



The Newark Museum of Art Announces the Acquisition of *NOW* by Shahzia Sikander

*NOW is a Large-Scale Outdoor Sculpture with Institutional, Societal, and
Geographical Significance to the Museum*

April X, 2024 (Newark, New Jersey) -- The Newark Museum of Art (NMOA) is pleased to announce the acquisition of **Shahzia Sikander's** *NOW, 2023*, a large-scale outdoor sculpture on long-term display. A significant addition to NMOA, *NOW* will coincide with the debut of recent acquisitions and new surprises in the Arts of Global Asia galleries. *NOW* is an important contribution to the Museum's campus-wide plan and outdoor sculpture park vision. Alongside the artist, *NOW* will be celebrated at the Museum's Washington Street entrance on Saturday, May 18th at 3:30pm during the all-day [American Art Convening](#), which is open to the public and free of charge. In partnership with Newark City Parks Foundation, Inc., the block party will feature DJ Raed Ransom of YallaPunk spinning disco/funk beats with SWANA (Southwest Asia and North Africa) music.

A luminous artwork made of bronze and measuring eight feet high, the female figure represented in *NOW* nods to the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (with an incised lace collar around the figure's neck). Fittingly, *NOW* will stand just feet away from the newly named Ruth Bader Ginsburg Hall at Rutgers University, Newark, where Ginsburg was a law professor and whose commitment to social justice was an inspiration to **Sikander**.

NOW bears a historical connection to a painting Sikander created from 2000-2001, *A Slight and Pleasing Dislocation 2*, an unfinished work originally conceived as part of an expansive mural at Skadden Arps Law firm in NYC. The painted image re-envisioned the ubiquitous depiction of women and jurisprudence within the context of Western art history, refracted through a non-Western art history lens. The inclusion of a non-Western feminine figure wielding a sword was subject to censorship on the grounds of perceived violence in the aftermath of September 11, and Sikander was asked to remove the artwork. Electing to walk away from the project, Sikander found it notable that a representation of a non-white female wielding a sword was construed as inherently violent. More than two decades later, Sikander revisited the original painting as a conceptual springboard for the creation of *NOW*.

NOW is a meaningful addition to NMOA collection for several reasons. The sculpture complements an extensive Arts of Global Asia gallery rotation entitled Heroic Women, in which the contributions that women have made throughout history are highlighted. Further, *NOW* fulfills the Museum's goal to increase representation through artworks by women and artists of color.

<Linda C. Harrison quote>

“This momentous addition to our renowned Arts of Global Asia collection and its prominent placement signals to each passerby that the Museum is a place for everyone, both outside and in, where representation and diversity matters, and all are welcome.”

Upon learning that *NOW* had been acquired by NMOA, the artist wrote to Atteqa Ali, Ph.D., Associate Curator, Arts of Global Asia, who brought the sculpture into the collection, “I haven’t had such a big gesture of support from an American institution towards the acquisition of my work in many years (post 9/11).”

NOW will be celebrated during the NMOA’s American Art Convening, Changing It Up, an event filled with artist-led conversations and workshops exploring the evolving landscapes of American art and the innovative use of museum spaces. **Sikander** will participate in a panel discussion, “Artists and Museums as Worldmakers,” alongside Terence Hammonds, Erica Lord, and Bony Ramirez. Long after the celebration, *NOW* will welcome NMOA visitors to a host of Museum-sponsored events, including the 50th annual Newark Black Film Festival, July 10 – 17.

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About The Newark Museum of Art

We welcome everyone with inclusive experiences that spark curiosity and foster community.

Founded in 1909 and located on a four-acre campus in the heart of Newark, New Jersey, The Newark Museum of Art (NMOA) is the state’s largest museum and ranks twelfth nationally in terms of collection size. Global and diasporic, the collection includes more than 300,000 works from the ancient world to the art of today, including significant holdings of science and natural history. Visitor- and community-centered, NMOA responds to the evolving needs and interests of the diverse publics it serves by offering exhibitions, programming, a research library, paid internships, and local and global partnerships. Under the leadership of Director and CEO Linda C. Harrison, NMOA has launched an era of transformation to create an engaged citizenry by reimagining the role of the art museum for the 21st century.

About Shahzia Sikander

Shahzia Sikander is an internationally exhibiting artist who is celebrated for subverting Central and South-Asian manuscript painting traditions and launching the form known today as neo-miniature. Born in Lahore, Pakistan, Sikander earned a B.F.A. in 1991 from the National College of Arts (NCA) in Lahore. Sikander’s breakthrough work, *The Scroll*, 1989–90, received national critical acclaim in Pakistan and brought international recognition to this medium within contemporary art practices in the 1990s. Sikander received her M.F.A. at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1995. Over the subsequent twenty-plus years, Sikander’s practice, which has expanded to include paintings, media work, and most recently, sculpture, has been pivotal in showcasing the art of the South Asian diaspora as a contemporary American tradition.