

University of Michigan Museum of Art  
*You Are Here*  
October 18, 2021–spring 2023

[UMMA exhibition website](#)

[Introductory text](#)

**Checklist**

*\*works on paper that will rotate throughout the exhibition*

- [Harry Bertoia, \*Untitled, Sounding Sculpture\*](#)
- [Florencia Pita, \*Alice\*](#)
- [Kehinde Wiley, \*Saint Francis of Assisi\*](#)
- Grouping:
  - [\\*Shigeo Fukuda](#)
  - [Xu Weixin, \*Ba Jin\*](#)
  - [\\*Elizabeth Catlett](#)
- Grouping:
  - [Roxy Paine, \*S2 P2 RAP4\*](#)
  - [Beverly Fishman, \*H.H.H. \(Brown/Black\)\*](#)
- Grouping:
  - [Louise Nevelson, \*Black Excursion No. 13\*](#)
  - [Burhan Cahit Doğançay, \*Give Peace a Chance\*](#)
  - [Tyree Guyton, \*Stature\*](#)
- [Jonathan Monk, \*Sentence Removed O's Remain\*](#)
- [\\*Vik Muniz](#)
- [Samuel Levi Jones, \*Promises\*](#)
- [Randolph Rogers, \*Nydia, the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii\*](#)
- [Richard James Wyatt, \*Flora\*](#)

## Introductory panel

### *You Are Here*

Welcome back to the museum. We've missed you.

On March 16, 2020, we closed our doors, just six days after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. We didn't know for how long. At that point there were twelve confirmed COVID-19 cases in Washtenaw County. We weren't wearing masks because we didn't fully understand how the virus is transmitted. We reopened to the public 488 days later, on June 17, 2021. While it is exciting to be together again and to see the world slowly reopen, we are also deeply impacted by what we've been through. This exhibition holds both of those feelings.

I titled the exhibition *You Are Here* to remind us to be present **where we are**: to look and feel and be here, in person at the museum, and to remind us **where we aren't**: at home, isolated, connecting with each other virtually. The centerpiece of the exhibition—Kehinde Wiley's portrait of Keshawn Warren standing in front of a vibrant floral background—exemplifies the idea of being present in oneself. The artworks in this show were selected because you really need to experience them in person, to be immersed in their textures, patterns, colors, and ideas. Go ahead and play the Harry Bertoia sound sculpture to announce your presence in the gallery—after all, you are here.



## Harry Bertoia

Italy, 1915–1978

*Untitled, Sounding Sculpture*, 1969

Beryllium and copper rods

Bequest of the Estate of David Caldwell Leedy, 2005/2.30

Harry Bertoia's *Sounding Sculpture* attempts to democratize the experience of making music by being instantly playable by anyone. Inspired by the sound of a bent wire springing loose, Bertoia created a series of instruments by experimenting with the length, thickness, material makeup, and placement of metal rods.

*You are encouraged to play this sound sculpture. Carefully caress the bars of the sculpture, allowing the metal rods to strike each other gently. The sculpture's sound echoes throughout the gallery space, announcing your presence.*



### Additional Resources

- Artist Website: <https://harrybertoi.org/>
- [Harry Bertoia Sonambient Sculpture, ca. 1965](#) - Beginning in 1960, Bertoia began to incorporate music into his art, creating sculptures that allowed for sonorous response to wind or touch.
- [Harry Bertoia's History and Process](#) - Curator Claire McRee discusses the progress and evolution of Harry Bertoia's copper sonic sculpture throughout his career.

## Florencia Pita

Argentina, born 1973

*Alice*, 2007

Polymer foam, PETG, urethane

Gift of the artist, 2013/1.228

Florencia Pita's vivid orange sculpture invites you into a wholly immersive and uncanny landscape that plays with expectations of scale, color, and texture. It draws inspiration from the flora and fauna the character Alice encounters in Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Influenced by her architectural training, Pita uses industrial materials that you've probably never heard of, but likely encounter in your day-to-day life, such as Polymer foam, PETG, and urethane. These lightweight and pliable materials are made to fit together like a child's toy and entice viewers to explore the embellished surfaces—as if we are just one curious step away from tumbling down the rabbit hole.

