



Smithsonian Institution

OUR SHARED FUTURE: COLLECTIONS HIGHLIGHTS APRIL 2024

The following highlights feature a One Smithsonian approach to collections acquisition and stewardship. It shows how the Smithsonian is focused on diverse representation within the collections that reflects the full story of the American experience.

COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM CELEBRATES NEW ACQUISITIONS



New acquisitions set to be included in the upcoming exhibition at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum from March 16 through September 2, 2024.

This month, **Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum**, will open a new exhibition, “Acquired! Shaping the National Design Collection.” This exhibition, designed with the intention of allowing viewers to gain insight into the process of acquiring new works, will open formally on March 16 and continue until September 2. Presented on the second-floor galleries, the exhibition will feature more than 150 works, including objects that represent the museum’s collecting legacy and works brought into the collection since 2017 that demonstrate what it means to be a design museum today.

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum was founded in 1897 by Sarah and Eleanor Hewitt, the granddaughters of industrialist Peter Cooper. Housed in New York City’s Carnegie Mansion, the museum aims to educate and advance the public understanding of design through impactful programming, educational resources, and a diverse and wide range of interactive exhibitions. Today, the museum is home to a collection of over 215,000 design objects, all accessible online via an intense and intricate digitization process.

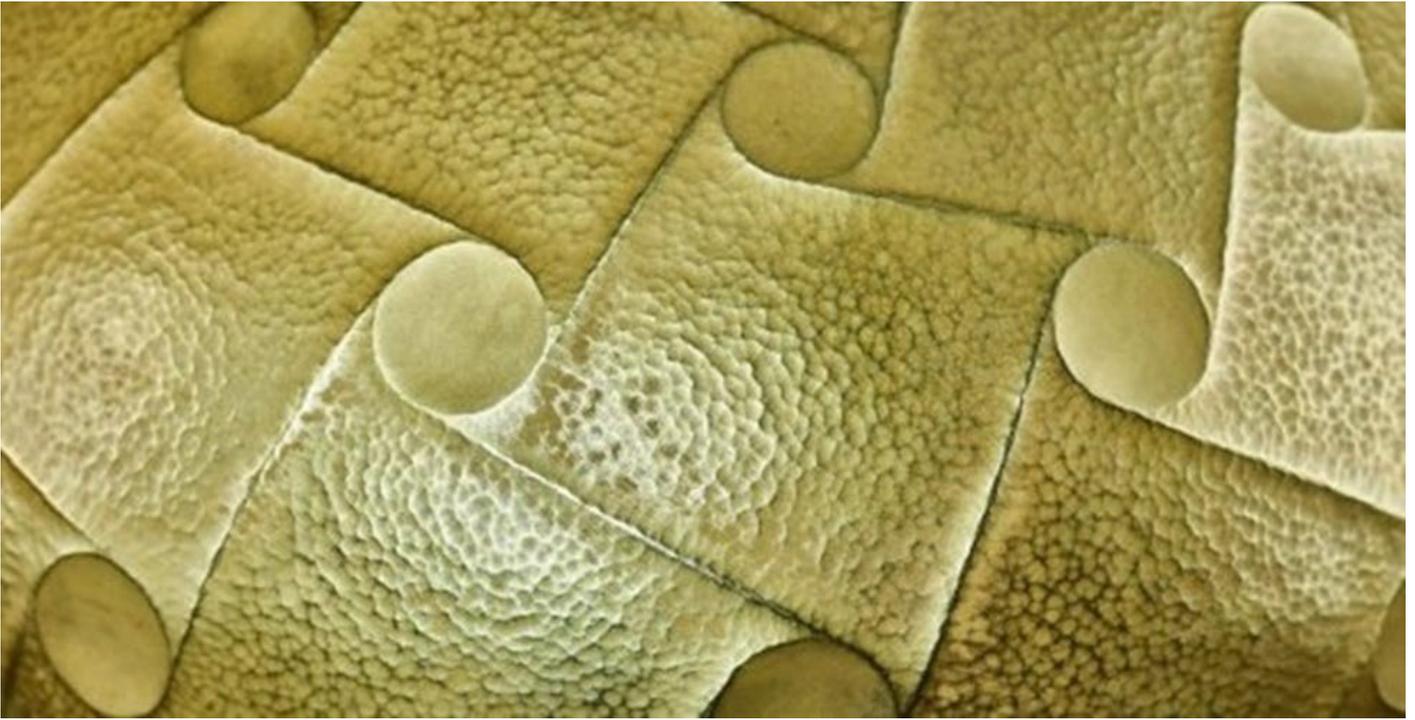
Highlights of the work on view include:

