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## In the Aggregate: Women Artists, Museum Work, and the Paths We Tread

Annelise K. Madsen

"Birdella with letter / Signed / 1925 / fr." This typescript notation on a trimmed slip of paper, tucked into an envelope with University of Connecticut letterhead, offered a tantalizing clue (fig. 1). In a quiet room of the university library's Archives and Special Collections, I sat with this discovery, feeling a twinge of excitement but also a nagging "and so?" My research visit to view the Ellen Emmet Rand Papers had yielded something.<sup>1</sup> That must be the model's name! But then again, it was only a first name. And that slip of paper did not actually refer to the painting I was after. I began to have second thoughts. Could I call this a discovery? Or was it simply a near miss?

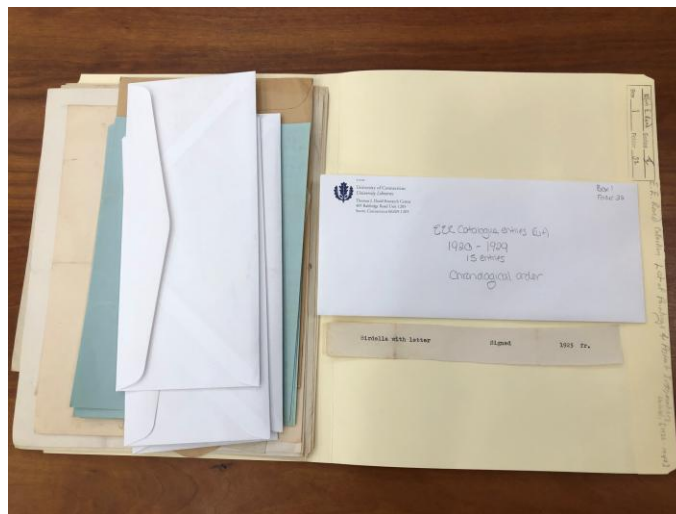


Fig. 1. "Birdella with letter," typescript on slip of paper, box 1, folder 32, The Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Archives & Special Collections, University of Connecticut. Photograph by author

I traveled to the archives in search of a fuller understanding of the arresting figure study *Woman before the Mirror*, by Ellen Emmet Rand (1875–1941), a relatively recent addition to the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago (fig. 2). Stewarding new acquisitions is one of the great responsibilities and joys of museum work. The Rand painting is in our collection in large part because I sought it out in 2018 and made a case for its inclusion. With long-standing interest in historical women artists, I have come to recognize that my efforts as a curator can make a difference.<sup>2</sup> At times, the steps feel small, the roadblocks large. Yet the push to shift and expand the narratives of American art in the galleries of the Art Institute—

indeed, across museums, among our scholarly community, and to outlets far and wide—takes us to new ground. The call to elevate women artists has grown more urgent in recent years, as scholars, museum professionals, and stakeholders in the art market and press critically examine predominant narratives and practices that have centered white male artists to the exclusion of a more diverse array of makers. Data-driven approaches to ascertaining the state and stakes of representation, such as the Burns Halperin Report, have amplified the trenchant inequalities that persist.<sup>3</sup>

I begin this essay with Rand and aim to articulate some of the lessons I have learned in treading the many paths that curatorial work uncovers. There is not a clarifying or “aha” moment in the archives to share here. Instead, I consider the ways in which various projects, together, add up to something important—from collections research, acquisitions, and gallery installations to exhibitions, programming, scholarship, and digital content. This is a story about finding one’s way, sometimes amid skepticism, partial answers, and slim resources, and, in turn, acknowledging the groundwork we can build for one another as we continue the essential task of valuing women makers. Rather than see the Rand archival visit as a dead end, I choose to understand it as one stop along a circuitous path—and a step forward.