### Additional Resources

- Artist's Website:  
<https://www.florenciapita.com/>
- [What is Architecture? Notions from Odile Decq, Snøhetta, Pita & Bloom and Jeffrey Kipnis | March 14th, 2021](#) ArchDaily collaboration with WIA, who interviewed the world's leading architectural designers. [Direct Link to Pita & Bloom's Interview](#)
- [Florence Pita & Jackilin Bloom: Colorforming | September 8th, 2017](#) Florence Pita and Jackilin Bloom characterize their work in terms of a synthesis of color and form, in which the color is innate to the project and process, not personal taste. They review their installation projects (Pulse Tendril Formations, Alice, Cronopios).
- [Florence Pita: UMMA Table gallery talk | March 14th, 2014](#)



## Kehinde Wiley

United States, born 1977

*Saint Francis of Assisi*, 2008

Oil wash and graphite on paper, in artist's frame

Collection of Michael Frishberg

Kehinde Wiley challenges us to reconsider what and who contemporary portraiture can and should represent. He invites everyday people of color to select poses from historic paintings of kings, queens, gods, and saints. For this portrait, Keshawn Warren chose the stance of Saint Francis in Italian Renaissance painter Giovanni Bellini's (1430–1516) *St. Francis in the Desert*. Warren's open arms and upward glance mimic the Christian saint's posture, but in Wiley's reinterpretation, a lush and vibrant floral background wraps around Warren as he claims his space.



### Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <http://kehindewiley.com/>
- [Christian-themed portraits by Kehinde Wiley | August 31, 2016](#) This article goes through multiple of Wiley's series, comparing his work to the original religious work that had inspired him. His religious paintings commanded empathy from its audiences during a time where men of color were featured on the news as victims of police brutality.
- [Contemporary Conversations: Artist Kehinde Wiley and The Duke of Devonshire | July 17th, 2020](#) - Sotheby's Chairman Oliver Barker in conversation with American portrait painter Kehinde Wiley and The Duke of Devonshire. Kehinde and the Duke examine the history of portraiture and the power of the image, bringing together the arts of the past and the arts of the present in this talk.

## Shigeo Fukuda

Japan, 1932–2009

*Human Rights (ARTIS '98)*, 1989

Screenprint

Gift of the DNP Foundation for Cultural Promotion,  
2017/2.97

Shigeo Fukuda is celebrated for his innovative and illusionistic contributions to the art of poster design. He expertly communicates complex messages, including anti-war sentiments and environmental advocacy. This poster celebrates the two-hundred year anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789, a significant civil rights document that emerged from the French Revolution. The text reads *Les Droits de l'Homme* (French for “human rights”) on an abstracted version of the French tricolor flag. Fukuda artfully divides a single figure into thirds, creating silhouettes of multiple figures walking in unison. This imagery makes tangible that the rights of the individual must be the rights of all people, and that humanity must walk together in order to move forward.



### Additional Resources

- [Antiwar Posters by Graphic Designer Shigeo Fukuda | July 15th, 2015](#) This article goes through some of Shigeo Fukuda’s most recognizable posters and the advocacy messages behind them.
- [Shigeo Fukuda - A legend, with a sense of humour -agIdeas 2005 | September 2nd, 2014](#) Shigeo imparted his design ethos and encouraged us to consider graphic design not as a business but as “a culture and visual communication that provides pleasure and happiness”.
- [ADC Hall of Fame Shigeo Fukuda](#) A much more in depth biography of Shigeo Fukuda.

## Xu Weixin

China, born 1958

*Ba Jin*, 2016

Oil on canvas

Gift of the artist, 2016/2.82

Xu Weixin's series *Chinese Historical Figures:*

*1966–1976* memorializes on a grand scale significant figures overlooked in traditional historical accounts. *Ba Jin* (1904–2005), pictured here, was a Chinese political activist and writer noted for his anarchist views and criticisms of ideological suppression in pre-Cultural Revolution (1966–76) China. But during the Cultural Revolution, his activism earned him the label of counterrevolutionary and he was confined to a detention center. *Ba Jin* championed the

dissemination of literature to the masses, stewarding the creation of the National Museum of Modern Chinese Literature. Xu Weixin frames *Ba Jin* with vertical Chinese text that details his biographical information, amplifying his legacy of making knowledge accessible.



### Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <http://www.xuweixinart.com/>
- [LRCCS Studio Visit and Conversation with Artist Xu Weixin | August 26th, 2020](#) Hosted by the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies (LRCCS), featuring artist Xu Weixin and UMMA Curator Natsu Oyobe, as well as other U-M Panelists.
- [China's Cultural Revolution: portraits of accuser and accused | February 24th, 2012](#) Fascinating article which goes through some of Weixin's works and tells the stories of the subject, as told by the subject themselves or their descendants.
- [The Cultural Revolution: all you need to know about China's political convulsion | May 10th, 2016](#)
- [Seeing red: The propaganda art of China's Cultural Revolution | February 12th, 2019](#)

## Elizabeth Catlett

United States, 1915–2012

*Malcolm X Speaks for Us*, 1969

Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Elizabeth Catlett, 2006/1.96

In this print, Elizabeth Catlett envisions a scene in which civil rights activist and Muslim minister Malcom X (1925–1965) speaks to a crowd of African American women whose faces are based on the artist's earlier prints. The color and tone of the repeated faces are altered across the surface of the paper, so that while each figure is individualized, together they form a unified crowd of people listening to the powerful words. This work speaks to the range of voices in civil rights activism that are advocating for a shared message of liberation.



### Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <https://www.elizabethcatlettart.com/>
- [The New Intellectuals: Internationalism and the Radical Pedagogy of Elizabeth Catlett | May 14th, 2020](#) Jordan T. Camp speaks to scholar Christina Heatherton about her research on legendary artist and revolutionary internationalist Elizabeth Catlett. | [Have Always Worked Hard in America, Elizabeth Catlett | February 22nd, 2011](#) Cleveland Museum of Art curator Jane Glaubinger discusses Elizabeth Catlett's linoleum artwork.



## Roxy Paine

United States, born 1966

*S2 P2 RAP4*, 2005

Low density polyethylene (plastic) and pigment  
Gift of Irina Aristarkhova and Gunalan Nadarajan,  
2020/2.69

Roxy Paine constructed *S2 P2 RAP4* using a sculpture-making machine—Scumak, for short—to challenge the idea that artists need to be “present” when making their art. Following instructions written by Paine, the Scumak program melts together vibrant red-colored pigment and plastic polyethylene beads. The liquified layers of polyethylene pile up and flow before solidifying into their final sculptural forms. The result is simultaneously beautiful and uncomfortable: movement is temporarily frozen in time. Look away and the big red blob just might become a puddle on the museum floor.



## Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <http://roxypaine.com/>
- [Roxy Paine interview: 'The best ideas come out of long gestation' | November 19th, 2014](#)  
Roxy Paine and Jill Spalding speak about how industry and nature are connected in his work.
- [Roxy Paine - Scumak No. 2, Auto Sculpture Maker 1998 - 2001 | July 2nd, 2011](#)  
A video of the SCUMAK making pieces by melting plastic with pigments and periodically extruding them onto a conveyor belt, creating bulbous shaped sculptures that are each unique.
- [Scumak No. 2 at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art | May 27th, 2011](#) Through this video you can see the way the sculptures naturally layer due to the dripping of the materials.

## Beverly Fishman

United States, born 1955

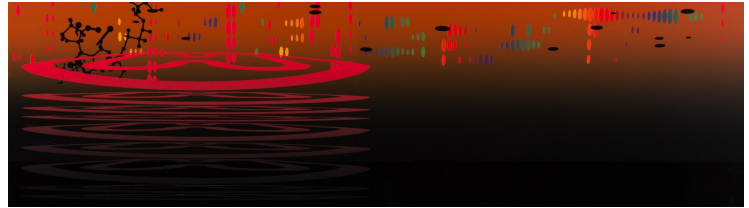
*H.H.H. (Brown/Black)*, 2003

Vinyl and powder-coated metal

Gift of Burt Aaron, 2017/2.97



Beverly Fishman's swirling abstractions and glowing hues borrow from visual histories of science, technology, and medicine. Using industrial materials like



automotive paint, vinyl, and metals, Fishman creates a pristine and immersive landscape of floating shapes and patterns reminiscent of scientific images of DNA sequencing. This includes a version of the now-iconic circular X-ray view of DNA's helix structure. Fishman references digital and medical imaging technologies, generating visible connections to the hidden systems that comprise us.

## Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <https://www.beverlyfishmanstudio.com/>
- [The Society for Contemporary Art presents Beverly Fishman | March 9th, 2021](#)  
Interview with Beverly Fishman as she goes through her three decades of work.
- [BECon 2013 - Beverly Fishman | September 16th, 2014](#) Video lecture with Beverly Fishman as the keynote speaker, with a focus on color as a material.

## Louise Nevelson

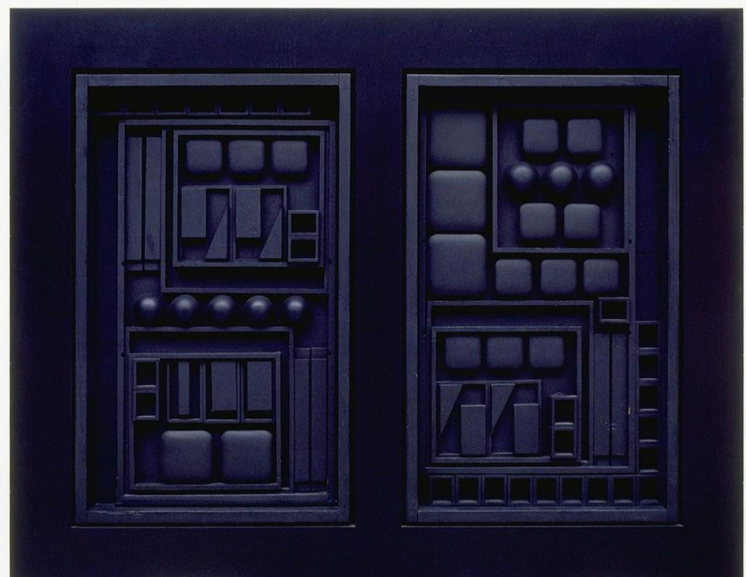
Ukraine, 1899–1988

*Black Excursion No. 13*, 1964

Painted wood and black formica  
Gift of the Lannan Foundation in  
Honor of the Pelham Family,  
1997/1.131

Louise Nevelson's abstract sculptures come from humble beginnings. Since she lacked the means to purchase pricey art materials, Nevelson scoured her home and the streets of New York

City to source her supply of wood out of old boards and boxes. She constructed large-scale and intricate compositions out of these abandoned objects, coated in a uniform layer of black paint. While individual components of *Black Excursion No. 13* are obliterated, their shapes remain in this transformed, sculptural state. Nevelson's approach prompts us to consider: How can the everyday be transformed into something else entirely?



## Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <https://louisevelsonfoundation.org/>
- [Thinking Outside the Box: Louise Nevelson at Kykuit | November 30th, 2020](#) Art historian Deborah A. Goldberg, Ph. D., explores Louise Nevelson's monumental metal sculpture *Atmosphere and Environment VI* in relation to her earlier assemblages in wood, her contemporary work in Plexiglas, and sculpture by her peers.
- [Nevelson in Process, 1977 | From the Vaults | March 27th, 2020](#) Footage of Louise Nevelson from 1977 of her making a piece in her studio, using discarded wood and scrap metal. Nevelson sheds light onto her own history as an immigrant and how it shaped her perspective as an artist.

## Burhan Cahit Doğançay

Turkey, 1929–2013

*Give Peace a Chance*, 2009

Collage and mixed media on canvas

Anonymous gift, 2015/2.151

Burhan Cahit Doğançay combines found objects, as well as materials manipulated to appear as found objects, to mimic the look and feel of an urban wall, encouraging us to take a closer look at the surfaces in our everyday environment. *Give Peace a Chance*

is covered in anti-war and pro-Tibet messages. Handwritten texts and newspaper ads for anti-war protests accompany a framed stencil portrait of the Dalai Lama (b. 1935), the spiritual leader of Tibetan buddhism, and a photograph of actor-activist Richard Gere (b. 1949)—two well-known advocates in the longstanding conflict with China over Tibet’s sovereignty.



