

Press Release

The Brooklyn Museum Expands Its Collections with More Than 200 Acquisitions

Highlights include a rare example of nineteenth-century Lenape (Delaware) beadwork; contemporary works by Miles Greenberg, Oscar yi Hou, and Liza Lou; photographs by Laurie Simmons and Mahtab Hussain; an important Egyptian *talatat* relief block; and several additions to the Arts of the Islamic World, Asian, Contemporary, Decorative Arts, and Feminist Art collections

Reflecting a curatorial objective to tell fresh stories from multiple perspectives, the Brooklyn Museum made more than two hundred acquisitions between December 2021 and October 2022, across a variety of categories and mediums. Notably, its holdings by American artists have been broadened to better reflect the diversity of the United States and to create space for underrepresented American voices such as Black, Asian American, Native American, and women artists. These new additions will ultimately be presented in the Museum's reinstalled American Art wing, a major reinstallation slated to be fully unveiled in late 2024.

Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director, Brooklyn Museum, says, "It's important that our acquisitions speak to the issues of our day—both for current audiences and for future visitors. We want acquisitions to consistently enhance our ability to present inclusive, truthful, and dignified histories. Galvanized by recent calls for racial justice, the multiyear reinstallation of our American Art galleries addresses the differing visions of land, abolition, labor, and identity in the United States, and urges us to look closely and critically at this country's history."

The new set of historical and contemporary works entering the collection represents multiple generations of emerging and established artists and a wide range of disciplines.

A selection of highlights follows.

Brooklyn Museum

***Trailer* (2000), by Liza Lou, Gift of Sherry and Joel Mallin**



The first of Liza Lou's works to enter the Museum's collections, *Trailer* is an abandoned 1949 Spartan Mansion aluminum trailer that has been transformed into a striking scene encased in monochromatic glass beads. The trailer appears to visitors as a lived-in residence, but alongside the dishes, documents, and cigarettes appear guns and bottles of whiskey, suggesting a darker undertone to the work's cinematic shimmer. *Trailer* is emblematic of Lou's large-scale sculptural practice, through which she creates immersive, domestic environments from meticulously detailed beading that blurs the historical distinction between "fine art" and "craft."

Two Untitled Paintings (1931, possibly 1917), by Bumpei Usui and Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Gift of Leighton R. Longhi and Rosemarie Longhi

Two paintings by Japanese American artists Bumpei Usui and Yasuo Kuniyoshi are significant and transformational additions to the American Art collection, furthering the Museum's institutional goal of increasing holdings of works by Asian American artists. In addition, Usui's work is his first to enter the collection. The two artists contributed significantly to twentieth-century American modernism and were also close friends, with Kuniyoshi serving as an unofficial mentor to Usui. The paintings exemplify both the artistic and the personal relationship between two important Japanese American artists. This can be seen in not only the stylistic similarities between the paintings but also the original frames, which were designed and crafted by Usui, who also excelled as a frame and furniture maker.

***Bronx, N.Y.* (1924), by Bumpei Usui**



Bronx, N.Y., also by Bumpei Usui, is another addition that represents an important period in the artist's career, when he engaged with emerging modernist practices such as Precisionism. Usui's paintings became increasingly expressive in the 1930s, with

brushstrokes more closely resembling those of Yasuo Kuniyoshi. In this work, however, Usui's style emphasizes the geometric shapes of bricks and buildings, and explores industry and new development in New York City at the time.

***Talatat* (ca. 1359–1352 B.C.E.), Gift of Prof. Dr. H. A. Schlögl in memory of Bernard V. Bothmer**



This exquisite ancient Egyptian limestone *talatat* block with relief decoration joins three other blocks that are already on display at the Museum. Forming the largest and most complete reconstructed group of Amarna *talatat* in the Western Hemisphere, the four blocks together illustrate a pastoral scene with goats, herders, and trees that once likely decorated the palace in which Tutankhamun grew up. This rare installation will allow the public to better understand the unique style of the Egyptian Amarna Period (1352–1323 B.C.E.) and the scope of its naturalistic scenes, previously unparalleled in Egyptian art.

