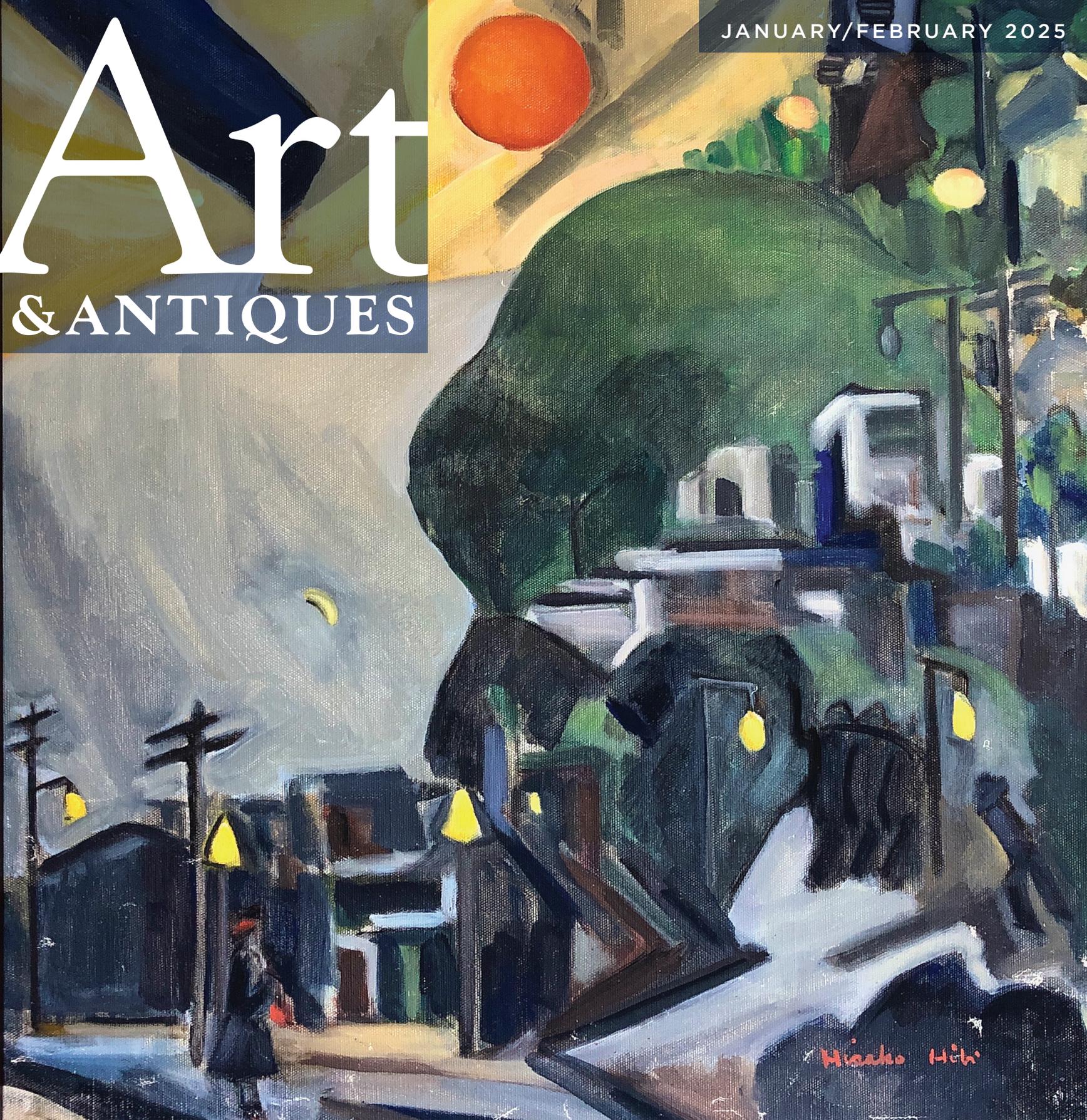


JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

Art & ANTIQUES



JAPANESE-AMERICAN WOMEN ARTISTS

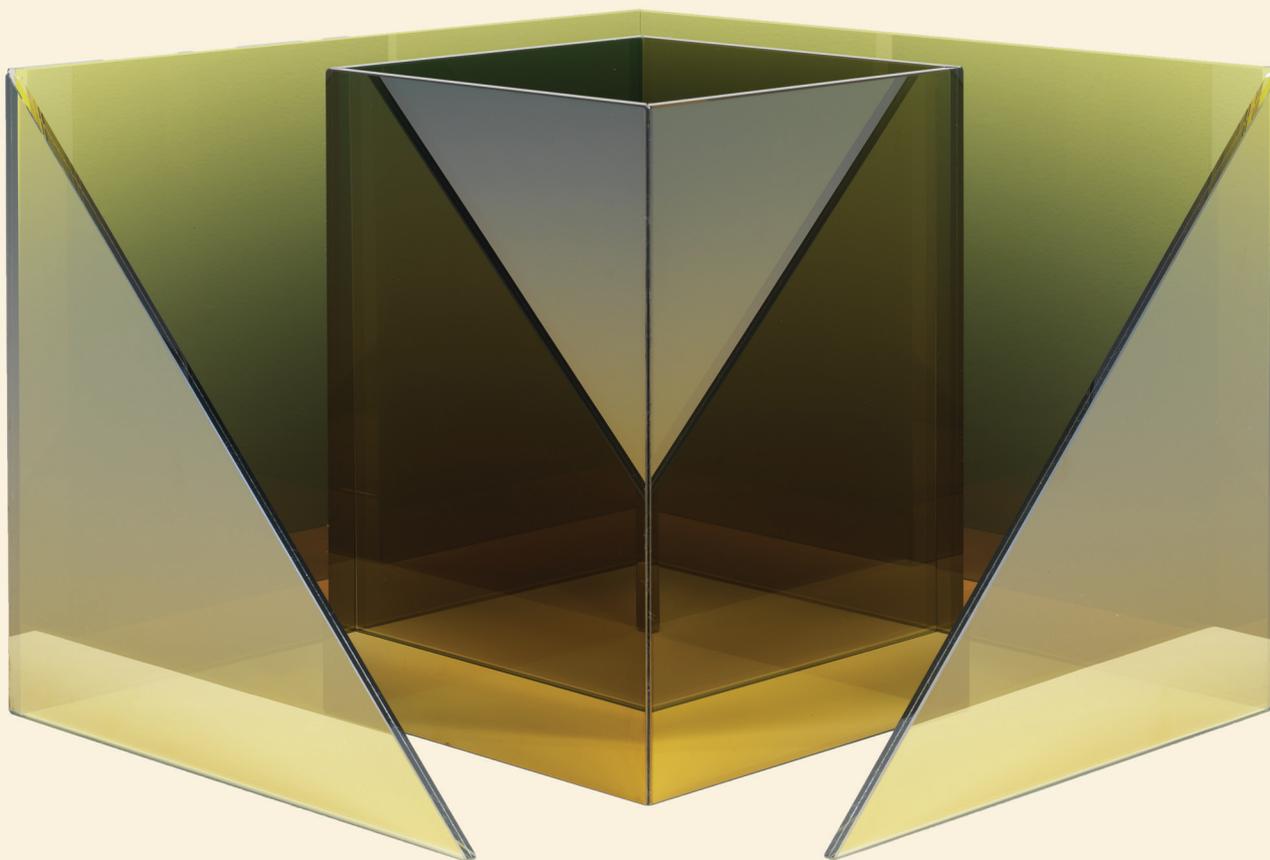
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Larry Bell, *Deconstructed Cube SS with Triangle (Limoncello / Emerald)* [2020]
Laminated glass, stainless steel and titanium dioxide, 12 x 16 x 16 inches



Blanche Lazzell (American, 1878–1956), *Church Around the Corner*, 1949. Oil on canvas, 28 x 36 3/16 in. Art Museum of West Virginia University Collection, acquired through Frances Sellers. © Estate of Blanche Lazzell.

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(right) Gilles Gorriti (1939-2019)
La carte de tarot
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Gilles Gorriti & Paul Aizpiri

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FOUR ARTS FOR EVERYONE



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They Persisted

A new exhibition tells the story of three American women of Japanese descent and expands the story of American Art.

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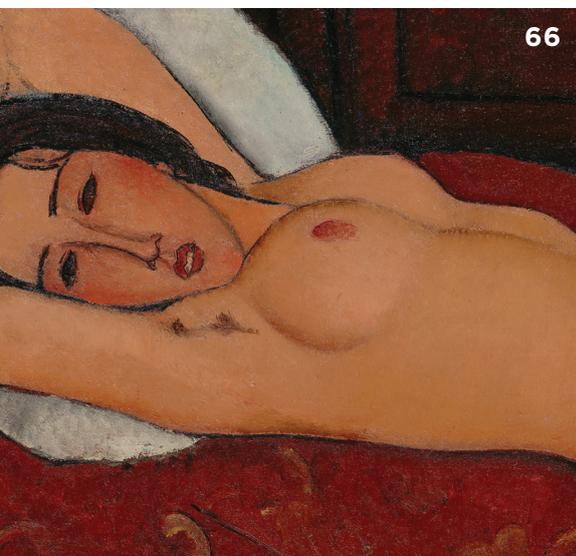
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The Clark Art Institute receives one of its largest gifts—331 works of art from the foundation of Aso O. Tavitian. Time soon to build a new wing to house the treasures.

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BY ANN LEVIN

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Hisako Hibi, *Waiting for Bus to Work*, 1955. Oil on canvas, 24 x 20 in. [detail]

The Hibi Estate. Photo by ShiPu Wang



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The Aga Khan Emerald sets a world record for the most expensive emerald ever sold at auction—selling at Christie's in Geneva for \$8.86 million.



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Pictured left to right: Joe Waldrum, Delmas Howe, Gregory Grafwallner, Suzanne Pointon, Noël Hudson, Leo Neufeld, and Dave Barnett. Photo by Gabriella Marks

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June Leaf, *Shooting from the Heart*, 1980. Tin plates, rods, spring, and gears. 18 x 8 inches, museum purchase, 1995.62



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Vive la France!

Few figures in the history of France continue to maintain influence as multi-dimensional and profound as that associated with Napoleon Bonaparte, the self-proclaimed 19th-century emperor who set out to rule the better part of continental Europe and ended up banished for the last six years of his life to Saint Helena, a volcanic island in the South Atlantic Ocean.

A native of Corsica, Bonaparte was born in 1769 and came to mainland France as a child. In his teens, he entered military service and over time became one of the most illustrious war heroes of all time. After crowning himself, literally, at Paris's Notre-Dame Cathedral in 1804, he became Emperor of France and held that title over a period of more than a decade.

When Empress Joséphine, his first wife, failed to produce an heir, Napoleon married his second wife in 1810. In the following year, Empress Marie-Louise (daughter of Emperor Francis I of Austria) gave birth to a son, Napoleon Francis Joseph Charles (Napoleon II), who became known as King of Rome at his birth and later recognized as Duke of Reichstadt.

These remarkable Carrara marble busts, almost certainly commissioned by the emperor himself, stand as some of the most outstanding examples of Napoleonic busts not currently housed in a museum.

The idealized likeness of Empress Marie-Louise is signed "GMR," a reference

to the renowned Italian sculptor Gaetano Matteo Monti of Ravenna, who likely created the sculpture around 1810

to commemorate her marriage that year to Bonaparte. The accompanying bust of Napoleon I, attributed to the sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini, was in all likelihood completed several years earlier—probably not long after Bartolini was personally

selected by the emperor to direct Italy's Academy of Fine Arts of Carrara in 1807.

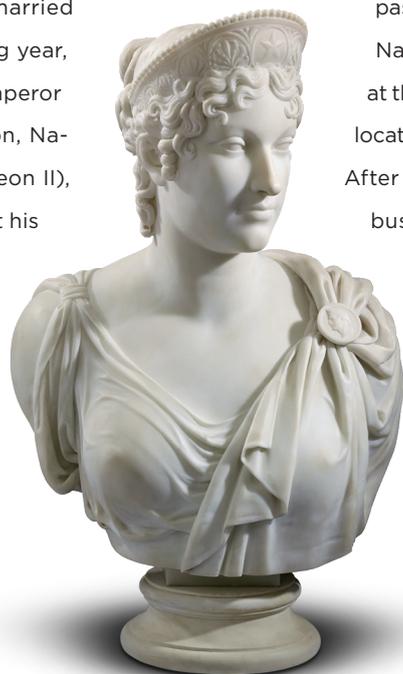
Napoleon was often portrayed—through sartorial touches such as laurel wreaths enveloping his head or extravagant robes cascading from his shoulders—as a direct heir to the nobility of ancient Rome.

Of a provenance as exceptional as the works of art themselves, these sculptures passed from Napoleon I to his nephew, Napoleon III, who displayed the busts at the imperial Château de Compiègne, located some 60 miles northeast of Paris. After Napoleon III's death in 1873, these busts were separated by his widow,

Empress Eugénie. Fortunately, the marble masterpieces were reunited as a pair in 1936 by Élie Fabius, the legendary Parisian antiques dealer of the first half of the 20th century.

The sculptures are part of the inventory held by M.S. Rau, New Orleans.

By Roger Harris



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Playwright as Painter

WHEN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS died at age 71 in his suite at Manhattan’s Hotel Elysée on February 25, 1983, he was eulogized around the world and praised by prominent critics as one of the greatest playwrights of the 20th century.

Among the myriad accolades that represent a reasonable unit of measure for his international success are the two Pulitzer Prizes awarded for achievements in drama: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955). Moreover, there is general agreement that his importance as a playwright born in the United States is eclipsed only by that of Eugene O’Neill, whose *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1957—one of a record-setting four Pulitzers received by O’Neill.

Along with his work as a playwright, Williams wrote novels, short stories, and poetry. Major motion pictures based on his literary creations—and featuring cinematic icons such as Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, Vivien Leigh, and Marlon Brando—are an integral part of his artistic legacy.

Born Thomas Lanier Williams in Columbus, Mississippi, “Tennessee” became identified with life in New Orleans and Key West over the course of his adulthood. It was, in fact, at his home in the Florida Keys that Williams immersed himself in yet another well of his imaginative resources: an interest in painting. As

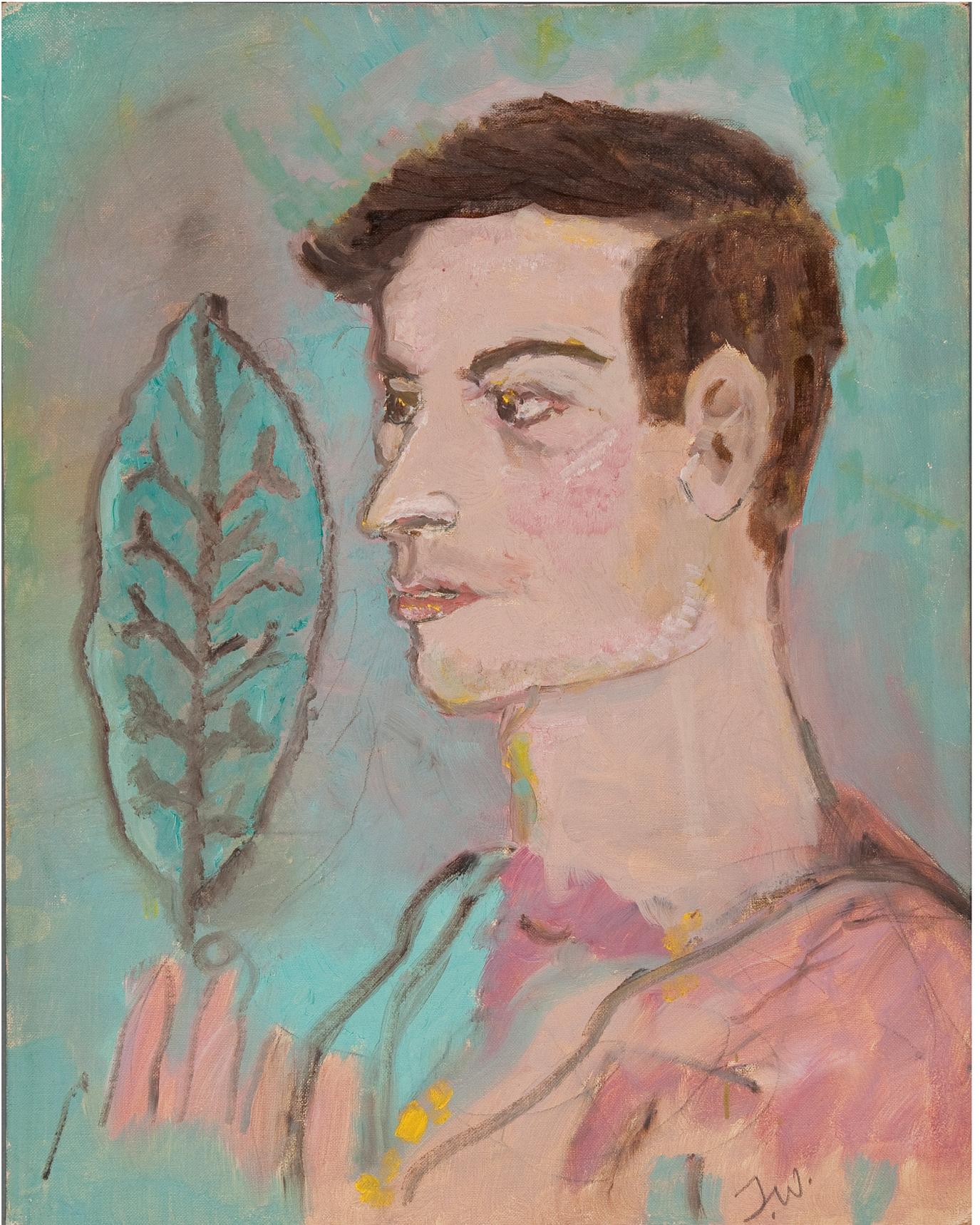
much a means of escape as an outlet for his formidable creative energy, the easel and blank canvas became familiar companions for the playwright—especially in the last two decades of his life.

“Tennessee Williams: Playwright and Painter,” a 2018 exhibition of nine paintings by Williams, was featured at the Jewish Museum of Florida—FIU, located in Miami Beach. For the Williams show, the paintings were placed on loan by David Wolkowsky, a Williams confidant and member of a pioneer Jewish family in Key West. Although there is, apparently, no definitive catalog of Williams’s paintings, Michael Adno, in his *New York Times* article published at the time of the exhibition in Miami (“Tennessee Williams Made Paintings. They Were About Love and Loss, Too”), claimed that “T.W.” (as he signed his work) made “hundreds of paintings that give us an intimate, unfiltered look at how he struggled with his sexuality and loneliness and reconciled himself to his place in the world.”

While anticipating the publication of an even somewhat comprehensive *catalogue raisonné* devoted to the paintings of Tennessee Williams, art lovers interested in what the creator of Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski was able to render immortal with a delicate paint brush will be intrigued by such works as the one pictured (facing page), which is housed at the University of Texas’s Harry Ransom Center.

By Roger Harris

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS ART COLLECTION. 2003.1.0001. HARRY RANSOM CENTER.



Untitled [Portrait of Frank Merlo], n.d., oil on canvas board, 50 cm x 40.4 cm.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Art-world news and market updates, exhibitions, and events.

