

# WHAT LIES BENEATH

— — — — — WOMEN — POLITICS — TEXTILES — — — — —

17th February — 28th August 2022

The Women's Art Collection  
Murray Edwards College, Cambridge

WHAT LIES BENEATH: WOMEN, POLITICS, TEXTILES brings together a multi-generational, international group of women artists and collectives, using textiles to comment on politics and society. Traditionally, the history of textiles is the history of women's work. Whether hung over beds, laid on floors or worn on the body, textiles have a unique ability to communicate collective histories and individual stories. Over time and continents, this tradition has evolved. From Chilean arpilleras to quilts from the American South, textiles have become a powerful way to shape identity, build community and prompt political action.

The exhibition brings together key works from the permanent collection by Miriam Schapiro, Perminder Kaur and Francisca Aninat, alongside major loans from artists and galleries. It features recent work by the Chilean feminist art collective, Memorarte, and the Tejedoras de Mampuján, winners of the Colombian National Peace Prize. It includes new work by Nengi Omuku, Anya Paintsil and Enam Gbewonyo, which blend traditional and experimental techniques, as well as important 20th-century pieces by Nicola L. and Stella Mae Pettway of the Gee's Bend Quiltmakers.



Memorarte, ¿Dónde están? *Where are they?*, 2018  
Courtesy of the artists

The artists in this exhibition use a range of techniques such as appliqué, knitting, quilting, rug-hooking, collage and fabric-painting. Many of these draw on traditional craft practices that have been passed down through the generations, from mother to daughter or in sewing groups. The works on display make powerful statements about gender, race and class. They confront issues ranging from global human rights abuses to the artists' personal experiences of living in the world. The exhibition's title is drawn from the work of Enam Gbewonyo. It evokes the practical use of textile pieces — quilts covering beds and rugs covering floors — while also pointing to the political subtext of the works and their multiple layers of meaning.

The exhibition is curated by Naomi Polonsky and Lorna Dillon with Koni Borowiak, Laura Moseley, Annie Roberts and Francesca Vella Bonnici



Anya Paintsil, *Blodeuwedd*, 2022  
Courtesy of the artist

## WHAT LIES BENEATH PUBLIC PROGRAMME

The exhibition will be accompanied by a public programme of both online and in-person events, including tours, talks, workshops, panel discussions and academic symposia. The events are free and open to all. For more information and to book tickets, please follow us on social media or go to our website:

🐦 @TheWomensArt

f @womensartcollection

[womensart.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk](http://womensart.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk)

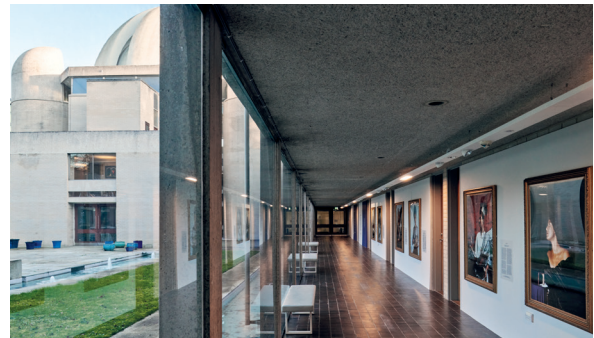
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## ABOUT THE WOMEN'S ART COLLECTION

The Women's Art Collection is Europe's largest collection of art by women. It includes 550 works by leading artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Paula Rego, Lubaina Humid, Faith Ringgold, Tracey Emin and Cindy Sherman. Founded in the early 1990s, the Collection challenges the underrepresentation of women artists in museums and galleries. In 2018, the Collection was granted Museum Accreditation by Arts Council England.

The Collection is displayed throughout Murray Edwards College, an iconic Brutalist building designed by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon as a



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manifesto for women's education. Today, we continue to celebrate and support women artists, giving them visibility and a voice. We stage two exhibitions a year, alongside a vibrant programme of events.

Art Fund



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