Bandolier Bag (1850s), by a Lenape (Delaware) artist



This work is a stunning example of Lenape (Delaware) beadwork dating from the nineteenth century that will allow the Museum to build its collection of Lenape (Delaware) objects. As part of the Museum's Living Land Acknowledgment project, which grew out of a 2019 convening with representatives of Lenape (Delaware) Nations, the Museum made a commitment to educate visitors, through artwork, about the history of violent displacement, the ongoing erasure of the Lenape people from their ancestral homeland, and the resilience and creativity of Lenape artistic traditions. This bag is a standout piece with its eye-catching blue and pink leaf patterns. In particular, the bag

illustrates how Native American women embraced the use of glass beads and innovated a new beadwork appliqué technique that enabled them to create such striking floral art.

***Probing the Land VIII (Robert E. Lee, After the Uprising)* (2020), by Nate Lewis**



Nate Lewis's *Probing the Land VIII (Robert E. Lee, After the Uprising)* is the first work by the self-taught artist to enter the collection. Lewis created this image of Confederate General Robert E. Lee as part of a body of work that captures the current rejection of symbols of white authority and power. Lewis's engagement with Confederate monuments began after the 2015 shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, by a young white man. After photographing various American monuments, including those honoring Confederate officers in Richmond, Virginia, Lewis approached the surface of this photographic image as if it were a body. Drawing on his experience as a critical care nurse, he used a small blade to make a series of surgical cuts into the image printed on paper as though it were skin, metaphorically exposing festering wounds and gutting history.

***The Arm Wrestle of Chip & Spike; aka: Star-Makers* (2020), by Oscar yi Hou**



Oscar yi Hou's first solo museum exhibition opened at the Brooklyn Museum in October 2022, and this is his first work to enter the collection. *The Arm Wrestle of Chip & Spike; aka: Star-Makers* is an outstanding example of yi Hou's body of vibrantly hued paintings that center queer, Asian-diasporic subjects, drawing analogies between these two marginalized positions. The artist's layered references—to queer iconography, figurative painting, poetry, East Asian visual culture, and representations of East Asian figures in U.S. popular culture—raise questions about who is considered "American" at this time of social unrest and political polarization.

***Fool's Errand #3* (2021), by Jarvis Boyland, Gift of The Dean Collection**



Memphis-born Jarvis Boyland often places figures in domestic settings and situations that suggest many narrative possibilities, as in the vivid and striking painting *Fool's Errand #3*, his first work to enter the collection. Boyland often uses surprising or unusual color combinations and stylistic details—here, the pink gloves, blue bandana, fur belt, and patterned bag. The curtain pulled aside to reveal the subject bearing flowers imbues the moment with a quiet sense of drama, not unlike a single cinematic frame. This emerging artist's work focuses on queer men of color in intimate spaces and navigates the intersections of Black identity, using portraiture to explore and critique the facade of masculinity.

***The Bridge* (1938), by Loïs Mailou Jones**



The Bridge by Loïs Mailou Jones exemplifies the artist's substantial work in watercolor, a technique she taught at Howard University, Washington, DC. This painting, typical of Jones's Impressionistic and Post-Impressionistic style, is an important addition to the American Art collection, as her watercolor paintings from time spent in Europe are rarely found in public collections. This exciting acquisition expands the collection's representation of Black women artists.

***Twenty Watercolors* (1880–1903), by Emily Sargent**

This series of twenty watercolors by American painter Emily Sargent is a significant and transformative addition to the Museum's collection of nineteenth-century landscape paintings. Many women artists of this era pursued landscape painting, and some seized opportunities for wide-ranging travel and further study. Yet their artworks have typically been underrepresented in public collections. Though Sargent was a creative force in her own right, her work remains understudied and overshadowed by her brother John Singer Sargent's. In this series, her Impressionistic paintings represent a variety of locations, specifically in North Africa and the Mediterranean, and an exciting range of subject matter and artistic experimentation. Included are scenes of markets or bazaars in the Mediterranean, the play of light across architectural features of Italianate and Islamic-style structures, and even stark landscapes in Cairo, Egypt, in which bands of color verge almost on abstraction.