### Additional Resources

- [Doğançay Museum](#) - The Dogançay Museum, Turkey’s first modern art museum, features a mini-retrospective of five decades of Dogançay’s artistic evolution starting with his early figurative paintings up to his wall-inspired works as well as photographs.

## Tyree Guyton

United States, born 1955

*Stature*, 1988

Oil on canvas with a paper windowshade

Gift of Patrick and Marla Smith, 2021/1.87

Tyree Guyton has long used artmaking to build community, revitalizing the people and spaces that raised him by championing their diversity and stability. His installations, paintings, and sculptures often combine found objects and unusual materials that are then transformed by their new creative contexts. All of the materials in *Stature*, including the paint, came from abandoned properties on the lower east side of Detroit.

Guyton placed a drawn window shade directly onto the canvas; the everyday rectangular object becomes one more abstracted element in a field of texture and color. Its presence reinforces the tactile, personal relationships with the common and overlooked materials that make up our lived spaces.



### Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <https://www.tyreeguyton.com/>
- [The Heidelberg Project - The Faces of Tyree Guyton](#) - A Filmographic portrait of Guyton, centering his story and the Heidelberg Project. ([idfa.nl](http://idfa.nl))
- [Tyree Guyton: Faces of God on Fire | November 22nd, 2013](#) - Article includes some history of the Heidelberg Project and the artist statement.

## Jonathan Monk

United Kingdom, born 1969

*Sentence Removed O's Remain*, 2000

Acrylic and neon

Gift of Leonard Rosenberg, 2015/2.100

The guiding philosophy of Jonathan Monk's artistic practice is that nothing can ever be original. In his tongue-in-cheek views of the art world, Monk is constantly referencing and reinterpreting earlier art. He is especially interested in mining the twentieth-century Conceptual and Minimalist art movements, and employing industrial materials to create sculptures.

*Sentence Removed O's Remain* features an enigmatic title that hints that there is more information to be had, but reveals nothing. Monk cleverly entices us with an abstract and minimal sculpture in bright neon, but leaves us with an unsolvable riddle.



## Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <https://www.lissongallery.com/artists/jonathan-monk>
- [Jonathan Monk Interview: An Original Twist | December 20th, 2016](#) - Jonathan Monk's view on the idea of originality: "Just embrace that you're not. Or twist it so you can be."
- [Jonathan Monk On Why Originality Is A Thing Of The Past](#) - Interview by Lara Konrad with Jonathan Monk in his office/studio. As a self described collector/artist, his studio does seem almost archival, with boxes full of materials, marked with dates stacked one on top of another.

## Vik Muniz

Brazil, born 1961

*Death of Chatterton*, 2000

Dye destruction print

Museum purchase made possible by  
the W. Hawkins Ferry Fund, 2006/1.153



*Wall Text:* Vik Muniz is known for using unconventional materials—dust, soil, thread, sugar, and, in this work, chocolate syrup—to recreate iconic images from the history of art and pop culture. In his *Death of Chatterton*, he recreates an oil painting (pictured below) by Pre-Raphaelite painter Henry Wallis (1830–1916) that imagines and romanticizes the 1770 suicide of the young poet and forger [Thomas Chatterton \(1752–1770\)](#). Drawing quickly with Bosco-brand chocolate syrup, Muniz made his image on white plexiglass. He then photographed the bittersweet scene, immortalizing the temporary chocolate drawing. Muniz’s pastiche of historical sources and contemporary edible material pokes fun at itself in a meditation on the reproducibility of images: drawings translated into photographs that recall paintings.

## Additional Resources

- Artist’s Website: <https://vikmuniz.net/>
- [Meet the Artist: Vik Muniz - Hirshhorn Museum | July 31st, 2017](#) “Foregrounding photography’s ability to capture and create, his work is simultaneously humorous and incisively critical. His practice often focuses on art history and its intersections with science and perception, all the while drawing attention to the constant inundation of images in our lives.”
- [Vik Muniz: Art with wire, sugar, chocolate and string: Art Video: Art Talk](#) In this video, Vik Muniz explores the ranges of a variety of media, experimenting with the unconventional materials he uses. He explores his works, going in depth about the techniques.

