



MEMORIAL ART GALLERY ACQUIRES WORKS BY FOUR RENOWNED CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

ROCHESTER, NY, June 2, 2015 — As the Memorial Art Gallery prepares the first major reinstallation of its collection of postwar and contemporary art in decades, Director Jonathan Binstock has announced the acquisition of important works by four internationally renowned artists. Three of the artists—Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Mickalene Thomas and Hung Liu—are still active; the fourth, Beauford Delaney, died in 1979.

“Over the past eight months the MAG has added considerably to its collection of postwar and contemporary art to carry forward the rich narratives about art history that we already share with our visitors,” said Binstock, who is an expert on the art of the post World War II era. “The beauty of these acquisitions is how well they fit into MAG’s historical collections. They can be exhibited together, in the context of a modern and contemporary art installation, or inserted into other areas of the museum, as provocative foils that expand the conversation on the relevance of art, both past and present, for contemporary audiences.”

Convertible Series, Group 10 (2011), a mirrored wall sculpture by Farmanfarmaian, is already on view. *Three Fujins* (1995), an allegorical painting by Liu, is being unveiled this week in anticipation of a [June 4 lecture by the artist](#). Thomas’s rhinestone-studded *Portrait of Qusuquzah #6* (2015) and Delaney’s ethereal *Charlie Parker* (1968) will be exhibited in August when the reinstalled galleries open to the public.

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian (b. 1924)

Monir Farmanfarmaian was born to a prominent family in Qazvin, Iran and came to the US in the 1940s as an art student and later a fashion illustrator. In New York, she circulated among such luminaries as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Louise Nevelson, Milton Avery and Andy Warhol.

After returning to Iran in 1957, Farmanfarmaian began creating the mirrored sculptural objects for which she is best known—works influenced by both modernism and traditional Islamic art and architecture. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, she took refuge in New York, but in 2004 she returned to Tehran, where she continues to work today.



Major museums around the world collect Farmanfarmaian’s art, including the Tate Modern; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Metropolitan Museum of Art; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. *Infinite Possibility*, an exhibition of her mirror works and drawings, was on view through June 3 at New York’s Guggenheim Museum.

SHOWN: *Convertible Series, Group 10* (2011). Mirror and reverse-painted glass on plaster and wood. Maurice R. and Maxine B. Forman Fund and Marion Stratton Gould Fund. ALSO PURCHASED (currently off view): *Based on Hexagon* (2012). Ink, mirror and reverse-painted glass on paper. Gift of Cheryl Haines.

Hung Liu (b. 1948)

By reworking photographic images from history into layered allegorical paintings, Hung Liu bridges the emotional distances imposed by culture, time and geography.

Liu was born in Changchun, China, just prior to the founding of the People’s Republic of China. She spent four years in a remote village during the Cultural Revolution before returning

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to her art studies. Trained as a social realist painter and muralist, she emigrated to the US in 1984 and earned an MFA from the University of California, San Diego. She is professor emerita at Mills College in Oakland, where she taught art for more than two decades.

Summoning Ghosts, a retrospective of Liu's work organized by the Oakland Museum, recently concluded a national tour. At MAG, her art is included in the exhibition *The Human Touch: Selections from the RBC Wealth Management*

Art Collection, which closes June 28.

Shown: *Three Fujins* (1995). Oil on canvas, bird cages. Gift of Gerald and Ellen Sigal and Marion Stratton Gould Fund.

Mickalene Thomas (b. 1971)

Artist and filmmaker Mickalene Thomas presents a complex vision of what it means to be a woman in the 21st century. Inspired by wide-ranging sources including Hudson River School landscapes, Henri Matisse's nudes and Romare Bearden's collages, Thomas explores beauty from a pop-culture perspective. Non-traditional materials like rhinestones add drama and sensuality.

Thomas has exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally. In 2014, the International Museum of Photography and Film at George Eastman House hosted a solo exhibition of her work. *Mickalene Thomas: Happy Birthday to a Beautiful Woman* featured large-scale photographic portraits, and an installation and film about the artist's mother, former fashion model Sandra Bush.

Mickalene Thomas lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. To learn more about her, visit mickalenethomas.com.



SHOWN: *Portrait of Qusuquzah #6* (2015). Acrylic, enamel, oil and rhinestones on wood panel. Marion Stratton Gould Fund.



Beauford Delaney (1901–1979)

Born in Knoxville, TN, the son of a Methodist minister and a freed slave, Beauford Delaney studied art in Boston before moving to New York in 1929. There, his large circle of friends included Henry Miller, Georgia O'Keeffe, and, most important, the young writer James Baldwin, for whom he served as mentor. The two men became best friends.

In 1953 Delaney traveled to France for what was meant to be a short visit. He would remain there for the rest of his life, continuing to paint even as he struggled increasingly with alcoholism and mental illness.

MAG's portrait of jazz legend Charlie Parker reflects Delaney's lifelong love of music, as well as his signature use of yellow, which he considered the color of light, healing and redemption. The painting comes to MAG from the collection of actor Billy Dee Williams, who purchased it when he was brought to the artist's studio by James Baldwin.

SHOWN: *Charlie Parker* (1968). Oil on canvas. Maurice R. and Maxine B. Forman Fund, Herdle Fund, Lyman K. and Eleanore B. Stuart Endowment Fund, Marion Stratton Gould Fund, and the Estate of Susan Eisenhart Schilling.

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