

## ARTnews

### The Met Awards Prestigious Commissions to Nairy Baghramian and Jacolby Satterwhite

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The facade of the Metropolitan Museum in New York featuring a sculpture by the Kenyan-American artist Wangechi Mutu. PHOTO BY CHRISTINA HORSTEN/PICTURE ALLIANCE VIA GETTY IMAGES

This fall, new, cutting-edge commissions will take over two of the most visible stages contemporary art has to offer: the façade and Great Hall of New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The institution has announced that Berlin-based sculptor Nairy Baghramian will make four sculptures for the façade niches facing Fifth Avenue, while Brooklyn-based multimedia artist Jacolby Satterwhite will fill the Great Hall with more than one hundred works that shift between sound, video, and performance. The commissions will follow Lauren Halsey’s highly anticipated rooftop garden project that opens April 19.

In a statement, Met director Max Hollein said, “We are excited to present major new works by Nairy Baghramian as well as Jacolby Satterwhite, two outstanding, innovative artists whose installations at The Met will challenge and expand our dialogue with the museum as a site of artistic discourse and community experience.” The artist selection testifies to the museum’s belated efforts to engage with contemporary art that defies easy categorization. In March 2022, the Met announced plans for a new \$500 million modern and contemporary art wing designed by the Mexican architect Frida Escobedo. The building is set to be completed in 2029.

Baghramian’s commission, titled *Scratching the Back*, is the fourth in a series that most recently featured works by Hew Locke and Carol Bove. Baghramian, who was born in Iran, has planned abstract, polychrome sculptures that “seem to have washed up like flotsam and jetsam,” the Met said in a statement. She won the 2022 Nasher Prize, administered by the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, and had a lauded solo exhibition at Vienna’s Secession. The amorphous forms on view there—what she has called “ambivalent abstraction”—were composed of disparate materials like glass, wax, and marble, and dialogued with the relationship between object and exhibition space.

Meanwhile, Satterwhite will be only the second contemporary artist officially commissioned for the Great Hall, after the Cree artist Kent Monkman in 2019. Monkman debuted two monumental paintings that recast classic interpretations of American history with Indigenous, gender-fluid characters. Satterwhite was a standout at the 2014 Whitney Biennial and more recently was commissioned to make an installation for the revamped David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center. His contribution, a video titled *An Eclectic Dance to the Music of Time*, paid homage to San Juan Hill’s roots as a predominantly Black and Puerto Rican neighborhood. “It’s not on a schedule,” Hollein told the *New York Times*. “We only do the Great Hall when we feel it’s right.”