COMPILED AND WRITTEN BY ASHLEY BUSBY

Forever Ever

AS A PART of their 10th anniversary programming, Paris's Fondation Louis Vuitton stages "Pop Forever, Tom Wesselmann & ..."; the exhibition runs through February 24, 2025. The show provides both an expansive history of Pop and a close examination of the career of Wesselmann (1931-2004).

Conscripted into service during the Korean War, Wesselmann used GI Bill funding to pursue a career as a cartoonist, studying first at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and later the Cooper Union. He began his career working as an illustrator for men's magazines, and his commercial art origins certainly contributed to his technical virtuosity and his later subject matter selection.

At the opening of his first exhibition in 1959 at the Judson Gallery, which he helped cofound, Jim Dine insisted that he "[might] be one of America's greatest painters."

In the foreword to the companion catalog, Bernard



Arnault, President of the Fondation Louis Vuitton, notes that, while his initial attraction to Wesselmann's work was "purely instinctive" the artist truly shines in "his ability to reinvent classical painting in the context of his time." For the artist, that distinction—being a painter of his time rather than a Pop painter—was



key. Wesselmann shirked the label, insisting that his work did not bear the same emphasis on cultural critique as seen in the work of his contemporaries. Still, the artist's oeuvre displays a cool, observational detachment common among his Pop-era peers.

Wesselmann's

work is set in conversation with his Dada predecessors, his 1960s contemporaries both in Europe and the United States, as well as more recent global artists. *Portrait Collage #1* (1959), with its scrappy surface and found materials, recalls Kurt Schwitters's merzbild. The tondo painting *Still Life #34* (1963) essentially captures the Popu-



SARINA STRAUS & JANIL JAMES GARY THE MARC & LIVIA STRAUS FAMILY COLLECTION © ADAGP, PARIS, 2024 PHOTO: © JEFFREY STURGES; COLLECTION LARRY WARRSH © AL WEIWEI; MUGRABI COLLECTION © ADAGP, PARIS, 2024 PHOTO: © JEFFREY STURGES; CENTRE POMPIDOU, MUSÉE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE / CENTRE DE CREATION INDUSTRIELLE, PARIS © ADAGP, PARIS, 2024 PHOTO: © CENTRE POMPIDOU, MNAM-CCI, DIST. RMN - GRAND PALAIS / PHILIPPE MIGEAT

luxe era with a slick presentation of consumable delights and name-brand goods. Wesselmann's compositions stand in striking comparison to Pop art's usual suspects—Warhol, Lichtenstein, etc.—as well as surprising additions to the Pop canon. Nouveau Realist Mar-

tial Raysse's 1964 neon and paint on metal construction *America America*, buzzing and flashing like a roadside ad, references postwar ideas about American culture. Among more contemporary offerings, Ai Weiwei's *Han Dynasty Urn with Coca-Cola Logo* (2015), ponders the rise and effects of global consumerism.

Curators also assess Wesselmann's long-running fascination with the female nude and sexuality in work from his series *Great American Nude* as well

as late career paintings. Presented as a fetishized fragment, *Mouth #14 (Marilyn)* reflects pop culture's presentation of the feminine as yet another consumable. *Sunset Nude with Matisse Apples on Pink Tablecloth* (2003) calls attention not only to his reverence for pictorial classicism and traditional genres but also figures the female body as an erotic treat like the apples that surround her.

The curatorial team has assembled over 150 works by Wesselmann from across his over four-decade career.



Shown alongside 70 works from 35 artists working in a similar vein, the exhibition stresses the notion of *forever*. Pop was not simply a time specific movement but rather a mindset that continues still today.



THE ESTATE OF TOM WESSELMANN, NEW YORK © ADAGP, PARIS, 2024
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“Girl Artist” Gets Her Due

“MARISOL: A Retrospective,” a major touring show of one of the most influential artists of the 1960s, is set for a final stop at the Dallas Museum of Art from February 23 to July 6, 2025. Called a “must-see-exhibition” by *The New York Times* the exhibition was organized by the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, to which the artist bequeathed her estate in 2016. Curators offer a comprehensive survey of over 250 artworks and documents from her almost six-decade career.



Born María Sol Escobar in 1930 to wealthy Venezuelan parents, she adopted the name Marisol as a teenager. Her formal art education included stints at the Otis Art Institute,



the *École des Beaux-Arts*, the Art Students League, and private study with Hans Hofmann. Initially drawn to abstract expressionism, by the end of the 1950s she turned to sculpture, producing large-scale, totemic figures that became the mainstay of her career. By the 1960s, Marisol was recognized by Warhol as “the first girl artist with glamor.” She had shows at notable galleries, including Leo Castelli and Sidney Janis, and a feature in *LIFE* magazine. Her fame rose to superstar proportions, but dwindled just as quickly. Nonetheless, she built an expansive oeuvre never compromising her ideas, wit, and

inventive approach to materials. Marisol was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease in 2006 and died in 2016.

Most often associated with Pop, Marisol’s work went far beyond the movement’s obsession with the popular and provided a sharp, witty critique of society. In much of her work she reflects upon women’s roles



and expectations. Each of the fifteen life-size figures in *The Party* (1965-66) features Marisol’s face. Despite their chic cocktail attire, these women seem to shrink in the limelight, a biting commentary on modern alienation. In *Baby Girl* (1963) the doll perched on the tot’s knee is a miniature Marisol. Cast as the plaything, the child dominates the woman, an indication of the pressures of motherhood.

Beyond women’s issues, her work provides broad commentary on other pressing social issues. *The Hungarians* (1955) seems to address the plight of immigration with a family perched precariously on



wheels. The absurd hybrid figure depicted in *The Fishman* (1973) has been variously linked to concerns about environmental disaster or the Cold War-era military-industrial complex.

In other work, Marisol envisions her creative heroes. *Portrait of Georgia O’Keeffe with Dogs* (1977) captures one of her artist mentors surrounded by her beloved pet Chow Chows. *John, Washington & Emily Roebling Crossing the Brooklyn Bridge for the First Time* (1989) depicts the female engineer who completed the bridge project after the death of her father-in-law and her husband’s extended illness.



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Intuitive Abstraction

THE MOST comprehensive exhibition in Italy of Helen Frankenthaler's groundbreaking abstraction runs through January 26, 2025 at Florence's Palazzo Strozzi. "Helen Frankenthaler: Painting Without Rules" includes major loans



from institutions including Tate Modern, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Frankenthaler's estate. Charting work in both painting and sculpture produced between

1953 and 2002, the show also sets her oeuvre in conversation with artist contemporaries such as Jackson Pollock, Morris Louis, and Anne Truitt.

In 1952, Frankenthaler experimented with adding turpentine to oil paint, creating a pourable medium—thin and viscous—that was applied to raw, unprimed canvas. She termed her technique *soak-stain*.

Unlike many of her abstractionist contemporaries who emphasized the non-objective and formalist qualities of their

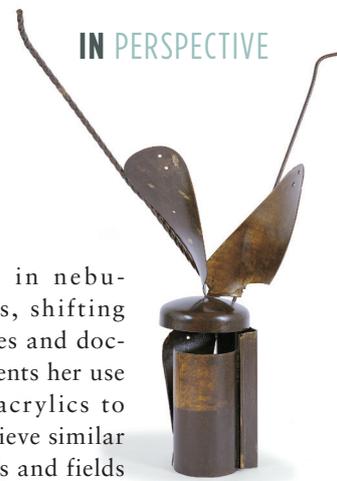


work, Frankenthaler insisted that her work bore a connection to the landscape, connecting memory, experience, and place. *Alassio* (1960) relates to a summer trip to the Northwest Italian seaside community with then-husband Robert Motherwell. *Star Gazing* (1989) projects that vision of place onto the heav-



ens in nebulous, shifting blues and documents her use of acrylics to achieve similar veils and fields of color.

"Painting Without Rules" also examines the artist's work in 3D media. In compositions such as *Heart of London Map* (1972), produced at Anthony Caro's London Studio, Frankenthaler uses an intuitive approach similar to that seen in her paintings.



Desert Celebration

ARIZONA'S longest running art show, Celebration of Fine Art, returns to Scottsdale, Arizona, for its 35th season. During the ten-week run (January 18-March 30, 2025) visitors will have access to 100 acclaimed and emerging artists, all under one roof. As always, this highly immersive experience emphasizes process and connection through special exhibitor demonstrations and a booth-as-studio model. This year the "big white tents"



have shifted slightly, just 200 yards to the south of the past location; the layout, famous sculpture garden, and the entrance on Hayden Rd. remain the same.

Among this year's artists, several evoke the splendor of the high desert terrain and the peoples that live there. Ray Tigerman's bold

paintings rendered in prismatic acrylics serve as a tribute to "the untamed spirit of the Southwest." *Three Sisters* references native foodways and Indigenous agriculture legends.

Photographer Jon Linton also seeks to capture the magnificence of the Arizona desert where he has made his home for almost three decades. *Cadillac Wash* demonstrates his brilliant eye for composition. The pyramidal central form of a towering, multi-armed saguaro echoes the dense cumulus clouds clustered along the horizon.

Gabriela Aguilo creates abstract, inner landscapes



inspired by her travels. Each work is finished with a layer of pigmented beeswax that creates a shimmering, otherworldly sensation. *Pleroma* depicts a sunrise over mountains and white sand. Her title references a Greek word meaning *fullness*, often associated with theological ideas about the totality of God's power.

Western Revision

“KNOWING THE West,” a new major travelling exhibition at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, seeks to complicate the ways in which we know, and think we know, the West. On view through January 27, 2025, the exhibition will travel to two additional venues in 2025 and 2026. Curators celebrate the diverse artists and communities who have called the Western United States

home, especially those historically overlooked or underrepresented. With over 120 works by Native and non-Native artists in a range of media, the show upends traditional narratives of American art.

Japanese artist Chiura Obata immigrated to San Francisco in 1903. *Upper Lyell Fork, Near Lyell Glacier* (c. 1930) matches a fluid line quality derived from traditional sumi training with



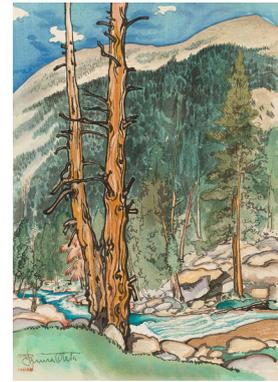
the rugged beauty of the California landscape.

Dorothy Brett first traveled to Taos in 1924 and fell in love with a landscape that she equated to freedom. Scenes of New Mexico such as *Desert Indian* often incorporate a romanticized image of Indigenous peoples.

In her innovative pottery, Lucy Lewis, a native of Acoma Pueblo, revived 11th-century Mimbres-style tech-

niques. Vessels feature ancestral and natural patterns in black line work on white slip.

A *Suitcase* produced by Nellie Two Bear Gates sees an everyday object transcribed with traditional imagery related to her Yanktonai Dakota heritage. Given as a wedding gift to the artist's cousin, Ida Claymore, the meticulously beaded surface depicts a bride on one side and the groom's rancher family on the other.



MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS, MINNEAPOLIS, MN.; THE ROBERT J. ULRICH WORKS OF ART PURCHASE FUND. PHOTO: MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS.; TIA COLLECTION, SANTA FE, NM.; JAMES HART PHOTOGRAPHY.; DENVER ART MUSEUM.; PURCHASE FROM BRENTLINGER COLLECTION. PHOTOGRAPHY © DENVER ART MUSEUM.; CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS, 2023.34; PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDWARD ROBISON III.



Popular Pictures

CELEBRATING THE rich visual culture of the interwar period in the United States, “Jazz Age Illustration” at the Delaware Art Museum documents an era of cultural vibrancy. On view through January 26, 2025, the exhibition pulls from the institution's notable illustration collection and features more than 120 original paintings and drawings. In an era before photography dominated popular media, such work demonstrates the tastes, cultural attitudes, and aspirations of the American public.

In a field dominated by men, Helen Dryden established herself as one of the most inventive fashion illustrators of the era. Over a thirteen-year career at

Vogue, Dryden's feminine forms and whimsical treatments—like those seen in a 1922 masquerade-themed cover illustration—helped usher in a taste for European fashion and Art Deco ornament.

After studying under Golden Age illustrator Howard Pyle, Leslie Thrasher rose



to prominence with his cover work for weeklies such as *Liberty*. His highly successful “Love of Lil” continuity covers centered on middle class newlyweds. *I'm Dyin', Egypt, Dyin'* (April 1927) depicts Lil and Sandy readying for a costume party, the title a humorous allusion to a line from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Jay Jackson worked as an

illustrator and cartoonist for the Black-owned newspaper *The Chicago Defender*. Produced for the 1940 American Negro Exposition, his *Etta Moten Barnett Dancing* captures the pioneering star of stage and screen in the midst of a captivating performance.



DELAWARE ART MUSEUM, ACQUISITION FUND, 1991; DELAWARE ART MUSEUM, GIFT OF MRS. AUDREY THRASHER DE RUSSOW, 1973. © LIBERTY LIBRARY CORPORATION; DELAWARE ART MUSEUM, ACQUISITION FUND, 2022. © ESTATE OF JAY PAUL JACKSON

Cutting-Edge Fair

ART PALM BEACH transforms the Palm Beach County Convention Center January 22-26, 2025. Now in its third year, this cutting-edge fair will feature 80 international galleries and, in the words of show director and producer Cassandra Voyagis, will provide “a global hub for creative vision.”



This year the fair’s museums and non-profits platform, DIVERSEartPB, explores the theme “Art Has the Power to Change the World.” As a part of this offering, Bratislava’s Danubiana Museum of Art will present Viktor Freso’s 30-foot Bear Sculpture, a symbol for power and resilience that also sets the tone for this ambitious fair.



Among international exhibitors, Sundaram Tagore Gallery will present work from Kenny Nguyen. His stunning paintings are made from torn strips of silk, dipped in acrylic and affixed to raw canvas. Loosely pinned to the wall, they unfurl to create an animated presence.

Victorian Women

THE ART GALLERY of Ontario (AGO) presents “Tissot, Women, and Time,” an examination of the lives of French women at the end of the 19th century. Like his Impressionist contemporaries, James Tissot made a career focused on themes of everyday life.

This new exhibition, on view through June 29, 2025, figures his female subjects as signifiers of the conditions of Victorian social class and morality. According to guest curator Dr. Mary Hunter, “The contradictions present in Tissot’s art reflect the era’s own duality about women – casting them simultaneously as sexual yet innocent, sickly yet seductive, timeless yet modern.”



Work on view includes paintings such as *The Convalescent* (1872)—a perfect example of the aforementioned dualities—alongside 34 works on paper drawn from the AGO collection, the largest corpus of the artist’s prints outside of Paris’s Bibliothèque Nationale.

COURTESY ART PALM BEACH

ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO. GIFT OF R.B.F. BARR, ESQ., Q.C., 1966. PHOTO © AGO. 6528



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Polychrome Persuasion

SINCE ANTIQUITY, to sculpt the Divine meant that the sacred figure would be imbued with a corporeal form and provided a believable presence; when rendered in color, the Divine was even more real. “Hand in Hand. Sculpture and Colour in the Spanish Golden Age,” an exhibition at Museo del Prado with support from Fundación AXA, provides an in-depth look at 17th-century polychrome devotionals and religious statuary. On view through March 2, 2025, the show includes almost 100 sculptures by revered master craftsmen alongside paintings and prints that emulate such work.

At the start of the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation splintered religious practice. The subsequent Catholic Counter-Reformation placed emphasis on maintaining the faithful through expressive art and encouraged devotion by emphasizing the perceived humanity of religious figures. In essence Catholic iconography often championed ordinary people who experienced extraordinary connections with God. *The First Steps of Jesus* (c. 1692-1706) by Luisa Roldán, the earliest woman sculptor documented in Spain, images Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child in a highly relatable, heartwarming scene of familial connection. The surrounding angels are the only indication of their holiness.

In Spain, especially, sculptors sought to amplify the naturalism of their forms through the application of color. According to Benedictine monk Gregorio Argaz, “Each figure, no matter how perfect it may be in sculpture, is a corpse; what gives it life, soul, and spirit is the brush,

which represents the affections of the soul. Sculpture forms the tangible and palpable man [...], but painting gives him life.”

The sculptor’s role in creating such work was also not merely as artisan but as divine intermediary, and the production of the sculptural object was seen as a parallel to God’s own act of creation. During the period, God was viewed as the sculptor of humanity, imparting upon each individual his primary form. In turn, humanity was thought to color or “polychrome” their own existence, to varying degrees, depending upon

their actions and piety.

Most work from the era was created in wood, selected in part because it could so easily adapt and imitate through the addition of color often applied by a second specialized artist working in tandem with the carver. A stunning representation of *Mary Magdalene* (1551-1570) by Juan de Juni features polychrome application by Juan Tomás Celma. She clasps an alabaster jar in her hand, an invocation of the anointing of Christ. Her dazzling golden robes swirl around an intricately patterned, brocade gown complementing her gentle features and sweet face.

Artists could further amplify the veracity of the work through the addition of materials, including jewels, fabric, ivory, glass, and even real hair. Luis Salvador Carmona’s *Christ of Forgiveness* (1756) features an agonizing depiction of Christ’s suffering. A real rope hangs loosely from his neck and is tied to a globe below that depicts Adam and Eve grasping the apple under the Tree of Knowledge. Here Christ is literally weighed down by the world and man’s sin, a persuasive and palpable image of promised salvation as a reward for repentance and steadfast devotion.



CLOCKWISE TOP LEFT: MUSEO DE GUADALAJARA; VALLADOLID. MUSEO NACIONAL DE ESCULTURA; NAVA DEL REY (VALLADOLID). CLARISAS CAPU-CHINAS; MADRID. MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO; MONFORTE DE LEMOS (LUGO). MONASTERIO DE SANTA CLARA; SEVILLE. MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES

Pacific Spirit

RioBravoFineArt in Truth of Consequences, New Mexico, presents “Art of My Soul” as the first exhibition of their 2025 season. Featuring the work of painter Leo Neufeld, the show will be on view from January 11-March 25, 2025.

Trained at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Arts Student League, Neufeld has exhibited widely from coast to coast. He currently lives and works in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A master of plein air painting, he is best known for his South-



west landscapes, portraits, and figure studies.

This new show offers visitors a unique opportunity to survey another beloved subject in Neufeld’s oeuvre, stunning Pacific coast vistas. *Lover’s*

Point depicts frothy waves crashing against the Monterey Bay shoreline. As if perched on the rocky outcroppings, the viewer fully appreciates the way in which the artist has captured beach, sea, and sky in thick, gestural dashes of color.

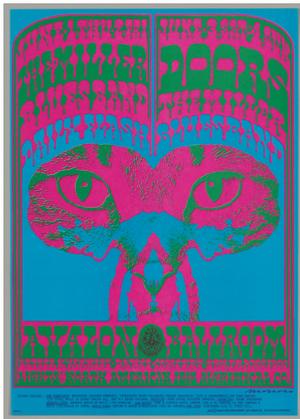
LOVER'S POINT COURTESY RIOBRAVOFINEART

Groovy Design

ON VIEW THROUGH June 15, 2025, “Psychedelic Rock Posters and Fashion of the 1960s” at the Portland Art Museum presents over 200 rock concert posters alongside vintage garments for a truly groovy experience.

At San Francisco venues like the Filmore Auditorium and the Avalon Ballroom, music promoters sought out young designers to represent the spirit of the era. Drawing from diverse historical reference points such as French Art Nouveau and Surrealism, poster artists employed distorted letterforms, acidic color combinations, and uncanny imagery to mimic the altered perception of the psychedelic experience.

