

Exhibition Advisory

Spelman College Announces First National Tour of Art Collection Five Cities to Showcase Work of Nearly 40 Artists of African Descent, Commencing at Vassar College in September 2023



Exhibition: *Silver Linings: Celebrating the Spelman Art Collection*

Dates: September 30, 2023 – January 22, 2024

Location: Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY

ATLANTA, GA (June 30, 2023) – Spelman College, a historically black liberal arts college for women located in Atlanta, Georgia, announces the first-ever national tour of its art collection. The tour, made possible through the Art Bridges Foundation, will travel in the group exhibition *Silver Linings: Celebrating the Spelman Art Collection* to five institutions across the United States, beginning with Vassar College in September. Through the work of nearly 40 artists, *Silver Linings* uplifts the legacy of artists of African descent spanning the 20th Century through the contemporary moment, many of whom have been overlooked by mainstream art museums.

“Spelman’s art collection has long been regarded as a hidden gem and we have lent individual works of art for many years. Now, we are excited to share a selection of works by artists who shape our collection with audiences around the United States for the first time,” said Dr. Liz Andrews, Executive Director, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art. “Our hope is that this tour will raise awareness of the work we are doing in Atlanta to uplift Black women artists.”

Though Spelman College Museum of Fine Art was founded in 1996 with a mission to uplift art by and about women of the African diaspora, the college’s art collecting dates back to 1899. Originally curated by Spelman College Museum of Fine Art Executive Director Liz Andrews and Curator-in-Residence Karen Comer Lowe, *Silver Linings* celebrates Spelman College’s art collection while looking to the important role Historically Black Colleges and Universities

(HBCUs) have had in providing exhibition opportunities and establishing provenance for Black artists.

The full list of exhibited artists include: Amalia Amaki, Emma Amos, Benny Andrews, Firelei Báez, Herman “Kofi” Bailey, Romare Bearden, Betty Blayton, Beverly Buchanan, Selma Burke, Elizabeth Catlett, Floyd Coleman, Renée Cox, Myra Greene, Sam Gilliam, Samella Lewis, Glenn Ligon, Howardena Pindell, Lucille Malkia Roberts, Deborah Roberts, Faith Ringgold, Nellie Mae Rowe, Lorna Simpson, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Lina Iris Viktor, Carrie Mae Weems and Hale Woodruff.

The exhibition first premiered at Spelman Museum of Fine Art from March 1 until June 30, 2022, in celebration of the museum’s 25th anniversary and will tour first to the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College from September 30, 2023, until January 22, 2024. Originally founded as a women’s college, Vassar brings *Silver Linings* to its museum on the occasion of two additional anniversaries – 30 years of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center’s completion by Cesar Pelli and 160 years of collecting art. The presentation at Vassar honors the histories of female colleges while looking ahead to its own future as it focuses attention on the work of more women artists, artists of color and other underrepresented artists.

The exhibition *Silver Linings: Celebrating the Spelman Art Collection* has received financial support from Art Bridges Foundation. The vision of philanthropist Alice Walton, Art Bridges is dedicated to expanding access to American Art around the country, and the foundation works with museums of all sizes to create and support arts programs that educate, inspire and deepen engagement with local audiences.

“We are honored to partner with the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art to make their extraordinary collection accessible to audiences around the country,” said Paul R. Provost, CEO of Art Bridges. “Our partner museums presenting *Silver Linings: Celebrating the Spelman Art Collection* are excited to be sharing with their communities some of the finest examples of works by African American artists from the 19th and 20th centuries. This is a wonderful opportunity for our partner museums, and we’re grateful to Spelman College for their generosity in making these works available.”

Like its original presentation at Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, *Silver Linings* at Vassar College will highlight the work of masters, pioneers and trailblazers who anchor the Spelman Collection, grouped in four distinct sections beginning with artists who were part of the Spiral Group such as Emma Amos and Romare Bearden; artists who embraced abstraction and traditional figurative styles, including Betty Blayton, Elizabeth Catlett and Faith Ringgold; with the final two sections focusing on contemporary art, including photographers Myra Greene, Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems, as well as today’s artists embracing figuration through a more contemporary lens.

“We are honored to be the first stop for *Silver Linings: Celebrating the Spelman Art Collection*. I had the privilege of experiencing the exhibition firsthand in Atlanta and was immediately struck

by the strength and depth of the collection as well as the organic synergies between the histories of Spelman and Vassar, as well as the visions guiding both institutions today,” said Mary-Kay Lombino, Deputy Director and Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and Richard B. Fisher Curator at The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College.

Following its presentation at Vassar College, *Silver Linings* will travel to Boise Art Museum, the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Harn Museum of Art and Hunter Museum of American Art. Please click [here](#) for a full list of institutions and exhibition dates.

