ALMINE RECH

Breaking the Mold
Brooklyn Museum at 200

Feb 28, 2025 — Feb 22, 2026 | Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY, US

The Brooklyn Museum Announces 'Breaking the Mold: Brooklyn Museum at 200.'
The sweeping exhibition, presented in three parts, marks the Museum's anniversary year by exploring the collection's rich history and evolution.
On view February 28, 2025, through February 22, 2026

From groundbreaking early acquisitions to striking new additions, the Brooklyn Museum's collection has long championed artists and artworks that catalyze imaginative storytelling and brave conversations. As the Museum commemorates its 200th anniversary, 'Breaking the Mold: Brooklyn Museum at 200' celebrates its unique legacy. Comprising three sections that boast long-time favorites and brand-new standouts, the exhibition brings fresh narratives to the fore while exploring the collection's rich history and evolution. Breaking the Mold is organized by curators across the institution, featuring works from all collection areas.

"This exhibition is a celebration of everything the Brooklyn Museum represents," says Catherine Futter, Director of Curatorial Affairs and Senior Curator of Decorative Arts. "As we mark the Museum's 200th anniversary, this exhibition contextualizes the current moment in our long, remarkable history as a premier cultural destination in Brooklyn, New York City, and beyond."

Three chapters— 'Brooklyn Made, Building the Museum and Its Collection, and Gifts of Art in Honor of the 200th'—examine foundational aspects of the Museum's story. Through works spanning time, geography, and medium, the exhibition introduces viewers to Brooklyn's artistic communities, the history of the Museum's building and collection, and recent gifts made in honor of the 200th anniversary.

Brooklyn Made pays homage to the borough's artists and designers from the seventeenth century to today. Beginning with a pair of Delaware Lenape youth moccasins to acknowledge the land's original inhabitants, this section journeys through time to spotlight works by contemporary Brooklyn-based artists such as KAWS, Duke Riley, and Tourmaline. Some works speak to the diversity of artists and manufacturers who have called Brooklyn home, while others consider outsiders' fascination, documentation, and exploration of the borough as a place with a provocative history and the subject of popular imagination. Spanning the Museum's vast collection, from decorative arts and design to painting, photography, and works on paper, as well as its immersive period rooms, these works illuminate the borough's rich histories, including those of its many immigrant communities. Presented throughout the space are historical and contemporary images of Brooklyn, depicting its performances, protests, architecture and design, landscapes and waterways, and, most importantly, its people.

'Building the Museum and Its Collection' features transformational artworks and archival materials that trace the development of the collection as well as the rich history of the Museum's famed Beaux-Arts building. This section highlights the acquisitions, people, and programs that exemplify the Museum's trailblazing engagement with the borough's communities and the daring vision that has made it a cultural touchstone. Through works from across collection areas, including pieces rarely on view, set alongside materials from the Brooklyn Museum Archives, visitors will deepen their understanding of the Museum's 200-year history.

'Gifts of Art in Honor of the 200th Anniversary' showcases extraordinary pieces of contemporary art, including painting, photography, video, and sculpture, given to the Museum by valued donors in honor of the 200th anniversary. Exemplary artworks by Robert Frank, Coco Fusco, Antony Gormley, Julie Mehretu, and Alex Katz are joined by contributions from influential artists working today in Brooklyn and beyond.
The works in this section reveal how the collection continues to evolve to reflect our changing world, and new gifts will be added over the course of the exhibition.

Additional gifts are on view throughout the Museum, including selections from the Dennis Freedman collection on the fourth floor, Mark di Suvero's sculpture *Sooner or Later* (2022) on the Plaza, and Liza Lou's *Trailer* (1998-2000) in the Pavilion. Find out more about the Museum's 2024 acquisitions, including those presented in this exhibition.