]} Shortly after returning to painting, Fein began to work on her “Eye” series, which often exhibited elements of paintings she had done decades earlier.^[3] The series currently consists of twenty-one paintings.^{[11][12]} Fein would later describe her “Eye” series as both a “fun and thrilling experience.”^[3] Fein also returned to painting landscapes of California, a continuation of earlier work she had done between 1955 and 1975.^{[13][14]}

After the death of her husband in 2013,^[15] Fein began work on her “Tree” series as a memorial to her husband, whom Fein credited as having always supported her career. The series consists of five paintings, the first of which symbolizes her husband. The next piece in the series was meant to represent both Fein and Scheuber, while the third piece represented Fein herself. A fourth piece symbolized both Fein and Scheuber again. Fein enjoys being near nature, which inspires many of her works.^[3] She currently resides in [Martinez, California](#).

MIA THE TEA PARTY BY FEIN

World War II (1939-45) transformed the lives of Sylvia Fein and her friends. The Tea Party was created during the height of the war and shows the artist in the role of Alice, from Lewis Carroll’s 1865 fantasy novel *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, at a table set for absent friends. Fein leans against a rock formation that swells and writhes with the suggestion of concealed images—birds, lizards, faces, hands—as though the very earth were unstable and ready to change itself and challenge her understanding of reality. A card on the table is inscribed “WKS/Hawaii,” revealing the picture’s dedication to her husband, fighting in the Pacific. Fein’s self-portrait as Alice suggests magical thinking and the will to have control over the whims of fate.

What is an American?, 2003

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith; Publisher: Brodsky Center, New Brunswick, N.J.

Lithograph on Japan paper with hand painting in acrylic, chine colle, collage, metal grommets

G261

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith is an acclaimed contemporary Native American artist who works in a variety of media. Her work explores important themes of Native American culture like assimilation, tradition, stereotypes, and interactions of contemporary Native Americans in today's world. The central figure of this work is an anonymous Native American male who wears a bandolier bag, traditional-style choker and necklace, decorated leggings, and a frockcoat. The blood coming out of the figure's left hand references the colors of the American flag. Considering that Native Americans volunteer for military service during wartime at a higher rate than any other group per capita, Quick-to-See Smith asks, "Who is an American?"

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (born 1940), a self-described cultural arts worker, is a [Native American](#) visual artist and curator. An enrolled member of the [Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes](#), Smith is also of Métis and Shoshone descent. She is also an art educator, art advocate, and political activist. Prolific in her long career, her work draws from a Native worldview and comments on American Indian identity, histories of oppression, and environmental issues.

In the mid-1970s, Smith began to gain prominence as a painter and printmaker ^{[2][3]}, and later she advanced her style and technique with collage, drawing, and mixed media. Her works have been widely exhibited and many are in the permanent collections of prominent art museums in the United States, including the [Museum of Modern Art](#)-New York, the [Whitney Museum of American Art](#), ^[11] the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), and the [Walker Art Center](#) as well as the [Smithsonian American Art Museum](#) ^[12] and [National Museum of Women in the Arts](#). ^[13] Internationally, her work is also included in many private and public collections like The Museum of Mankind (Vienna), [The Museum of Modern Art \(Quito\)](#), the [Victoria and Albert Museum](#) (London), the [Museum for World Cultures](#) (Frankfurt), and the [Museum for Ethnology](#) (Berlin). Finally, her work has been collected by [New Mexico Museum of Art](#) (Santa Fe) ^[14] and [Albuquerque Museum](#), ^[15] both located in a landscape that has continually served as one of her greatest sources of inspiration. She actively supports the [Native arts](#) community by organizing exhibitions and project

collaborations, and she has also participated in national commissions for public works.

Smith lives in [Corrales, New Mexico](#), near the [Rio Grande](#) and, since 2017, she has been represented by [Garth Greenan Gallery](#) in New York.

