



The Phillips Collection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2023

Media Contacts:

Lauryn Cantrell, 202.387.2151 x235

lcantrell@phillipscollection.org

Third Eye

Tyler Mahowald, 212.335.9009 x311

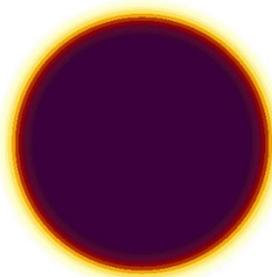
tyler@hellothirdeye.com

Online Press Room:

www.phillipscollection.org/press

The Phillips Collection Announces Recent Acquisitions that Enrich Photography Holdings and Diversify Collection

Including important works by photographers Frank Stewart, Aaron Siskind, and Zanele Muholi, and artists Sanford Biggers, Linling Lu, and Marta Pérez García



WASHINGTON, DC—The Phillips Collection announces recent acquisitions, including major works that enrich growing areas of the museum’s collection with a significant emphasis on photography. Through multiple gifts, more than 60 photographs by artists including Frank Stewart, Aaron Siskind, Zanele Muholi, and more have entered the collection. In addition, works by artists including Sanford Biggers, Linling Lu, and Marta Pérez García strengthen existing holdings to provide more comprehensive narratives of modern and contemporary art.

“We are delighted to acquire works by such an expansive and dynamic group of artists,” says **Vradenburg Director and CEO Jonathan P. Binstock**. “The Phillips Collection has a unique history and legacy of collecting from its beginnings as a private collection established by Duncan Phillips. We remain dedicated to the founding principles of Phillips’s pioneering vision while actualizing the museum’s strides toward inclusivity by collecting work by LGBTQ+ artists, women, artists of color, and those who have been historically overlooked.”

The museum’s recent acquisitions include multiple gifts of photography works—the fastest-growing area of the collection that includes nearly 1,700 objects today. Frank Stewart (b. 1949, Nashville, TN), on the occasion of his first museum retrospective, [*Frank Stewart’s Nexus: An American Photographer’s*](#)

[Journey, 1960s to the Present](#), gifted the Phillips three photographs: *Clock of the Earth, Mamfe, Ghana* (1998), *Miles in the Green Room* (1981), and *Stomping the Blues* (1997). Stewart’s work centers around empathetic images of lives experienced and observed, including the influence of Black life and culture in the United States, his travels to Africa, and music and jazz in particular.

Recently on view was a triptych titled *Zibandlela VI, III, and II, The Sails, Durban* (2020) by **Zanele Muholi** (b. 1972, Umlazi, South Africa), gifted by Eric Richter and Charles Shoener in honor of The Phillips Collection’s Director Emerita Dorothy Kosinski. For more than a decade, Muholi has documented LGBTQ+ communities in South Africa to reassert their existence in response to discrimination and violence. Featuring three self-portraits, the triptych is part of the artist’s wider practice that explores issues of identity, self-representation, and expression.

Important acquisitions also enrich the museum’s historic collections of American post-war photography. A gift of 22 works by **Aaron Siskind** (1903–1991) from Michal Venera and Michelle Kurtz introduces into the collection the artist’s abstract works created from the 1950s to 80s. The Phillips acquired its first photograph by Siskind in 2003 and now retains 85 works that span his entire career. In addition, a group of 25 black-and-white photographs by seminal street photographers **Sid Grossman** (1913–1955), **Arthur Leipzig** (1918–2014), and **Leon Levinstein** (1910–1988) have entered the collection through a gift from Michal Venera; and 13 architectural and dance photographs by **Philip Trager** (b. 1935, Bridgeport, CT) augment existing contemporary holdings through a gift from Philip Trager in honor of Kosinski.

“The Phillips received its first gift of photography holdings in the 1940s, which has expanded significantly since then as one of the most substantial areas of collecting at the museum,” says **Elsa Smithgall, Chief Curator at The Phillips Collection**. “Through these new acquisitions, the museum is able to support and exhibit the work of internationally recognized modern and contemporary artists, as well as to collect work that has significance to our local communities in DC.”

