Great Washington Museums Celebrate Great Women Artists is a collaborative city-wide project highlighting works by women artists in institutions throughout the nation’s capital. The program will feature an array of signature works being exhibited in 2012 that have enriched the distinguished collections of the Washington, D.C. region. This landmark program, in honor of the National Museum of Women in the Arts’s 25th anniversary celebration, continues and reinforces NMWA’s dedication to celebrating women’s achievements in the visual, performing and literary arts.

JOIN US! Celebrate Women in the Arts.
JOIN US! Celebrate Women in the Arts.

1. AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AT THE KATZEN ARTS CENTER
Lisa Montag Brotman, Cherry Wallpaper, 1981; Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 in.; American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Private Collection

Cherry Wallpaper features a masked nude, her back turned toward the viewer. She is positioned contrapposto, foot balanced on a pillow-covered ball, arm resting on an impossible one-legged chair before a red curtain with flesh-like red tassels. Cherries adorn a cloudy blue wallpaper sky, juxtaposing power and vulnerability. On view June 9–August 12, 2012.

American University at the Katzen Arts Center, 4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW www.american.edu/museum

2. ART MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAS
Amelia Pelaez, Blue Angel, 1945; Gouache on paper, 32 x 28 ½ in.; Collection Art Museum of the Americas, Organization of American States, Gift of Joseph Cantor

Amelia Pelaez (Cuban, 1896–1968) studied at the San Alejandro Academy of Fine Arts of Havana, then went to Paris to continue her studies. Upon her return to Cuba, Pelaez became an active member of the Cuban modern art movement, influencing the break from the traditional painting styles. She participated in the 1944 Modern Cuban Painters exhibition at MoMA in New York, the 1951 and 1957 Sao Paulo Biennials, and the 1952 Venice Biennial. In 1968 Cuba awarded her the Orden nacional “30 años dedicados al arte.” On view January 9–December 9, 2012. Pelaez’s work will be displayed alongside three other paintings by iconic Latin American women artists.

Art Museum of the Americas, OAS Main Building on the corner of 17th & Constitution http://museum.oas.org

3. CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART
Joan Mitchell, Salut Tom, 1979; Oil on canvas, 111 x 316 in.; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Gift of the Women’s Committee of the Corcoran of the Women’s Committee of the Corcoran with the aid of funds from the National Endowment for the Arts

Salut Tom, one of Joan Mitchell’s largest and most important paintings, is the view of the river Seine from her estate in Vétheuil, France, where the French Impressionist Claude Monet lived in the 1870s. Motivated by her mental image as well as the actual landscape, Mitchell redrew and repainted the scene many times, displacing the factual traces of her subject with abstract nomenclatures. Although she consistently denied being influenced by Monet, it is difficult not to compare Salut Tom to the French artist’s multi-panel vistas of water lilies. On view throughout 2012. Attend Saturday tours during Women’s History Month, March 17, 24, and 31, 2 p.m., to see featured works by women artists in the Corcoran’s collection.

Corcoran Gallery of Art, 500 17th St., NW www.corcoran.org

4. DAR MUSEUM
Ruth Henshaw Bascom, Frances Knowlton (1808–1885), 1830; Pastel and pencil on paper, 19 ½ x 14 ½ in.; Friends of the Museum Purchase

Ruth Henshaw Bascom (1772–1848), one of America’s best known folk artists, gained fame as a profilist. Her diaries, recording her travels, subjects, and interesting details of her work, are in the Manuscript Collections, American Antiquarian Society. Here she recorded the completion of Frances Knowlton’s portrait between March 4 and March 8, 1830. She also noted working on a portrait of Joseph Knowlton, the brother of Frances; this portrait is also in the DAR Museum collection. On view October 7, 2011–September 1, 2012 in By, For, and Of the People: Folk Art and Americana at the DAR Museum.

DAR Museum, 1776 D St., NW www.dar.org

5. DUMBARTON OAKS
Maria Sibylla Merian, Plate 20, Arbre de Comme gâte (Gammu Gutaa Tree with White Witch, Cocoon, and Caterpillar of Hawk Moth and Drops of Resin), from Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium, 1719; Hand-colored etching, 19 ½ x 14 ½ in.; Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, D.C.

The exquisitely detailed plates of Maria Sibylla Merian’s Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium depict the flora and fauna of Suriname, with a particular emphasis on the process of metamorphosis. Merian (1647–1717) sailed from Amsterdam to Suriname in 1699 and remained there until 1701, studying and drawing plants and insects that had not previously been seen or described in Europe. This book impacted European perceptions of the tropical New World, the life cycles of insects, and the manner in which illustrations could indicate natural context. On display January 2012–December 2012 in the Rare Book Exhibit Gallery outside the Rare Book Collection, in the Dumbarton Oaks Museum.

