MoMA AT NGV:
130 YEARS OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

ARTWORK LABELS

MoMA at NGV: 130 Years of Modern and Contemporary Art

Installed across the entire Ground Floor of NGV International, this exhibition presents more than 200 works from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. Spanning 130 years, and representing a broad spectrum of artistic practices – including painting, sculpture, drawings, prints, architecture, design, photography, film, media and performance – the works gathered here reflect the expansive breadth of MoMA's collecting history.

MoMA at NGV unfolds across eight sections, each of which focuses on a period of roughly two decades. Although these galleries progress chronologically, the exhibition does not tell a single story of modern and contemporary art. Rather, it suggests multiple trends and currents that vibrate differently in various contexts, where social, cultural, aesthetic and technological developments shaped artistic innovation.

Between the exhibition's earliest work, an 1886 painting by Georges Seurat, and its most recent, a 2016 woven map made by the National Union of Sahrawi Women and Manuel Herz Architects, the way artists reflect the world has changed significantly. From Post-Impressionism to the present, the works on view here support the assertion of MoMA's founding director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr, that 'modern art is almost as varied and complex as modern life'.

All works are from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Arcadia and Metropolis

As the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth, artists reacted to the new era's industrial innovations in various ways. Some embraced urbanisation and its technologies, making the metropolis the subject of their work. Others retreated to Arcadian idylls, composing pictorial sanctuaries of harmony and balance.

Post-Impressionist painters were among those who continued to create within established academic genres, seen here in a portrait by Vincent van Gogh, a landscape by Georges Seurat and a still life by Paul Cézanne. But if these artists' subjects were traditional, their techniques were wholly inventive, including sinuous brushstrokes, divisionist dots and flattening facets employed as methods to reject illusionism. Others mined non-Western cultures for fresh inspiration; for example, paintings by Paul Gauguin and Henri Matisse in this gallery look to Tahiti and Japan, respectively, for their figures and forms.

At the same time, other artists revelled in portraying the spectacle culture of rapidly growing cities: Eugène Atget's photographs, Jules Chéret's posters, a painting by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and a film by Auguste and Louis Lumière all capture the media and movement of a newly wired Paris. The designs of Berlin-based Peter Behrens – industrial objects as well as the branding conceived to promote them – similarly speak to the electricity of the age.

Georges-Pierre Seurat
French 1859–91

Evening, Honfleur
1886
oil on canvas, with painted wood frame

Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, 1957

Georges Seurat spent the summer of 1886 in the French coastal town of Honfleur in order to, in his words, ‘wash the light of the studio’ from his eyes. Seurat meticulously applied at least twenty-five colours to this canvas, in the form of thousands of carefully placed dots. He developed this technique, known as pointillism, through his readings of pioneering optical theory of the day; in the viewer’s eye, these dots both coalesce into shapes and remain separate particles, generating a shimmer. Seurat added the wooden frame later, handpainting it with the same technique to add greater luminosity and suggest the extension of the image past its boundaries.

Vincent van Gogh
Dutch 1853–90

Portrait of Joseph Roulin
1889
oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rosenberg, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Mr. and Mrs. Armand P. Bartos, The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection, Mr. and Mrs. Werner E. Josten, and Loula D. Lasker Bequest (all by exchange), 1989

This portrait is one of six Vincent van Gogh painted of his close friend, a postal employee in the southern French town of Arles. Van Gogh moved to Arles from Paris in 1888, hoping to create an artists' cooperative there. The plan never came to fruition, and he became lonely and isolated. Van Gogh befriended the Roulin family and they are the subjects of many of his paintings.

In a letter to his brother Theo, Van Gogh wrote that of all genres 'the modern portrait' excited him the most: 'I want to paint men and women with that something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolise, and which we try to convey by the actual radiance and vibration of our colouring'.

For kids

Vincent van Gogh painted this portrait of his friend, Joseph Roulin, who worked in the post office in Arles, a town in the South of France. Joseph is wearing a blue uniform and his hat says ‘Postes’, which is the name of France’s postal service. Behind Joseph is green wallpaper, covered in swirling flowers and dots of cream paint. Vincent often put this green and blue together in his paintings. He used colours to express his mood or feelings.

If you could paint how you are feeling now, what colours would you use?

Paul Cézanne
French 1839–1906

Still life with apples
1895–98
oil on canvas

Lillie P. Bliss Collection, 1934

‘I will astonish Paris with an apple’, Paul Cézanne once declared, asserting his intention to shake the academic art establishment with the simplest of subjects. *Still life with apples* demonstrates that the traditional still-life genre could be a vehicle for representing everyday objects in radical new ways. Rather than aiming for illusionistic likeness, Cézanne drew attention to the act of painting, leaving areas of the canvas bare, and breaking rules of perspective.