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith was born on January 15, 1940, in [St. Ignatius Mission](#),^[1] a small town on the Flathead Reservation on the [Confederated Salish and Kootenai Indian Reservation](#), [Montana](#). Her first name, Jaune, means "yellow" in French, pointing to her French-Cree ancestry. Her Indian name, "Quick-to-See," was given to her by her Shoshone grandmother as a sign of an ability to grasp things readily.^[1]

As a child, Smith had an itinerant life. Her father, a single parent who traded horses and participated in rodeos,^[1] frequently moved between several reservations as a horse trader.^[2] As a result, Jaune lived in various places of the Pacific Northwest and California.^[4] Growing up in poverty,^[5] Smith worked alongside migrant workers in a Seattle farming community between the ages of eight and fifteen years old, when school was not in session.^[2]

However, Smith knew very early on that she wanted to be an artist. She remembers drawing on the ground with sticks as a four-year old,^[4] and in first grade, she recalls the first time she encountered tempera paints and crayons:

I loved the smell of them. It was a real awakening. I made a painting of children dancing around Mount Rainier. My teacher raved about it. Then with Valentine's Day approaching, I painted red hearts all over the sky. ... I see it as my first abstract painting."^[2]

In 1960, Smith began her formal art education in Washington state, earning an Associate of Arts Degree at [Olympic College](#) in [Bremerton](#) and taking classes at the [University of Washington](#) in [Seattle](#). Her education, however, was interrupted because she had to support herself through various jobs as a waitress, Head Start teacher, factory worker, domestic, librarian, janitor, veterinary assistant, and secretary.^[4] In 1976, she completed a Bachelors degree in Art Education from [Framingham State College](#), Massachusetts, and then moved to [Albuquerque](#), New Mexico, to start graduate school at the [University of New Mexico](#) (UNM).

Her initial attraction to the University was its comprehensive [Native American studies](#) program, but after applying three times and being successively turned down, she decided to continue taking classes and making art.^[3] After an eventual exhibition at the Kornblee Gallery in New York City and its review in *Art in America*, she was finally accepted into the Department of Fine Arts at UNM^[3] where in 1980 she graduated with a Masters in Art.^[6] This liberal arts education formally introduced her to studies on the classical and contemporary arts, focusing on European and American artistic practices throughout the millennia, which served as her most influential point of access to the contemporary global art world.^[9]

From this background of her childhood and formal arts education, Smith has actively negotiated Native and non-Native societies by navigating, merging, and being inspired by diverse cultures. She produces art that "follows the journey of [her] life as [she moves] through public art projects, collaborations, printmaking, traveling, curating, lecturing and tribal activities."^[3] This work serves as a mode of visual communication, which she creatively and consciously composes in layers to bridge gaps between these two worlds^[5] and to educate about social, political and environmental issues existing deeper than the surface.

[Artistic style](#)

Smith has been creating complicated abstract paintings and [lithographs](#) since the 1970s. She employs a wide variety of media, working in painting, [printmaking](#) and richly textured mixed media pieces. Such images and collage elements as commercial slogans, sign-like [petroglyphs](#), rough drawing, and the inclusion and layering of text are unusually intersected into a complex vision created out of the artist's personal experience. Her works contain strong, insistent socio-political commentary that speaks to past and present cultural appropriation and abuse, while identifying the continued significance of the Native American peoples. She addresses today's tribal politics, human rights and environmental issues with humor. Smith is known internationally for her philosophically centered work regarding her strong cultural beliefs and political activism.^[4]

A guest lecturer at over 185 universities, museums and conferences around the world, Smith has also shown her work in over 100 solo exhibitions. Her work has

been reviewed by [The New York Times](#), [ArtNews](#), [Art in America](#), [Art Forum](#), [The New Art Examiner](#) and many other notable publications. She also organizes and curates numerous Native American exhibitions and serves as an activist and spokesperson for contemporary Native art.

Smith's collaborative public artworks include the terrazzo floor design in the Great Hall of the [Denver Airport](#),^[5] an in-situ sculpture piece in [Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco](#),^[6] and a mile-long sidewalk history trail in West [Seattle](#).^[7]

1980s

Smith's initial mature work consisted of abstract landscapes, begun in the 1970s and carried into the 1980s. Her landscapes often included [pictographic](#) symbolism and was considered a form of self-portraiture; Gregory Galligan explains in *Arts Magazine* in 1986, "each of these works distills decades of personal memory, collective consciousness, and historical awareness into a cogent pictorial synthesis."^[8] The landscapes often make use of representations of horses, teepees, humans, antelopes, etc.