Victor Moscoso’s “Pink Panther” advertises June 1967 performances by Daily Flash and the Miller Blues Band at the Avalon. The typography twists and teases above a pair of feline eyes. The artist’s intensely saturated palette likely drew upon his early training under color theorist Josef Albers.



GIFT OF GARY WESTFORD, FROM THE GARY WESTFORD COLLECTION, PORTLAND ART MUSEUM, PORTLAND, OREGON, 2019.29.10

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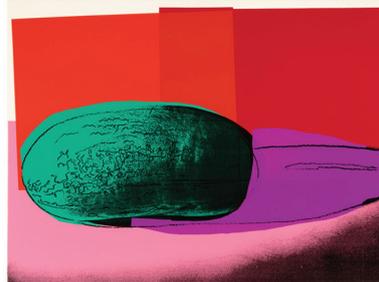
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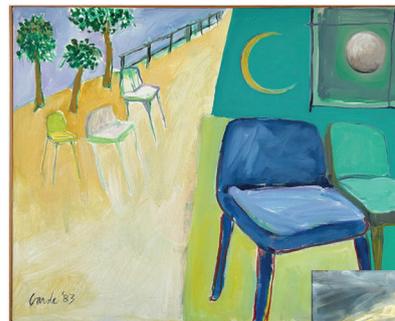
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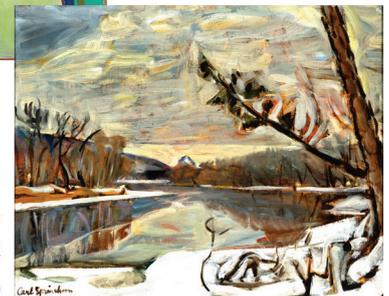
ANDY WARHOL
Space Fruit: Watermelon, screenprint,
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Artful Deception

PARIS'S MUSÉE Marmottan Monet presents “Trompe-l’œil, from 1520 to the present day,” on view now through March 2, 2025. Divided into eight sections, the exhibition includes over 80 works and provides a historical chronology of the genre, highlighting its evolution.

A French term meaning to “deceive the eye,” trompe l’œil was first used by painter Louis-Léopold Boilly to describe a



work submitted to the 1800 salon. The origin of the visual format is often linked to an account that appears in Pliny the Elder’s 1st century AD

text *Natural History* wherein the painter Zeuxis is said to have painted grapes so flawless that birds gathered in anticipation. Nicolas de Largillière’s 1677 painting of two clusters of grapes likely alludes



to that early story.

Among the work on view, several canvases go beyond simply “fooling” the eye and exist as perceptual conundrums wherein the viewer’s ability to determine what’s real and what’s not is highly compromised. Jean Pillement’s *Trompe l’œil with a ribbon in front of a landscape of the Portuguese countryside* (c. 1790) is a truly astounding com-



position. The court painter to Marie Antoinette excelled at landscape. Here, his rural panorama shows technical finesse. However, the appearance of a rumpled, curling, satin ribbon across the upper portion of the canvas demonstrates his excellence. Among more contemporary masters in the genre, Henri Cadiou, *Transcendance spaciales* (1960) is a cheeky dupe of Lucio Fontana’s Spatial Concept series.



SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM, RICHARD BRUMBAUGH TRUST IN MEMORY OF RICHARD IRVING BRUMBAUGH AND GRACE LISCHER BRUMBAUGH 28:2016; CORA GINSBURG LLC ON BEHALF OF PRIVATE COLLECTOR; SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM, RICHARD BRUMBAUGH TRUST IN MEMORY OF RICHARD IRVING BRUMBAUGH AND GRACE LISCHER BRUMBAUGH 42:2021

Drawings on Display

MASTER DRAWINGS New York, the premier U.S. drawings exposition, returns February 1-8, 2025, for its 19th edition. Twenty-eight global galleries will showcase exceptional and rare works at sites throughout the Upper East Side of Manhattan. In partnership with the New York-based non-profit The Drawing Foundation, the fair also offers a robust lineup of tours, lectures, and other special programming.

Among this year’s new exhibitors, Paris’s Galerie Rattou-Ladrière will present a range of important works including a pen and brown ink *Head of a Bearded Man* by Italian Mannerist Giuseppe Cesari. Best known for his large fresco cycles, Cesari also



taught later Baroque icon Caravaggio. This small figure study demonstrates the older teacher’s shared flair for the dramatic.

With locations in Chicago, Paris, and New York, Les Enluminures will



exhibit a rare group of 14th- and 15th-century European miniatures from artists rarely seen at market. An *Initial D with Saint Peter*, from an *Antiphonal* (c. 1331-1334) by Maestro Daddesco derives

from a longer hymnal, no longer extant. It was likely removed in the 19th century when attitudes toward conservation varied from those of today.

London’s Sam Fogg will feature work from revered Mughal artists of the 16th



and 17th centuries. *Bahrām Gur facing the Dragon* (c. 1675) by an artist from the School of Muhammad Zaman depicts a dramatic scene from the Persian epic poem the *Shahnama* or “Book of Kings.”

PHOTO BY KYLE BROWN; PHOTO BY KIBBEY COUSE; POSING IN 2021 FOR A SCULPTURE CREATED AND DONATED BY ED SHIDA. PHOTO BY HOLLY AZZARI.

EGYPTIAN ENGAGEMENT

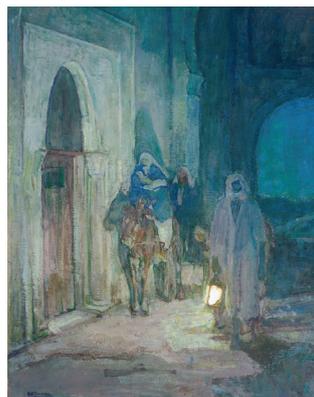
NOW ON through February 17, 2025, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, “Flight into Egypt: Black Artists and Ancient Egypt, 1876–Now” charts the ways in which Egypt has served as a source of inspiration in the Black diaspora. The show highlights the transformation of ancient culture into modern identifier.

The exhibition takes its

title from Henry Ossawa Tanner’s 1923 painting *Flight Into Egypt*. As one of the first internationally recognized Black American painters, Tanner built a late-career body of work that recast typically whitewashed Biblical narratives with People of Color. Tanner’s work also coincides with a growing interest among Black intellectuals to refute

prevailing trends in Egyptology that viewed ancient Egypt as distinct from Black Africa and to ennoble Black identity in an era of continued prejudice.

The exhibition also presents work from con-



temporary artists that engage with these themes. For *Grey Area (Brown Version)* (1993), artist Fred Wilson includes five replicas of the bust of Nefertiti, ranging in coloration from a light beige to dark brown. The work considers the historical queen’s

role as a symbol for Black beauty ideals and the debate regarding her racial identity. In Derek Fordjour’s mixed media painting *Board Meeting (Brotherhood Smoke)* (2021) a golden bust of Tutankhamun watches over members of Alpha Phi Alpha, the oldest Black academic fraternity. The step program they practice and the organization’s iconography also draw inspiration from Egyptian visual culture.

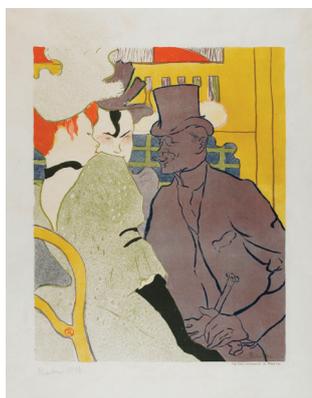


COLLECTION OF ROBERT F. SMITH PHOTO: © DEREK FORDJOUR, COURTESY DAVID KORDAN-SKY GALLERY PHOTO BY MARK BLOWER, DANIEL GREER; BROOKLYN MUSEUM, REQUEST OF WILLIAM K. JACOBS, JEN AND REQUEST OF RICHARD TEMPEL, BY EYCHARGE (2008-14-11); COLLECTION OF ROBERT F. SMITH PHOTO: © DEREK FORDJOUR, COURTESY DAVID KORDAN-SKY GALLERY, PHOTO BY MARK BLOWER, DANIEL GREER

La Vie Nocturne

A NEW SHOW at the Minneapolis Institute of Art transports visitors to *fin-de-siècle* Paris. “At the Moulin Rouge” centers on Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec’s masterwork of the same name—on special loan from the Art Institute of Chicago—exhibited alongside prints, posters, and drawings from the MIA’s collection. On view through March 9, 2025, these images evince the bohemian spirit of the era and document the city’s nightlife as recorded by Toulouse-Lautrec and his contemporaries.

In the titular canvas, the artist paints himself among the denizens of the fabled nightclub, including dancers La Goulue and Jane Avril as well as singer May Milton. *The Englishman at the Moulin Rouge* depicts painter William Tom Warren surrounded by a pair of coquettish performers.



HELEN BIRCH BARTLETT MEMORIAL COLLECTION, ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, 1928.610; MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART, GIFT OF RUTH AND BRUCE DAYTON, 2001.94.1

Otherworldly Offering

A NEW EXHIBITION at the Peabody Essex Museum explores the human desire to connect with the departed, with a special focus on late 19th- and early 20th-century Spiritualism. On view through February 2, 2025, “Conjuring the Spirit World: Art, Magic, and Mediums” is sure to delight both skeptics and true believers. Curators document the way in which art and objects, including a Spirit Bell (c. 1870) produced by famed Paris magic dealer Émile Voisin, served as proof of a medium or magician’s ability to connect with realms beyond our own. Works on exhibit also emphasize magic as a source of agency for marginalized communities, including women like Ava Muntell (“The Woman with a Million Eyes”), captured in a stunning hand-painted photo collage by an unknown artist.



COLLECTION OF JOHN GAUGHAN, LOS ANGELES, PHOTO BY JEFF CHANG; COLLECTION OF TONY OURSLER, PHOTO COURTESY OF OURSLER STUDIO.

Beachfront Affair

MARK YOUR calendars for Presidents' Day Weekend when the Palm Beach Show takes over the Palm Beach County Convention Center, February



13-18, 2025. Exhibitors in every genre are sure to astound with offerings including art, jewelry, silver, textiles, porcelain, and beyond. As a special collaboration, owner and

operators of the Palm Beach Group Show will partner this year with *Florida Design* magazine to present “design!”, a branded area of the showroom featuring furniture, lighting, and other design elements from local interior designers and cutting-edge manufacturers.

Fine jewelry purveyor Aaron Faber brings an 18K gold, 31.03 carat “Dragon Egg” ametrine and diamond ring by rising talent Philipp Munsteiner. The inventive, faceted cut jewel is inspired by the Christopher

Paolini fantasy novel *Eragon*. In the booth from Greg Pepin Silver, a pair of monumental Georg Jensen Art Deco sterling silver candelabra amaze. Designed by Harald Nielsen in 1938, they soar to an impressive 30 ¼ inches tall and will transform any tablescape.



Art lovers will revel in the offerings from Darnley Fine Art, including *The Judgement of Paris* by Kathleen Muriel Scale (1913-2006). Known for her imaginative, modernist takes on myth, she drew inspiration from Early Renaissance



painters such as Botticelli in her approach to the figure.

Palm Beach local Steidel Contemporary includes work from potter Jennifer McCurdy. In work such as *Gilded Coral Vessel* she fires her intricate, nature-inspired porcelain bodies until they are almost translucent and then treats the vessel's interior with 24 carat gold leaf.



COURTESY DARNLEY FINE ART; COURTESY GREG PEPIN SILVER; COURTESY AARON FABER; COURTESY STEIDEL CONTEMPORARY (PHOTO BY GARY MIRANDO)

BLISSFUL BEQUEST

A NEW exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) examines the collecting practice and legacy of one of the institution's founders. “Lillie P. Bliss and the Birth of the Modern” continues its run through March 29, 2025, and celebrates the 90th anni-



versary of Bliss's major institutional bequest. The new exhibition showcases this work alongside archival materials that serve to reconstruct her life in art.

The daughter of a Boston textile merchant, Bliss dedicated her life to Modernism. An enthusiastic collector, she helped charter MoMA alongside Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, Mary Quinn Sullivan, and others.

When the museum opened its doors in 1929, it sponsored exciting new temporary exhibi-



tions but did not have a permanent collection. At her death from cancer in 1931, Bliss left the institution approximately 120 works of art. This became the core of the collection so loved today.

Among the most important works from the original gift are Paul Cézanne's *The Bather* (c. 1885) and Amedeo Modigliani's portrait of *Anna Zborowska* (1917). A unique feature of Bliss's bequest also allowed for the sale of works to sup-



port continued expansion of the collection. The sale of a painting by Degas provided the funds needed to acquire Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*. The acquisition of other now iconic collection masterworks, such as Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* and Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*, were also made possible by the Bliss gift.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK; LILLIE P. BLISS COLLECTION; RONA ROOB PAPERS, II, C.3; THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ARCHIVES, NEW YORK

Cosmic Compositions

IN THE SECOND half of the 20th century, Southern California was a hub for scientific and technological advances. Sites in and around Los Angeles such as Mount Wilson Observatory, the California Institute of Technology, and Pasadena's Jet Propulsion Laboratory made major new discoveries in the fields of astronomy, physics, industrial manufacturing, and telecommunications. In parallel, artists in

the area closely engaged with and responded to these innovations. As a part of the 2024 PST Art: Art and Science Collide series, the Palm Springs Art Museum stages "Particles and Waves: Southern California Abstraction and Science, 1945-1990," running through February 24, 2025. Curators emphasize artistic responses to new ideas about light, energy, and motion.

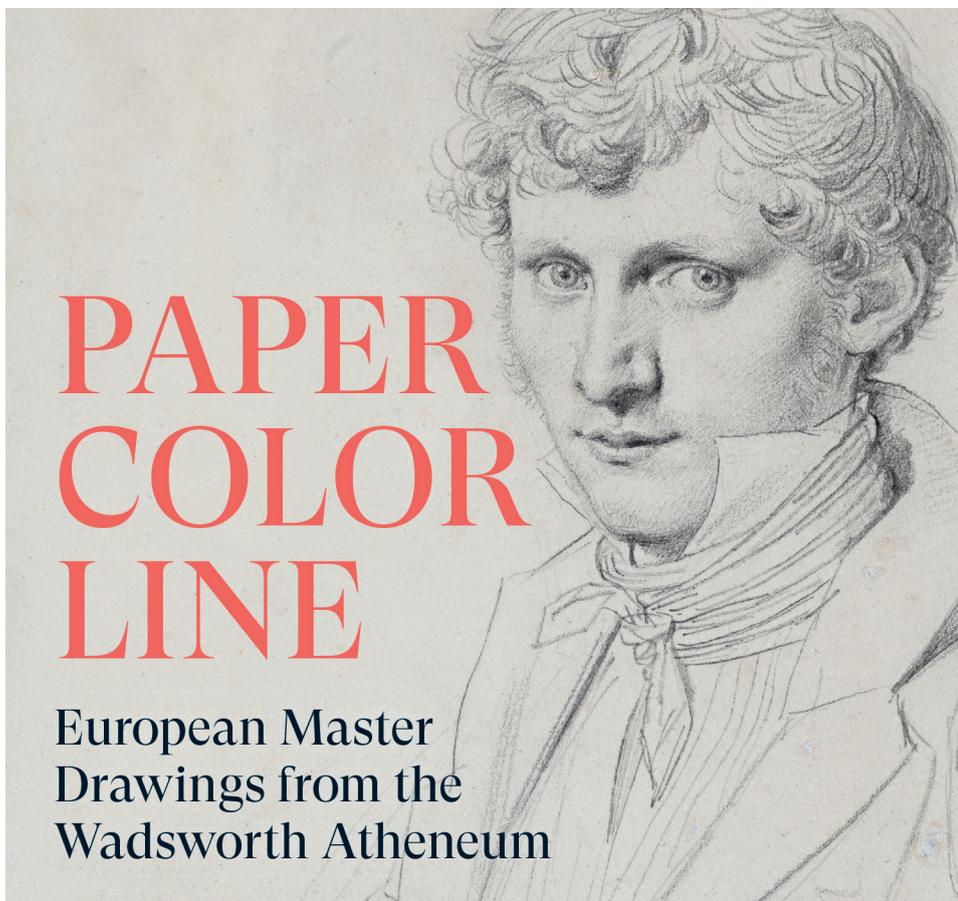
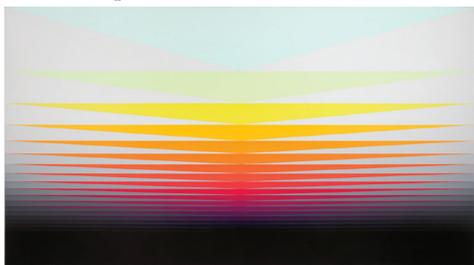
Helen Lundberg explored geometric abstraction in the 1950s and

1960s, a sharp contrast to her better-known Post-Surrealist compositions. *Planet Rising* (1967) suggests both the Southern California landscape and planetary movement.

Frederick Eversley worked at Wyle Laboratories on projects for NASA before pursuing art. His *Untitled (Black)* (1978) parabolic lens is one of several works cast from polyester resin on a motorized turntable. Its highly polished surface refracts and reflects light, creating a kinetic experience

despite the static form. Norman Zammitt explored color theory and geometry in paintings such as *Search for the Elysian Field* (1976). Hue selection and arrangement for the precise bands of vivid color are determined by a self-invented logarithmic progression.

COLLECTION OF IVAN MOSKOWITZ, COURTESY OF LOUIS STERN FINE ARTS; PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM, GIFT OF THE ARTIST, 1969; © THE FEITELSON/LUNDERBERG ART FOUNDATION; © PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM; GIFT OF THE ESTATE OF EUGENE V. KLEIN, 6-1-1992. PHOTO: RJ SANCHEZ | SOLSTREAM STUDIOS. © FREDERICK EVERSOLEY.



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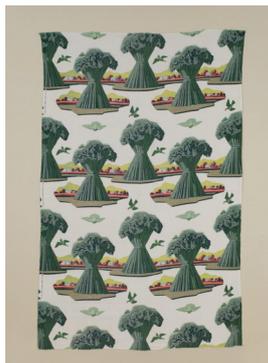
INDUSTRIAL SCREEN printing saw widespread application and innovation in the 1930s, especially in textile manufacture. By the 1950s, designers utilized the format to produce radical, experimental fabrics distinguished by hand-crafted aesthetics, intense coloration, and precision motifs.

“Bolts of Color: Printed Textiles After WWII,” a new exhibition at the Saint Louis Art Museum, runs through April 20, 2025. Drawing from a recent collection acquisition, the show highlights work by well-known artists and progressive new designers, highlighting visual connections to contemporary art.

Some of the most remarkable fabrics on display come from designers who centered

their careers in the medium. Althea McNish drew upon her African Caribbean heritage and training under Pop icon Eduardo Paolozzi for her bold, tropical designs such as *Painted Desert*. Austrian husband and wife duo Leo and Gretl Wollner’s pedigree included training under Wiener Werkstätte luminaries. In collaboration with Knoll, they developed oversized screens that allowed for massive floor-to-ceiling imagery printed on velvet. *Rivers* features vertical streams of soft earthy hues.

