

# WOMEN IN THE ARTS



NATIONAL MUSEUM  
*of WOMEN in the ARTS*

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SPRING 2009

## Gender Pay Gap among Artists



In December the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) published the research note "Women Artists: 1990–2005," a follow-up to their report "Artists in the Workforce: 1990–2005" from May 2008. The report examines employment trends among women in the United States who work full time as artists. While the results confirm that women are making strides in artistic fields that are traditionally dominated by males, it also notes that women are sorely underrepresented in certain professions and that significant patterns in pay disparity still exist.

### Key Findings

- Female artists earn less than male artists. Women earn 92 cents for every dollar that men make in lower-paying performing arts professions (musician, dancer) and only 72 cents for every dollar that men make in non-performing arts (designer, art director).

- Pay gaps between men and women increase with age. Women artists between the ages of 18 and 24 earned 95% of what men make, while women artists between the ages of 45 and 54 earned only 67%, in 2003–05.
- Women make up just under half of artists nationwide (46%), comparable to their percentage of the U.S. workforce. They are underrepresented in many artist professions: women were only 35% of producers and directors and 36% of musicians in 2003–05.
- Women have increased their presence in some artist occupations: by 2003–05, women made up 22% of all architects—a gain of seven percentage points from 1990. Women also increased their representation among photographers (up 11 points) and actors (up 7 points).
- In the male-concentrated occupations in which women have made the largest gains, the women are substantially younger. The median age of women architects is 38—six years younger than for men in this occupation.

Between men and women photographers, the age gap is even greater, with women at a median age of 31, men 43.

- Women artists are as likely to be married as female workers on the whole but are less likely to have children. In 2003–05, 54% of women artists and 53% of all women workers were married. Twenty-nine percent of women artists had children under age 18, which is almost 6 percentage points lower than that of women workers in general.

"This important new report provides a factual overview of the situation of women in the American arts," said NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. "Committed and entrepreneurial, women artists are making enormous progress, but they still lag behind their male colleagues economically, especially in fields such as photography, design, and architecture." The complete research note is available at [www.arts.gov/research/ResearchNotes\\_chrono.html](http://www.arts.gov/research/ResearchNotes_chrono.html).

## The Fund for Women Artists

Created in 1994 by Martha Richards, the Fund for Women Artists is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping women artists get the resources they need to do their creative work. The fund has raised more than \$4 million and created a Web site that provides free networking, fundraising, and advocacy services to more than five-hundred thousand visitors a year. Based in San Francisco, the fund strives to challenge stereotypes by supporting the creation and appreciation of art by women and increasing opportunities for women artists to be paid fairly. The Fund for Women Artists hosts WomenArts Network, an online directory of nearly twelve hundred women artists, and an extensive list of funding resources for women artists.

A new initiative of the fund, organized in collaboration with Women in the Audiences Supporting Women Artists Now, is "Support Women Artists Now" Day (SWAN Day), an international holiday to celebrate women artists. The second annual SWAN Day will be held on

March 28, 2009, during Women's History Month. The first SWAN Day, in 2008, was celebrated with more than 160 events—performances, conferences, concerts, workshops, film screenings, and other activities—in eleven countries. Visit [www.womenarts.org](http://www.womenarts.org) to learn more about the Fund for Women Artists and SWAN Day.

## Women Taking the Lead

Johnnetta Cole became director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art on March 2. Cole was the board chair of the Johnnetta B. Cole Global Diversity and Inclusion Institute at Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she was the college's president from 2002 to 2007. She was also previously a professor at Emory University and president of Spelman College, both in Atlanta. Cole has served on the Scholarly Advisory Board of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture since its inception, and she has worked with a number of Smithsonian programs since the mid-1980s.

On January 12, Lora Urbanelli assumed the position of director at the Montclair Museum of Art in New Jersey. Urbanelli was previously the executive director of the Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland, Maine, and was an active member of NMWA's Rhode Island State Committee.



DONALD WOODMAN PHOTOGRAPHER

View of Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* looking across the Virginia Woolf and Georgia O'Keeffe runners and down the back of Wing 1 © Judy Chicago 1979



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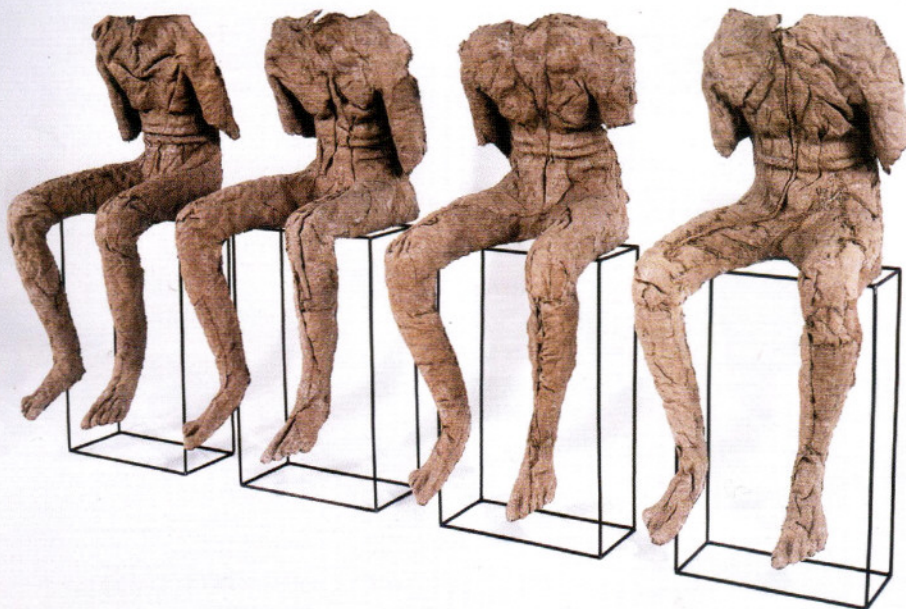
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ON VIEW

## Magdalena Abakanowicz's *Four Seated Figures*

Through August 2009



**M**ade of burlap mixed with resin and glue and hollow in the back, *Four Seated Figures*, 2002, exemplifies the large-scale headless, handless figures for which Magdalena Abakanowicz (Poland, b. 1930) is best known. The figures, which the artist sculpted individually, are powerful portraits of timeless, existential pain that express Abakanowicz's experience with war. With a texture reminiscent of tree bark, they appear to have been stripped of skin, revealing muscles, intestines, arteries, and pieces of cord suggestive of the human nervous system. Masculine in appearance, the four seated figures are "sexless," explains the artist. "They represent the human race rather than men or women of any specific nationality, color, or creed. They are naked, exposed, and vulnerable, just as we are." Not intended to be heroic, the figures are meant to inspire quiet contemplation and an emotional response, emblematic of our collective human experience. Abakanowicz created *Four Seated Figures* especially for NMWA using the same plaster molds she used to make her original *Seated Figures*, 1974-79.

Magdalena Abakanowicz, *Four Seated Figures*, 2002; Burlap, resin, iron rods; 53 1/2 x 24 1/4 x 99 1/4 in. overall; Gift of Patti Cadby Birch and partial museum purchase: Members' Acquisition Fund

**On the Cover:** Detail: Mary McFadden, *Gown from Greece*, the *Classical Period* collection, 1976; Polyester, Marii-pleated; Photo by Matthew Suib