Several new acquisitions align with The Phillips Collection’s ongoing commitment to amplifying the voices and perspectives of artists from diverse backgrounds. With acquisitions from artists including **Linling Lu** (b. 1983, Zunyi, Guizhou Province, China), **Sanford Biggers** (b. 1970, Los Angeles, CA), and **Marta Pérez García** (b. 1965, Arecibo, Puerto Rico)—all of whom had significant presentations with the Phillips’s *Intersections* series—the museum continues to grow its contemporary collection.

The museum’s first acquisition of **Lu**’s work also marks an important milestone for the Phillips: *One Hundred Melodies of Solitude No.99* (2020) is the first artwork by a Chinese-born American woman artist to enter the collection. As seen in her recent *Intersections* project [Soundwaves](#), Lu frequently draws inspiration from elements of classical music; her ongoing series *One Hundred Melodies of Solitude* visualizes soundwaves into vividly colored spatial configurations.

Glitch (2022) by **Biggers**, purchased through the Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, is part of the artist’s ongoing series of quilt-based works. Consisting of painted and repurposed pre-20th-century quilts, the work examines the malleability of cultural heritage, identity, and histories. For his 2021 *Intersections* project [Mosaic](#), Biggers responded to the Phillips’s five works by quiltmakers of Gee’s Bend, Alabama (partial gifts of the Souls Grown Deep Foundation in 2019); *Glitch* adds to the museum’s growing collection of textile works.

Additionally, in an engagement with new mediums and practices, The Phillips Collection has purchased *Move the Way you Want* (2022) by **Jonathan Monaghan** (b. 1986, New York, NY), which was first exhibited as part of the artist's 2022 [Intersections](#) project. The artwork is an eight-minute digital video that also includes a fully digital clone with NFT registration. In the film, Monaghan's surrealist dreamscape confronts viewers with an illusionistic yet dehumanized world filled with opulent architectural decor and familiar mass-produced items of today.

The Phillips remains committed to supporting artists whose practice has particular relevance to the DC area. Two sculptures by Puerto Rican, DC-based artist **Pérez García** have entered the collection through a gift from Robert and Barbara Liotta through the Sidney and Nina Josephs Trust. Both artworks were included in the 2022 *Intersections* project [Restos-Traces](#) which examined the recollection and preservation of memory as it relates to trauma and domestic violence. The museum has also acquired *Untitled* (1973), a silkscreen print by **Minnie Klavans** (1915–1999) through a gift from Judith L. Klavans on behalf of the Klavans Family. Klavans worked in DC throughout her career, studying under printmaker Lou Stovall, and today is associated with a wider group of artists in the Washington Color School. Additionally, the dynamic painting *The Big 5* (2005) and bold etching *Journey through Migration* (1985, editioned 2004) by DC-based artist **Joyce Wellman** (b. 1949, New York, NY) joined the collection through a gift from the artist, along with a geometric mixed-media work by **Sam Gilliam** (1933–2022), gift of Elsa Barr Williams.

IMAGE GALLERY:

High-resolution press images are available upon request. Please contact Lauryn Cantrell, lcantrell@phillipscollection.org

IMAGES: (Left to right) Frank Stewart, *Stomping the Blues*, 1997, Gelatin silver print, 16 x 20 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of the artist, 2023; Linling Lu, *One Hundred Melodies of Solitude, No. 99*, 2020, Acrylic on canvas, 93 x 93 x 2 in., The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2023; Sanford Biggers, *Glitch*, 2022, Assorted fabrics and acrylic resin, 50 7/8 x 33 x 4 in., The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2022, Photography by Lance Brewer, Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, Aspen and New York; Joyce Wellman, *Journey through Migration*, 1985, Color viscosity etching, 22 x 16 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of the artist, 2022

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art, was founded in 1921. The museum houses one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist and American modern art collections and continues to grow its collection with important contemporary voices. Its distinctive building combines extensive new galleries with the former home of its founder, Duncan Phillips. The Phillips's impact spreads nationally and internationally through its diverse and experimental special exhibitions and events, including its award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; renowned Phillips Music series; and dynamic art and wellness and Phillips after 5 events. The museum contributes to global dialogues with events like Conversations with Artists and Artists of Conscience. The Phillips Collection values its community partnership with THEARC—the museum's satellite campus in Southeast DC. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

###