Textiles by contemporary artists, including Lucio



Fontana and Rockwell Kent, translate and build upon the visual tendencies of the fine art world. Best known as a painter and illustrator, Kent was also a frequent collaborator with New York’s Bloomcraft Inc. *Harvest Time Textile* bears comparison to his better-known

woodcut illustrations. Rendered in punchy contrasting tones, the fabric recalls Regionalist iconography and tessellates swooping birds over a towering sheaf of wheat.

SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM. RICHARD BRUMBAUGH TRUST IN MEMORY OF RICHARD IRVING BRUMBAUGH AND GRACE LISCHER BRUMBAUGH 28;2016. CORA GINSBURG LLC ON BEHALF OF PRIVATE COLLECTOR. SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM. RICHARD BRUMBAUGH TRUST IN MEMORY OF RICHARD IRVING BRUMBAUGH AND GRACE LISCHER BRUMBAUGH 42;2021

In Memoriam

ART HISTORIAN and preservationist Virginia Couse Leavitt passed away November 26, 2024, at her home in Taos, New Mexico. As the co-founder of the Couse-Sharp Historic Site (CSHS) and the principal scholar on the work of her grandfather, Eanger Irving Couse, founding member of the Taos Society of Artists, her legacy will not soon be forgotten.

Leavitt lived in the Couse home as a child and returned during summers for most of her life. She spent over three decades researching and writing the definitive guide to her grandfather’s work, published in 2019 by the University of Oklahoma Press. That work also provided the foundations for the Lunder Research Center, the only repository dedicated to the Taos art colony.

Her commitment to the area’s position as a cultural mecca, past and present, was staunch and unwavering. Says current CSHS executive director, Davi-

son Koenig, “Ginnie is the soul of the Couse-Sharp Historic Site, and I say that in the present tense. She created and embodied a culture of not only dedication and excellence but also close relationships and goodwill. She called the good luck and can-do spirit of this organization ‘Couse mojo,’ and she believed in it fully. We’ve always suspected that the mojo was really her love and care, and we will carry that and all facets of her legacy with us into the future.”

In lieu of flowers, those who wish to honor Leavitt’s memory can donate to the Virginia Couse Leavitt Memorial Fund at CSHS.



PHOTO BY KYLE BROWN. PHOTO BY KIBBEY COUSE. POSING IN 2021 FOR A SCULPTURE CREATED AND DONATED BY ED SHIDA. PHOTO BY HOLLY AZZARI.

Milestone Presentation

THE LA ART Show returns to the Los Angeles Convention Center February 19-23, 2025, for its milestone 30th anniversary. Since its founding, the fair has featured diverse work from modern and contemporary talent. This latest offering is no exception, with participation from over 100 global galleries, museums, and non-profits. In tandem with the fair, art lovers can also visit the event's educational, non-commercial platform DIVERSEartLA, staged this year as a special retrospective of the organization's curato-



rial efforts over the last three decades.

In the booth from Arcadia Contemporary, fans of the historical are sure to delight at Elen Bezhen's figure paintings. In *The Weeds* she provides a unique, contemporary spin on late-Medieval and early-Renaissance aesthetics.

Among the offerings from



Rebecca Hosack Gallery, Mersuka Dopazo's collage works serve as travelogue, integrating textiles from around the world. *The Still Life Little is "White"* incorporates cheery color and contrasting patterns to render an age-old motif new.



For those drawn to abstraction, check out Fabrik Projects' showcase of Sebastiaan Knot's photographs. Inspired by the 1960s Light and Space movement, he manipulates simple shapes and studio lights to create images such as *N52774*. Perceptually challenging, the photographs are not digitally altered. Represented by Wood Symphony Gallery, Nairi Safaryan's intricate wood carvings such as *Unity* suggest an archetypal image of the feminine.

Nouveau Chic

BEST KNOWN FOR her elegant *minaudières*, or gem-encrusted evening bags, handbag designer Judith Leiber blurred the boundary between function and art. Roanoke's Taubman Museum of Art presents "Judith Leiber and Art Nouveau," on view through July 13, 2025. The exhibition coincides with the touring exhibition "Eternally New: The Art Nouveau World of Alphonse Mucha,"

running through March 16, 2025. The Taubman is the first museum outside Europe to host this immersive exhibition.

Born in Hungary, Leiber was a Holocaust survivor who immigrated to the U.S. in 1947.

With experience designing bags in Budapest, Leiber started her own company in 1963 and produced some 4,000 original designs.

Her sparkling surface treatments parallel Art Nouveau splendor. A *Tiffany Stained Glass-Inspired Book Bag Handbag* from 1991 responds to the American Nouveau designer's shimmering color, here achieved with thousands of Swarovski crystals and onyx.



Tantalizing Timepieces

FAMED CABINETMAKER to Louis XIV, André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732) was celebrated for his innovative marquetry and designs that smacked of the era's opulence. "Keeping Time: Clocks by Boulle," a new display at London's Wallace Collection, centers on five exceptional timepieces by the artist that combine of-the-moment style and the latest in horology. Running through March 2, 2025, the exhibition opens ahead of an international conference on Boulle to be hosted by the institution.

Each design stands as both a testament to creative collaboration, with mechanisms from leading clockmakers of the era, and an indicator of the worldliness of its commissioner. A wardrobe made c. 1715 features a movement by renowned Parisian clockmaker Pierre Gaudron encircled by cherubim. The exquisite oak and ebony case and intricate diapered marquetry imitate the look of then-fashionable Japanese lacquerware.



Man of the Arts

THE WALLS OF GEORGE BILLIS'S THREE GALLERIES ARE AMONG THE MOST COVETED LOCALES FOR ARTISTS AND ART BUYERS INTERVIEWED BY DAVID MASELLO



The gallerist George Billis stands in front of a canvas by Stephen Magsig, one of his longtime artists.

GEORGE Billis is not only one of the most visible gallerists, but he's also one of the most engaging and charismatic. If he is present in any one of his three galleries in New York City, Los Angeles, or Fairfield, Connecticut, he greets you at the door, welcomes you. The regularly scheduled openings for his stable of 25 artists (some of whose works are pictured here) are always well attended and spirited. He has long embraced artists who depict cityscapes, interiors, still lifes, and figures. *Art & Antiques* met with him in his New York gallery to talk about the business of art today.

When did you decide to become a gallerist?

As long as I could remember, I loved art, going to museums, traveling abroad to see famous works of art. I always knew that I wanted to do something with the art world. In 1997, my artist friends casually said to me, "Why don't you open a gallery and show our work?," so I did!

What motivates you as a gallery owner?

I want to showcase, and sell, my artists' works. I want the public to be introduced to various art works by these talented painters.

What distinguishes your galleries from others in New York and elsewhere?

My galleries tend to show more realism, which is not typical for the Chelsea Art District in New York City.

You were among the pioneers to open in Chelsea, in what was then a rather forlorn neighborhood. Why did you choose to open there?

I was the twelfth gallery to



open in Chelsea, in March of 1997. As a young gallerist, I could not afford the rents of SoHo, which was the main established gallery district at the time. Chelsea was affordable and people were curious about the shift to Chelsea, so I was able to cultivate clients early on. For the same reason I was attracted to the Chelsea neighborhood, I wanted an East Coast/West Coast presence, and I chose Culver City in LA., which was also just on the brink of burgeoning in 2004.

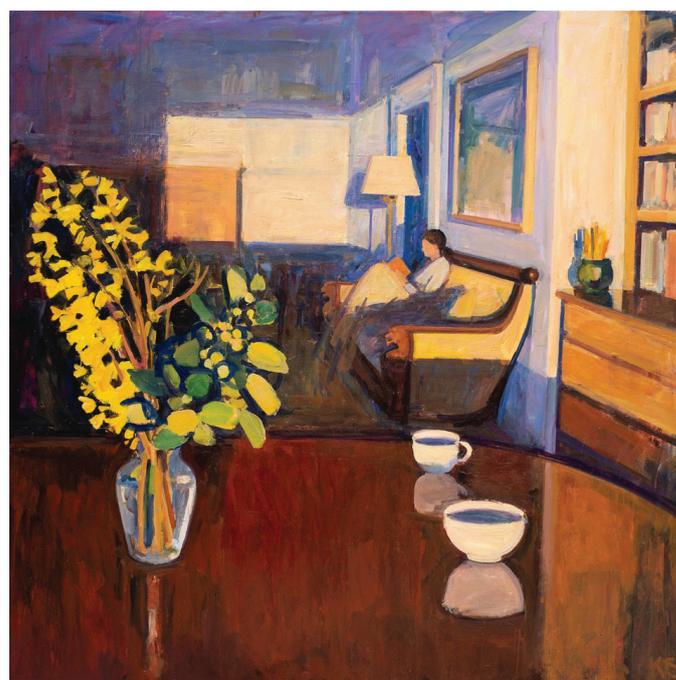
Tell us about your gallery

in Fairfield, Connecticut, and why you established a presence there.

During Covid, my gallery and family were displaced to Connecticut. So, I opened a location to keep the gallery active and conduct business close to what became home during the pandemic. Fairfield is extremely convenient to New York, where I continued to have major projects and clients.

What do you look for while seeking out artists?

The majority of our artists refer other artists, while some



Above: Danny Heller, *Central Park Evening*, oil on canvas, 28 in. x 40 in.

Right: Kurt Solmssen, *Sunrise Interior*, 2023, oil on canvas, 64 in. x 64 in.



Above: Bennett Vadnais, *Brewers Hill*, acrylic on panel, 15 in. x 23.5 in.

Below: Lisa Golightly, *Late Afternoon*, acrylic on aluminum dibond panel, 30 in. x 30 in.



artists reach out to us directly. At the same time, I have a stable cadre of artists that I am loyal to and need to exhibit on a regular basis.

Although you showcase a range of topics, many of your artists are known for their cityscapes. Why that genre?

Living in, and visiting, New York is a great inspiration to artists and visitors. It's a fabulous metropolis, and people from all over the world want to take home a piece of Manhattan. My cityscape artists do not paint the typical New York City scenes—they capture the aura and essence of the city, which makes

their work unique. They are cityscapes, but they are atmospheric and full of feeling and movement. While it is easy to “capture” a building, it is not easy to express a mood and a sense of excitement of locale. Realism will always have an audience.

You were born in Greece and came here as a boy. Does your Greek heritage influence your work?

I am still inspired by antiquities and the heritage and culture of Greece. I do have an attachment to the islands and the mainland and visit often with my family.

What are some of the marketing/business challenges of



owning a gallery?

As a gallerist in New York, I have been through many recessions, 9/11, and the pandemic. As you know, art is a luxury item and the first to suffer during any economic challenge. I am fortunate that I have been able to stay in business throughout these challenges, but it has come at a cost. My survival as a brick-and-mortar art dealer for 30 years has not been easy. But clients are loyal when they know they have an art dealer they can trust—longevity is key.

You also work with corporate clients. How does that differ from working with individuals who buy art?

Generally, there is a committee involved with the corporate lobby projects I have worked on. These projects typically require larger scale artworks and multiple pieces, and I have to work closely with the client and artists on such commissions. They are time-consuming projects for everyone, but often grand in scale once the project is completed. When we do corporate commissions, we generally have inventory that is

Above: Nicholas Evans-Cato, *Icebergs*, oil on canvas, 10 in. x 26 in.

Below: Christopher Stott, *Underwood, Good Society*, oil on canvas, 40 in. x 30 in.



“My survival as a brick-and-mortar art dealer for 30 years has not been easy. But clients are loyal when they know they have an art dealer they can trust—longevity is key.”



Cindy Rizza, *Matriarch*, oil on linen, 48 in. x 36 in.

selected, and those projects take less time. I enjoy working with corporations a lot—it is refreshing to create a corporate board room that is exciting to enter and conduct a meeting in when there is artwork that brings the room to life.

Advice for first-time art buyers?

Don't be afraid to talk to the gallery owners and directors. If you have a budget, even small, let them know. You might be surprised what is in inventory that can be suggested. Attend openings and educate your eye—living with real artwork enriches your mind. I make it a point to greet individuals when they enter the gallery; I say, "Hello," and offer assistance. I want clients and visitors to feel welcome and confident in the gallery, not intimidated.

What do you find are some of the most rewarding aspects of your work?

I become excited when an artist is excited about their new body of work. Installing artwork in clients' homes, where I see spaces in which the art will live and be enjoyed, is also very rewarding. And revisiting grand New York City lobbies that I have worked on, while showing my family and friends the finished project, is very satisfying.

Your thoughts on the future of the stand-alone art gallery?

I believe that brick-and-mortar is important in the art world—people need a place to go and view artwork live, and artists all have a desire and need to display their work and showcase a body of work. Art is a living, breathing entity, and you need to experience it live to really appreciate it. ▲



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House Proud

THE GREAT AMERICAN ANTIQUE ISN'T INSIDE YOUR HOME, BUT MAY, INSTEAD, ACTUALLY BE YOUR HOME. THE CLASSIC BUNGALOW CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL AS THE NATION'S MOST ICONIC RESIDENCE. BY DAVID MASELLO



Of the major American cities, Chicago has the largest collection of brick bungalows, some 80,000 still standing throughout the city.

THE TYPICAL American house has none of the features you might expect: no white picket fence or window shutters, no rolling expanses of lawn or in-ground pool, or even an attached garage. The great American home is not the post-War split-level, the one-story ranch, or the classic center-hall neo-Colonial. The dwelling that best defines both the urban and suburban American streetscape is the two-bedroom, one-and-a-half-story, 1,200 to 1,600-square-foot bungalow.

Though small in scale, what a bungalow accommodates well, perhaps better than any other type of residence, is the Ameri-

can family and way of life. Since the bungalow's inception in the late 19th century, the residential form has welcomed any and all residents, regardless of income or ethnicity. What could be more American than that?

When bungalows were erected in huge numbers in American cities, coast to coast, most beginning in the mid-1920s, they were meant to be modest in scale, affordable, adaptable, family friendly, and enduring. They remain all of those things and, as a result, have become among the most sought-after of houses.

Although the word bungalow derives from the Bengali *bangla*, and the dwell-

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CHICAGO BUNGALOW ASSOCIATION



ing's detailing references handcrafted English Arts & Crafts motifs, what has morphed into the true bungalow is a distinctly American phenomenon. The largest concentration of bungalows is found in and just around Chicago, Pasadena, Houston, Dallas, Detroit, and Milwaukee, though most American cities have their own versions. While the form that bungalows assumed has varied in different parts of the country, they all share some common variables in their layout, form, function, and ideals.

"At base, a bungalow is a house made for the middle class," says architect Ian Baldwin, principal and founder of his Providence, Rhode Island-based architecture firm, New Model Architecture, and a former instructor of architectural history at the Rhode Island School of Design. "A bungalow represents a

really useful bridge between the fussier Victorian houses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the modern houses that came along later, mostly after World War II," Baldwin emphasizes.

The most dramatic example of that dynamic is evident in Chicago. While the city has long been celebrated for its early high-rise architecture, what has come to be known as the Chicago School of Architecture, what really defines the city are its brick bungalows, some 80,000 of which line the streets in many of its neighborhoods. They represent one third of the city's single housing stock.

"Without a doubt, Chicago has the largest collection of bungalows of any city in America," says Mary Ellen Guest, executive director of the nonprofit Chicago Bungalow Association, which works to protect the architec-

The classic American bungalow features one-and-a-half stories over a full basement, which some occupants reconfigure for additional bedrooms. A low-pitched hip roofline features wide overhangs.



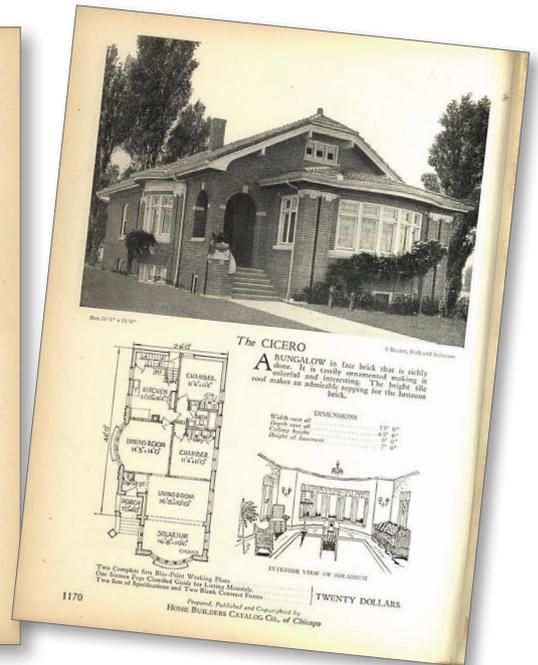
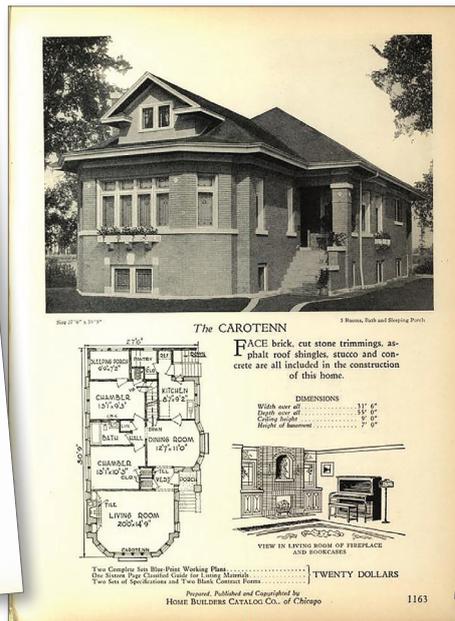
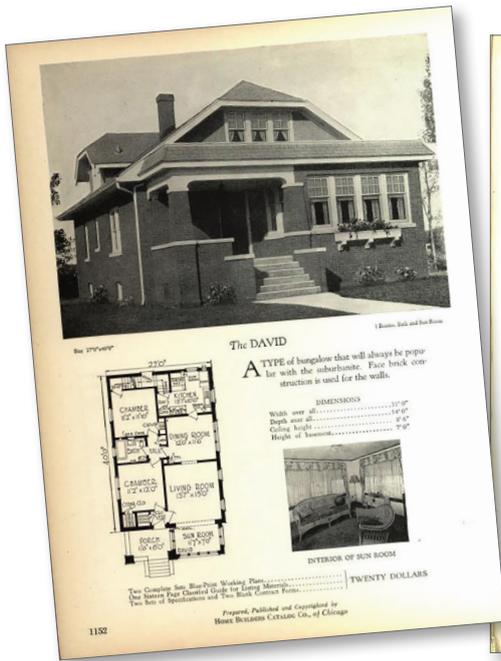
Living rooms and dining rooms meld. Narrow city lots, most prominent in Chicago, were perfectly suited for the scale of the bungalow. An abundance of windows, especially in the corners, helps brighten interiors.

tural style. She explains that when entire streetscapes of bungalows began to rise throughout the city in the early 1920s on empty land, there were few housing options for the emerging middle class. “The choices were tenement-type apartments or workers’ cottages, so the brick bungalow arose to accommodate this new middle class.”