These paintings touch on the alienation of the American Indian in modern culture, by acting as a sum of the past and something new altogether.^[9] She does this by beginning to saturate her work with the style of [Abstract Expressionists](#). Smith explains, "I look at line, form, color, texture, etc., in contemporary art as well as viewing old Indian artifacts the same way. With this I make parallels from the old world to contemporary art. A Hunkpapa drum become a [Rothko](#) painting; ledger-book symbols become [Cy Twombly](#); a Naskaspi bag is [Paul Klee](#); a Blackfoot robe, [Agnes Martin](#); beadwork color is [Josef Albers](#); a parfleche is [Frank Stella](#); design is [Vasarely](#)'s positive and negative space."^[10]

1990s

In the 1990s, Smith began her *I See Red* series, which she has continued on and off through this day. Paintings in this series were initially exhibited at [Bernice Steinbaum Gallery](#) in 1992, in conjunction with protests regarding the Columbian quincentenary.^[11] As Erin Valentino describes in the *Third Text* in 1997, "The paintings in this series employ numerous kinds of imagery from an abundance of sources and in a variety of associations: high, mass, consumer, popular, national,

mainstream and vernacular cultures, avant-garde (modernist) imagery and so-called Indian imagery in the form of found objects, photographs, scientific illustrations, fabric swatches, bumper stickers, maps, cartoon imagery, advertisements, newspaper cut-outs and visual quotations of her own work, to name some."^[11] Here, she juxtaposes stereotypical commodification of native American cultures with visual reminders of their colonizer's legacies.^[11] The style of these paintings, with their collage, layered, and misty environments, are reminiscent of that of [Robert Rauschenberg](#) and [Jasper Johns](#), their subject matter reminiscent of [Andy Warhol](#), too.^[12]

2000s

Smith has consistently addressed respect for nature, animals, and human kind.^[13] Her interest in these topics lies in her exploration of the adverse sociocultural circumstances created for Native Americans by the government; this umbrella term refers to the health, sovereignty, and rights of Native Americans.^[11] She is able to put her studies into practice by avoiding toxic art supplies and minimizing excessive art storage space.^[13]

Today, Smith's paintings still contain contemporary cultural signifiers and collaged elements. References to the [Lone Ranger](#), [Tonto](#), [Snow White](#), [Altoids](#), [Krispy Kreme](#), [Fritos](#), etc., all serve to critique the rampant consumerism of American culture, and how this culture benefits off of the exploitation of Native American cultures.^[14] She uses humor in a cartoonish way to bemoan the corruption of nature and mock the shallowness of contemporary culture.^[14]

Nomad Art Manifesto

As an active environmentalist, Smith often critiques the pollution created through art-making such as toxic materials, excessive storage space, and extensive shipping. The Nomad Art Manifesto, designed based on the aesthetic of [parfleches](#), consists of squares carrying messages about the environment and Indian life, made entirely from biodegradable materials.^[15]

YAYOI KUSAMA

Untitled, 1967

Kusama Yayoi

Oil on canvas

THE JOHN R. VAN DERLIP FUND 2010.7

G251

Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's work is widely diverse in theory and practice, including painting, drawing, sculpture, assemblage, performance, video, and installation. At one point, she ventured into the fashion world with her own clothing line. During the decade she lived in New York-1958 to 1968-she was especially known for her exuberant abstract paintings, which used a signature motif known as an "infinity net"-interlocking shapes painted with netlike patterns. In *Untitled*, Kusama added her characteristic polka dots over the infinity nets, creating yet another dimension. This work was made shortly before she returned to Japan to seek treatment for the hallucinations and obsessive thoughts that had troubled her since childhood. Kusama has often said making art is the way she manages her obsessions.

The global success of Kusama

[Yayoi Kusama](#) has consolidated a name for herself for her genius and innovation. As one of the [most highly sought after artists of her generation](#)¹, this [Japanese](#) artist has been long known for attracting massive masses to her incredible exhibitions. The demand for tickets to her various global shows and exhibitions is so great that fans are often forced to book their tickets months in advance. Not only is the 90-year-old artist a hit with the crowds, but she also enjoys great success in the red-hot art market, which is a fact that has been enhanced even further due to her famous international retrospectives. Also regarded as the [most expensive artist of the years 2014](#)² & 2016, Kusama's contribution does not just stop in the art world.

Because of her immense talent and accomplishments, she continues to even out the gender imbalances that characterize the art world so that more living female artists can reach new heights in art-market appreciation. Today, her works can be found in enviable collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, and in The Museum of Modern Art in New York, among others.