Silver Linings: Celebrating the Spelman Art Collection is organized by Spelman College Museum of Fine Arts, Atlanta, Georgia and curated by Liz Andrews and Karen Comer Lowe with initial contributions from Anne Collins Smith. Generous support provided by Art Bridges.

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Notes to Editors

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About Spelman College

Founded in 1881, Spelman College is a leading liberal arts college widely recognized as the global leader in the education of women of African descent. Located in Atlanta, the College's picturesque campus is home to 2,100 students. Spelman is the country's leading producer of Black women who complete Ph.D.s in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The College's status is confirmed by the U.S. News & World Report, which ranked Spelman No. 51 among all liberal arts colleges, No. 19 for undergraduate teaching, No. 5 for social mobility among liberal arts colleges, and No. 1 for the 16th year among historically Black colleges and universities. The Wall Street Journal has ranked the College No. 3, nationally, in terms of student satisfaction. Recent initiatives include a designation by the Department of Defense as a Center of Excellence for Minority Women in STEM, a Gender and Sexuality Studies Institute, the first endowed queer studies chair at an HBCU, and a program to increase the number of Black women Ph.D.s in economics. New majors have been added, including documentary filmmaking and photography, and collaborations have been established with MIT's Media Lab, the Broad Institute and the Army Research Lab for artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Outstanding alumnae include Children's Defense Fund founder Marian Wright Edelman, Walgreens Boots Alliance CEO Rosalind Brewer, political leader Stacey Abrams, former Acting Surgeon General and Spelman's first alumna president Audrey Forbes Manley, actress and producer Latanya Richardson Jackson, global bioinformatics geneticist Janina Jeff and authors Pearl Cleage and Tayari Jones. To learn more, please visit spelman.edu or follow [@spelman_college](https://twitter.com/spelman_college) on social media.

About Spelman College Museum of Fine Art

The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art is the only museum in the nation dedicated to art by and about women of the African diaspora. The museum is located on the campus of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia on the first floor of the Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby, Ed.D., Academic Center. Initial plans for the Museum were spearheaded by arts faculty who believed that visual art is an essential component of a liberal arts education and that it plays a significant role in encouraging intellectual growth and it has served as a vital resource for the Spelman community and the Atlanta University Center since it opened in 1996. The Spelman Museum is an internationally respected nexus for excellent exhibitions and programs, and has a renewed commitment to growing and exhibiting the permanent collection of art. To learn more, please visit museum.spelman.edu or [@spelmannuseum](#) on social media.

About Vassar College

Vassar College, located in New York's scenic Hudson Valley, is an independent, coeducational, residential liberal arts college, which fosters intellectual openness and lively exploration through its widely varied course offerings. Founded in 1861 to offer women a fully equivalent education to that of the best men's colleges of the period, Vassar became the first women's college in the nation to expand its mission to coeducation by opening its doors to men in 1969. Today's students, who meet each other as equals, are encouraged to develop diverse perspectives through engaging in lively dialogues with faculty and fellow students, which enables them to achieve the insight and confidence needed to function most creatively in today's complex world. Consistently ranked among the top liberal arts colleges in the country, Vassar continues to be renowned for pioneering achievements in education, and for the beauty of its campus in Poughkeepsie, New York. Vassar stands upon the homelands of the Munsee Lenape. To learn more, please visit vassar.edu or follow [@vassarcollege](#) on social media.

About the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center is a teaching and learning museum, free and open to all, supporting the College's educational mission and communities. Formerly the Vassar College Art Gallery, the Loeb is the first art museum at a college or university that was part of the institution's original plan. Today, the permanent collection includes over 22,000 works, comprised of paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs, textiles, and glass and ceramic wares. The Loeb strives to be a catalyst for scholarly, creative, and social justice work by Vassar students and others. It aims to reflect a commitment to broaden, and amplify, the voices represented in the museum setting, and to ensure that the Loeb's programs and practices have a positive impact on campus and beyond. To learn more, please visit vassar.edu/theloeb or follow [@theloeb](#).

About Art Bridges

The vision of philanthropist and arts patron Alice Walton, Art Bridges has been creating and supporting programs that expand access to American art in all regions across the nation. Created in 2017, the foundation strives to bring great works of American art out of storage and

into communities. Art Bridges partners with a growing network of nearly 130 museums of all sizes and locations, providing financial and strategic support for exhibition development, collection loans and programs designed to engage new audiences. Art Bridges funds projects that inspire deeper relationships between arts organizations and their communities, develop expanded relationships built on inclusivity and respect, and encourage meaningful personal connections that lead to stronger, more vibrant cities and towns. To learn more about Art Bridges, follow on social platforms @artbridgesfoundation and visit www.artbridgesfoundation.org.

Image(s): *Silver Linings: Celebrating the Spelman Art Collection*. Installation view, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, March 1 – June 30, 2022. Courtesy of Spelman College Museum of Fine Art.