ARKANSAS COMMITTEE
NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS
35 YEARS
EST. 1989

Celebrating Our Past, Present, and Future

35 Years and Growing: Arkansas Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts

Gravitas, Lisa Krannichfeld, 2024 ACNMWA Artist Award Winner

Ed Dell Wortz (L) and Helen Walton (R)

The Beginning

The Arkansas Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts (ACNMWA) began in March 1989 when Helen Walton of Bentonville and Ed Dell Wortz of Fort Smith asked friends from across the state to join them in supporting the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) in Washington, D.C. With $2,000 from NMWA and $100 from each Arkansas Committee member, this group of dedicated volunteers set out with ambitious plans to boost awareness and appreciation of artists who identify as female.

Thirty-five years later, our mission remains the same. ACNMWA is a non-profit organization run entirely by volunteers committed to highlighting the achievements of these Arkansas artists and sharing the groundbreaking work of NMWA with audiences across the state.

Elevating Arkansas Artists

In October 1990, the Committee began planning for an Arkansas exhibit at the museum in Washington. Invited curators organized exhibitions of Arkansas artists, the Committee published a book featuring 30 Arkansas artists, and Grace Glueck, art editor for the *New York Times*, selected ten artists to exhibit at the museum in Washington.

This 1992 exhibition, which was the eighth in NMWA's series of state exhibitions, represented the first full-scale attempt at bringing national attention to women artists of Arkansas and set the stage for the Committee's future endeavors.

Summer Hula Hoop, 2021, Katherine Strause, ACNMWA 2023-2025 Juried Artist Registry

Meet Me in the Garden (Undone), 2022, by Heidi Carlsen-Rogers, Arkansas Women to Watch: New Worlds 2023

Bringing Arkansas Artists to the International Stage

ACNWA supports Arkansas women artists with exposure and recognition for their work, including:

Women to Watch

In 2008 NMWA introduced its *Women to Watch* program to increase the visibility of promising women artists who are deserving of national and international attention. NMWA has hosted six additional *Women to Watch* exhibitions, and an Arkansas artist has been featured in each of these curated exhibitions at the Washington museum.

Aimée Papazian represented Arkansas in the 2024 exhibition, and her work was chosen for the cover of the exhibition catalogue. In addition to national visibility, media, and curatorial connections for the artists selected to be exhibited at NMWA, the Arkansas Committee hosts a year-long tour of all of its *Women to Watch* nominees, introducing Arkansas talent to communities across the state.

After visiting NMWA for the opening of the 2024 Women to Watch exhibition, Papazian said, “I met such amazing people, and I was so honored to be in the show in the company of those other women. What stunning work. Thank you so much for the opportunity. I will remember that trip for the rest of my life. It really gave me a much-needed boost after a very difficult couple of years. I really can't overstate the effect it had on me, and it was an absolute honor to represent Arkansas.”

Which End Up?, 2022, by Aimee Papazian in New Worlds: Women to Watch 2024

Gut Feeling, 2020, Shelby Fleming, 2023 ACNMWA Artist Award Winner

Artist Award

The annual Artist Award is an open online competition, where the Arkansas Committee presents an unrestricted $4,000 award to an artist working in Arkansas. This may be used for expenses ranging from professional development workshop training, equipment, and supplies to research, travel and childcare. ACNMWA has honored 23 Arkansas women artists with this Artist Award.

"I was going to start my second wearable sculpture fashion line and rent a larger studio to accommodate my massive vision. Little did I know a week after being awarded the grant I would have unexpected surgery to remove my gallbladder."

Shelby Fleming, 2023 ACNMWA Artist Award Winner

College Internship

The annual College Internship provides a $3,000 stipend for an Arkansas woman attending an Arkansas university or college to complete a collaborative project with a mentor in an Arkansas museum, gallery or arts or cultural institution.

Life Cycle, 2020, Jessica Mongeon, ACNMWA 2023-2025 Juried Artist Registry

Juried Artist Registry

Every two years ACNMWA holds an open competition juried by an Arkansas arts professional for women artists to populate an online Artist Registry. Artists' images, artist statements and website links are featured on the ACNMWA website and in our social media posts for two years offering these artists exposure to thousands of viewers. More than 150 Arkansas women artists and their work have been featured in the online Juried Artist Registry.

Members of the Arkansas Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) and friends of the organization pose with then First Lady Hillary Clinton in the First Ladies Sculpture Garden during a visit to the White House in 1997.

Celebrating the First 35 Years

Today, ACNMWA has funding support for its major programs, a new website, active social media channels, and a talented and engaged board of volunteers. The National Museum reopened in October 2023 after a two-year, $67.5 million renovation, reaffirming its commitment to women artists. Located near the White House, this distinctive historic building and its collection and programs enhance the cultural heritage of our nation's capital.

The Arkansas Committee is celebrating its 35th anniversary with a series of "friend-raising"events across the state to share information with local artists, teachers, museum staff, former board members,supporters, philanthropists, and art enthusiasts. A culminating celebration lunch featuring NMWA Director Susan Fisher Sterling will be held in Little Rock in November.

SEATED: Garbo Hearne, Kate Faust Franks, Martha Hendrix, Mary Ross Taylor, and Mary Harding Talbot STANDING: Demara Titzer, Sarah Shell Teague, Jena Roberts, Debra Bennett Jackson, Kate Maurras, Virmarie DePoyster, Marjorie Williams-Smith, Marilynn Porter, Jeanne Parham, Mary Lynn Reese Not Pictured: Sandy Alstadt, Deborah Baldwin, Kinya Christian, Ashley Kemp Wimberley, Ann Jennings Shackelford, Anna Landers Swaim (Picture taken April 22, 2024)

Motherland, Tessa Davidson, ACNMWA 2023-2025 Juried Artist Registry

Laying a Foundation for the Next 35 Years

The Arkansas Committee has big dreams and a bold vision for the future. Exhibitions for free public viewing are the heart of our program. We encourage collectors and curators to view the works of Arkansas women artists and all art lovers to discover and support NMWA.

In 2025, we will continue to sponsor Arkansas artists for exhibition at NMWA, support college students with internships, provide funding to mid-career artists, and use our website to boost awareness of the amazing women creating art in Arkansas. We will also seek input from artists to learn how we can best support them in the future.

We invite to you join us in this work by visiting our website at acnmwa.org and following us on Facebook and Instagram.

For more information, contact Arkansas Committee President MaryRoss Taylor at sistex@aol.com; Advancement Chair Marilynn Porter at fluff7703@gmail.com; or 35th Anniversary Co-Chairs Kate Franks at k8franks@gmail.com and Jeanne Parham at jpar0513@aol.com.