Five years prior to my visit to the Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, my focus was on *Woman before the Mirror* and what it would take to secure this potential acquisition for the Art Institute’s permanent collection. From the start, I knew I wanted to go after this one. When I first saw the painting on a dealer’s website, it took hold of me. In a shallow space, a figure sits with her back to the viewer. Facing a mirror, the woman reveals her intense gaze in reflection. The portrayal is direct and assertive in nature. The composition features wonderful passages of Rand’s assured brushwork and vibrant palette, with purples, blues, green, and peach laid on in swift, painterly strokes. I felt a connection to the work—more on that in a moment—and I immediately started my research.



Fig. 2. Ellen Emmet Rand, *Woman before the Mirror*, 1925. Oil on board, 27 7/8 x 21 1/2 in. The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick G. Wacker Jr. Endowment Fund, 2019.711

Rand was among a group of strong women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that sought a level of artistic professionalism on par with their male peers. This she achieved, executing some eight hundred portraits over the course of her long and successful career, supporting herself and her family all the while, and exhibiting widely from early on. Born Ellen Gertrude Emmet in San Francisco in 1875, Rand relocated to New York with her widowed mother and siblings the following decade and soon pursued artistic training. After time at the Cowles Art School in Boston and the Art Students League in New York, she headed to Paris in 1897, studying there for three years. When she returned to the United States to launch her career, Rand, then in her mid-twenties, hit the ground running. She split her time between New York City and Salisbury,

Connecticut, securing important commissions over the next several decades and working hard at every turn. Her robust network of sitters would include writer Henry James, sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, among many other leading figures in politics, industry, education, society, and the arts. Rand's name recognition, well earned in her own time, faded in the years after her death in 1941.<sup>4</sup>



Fig. 3. John Singer Sargent, *The Fountain, Villa Torlonia, Frascati, Italy*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 28 1/8 x 22 1/4 in. The Art Institute of Chicago, Friends of American Art Collection, 1914.<sup>57</sup>

It was actually the surname Emmet that initially caught my attention when I came across *Woman before the Mirror*. A number of female members of the Emmet family pursued professional careers as painters, among them Ellen's first cousins—sisters Rosina Emmet Sherwood (1854–1948), Lydia Field Emmet (1866–1952), and Jane Emmet de Glehn (1873–1961).<sup>5</sup> They were a remarkable group of women, to be sure, and a ready network of support for the adolescent Rand as she embarked on training and a career of her own. In recent years, it was Jane who I came to know in the galleries of the Art Institute. She is the artist at work in John Singer Sargent's *The Fountain, Villa Torlonia, Frascati, Italy* (fig. 3). In her white painting smock, palette and brushes in hand, Jane is engaged at her easel while her husband, artist Wilfrid de Glehn, lounges nearby. We can imagine this plein air exercise: Sargent (1856–1925) portraying her amid the greenery and spray of the fountain, and Jane capturing a light-filled study of the surrounding scenery. *The Fountain* is a dazzling composition and fittingly captures this

transitional moment in Sargent's career, when he shrugged off portraiture and focused with renewed energy on land-scapes. Preparing an exhibition on Sargent a number of years ago, this painting was front and center in my mind. And, in turn, it brought the Emmet name back into my field of vision.

*The Fountain* was not my first encounter with the Emmets. That meeting probably dates to 1998 or 1999. As an undergraduate, attempting for the first time a serious piece of writing in the form of a senior thesis, I examined, in part, the public art program at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Rosina Emmet Sherwood and Lydia Field Emmet each painted a mural for the Woman's Building, *The Republic's Welcome to Her Daughters and Art, Science, and Literature* (both 1892–93; location unknown, presumed destroyed), respectively. Neither composition had a role to play in my project, but my research did uncover their names and artworks.

A decade later, I reconnected with the Emmet family and these two murals. I contributed a set of essays to *Women Building History: Public Art at the 1893 Columbian Exposition*, by Wanda Corn.<sup>6</sup> It was a wonderful collaborative project focused on this singular space at the fair conceived, programmed, and led by women. Reengaging with the material as a seasoned graduate student, I gained a nuanced understanding of the mural decorations, the cadre of female artists who undertook them, and the vocabularies they employed to scale up big ideas for their audiences and for themselves.

