

Phoenix Art Museum

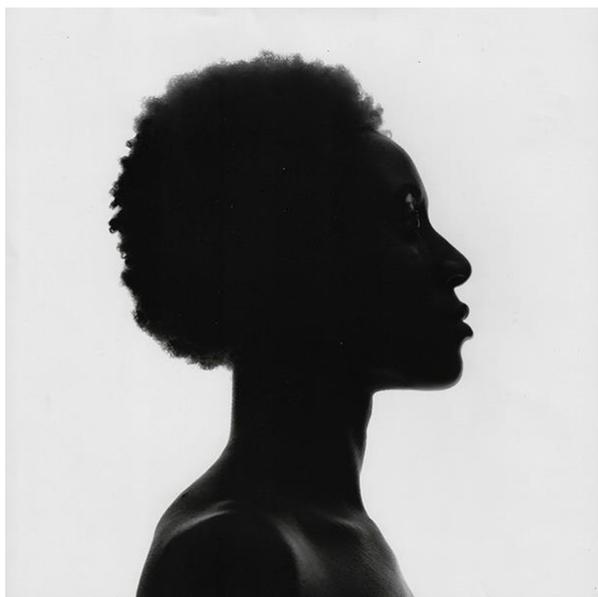
News Release

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Phoenix Art Museum exhibition prompts conversation around women artists, gender inequality, and revisionist art histories in the Museum's collection

In the Company of Women presents nearly 50 works exclusively by women artists to be seen in a new light



Left: Erica Deeman, Untitled 18, 2013. Photograph. Collection of Phoenix Art Museum. Purchased with funds provided by Contemporary Forum. Right: Rebecca Campbell, Jack and Diane, 2004. Oil on canvas. Gift of Vicki and Kent Logan.

PHOENIX (June 8, 2018) – Beginning on July 7, Phoenix Art Museum presents *In the Company of Women: Women Artists from the Collection*, an exhibition of nearly 50 twentieth- and 21st-century artworks from the Museum's holdings. Showcasing an array of styles and media, with works on view by Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keeffe, Faith Ringgold, Erica Deeman, Daniela Rossell, and many others, the exhibition is both a response to contemporary phenomena, including the #MeToo movement, as well as an engagement with feminist scholarship that, for decades, has aimed to provide a more complete history of artistic production. *In the Company of Women* creates a new context for some of the Museum's most iconic pieces, prompting conversations about gender inequality, the systematic exclusion of women from mainstream art circles, and the idea that artistic production must be understood in the context of society at large. *In the Company of Women* also aims to encourage conversation about the presence of works by women in the Museum's collections and exhibitions, as well as the institution's commitment to proactively addressing these issues. The exhibition will open on Friday, July 6 at 6 pm for First Friday festivities, and will be on view July 7 through August 12 in the Museum's Steele Gallery.

"We are excited to celebrate the iconic pieces featured in *In the Company of Women*," said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO of Phoenix Art Museum. "This exhibition casts these works in an engaging new light, reminding us that museums are meant to be a place where all perspectives are considered meaningful. We look forward to sharing these beloved works with new and seasoned visitors alike."

In the Company of Women was inspired in part by the 1976 Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) exhibition *Women Artists: 1550-1950*, the first large-scale museum exhibition in the United States exclusively featuring women artists. Curated

by renowned art historians Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *Women Artists* was revolutionary in the way it utilized the museum setting to explore barriers that women artists have historically faced. For example, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, women were barred from studying the nude model, which formed the basis for academic training and representation, despite women's bodies often serving as the objects of artistic representation and consumption.



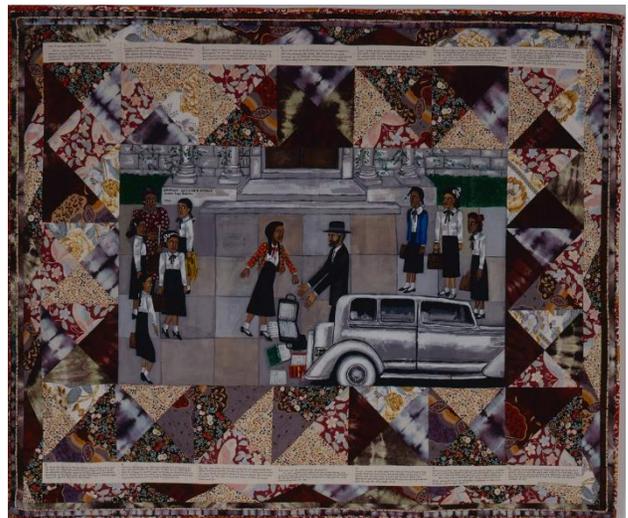
Liliana Porter, Red with Mirror, 2000. Cibachrome. Gift of anonymous donors in honor of Dr. Beverly Adams.

