

SFMOMA revealed the works it acquired with proceeds from selling a Rothko for \$50 million.



Leonora Carrington, *The Kitchen Garden on the Eyot*, 1946. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchase, by exchange, through a gift of Peggy Guggenheim in honor of Whitney Chadwick. © Estate of Leonora Carrington / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Don Ross.

In February, SFMOMA announced it would be deaccessioning a Mark Rothko painting valued between \$35 million and \$50 million, in hopes that the proceeds from the sale would allow the museum to “make great strides in diversifying the collection.” In May, that painting sold for \$50.1 million at Sotheby’s post-war and contemporary art evening auction in New York; of that sum, SFMOMA received \$42.8 million. On Wednesday, the museum announced that it used those funds to acquire 11 new works by 10 artists: Rebecca Belmore, Forrest Bess, Frank Bowling, Leonora Carrington, Norman Lewis, Barry McGee, Kay Sage, Alma Thomas, Mickalene Thomas, and two works by Lygia Clark.



Frank Bowling, *Elder Sun Benjamin*, 2018. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchase, by exchange, through a gift of Peggy Guggenheim. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London. Photo by Katherine Du Tiel.

Neal Benezra, the director of SFMOMA, said in the press release:

This is just the beginning of what we will be able to accomplish with this fund, which allows us to broaden the scope of the stories we are able to tell in our galleries. [. . .] With these works, many of which are the first by these extraordinary artists to enter our holdings, we will be able to recontextualize our permanent collection and the Fisher Collection and expand the art historical narratives we share with our visitors.



Mickalene Thomas, *Qusuqzah, une très belle négresse 1*, 2011. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchase, by exchange, through a gift of Peggy Guggenheim. © Mickalene Thomas / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Katherine Du Tiel.

The acquisitions were spearheaded by Gary Garrels and Janet Bishop, two of the museum's curators. "Works by these artists have long been on our wish list," Garrels said in a statement. "We are thrilled that we can now finally make these acquisitions a reality." The newly acquired works will be shown alongside other pieces from the permanent collection in a show slated to open in late August.

Some observers criticized SFMOMA's decision to deaccession the Rothko painting. Last year, the Baltimore Museum of Art also faced criticism when it announced plans to sell off works by five white male artists so it could diversify its collection; it has since made a slew of acquisitions.

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