## Samuel Levi Jones

United States, born 1978

*Promises*, 2014

Deconstructed encyclopedia set on canvas

Collection of Julie and David Eskenazi

Samuel Levi Jones uses the physical manifestations of knowledge, namely books, to confront long legacies of erasure and racial inequity in tellings of history. The towering patchwork assemblage *Promises* comprises thirty-six encyclopedic books—pages removed, covers remaining, stitching frayed. By undoing the books themselves, the artist questions the reliability of texts that claim to summarize human history, but were often created by those who held the greatest power and influence, and usually control the narrative.



### Additional Resources

- Artist's Website: <https://samuellevijones.com/>
- [One artist's solution to the racial inequities embedded in books: Rip them apart | August 5th, 2019](#) "Jones operates according to an unstated social-scientific law, that power is neither created nor destroyed. He does the work of transformation, reassigning power from sources steeped in biased convention, where it had a corrosive effect on humanity, to new vehicles of thought and sensual encounter."



## Randolph Rogers

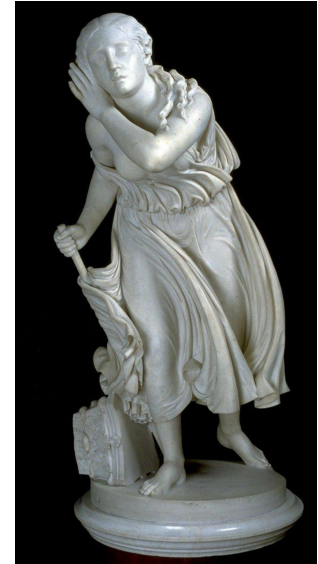
United States, 1825–1892

*Nydia, the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii*

1861

Carrara Marble

Gift of Rogers Art Association, 1862.1



Randolph Rogers's *Nydia, the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii* was an immensely popular sculpture from the late-nineteenth century. Inspired by a character from Edward Bulwer-Lytton's 1834 *The Last Days of Pompeii*, Nydia is an enslaved blind girl who deftly navigates the destruction of Pompeii after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Rogers represents a moment from the story when Nydia searches for her companions, straining to hear their reply to her calls. The fallen capital at her feet and her wind-blown clothing suggests the danger of her situation. Though Rogers was born in upstate New York and resided in Rome, he spent much of his childhood in Ann Arbor and considered it to be his hometown. Nydia was commissioned for the University in 1858 and was one of the first in the Museum's collection. This sculpture remains a steadfast presence in this gallery and serves as a reminder of our own mortality.

---

## Richard James Wyatt

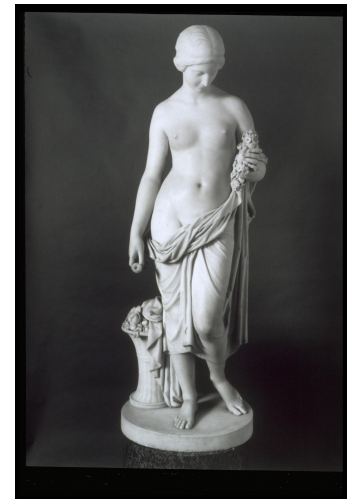
United Kingdom, 1795–1850

*Flora*

1850

Marble

Gift of Albert M. Todd,



The dawn of the nineteenth century encouraged an enormous increase in demand for gallery sculpture, works intended for public display rather than simply decorative reasons. Richard James Wyatt, like many sculptors of his time, moved to Rome—the epicenter of the neoclassical revival—to train in the techniques of the classical masters. He soon became regarded as a virtuoso carver and celebrated for his ability to portray the female form; the highly finished surfaces create a soft, warm effect which is distinct to his work. This statue represents the Roman mythological figure Flora, the goddess of the spring who holds authority over flowers, grain, and fruit. Wyatt had just completed Flora at the time of his death, so this sculpture memorializes some of his final chisel marks.