



## Bechtler Museum of Modern Art reimagines its collection with immersive exhibition

***Collection, Reframed: We Are Here, Beyond Vision*** (July 2 - Sept. 22, 2025) blends art and science and redefines the museum-going experience

**Charlotte, NC** – May 28, 2025 – Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is redefining the museum-going experience with an ambitious multimedia exhibition that transcends the limits of visual art to engage multiple senses.

“We are delighted to introduce the inaugural presentation of Bechtler’s ***Collection, Reframed*** program, a summer exhibition series that invites contemporary artists and creative visionaries to engage with the museum’s holdings,” said executive director Todd D. Smith. “We envision this series as a way to create fresh conversations around the works in our permanent collection, which includes some of the most respected modern artists of the 20th century.”

***Collection, Reframed: We Are Here, Beyond Vision*** pairs immersive video and sound installations by New York-based artist [Janet Biggs](#), North Carolina-based dancer and choreographer [Davian Robinson](#), who is visually impaired, and a host of other collaborators with works from the museum's permanent collection. The result is a reflection on the human body in varied states – candid, abstracted, constrained, or in motion.

The exhibition runs July 2 to September 22, 2025, with the museum itself acting as co-creator of the work, rather than simply a display space.

Biggs, Robinson, and Bechtler’s Curator Katia Zavistovski began the collaborative process by asking: What is a museum and who is it for? What senses can we use besides sight to appreciate art? How do bodily limitations expand notions of what is possible?

Writing for this project, art critic Barbara Pollack suggests that “it is as if the museum has been reconfigured to be more inclusive of those who may not have perfect sight, or more likely, for those who do not have preconceptions of an art experience.”

The exhibition includes the following:

[Hidden Within, 2024](#) by artist Janet Biggs, spatial audio engineer Tanner Upthegrove, mathematicians Agnieszka Międlar and Paul Cazeaux, physicist Daniel Tapia Takaki, and graduate intern/artist Sarah Hammer. Four-channel video installation with spatialized sound and four vibration encoding reflecting pools.

The installation unfolds in three related segments: in one, Robinson uses echolocation to navigate spaces inside Bechtler Museum; another takes place in the Amazon headwaters of Peru; and the last features

Virginia Tech's elite Gregory Guard silent drill team. Each considers how information can be concealed, discovered and processed.

**Contra Naturam, 2024** by artist Janet Biggs and dancer/choreographer Davian Robinson. Three-channel video installation with spatialized sound.

**Contra Naturam** takes as its starting point a 1987 quote by William F. Buckley, Jr., a central figure in American Conservatism, regarding blind sailor James Dickson's solo attempt to sail the Atlantic Ocean: "...It is profane to suppose that a cripple can run, a deaf man hear, or a blind man see. ... Why would you take a blind man to a ballet? ... A ballet is to be distinguished from music because it is a form of dance. ... It is against nature, Contra Naturam ..."

Biggs's experiences as guardian to an aunt with autism have become central to her work, and in *Contra Naturam*, she and Robinson challenge Buckley's words.

**Data Sonification: Maja Godlewska, Barbara Hepworth, Pablo Picasso, 2025** by spatial audio engineer Tanner Upthegrove, artist Janet Biggs, dancer/choreographer Davian Robinson and mathematicians Agnieszka Międlar, and Paul Cazeaux.

For this sound installation, Biggs and Robinson selected three works from Bechtler's permanent collection to translate into sound: a painting by Maja Godlewska titled *White* (2004), a bronze by Barbara Hepworth titled *Garden Sculpture (Model for Meridian)* (1958) and a tapestry by Pablo Picasso titled *The Acrobat* (1968). To create the audio work, Biggs and a team from Virginia Tech took hundreds of high-resolution photographs of these artworks and converted that data into auditory representations of the objects. The resulting soundscapes are then spatialized, creating an immersive sensorial experience.

**Bechtler Walk, 2025** by artist Janet Biggs and dancer/choreographer Davian Robinson. MP3 file, MP3 player, headphones, blindfold.

In this audio work, visitors will listen to Robinson's journey from South Tryon Street to the museum interior: he encounters the iconic **Firebird** sculpture outside the museum, then makes his way to the lobby and up the elevator to the fourth-floor gallery. Listeners experience atmospheric elements and Robinson's stream-of-consciousness narration.

**We Are Here, 2025** by artist Janet Biggs, with A/R and motion design specialist Ethan Candelario. 18-page, 3D-printed and augmented-reality artist's book.

A 3D-printed book integrating augmented reality technology (A/R) serves as both an archival document and a sculptural object, capturing the exhibition's collaborative process. Imagery is printed in relief, inviting touch, while the text remains hidden until activated. Readers must engage multiple senses and technologies to uncover what lies within.

### **Selections from Bechtler Museum's Permanent Collection**

*Collection, Reframed: We Are Here, Beyond Vision* will feature over 60 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper that show the human body in various states of form and flux, highlighting both bodily capabilities and constraints. Representing some of the most pioneering artists of the 20th century – Alexander Archipenko, Edgar Degas, Alberto Giacometti, Henri Matisse and Andy Warhol among them – these works show the many approaches that artists have used to portray the human form.

## **SPECIAL PERFORMANCE DURING EXHIBITION – July 12, 2025, at 5 pm ET**

[Misregistration 2025](#) by artist Janet Biggs, dancer/choreographer Davian Robinson, spatial audio engineer Tanner Upthegrove, mathematicians Agnieszka Międlar and Paul Cazeaux. Multimedia performance at Bechtler Museum of Modern Art.

*Misregistration* is a dance performance that experiments with new, inclusive choreographic techniques, embracing the strengths of individuals with disabilities and incorporating touch, sound, and echolocation as alternative methods of communication. This performance premiered at Virginia Tech on May 1 and 2, 2025.

Further [captions and credits](#).

### **About Bechtler Museum of Modern Art**

Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, a gem in the Southern art landscape and in the heart of Uptown Charlotte, is devoted to modern art and its legacies. The cornerstone of its holdings are works by European and American artists collected by the Zürich-based Bechtler family and gifted to the museum by Andreas Bechtler and his family, who have long called Charlotte home. Represented here are some of the most influential figures of 20th-century modernism, including Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Barbara Hepworth, Pablo Picasso, Bridget Riley and Andy Warhol, among others. Opened in 2010, the museum is focused on the global scope of modernism and its continued relevance, with changing exhibitions that feature both well-known and underrepresented modern and contemporary artists. The museum building, designed by Swiss architect Mario Botta, features Niki de Saint Phalle's iconic *Le Grand Oiseau de Feu sur l'Arche* (*The Large Firebird on the Arch*) on its entrance plaza. Bechtler also serves as a hub for live music, artist talks, cocktail hours for young creatives and family events. For more: [www.bechtler.org](http://www.bechtler.org).

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