As developers began to fill neighborhoods near and far from downtown with the rectangular, two-bedroom brick dwellings, set on standard lots measuring 25 by 150 feet, rail lines and streetcars followed, thus enlarging the very footprint of the city. These detached, single-family homes, with dormers peaking from a shallow hipped roof and a small covered porch/entry are the chief architectural statements found in Chicago. Each home features a full basement, which often accommodates additional bedrooms, as does the dormered space on the second level.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CHICAGO BUNGALOW ASSOCIATION



One of the most surprising developments about the bungalows found in Chicago and other Midwestern and Southern cities is that they are the only architectural form that began on America's west coast and gravitated eastward. It was in the very early 20th century, when places like Pasadena were filling with a mass migration of middle-class Midwesterners and Easterners, that the bungalow really began to take shape. In warmer climates, such as Pasadena, Houston, and Phoenix, the prevailing architectural motif of the bungalow was what is now called American Craftsman. The style makes use of local wood and stone, incorporates large expanses of glass, and includes a front porch that often doubles as a sleeping porch. And no matter what their locale, rectangular bungalows typically feature two bedrooms along one side of the house, and a more open plan living/dining/kitchen area on the other.

Bungalow Heaven is a 16-block historic neighborhood of such structures in Pasadena, and one of the great American repositories of the style. The neighborhood earned a listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. While some of the houses there came as ready-to-assemble, via kits manufactured by Sears and Montgomery Ward, most of the bungalows in

Pasadena were built by skilled, independent contractors as spec houses.

"These builders, just like Greene and Greene, the architects of our famous Gamble House, didn't go to architecture school or have any formal training," says Tina Miller, former president of the Heaven Bungalow Neighborhood Association and now an active member and "block representative." These amateur, though experienced, contractors and builders made use of local

Although bungalows assumed various architectural styles, they were built on the same scale with similar floor plans. Spacious kitchens are positioned at the rear of the house; in subsequent years, many people have added eating islands.





The façades of some bungalows are defined by projecting bay windows; the Arts & Crafts origins of the American bungalow are particularly evident in the windows. Fireplace bricks are usually identical to those used on the exteriors.

old-growth Douglas fir, noted for its warm cherry hues, resilience to termites, and tight durable grain.

While bungalows share a common scale and mission, they do differ in their details from region to region. Many of the dwellings in Bungalow Heaven, for instance, feature what is called a California Cooler, a kind of open-air pantry area that not only functioned to keep produce fresh, but also worked to ventilate the entire house through the attic. River rocks from local arroyo feature into many of the interiors, too, as do “clinker bricks,” which are remnants and shards of bricks that are

mixed in with expanses of river rocks and other perfect bricks. These materials function as fireplace hearths and floors, as well as a kind of decorative and durable textural mosaic.

“In Chicago bungalows, there is so much good craftsmanship throughout,” says Guest, referencing such novel details as a cleverly concealed ironing board in the kitchen, expanses of easy-to-maintain tile, and

built-in cabinets. “One really revolutionary idea behind bungalows is that you didn’t need a staff to take care of them,” she says. Prior to the construction of bungalows, many American homes were meant to house a servant or two. “Because bungalows weren’t big and because they featured indoor plumbing, frankly, to use an old-fashioned concept, the woman of the house could take of the house all on her own.”

In denser cities such as Chicago, Milwaukee, and Detroit, the rectangular-shaped bungalows were built with their narrow sides to the street, allowing for more units to fill a typical city block. In Houston’s The Heights neighborhood, Phoenix’s Willo Historic District, Dallas’s Winnetka Heights, and other cities where land was more

plentiful, the long side of the rectangles often faces the street, allowing for more yard space at the front and rear.

No matter their position on a given lot, though, the bungalow is a decidedly environmentally sound structure. “In summer, the long open plans, with windows on all four sides, plus the operable attic window, allows for a cooling cross breeze,” Baldwin points out. “And because they are compact enough in size, occupants never have to spend enormous amounts of money to keep themselves toasty. Bungalows were the original affordable and respectable middle-class American house.”

After World War II, as American suburbs exploded in growth, the favored styles became the neo-Colonial, the sprawling ranch, the modern split-level, and others that mocked the Tudor and Georgian. “Suddenly, the bungalow was no longer the cool house to have,” says Guest, “but now, everywhere in Chicago and in other cities with bungalows, younger people are honoring the materials used in the homes, this type and scale of home, and the idea of a place with what I call ‘embodied energy.’ The Chicago bungalow represents the fabric of this city. They were and are an amazing piece of our history and family life.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CHICAGO BUNGALOW ASSOCIATION



Despite their identical footprints, bungalows can be defined by distinctive details, including mock Tudor-style timbers (above) and an arched entryway (left) with a keystone at its center.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CHICAGO BUNGALOW ASSOCIATION

Putting Up Your Dukes

THE NORTON MUSEUM OF ART PUTS ON THE GLOVES FOR AN INSPIRING SHOW IT HAS MOUNTED ABOUT THE SPORT—AND THE ART—OF BOXING. BY DAVID MASELLO



George Bellows, *Club Night*, 1907.
Oil on canvas, 43 x 53 1/8 in.

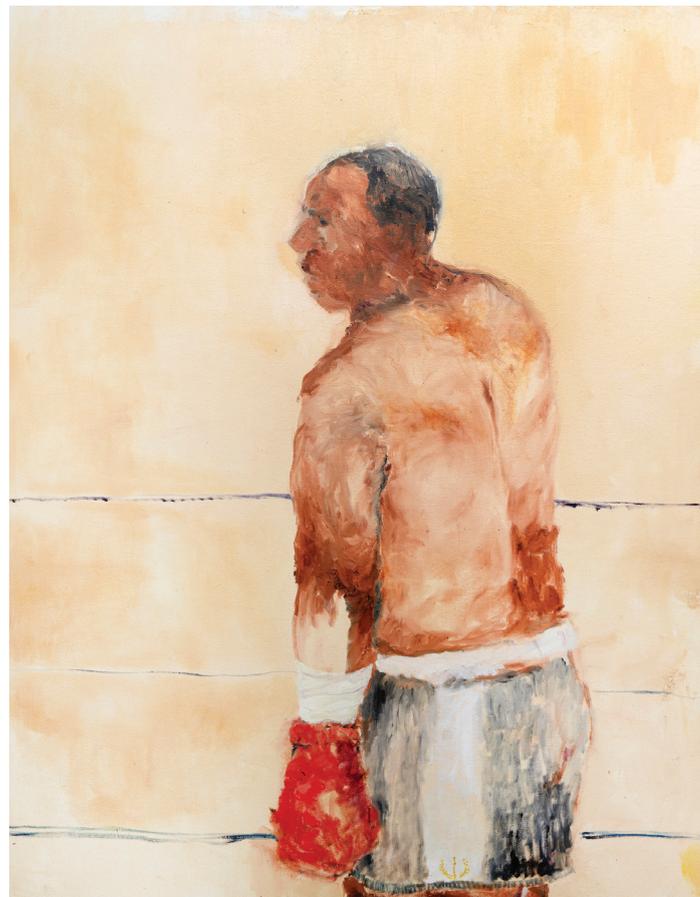
A GROUP OF Palm Beach senior citizens was ready for a fight when they visited the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach. They had come to see an ongoing show there devoted to seascape paintings by Sorolla. But when Arden Sherman, the Norton’s Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, graciously welcomed them and offered to also show them through another exhibition that had just opened in November, “Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing” (through March 9, 2025), they rebelled—peacefully

but vocally.

“I don’t want to see anything violent,” Sherman recalls one of the people saying, while many others voiced wholesale disinterest in the sport of boxing. “I emphasized to them that this show of ours was special, that it wasn’t at all about violence. Rather, it’s about life.”

Upon leading the group through the show of 110 artworks by more than 80 artists that Sherman had assembled, the responses had changed. When they had seen

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, JOHN HAY COLLECTION, 1982.76.1, COURTESY NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON



Above, left to right: Jared McGriff, *The Practice of Self Protection at All Times*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 70 x 54 in.; *A Rest Between Swings*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 70 x 54 in. Below: Jerry McMillan, *Judy Chicago Boxing Ring*, 1970. Gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 in.

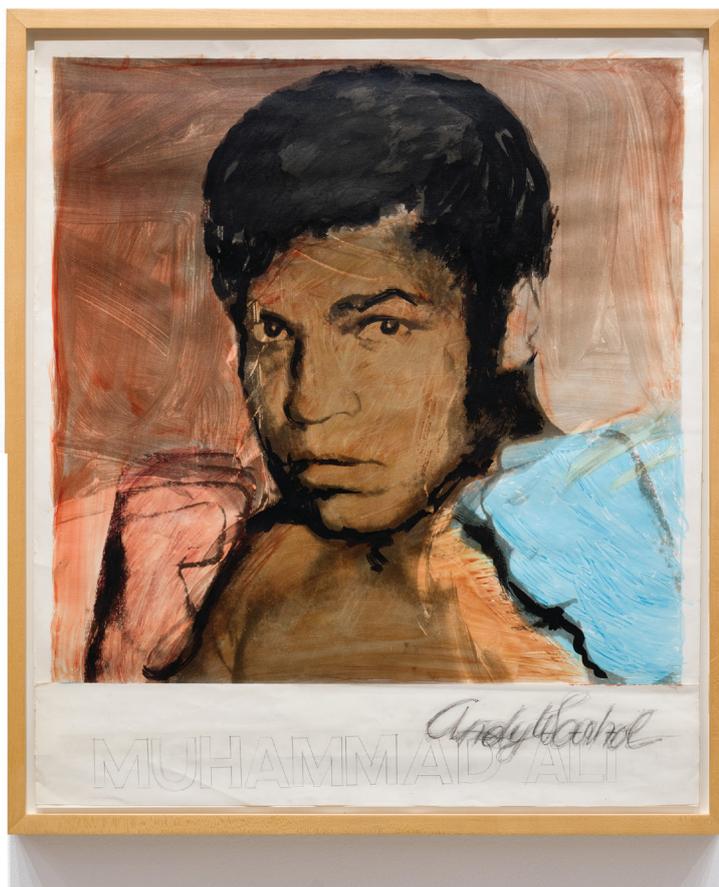
the works by artists who include Edward Hopper, Ed Ruscha, Roy Lichtenstein, Alison Saar, Hernan Bas, Katherine Bradford, and even a drawing by Muhammad Ali of a boxing ring, they were, collectively, as Sherman says, “Ecstatic.” So taken were they with the show that they later sent Sherman a bottle of Champagne as thanks for the special private tour. Unlike the winners of a boxing match, Sherman was not doused in the bubbly.

Even for those who have no interest in sparring or witnessing takedowns in the ring, going at punching bags or lacing up a pair of gloves, the show is a knockout. As Sherman explains, two other museums were concurrently configuring a show about the sport just as she was—the New York City-based FLAG Art Foundation and The Church (in Sag Harbor, New York). For years, Sherman had been collecting imagery of boxing for a potential show, long prior to assuming her current curatorial role at the Norton. “For

years, I kept noticing that so many artists were depicting imagery of boxing,” she says. “I was seeing references to boxing gloves and fighting imagery when I visited artists’ studios, art fairs, exhibitions around the country.”

It was her idea to collaborate with the other institutions in a wholly novel fashion. The various venues would present their own separately curated shows about the sport. They would share their checklists, but each would present their own interpretation of a show. “This was unprecedented,” says Sherman, “three unique shows with three unique curators with the vision of one shared title and theme. This is not a traveling show, but we agreed to jointly publish a catalogue.” The Norton’s





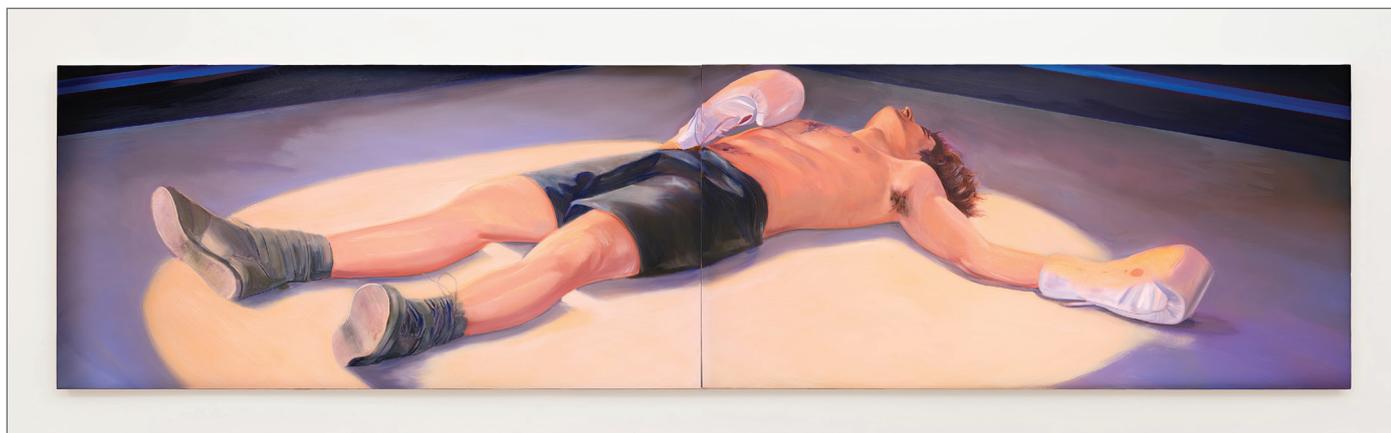
Above, left to right: Roy F. Lichtenstein, *Sweet Dreams Baby!*, 1965. Screenprint on heavy smooth white woven paper, 37 5/8 x 27 7/8 in.; Andy Warhol, *Muhammad Ali*, 1978. Acrylic, silkscreen, graphite, and paper collage on paper, 30 x 25 3/4 in. Below: Caleb Hahne Quintana, *How a Fall Can Make You Real*, 2023. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 35 x 140 in.

show, however, is the largest of the three (the other two shows have already run), in large part because the museum has exhibition space far larger than the other venues.

The show proves that there is beauty even in defeat (i.e., in the ring). Caleb Hahne Quintana's *How a Fall Can Make You Real* (2023) depicts an ethereally lovely young man inert and prostrate in the ring, his figure enveloped by a spot-

light. A stigmata-like mark appears on a glove. "There's sanctifying energy to this work," says Sherman, "an almost religious, spiritual energy to it."

Yet another saintly image is that of a silver gelatin photo by Samuel Fosso, *Muhammad Ali, St. Sebastian* (2008), that references (though does not depict) the man known as "The Greatest," pierced by the arrows that had felled Saint Sebastian. The



ADDISON GALLERY OF AMERICAN ART, PHILLIPS ACADEMY, ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS, GIFT OF DR. JOSEPH CLIVE ENOS II, 2010.69 © ESTATE OF ROY LICHTENSTEIN; PRIVATE COLLECTION; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND ANAT EBGLI, LOS ANGELES/NEW YORK; PHOTO BY SHARK SENESAC



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA, PARIS/BRUSSELS

Andres Serrano, *Floyd Mayweather Jr.*, 2006. Cibachrome and plexiglass, 35 x 45 in.



Above: Fletcher Martin, *Down for the Count*, 1936–1937. Oil on canvas, 29 ¾ x 47 ½ in. Framed: 38 x 56 x 2 ½ in.

Below, left to right: Arden Sherman, Norton Museum’s Glenn W. and Cornelia T. Bailey Senior Curator of Contemporary Art.; Otis Kwame Kye Quaiocoe, *Untitled III*, 2024. Oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.

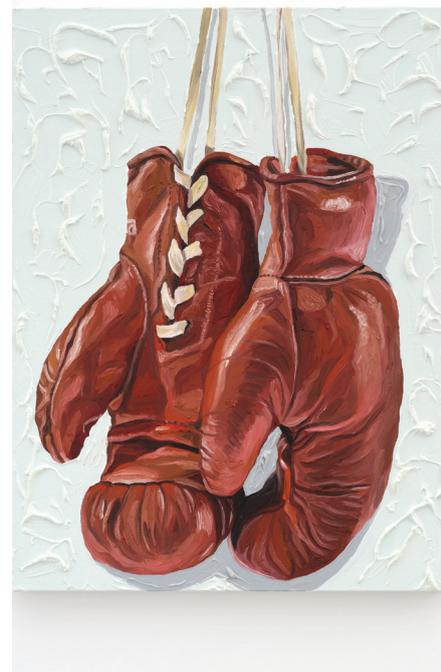


work is from the Nigerian photographer’s oeuvre known as the African Spirits Series.

Andres Serrano’s photograph of the former champion boxer Floyd Joy Mayweather, Jr., shows just the closeup of his hand, wrapped with a ragged length of gauze. “It’s just the palm of his hand,” Sherman points out. “It shows the bare essentials of the man himself, the deep lines on his fingers. The work is really beautiful, it’s raw, it’s sensitive.” Among the moodiest works in the show, and one that packs an especially big punch, is George Bellows’s iconic *Club Night* (1907) in which boxers are contorted, mid fight, in a ropeless ring. Distorted faces in the crowd beyond register a perverse glee in the struggle, with some of the patrons dressed in formal evening wear. The power and balletic dance of the athletes are discerned in the composition and the very brushstrokes.

Fletcher Martin’s *Down for the Count* (1936–37) depicts a fallen fighter, with his nemesis in the background, ready to inflict more blows, if necessary. But the fallen figure embodies a kind of godly nobility, with portions of his body gleam in arena lights.

As Sherman comments, “Pairing art-making with boxing locates the Norton as a site for constructive discussions around our human instinct to fight and prevail, and there is not better metaphor to engage in during the current moment of American history. I’m proud that we are surprising audiences.” **A**



BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN. GIFT OF MARI AND JAMES A. MICHENER, 1991. 264 © ARTIST OR ARTIST’S ESTATE; PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NORTON MUSEUM OF ART; COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ROBERT’S PROJECTS, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. PHOTO: PAUL SALVESON



COLLECTION OF ISABEL STAINOW WILCOX. COURTESY JEAN MARC PATRAS. PARIS

Samuel Fosso, *Muhammad Ali, St Sebastien*, from *African Spirits Series*, 2008. Gelatin silver print, 40 x 29 7/8 in.

Patching Together History

A LANDMARK SHOW OF QUILTS MADE BY BLACK AMERICAN WOMEN OVER MANY DECADES HIGHLIGHTS A COMMON HOUSEHOLD CRAFT THAT WAS, AND REMAINS, AN ORIGINAL AMERICAN ART FORM BY DAVID MASELLO



Catherine Gill with *Sunburst Quilt* (left) made by her mother; *Flagstaff, Arizona, April 1993* (right) made by Classy Blaylock, from Decatur, Mississippi. Chromogenic print, 27 x 38 in.

EVERY QUILT tells a story. Some of the square panels might depict a farm family at work—hunting raccoons, picking cotton, milking a cow in the barn. Another might show the quotidian details of daily domestic life—a girl jumping rope, a woman walking her dog, clothes drying on the line. Or another one might simply show an abstract composition more akin to the geometric patterns seen through a kaleidoscope but made of materials applied to a flat cotton surface. And while there is the story of a quilt’s thematic design, there is an even more important story behind each—that of its maker.

At the Mississippi Museum of Art

(MMA), a landmark show entitled “Of Salt and Spirit: Black Quilters in the American South,” (through April 13, 2025), features 51 quilts that hang on its gallery walls or are draped on display tables, each of which tells a compelling story about the maker, the region, and the very reason for the object’s making. In conceiving this show and refining its curatorial vision, the prolific guest curator, Dr. Sharbreon Plummer, states emphatically, “I wanted to honor these women quilters and tell their stories. Black quiltmaking is one of the earliest art forms reflecting the folkways of the American South.” Plummer’s very name for the exhibition references a



line from a poem by Ashley M. Jones, the current poet laureate of Alabama. Jones's poem, "I Cannot Talk About the South Without Talking About Black Women," invokes the phrase "of salt and spirit," to characterize the mostly unnamed women she addresses in the work.

