Hauser & Wirth to Mount Show of Masterpieces from Eileen Harris Norton's Collection

BY ALEX GREENBERGER | December 2, 2020 8:00am

Eileen Harris Norton, 2020
PHOTO: COURTESY HARRIS-WARREN NORTON FOUNDATION

Listen to this article now 4 min listen
Powered by Trinity Audio
0:00 / 0:00

In February, Hauser & Wirth's Downtown Los Angeles gallery will stage a show of masterpieces from the holdings of Eileen Harris Norton, an important collector based in Los Angeles who passed away in 2019 at the age of 94. It will be one of the key exhibitions taking place in LA during the Frieze Los Angeles art fair.

Titled "Destiny Is a Rose: The Eileen Harris Norton Collection," the exhibition will feature major works by Kerry James Marshall, Lorraine O'Grady, Alma Thomas, David Hammons, and many more, to say little of pieces by Felix González-Torres, Beatriz Milhazes, and other giants of recent art history. As part of the show, Hauser & Wirth is also printing a catalog devoted to Harris Norton's collection, in what is being billed as a first.

Hauser & Wirth has a tradition of staging large-scale exhibitions of high-quality private collections, in its various galleries in Los Angeles and New York. As ARTnews has noted in a dead earlier this year, "The Harris Norton show, like those other presentations, will not be a selling show.

Harris Norton has been collecting since 1976, the year she bought a Ruth Waddy print. For over a decade, she appeared on the ARTnews Top 200 Collectors list alongside her former husband, Peter Norton. During the 90s, the two made a habit of visiting artists studios. Later on, they also made a habit of buying art.

Harris Norton, who worked as a teacher before cofounding a software company with Norton, is today best known in LA for launching Art + Practice with artist Mark Bradford and the Hammer Museum to mount shows and foster the creation of new artworks, which Hauser & Wirth represents. (Founded in 2014, the socially minded organization has since worked with institutions such as the California African American Museum and the Hammer Museum to mount shows and foster the creation of new artworks.

Activities such as these have made Harris Norton important to figures such as Thelma Golden, the director and chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem, who calls Eileen Harris Norton is a pivotal figure within the arts landscape. "Golden told ARTnews in 2014. "Her vital support of countless artists, many of whom are now household names, has amplified the visions of those whose perspectives have contributed so meaningfully to a dynamic and vibrant art world."

The 60-work Hauser & Wirth show will trace Harris Norton's rise, beginning in the period during the 90s and '00s when she focused largely on LA artists and then expanding to include the collection she formed her focus global with acquisitions of art by Isaac Julien, Mona Hatoum, and more.

A look at some of the works in the exhibition follows below.

Kerry James Marshall, *Destiny Is a Rose*, 1990

Kerry James Marshall, Destiny is a Rose, 1990.
Photo: Joshua White/JWPhotography, courtesy Hauser&Wirth Los Angeles and David Zwirner

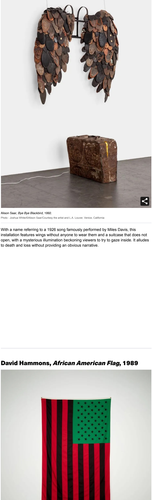
Before he painted his signature images situating Black figures in tableaux evoking art-historical images, Kerry James Marshall made works such as this one, in which painted-over paperback covers featuring white women surround a Black woman.

Mark Bradford, *Half a Man*, 2009

Mark Bradford, Half a Man, 2009.
Photo: Keith Lanpher/Keith Lanpher Photography, courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Mark Bradford is known for abstract paintings that make use of text, often to comment on histories of racism and erasure.

Lorraine O'Grady, *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire*, 1980–83



Lorraine O'Grady, Mlle Bourgeoise Noire, 1980–83.
Photo: Charles Roberts/©2020 Lorraine O'Grady Trust, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York

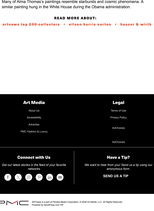
Lorraine O'Grady donned this dress for performances in which she created art events under the persona of Mlle Bourgeoise Noire, a middle-class woman who addressed her audience, telling viewers, "Black art must take more risks!"

Alison Saar, *Bye Bye Blackbird*, 1992

Alison Saar, Bye Bye Blackbird, 1992.
Photo: Joshua White/JWPhotography, courtesy the artist and L.A. Louver, Venice, California

With a name referring to a 1926 song famously performed by Billie Davis, this installation features wings without anyone to wear them and a suitcase that does not open, with a mysterious illumination beckoning viewers to try to gaze inside. It alludes to death and loss without providing an obvious narrative.

David Hammons, *African American Flag*, 1989



David Hammons, African American Flag, 1989.
Photo: Keith Lanpher/©2020 David Hammons/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

For one of his most famous works, David Hammons remade the stars and stripes in black, red, and green, the colors of the Pan-African flag. This work will be among the viewers at the newly reopened Studio Museum in Harlem, to which Harris Norton has gifted artworks by Hammons, Chris Ofili, and others.

Alma Thomas, Untitled, ca. 1968

Alma Thomas, Untitled, ca. 1968.
Photo: Joshua White/©2020 Estate of Alma Thomas/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/Courtesy Alexander Gray

Many of Alma Thomas's paintings resemble starbursts and cosmic phenomena. A similar painting hung in the White House during the Obama administration.

READ MORE ABOUT:
artnews top 200 collectors • eileen harris norton • hauser & wirth

Art Media
About Us
Accessibility
Advertise
FAQ | Terms of Levels

Legal
Ad Choices
Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
AdChoices

Subscriber Support
Subscribe to Art Magazine
Customer Service
Purchase Back Issues
Contact Us

Connect with Us
Get our latest stories in the feed of your favorite network.

Have a Tip?
We want to hear from you! Send us a tip using our secure portal.
SEND US A TIP

Stay In The Know
Subscribe to our newsletters below:
ARTnews
Art in America

ARTNEWS is a part of Penske Media Corporation. © 2020 Art Media, LLC. All Rights Reserved.
Powered by WordPress.com VIP
OUR SITES