It was this personal pathway through the material that primed me to see *Woman before the Mirror* as an opportunity—and, importantly, to seize it. Rosina, Lydia, and Jane led me to Ellen. To put it another way, the Emmets form part of the genealogy of my scholarly work. My recognition of the opportunity was one thing, yet making the acquisition happen hinged on an essential next step: convincing others that the Rand was worth pursuing. One of the challenges of bringing overlooked artists into the collection is that the names are new to so many. How do you advocate to fill a gap in the museum's holdings when some do not perceive that a gap even exists in the first place? Fortunately, comments such as "is it good enough?" or "never heard of her" were minimal (yet voiced), and overwhelmingly, the various milestones in the acquisitions process were met with steadfast enthusiasm and support. With approval from the Board of Trustees in June 2019, *Woman before the Mirror* joined the Art Institute of Chicago's permanent collection and is currently on view in Gallery 178. It has been inspiring to hear so many positive responses from visitors and colleagues over the last several years. Rand's work is making an impact in the galleries.

My initial research enabled me to connect some of the dots in the story of the painting. In portraying a figure but not necessarily a likeness, what was Rand up to? The woman's fitted dress and its voluminous fabric do not suggest the contemporary fashions of the 1920s, yet the composition's close cropping and the interior's spare setting offer few additional clues. The painting is not known to have been exhibited, so we do not have press reviews or catalogues to consult. Another work by Rand provided crucial context. *The Sixties*, a large-scale painting likewise executed in 1925, features the same figure in her violet dress and feathered hat, this time positioned toward the viewer with her eyes cast downward (fig. 4). Intended for exhibition, *The Sixties*—referring to the 1860s—was a purposefully nostalgic and sentimental composition, highlighted by the woman's bustled gown and the threads of an unknown narrative contained in a letter in her hand.<sup>7</sup> *Woman before the Mirror* is both a related figure study and a finished work.<sup>8</sup> It demonstrates Rand's exploration of compositional strategies, resulting in this fresh, dynamic painting that is arguably the stronger of the two.



Fig. 4. Ellen Emmet Rand, *The Sixties*, 1925; original photograph by Carl Klein, New York. The Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Archives & Special Collections, University of Connecticut

Thus, when I came across the note "Birdella with letter" in the archives, I knew I had found the name of the model that sat for Rand—twice: Birdella with letter, yes, but also Birdella before the mirror. The artist had both paintings photographed, and the sole place in Rand's papers where the two mingle, so to speak, is in a folder containing a handful of images of 1925 works.<sup>9</sup> There was plenty of other material to sift through—diaries, correspondence, newspaper clippings, sketchbooks—but *Woman before the Mirror* and Birdella escaped further mention.

Archives can be tricky things. They reveal, and they withhold. What gets preserved is partial and contingent, rather than comprehensive and unbiased. Items get lost over time—or overlooked, or repurposed, or willfully discarded. As scholar Rebecca VanDiver convincingly demonstrates, the archive, as an object of study in and of itself, must be negotiated—especially in our efforts to recover artistic agency and surface stories that need telling. She reminds us, "As an opening, however, an archive does not promise closure."<sup>10</sup> Its materials are not straightforward evidence that we simply marshal and footnote in the course of an argument. It takes some doing to read an archive in relation to the questions we bring to it as well as those that emerge in the looking.

In the case of *Woman before the Mirror*, my visit to the Ellen Emmet Rand Papers at the University of Connecticut Library opened up new lines of inquiry but also left much up in the air. What more can I learn of Birdella? Knowing now that Rand had the painting photographed, what might we piece together about her intentions for the work? Did she exhibit it after all? What is the full history of the painting during the artist's lifetime and thereafter?<sup>11</sup>

In recounting this story of Rand, my aim is to acknowledge the difficulties and messiness at play in pursuing the essential work of elevating historical women artists across the museum and beyond. Indeed, I regard "Birdella with letter" as a discovery. It represents one stop along an extended scholarly journey, and I fully intend to keep moving and to do what I can to make artists like Rand matter to more colleagues, art enthusiasts, institutions, and storytellers. As a scholar and curator, I have come to understand the value of this work in the aggregate. Piece by piece, it adds up to something significant. Here are some of the lessons I have learned treading my own path, as well as collaborating with others, in the name of women makers.