Yayoi Kusama was born on March 22, 1929, in Matsumoto City, Japan. She was born into a family of affluent merchants that operated a seed and plant nursery

farm. Although she grew up in an area that was characterized by immense natural beauty at a time when World War II had torn up everything, her family life was deeply troubled. As a kid, her mother was physically abusive to her and often rebuked her for painting while her father was a known philanderer.

At the age of 10, she began experiencing hallucinations that would often involve flashes of light, fields of flowers, dots, and [pumpkins speaking to her](#)³. These hallucinations would appear so vividly to her that they would seem to come to life and engulf her. It was around this time that she began to paint, probably as a psychological response to her hallucinations and fears. Her first ever painting featured an image of a Japanese woman in a kimono that had completely been covered in a sequence of dots and nets. This polka dot patterning was to be featured a lot in her artwork later on for decades to come and later even covered entire [buildings](#)⁴ or [museums](#)⁵.

As an adult, she studied painting in Kyoto but moved to [New York](#) as a means of advancing her craft like most ambitious artists before her. In New York, she proved herself a formidable force among well known and revered artists of the time such as Claes Oldenburg and [Andy Warhol](#). At the time, her works were primarily hallucinatory but she also worked on installations like 1965's *Infinity Mirror Room*.

Although she found initial success in America, she was forced to return to Japan during the 1970s to deal with some mental health issues and remained relatively obscure for many years after that. It was not until 1993 in Venice, Italy in the [Venice Biennale](#) inauguration when she was seen again in public.

Throughout the years after her Venice Biennale, she continued to work and gain critical acclaim. The year 2017, however, can be considered to be one of her best. It included the inauguration of [her museum](#)⁶ in [Tokyo](#), as well as a number of other exhibitions at the [Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden](#) (Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors), the National Gallery Singapore (“Yayoi Kusama: Life is the Heart of Rainbow”), and two concurrent shows that were held at David Zwirner in New York (“Yayoi Kusama: Festival of Life” & “Yayoi Kusama Infinity Nets”). Yayoi Kusama produces art that ranges from paintings and [sculptures](#)⁷ to film and art installations. Her body of work is typically unified by her repetitive utilization of dots, mirrors, and pumpkins. Although she started off with pencil drawings as a young girl, Yayoi's style has grown. Today, she is known mainly for her Instagram worthy installations that feature color, pattern, and of course pumpkins.

Her fascination with pumpkins can be traced to her childhood. However, the pumpkin first appeared in Kusama's artwork back in 1946 when she exhibited it in a traveling exposition in Matsumoto, her childhood town. This first piece was painted in the [Nihonga](#)⁸ style of traditional painting that was developed in Japan around the 19th century. After this first piece, Kusama did not feature pumpkins in her artwork again until she re-emerged them in the 1970s.

In the 1980's, Kusama began incorporating them in her dot motif drawings and paintings, as well as in prints and her environmentally conscious installation *Mirror Room*, which she created in 1991 for an exhibition at the [Fuji Television Gallery and the Hara](#)⁹ Museum in Tokyo. Subsequently, the *Mirror Room* was also exhibited in the Japanese Pavilion at the 1993 Venice Biennale, which is also where she re-introduced herself publicly to society after dealing with a mental breakdown years before. At this Venice Biennale, Kusama even handed out small pumpkins to attending visitors to take away.

Later on, that year in 1994, she created another massive pumpkin installation that consisted of a [huge yellow sculpture](#)¹⁰ with black dotted patterns that was exhibited at Naoshima Island in Japan's Seto Inland region. Today, this huge sculpture can be found at the end of a pier at the Benesse Art Site, where it hovers over the water, blending in nicely with the surrounding landscape.

The 1994 sculpture was the first of [many open-air installations](#)¹¹ that she would display all through the 2000s in various international venues such as Matsudai Station in Tōkamachi, the Lille Europe Train Station in Lille, and the Beverly Gardens Park in Beverly Hills, just to name a few. Kusama's pumpkins are often cast in stainless steel, mosaic and bronze. Apertures are typically cut out of the surfaces of the pumpkin so that the dot-pattern can be created to play with light and shadow.

