

NC Museum of Art in Raleigh, NC, Opens the Reinstallation of Its Vast Collection

This October, the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, NC, will complete an ambitious reinstallation of its collection, featuring the presentation of five new thematic galleries, exploring portraiture and power, Egypt and Africa, the Americas, the art of conservation, and a gallery connecting visual and performing arts. In development for several years, this refreshed interpretation of the entire collection will be strengthened through a community voices project spotlighting visitor viewpoints on artwork labels; new interactive learning experiences, including digital games and labels; and expanded introductory wall text in English and Spanish. In addition, new acquisitions from William Kentridge, Lucie Attinger, Marie Watt, and Edmonia Lewis, and site-specific commissions, including a new permanent installation by Argentinian artist Tomás Saraceno and year-long displays by Moroccan artist Hassan Hajjaj and North Carolinians Elizabeth Alexander and JP Jermaine Powell, will go on view for the first time.

“The new presentation of the Museum’s collection features themed galleries inspired by our earlier series of cross-collection pairings that explore some of the most important conversations in the world today,” said Museum Director Valerie Hillings. “We hope visitors will connect more deeply with the collection, considering diverse points of view and multiple perspectives represented through interactive experiences in the galleries.” The project incorporates never-before-seen installations and exciting updates through new works by both international and American artists. The NCMA’s reinstallation elicited the creative effort of every department—from curatorial to conservation, exhibition design to visitor experience, marketing to education. “We’ve re-envisioned how our visitors will engage with the People’s Collection and are excited to reveal the culmination of this transformational Museum-wide undertaking,” said Hillings.

The updated collection galleries will debut with support of corporate partner Bank of America with a weekend of free events on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 8 and 9, 2022, including artist-led tours, a live-drawing event, a lecture, an outdoor dance party, a family day of activities and gallery experiences for all ages, and a Music at the Museum festival. More details on these opening events will be shared soon.

New Themed Galleries for the Collection

The reimagined presentation broadens the representation, narratives, and media in the galleries. Visitors will be able to learn about national and global histories through works of art and better understand cultures that were and are diverse and interconnected. All themed galleries will have introduction panels in English and Spanish.

Made in the Americas: This gallery bridges the collections of ancient America and American art and showcases the interconnectedness of the Americas, both hemispherically and with other parts of the world. The narratives emerging from artworks in this gallery emphasize how cross-cultural contact, global influences, and international encounters and exchange have defined American artistic production.

Portraits and Power: This section displays both historic and contemporary portraits side by side to demonstrate their powerful role in how people are presented through images. It invites visitors to contemplate what has changed in these dynamics of power over the years, or perhaps what has not, through surprising comparisons, such as Hyacinthe Rigaud’s portrait Louis XV (circa 1715–17) alongside Kehinde Wiley’s Mrs. Hale as “Euphrosyne” (2005) and Beverly McIver’s Truly Grateful (2011) contrasted with Anthony Van Dyck’s Lady Mary Villiers (circa 1637).

The Africa We Ought to Know: Previously on view as two separate collections, this gallery reconnects Egypt to Africa, celebrating that Africa is a continent where em-



Endia Beal, “Sabrina and Katrina”, 2015, pigment print, 40 × 26 in., Purchased with funds from the William R. Roberson Jr. and Frances M Roberson Endowed Fund for North Carolina Art

pires have flourished over millennia, each contributing to a fascinating antiquity and a vigorous history that extends to a dynamic and creative present. Visitors will be able to explore the continent and learn more about its people through interactive maps of trade routes and various African kingdoms.

Art Conservation: This space will showcase the study of art, science, history, and technology as conservators share their deep understanding of the materials and techniques used in the reconstruction and restoration of different types of objects. Rotating conservation projects will be featured, highlighting how artworks are researched, analyzed, and preserved. The first object featured will be visitor favorite *Cloud Chamber for the Trees and Sky* by Chris Drury (2003), which reopened in the Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park in 2022 after extensive conservation.

