Holiness and the Feminine Spirit
THE ART OF
JANET MCKENZIE

September 17–October 19, 2012
Kresge Theatre Lobby, Fifth Floor, Grace Library
About the Artist

Janet McKenzie is a native New Yorker, born in Brooklyn and raised in and around New York City. She now lives in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

McKenzie studied at the Fashion Institute of Technology (NYC) and the Art Students League (NYC) on scholarships (Merit, Arnold Blanch). She was the recipient of the Edward McDowell Traveling Scholarship, which sent her to Europe for a year to study and travel. At the time, she was one of the youngest recipients of the McDowell, which is the Art Students League's most prestigious award. After returning to New York, the League gave McKenzie her first solo show. Since that time she has focused her life's work primarily on the subject of women.

The artist's devotion and commitment to imagery of women has, in many ways, to do with the loss of her mother and grandmother at an early point in her life. She realized that their journey—all women's really—was interwoven and linked together. She grew to believe that her work would serve as a symbolic voice for women who were not able to speak for themselves.

In the mid-1990s, McKenzie began to incorporate diversity, children, and symbolic imagery into her work with women. At the same time, the need to explore a sacred voice within her work surfaced, partly influenced by time spent in New Mexico.

McKenzie's painting, "Jesus of the People," was selected as the winner of the National Catholic Reporter's competition for a new image of Jesus at the Millennium by judge, Sister Wendy Beckett, art historian and BBC television host. Her interpretation of Jesus pays homage to two groups usually left out of such imagery, African Americans and women. In the words of Sister Wendy, "This is a haunting image of a peasant Jesus—dark, thick-lipped, looking out on us with ineffable dignity, with sadness but with confidence. Over His white robe He draws the darkness of our lack of love, holding it to Himself, prepared to transform all sorrows if we will let Him."

The Paintings

Jesus of the People  30"x48"
The Inspiration of Saint Monica  36"x48"
The Visitation  34"x48"
Sacred Madonna and Child  36"x48"
Mary, A Mother's Sorrow  30"x54"
Keepers of Love  42"x54"
The Shroud  48"x46"
Pieta  48"x24"
Woman Offered #5  24"x48"
Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton  34"x48"
Stillness  54"x44"
Annunciation  36"x48"
Magna Mater  30"x54"
Cry Haiti  24"x48"

All paintings are oil on canvas and are part of the private collection of the artist.

Please visit www.janetmckenzie.com to learn more about Janet McKenzie and her work.

McKenzie's book, Holiness and the Feminine Spirit: The Art of Janet McKenzie, will be on sale throughout the show.