Known in Japan as Kabocha, Pumpkins are positive images to Kusama because they represent a positive piece of her troubled childhood in Matsumoto. As a young girl, Kusama spent hours drawing pumpkins. To her, pumpkins are [representative of stability, comfort, and modesty](#)¹². According to Kusama, she prefers to use pumpkins because not only are they attractive in both color and form, but they are also tender to the touch. The inclusion of pumpkins in her artwork can, therefore, be said to be as a result of the childhood memories that the vegetable triggers.

MARIA MONTOYA MARTINEZ
POT 1920-1940

Maria Montoya Martinez (1887, [San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico](#) – July 20, 1980, San Ildefonso Pueblo) was a [Native American](#) artist who created internationally known [pottery](#). Martinez (born Maria Poveka Montoya), her husband [Julian](#), and other family members examined traditional Pueblo pottery styles and techniques to create pieces which reflect the [Pueblo](#) people's legacy of fine artwork and crafts.

Martinez was from the San Ildefonso Pueblo, a community located 20 miles northwest of [Santa Fe, New Mexico](#). At an early age, she learned pottery skills from her aunt^[1] and recalls this "learning by seeing" starting at age eleven, as she watched her aunt, grandmother, and father's cousin work on their pottery during the 1890s.^[2] During this time, [Spanish tinware](#) and [Anglo](#) enamelware had become readily available in the Southwest, making the creation of traditional cooking and serving pots less necessary.^[3] Traditional pottery making techniques were being lost, but Martinez and her family experimented with different techniques and helped preserve the cultural art.

During an excavation in 1908 led by [Edgar Lee Hewett](#), a professor of archaeology and the founder and director of the [Museum of New Mexico](#) in Santa Fe, examples of black-on-white Biscuit Ware pottery were discovered. While searching through the sandy dirt and red clay of the New Mexico desert terrain, broken pieces of biscuit ware were uncovered. (The term biscuit ware was first applied by Kidder (1915) to describe the distinct pottery from Classic period ruins in the Pajarito Plateau and Santa Fe Valley. While biscuit wares appear to have developed directly out of Santa Fe Black-on-white and Wiyo Black-on-white, biscuit wares exhibit characteristics that are quite distinct from earlier pottery types^[4]

It is a common misconception that, "during the end of the 18th century, the use of plant pigments and finely powdered mineral substances became the preferred technique of painting and slowly caused the extinction of glazed pottery" (Frank and Harlow, 8). "In reality, the nearby inhabitants of [Santa Clara Pueblo](#), were still producing the highly burnished black pottery, since the 1600s, though it had fallen into virtual disuse by the 1900s preceded by a decline in the finish.

Hewett sought a skilled pueblo potter who could re-create Biscuit Ware. His intention was to place re-created pots in museums and thus preserve the ancient art form. Maria Martinez was known in the [Tewa](#) pueblo of San Ildefonso, New Mexico for making the thinnest pots in the least time; therefore, Hewett saw her as the perfect Pueblo potter to bring his idea to life.^[5] This work was distinct from, but invariably confused with (in the popular narrative) the matte black on polished blackware that Maria and her husband experimented with and perfected on their own and for which there was no prior precedent, contrary to popular myth.^{[6] [7]}

Challenges and experiments[[edit](#)]



Polychrome Avanyu plate by Maria and Popovi Da, 1969

A long process of experimentation and overcoming challenges was required to successfully recreate the black-on-black pottery style to meet Maria's exacting standards. "As almost all clay found in the hills is not jet black, one specific challenge was to figure out a way to make the clay turn the desired color. Maria discovered, from observing the Tafoya family of Santa Clara Pueblo, who still practiced traditional pottery techniques, that smothering the fire surrounding the pottery during the outdoor firing process caused the smoke to be trapped and is deposited into the clay, creating various shades of black to gunmetal color."^[8] She experimented with the idea that an *unfired polished red vessel which was painted with a red slip on top of the polish and then fired in a smudging fire at a relatively cool temperature would result in a deep glossy black background with dull black decoration.*^[9] Shards and sheep and horse manure placed around the outside and inside of the outdoor [kiva](#)-style [adobe](#) oven would give the pot a slicker matte finished appearance.^[10] After much trial and error, Maria successfully produced a black ware pot. The first pots for a museum were fired around 1913. These pots were undecorated, unsigned, and of a generally rough quality.^[8] The earliest record of this pottery was in a July 1920 exhibition held at the [New Mexico Museum of Art.](#)^[11]

Embarrassed that she could not create high quality black pots in the style of the ancient Pueblo peoples, Martinez hid her pots away from the world.^[5] A few years later, Hewett and his guests visited the little Tewa Pueblo. These guests asked to purchase black ware pottery, similar to Martinez's pots housed in a museum. She was greatly encouraged by this interest and resolutely began trying to perfect the art of black ware pottery. Her skill advanced with each pot, and her art began to

cause quite a stir among collectors and developed into a business for the black ware pottery. In addition, Martinez began experimenting with various techniques to produce other shapes and colorful forms of pottery.