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1703 32nd St., NW www.doaks.org

6. FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY
Susanna Centlivre, The Basset-table, 1706; Folger Shakespeare Library

Susanna Centlivre was one of the first Englishwomen to make the theater a profession. She moved from acting to writing, turning out 16 plays. The Basset-table stars Lady Reveler, a young widow who earns extra money by hosting gambling at her home. In contrast to her are other colorful women such as Mrs. Sago, who “embezzles her husband’s stock.” The prim Lady Lucy sums up the difference between gambling and playgoing: “one ruins my Estate and Character, the other diverts my Temper, and improves my Mind.” The play will be on view as part of the exhibition “Shakespeare’s Sisters: Voices of English and European Women Writers, 1500–1700,” February 2–May 19, 2012.

Folger Shakespeare Library, 201 E Capitul St., SE www.folger.edu

7. HILLWOOD ESTATE, MUSEUM, & GARDEN
Firm of Maria Semenova, Korsh, 1898–1908; Silver, enamel, Siberian amethists, chrysoprase, and garnets, 8 in. long; Hillwood Estate, Museum, & Garden, Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (acc. no 15.89)

In 18th- and 19th-century Russia, women regularly participated in family businesses, including gold and silversmithing. However, it was not until the late 19th century that they began to register their own names and hallmarks. Maria Semenova came to the world of metalwork through her father’s workshop and eventually directed this firm. She frequently updated traditional Russian designs, such as this impressive korsh (drinking vessel) in the Hillwood collection. Her choice of stones and her treatment of enamelled flowers mark it as innovative. This work will be on display March–October 2012 in the Hillwood mansion’s entrance hall. Hillwood will also hold an exhibition of Belgian artist Isabelle the Beverghe’s paper costumes, June–December 2012.

Hillwood Estate, Museum, & Gardens, 4155 Linnean Ave., NW www.hillwoodmuseum.org

8. HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN
Agnes Martin, Garden, 1964; Synthetic polymer and colored pencil on linen, 72 ½ x 72 in.; Hirshhorn Purchase Fund and Joseph H. Hirshhorn Fund 2001

Agnes Martin’s abstract paintings evoke quiet contemplation through the simplicity of their geometric order. Although not a practitioner, Martin became interested in Zen Buddhism and Taoist thought in the late 1940s and early 1950s, incorporating ideas about discipline, meditation, and unity into her work. She
developed her signature compositions—subtle grids of muted colors on identical 6-x-6-foot canvas mounts—during the 1960s. In Garden, subtle tension is created by the red and green lines of the grille-like pattern. Typical of Martin’s paintings, a precisely rendered linear foreground balances a vast, delicately toned background, producing a harmonious structure and space. On view through spring 2012.

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Independence Ave. & 7th St., SW http://hirshhorn.si.edu

9. INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Olga de Amaral, Riscos calizos (Limestone Cliffs), 1988; Wool, 99 x 114 in.; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Art Collection, Washington, D.C.

Colombian textile artist Olga de Amaral (b. 1932, Bogota, Colombia) began her artistic career in Colombia in the late 1950s and studied textiles at the Cranbrook Academy of Arts in Bloomfields Hills, Michigan. She is one of the first artists in the 1960s to transform textile arts from a primarily two-dimensional representational art form into a three-dimensional, abstract art form. Her textiles are in significant collections around the world. On display from mid-January through December 2012 in the East Lobby, Ground Floor of the IDB main building. By appointment: contact Soledad Guerra, 202-623-1213, or Debra Corrie, 202-623-3278.

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Cultural Center, 1300 New York Ave., NW www.iadb.org/cultural

10. THE KREEGER MUSEUM

Martha Jackson-Jarvis, Markings, 2000; Concrete and steel, dimensions variable; Photo by Greg Staley, 2011

Dalya Luttwak, When Nature Takes Over, 2011, Painted steel, roots, and vines, dimensions variable; Photo by Greg Staley, 2011

Jackson-Jarvis’s sculpture, created for an exhibition inspired by Thomas Jefferson, pays homage to enduring stories embedded in the landscape with Markings, a narrative of the antebellum south, incorporating proportions of vernacular architecture and chicken feet. Dalya Luttwak created a site-specific sculpture on the museum’s tennis court, out of use since 1994. By painting existing roots and vines bright red and adding steel sculptures of roots, she concentrated her attention on what was there and no longer is, When Nature Takes Over. Both sculptures are on view in the Kreeger Museum Sculpture Garden through July 2013.