***Wedding Couple* (1934) and *Untitled* (date unknown), by James Van Der Zee, and *Catherine Moton Patterson* (1936), by Prentice H. Polk**



Before these recent acquisitions, the Museum held only one work by James Van Der Zee and no works by Prentice H. Polk, widely considered two of the most important and well-known photographers of the first half of the twentieth century. Three newly acquired portraits by the two artists represent a particular moment during the New Negro Movement, when African Americans were using photography to document emerging Black middle and upper classes and to imagine themselves outside of and against dehumanizing, racist popular imagery.

***Muslims in America: New York City Edition* (2021), by Mahtab Hussain, Gift of Elizabeth and William Kahane**



Muslims in America: New York City Edition by Mahtab Hussain is the first work by the British artist to enter the collection. The limited-edition portfolio comprises twelve photographs that portray a widely diverse group of Muslims in New York City, countering the prevalent and vilifying narrative of Islam as a monolith. Throughout his career, Hussain has worked at the intersection of identity, heritage, and displacement, capturing portraits of Muslim individuals, most of whom are working-class and British South Asian.

***Cyrus in the Field with His Camera* (2021), by Laurie Simmons, Gift of Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn**



Cyrus in the Field with His Camera, by American artist Laurie Simmons, is part of her new series that features her family and friends in body paint. This photograph shows Simmons's child Cyrus Grace Dunham, a writer and political organizer. Since the 1970s, Simmons's work has blended the psychological, political, and conceptual, transforming photography's propensity to objectify people—especially women—into a sustained exploration of the medium.

***Oysterknife* (2020), by Miles Greenberg**



Oysterknife, the first work by emerging artist Miles Greenberg to enter the collection, furthers the Museum's commitment to collecting time-based art, or work that is experienced over a specific duration. Greenberg's practice explores the Black body in space through time-based performance and sculpture. *Oysterknife* documents Greenberg as he walked on a conveyor belt nonstop for twenty-four hours. Performed in July 2020, when protests were spreading across the United States and the globe in response to George Floyd's murder, this act of endurance is a powerful metaphor for survival. The title refers to a passage from Zora Neale Hurston's book *Dust Tracks on a Road* that highlights the need for agency and resolve: "I am not tragically colored. . . . No, I do not weep at the world—I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife."

***Jingle Johnny Processional Stand Pink* (2021), *Mosque Lamp and Prayer Carpet Green* (2021), and *Chandelier [Feat. Pink]* (2021), by Baseera Khan**



Following the UOVO Prize exhibition *Baseera Khan: I Am an Archive* at the Museum, three artworks by Khan entered the Feminist Art collection. The artist's multimedia oeuvre employs conceptual and material collage to visualize the lived experiences of people at the intersections of Muslim and American identities today and throughout history. Two photographs, *Jingle Johnny Processional Stand Pink* (2021) and *Mosque Lamp and Prayer Carpet Green* (2021), depict Khan engaging with historic objects from the Museum's Arts of the Islamic World collection. *Chandelier [Feat. Pink]* (2021) features patterns borrowed from Khan's family embroidery archive, decorating a spinning, reflective disco ball–like sculpture.

View the [full list of 219 acquisitions](#) made between December 2021 and October 2022.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

Liza Lou (American, born 1969). *Trailer*, 1998–2000. Glass beads, velvet, wood, wire, plaster, found objects, electrical parts, 120 × 96 × 420 in. (304.8 × 243.8 × 1066.8 cm). Gift of Sherry and Joel Mallin, 2022.24. © Liza Lou. (Photo: Richard Barnes)

Liza Lou (American, born 1969). *Trailer* (detail), 1998–2000. Glass beads, velvet, wood, wire, plaster, found objects, electrical parts, 120 × 96 × 420 in. (304.8 × 243.8 × 1066.8 cm). Gift of Sherry and Joel Mallin, 2022.24. © Liza Lou. (Photo: Tom Powell Imaging)

Bumpei Usui (American, born Nagano, Japan, 1898–1994). *Bronx, N.Y.*, 1924. Oil on canvas, 20 × 24 in. (50.8 × 61 cm). Dick S. Ramsay Fund, 2022.35. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

Talatat, ca. 1359–1352 B.C.E. Limestone, 8 11/16 × 16 1/2 × 2 5/8 in. (22.1 × 41.9 × 6.7 cm). Gift of Prof. Dr. H. A. Schlögl in memory of Bernard V. Bothmer, 2022.17. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

Lenape (Delaware) artist. Bandolier Bag, 1850s. Cotton, wool, silk, glass beads, 28 1/4 × 21 1/4 × 2 1/4 in. (71.8 × 54 × 5.7 cm). Frank L. Babbott Fund, 2021.41.