- A projection of **Watercolor Maps** (2012–2015), the first acquisition of a live website into the collection. Visitors will be able to zoom in on cities across the world through this web-based, open-source mapping tool designed by Stamen Design that displays OpenStreetMap’s data with the hand-hewn textures of watercolor paint.
- A series of posters by **Jésus Ruiz Durand**, created between 1969 and 1972, which are focused on the agrarian reform movement in Peru. These posters created an extraordinarily colorful and hopeful visual campaign that looked to op art (optical art) and pop art for inspiration.

- **Faith Ringgold's** 1971 Black feminist poster adapts the patterning of Kuba textiles from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Ringgold presents a puzzle of words, WOMAN/FREE/YOUR/SELF, each contained within a triangle that resonates individually as a shout and together becomes a call to action.
- **Jay Sae Jung Oh's** *Savage Chair* (2021) is composed of found household objects and discarded everyday items that she has meticulously bound together and laboriously hand-wrapped in leather cord.
- **Fernando Mastrangelo's** *Rainbow Sprinkle Drum Stool* (2017) uses multi-color sugar sprinkles to create a dynamic static effect while offering a commentary on excess and indulgence in contemporary society.
- **Nick Cave's** design for the wallcovering "Wire" (2022) was digitally printed using matte ink on a metallic mylar ground to create the effect of a furry surface.
- A 1947 Floor Lamp by **Greta Magnusson Grossman**, who was pivotal in shaping the visual vocabulary of California's midcentury modern design.
- Textile, *Van Gogh* (designed late 1950s) by Trinidadian artist and designer **Althea McNish**, who achieved international recognition in the 1950s and onward for her colorful furnishing and fashion fabrics that often depicted the tropical landscape of her homeland.
- "Girls" (1972) by **Alexander Girard** was designed as part of the Environmental Enrichment Panels series, which was intended to create a more playful and cheerful workspace.
- **Charles Reilly's** 2019 digital video, "Choreography of Life," exemplifies his multidisciplinary creativity as a visual artist and molecular biophysicist. His work uses the design process of creating molecular dynamic simulations to investigate and explore.

Support for "Acquired! Shaping the National Design Collection" is provided by Cooper Hewitt's Collections Committee and by the Lily Auchincloss Foundation.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ASIAN ART: NEW ACQUISITION OF CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE METALWORK



From March 2, 2024, until early 2026, “Striking Objects” is set to be housed at the **National Museum of Asian Art**, shining a light upon contemporary Japanese metalwork. Traditional Japanese metalworking, a powerful and delicate craft, evolved to produce functional items, such as vessels and tools. Hammering was primarily applied to create water containers for tea, gongs for religious and secular use, bells, swords, and armor. Over time, the development of alloys, patination methods, and the infusion of foreign decorative techniques, such as chasing and inlay, expanded hammered metalwork’s visual and aesthetic potential. In early 2022, the museum received the Shirley Z. Johnson collection of contemporary Japanese metalwork—a gift of unprecedented scale not only at the museum, but in the West as a whole.

“Striking Objects” includes works by two artists designated by the Japanese government as national treasures for hammering: Sekiya Shirō (1907–1994) and Ōsumi Yukie (b. 1945). Ōsumi is the first woman to hold this title for metalworking.