### **Follow the Breadcrumbs**

Some artists blazed a trail all their own, but oftentimes where there is one woman artist, there are others. They studied and labored in community, built networks, founded professional organizations, and made strides together. Follow the breadcrumbs. Keep your eyes open and your memory bank serviceable. Sometimes when you are heads-down working on one artist, you uncover glimpses of another artist in the historical record. These can be moments when, as a researcher, you bookmark a connection or constellation of activity. Down the road, you might find reason to pick up on this trail and take your research in a new direction.

### **Ask Questions and Value Partial Answers**

Curiosity is a powerful agent of change. Even when the resources are scarce, an inquisitive approach to your artwork or material, combined with sharp investigative skills, can yield new knowledge. The effort may leave you wanting more, but those partial answers can serve as signposts along an extended inquiry and course of study. Unanswered questions have a way of staying with you. Later on, you may return to them with alternate strategies or evidence in hand, unlocking a way forward. To be sure, I have not quit Rand yet.

## Propose and Persuade

With each woman artist you seek to add to your institution's permanent collection, you will have to make a case. When I proposed such names as Julie Hart Beers, Theresa Bernstein, Abastenia St. Leger Eberle, and Lilly Martin Spencer, each was the result—like Rand—of considerable effort navigating the scholarly material. With respect to possible acquisitions, sometimes identifying artists worth pursuing, in and of itself, can be difficult. Often there is not a large trove of scholarship that you can readily consult.<sup>12</sup> The auction records can be slim, spotty, or nonexistent. An artist's body of work may be largely held in private collections rather than public institutions. There are hurdles, in short, to both information and access. In turn, you have to piece together period and modern resources to build an archive, gathering a critical mass of research materials on an overlooked artist. This involves both surfacing and evaluating sources, as well as ascertaining, eventually, what you have, what you do not have, and what is most crucial to seek out in order to make an informed decision about an acquisition opportunity. Additionally, sometimes you have to play a long waiting game to find the right object on the art market for the collection. In some cases, the next win can take years.

And so, simply getting to the moment of naming names can feel like an arrival. But then you must shift gears and begin the critical next step of persuading the various colleagues, support communities, and stakeholders that have a role in the acquisitions process to see the opportunity that you see. As curator, you are detective and advocate, among many other things.

Such efforts to propose and persuade must extend beyond acquisitions to include, for instance, an institution's calendar of exhibitions. Historical women artists deserve to be better represented among this highly visible segment of museum activities. It was a joy earlier this year to open *Georgia O'Keeffe: "My New Yorks"* at the Art Institute of Chicago, a project I cocurated with Sarah Kelly Oehler.<sup>13</sup> O'Keeffe has star power and, importantly, name recognition. But even for the most well-known names on the roster of historical women artists, solo shows can be a rarity. In Regenstein Hall, the museum's largest special exhibition space since 1988, there have been only three exhibitions dedicated to women artists, historical or contemporary, namely Mary Cassatt in 1998–99, Barbara Kruger in 2021–22, and O'Keeffe in 2024. We must continue the necessary work of conceiving, pitching, and mounting solo exhibitions on female makers. Let us give these artists their due attention, celebrate their work, and deepen the scholarship in the process.

## Look Where You Are

Our own museum collections are sites for learning and recovery. The story is familiar: what was once valued by someone in the institution—accessioned and displayed—has long been forgotten, relegated for years or generations to storage areas rarely revisited.<sup>14</sup> Take a hard look at objects off view to recognize and better understand what you have. Create opportunities for some of these works by women artists to make an impact once again in the galleries.