The Kreeger Museum, 2401 Foxhall Rd., NW www.kreegermuseum.org

11. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Dorothea Lange, “Migrant Mother” or Destitute pea pickers in California, 1936; Electronic scan from a 4-x-5-in. photo negative, original photograph ca. 8 x 10 in.; Image courtesy Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

The photograph that has become known as “Migrant Mother” is one of a series of photographs that Dorothea Lange made of Florence Owens Thompson, a 32-year-old mother of seven children, in February or March 1936 in Nipomo, California, using a Graflex camera. Lange was concluding a month’s trip photographing migratory farm labor around the state for which was then the Resettlement Administration. On view online.

To view the image, visit www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1998021539/IP or http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhtml/awpnp6/migrant_mother.html

12. NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM


Chloethiel Woodard Smith’s innovative proposal for the Washington Channel Bridge spanned from the Southwest waterfront to East Potomac Park in Washington, D.C. Lined with shops and restaurants, the bridge carried only pedestrians and shuttle busses. The design was nicknamed the “Ponte Vecchio” after the famous bridge in Florence, Italy. Smith’s proposal failed to generate significant interest among potential tenants or financiers, so the bridge was never built. On display November 19, 2011–May 28, 2012 in the temporary exhibition “Unbuilt Washington.”

National Building Museum, 401 F St., NW www.nbm.org

13. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Georgia O’Keeffe, Jack-in-Pulpit Abstraction - No. 5, 1930; Oil on canvas, 48 x 30 in.; Alfred Stieglitz Collection, Bequest of Georgia O’Keeffe, 1987.58.4

In 1930, Georgia O’Keeffe painted a series of six canvases depicting a jack-in-the-pulpit. The series begins with the striped and hooded bloom rendered with a botanist’s care, continues with successively more abstract and tightly focused depictions, and ends with what might be the essence of the jack-in-the-pulpit, a halode black pistil standing alone against a black, purple, and gray field. No. 5 represents an advanced point in O’Keeffe’s process of increasing detail and abstraction to discover the immanence of nature. On view through May 2013 in the NGA East Building.

National Gallery of Art, 4th St. & Constitution Ave., NW www.nga.gov

14. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

Nora Naranjo-Morse, Always Becoming, 2007; Mixed media site-specific sculpture, dimensions variable; Courtesy the National Museum of the American Indian

When acclaimed Santa Clara Pueblo artist Nora Naranjo-Morse created Always Becoming, it was with the intention that it erode over time. Composed of organic materials, the five sculptural forms, ranging from seven to 16 feet high, are nestled within the museum’s southern landscape, surrounded by indigenous plant life. According to the artist, the shapes are inspired by Native American architectural forms and familial relationships: “The natural materials…used to make Always Becoming symbolize the unique relationship indigenous peoples established with their environment.” On view outside the museum’s south entrance indefinitely.

National Museum of the American Indian 4th St. & Independence Ave. www.nmai.si.edu/alwaysbecoming/AlwaysBecoming.html

15. NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Alice Neel, Self-Portrait, 1980; Oil on canvas, 57 x 43 x 2 framed; National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, © Estate of Alice Neel, 1980; NPG.85.19

At the age of 75, Alice Neel began this shocking, endearing, and unconventional portrait, a project that took another five years to complete. A striking challenge to the centuries-old convention of idealized femininity, Neel’s only painted self-portrait is wonderfully suggestive of the artist’s bohemian, bawdy character. On view indefinitely.

National Portrait Gallery, 800 F St., NW www.npg.si.edu

16. THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

Georgia O’Keeffe, From the White Place, 1940; Oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., Acquired 1941

The impact of Georgia O’Keeffe’s 1929 visit to New Mexico was so great that the artist returned to the area almost every summer until she settled there permanently in 1949. For
3. SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART
Magdalene Anyango N. Odundo, Reduced Angled Spouted Black Piece, 1990; Ceramic, 17 ½ x 11 ¼ x 11 ¼ in.; Museum purchase
Magdalene Odundo’s works illustrate a deliberate association with African and European modernist forms, referring to world ceramic history and technique. She regards her subtle, elegant pieces as non-utilitarian containers of form and color. Odundo’s works are hand-coiled, scraped smooth with a gourd, coated with slips and burnished. The color is dependent upon the firing technique. Her black pots are stuffed with combustibles (wood chips and shavings) and undergo a second firing. On view throughout 2012. Also in 2012, the museum will host the exhibition Lalla Essaydi: Revisions, May 9, 2012–February 24, 2013.
National Museum of African Art
950 Independence Ave., SW
http://africa.si.edu

