

# HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

## 15 Best Artist Retrospectives of 2015

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In the art world, it seems 2015 was the year of the underdog. In and among the blockbusters and biennials, there were a great number of retrospectives devoted to artists who have long been under-rated, under-valued, and under-recognized for their achievements. Here are our top 15 retrospectives of artists whom we were glad to see get their due.



Melvin Edwards, *Ame Eghan (Rocker)*, 1975. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, © 2015 Melvin Edwards / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

### **Melvin Edwards: Five Decades**

Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas

January 31 - May 10, 2015

Zimmerli Art Museum, New Brunswick, NJ

September 1, 2015 - January 10, 2016

Labeled in 1988 "one of the best American sculptors... [and] one of the least known," Melvin Edwards' best-known works are his Lynch Fragments--welded steel sculptures that address the struggle for civil rights and the turmoil of the 1960s and 70s in abstract compositions of chains, railroad ties, barbed wire, and other implements of labor and war.



Barbara Kasten: *Stages*, 2015, installation view, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania. Photo: Constance Mensh.

### **Barbara Kasten: Stages**

Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia

February 4 - August 16, 2015

As we wrote [in a feature earlier this year](#), [Barbara Kasten's work](#) has been subject to a long overdue renaissance lately, partly due to the resurgence of interest in her work by young photographers and sculptors who are finding parallels in their methods of making, rather than taking, photographs.



Doris Salcedo, *Plegaria Muda* (detail), 2008-10. Inhotim Collection, Brazil. Photo: Nathan Keay, © MCA Chicago.

### **Doris Salcedo**

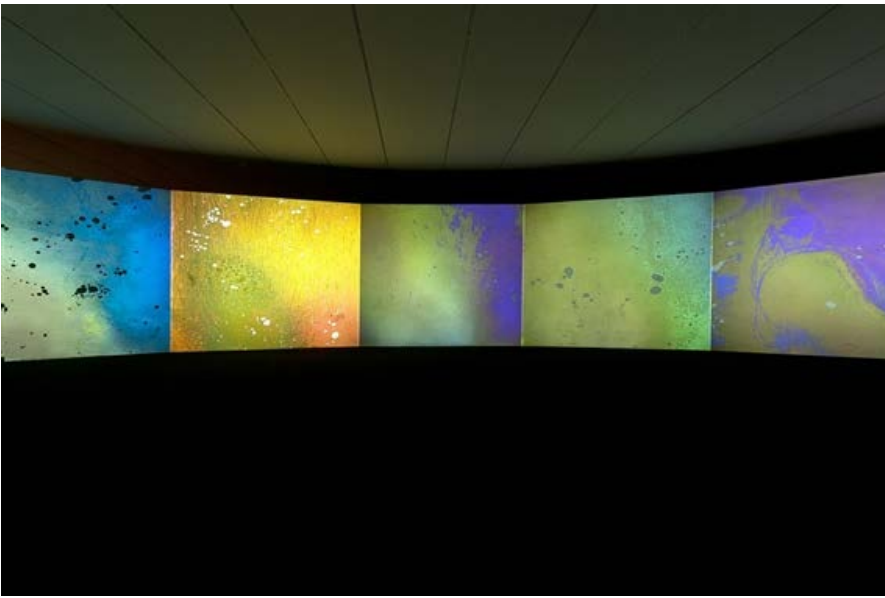
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

February 21 - May 4, 2015

Guggenheim Museum, New York

June 26 - October 12, 2015

Colombian [artist Doris Salcedo](#) first gained renown in the 1990s for her powerful sculptures and installations that express the loss and trauma of political violence. This year marks her very first museum retrospective, allowing a new generation of viewers the opportunity to fall in love with her works all over again. Read our previous coverage of the exhibition [here](#).



Gustav Metzger, *Supportive (detail)*, 1966-2011. Collection of Musee d'art contemporain, Lyon. Courtesy: MAC Lyon © Photo: Blaise Adilon.

### **Act or Perish. Gustav Metzger--a retrospective**

Centre of Contemporary Art in Toruń, Poland

March 27 - August 30, 2015

Kunsthall Oslo and Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo

November 14, 2015 - January 31, 2016

Fluxus member, conceptual artist, environmental and anti-war activist, art historical researcher, countercultural icon--Gustav Metzger's curriculum vitae is as multi-faceted as it is astounding. This ambitious retrospective began in March with a large survey of his works in Toruń, Poland, and continues in Oslo with more in-depth presentations and recreations of Metzger's experiments in kinetic art using materials like hydrochloric acid, nylon, glass, water, heat, and light.



Carol Rama, *Lusinghe*, 2003. Collection Charles Asprey, London. © Archivio Carol Rama, Turin. Photo: Andy Keate.

### **The Passion According to Carol Rama**

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris

April 3 - July 12, 2015

Self-taught, straddling the figurative and the abstract, inciting the censors--Italian artist Carol Rama made art against the grain of the modernist narrative of her time, a kind of "queer Arte Povera." Her distinctive work has come to be reappraised in the 21st century, appearing in the Venice Biennale in 2003 (where it won the Golden Lion award) and again in 2013, and now in this major survey in Paris.