Here, the floral motif of the drapery on the left side of the composition appears unfinished, and the corner of the table at right tilts forward, out of alignment. Rendered in a series of discrete, parallel brushstrokes, these solidly sculptural apples have a significant degree of weight and volume.

Paul Gauguin
French 1848–1903

The Moon and the Earth
1893
oil on burlap

Lillie P. Bliss Collection, 1934

In *The Moon and the Earth*, Paul Gauguin depicts an ancient Polynesian myth in which Hina, the female spirit of the Moon, implores Fatou, the male spirit of the Earth, to grant humans eternal life – a request Fatou resolutely denies. Gauguin's depiction of Hina and Fatou is marked by a great disparity in the figures' size, scale and colouration, which seems to reflect their ancient quarrel.

In 1891 Gauguin left Paris for Tahiti, which had long loomed large in his imagination as a paradise unspoiled by European social customs. This self-imposed exile influenced not only Gauguin's choice of subject matter but also led to his embrace of expressive colours, flat planes and simplified, distorted forms.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec
French 1864–1901

La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge
1891–92
oil on cardboard

Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, 1957

Throughout his body of work, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec portrayed unconventional individuals in a manner both frank and sympathetic. Here, Louise Weber, nicknamed La Goulue (The Glutton), is depicted at the Moulin Rouge, a Montmartre cabaret frequented by Paris's bohemian subculture.

Toulouse-Lautrec made many paintings and prints of Weber, a star performer known for her insatiable appetite for both life and food. In this work, her lover and her sister flank La Goulue at left and right, respectively. In Weber's self-assured expression, upright carriage and plunging neckline we sense the characteristics she reputedly possessed: 'haughty, ferocious, brazen, coarse and wanton'.

Auguste Lumière
French 1862–1954
Louis Lumière
French 1864–1948

Danse serpentine
1897–99
digital file, transferred from original 16mm hand-coloured film, silent, 59 sec

This film by the Lumière brothers pays homage to American dancer Loïe Fuller's 'Serpentine dance'. The patented routine, performed here by an anonymous female figure, caused a sensation during the 1892–93 season at the Folies-Bergère music hall in Paris.

The dancer twists her body dynamically to transform her costume – a winged dress made from varying lengths of layered white silk – into fluctuating shapes that resemble natural forms, such as flower petals and butterflies. The dress also functioned as a screen onto which electrical light, filtered through coloured glass panes, was projected. This innovative use of colour is represented here through the direct application of tints to the film stock.

Jules Chéret
French 1836–1932

Folies-Bergère, La Loïe Fuller
1893
lithograph
Printer: Imp. Chaix (Ateliers Chéret), Paris

Acquired by exchange, 1968

Théâtrophone
1890
lithograph
Printer: Imp. Chaix (Ateliers Chéret), Paris

Given anonymously, 1954

Jules Chéret is one of the most celebrated printmakers of the late nineteenth century, and often regarded as the first lithographic poster artist. His innovative *crachis* technique – involving spattering rather than painting a wax resist onto the lithographic stone – allowed him to create a shimmering effect with a wide-range of intermediary colours.

Chéret's poster art often deployed women as fashionable, enticing or allegorical figures. The image of American dancer Loïe Fuller, for example, captures the sensuality and excitement of the cabaret culture of fin de siècle Paris. His Théâtrophone poster depicts a fashionable

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Parisian listening to live music at a public booth.
The Théâtrophone and its London equivalent, the Electrophone, were the first systems to deliver broadcasts of musical events via telephone wires.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

German 1880–1938

Street, Dresden

1908, reworked 1919, dated on painting 1907
oil on canvas

Purchase, 1951

The crowded city street – here, Dresden's fashionable Königstrasse – was a frequent subject for the German Expressionist group Die Brücke (The Bridge), an art collective Ernst Ludwig Kirchner helped found in 1905. The group sought an authenticity of expression that its members felt had been lost with the innovations of modern life.

Kirchner has violently heightened the colours of this urban scene, depicting its figures with mask-like faces and vacant eyes in an attempt to capture the psychological alienation wrought by modernisation. On the painting's reverse, Kirchner painted a scene of nude women bathing in a natural landscape. Such idyllic scenes were frequent subjects for Die Brücke artists. This one creates a fitting juxtaposition to the jarring city scene it mirrors.

