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Hi-res images available upon request

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Determined Women: Collectors, Artists, and Designers at Hillwood

On view February 18 through June 18, 2023

Trace the evolution of Marjorie Merriweather Post's collection, through the lens of the valiant female collectors, artists, and designers within it

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The special exhibition *Determined Women: Collectors, Artists, and Designers at Hillwood*, on view at Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens from February 18 through June 23, 2023, will explore the innovative and intrepid female collectors, artists, and designers in Hillwood's collection.

Hillwood founder Marjorie Merriweather Post was an astute business executive, discerning collector, and committed philanthropist. As a strong woman in a male-dominated world, she greatly admired her predecessors—influential women who ran countries, inspired reforms, supported culture, and created art and design. *Determined Women* will focus on those who set an example for Post and future women by making a place for themselves and overcoming obstacles through their determination to succeed.

"Marjorie Post was a resolute woman, forging her way in a society where women were typically in the background," said Kate Markert, Hillwood's executive director. "This greatly informed her collecting, and while she is known to have had an eye for beauty and a taste for exquisitely crafted objects, her focus on female creators and subjects is a lesser known aspect of her holdings."

Presented in concert with the new publication *The Houses and Collections of Marjorie Merriweather Post: The Joy of It*, the exhibition is the first at Hillwood to share the stories of the women behind the objects in museum's collection, rather than just of the artworks themselves.

Women in Hillwood's Collection

Though Hillwood's collection is described as comprising primarily French and Russian decorative arts, Marjorie Post was long drawn to works of art associated with influential women. She had a wish for future generations to find inspiration in how she lived and what she accomplished, and Post



similarly looked to her forerunners, whose beliefs, power, strength, and courage continue to motivate today.

Post's collection at Hillwood illustrates the significant presence of women in arts even when their access to academies and official artistic institutions was restricted in most Western societies. Even though their artistic expressions were limited to certain forms and techniques, such as fashion, embroidery, lace, miniatures, and portraiture, which were considered by officials as appropriate for their gender, women still made an impact.

Post's interest in royalty has long been acknowledged, and her interest in Marie Antoinette and Catherine the Great recognized, but she also took notice of Russian nobility, such as Julia Samoilova and Elena Pavlova. Many of these women feature in portraits throughout the collection, in images Post juxtaposed with portraits of her own family members. A number of these portraits were also painted by women, such as Scottish artist Christina Robertson. Other artists, designers, and entrepreneurs in the exhibition will include Marguerite Gérard, who counted among the few women to display their art at the Paris Salon in the late 18th century; Pauline Knip, one of the few independent female contract workers at the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory; Anna Ringe, an independent silver work master who worked for Fabergé; and Maria Semenova, an enamellist who took over her father's workshop. Each woman will have a dedicated vignette, highlighting her contribution to the art world.

Additionally, Post considered fashion couturiers and interior designers to be artists, working closely with Frances Schwartzburg Spingold, Anne Lowe, and Eleanor Stockstrom McMillen Brown. She supported a wide range of inventive and daring women across a variety of artistic means.



Additional Displays

Contemporary pieces held in the museum's collection will appear in the mansion in dialogue with the works from which they drew inspiration. Created by Isabelle de Borchgrave and Cindy Sherman, these more recent works will be juxtaposed with the historic pieces collected by Marjorie Post and demonstrate the continued talent of women artists today.

Exhibition Organization and Highlights

Determined Women will follow Marjorie Post's collecting journey through the lens of pieces featuring, created by, or inspired by women. Nearly 100 items, ranging from the 1700s to today, will demonstrate the diverse artworks and experiences of women.

Organized into four sections, it will open with a feature on the Post family women, setting the stage by looking into Marjorie Post, her forerunners, and her three daughters, Adelaide, Eleanor, and Nedenia. Many of these earlier women played a role in shaping Post, particularly her passion for art. Photographs, portraits, and more will bring these important figures to life.

The exhibition will then present more than twenty influential women, as seen through their objects and portraits. These include saints, ancient and modern rulers, those that faced a tragic fate, women in the Age of Enlightenment, and those who fought against norms and conventions. During the Enlightenment, in particular, women found ways to express their voices and influence social progress. They were rulers, writers, scientists, artists, collectors, revolutionaries, activists, and overall models for gender equality. The seeds planted during this time, with the many achievements of women across Western societies, allowed for the expansion of women's rights in the following centuries, from suffrage movements, a cause supported by Marjorie Post, social progressives, the women's liberation movement, and feminism. The section will end with one of Hillwood's newest acquisitions, a contemporary ceramic piece with images of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Kamala Harris, and Stacey Abrams.