Description of black ware pottery[[edit](#)]



Maria and Julian Martinez matte-on-glossy blackware wedding vase, ca. 1929, collection of the [Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art](#)

An olla jar has a slightly flattened rim and a marked angle at the shoulder. The one created by Maria and Julian Martinez is "decorated on the rims only above the angle of the shoulder with continuous paneled bands."^[12] Light is reflected off of the shiny, smooth surface. The jet black ceramic product's finish appears unblemished in any way. A band of a lighter black decoration stands out against a solid black matte background. The pot "depends on the decorative effect of the manipulation of the surface finish alone" to appear as though the decorations are scratched into the pot's surface.^[12] The band wraps directly below the narrow neck of the pot. A wide-eyed avanyu, or horned serpent, encircles the pot and slithers inside the band. The serpent's tongue almost touches the tip of his tail. The snake's body movements seem alive; a tribute to the appreciation the Pueblo peoples have for nature and life. The decorations on the pot give the pot a personality and unique individualized look.

Process[[edit](#)]

Creating black ware pottery is a long process consisting of many steps requiring patience and skill. Six distinct processes occur before the pot is ready to be sold. According to Susan Peterson in *The Living Tradition of Maria Martinez*, these steps include, "finding and collecting the clay, forming a pot, scraping and sanding

the pot to remove surface irregularities, applying the iron-bearing slip and burnishing it to a high sheen with a smooth stone, decorating the pot with another slip, and firing the pot."^[13]

The first step in creating a pot is gathering the clay. The clay is gathered once a year, usually in October when it is dry and stored in an old weathered adobe structure where the temperature remains constant.^[13] When Martinez is ready to begin molding the clay to form a pot, the right amount of clay is brought into the house. A cloth, laid upon a table, holds a mound of gray pink sand with a fist hole in the center filled with an equal amount of blue sand. A smaller hole is made in the blue sand and water is poured into the hole. The substances are then all kneaded together, picked up within the cloth, washed, and covered with a towel to prevent moisture from escaping where the clay will sit for a day or two to dry. The pukis or "the supporting mold, a dry or fired clay shape where a round bottom of a new piece may be formed" builds the base shape of the pot looking like a pancake.^[14] After squeezing the clay together with one's fingers, a wall is pinched up about an inch high from the pancake base. A gourd rib is used in cross-crossing motions to smooth out the wall, making it thick and even. Coiling long tube shapes of clay on the top of the clay wall and then smoothing it out with the gourd increases the pot's height. Air holes are patched with extra clay and sealed away with the gourd rib like a patch being sewn on a pair of blue jeans.^[14]

After drying, the pot is scraped, sanded, and polished with stones. This is the most time consuming part of the entire process. A small round stone should be applied to the side of the pot in a consistent, horizontal, rhythmic motion. Rubbing the stone parallel with the side of the pot produces a shiny, polished, even look.^[15]

Creating the polished finish with the stone is called burnishing. The pot is finally ready to fire after the secondary slip is applied, by painting onto the burnished surface various traditional designs.^[16]

Firing[\[edit\]](#)