While most of the quilts on display, some of which are large enough to cover a king-size bed, were made for utilitarian domestic purposes, they are sufficiently detailed to also assume roles as artworks. "When you look at these examples," says Plummer, "you see the hand, you see the body that went into them. You might see some fading and unraveling threads, proving that while they may have been loved, they were also used."

While quiltmaking is a longtime, firmly entrenched American phenomenon, practiced by everyone from the Amish to the

early settlers in New England, the tradition among Black women in the South reflects an especially defined historical import. As Plummer explains, for Black Americans the making of quilts was a way to record their history. "The quilts on display represent both the artistry and a deep cultural narrative conveyed by the makers over decades." Such decades encompass the origins of the institution of slavery, Reconstruction, daily life in rural Southern locales, the later Great Migration north, and ongoing life today. "Each of these quilts is a testament to resilience, creativity, and community," she emphasizes.

Although Plummer had long been contemplating mounting this show with an emphasis on Black Southern women who

Clockwise from left: Mabel Williams, *Improvisational Strip Quilt*, 1968. Cotton, polyester, wool, twill; hand-pieced, hand-quilted (appliquéd and embroidered backing), 85x 65in.; Gustina Atlas, *Variation on Dresden Plate Quilt*, 1998. Cotton; machine-pieced, hand-quilted, 81 1/2 x 80 in.; Geraldine Nash, *Blue Log Cabin*, 2007. Cotton; hand-quilted, 90 1/2 x 64 1/2 in.



Above, left to right: Hystercine Rankin, *Memory Quilt*, ca. 1994. Fabric; appliquéd, hand-embroidered, hand-quilted, 88 x 82 in.; Mary Mayfair Matthews, *Folk Scenes Quilt*, 1992. Rayon, cotton polyester blend, lace, lamé, buttons; hand-pieced, appliquéd, 86 1/4 x 74 in. Below: Emma Russell, *Star Quilt*, 1978. Cotton blend; hand-pieced, appliquéd, hand-quilted, 81 x 77 in.



practiced the craft and artform, she chose the MMA as its initial venue because of the museum’s existing collection of quilts. Roland Freeman (1936–2023), who worked as a stringer for *Time* magazine and Magnum Photos in the 1960s, documented through his photos and books African-American quilters and their guilds. During his travels throughout the American South, he collected numerous examples, even making some himself. A gift from the Kohler Foundation in 2022 allowed for 131 of those from Freeman’s personal collection to become part of the permanent collection. Twenty of Freeman’s works are featured in the show. Also included is a captivating 23-minute video that Freeman shot as he interviewed Hystercine Rankin (1929–2010), perhaps the most famous—and char-

ismatic—Mississippian quilter.

Although quilts are meant to be touched, those on display are treated as they deserve to be—as artworks. Yet, the museum has ingeniously included placards, “touch labels” as Plummer calls them, that feature the materials used—velvets, cottons, wools, flannels, polyesters—that visitors are encouraged to touch. Three local quiltmaking women have also been commissioned to be on premises making new works and talking with visitors about their methodologies.

The works on view come not only from Mississippi, but from throughout the American South—the Carolinas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee. Aficionados of the history of the American quilt will recognize some of their makers, who include Annie Dennis, Gwendolyn Magee, Annie Mae Morgan, Geraldine Nash, Hystercine Rankin, Emma Russell, the mother-daughter team of Elizabeth T. Scott and Joyce J. Scott, and Mabel Williams. After its run at the MMA, the show is set to tour, with one venue to be the museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the alma mater of quilter Gwendolyn Magee.

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Above: Perspective from inside the gallery, with quilts and other installation materials on display. Below, left to right: Geraldine Nash, *Strings in Diamond Quilt*, 2000. Cotton; machine-pieced, hand-embroidered, hand-quilted. 27 1/4 x 28 in. Hystercine Rankin, *Parchman Prison*, 1992. Cotton; machine-pieced, hand-quilted. 83 3/4 x 95 1/4 in.



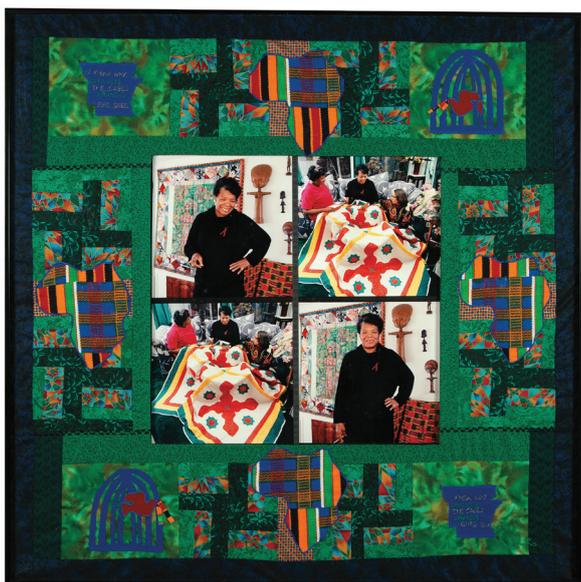
COLLECTION OF MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART, JACKSON. PHOTO BY MASON CROWE; COLLECTION OF MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART, JACKSON. GIFT OF THE KOHLER FOUNDATION, INC., 2022.9.4; COLLECTION OF MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART, JACKSON. MUSEUM PURCHASE, WITH FUNDS FROM THE SEARCY FUND, 2008.103



Among the aesthetic assessments that Plummer has made clear in her brilliant show—certainly in terms of color but also in breadth—is that, ironically, the more abstract patterns are often the oldest, reflecting that their makers used whatever materials were on hand, with less concern for telling a narrative tale than for creating something engaging to the eye. “The more utilitarian the quilt, the more that the design spoke to abstraction,” says Plummer. “As Black people

relocated, some wanted to pay homage to their history and ancestry and to preserve their culture. The quilts went with them. Telling a story on a quilt was a way to visualize language. They used a soft medium to tackle tough subjects.”

Plummer is, as her official bio describes, a scholar of “the folkways connected to Black life,” with a focus on textile traditions. When asked if she herself makes quilts, she says, “Not as much as I’d like to, but I’m looking to return to it. You can’t write and curate shows about quilts unless you experience the making of them yourself. Making quilts is a very contemplative and meditative practice. I have an ancestral connection to them.”



Above: Another perspective of the exhibition, with gallery benches inviting visitors to sit and study the kaleidoscopic elements of the various quilts. Below: *Maya Angelou, Author, Educator, and Quilter* (top left and bottom right); *Dolly McPherson, Maya Angelou, and Beverly Guy-Sheftall* (top right and bottom left), Winston-Salem, North Carolina, November 1992. Chromogenic print with quilted mat by Anita Knox, 1996, 36 x 36 in.

COLLECTION OF MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART, JACKSON. PHOTO BY MASON CROWE; COLLECTION OF MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART, JACKSON. GIFT OF THE KOHLER FOUNDATION, INC., 2022.9.174; PHOTOS BY ROLAND FREEMAN



One of the concerns for the curator was how to show so many quilts in limited gallery space, but wherever possible, she revealed the patterns in full so that viewers could see the handiwork.

They Persisted

A NEW EXHIBITION TELLS THE STORY OF THREE AMERICAN WOMEN OF JAPANESE DESCENT AND EXPANDS THE STORY OF AMERICAN ART. BY ASHLEY BUSBY



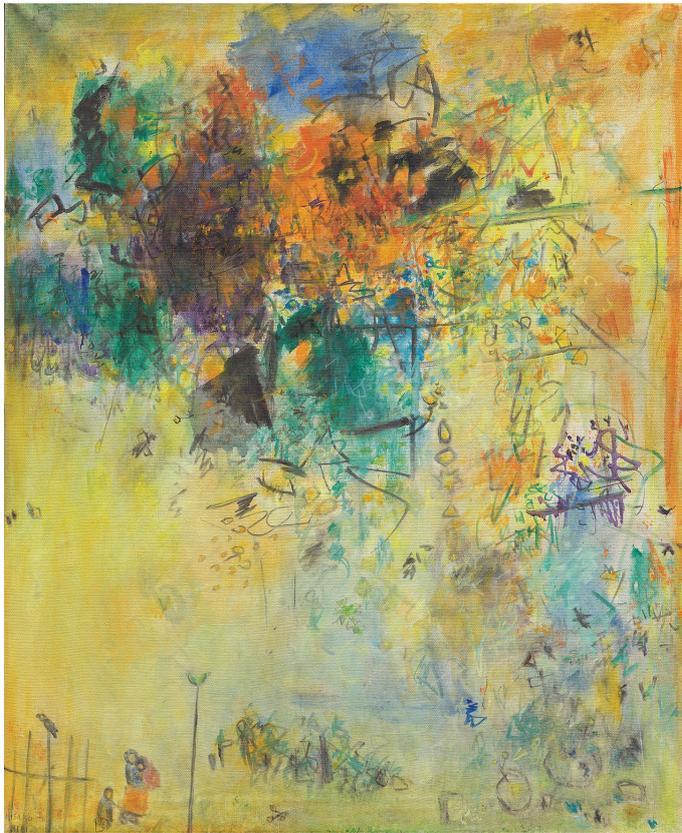
Miné Okubo, *Wind and Dust*, 1943. Opaque watercolor on paperboard, 19 x 24 in.

IN RECENT years, the museum world has highlighted the work of previously underrecognized artists, in part to reenergize collections and tell new stories, but more importantly as a means to question the rigidity of the canon. “Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi, and Miné Okubo,” a new exhibition at the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) on view through August 17, 2025, draws attention to three pioneering American women artists of Japanese descent. Despite often invisible barriers to

success, such as race, gender, and painting style—and the very real challenges they faced, including displacement and mass incarceration during World War II—each woman persisted and sustained her own impressive creative voice.

Curated by ShiPu Wang, Coats Family Chair in the Arts, and professor at the University of California, Merced, and organized by the Japanese American National Museum, the exhibition is coordinated at SAAM by Melissa Ho, curator of twentieth-century art, with

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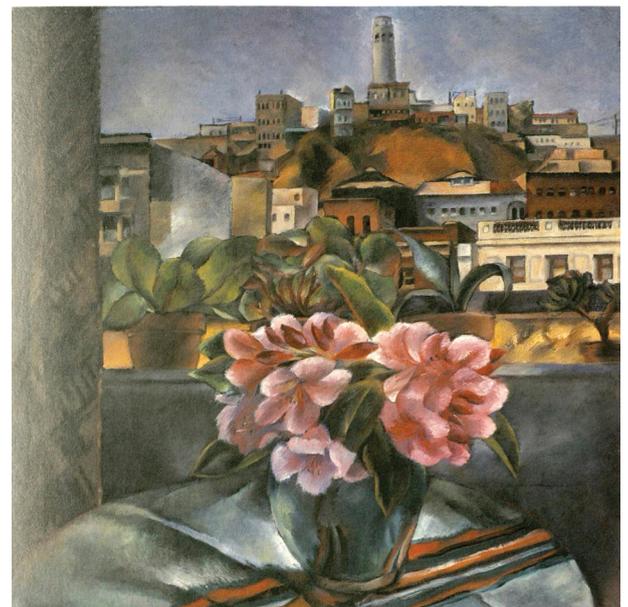
Clockwise from left: Hisako Hibi, *Autumn*, ca. 1967. Oil on canvas, 39 1/8 x 32 1/4 x 1 1/2 in.; Miki Hayakawa, *One Afternoon*, ca. 1935. Oil on canvas, 40 x 40 in.; Miki Hayakawa, *From My Window*, 1935, Oil on canvas, 28 x 28 in.

Anna Lee, curatorial assistant for Asian American art. Of the exhibition's importance, Wang notes, "[The show] aims to direct more attention toward these artists' diverse bodies of work that belong in and enrich the broader stories of American art." According to Ho, the exhibition is part of a SAAM initiative to foster scholarship on Asian Pacific American artists. The institution has also acquired six works by Hibi and Okubo for its permanent collection, a move that will allow these artists to "take their rightful place as part of the cultural inheritance of our nation."

Born in Hokkaido, Japan, Miki Hayakawa (1899-1953) immigrated to California at age nine. In the 1920s, she studied on scholarship at Berkeley's School of the California Guild of Arts and Crafts and later at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. She had her first solo exhibition in 1929 at the Golden Gate Institute. Critically praised as a "genius," she was recognized for her observational skill.

In the decade that followed, she exhibited widely to much acclaim. Following the 1942 enactment of Executive Order 9066, Hayakawa avoided internment by relocating to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she continued to make art until her death from cancer.

"Pictures of Belonging" highlights Hayakawa's skills as a portraitist. In *One Afternoon* (c. 1935) the artist depicts "Edward," a model who appears in other works from the period. The painting serves as a testament to Hayakawa's formal experimentation in line with modernist tendencies. Moreover, as Wang argues, "For diasporic artists, creating portraits...enable[d]





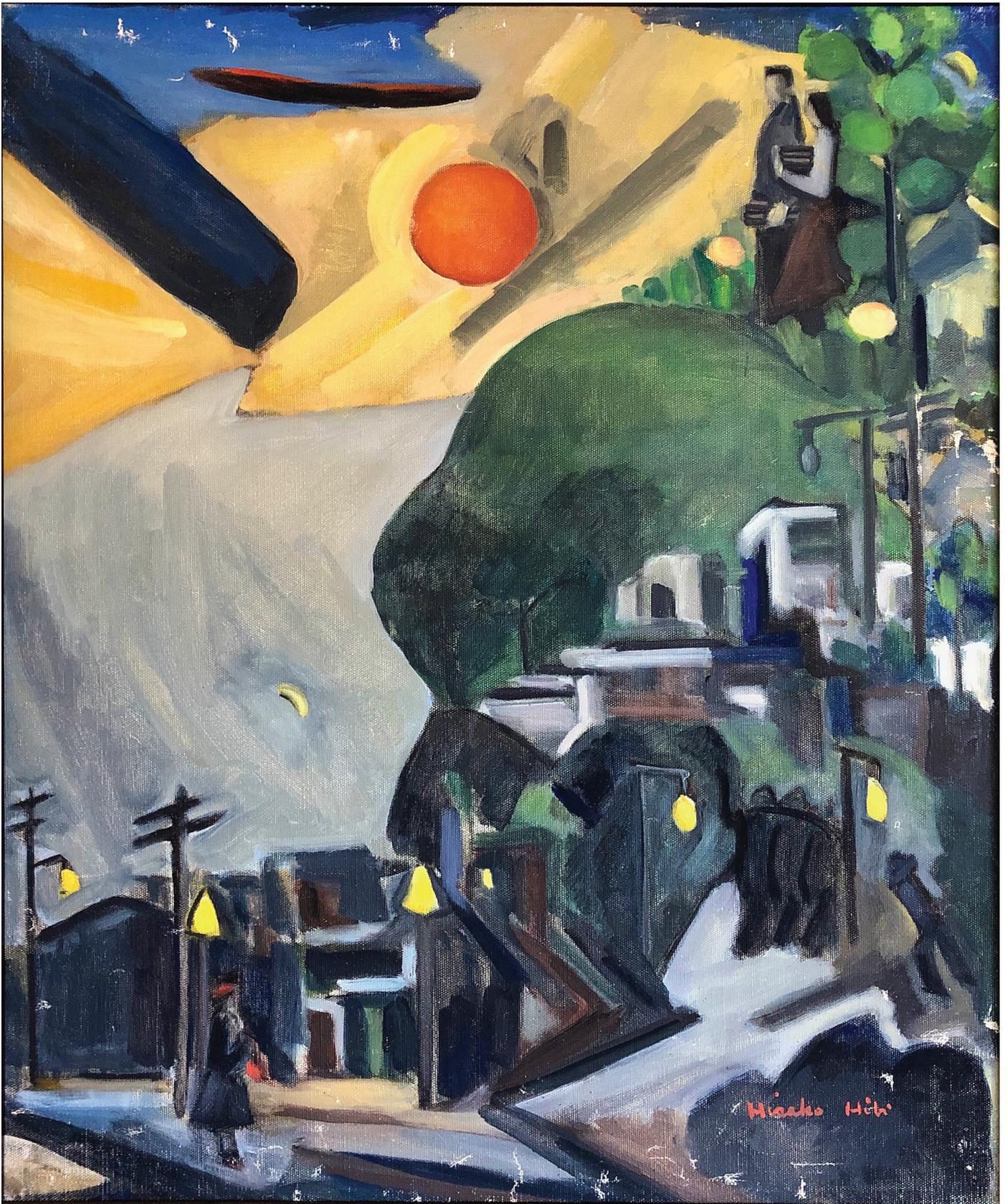
Hisako Hibi, *Floating Clouds*, April 1944.
Oil on canvas, 19 1/8 x 23 x 1 1/2 in.

them to... capture that deep engagement with another person, memorialize their relationship and shared experience, render their own existence visible, and, most crucially, affirm a sense of belonging for both the model and the artist.”

Also born in Japan, Hisako Hibi (1907-1991) arrived in San Francisco in 1920. In 1926 she enrolled at the California School of Arts where she met her husband, fellow first-generation immigrant and artist Matsusaburo George Hibi. They moved to Hayward, California, in the 1930s to raise a family but remained active participants in a uniquely international, diverse, and receptive Bay Area art scene.

This all ended in 1942, when Hibi and her family were uprooted from their lives, first forced to live in a horse stable at Tanforan Assembly Center, and

“For diasporic artists, creating portraits...enable[d] them to... capture that deep engagement with another person, memorialize their relationship and shared experience, render their own existence visible...”

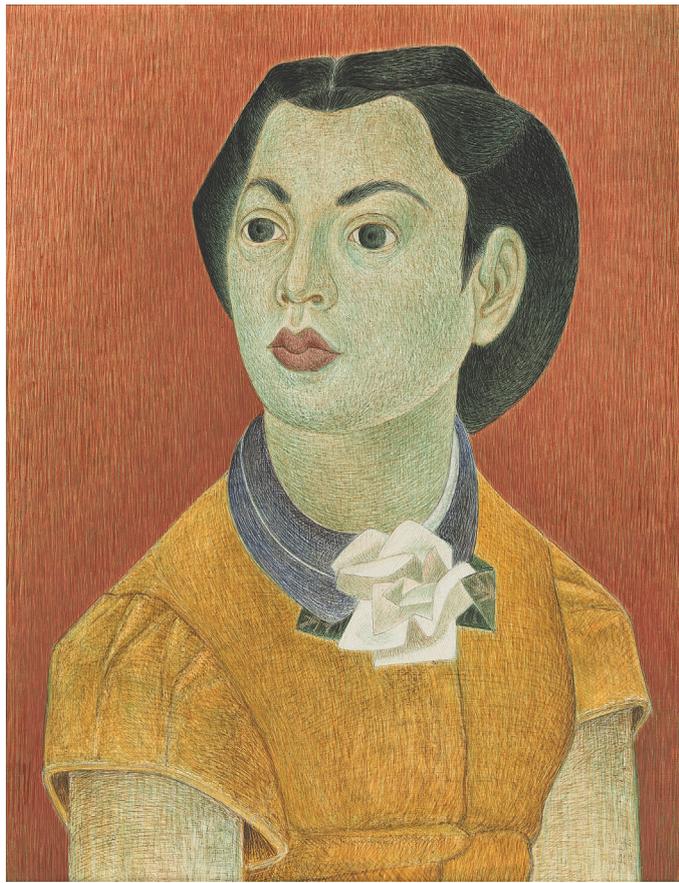


THE HIBI ESTATE. PHOTO BY SHIPU WANG

Hisako Hibi, *Waiting for Bus to Work*, 1955. Oil on canvas, 24 x 20 in.