Nate Lewis (American, born 1985). *Probing the Land VIII (Robert E. Lee, After the Uprising)*, 2020. Hand-sculpted inkjet print, ink, graphite, frottage, 43 × 60 in. (109.2 × 152.4 cm). Purchase gift of Rahul Sabhnani, 2021.44. © Nate Lewis. (Photo: Fridman Gallery)

Oscar yi Hou (born Liverpool, UK, 1998). *The Arm Wrestle of Chip & Spike; aka: Star-Makers*, 2020. Oil on canvas, 55 1/2 × 43 in. (141 × 109.2 cm). Purchase gift of Scott Rofey and Olivia Song, 2021.45. © Oscar yi Hou. (Photo: Jonathan Dorado, Brooklyn Museum)

Jarvis Boyland (American, born 1995). *Fool's Errand #3*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 60 × 48 in. (152.4 × 121.9 cm). Gift of The Dean Collection, 2021.56. © Jarvis Boyland. (Photo: Kohn Gallery)

Lois Mailou Jones (American, 1905–1998). *The Bridge*, 1938. Watercolor and graphite on paper, 19 1/2 × 15 1/2 in. (49.5 × 39.4 cm). Robert A. Levinson Fund, purchased in honor of Sandra Williams-Cornwell and W. Don Cornwell for their two decades of stalwart generosity and dedication to the Brooklyn Museum, 2022.8. © Estate of Lois Mailou Jones. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

Prentice H. Polk (American, 1898–1984). *Catherine Moton Patterson*, 1936; printed ca. 1936. Gelatin silver print, 9 1/2 × 7 1/2 in. (24.1 × 19.1 cm). Robert A. Levinson Fund, purchased in honor of Sandra Williams-Cornwell and W. Don Cornwell for their two decades of stalwart generosity and dedication to the Brooklyn Museum, 2022.19.2. © Estate of Prentice H. Polk. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

Mahtab Hussain (British, born 1981). *Ahmed Mohamed*, from *Muslims in America: New York City Edition*, 2021. Inkjet print, 11 × 16 in. (27.9 × 40.6 cm). Gift of Elizabeth and William Kahane, 2021.58.13. © Mahtab Hussain. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

Mahtab Hussain (British, born 1981). *Aissatou Bah*, from *Muslims in America: New York City Edition*, 2021. Inkjet print, 11 × 16 in. (27.9 × 40.6 cm). Gift of Elizabeth and William Kahane, 2021.58.6. © Mahtab Hussain. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

Laurie Simmons (American, born 1949). *Cyrus in the Field with His Camera*, 2021. Inkjet print, 48 × 70 in. (121.9 × 177.8 cm). Gift of Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn, 2021.59. © Laurie Simmons. (Photo: courtesy of the artist)

Miles Greenberg (Canadian, born 1997). *Oysterknife* (still), 2020. Single-channel digital video (color, sound): 24 hours. Purchase gift of J. A. Forde, 2022.5. © Miles Greenberg

Baseera Khan (born Denton, Texas, 1980). *Jingle Johnny Processional Stand Pink*, from *Law of Antiquities*, 2021. Archival inkjet print, artist's custom frame, 60 × 40 in. (152.4 × 101.6 cm). Purchase gift of Kathy and Steven Guttman, 2022.16.1. © Baseera Khan. (Photo: courtesy of the artist)

Baseera Khan (born Denton, Texas, 1980). *Mosque Lamp and Prayer Carpet Green*, from *Law of Antiquities*, 2021. Archival inkjet print, artist's custom frame, 33 × 24 in. (83.8 × 61 cm). Purchase gift of Kathy and Steven Guttman, 2022.16.2. © Baseera Khan. (Photo: courtesy of the artist)