Ree Morton, *Sister Perpetua's Lie*, 1973. Installation view, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2015. Collection Generali Foundation, on permanent loan to Museum der Moderne, Salzburg. Courtesy of Museo Reina Sofia.

### **Ree Morton: Be a Place, Place an Image, Imagine a Poem**

Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid

May 20 - September 28, 2015

Ree Morton's artistic career began relatively late and was tragically cut short, when the artist died in a car accident, in 1977. However, in a span of just eight years, she amassed an intellectually engaging and semiotically complex oeuvre of sculpture, painting, and installation works, surveyed in its entirety, for the first time since 1980, at the Reina Sofia.



Noah Purifoy, *Black, Brown and Beige (After Duke Ellington)*, 1989. Sue A. Welsh Collection. © Noah Purifoy Foundation. Photo: Noah Purifoy Foundation, by Seamus O'Dubslaine.

### **Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada**

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

June 7, 2015 - January 3, 2016

Noah Purifoy's sculptures and assemblages made of salvaged materials--whether constructed out of detritus found near the artist's Mojave desert refuge, or out of the wreckage of the Watts riots--bear witness to the multi-layered histories of the people and places from which they were collected. This spectacular survey of Purifoy's complex, politically charged, and, until now, largely hidden oeuvre is a total revelation.



Sarah Charlesworth: *Doubleworld*, 2015. Courtesy New Museum, New York. Photo: Maris Hutchinson / EPW Studio.

### **Sarah Charlesworth: Doubleworld**

New Museum, New York

June 24 - September 20, 2015

One of the lesser-known members of the "Pictures Generation," Sarah Charlesworth's recent retrospective at the New Museum helped rectify that omission at a time when her work--precise, conceptual photography investigating the role of images in our culture--is more relevant than ever.



Installation view of Barbara Hepworth: *Sculpture for a Modern World* at Tate Britain with Barbara Hepworth's *Pelagos*, 1946. © Bowness. Courtesy Olivia Hemingway, Tate Photography.

### **Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture for a Modern World**

Tate Britain, London

June 24 -October 25, 2015

Critics disliked the vitrined presentation of Barbara Hepworth's work at the Tate Britain this year, but all agreed that a retrospective of the British artist's lyrical modern sculptures--her last major exhibition in London was more than 50 years ago--was long overdue.





Gustave Caillebotte, *The Floor Scrapers*, 1875. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Gift of Caillebotte's heirs through the intermediary of Auguste Renoir, 1894.

### **Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye**

National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C

June 28 - October 4, 2015

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

November 8, 2015 - February 14, 2016

The most underrated Impressionist, Caillebotte was known only for a few of his distinctive street scenes of Paris and his peculiarly photographic perspective on painting. This celebrated retrospective introduces audiences to Caillebotte's wide-ranging and accomplished oeuvre, and it is absolutely enthralling.



Sheila Hicks, installation view, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 2015. Photo: David Johnson.

### **Sheila Hicks**

Contemporary Art Museum, St Louis

September 11 - December 27, 2015

One of the first artists to launch textiles out of the world of craft and into the realm of fine arts, American-born, Paris-based artist Sheila Hicks should be much better known in the United States. This exhibition brings together a wide range of her sensuous abstract fiber-based installations and sculptures from the 1960s to the present day.



David Diao, *Lying 1*, 2000. Courtesy the artist and Postmasters Gallery.

### **David Diao**

Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing  
September 19 - November 14, 2015

Since the 1960s, David Diao has made work in a self-aware dialogue with art history, art market forces, and personal experience, in characteristically self-effacing, droll manner. In one recent work, he anticipated his retrospective by painting an invitation to "David Diao: 40 Years of His Art." The exhibition at the UCCA brings together 115 of his works, the artist's largest exhibition to date, in a thought-provoking survey.



### **Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun**

Grand Palais, Paris

September 23, 2015 - January 11, 2016

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

February 15 - May 15, 2016

It is hard to imagine that France has never before staged a retrospective of court painter and official portraitist of Marie Antoinette, Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun. Following the French Revolution, Vigée Le Brun fled France and proceeded to paint the aristocracy from Italy to Russia, becoming the most famous portraitist in Europe, painting over 600 portraits over her illustrious career.



Joaquín Torres-García, *Construcción en blanco y negro* (*Construction in white and black*), 1938. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © Sucesión Joaquín Torres-García, Montevideo 2015. Photo: Thomas Griesel.

### **Joaquín Torres-García: The Arcadian Modern**

Museum of Modern Art, New York

October 25, 2015 - February 15, 2016

Uruguayan avant-gardist Joaquín Torres-García--an influential artist and philosopher who made his mark in Europe and subsequently established modernist art back in South America--is "a modernist classic, but an elusive one," as Holland Cotter recently named him in the New York Times. This retrospective at MoMA is a well-timed revival of this transnational artist.