Fig. 5. Bessie Potter (Vonnoh) in her studio in the Athenaeum Building on Van Buren Street, Chicago. Reproduced in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 9, 1897, 373; Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress

For instance, a few years ago I was intent on finding a place for sculptor Bessie Potter Vonnoh (1872–1955) in our presentation of American Impressionism, bringing *A Young Mother* (modeled 1896, cast 1903) out of storage and on view. A pathbreaking modeler, Vonnoh built a formidable market at the turn of the twentieth century for her most celebrated works, domestically scaled sculptures of contemporary women. Genre studies as well as portraits, these singular figures feature swiftly modeled, active surfaces that convey a sense of immediacy and vibrancy. The artist and her work also illuminate a local narrative. Vonnoh (at the time Potter) studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, establishing a studio in the city by the mid-1890s and growing her national reputation from there (fig. 5).

After installing Vonnoh in the galleries, I realized that my efforts called for a second act, as there was a remarkable story yet to tell about the sculptor and our institution. I knew her works had entered the collection at an early moment—seven bronzes, including *A Young Mother*, were purchased out of a feature exhibition on the artist at the museum in 1914–15. But there was an earlier chapter to recount. In 1895 the Art Institute had accessioned seven other

sculptures by Vonnoh—all executed in plaster, her preferred medium at the time. And so I dug into our institutional archives to learn more. Among the fascinating discoveries: in 1895 Vonnoh, at age twenty-two, became the first named woman sculptor—and only the second woman artist—represented in the permanent collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. This is my kind of find! And so I shared these insights in a blog post.<sup>15</sup> On the heels of this deep dive into Vonnoh, we have moved *A Young Mother* into another gallery, where it plays a critical role in an introduction to the Arts of the Americas collection (fig. 6). From storage to gallery, archive, and online essay—this trajectory proved a productive one through the material.



Fig. 6. View of Gallery 161 with Bessie Potter Vonnoh's *A Young Mother* at left, The Field-McCormick Galleries of American Art, The Art Institute of Chicago

## Make Statements

For overlooked artists, the leap from storage to gallery is critical, but equally impactful in terms of visibility is where an object is displayed and how it participates in dialogues among a constellation of artworks on view. Look for opportunities to make statements—both bold and subtle—by means of your installation choices. In 2022 my colleagues and I reinstalled the Art Institute's permanent collection of American modernisms, embracing an expansive group of works and makers in our re-presentation of these galleries—one effort among so many that we, as scholars of American art, are undertaking at our respective institutions. The project got us thinking in new ways about familiar works, such as Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* (1942). In the prior installation, *Nighthawks* held pride of place on a freestanding wall in the middle of the gallery. With the reinstallation, we changed this dynamic. The freestanding wall is gone, and the painting now hangs on the rear wall, flanked by Gertrude Abercrombie's *The Past and the Present* (c. 1945) and Hughie Lee-Smith's *Desert Forms* (1957). This Surrealist context highlights the strangeness of Hopper's seemingly realist depiction while also bringing Abercrombie and Lee-Smith to the fore. Further, in an adjacent space, we debuted the recent acquisitions *Musician* and *Dancer* (c. 1939) by Augusta Savage, centering this energetic sculptural pair and opening up conversations with fellow Harlem Renaissance artist Jacob Lawrence (a student of Savage) and such Chicago modernists as Ivan Albright, Margo Hoff, and Archibald Motley in a gallery focused on entertainment, leisure, and everyday people.<sup>16</sup>

## Share Out

Let your audiences and colleagues know what you are doing, what your research has uncovered, which artists and stories you have come to value, and where you are headed. Make use of a wide variety of formats, methods of circulation, and scale: scholarly essays (like this Research Note), exhibition catalogues, and other publications, digital videos and interactives, blog posts, public lectures, press interviews, gallery tours, conversations with colleagues and supporters, and more.<sup>17</sup> Speak up and share your work.

