

**Spencer Museum of Art to Open Major Exhibition Exploring the Pathbreaking Work  
Of Visionary Women Artists of Color**

*Exhibition to Feature Approximately 70 Works by Nearly 40 Artists,  
Capturing a Depth of Artistic Innovation and Its Essential Relationship to Social and Cultural Change*

**Lawrence, KS (April 3, 2024)**—In February 2025, the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas will open a major exhibition exploring the visionary work of women as well as several gender non-conforming artists. Titled *Bold Women*, the exhibition explores the myriad ways that women have pushed the boundaries of art and spurred critical social and cultural change across generations and geographies. Within this broad purview, it emphasizes the important contributions of Black, Indigenous, and global artists of color, LGBTQ+ artists, and artists of intersecting identity. *Bold Women* includes approximately 70 new and existing works of art in a wide range of mediums by some 40 contemporary artists, including **Elia Alba, Firelei Báez, Andrea Chung, Faye HeavyShield, Hong Chun Zhang, Shirin Neshat, Shelley Niro, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Ingrid Pollard, Shellyne Rodriguez, Cara Romero, Mary Sibande, Rose B. Simpson, Mimi Smith, Sonié Joi Thompson-Ruffin, and Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie**, among others. The exhibition also features several historical touchstone works to highlight women’s artistic innovations over more than 100 years.

*Bold Women* will be on view at the Spencer from February 18 - July 6, 2025. It is curated by **Susan Earle**, the Spencer’s Curator of European and American Art, in collaboration with a diverse group of advisors, including Lawrence-based textile artist and educator **Marla A. Jackson**, whose work will be included in the show; Kansas City community arts advocate **Rose Bryant**; **Dr. Kimberli Gant**, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Brooklyn Museum; Toronto-based Anishinaabe-kwe Indigenous art curator and artist **Wanda Nanibush**; and graduate-level interns and other students at KU. It is supported by numerous grants, including from the National Endowment for the Arts, RC Kemper Jr. Charitable Trust and Foundation, and Art Dealers Association of America Foundation. Most recently, the Every Page Foundation awarded the Spencer a \$25,000 grant to support the creation of new, site-specific work for the exhibition as well as loans from several artists.

At the heart of the exhibition is the idea of boldness, explored as a defining attribute of the spectrum of works created by the featured artists and as an indicator of the artists’ fearless efforts to challenge institutional systems and dominant historical narratives. In particular, *Bold Women* emphasizes the potency of feminist thinking and methodologies and examines the ways in which artists of intersecting identity have long shaped feminist action to drive essential social and cultural change. Through groundbreaking painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, textiles, video, and other distinct visual forms, the exhibiting artists have asserted personal and communal agency, reclaimed cultural heritage, expanded

common notions of history, and established space for themselves and their communities. *Bold Women* highlights the diversity of intersectional feminist visions as one critical lens through which to examine the relationship between artistic practice and socio-political advocacy and change. Equally, these artists have been instrumental to the development of art, deepening its possibilities through vital experimentation and conceptual thinking. The exhibition examines the significance of the formal innovations that pervade their work.

“Despite the recent art world focus on women artists and artists of color, the presentation and acquisition of work by white men still dominates the field. *Bold Women* explores and celebrates the depth and range of work produced by women, especially women of color and of intersectional identity, introducing audiences to their visionary practices and enriching our understanding of their distinct contributions to the global artistic landscape,” said Earle. “*Bold Women* also recognizes that women have long been at the forefront of both artistic innovation and social and cultural progress, even if their work might be new to museum presentations and collections. With this show, we are proud to rectify critical historical omissions and to bring greater scholarly recognition and public awareness to these compelling artists and works.”

“As a museum situated within a major research university, *Bold Women* also offers exciting opportunities to connect our campus audiences and broader community with artistic practices that engage a wide range of ideas and subjects,” added Saralyn Reece Hardy, the Marilyn Stokstad Director of the Spencer Museum of Art. “Art has always played a role in cultural, social, and political discourse, and the Spencer’s program has for many decades now sought to illuminate its significance to research and dialogue in various disciplines. *Bold Women* invites visitors to experience the work of an exceptional group of artists, fostering conversation about how creative practices can spur essential change well beyond the art world.”

*Bold Women* will be accompanied by a broad range of programs, with details to be released closer to the exhibition opening.

### **About the Spencer Museum of Art**

[The Spencer Museum of Art](#), located on the University of Kansas Lawrence campus, explores the intersection of art, ideas, and experiences. With a diverse collection of more than 48,000 works, the Spencer is the only museum in Kansas with contemporary and historic artwork in all mediums from cultures across six continents. The Spencer Museum facilitates arts engagement and research through exhibitions, artist commissions and residencies, conferences, performances, lectures, children’s art activities, and arts and culture festivals. Admission to the Spencer Museum of Art is free.

###

### **For more information, please contact:**

**Alina Sumajin**, Co-founder and Principal  
PAVE Communications & Consulting  
[alina@paveconsult.com](mailto:alina@paveconsult.com) / 646.369.2050

**Elizabeth Kanost**, Director of External Affairs  
[Spencer Museum of Art](#), University of Kansas  
[elizacat@ku.edu](mailto:elizacat@ku.edu) / 785.864.0142