

# explore LI

WITH SHOWS HIGHLIGHTING WOMEN AND VOICES FROM THE PANDEMIC, 2 LI MUSEUMS FIND A PATH FORWARD

**B2**



# State *of their* Art

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VIDEO

Audrey Flack speaks about women artists  
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NASSAU COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

"Heroines of Abstract Expressionism" fills a gallery with mid-20th century masterworks from American women artists like Audrey Flack, Lee Krasner and Elaine de Kooning.

# A CHANGE OF ART

Museums use fresh approaches to spotlight women, local art in the pandemic

BY MARY GREGORY  
*Special to Newsday*

**D**ue to the pandemic, museums everywhere have had to find new ways to exhibit art and connect with audiences while keeping everyone safe. Two major exhibitions dedicated to women artists at the Nassau County Museum of Art had to be postponed from July to November last year. Meanwhile, the Long Island Museum's annual members show opened on time, but online only. It's a tale of two museums and how they're adjusting.

## WOMEN MAKING ART

Through April 25, works by dozens

of women artists fill the entire Nassau County Museum in two groundbreaking exhibitions. They range from 19th century oils by Impressionist Mary Cassatt to a 2020 multimedia installation created specially for the show by Bridgehampton photographer Laurie Lambrecht. It took navigation and negotiation, but thanks to grants and gifts of PPE from the community, the exhibitions finally opened.

"Heroines of Abstract Expressionism," on loan from guest curators, Rick Friedman and Cindy Lou Wakefield, fills one gallery with a celebration of mid-20th century works from iconic artists like Lee Krasner, Hedda Sterne, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, Elaine

de Kooning and Helen Frankenthaler, all pioneering women who lived and worked on Long Island. "I've never seen such power on these walls," said museum director Charles Riley. "It's almost like these things are smoldering, like they're on fire."

On the second floor, "FEM," a separate superb survey of contemporary work, presents rich, varied voices of international women reflecting on cultural, environmental, political, gender, emotional and physical realities through art.

Bridging both eras is East Hampton artist, Audrey Flack. She's presented in "Heroines" through an early abstract painting, but better known for her luminous, allegorical photorealist paint-

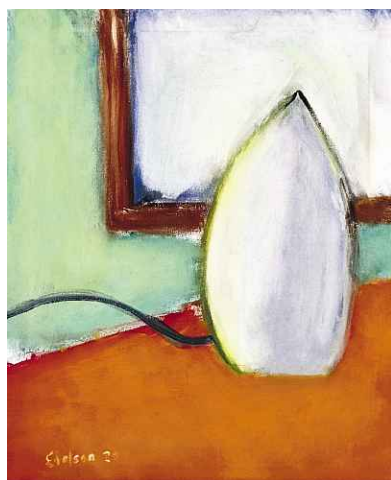
ings and powerful sculptures that celebrate female strength and beauty, all of which are highlighted in the 2019 documentary about her, "Queen of Hearts." Flack was inspired by the Old Masters, influenced by the Abstract Expressionist generation, and influential to those who came after her, including many of the artists in "FEM."

Like the rising acknowledgment for women artists, the exhibitions didn't arrive without struggle. Riley redesigned the show to run leaner and found new ways to reach audiences. "We have this lovely time ticketed approach, and everybody who comes in basically has a private museum," he explained. You can also see works on the website or take a video tour narrated by women who work at the museum. The exhibitions feature some of the most renowned women



LONG ISLAND MUSEUM / ALAN M. RICHARDS

Alan Richards' "A Rainy Evening in Midtown," on the Long Island Museum's site.



LONG ISLAND MUSEUM / PAUL EDELSON

"Homage" by Paul Edelson at the Long Island Museum's website.

### 'HEROINES OF ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM' AND 'FEM'

**WHEN | WHERE** Through April 25, 11 a.m.-4:45 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, advance timed ticket entry required; Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Drive, Roslyn Harbor  
**INFO** \$15, \$10 age 62 and older, \$5 students and ages 5-11, free age 4 and younger; 516-484-9338; nassaumuseum.org

### 'EVERY DAY: TRANSFORMING CRISIS INTO ART'

**WHEN | WHERE** Through Feb. 14 on the Long Island Museum's website and the LIMarts Facebook page  
**INFO** Free; 631-751-0066; longislandmuseum.org

artists of the modern era, from Käthe Kollwitz to Louise Nevelson, Kara Walker, Judy Chicago and Shirin Neshat. Said Riley, "It's a ravishingly beautiful show that's also an immensely powerful show, and the conjunction of power and beauty is one way to say, 'Look what women can do, have done and will do.'"

### 'TRANSFORMING CRISIS INTO ART'

In Stony Brook, The Long Island Museum faced different challenges. Its 14 buildings made it impossible to stay fully open while adhering to pandemic guidelines. So, executive director Neil Watson brainstormed with staff, and they came up with a hybrid approach, opting for partly open, and partly online. They switched to virtual educational and Alzheimer's programs, left the gates open for people to enjoy the grounds, and reopened some buildings when they felt it was safe. "The things we've learned are things that

will outlast the pandemic," said Watson.

This year, they decided on a virtual LIMarts member exhibition. "Every Day: Transforming Crisis Into Art" is online through mid-February. Seventy-two local artists, about two-thirds of whom are women, share glimpses of their days as artists this year in works as individual as they are. Eileen Palmer of St. James created a mosaic imbued with tenderness. "Just Breathe," is an abstracted image of lungs comprised of twigs and her grandmother's porcelain flowers. Paul Edelson, Mary Waka and others found inspiration in domestic scenes, while many turned to Long Island's landscape for inspiration.

Watson hopes to share the online show with other museums, giving the artists wider exposure. "Artists are our heartbeat. I always want to keep them at the forefront and see what more we can do for them," he said. "Good things come out of the darkest times."

**ON THE COVER** Artist Audrey Flack in her studio in East Hampton last month.

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