The latest exhibition from the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art, “Striking Objects: Contemporary Japanese Metalwork,” will display 17 contemporary Japanese metalworks alongside 18 metalworking tools that came to the museum as part of archival materials from the Shirley Z. Johnson Collection. “Striking Objects” will introduce audiences to how a basic metalworking technique—hammering—can achieve a variety of visual effects. The exhibition was made possible by the Shirley Z. Johnson Endowment fund. Mitsubishi Corporation provided support for this exhibition and the museum’s Japanese art program.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY RECEIVES GIFT TO SUPPORT GUNBOAT PHILADELPHIA PRESERVATION



Built in the summer of 1776 under the direction of Brigadier General Benedict Arnold and the Continental Congress, the USS Philadelphia was among the ships that were part of a two-day battle against the British in October of that year off Valcour Island near the New York shore of Lake Champlain. While defeated, the fleet succeeded in delaying the British. An hour after the battle ended, the Philadelphia, which had been badly damaged, sank to the bottom of the lake where it remained until 1935. In 1964, the ship was moved to the Smithsonian's possession, where it has been housed and restored by teams at the **National Museum of American History** ever since.

In spring 2019, the museum kicked off a multiyear project to ensure the long-term preservation of the Philadelphia. The completion of the conservation work for the ship is scheduled to coincide with the nation's commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The Philadelphia is being preserved at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History partly through a \$1 million leading gift from Americana Corner, an educational and philanthropic resource focused on America's founding era through the nation's first century. The gunboat was one of the original artifacts on view when the museum, then the National Museum of History and Technology, opened to the public on January 23, 1964. The gunboat is the oldest surviving American fighting vessel and an American cultural treasure.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY REVEALS NEW PORTRAIT OF OPRAH WINFREY

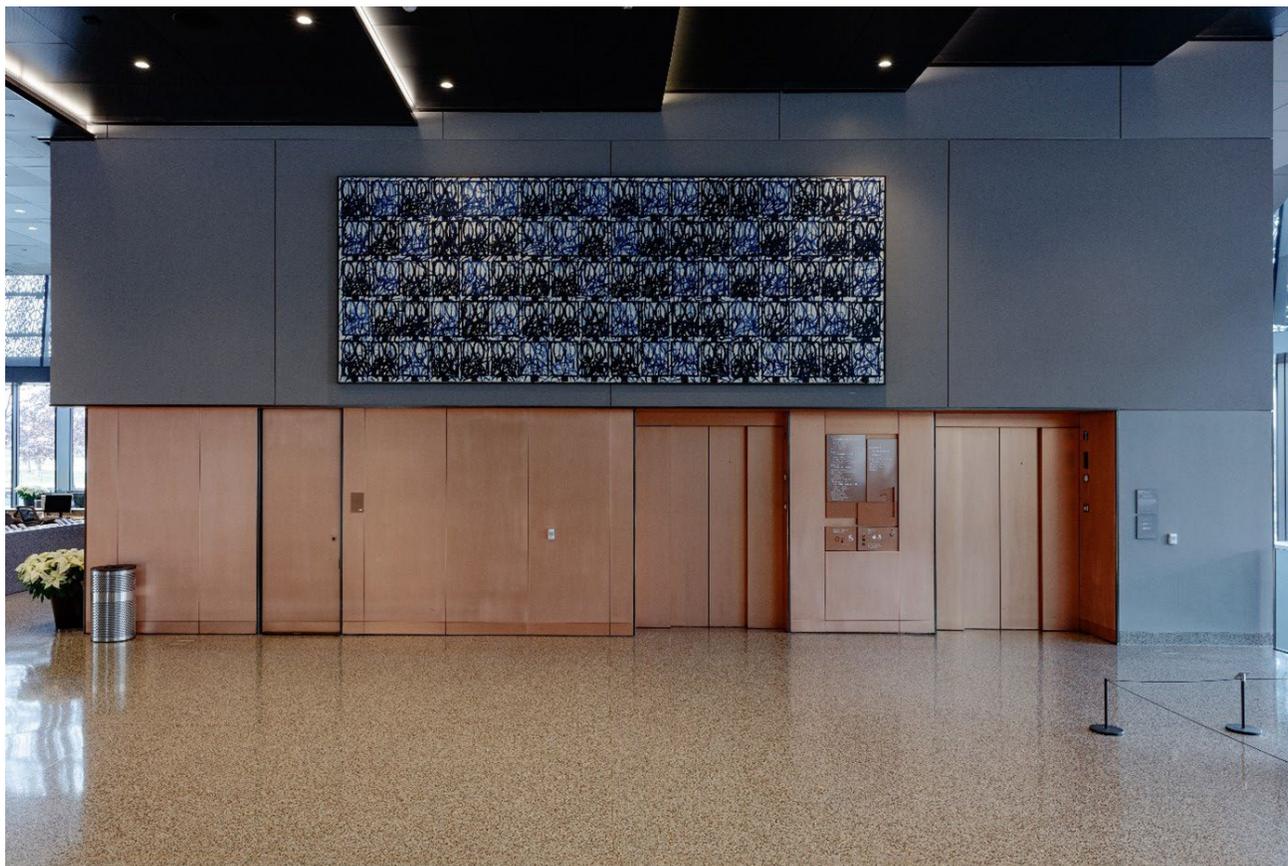
Born in rural Mississippi in 1954, Oprah Winfrey rose to fame as host and producer of the award-winning network TV talk show *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. The show ran for more than 25 years and reached millions of viewers. In 1986, Winfrey established Harpo Productions; launched *O, The Oprah Magazine* in 2000; and went on to become chairman and CEO of the cable network OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network in 2011. In 2021, the magazine expanded digitally through *OprahDaily.com* and *Oprah Insider*, a subscription site. Winfrey is a dedicated philanthropist, having donated \$500 million to various causes. She is a generous supporter of the Smithsonian and girls' education. Her school, the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, in South Africa, was built from a promise she pledged to Nelson Mandela.

