

Reflections on Progress: 100 Years of the New York Society of Women Artists

This Women's History Month, honor the legacy and vision of the New York Society of Women Artists as they celebrate their Centennial Year

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, March 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A powerful visual dialogue between past and present takes center stage as the [New York Society of Women Artists \(NYSWA\)](#) launches its Centennial Celebration with the exhibition *Reflections on Progress: 100 Years of the New York Society of Women Artists*. Opening during Women's History Month at the [Interchurch Center Gallery](#), this dynamic showcase juxtaposes the works of NYSWA's trailblazing founders with the bold, contemporary expressions of its current members. This landmark exhibition commences a year-long program of Centennial events for NYSWA. *Reflections on Progress* will be on view from March 14 – May 2, 2025, with a special reception for the public hosted on April 9, 2025, from 5:30-7:30 PM, featuring a performance by the Harlem [Jazzmobile](#) at 7:00 PM.

Jennifer Roberts, Director and Curator of the Interchurch Center Gallery, enthusiastically describes her curatorial selection as a "kaleidoscope of viewpoints," which "encourages viewers to see the world around us in different ways." Roberts notes that "[these works] employ a wide array of methods and materials,

EXHIBITION: MARCH 14 - MAY 2, 2025

Interchurch Center Gallery | 61 Claremont Ave, New York, NY 10115 | Monday - Friday | 9 am - 5 pm

Artists Reception Wednesday, April 9 | 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Performance by Harlem Jazzmobile starts at 7 pm | Reception is free and open to the public



Sueim Koo, *Married Life - I was covering my eyes, ears and mouth*, 2021. Mixed media collage on canvas, 24 x 18 in.

expressing perspectives from working women artists in all stages of their careers.” Both two and three-dimensional mediums will be displayed in the Treasure Room, a space built in 1958 with gifts from John D. Rockefeller Jr., and throughout the Interchurch Center Gallery’s main lobby.

In the spirit of the salon-style group exhibitions popular at the time of NYSWA’s founding, Reflections on Progress aims to chart the course of women’s history through a representative selection of 45

contemporary members’ works. The exhibition reflects the multi-generational nature of the Society, touching on major moments of 20th and 21st-century history through the

eyes of women who lived it. In “Looking Down” (2001), artist Diana Freedman-Shea painted an aerial view from her studio window in Tower Two of the World Trade Center, capturing a fleeting moment in time before the tragedy of 9/11. Alexandra Rutsch Brock’s “Connections: Remembrance” (2022) calls upon another harrowing moment in recent memory of societal fragility and individual vulnerability, the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking to the past, Anne Stanner’s “Women’s Suffrage Monument Proposal” (2018) ideates a present-day tribute to the pioneering efforts of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in achieving women’s right to vote in 1920.

For other artists, their deeply personal, autobiographical works serve as poignant vehicles for conveying universal truths – in particular, the transcendent plight of women across cultures, class divides, and time periods. The specificity and authenticity of these singular perspectives allow viewers to engage with greater empathy, regardless of their own backgrounds. In one such example, “Goodbye My Chrysanthemum” (2022), Natsuki Takauji offers a surreal take on self-portraiture as a commentary on her journey of healing from being sexually harassed as a young woman. Siena Gillann Porta’s “Fire, Blood & Schrödinger’s Cat” (2022) gives visual form to her experience of undergoing treatment for cancer, existing in the liminal space between life and death in a sterile hospital environment.

Exemplifying the pervasive inequity and restrictive societal expectations placed upon women, Sueim Koo’s “Married Life - I was covering my eyes, ears and mouth” (2021) speaks to the traditional culture of marriage in the artist’s birthplace of South Korea, and the difficulties therein. Seema Linda Pandya’s “Restoration - The Exchange - Mothers of Tabla” (2024) seeks to



Theresa Bernstein, *The Waiting Room*, 1935. Ink on paper, 13 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York.

challenge the patriarchal narrative of South Asian percussion arts, uncovering the buried history of women's centuries-old contributions to the genre. Grieving for the state of women's rights in the present, the diaphanous figure shrouded in Lori Horowitz's sculpture "Sorrow" (2020) embodies the precarity of living as a woman as hard-fought freedoms slip away.

Many of the member artists respond to current geopolitical and global struggles in their practices. The toll of natural disasters due to climate change, for example, is centered in Yolène Legrand's "Hispaniola Sous la Fury d'Elsa" (2021), whereas the horrors of Russia's invasion of Ukraine are at the crux of Karen L Kirshner's "Exodus" (2022). In "Aluminum Coat No. 4" (2019), Rose Deler puts forth an absurdist critique of the treatment of migrants on the southern border with a child-sized jacket sewn from mylar rescue blankets, underscoring the harsh reality of these dehumanizing policies and woefully inadequate materials of "care."

Standing alongside these 45 contemporary works, three anchoring historical pieces by the organization's founders reflect on the 100 years of women's history that the exhibition encompasses. In a historic tribute, three major art institutions, the Art Students League of NY, the Museum of the City of New York, and the Zorach Foundation together with Gerald Peters Gallery—have lent iconic pieces by NYSWA's founding artists: Marguerite Zorach, Anne Goldthwaite, and Theresa Bernstein. These works, presented in dialogue with the vibrant, diverse voices of NYSWA's present members, bridge a century of artistic evolution.

Marguerite Zorach's portrait of Mary Eliza Myrick (circa 1945), on loan from the Zorach Foundation and Gerald Peters Gallery, honors a well-known midwife and nurse in the community who was also the first African American born in Washington County, Florida, after the Emancipation Proclamation. Anne Goldthwaite's "The Young Laundress" (1925) depicts a moving portrait of a domestic worker, generously loaned by the Art Students League of NY. Born in Reconstruction Era Alabama, Goldthwaite sought to portray the American South with a particular interest in and sensitivity to the challenges faced by women, African Americans, and other marginalized groups. Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York, a print of Theresa Bernstein's sketch of "The Waiting Room" (1935) shows a glimpse into the daily drudgery of an Employment Office, a setting known to many women at the time. Bernstein was part of the Ashcan School, a movement during the late 19th and early 20th century that was devoted to scenes of everyday life, including the pervasive poverty and inhumane conditions that spurred the political rebellion of the period.

Reflections on Progress highlights the ongoing fight for gender equity, social justice, intersectionality, and artistic inclusion—issues as relevant today as in 1925 when NYSWA began. The exhibition, symposiums, and programs amplify NYSWA's mission, legacy, and commitment to women artists and inclusivity.

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