When firing the pots, Maria Martinez used a firing technique called "fire reduction". "...A reduction atmosphere occurs when the amount of available oxygen is reduced". The firing was a very long process that would take hours the day of in addition to the months of preparation beforehand. She would often receive help from either her husband or her children. The firing had to be done early in the morning on a clear, calm day when wind would not hinder the process. They started by carefully placing all of the pots to be fired in a fire pit, and then covered them carefully with broken pieces of pottery and aluminum sheets or any metal scraps they could find. In order to allow ventilation to keep the fire burning, they left small spaces uncovered, after which they meticulously surrounded the homemade kiln with cow chips - very dry cow dung - used to fuel the fire, careful to leave the vents free. The goal was to prevent any flame from actually touching

the pots, hence the protective metal sheets. After covering the [kiln](#) with the cow chips, they lit the kindling on all sides to ensure an even distribution of heat. They continued to feed the fire with dry cedar until the fire reached the desired temperature of around 12 to 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit, depending on what look they were attempting. If the fire continued to burn, the pottery would achieve a red-brown color. But in order to make the black pottery that Maria was famous for, the fire was smothered with dry powdered horse dung. By doing this, the amount of oxygen within the kiln was greatly reduced, therefore creating a reduction atmosphere which caused the color of the pots to turn black. After several hours, they shifted the horse dung around to kill the fire and bury the pots so they could cool slowly. After the kiln had cooled enough, they carefully pulled the pots out using either a stick if the pots were still hot, or waiting until they were cool enough to touch.^[17]

During the process of firing, they didn't know whether the pots would make it or not.

Decorations[\[edit\]](#)

Julian Martinez, Maria's husband, began attempting to decorate the pots she made. Although Julian did eventually master decorating techniques for Maria's pots, the process consisted of many trials and errors. "To create his designs, a slurry of clay and water known as slip is created and applied to the already burnished, but yet unfired surface. You cannot polish a design into a matte background, as the stone is not as precise as a brush is."^[18] He discovered that after the [guaco](#) juice burned out from the heat of the fire, he could mix the guaco with clay which then provided the perfect paint for his decorations. The process Julian settled on was to polish the background first, then matte paint the decoration in the negative.

In 1918, Julian finished the first decorated black ware pot with a matte background and a polished [Avanyu](#) design. (Still achieved by painting the background on an already burnished surface). "The first rush of water coming down an arroyo after a thunderstorm, a symbol of thanksgiving and for water and rain" was the interpretation by Julian of an avanyu or a horned water serpent.^[19] Many of Julian's decorations were patterns adopted from ancient vessels of the Pueblos. Some of the patterns consisted of birds, [road runner](#) tracks, rain, feathers, clouds, mountains, and zigzags or [kiva](#) steps. The museum displayed the first two decorated black ware pots painted by Julian.

Signatures[\[edit\]](#)

Maria signed her creations in different ways throughout her lifetime. The signatures found on the bottom of the pottery help date the pieces of art. Maria and Julian's oldest work were all unsigned. The two had no idea that their art would become so popular and did not feel it was a necessity to claim their work. The unsigned pieces were most likely made between the years of 1918 and 1923. Once

Maria gained success with her pottery she began signing her work as "Marie." She thought that the name "Marie" was more popular among the non-Indian public than the name "Maria" and would influence the purchasers more.^[20] The pieces signed as "Marie" date the pottery between 1923 and 1925. Even though Julian decorated the pots, only Maria claimed the work since pottery was still considered a woman's job in the Pueblo.^[21] Maria left Julian's signature off the pieces to respect the Pueblo culture until 1925. After that, "Marie + Julian" remained the official signature on all of the pottery until Julian's death in 1943. Maria's family began helping with the pottery business after Julian's death. From 1943 to 1954 Maria's son, Adam, and his wife Santana, collected clay, coiled, polished, decorated, and fired pottery with Maria. Adam took over his father's job of collecting clay and painting the decorations. "Marie + Santana" became the new signature on the pots. For about thirty years Maria signed her name as "Marie." Once her son, Popovi Da, began working alongside his mother, Maria began referring to herself as "Maria" on the pottery. They began co-signing their pieces around 1956 as "Maria+Poveka" and "Maria/Popovi." Thus, studying the signature on one of Maria's pots may give a hint at the completion date of the pottery since dates were not added to the pottery until recent years.

Although black ware pottery received a lot of success, the true legend behind the pottery is Maria Martinez herself. She won many awards and presented her pottery at many world fairs and received the initial grant for the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) to fund a Martinez pottery workshop in 1973.^[22] Martinez passed on her knowledge and skill to many others including her family, other women in the pueblo and students in the outside world. When she was a young girl she had learned how to become a potter by watching her aunt Nicolasa make pottery. During the time that she developed what we now know as the San Ildefonso style of traditional pottery, she learned much from Sarafina Tafoya, the pottery matriarch of neighboring Santa Clara Pueblo.

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