

Géricault, Mel Casas & Deborah Roberts Among Recent Museum Acquisitions

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The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) has announced a raft of recent acquisitions, and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York has acquired works by two Texas artists: Deborah Roberts and Mel Casas.

In an October 7 newsletter, Ms. Roberts announced that MoMA has acquired her large-scale mixed media on canvas work *Have a seat, this may take a while* (2025) for its permanent collection. The piece is currently on view in the museum's 53rd street entrance lobby. The collage depicts a young Black girl confronting an array of cultural icons and stereotypes, and portraying a fierce expression through an overlaid raised eyebrow.



Deborah Roberts, "Have a seat, this may take a while," 2025, 125 x 55 inches, mixed media collage on canvas

In the newsletter, Ms. Roberts said, "For me, entering MoMa's collection is not simply a professional milestone. It represents possibility. I think about the artists who came before me who were not given these opportunities, and I think about the young Black artists coming behind me who need to see that their ideas,

their histories, their bodies, and their ways of seeing the world belong within these institutions.”

Ms. Roberts received a Texas Medal of Arts Award for visual art from the Texas Cultural Trust in 2023.

Ruiz-Healy Art in San Antonio announced on Monday, October 19, that MoMA has acquired the 1973 Mel Casas painting *Humanscape 68 (Kitchen Spanish)*. This is the first artwork by Mr. Casas in the museum’s permanent collection. The gallery also announced in June that the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York had acquired another painting in the *Humanscape* series, subtitled *San Antonio Circus*. This piece was included in the museum’s recent *Sixties Surreal* exhibition.



Mel Casas, "Humanscape 68 (Kitchen Spanish)," 1973, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 96 inches

Humanscape 68 (Kitchen Spanish) was featured in a 2015 retrospective exhibition curated by Ruben Cordova at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center in San Antonio, one year after Mr. Casas died. In a 2015 article for *Hyperallegic* on the retrospective, curator Mia Lopez (who now works for the McNay Art Museum) noted that Mr. Casas was influential in the establishment of the GCAC. She noted that the *Humanscape* paintings “establish [Mr.] Casas’s distinct perspective as an American artist who worked within the Chicano movement, taking on topics such as identity politics, the war in Vietnam, the United Farm Workers movement, and other national issues.”

In its newsletter announcement, Ruiz-Healy Art describes *Humanscape 68 (Kitchen Spanish)* as addressing the “dehumanization and disenfranchisement” of Mexican American domestic workers, in the artist’s signature blend of pop imagery and incisive humor.



Théodore Géricault, "Definitive study for the Raft of the Medusa (recto) and Study of a man lying down, left arm raised (verso)," c. 1818, pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white on laid paper. Courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

The MFAH has acquired hundreds of artworks so far in 2026. In a September announcement, the museum noted several highlights, including a double-sided drawing, *Definitive study for the Raft of the Medusa (recto) and Study of a man lying down, left arm raised (verso)* (c. 1818), by French Romantic artist Théodore Géricault. Fellow artist Eugène Delacroix served as the model for one of the figures in the iconic painting.

The MFAH also acquired a marble table inlaid with jewels commissioned by famed Renaissance-era Italian art patron Cosimo II de' Medici, to go on view in the museum's European galleries this fall; *Lady on a Red Sofa* (c. 1820-25) by 19th-century African American artist Joshua Johnson, and *Her Sadness [Sattristesse]* (1923) by Polish emigré modernist painter Tamara de Lempicka, acquired following the museum's 2025 exhibition of her work.

A full list of the MFAH's 2026 acquisitions can be found on the museum's website.