Next are awards honoring women—the Order of St. Catherine, the Lady in Waiting, and awards won by Post, including the Legion of Honor. Marjorie Post had a great interest in orders of chivalry and amassed a large collection of orders from different countries. These symbols were worn with pride at balls and events as part of formal outfits, and a display will feature orders and insignias exclusively awarded to women.

The exhibition will conclude with a look at Hillwood as a women's art collection and at the artists and designers commissioned by Post. In addition to searching for pieces through a female lens, Post actively worked with women, commissioning portraiture, fashion, and interior design work, notably for the interiors at Hillwood. Post's interest in women's achievements was not limited solely to her art collection, and she collected a number of books written by women who were pioneers in their fields, such as Madeleine Jarry, Inge Morath, and Dame Joan Evans.

Curator

Dr. Wilfried Zeisler is Hillwood's chief curator. He is a graduate of Sorbonne University and the Ecole du Louvre, Paris. Wilfried has written extensively on French and Russian decorative arts, including a 2010 book on French ceramics commemorating the French-Russian Alliance, several articles, and contributions to books. Wilfried's dissertation, *L'Objet d'art et de luxe français en Russie (1881-1917)* [*French Objets d'art and Luxury Goods in Russia*], was published in Paris in 2014. Since 2009, he has participated in and curated exhibitions in Paris, Monaco, and Washington DC. At Hillwood, his most recent exhibitions were *Fabergé Rediscovered* (2018), *Bouke de Vries: War and Pieces* (2019), *Natural Beauties: Exquisite Works of Minerals and Gems* (2020), and *The Porcelain Flowers of Vladimir Kanevsky* (2021). Wilfried co-authored *Konstantin Makovsky: The Tsar's Painter in America and Paris* (2015), and is the author of *Fabergé Rediscovered* and *Vivre la Belle Époque à Paris—Paul de Russie et Olga Paley*, both published in 2018. He is the co-author, with Hillwood's curatorial team, of a new book focusing on the collections of Hillwood's founder, Marjorie Post, *The Houses and Collections of Marjorie Merriweather Post: The Joy of It*, to be published by Rizzoli in October 2022.

Events and Programs

Determined Women: Collectors, Artists, and Designers at Hillwood will inspire an array of programs and events throughout the presentation of the exhibition. A special event timed to Valentine's Day, on Tuesday, February 14, 2022, will celebrate the opening of the exhibition. A spring lecture series will feature a rich array of speakers exploring a variety of topics related to female pioneers and women in the art world.

About Hillwood

When art collector, businesswoman, social figure, and philanthropist Marjorie Merriweather Post left to the public her northwest Washington, D.C. estate, she endowed the country with the most comprehensive collection of [Russian imperial art](#) outside of Russia, an [exquisite 18th-century French decorative art collection](#), and 25 acres of serene landscaped gardens and natural woodlands. Opened as a public institution in 1977, today Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens offers a gracious and immersive experience unlike any other. Highlights of the collection include Fabergé eggs, Russian porcelain, Russian orthodox icons, Beauvais tapestries, and Sèvres porcelain, and Post's personal collection of apparel, accessories, and jewelry. Thirteen acres of enchanting formal gardens include a [japanese-style garden](#), [rose garden](#), [French parterre](#), and an orchid-filled [greenhouse](#).

General Information

Location:	4155 Linnean Avenue, NW, Washington, DC Metro: Van Ness/UDC, Red Line (20-minute walk)
Information/Tickets:	202-686-5807 for information or www.HillwoodMuseum.org Facebook.com/HillwoodMuseum
Hours:	Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Mondays, most holidays, and for several weeks in January.
Café:	Merriweather Café is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Merriweather To Go, featuring a quick selection of sandwiches, salads, snacks, and beverages, is available Tuesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Suggested Donation:	\$18, \$15 seniors, \$10 college students, \$5 for visitors age 6 to 18. No donation is suggested for children under 6. Adults and seniors receive \$3 off the suggested donation for weekday visits and \$1 off for weekend visits when reservations are made online.

Members receive free admission to visit the estate during regular operating hours. To join visit <https://hillwoodmuseum.org/membership>
For more information visit <https://hillwoodmuseum.org/visit/opening-hours-tickets>

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