## Build Resources for One Another

This is how it all adds up—the incremental doing and the continual sharing. We can pay it forward for one another. My own tough assignments in the past—amid slim resources and lingering questions—motivate me to contribute as I am able so that the next curator or researcher in pursuit of information on a particular female maker may find my work on a library shelf or digital platform and put it to good use for their own acquisition or study. We must continue the critical work of elevating historical women artists—forge our various paths, shed light on stories that matter to us, and name names. Let us give these artists and their works visibility, voice, nuance, and sufficient contexts and histories. Let us create pathways for a multitude of museum visitors, readers, learners, and art enthusiasts to connect meaningfully with an expansive array of female makers, today and tomorrow.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> 1920–29 EER Catalogue Entries (cut), Lists of Paintings, 1922–42, box 1, folder 32, The Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Archives & Special Collections, University of Connecticut (hereafter Rand Papers). I thank Kristin Eshelman, Jonathan Trinqué, and Alexis Boylan at the University of Connecticut for their assistance with the Rand Papers.
- <sup>2</sup> As a category, I understand "historical women artists" to encompass female and female-identifying makers whose careers were anchored several generations at a remove from our own moment in the twenty-first century. Rather than imposing a cutoff date of 1945 or later, I see the term as a positional one. As a scholar invested in writing and revising art histories, my relationship to the material is at play. For example, I consider Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) to be a historical woman artist. While our life dates overlap, she was active professionally beginning in the 1910s—and so there is a critical distance between her career as an artist and my own as a scholar. Notably, O'Keeffe took issue with the term "woman artist," wanting to be acclaimed instead as a great artist, without the qualifier. Nevertheless, I include her in the category "historical women artists," recognizing all the while that it is through multiple lenses on the material that we can work toward richer, expansive art histories; O'Keeffe, for instance, can be seen as a historical woman artist, as a white woman artist, as an American artist, as a modernist, and more.
- <sup>3</sup> In their 2019 investigation, Julia Halperin and Charlotte Burns determined, for instance, that works by women artists accounted for 11 percent of total acquisitions at twenty-six museums between 2008 and 2018. In their following report in 2022, that percentage held steady and did not increase (still 11 percent of total acquisitions at thirty-one museums between 2008 and 2020). Halperin and Burns further examined the category of female makers in 2022. Looking specifically at works by Black women artists in the United States, the percentage of total acquisitions dropped to 0.5 percent. Further, the collecting practices among the thirty-one museums skewed decidedly toward contemporary art. Of the acquisitions of works by women artists for which creation dates are known, only 2 percent represent works created before 1900. See "Women's Place in the Art World," *Artnet*, September 19, 2019, <https://news.artnet.com/womens-place-in-the-art-world>; and "The Burns Halperin Report," *Artnet*, December 2022, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/burns-halperin-report>. For another quantitative study, see Chad M. Topaz, Bernhard Klingenberg, Daniel Turek, Brianna Heggeseth, Pamela E. Harris, Julie C. Blackwood, C. Ondine Chavoya, Steven Nelson, and Kevin M. Murphy, "Diversity of Artists in Major U.S. Museums," *PLOS ONE* 14, no. 3 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0212852>.
- <sup>4</sup> For a recent study of the artist, see Alexis L. Boylan, ed., *Ellen Emmet Rand: Gender, Art, and Business* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020).
- <sup>5</sup> See Tara Leigh Tappert, *The Emmets: A Generation of Gifted Women*, exh. cat. (New York: Borghi & Co. and Olin Gallery, Roanoke College, 1993); Martha J. Hoppin, *The Emmets: A Family of Women Painters*, exh. cat., preface by Lydia Sherwood McClean (Framingham, MA: Berkshire Museum and Danforth Museum, 1982); and Emmet Family Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/emmet-family-papers-10250>.
- <sup>6</sup> Wanda M. Corn, with Charlene Garfinkle and Annelise K. Madsen, *Women Building History: Public Art at the 1893 Columbian Exposition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
- <sup>7</sup> Rand exhibited *The Sixties* at the National Academy of Design the same year it was painted; see Peter Hastings Falk, *The Annual Exhibition Record of the National Academy of Design, 1901–1950* (Madison, CT: Sound View, 1990), 430.
- <sup>8</sup> Along the bottom of *Woman before the Mirror*, Rand incised a thin horizontal line into the paint layer about an inch above the edge of the board while the paint was still wet or tacky. This suggests that she considered its cropping or framing around the time the work was completed. See Examination Report, Conservation and Science, Art Institute of Chicago. Rand signed and dated the painting at top right.
- <sup>9</sup> Photographs of Portraits, 1925, box 2, folder 22, Rand Papers. See fig. 4 for the photograph of *The Sixties* contained therein.
- <sup>10</sup> Rebecca A. VanDiver, "Off the Wall, into the Archive: Black Feminist Curatorial Practices of the 1970s," *Archives of American Art Journal* 55, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 41.