22. THE TEXTILE MUSEUM
Polly Barton, Arab Spring, 2011; Woven silk (double ikat technique), 92 x 16 ½ in., Courtesy of the Artist; Photograph by Wendy McEahern
Trained in Japan, Barton uses delicate silk threads, traditional dyeing techniques, and a narrow kimono loom to create luminous works of textile art. She painstakingly resist-dyes yarns prior to weaving, a technique known as ikat. Arab Spring was inspired by a Mamluk carpet woven in late-15th century Egypt, now in The Textile Museum collection. Barton felt “transported and displaced” by the carpet’s sensuous and refined color palette, as though she were “falling through the threads.” Woven of sheer, lustrous silk dyed in jewel colors, Arab Spring reveals varying patterns in different lights, carrying forward the idea of movement, travel, and the gesture of the artist’s journey. On view March 23–August 12, 2012.
The Textile Museum, 2320 S St., NW
http://textilemuseum.org

23. UNITED STATES CAPITOL
Vinnie Ream, Abraham Lincoln, 1870; Marble, statue 83 x 29 ¾ x 29 in.; United States Congress; Photograph courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol
Vinnie Ream’s statue of Abraham Lincoln is the first work of art commissioned by the United States government from a woman artist. Ream (later Vinnie Ream Hoxie) was only 18 years old when the Congress commissioned it in 1866. She had previously sculpted a bust of Lincoln. After making a full-size model for the statue in her Capitol studio, she took it to Italy for carving. The statue, completed in 1870, was installed in the Capitol in 1871. Lincoln is shown pensively at the Emancipation Proclamation in his right hand. Later, the sculptor contributed two statues for the National Statuary Hall Collection. On permanent display in the Capitol Rotunda.
Architect of the Capitol
East Capitol & 1st St., NE
www.aoc.gov

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National Museum of African Art
950 Independence Ave., SW
http://africa.si.edu

20. SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY
Sally Milgrim, Eleanor Roosevelt’s 1933 inaugural ball gown, 1933; Costume; Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History; Gift of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
This slate-blue silk crepe evening gown was designed by Sally Milgrim (1898–1994) for the 1933 inaugural ball. Embroidered with a leaf-and-flower design in gold thread, it featured detachable long sleeves. The belt buckle and shoulder clips are made of rhinestone and moonstone. Milgrim, known for her clothes’ quality and detail, began designing in the 1920s, adding women’s clothing to her family’s custom suit business, and went on to have stores around the country. On view November 2011–December 2013 in The First Ladies exhibition.
Smithsonian National Museum of American History, 14th St. & Constitution Ave., NW
http://americanhistory.si.edu

21. SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Nakunte Diarra, Bogolofánfí wrapper, 1990; Handwoven cotton textile with mud dye designs, 149 x 118 cm.; Department of Anthropology, NMNH, Smithsonian Institution; Photograph by James DiLoreto
The cloth depicts a traditional style of hand-woven and hand-dyed wrapped skirt worn by Bamana women in the Republic of Mali. The mud dye design is hand painted onto the cotton cloth. This design refers to marriage and the moving of a bride to her husband’s village. Nakunte Diarra, the artist, was taught this art form by her grandmother and her mother, and she has now taught her own children and grandchildren. On view indefinitely in the African Voices Exhibition, a National Museum of Natural History permanent exhibition on African Cultures, which features artwork by a number of African and African Diasporan women.
Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
10th St. & Constitution Ave., NW
www.mnh.si.edu/africanvoices

18. SMITHSONIAN ANACOSTIA COMMUNITY MUSEUM
Samella Lewis, Dance, 1964; Oil on canvas, 53 x 41 in.; Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum Collections; Photograph Susana Raab/ACM
Samella Lewis (b. 1924) is a renowned historian, critic, teacher, collector, and artist who has worked to define and popularize African-American art for more than six decades. Her extensive teaching and writing on the subject as well as her contributions to many museums and exhibitions have contributed substantively to the recognition and esteem of African-American art and artists. On view in the John R. Kinard Gallery, January 2–May 6, 2012 and July 28–December 31, 2012.
Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum
1901 Fort Place, SE
http://anacostia.si.edu