Art Includes: “Art” - meaning the visual arts - is often separated from “the arts,” a shorthand that actively segments creative expression into disparate parts: music, dance, painting, literature, and more. In this gallery the broad spectrum of the arts will be presented through a variety of media including moving images to foster understanding of creativity in new, vital ways. As museums continue to rethink what can be shown or expressed inside galleries, the integration of various art forms, including dance, music, theater, and poetry, plays a key role in reimagining the museum experience.

Acquisitions, Commissions, and Loans

As part of this reimagined installation of the *People’s Collection*, the Museum will also be highlighting major gifts and acquisitions, both permanent and short-term new commissions, and exciting loans. New works of art in the Museum’s collection to be revealed during the reopening include a mixed-media sculpture by contemporary Native American sculptor Marie Watt; photography by North Carolinian Endia Beal; internationally renowned South African multimedia artist William Kentridge’s video installation *KABOOM!* (2018); silver Torah finials by 18th-century female silversmith Hester Bateman; a marble sculpture by African American and Native American artist Edmonia Lewis titled *The Old Indian Arrow Maker and His Daughter* (modeled 1866, carved 1867); and an oil painting by Swiss artist Lucie Attinger, *Mon Atelier* (My Studio) (1889).

In the Museum’s West Building - the Thomas Phifer-designed, natural, light-filled galleries that opened in 2010 - visitors will be greeted by a series of new areas for art, including a new site-specific installation by Argentinian artist Tomás Saraceno featuring a series of suspended sculptures that will hang from the entrance ceiling.

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Nearby space will be dedicated to year-long temporary installations by North Carolina artists Elizabeth Alexander and JP Jermaine Powell. In East Building a large wall in the new Global Contemporary Art Gallery will feature a year-long, site-specific installation by Moroccan artist Hassan Hajjaj. Temporary installations by global contemporary artists will be featured in this gallery on an annually rotating basis.

The Museum will host loans from local, national, and international museums, including The National Gallery of Art, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and The Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City. North Carolina loans include a selection of ancient Greek and Roman objects from the Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill; Native American objects from the Gregg Museum of Art and Design, Raleigh; American decorative arts from the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem; European sculpture from the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham; works by 20th-century female artists from the Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, and from the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, Asheville; and loans of paintings and sculpture from private local collectors.

New Technology

The reinstallation offers visitors numerous ways to interact with and connect to the *People’s Collection* through technology. Digital labels will be in five galleries, including the Judaic, African, and American galleries; select European galleries; and the new Portraits and Power Gallery, allowing visitors to explore additional information and high-resolution images. These labels will be available in English and Spanish.

A partnership with the conservation staff, the interactive station *Beyond White: Marble Sculpture and Color* will focus on the Roman Fragment of a Sarcophagus with Ram from the third century. Through research and conservation, Museum staff learned this object had color when created



Edmonia Lewis, “The Old Indian Arrowmaker and His Daughter”, modeled 1866, carved 1867, marble, H. 21 1/4 × W. 14 × D. 13 1/2 in., Gift of Marilyn Jacobs Preyer

thousands of years ago. Visitors will be able to explore these pigments and see a digital version of what the object would have looked like when new and colorful.

There will be a map projection in The Africa We Ought to Know Gallery to encourage learning about the empires in Africa, paired with voice narration, to give a deeper understanding of the trade routes on the continent. A map in the Dutch collection will highlight the history of the 80 Years War. Travel and trade in the 17th century will be explored in a family-friendly game, with a focus on artists in the *People’s Collection* and the objects found in the paintings. Other installations include an ancient-animals video, created in partnership with the North Carolina Zoo and geared toward youth and family; an installation to explore the making of silver, mahogany, and chocolate; an exploration of other *Cloud Chamber* installations around the world; and eight performing arts experiences at the NCMA.

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