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- <sup>11</sup> As of yet, the earliest-known provenance of *Woman before the Mirror* dates to 1983, when it was with Rothschild Fine Arts, Inc., New York.
- <sup>12</sup> In the case of Spencer, an important body of scholarship and archival material is available, related, in part, to a solo exhibition mounted at the National Collection of Fine Arts (today the Smithsonian American Art Museum), more than fifty years ago. See Robin Bolton-Smith and William H. Truettner, *Lilly Martin Spencer: The Joys of Sentiment*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, 1973); and Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, 1828–1966, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/lilly-martin-spencer-papers-6072>.
- <sup>13</sup> A review of this exhibition is also featured in this issue of *Panorama*: Lee Ann Custer, review of *Georgia O'Keeffe: "My New Yorks,"* Art Institute of Chicago, *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2024), <https://journalpanorama.org/article/georgia-okeeffe-my-new-yorks>.
- <sup>14</sup> In some cases, the tale has a definitive ending in the form of deaccessioning. Sometimes we agree with those past decisions, and other times we shake our heads, recognizing what got away.
- <sup>15</sup> Annelise K. Madsen, "Bessie Potter Vonnoh, Trailblazing Chicago Sculptor," Art Institute of Chicago, January 3, 2023, <https://www.artic.edu/articles/1029/bessie-potter-vonnoh-trailblazing-chicago-sculptor>.
- <sup>16</sup> For our reflections as a curatorial team on the 2022 reinstallation, see Elizabeth McGoey, Andrew James Hamilton, Annelise K. Madsen, and Sarah Kelly Oehler, "Multiple Modernisms in the Americas: Old Favorites and New Stories," Art Institute of Chicago, May 24, 2022, <https://www.artic.edu/articles/993/multiple-modernisms-in-the-americas-old-favorites-and-new-stories>.
- <sup>17</sup> Sharing a few more projects of mine along these lines: "Hannah Brown Skeele's *Fruit Piece*," Art Institute of Chicago Essentials Tour Video, January 31, 2023, <https://www.artic.edu/videos/118/hannah-brown-skeele-s-fruit-piece-art-institute-essentials-tour>; Annelise K. Madsen, "In Good Company: Theresa Bernstein's *The Milliners*," Art Institute of Chicago, July 31, 2020, <https://www.artic.edu/articles/856/in-good-company-theresa-bernsteins-the-milliners>; Annelise K. Madsen, "#5WomenArtists: New Narratives in the Americas Collection," public lecture, Art Institute of Chicago, <https://www.artic.edu/videos/161/lecture-5womenartists-new-narratives-in-the-americas-collection>; Kyle MacMillan, "Adding and Elevating Women Artists at the Art Institute," *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 24, 2024, 44–45; <https://chicago.suntimes.com/art/2024/03/22/art-institute-chicago-adding-elevating-women-artists>.