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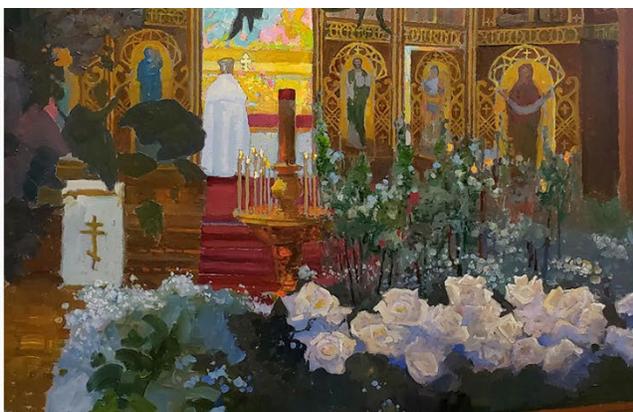
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**BOWERS
MUSEUM**

Two Summer Exhibitions Will Showcase the Talent of Artists from Around the World



Zondile Zondo, *I am ill, I still see Color and Beauty: Jamludi The Red Cow*, 2012, glass beads sewn onto fabric.



Peter Adams, *Paschal Glory: Russian Orthodox Church, Hollywood*, oil on panel, 30x24 inches

May 29, 2023 (Santa Ana, California) – Bowers Museum is excited to announce two upcoming exhibitions for summer 2023, *Ubhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence*, whose presentation at Bowers is made possible with generous support from PNC Bank and California Art Club's 112th Annual Gold Medal Exhibition.

Ubhle Women

Open July 1 – Aug. 27, *Ubhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence* is a spectacular overview of a new form of bead art, the *ndwango* (“cloth”), developed by a community of women living and working together in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The plain black fabric that serves as a foundation for the Ubhle Women artists’ exquisite beadwork is reminiscent of the Xhosa headscarves and skirts that many of them wore growing up. By stretching this textile like a canvas, the artists use colored Czech glass beads to transform the flat cloth into a contemporary art form of remarkable visual depth. Using skills handed down through generations and working in their own unique style “directly from the soul” (in the words of artist Ntombephi Ntobela), the women create abstract as well as figurative subjects for their *ndwangos*.



Zanele Muholi, *Portrait of Ntombephi Ntobela*, April 2013. © Zanele Muholi / Ubhle Artists.

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Ubhle means “beauty” in the Xhosa and Zulu languages and well describes the shimmering quality of light on glass that for the Xhosa people has a special spiritual significance. A single panel can take more than 10 months to complete.

"We are honored to have the opportunity to showcase the incredible talent of Ubhle Women," said Kelly Bishop, vice president of External Affairs at the Bowers Museum. "Their beadwork is truly breathtaking, and we believe this exhibition will be a highlight of our summer programming."

Ubhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence tour is developed by the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, Washington, DC in cooperation with Curators Bev Gibson, Ubhle Beads and James Green, and is organized for tour by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

This presentation of *Ubhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence* is made possible with generous support from PNC Bank.

"PNC Bank is pleased to support the Bowers Museum and celebrate the culture and art of the Ubhle Women," said Jarrod Ingle, PNC regional president and head of Corporate Banking for Orange County-Inland Empire. "The pieces included in the Ubhle exhibition are an avenue for the women to gain financial independence, which aligns with PNC's efforts to close the economic gender gap in our local community by supporting women financial decision makers through PNC's Project 257®: Accelerating Women's Financial Equality. Our local PNC team looks forward to a continued relationship with the museum and supporting changemakers in our community."

112th Annual Gold Medal Exhibition

A week after the opening of *Ubhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence*, Bowers Museum will also host the California Art Club's *112th Annual Gold Medal Exhibition*, open July 9 – Sept. 10, 2023. The much-anticipated annual showcase of Contemporary-Traditional artwork will spotlight 170 paintings and sculptures, selected by an esteemed panel of art scholars and artists, who reviewed nearly 600 submissions from nationally renowned representational artists as well as rising stars. To create the works for this unthemed exhibition, the 168 featured artists employed and modified the time-honored art techniques used by the founders of the California Art Club, who, at the beginning of the 20th century, inspired California Impressionism – the first artistic movement to be defined as uniquely Californian.

The artwork that will be unveiled at the Bowers Museum will feature picturesque landscapes that defined early Gold Medal Exhibitions, as well as grittier urban scenes and figurative works that represent the diversity of the Golden State and its fine artists, many of whom have immigrated from their native countries.



Therese Conte, *The Old Zoo*, oil on canvas, 36x24 inches

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“We are pleased to return to the Bowers Museum with our *112th Annual Gold Medal Exhibition* and showcase many new works in which our artists strive to innovate by finding inspiration in the unexpected, as we appreciate and learn from cultures from around the world,” says American artist Michael Obermeyer, the prominent Orange County artist who serves as the organization’s president.

The California Art Club’s *112th Annual Gold Medal Exhibition* is organized by the California Art Club in conjunction with the Bowers Museum.

Both exhibitions will be free with General Admission and accompanied by a full array of educational and family programs. For more information, visit bowers.org.

About PNC Bank

PNC Bank, National Association, is a member of The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC). PNC is one of the largest diversified financial services institutions in the United States, organized around its customers and communities for strong relationships and local delivery of retail and business banking including a full range of lending products; specialized services for corporations and government entities, including corporate banking, real estate finance and asset-based lending; wealth management and asset management. For information about PNC, visit www.pnc.com.

About Bowers Museum

Located in the historic heart of Orange County, Bowers Museum’s 9 permanent collection exhibitions showcase art and artifacts from cultures around the world. As the largest and one of the oldest museums in Orange County, Bowers has been voted ‘Best Museum’ in Orange County for the past 29 years by OC Register Readers. Partnering with world-class institutions, Bowers Museum’s featured exhibitions include blockbusters such as *Terracotta Warriors; Mummies: Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt, Treasures of the British Museum; and Guo Pei: Art of Couture*. Learn more and purchase tickets at bowers.org.

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