Above, left to right: Miki Hayakawa, *Portrait of a Negro*, 1926. Oil on canvas, 26 x 20 in.; frame, 36 x 29 1/2 x 4 in.; Miné Okubo, *Portrait Study*, ca. 1937. Tempera on hardboard, 20 x 16 in. Below: Miné Okubo, *Grocer Weighing Produce*, 1940. Tempera on hardboard, 40 x 35 in.



then eventually relocated to Utah's Topaz War Relocation Center. Even during her internment, Hibi remained dedicated to art. She helped arrange children's art classes and produced over 70 plein air landscape paintings, such as *Floating Clouds* (April 1944), that documented Topaz's harsh high desert environment.

Following their release in 1945, Hibi and her family relocated temporarily to New York. She earned U.S. citizenship in 1953 and returned to San Francisco soon after. In the post-war era, she continued to evolve her practice, including investigations in abstraction such as *Autumn* (c. 1967).

Unlike Hayakawa and Hibi, Miné Okubo (1912-2001) was *nisei*, or born in the U.S. to Japanese immigrant parents. She received a degree in art from the University of California, Berkeley, and exhibited widely in the 1930s. Like Hibi, Okubo was imprisoned first at Tan-

foran and then Topaz from 1942 to 1945. *Wind and Dust* (1943)—one of over two thousand drawings produced during her detention—documents everyday life at Topaz.

After the war, Okubo, then living in New York, was encouraged to publish her illustrations. Her award-winning, 1946 graphic novel, *Citizen 13360*, was one of the earliest first-hand accounts of the experiences of internment. As a part of her continued activism, Okubo testified in 1981 before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which eventually resulted in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 and reparation payments to former internees.

"Pictures of Belonging" argues for a well-deserved place for Hayakawa, Hibi, and Okubo in the history of American art. Their stories are now well-documented, and their works stand as a testament to the realities of their divergent American experiences, which were marked by both artistic achievement and dislocation. ▲

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IMAGE (detail): Nell Choate Jones (1879-1981). *Georgia Red Clay*, 1946, oil on canvas. Morris Museum of Art, Augusta, GA. 1989.01094

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Gros

How to Choose a Masterpiece

The Clark Art Institute receives one of its largest gifts—331 works of art from the foundation of Aso O. Tavitian. Time soon to build a new wing to house the treasures.

By Patti Zielinski

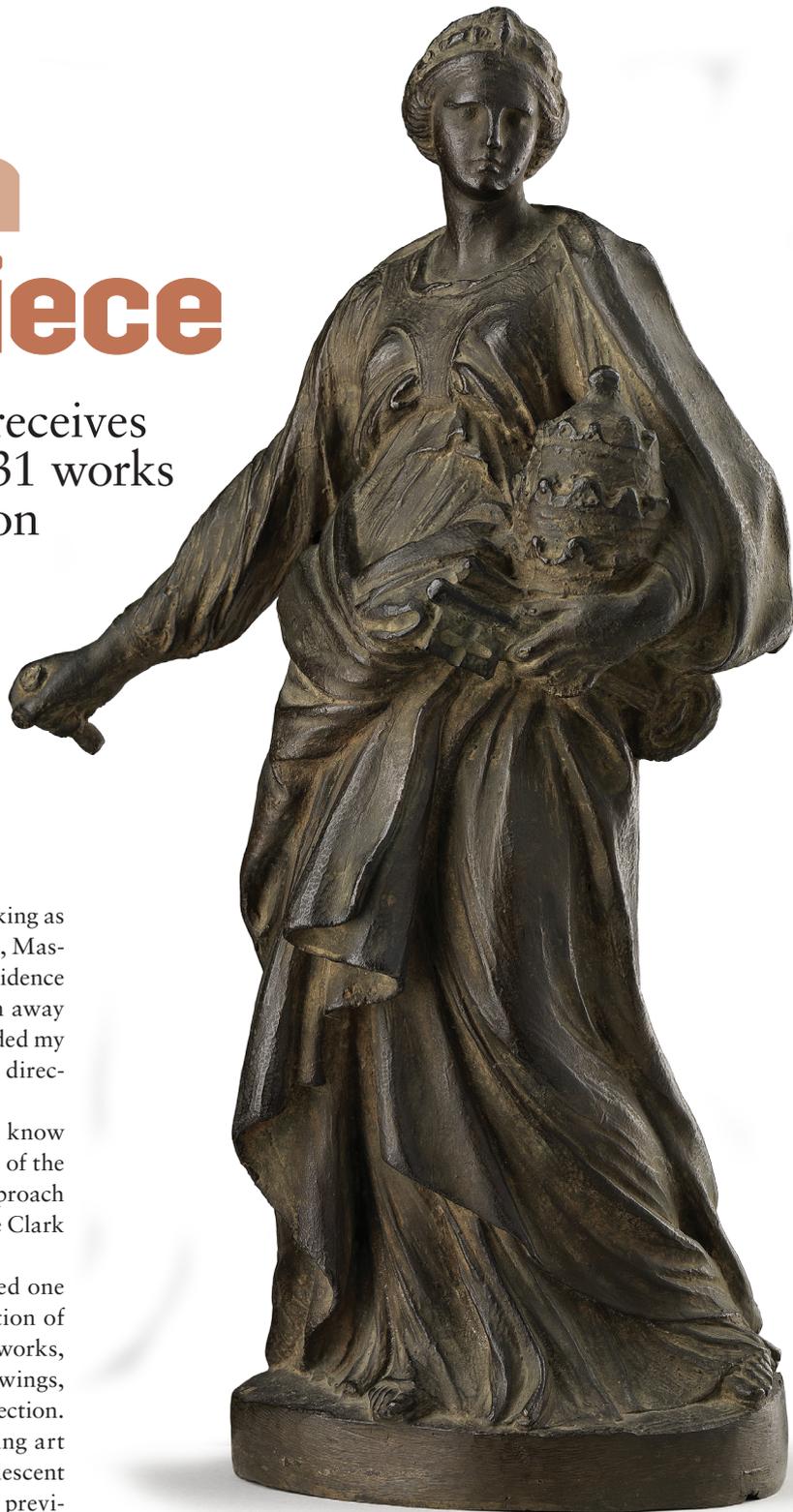
Shortly after Esther Bell began working as a curator at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts, she was invited to Aso O. Tavitian's residence for lunch. "When I entered his home, I was blown away by the museum quality of his collection; it far exceeded my expectations," says Bell, now the museum's deputy director and chief curator.

Over the years, Bell had the honor of getting to know Tavitian—long a friend of the Clark and a member of the Board of Trustees from 2006 to 2012—and his approach to collecting. Little did she know how vital a role the Clark would play in the preservation of his legacy.

In October, the Clark announced it had received one of the largest gifts in its history from the foundation of the late philanthropist, who died in 2020: 331 artworks, consisting of 132 paintings, 130 sculptures, 39 drawings, and 30 decorative arts objects from his personal collection.

Recognized as one of the world's most discerning art connoisseurs, Tavitian, a Bulgarian of Armenian descent who immigrated to the United States in 1961, had previously shown some of his collection at the Clark, notably in 2011 when he loaned 30 paintings and one sculpture for the exhibition "Eye to Eye: European Portraits, 1450–1850."

The gift also included more than \$45 million to endow



Opposite: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Portrait of Count Honoré de La Ribouillère*, 1815. Oil on canvas. Above: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Countess Matilda of Canossa*, c.1630–39. Bronze.

How to Choose a Masterpiece



a new curatorial position, care for the collection, and build a new Aso O. Tavitian Wing, where the entirety of the gift will be on view during an introductory period after the wing opens between 2027 and 2028. This will be a rare opportunity to view Tavitian's works on paper, which will afterward be stored for study and presented in periodic displays. The majority of paintings, sculpture and decorative arts objects will be continually shown in the Tavitian Wing and in the Clark's permanent collection galleries. (The Tavitian Foundation will sell the remainder of the collection of more than 900 works next year at Sotheby's.)

Prior to his death, Tavitian discussed his intentions to donate a significant portion of his collection to the Clark. "He wanted the artworks coming to the Clark to be representative of the spirit of the collection but was also conscious that we wanted something that was fitting for the public," says museum director Olivier Meslay.

The gift will complement the Clark's holdings of art before 1850 and strengthen the current collection. Sculpture particularly is a great strength of the collection, with works in bronze, plaster, terracotta, marble, and other materials dating from the Renaissance through the late 19th century by artists who include Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Andrea della Robbia, Gil de Siloé, Clodion (Claude Michel), and Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux. The addition of the 130 sculptures gives a significant boost to the Clark's permanent holdings. "It radically transforms the sculpture collection and will be the most visible impact to visitors," Meslay says.



Della Robbia's glazed terracotta *Portrait of a Youth* (c. 1470–80) is one such exceptional work modeled in deep relief with the head and neck set off against a simple roundel glazed in blue, resulting in a sculpture that is remarkably lifelike and modern.

Tavitian's collecting focus showed a keen interest in paintings and sculpture from the Renaissance through the early 19th century. The gift is rich in portraiture, including important works by Parmigianino (*Portrait of a Man*, c. 1530, oil on canvas), Elizabeth Vigée Lebrun (*Self-Portrait in Studio Costume*, c. 1800, oil on panel), Jean-Honoré Fragonard (*The Letter*, 1773–76, oil on canvas), and Jacques-Louis David. Meslay says the museum complemented its one portrait by David (*Comte Henri-Amédée-Mercure de Turenne-d'Aynac*) with three more from Tavitian's collection. "He's an important artist and this was a way to enrich our collection at the highest level of quality," he says. David painted *Portrait of Dominique-Vincent Ramel de Nogaret* (1820, oil on canvas), the former finance minister of France, while both men were in exile in Brussels following the final abdication of Napoleon in 1815. The two other David artworks in the gift are a pendant portrait of Ramel de Nogaret's wife, Ange-Pauline-Charlotte Ramel de Nogaret, and the portrait of the artist's son, Jules.

The portraiture collection reflects Tavitian's deep interest in the human experience, the historical stories associated with each

Above, left to right: Angelica Kauffmann, *Portrait of Elizabeth Kerr (née Fortescue), Marchioness of Lothian*, c.1770. Oil on canvas.; Peter Paul Rubens, *Portrait of a Young Man*, c.1613–15. Oil on panel.

LEFT: CLARK ART INSTITUTE, WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS. GIFT OF ASO O. TAVITIAN FOUNDATION. PHOTOGRAPH © BRUCE M. WHITE, 2024. RIGHT: CLARK ART INSTITUTE, WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS. GIFT OF ASO O. TAVITIAN FOUNDATION.



CLARK ART INSTITUTE, WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS. GIFT OF ASO O. TAVITIAN FOUNDATION.

Wallerant Vaillant, *Self-Portrait in a Turban*, 1650-1675. Oil on canvas.

How to Choose a Masterpiece



Clockwise from above: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Letter*, c.1773–76. Oil on canvas.; Jan van Eyck and workshop, *Madonna of the Fountain*, c.1440. Oil on panel.; Antoine-François Gérard, *Game of Hoops*, c.1780–89. Wax.

person portrayed and in past cultures. This is notably exemplified by Peter Paul Rubens's *Portrait of a Young Man* (c. 1613–1615, oil on panel), which depicts the artist's ability to capture the subtleties of character in an unknown sitter.

The donation gives the Clark its first works by more than 100 artists, including the 16th-century Italian painter Jacopo da Pontormo (*Portrait of a Boy*, c. 1535–40, oil on fired tile), and Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who is considered to be one of the greatest Italian sculptors of the 17th century; the small-scale



bronze *Countess Matilda of Canossa* is a reduction of the over life-size marble Bernini made for the tomb of Countess Matilda in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The Tavitian gift also includes a rare painting by Bernini, thought to be of his brother, Domenico Bernini. "Having a sculpture by Bernini alongside a painting by him is just so special..." Bell notes.

The oldest artwork selected is *Madonna of the Fountain* (c. 1440), a rare oil-on-panel, which is one of several period versions of one of Jan Van Eyck's last paintings, "a masterpiece of humanism," says Bell.

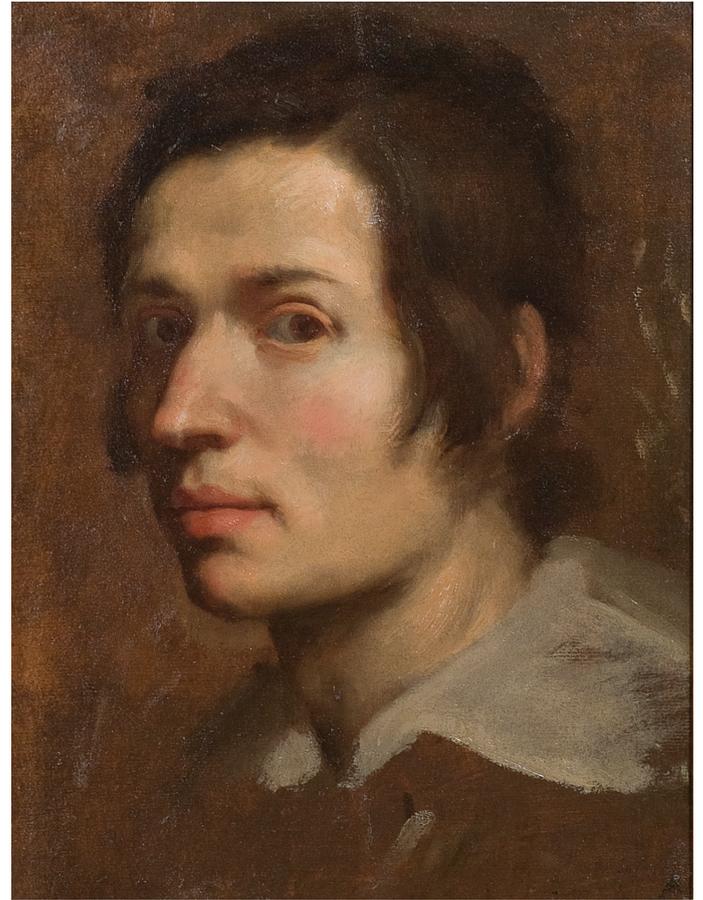
Clark leadership selected artworks based on criteria including quality (though "quality was almost everywhere in the collection and at the highest level," Meslay notes), works by artists the museum desired, and pieces that could strengthen the current collection.

"There was an incredible thirst for



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INSTITUTE, WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS, GIFT OF ASO O. TAVITIAN FOUNDATION. PHOTOGRAPH © BRUCE M. WHITE, 2024

How to Choose a Masterpiece



Above, left to right: Jacopo da Pontormo, *Portrait of a Boy*, c.1535–40 or later. Oil on fired tile.; Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Portrait of the Artist's Brother*, Domenico Bernini (?), c.1630–35. Oil on paper mounted on canvas. Below: Gil de Siloé, *Saint Cecilia*, c.1500. Marble.

more sculptures,” he adds.

The curators found the scholarly due diligence to make the selections—reading about the collection and studying it in person—a happy task. “What distinguishes Aso from other collectors is that he was buying consistently at museum-quality level,” Bell says. “He often competed against museums for certain acquisitions. This made proposing a dream list such a joy.”

“His collection is masterpiece after masterpiece. He needed to have a personal relationship with each of the objects he was buying,” Meslay adds.

When asked to name a favorite piece, Meslay (“If I pick one, it could be different tomorrow!”) and Bell (“It would be like picking a favorite child!”) are initially at a loss. However, Meslay notes being drawn to a rare, delicately carved marble sculpture depicting Saint Cecilia (c. 1500) playing an organ by Gil de Siloé, recognized as the greatest Spanish sculptor of the 15th century. “I don’t know another work of art by him outside of Spain,” says Meslay, who also

cites an admiration for the ensemble of eight Clodion sculptures in terracotta and marble that are “so modern, sensual and playful it is really unbelievable.”

Bell is captivated by the “very beautiful portrait of a man with a turban and piercing gaze”: Wallerant Vaillant’s *Self-Portrait in a Turban* (1650–75, oil on canvas). “When that painting appeared at The European Fine Art Fair, it was the talk of the fair. Then it was bought, and I could not wait to see where it landed—then I encountered it in Aso’s home and thought, ‘Wow.’”

The gift also includes an endowment for a newly created Aso O. Tavitian Curator of Early Modern European Painting and Sculpture, staffing to ensure continuous oversight of the works, the publication of a catalogue documenting the collection, as well as ongoing care and maintenance of the collection and the new facility.

“The fact that Aso, a person who had put so much care and effort into building this collection, left it to a museum devoted to making art available and accessible to the public is a sign of his wonderful, generous legacy,” Bell says. 

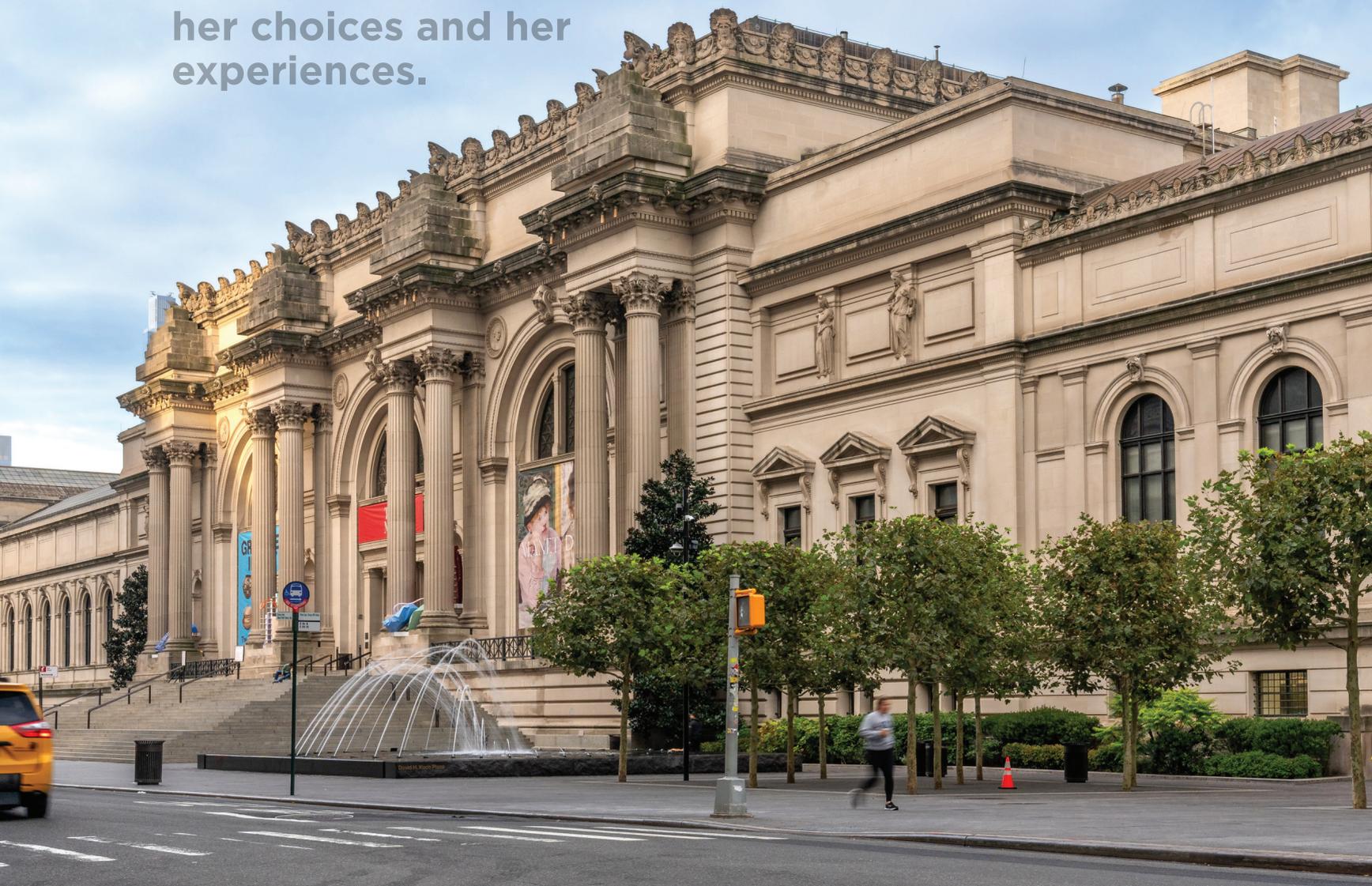




DIARY OF A DOCENT

THE
MET

Ann Levin recounts her work as a docent at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Part of the training involved her having to pick her favorite works in the institution. She shares her choices and her experiences.