Today, [work by women artists makes up only 3-5%](#) of major museum collections in the United States and Europe, and of 590 major exhibitions by nearly 70 institutions in the United States from 2007-2013, [only 27% were devoted to women artists](#). *In the Company of Women* seeks to bring these facts to the forefront while also shedding light on how some of the Museum's most beloved collection items are by women artists. Among them are Frida Kahlo's *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale*, a graphic depiction of death that, in a similar vein to many of Kahlo's famous self-portraits, demands that its viewer acknowledge a female subject in acute physical and psychological pain; Faith Ringgold's *The Bitter Nest, Part 1: Love in the School Yard*, a narrative quilt that exemplifies the artist's lifelong and fervent commitment to African-American history, civil rights, and the ideas of family and roots through quilt-making and genre painting; and Marguerite Zorach's *Deer in the Forest* (1914), a recent acquisition of the Museum by an under-recognized painter who, in her time, was one of the earliest innovators of American modernist painting thanks to her use of intense color and dynamic composition.

"As Phoenix Art Museum's curatorial department continues to expand and diversify its curatorial exhibition and collecting program, it is important to acknowledge that we are empowered as an institution to oversee and correct the gender imbalance in our programming in a deeply impactful way," said Gilbert Vicario, the Selig Family Chief Curator.

"Exhibitions like *In the Company of Women* provide us with the opportunity to talk about reinforced assumptions that pervade everyday life, such as the idea that women are objects of representation rather than active producers of art and history, or the fact that the work of women is often presented in opposition to the ideas of creativity and high culture," said Rachel Zebro, the Museum's curatorial associate of modern and contemporary art, and the exhibition's curator. "Art helps us to challenge these norms and expectations, and in using this series of familiar works from our own collection, we can share these ideas in a tangible way."

Additionally, *In the Company of Women* calls attention to a number of the Museum's recent solo exhibitions by women artists, including [Valeska Soares](#), [Betsy Schneider](#), [Iris van Herpen](#), [Sheila Pepe](#), [Magdalena Fernández](#), [Patricia Sannit](#), and [Saskia Jordá](#). These instances of visibility for works by women artists provoke questions such as: What does the increase in institutional representation of women mean, and how will it be sustained? Why is it important? What is the impact on museums and audiences? *In the Company of Women* encourages visitors to contemplate this and future exhibitions from new angles, all in an effort to question and transform perspectives on what is considered great art, and why.



Faith Ringgold, The Bitter Nest, Part 1: Love in the School Yard, 1988. Acrylic on canvas and fabric. Museum purchase with funds provided by Contemporary Forum, Stanley and Mikki Weithorn, Consortium of Black Organizations and Others for the Arts; Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Lorenz Anderman, Mr. and Mrs. David K. Anderson, and Mr. and Mrs. Roy Neuberger by exchange.

About the Exhibition

In the Company of Women will be on view from July 7 through August 12 in Steele Gallery. This exhibition is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and is made possible through the generosity of donors to the Museum's annual fund. For more details about the exhibition, please visit phxart.org/exhibition/inthecompanyofwomen.

Admission is free for Museum Members; veterans, active-duty and retired military personnel, and their families; Maricopa Community College students, staff, and faculty (with ID); and youth aged 5 and under. Entrance to the exhibition is included in general admission for the general public. During voluntary-donation times, the exhibition is offered free to the general public. Voluntary-donation times include Wednesdays from 3 – 9 pm, the first Fridays of every month from 6 – 10 pm, and the second weekend of each month (Saturday from 10am – 5pm and Sunday from Noon – 5pm). For a full breakdown of general admission prices and hours, see bit.ly/VisitPhxArt.

To request interviews and high-resolution photography, contact Phoenix Art Museum's Marketing and Communications Office, at 602.257.2105 or email margaree.bigler@phxart.org.

Related Programs

First Friday

July 6 | 6 – 10 pm

Celebrate the special First-Friday exhibition preview of *In the Company of Women* on July 6! Experience performances and activities led by Phoenix-based women artists and groups, including:

- Live music by [Las Chollas Peligrosas](#),
- Hands-on activity with [Melissa Waddell](#),
- Subaquatic living installation by [Allyson Yoder](#) with live music by [Malta](#),
- [Sonic Textile durational performance](#) by [Kristen Miologos](#),
- [Nerd Nite PHX](#),
- [Women's Social Club organized by DiRTYOGA](#),
- and more!

This is a free event open during the public during Pay-What-You-Wish hours at the Museum. Please check phxart.org/events/calendar for updates.

About Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for more than 50 years and is the largest art museum in the southwestern United States. Critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the Museum's permanent collection of more than 19,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents festivals, a comprehensive film program, live performances, and educational programs designed to enlighten, entertain, and stimulate visitors of all ages. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum's landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit phxart.org, or call 602.257.1880.

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