Oprah Winfrey's portrait is now on display at the Smithsonian's **National Portrait Gallery**. Chicago-based artist Shawn Michael Warren painted Winfrey in a purple taffeta dress amidst a lush garden at her California home. The full-length portrait with the frame, approximately 6 feet 10 inches by 5 feet 8 inches, was commissioned for the museum's permanent collection. It will be on view on the museum's first floor. Shawn Michael Warren is a fine artist whose work explores historic events and figures through a unique and striking narrative form. Warren's work is truth-seeking; his murals and paintings tell stories that balance historical accuracy and tactful research with stark and often unsettling realism.



Credit: Oprah Winfrey by Shawn Michael Warren, oil on linen, 2023. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Acquired through the generosity of Tommie L. Pegues and Donald A. Capoccia; Taylor and Wemimo Abbey; Anonymous; Deon Jones and Cameron J. Ross; Lisa Opoku and Loki Muthu; Mack Wilbourn; Charles Young and Andrea Wishom Young.

**NEW ARTWORK BY RASHID JOHNSON ON DISPLAY
AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE**



Rashid Johnson, "Bruise Painting 'Message to Our Folks,'" 2023. Copyright Rashid Johnson. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photograph by Josh Weilepp/NMAAHC.

The Smithsonian's **National Museum of African American History and Culture** has received a powerful artwork from African American artist Rashid Johnson, on loan from the artist's representative, Hauser & Wirth. The 20-by-7½-foot painting, titled "Bruise Painting 'Message to Our Folks,'" is now on view in the museum's Heritage Hall space. The artwork addresses the impact of social change and the uncertainty of living in a period of both reckoning and healing.

Johnson is one of the most influential contemporary American artists of the current time. Born in Chicago, Johnson studied at Columbia College and the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. Johnson began his career as a photographer in the early 2000s, and he eventually moved permanently to New York. Johnson is a multi-disciplinary artist, working in sculpture, painting, drawing, filmmaking, and installation. He often utilizes everyday materials ranging from shea butter to tropical plants, reflecting his childhood and African American culture. Johnson's work is inspired by and exhibits topics such as literature, music, critical theory, personal and racial identity, mental health, and history.