The summer before I started training to be a tour guide at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I spent two solid weeks there, traipsing up and down staircases, riding every elevator, tracking down hundreds of artworks scattered throughout the quarter-mile-long building. It was called a treasure hunt, and it was supposed to be fun, but some days, it felt so overwhelming, I'd ask my husband to come along to help me ferret out objects no bigger than my thumb, or ones tucked away in galleries so rarely visited that dust discreetly collected in the corners.

The idea was to get us tour guides-in-training thinking about the ten objects we'd soon select for our highlight tours, but I was plagued by self-doubt. How was I, a journalist and English major, who had dropped out of Smith College's legendary survey course of Western Art because

I didn't think I could memorize all those slides, possibly be qualified to lead visitors through one of the world's great art museums?

But when classes started in mid-September, I realized that only a couple people in our group of eleven had any formal background in art. Susan was a therapist; Sheila, a librarian; Jeff, a cancer doctor; and Barbara, once a businesswoman, was now in the business of being a grandma.

After training, Susan, Sheila, Barbara, and I would adjourn to the nearby Le Pain Quotidien on Madison Avenue and argue about our Top Ten—the ten must-see works of art for a visitor with only an hour or two to spare in the museum. We did it with the compulsive zeal of sports fans—“I'll trade you my notes on Rembrandt for yours on van Eyck.”

By Ann Levin



Above: Amedeo Modigliani, *Reclining Nude*, 1917. Oil on canvas, 23 ⁷/₈ x 36 ¹/₂ in. Below: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Harvesters*, 1565. Oil on wood; overall, including added strips at top, bottom, and right, 46 ⁷/₈ x 63 ³/₄ in.; original painted surface, 45 ⁷/₈ x 62 ⁷/₈ in.

By early October, we had to turn in our first three objects for the trainers' approval. For me, it was a no-brainer: the Kongo Power Figure, a hollowed-out wooden sculpture from Africa, baring its nail-studded chest like the powerlifters in my gym. The Astor Court, serene but otherworldly, a garden without a single flower, just cool

green plants and jagged limestone rocks. And a Tiffany stained-glass window because Louis Comfort Tiffany's wild and exuberant sense of color always reminded me of my interior decorator mother.

Sheila had been trying to get me to do Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux's marble sculpture *Ugolino and His Sons* showing the starving,

imprisoned count gnawing his fingers as he considers the unspeakable act of eating his own children. "It's got cannibalism," she enthused. "People will love it!"

But I was busy researching Bruegel's *The Harvesters* because his odd Netherlandish peasants and butterscotch-colored wheat fields always brought tears to my eyes.

I think we all picked things that moved us, within the constraints of museum guidelines. The objects had to be important; represent a diversity of cultures, time periods, and materials; large enough for people to see; and laid out along a logical route. Still, it never ceased to amaze me what people chose: a Colt revolver, a Turkish saber, and the kind of crossbows that became popular after *Game of Thrones*.

We spent a long time trying to talk Barbara out of a Renoir painting of two young girls at a piano. Susan said, "It's so sweet, it makes my teeth hurt."

Sheila, always the diplomat, suggested there were





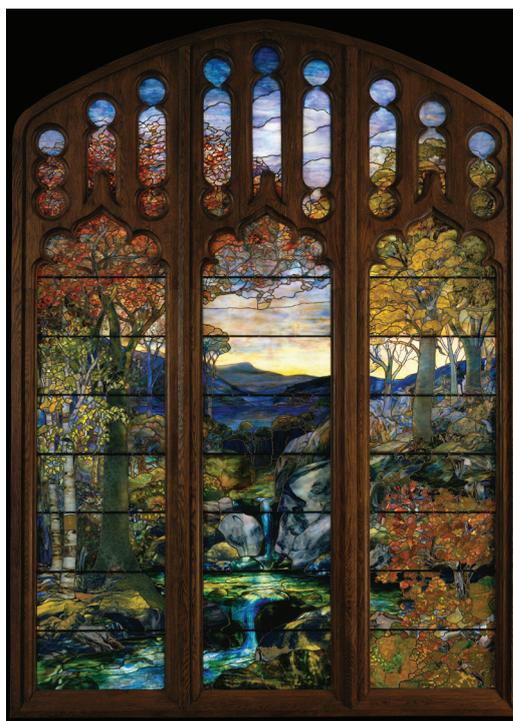
Above: *The Astor Chinese Garden Court*, 17th-century style. Taihu rocks, granite terrace, ceramic tile flooring, roof tiles, and door frames, various woods (nan wood columns, pine beams, ginkgo latticework), brass fittings Below: Tiffany Studios, attributed to Agnes F. Northrop, *Autumn Landscape*, 1923-24. Leaded Favrite glass, 132 x 102 in..

more important Renoirs to present to museum visitors, such as *Madame Charpentier and Her Children*.

“You could talk about how all of Paris was crazy for Japonisme at the time. And audiences love it when you point out that the kid in the blue-and-white ruffled dress is actually a boy.”

Barbara was unmoved. She was the romantic in the group, drawn to works of art about love, marriage, children, and families. One of the first objects she presented to the class was an 18th-century Rococo sculpture by Jean-Louis Lemoyne of an alluring, half-naked woman fending off Cupid’s arrows. She also did a Greek stele of a little girl saying goodbye to her pet doves—a real heartbreaker—and a painting by the Renaissance artist Fra Filippo Lippi of an elegantly dressed woman standing at a window while her betrothed looks in.

Naturally, Susan, the psychother-



apist, gravitated to works about sex and death. She chose a Chagall painting called *The Lovers* because the Russian-Jewish artist spoke to her immigrant-loving, Yiddische heart. In the picture Chagall embraces his wife, Bella. Through the window you can see fairytale details of Vitebsk, the town in Russia where they were from. It didn’t matter to her a bit if a bunch of art snobs thought Chagall was a lightweight because of all the color and dancing cows and fiddlers on the roof.

Of all the people in the class, Sheila took the mandate to choose highlights the most seriously. Like it was canonical. Like there was such a thing as canonical. Maybe it was a byproduct of sixteen years of Catholic education or her librarian training. But she truly believed in the mythical visitor from a faraway place with an hour to spare who’d feel cheated if she didn’t see the works the museum was most



Left to right: Kongo artist and nganga, Yombe group, *Mangaaka Power Figure (Nkisi N'Kondi)*, Second half of 19th century. Wood, iron, resin, ceramic, plant fiber, textile, pigment; H. 46 ⁷/₁₆ x W. 19 ¹/₂ x D. 15 ¹/₂ in., 53 lbs.; *Marble statue of a kouros (youth)*, ca. 590-580 BCE. Marble, Naxian, 76 ⁵/₁₆ x 20 ⁵/₁₆ x 24 ⁷/₁₆ in.; *Standing Buddha Offering Protection*, late 5th century. Red sandstone, H. 33 ³/₁₆ in., W. 16 ³/₄ in., D. 6 ¹/₂ in.

renowned for. Which, in her opinion, included Goya's *Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zuñiga*, or the Red Boy, (in my opinion, meh) and the relief panels from the palace of Ashurnasirpal (fine, but a little severe).

By January, I had eight of my Top Ten but was still dithering over at least a dozen others. I briefly settled on *The Horse Fair* by Rosa Bonheur, a panoramic view of a horse market in Paris in the 1850s, because I admired Bonheur's proto-feminist back story—she'd had to dress up like a man simply to go to the market and sketch undisturbed. But I just didn't love 19th-century realism.

Finally, after weeks of waffling, one of our trainers said to me, "Go with your gut." And suddenly, I felt liberated to add the picture I'd been wanting to do all along: Modigliani's *Reclining Nude*. He'd been my favorite since college, when I used to get stoned and stare at the poster over my bed of a different nude, *La Belle Romaine*, taking comfort in the girth of her enormous left thigh and listening to Marvin Gaye croon *Let's Get It On*.

The last work I selected was *Samson Captured by the Philistines* by the 17th-century Italian artist Guercino. I didn't love it, but my trainer listed its advantages.

"First of all, it's big, so everyone will be able to see it. Second, it's *Delilah*," she said, emphasizing the name of the Old Testament figure known for her acts of seduction and betrayal. "Finally, it's

got a bench in front of it, and people will be tired at this point in your tour."

Meanwhile, Jeff was struggling. He hadn't been kidding when he'd said on the first day of class that he had applied to the program to relax from his high-pressure job in a hospital. Even after it became clear how much work it was going to be, he just wasn't willing to adapt.

As the year went on, we watched in dread as time after time he flamed out in practice sessions in front of his cherished objects—Picasso's *Gertrude Stein*, Noguchi's *Kouros*, Monet's *Garden at Sainte-Adresse*. It was especially awful because we all knew how good he could have been if only he'd applied himself.

One night our class had a training in front of Georges de La Tour's *The Fortune-Teller*, a 17th-century painting of a wizened old fortune-teller reading a rich young man's palm while, unbeknownst to him, her beautiful young confederates steal his watch and jewelry.

We had to study the painting for a few minutes, then different people volunteered to put on a blindfold and describe it in detail. Here was the lesson we learned that night: that we saw almost nothing and remembered even less. Most of us didn't even notice that the man was being robbed. We were distracted by the other peo-

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK: PURCHASE: LILA ACHESON WALLACE, DRS. DANIEL AND MARIAN MALCOLM; LAURA G. AND JAMES J. ROSS; JEFFREY B. SOREN; THE ROBERT T. WALL FAMILY; DR. AND MRS. SIDNEY G. CLAMAN, AND STEVEN KOSKAR GIFTS, 2008 (2008.30); FLETCHER FUND, 1932 (32.11.1); PURCHASE; ENDI A. HAUPT GIFT, 1979 (1979.6)

ple in the picture, just like the man was. We didn't even know how many figures were in the frame or what they were wearing, even though their costumes were extraordinary, with sumptuously worked collars, sleeves, bonnets, and sashes.

For me, it was just a dazzling array of color—gorgeous swaths of pinks and orange and salmon and gold. But not for Jeff. He immediately homed in on the old woman's fingers. "She has arthritis!" he declared, pointing out her deformed thumb and swollen knuckles.

Why were we willing to do the drudge work when he wasn't? Because at some point most of us had been the straight-A student, the class monitor, the teacher's pet—the kid, despised by nearly everyone except the teacher, who habitually turned in projects for extra credit. It never would have occurred to us not to follow directions, intent as we were on proving we were the best. We never assumed we could just stand next to *Gertrude Stein*, as Jeff did, and say, "Isn't this freaking awesome?"

The day I passed my audit in May, I was ecstatic. My husband sent me a huge bouquet of flowers. But after the exhilaration came the dread—the fear of screwing up, being wrong, forgetting everything I'd learned. Although officially I wouldn't be on the schedule until the fall, I signed up to give tours over the summer and recited my tour everyday in the kitchen, standing in front of the refrigerator.



To some extent, my efforts paid off. By the time the next September rolled around, the words to my Top Ten flowed like lyrics to a song—with my remaining choices being the Greek Kouros (of course!); a Louis XVI room in the Wrightsman Galleries; the *Standing Buddha Offering Protection*, a late 5th-century sculpture from India; and the Bis Poles, a collection of wooden sculptures by the Asmat people in New Guinea. But every now and then, imposter syndrome came flooding back. Was I really qualified to lead tours at the Met because I'd once hung a Modigliani poster in my dorm room and a Bruegel made me cry?

Turns out the answer was yes. I had to believe that most people who came on our tours didn't really care that Guercino was born in 1591 or that Modigliani died when he was 35. They were drawn to these grand public spaces for the same reasons that I was—we wanted to be shattered and repaired, lifted up and knocked down, troubled and consoled.

We wanted to be invisible, we wanted to be seen. We wanted to feel, *you must change your life*. We wanted to feel, *your life is okay*. We wanted the sensation of pleasure, the cessation of pain. We wanted to be swept up into some larger enterprise, cleansed and improved, and restored to our authentic selves. 



Above: Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri), *Samson Captured by the Philistines*, 1619. Oil on canvas, 75 ¼ x 93 ¼ in.

Below: *Boiserie from the Hôtel Lauzun*, ca. 1770, with one modern panel. Carved and painted oak, H. 323 ½ x W. 323 ½ x D. 195 ¼ in.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. CHARLES WRIGHTMAN, 1984 (1984.459.2); THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, PURCHASE, MR. AND MRS. CHARLES WRIGHTMAN GIFT, 1976 (1976.91.1)

The Aga Khan Emerald

IN NOVEMBER, only one week before an ordinary banana (in the process of turning from yellow to brown) affixed to a blank wall with duct tape sold at Sotheby's in New York for \$6.2 million, the altogether extraordinary Aga Khan Emerald set a world record for the most expensive emerald ever sold at auction—selling at Christie's in Geneva for \$8.86 million.

Because it is never wise to force a comparison between apples and oranges (or, in this case, bananas and emeralds), significant details of the two sales will, of course, be left to coexist in the annals of 21st-century art history—each sale situated in its own universe of subjective responses to objects at auction at this point on the continuum. Nevertheless, the emerald, said to be “one of the rarest treasures on Earth,” has existed long enough as a celebrated piece of jewelry to have quite a story.

Featured as part of the Magnificent Jewels sale held by Christie's in Geneva (November 12, 2024), the 37-carat emerald has its origins in Colombia's ancient Muzo emerald mines and was made the centerpiece of a platinum and yellow gold brooch created by Cartier at the behest of Prince Aga Khan in 1960 for his bride, Nina Dyer.

Dyer, an international socialite who in her youth worked in fashion and as a model, married Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza, heir to the Thyssen industrial empire, in 1954. After a divorce two years later, in 1957 she married Prince Aga Khan, the second son of Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan III, the hereditary Imam of the Ismaili sect of Shi'ism.

In 1969, following Princess Nina Aga Khan's death in 1965 at age 35, Prince Aga Khan sold the one-of-a-kind brooch at a Christie's auction to Van Cleef & Arpels for \$75,000, with proceeds going to animal welfare causes on three continents (as stipulated in her will). It was later acquired by Harry Winston, the jeweler who turned the brooch into a pendant.

According to Max Fawcett, Head of Jewel-



COURTESY CHRISTIE'S GENEVA

lery at Christie's in Geneva, “The market for signed vintage jewels and coloured gemstones of the highest quality is as strong as it has ever been.” Commenting specifically on the record-setting emerald, he said, “The emerald brooch is not just a piece of jewelry; it carries with it the stories and charm of a bygone era.”

The Aga Khan Emerald is bordered by 20 marquise-shaped diamonds with a combined weight of approximately 12.04 carats. 

By Roger Harris

Offered by: Christie's Geneva, November 12, 2024
Estimated: \$6.1 to \$8.1 million
Sold for: \$8.86 million

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Hearts of a Wind Blown Flame, 2017, oil on canvas, 44" x 38" Artwork ©Estate of Katherine Porter



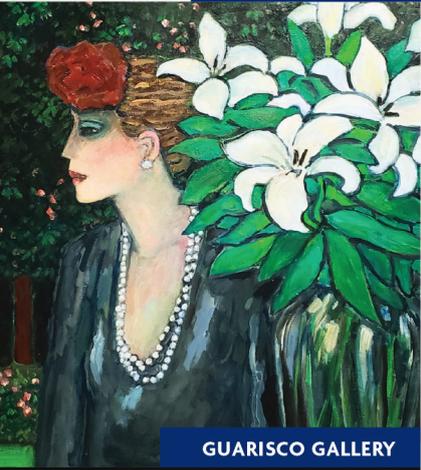
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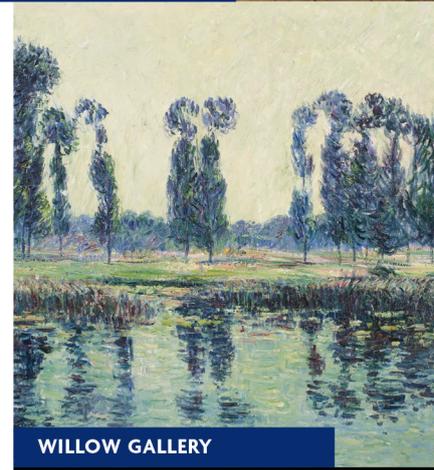
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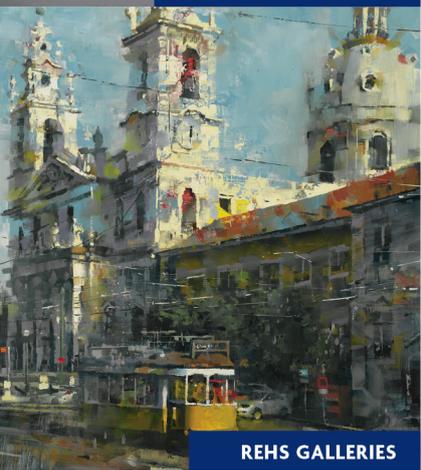
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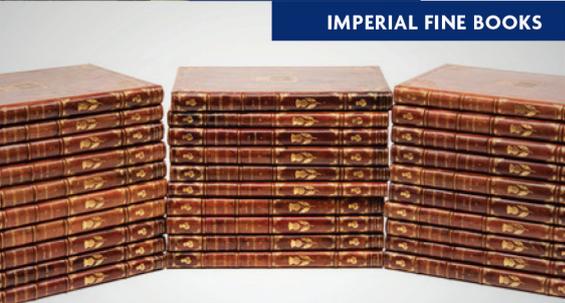
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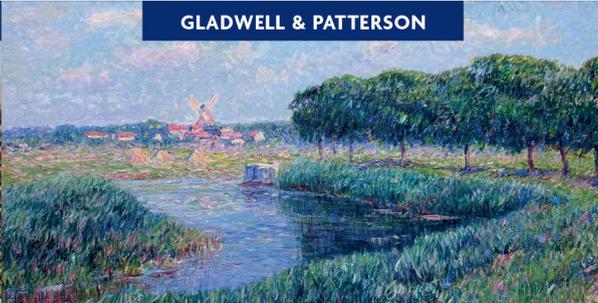
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