For kids

Ernst Kirchner made this painting to reflect life in the the fast-paced city of Dresden, Germany, in the early twentieth century. He has painted the street pink, and some of the people have orange or green faces. Look for a little girl crossing the street, wearing a large hat and holding a bunch of flowers. Behind her is an electric tram. Dresden was one of the first European cities to have a network of electric trams. At the time this painting was created, Melbourne was also being transformed by a new electric tram system.

Can you find the man in the top hat? How do you think Ernst felt about city life?

Peter Behrens
German 1868–1940

A.E.G. (Allgemeine Elektricitäts Gesellschaft), Berlin
manufacturer
German est. 1883

Fan (model GB1)
c. 1908
painted cast iron and brass

Melva Bucksbaum Purchase Fund, 2000

Synchronous electric clock
1910
brass, enamel and glass

Gift of Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, 2009

For kids

This clock uses the rhythm of electrical current to keep time. It was designed by Peter Behrens, an artist and architect interested in using electricity to power objects. This clock may have been for an office or railway station. Although there were electric streetlights in big cities by the 1890s, not many houses had electricity until the 1920s. Peter designed this clock and other objects, including lightbulbs and the electric fan nearby, when he worked for Germany's largest electricity company in the early 1900s.

What would you invent to make things quicker and easier for people?

Peter Behrens

German 1868–1940

Poster for A.E.G. metal filament light bulbs

1907
lithograph
Printer: Hollerbaum & Schmidt, Berlin

Arthur Drexler Fund, 1991

Electricity epitomised the spirit of technological progress in the early twentieth century. Designer-architect Peter Behrens, director of the Düsseldorf school of arts and crafts, wrote that design ‘is not about decorating functional forms – it is about creating forms that accord with the character of the object and that show new technologies to advantage’.

Behrens’s work from 1907 to 1914 for the German electricity company A.E.G. heralded a new approach to the design of industrial products that applied principles of standardisation, functionality and objective clarity to all aspects of the company’s manufactures and image, including its trademark and promotional materials. Behrens was a founding member of the Deutsche Werkbund association of artists, designers, architects and manufacturers who sought to eliminate barriers between art and industry.

Henri Matisse

French 1869–1954

La Japonaise: Woman beside the water

1905

oil and pencil on canvas

Purchase and anonymous gift, 1983

Henri Matisse spent the summer of 1905 in the sun-drenched town of Collioure in the South of France, painting in the company of André Derain (whose work is on view nearby). Using a variety of strokes – dashes, squiggles and dabs – Matisse applied pigments squeezed directly from the tube, juxtaposing colour and bare canvas to create a jittery, quivering effect.

In *La Japonaise: Woman beside the water*, the Japanese woman of the title can barely be distinguished from the surrounding landscape. When this painting and others like it were exhibited in the Paris Salon that autumn, such fierce colour and brushwork provoked the critic Louis Vauxcelles to call Matisse and his fellow painters *les fauves* (wild beasts), a description that lent the movement its name: Fauvism.

André Derain

French 1880–1954

Fishing boats, Collioure

1905

oil on canvas

The Philip L. Goodwin Collection, 1958

André Derain
French 1880–1954

Bathers
1907
oil on canvas

William S. Paley and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Funds, 1980

In this monumental painting, André Derain represents a trio of bathing women, a classical Arcadian subject, using formal means that were radically modern at the time. His use of orange browns to construct the figures, and blue greens to create abstract yet distinct natural zones for them to occupy, creates juxtapositions described by the artist as ‘deliberate disharmonies’.

Derain’s embrace of the art of non-European cultures is evident in the mask-like face of the central figure, which resembles a Central African Fang mask in Derain’s personal collection. First shown at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris in the spring of 1907, *Bathers* was immediately celebrated by the artist’s contemporaries, and placed him at the forefront of the avant-garde.

Henri Matisse

French 1869–1954

Seated figure, right hand on ground

1908, cast c. 1930

bronze

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund, 1952

Henri Matisse
French 1869–1954

Music (sketch)
1907
oil and charcoal on canvas

Gift of A. Conger Goodyear in honor of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 1962

Left to right

Eugène Atget
French 1857–1927

Rue Domat
1906
gelatin silver photograph on printing-out paper

Fleurs
c. 1896
gelatin silver photograph on printing-out paper

Marchand de vin, 15 rue Boyer
1910–11
gelatin silver photograph on printing-out paper

Abbott-Levy Collection. Partial gifts of Shirley C. Burden, 1969

These photographs by Eugène Atget, of a flower vendor's unattended cart, an empty bar, and a sidewalk filled with goods for sale, capture Paris at the dawn of the twentieth century. It is an urban environment dominated by pillars of advertising posters, rows of bottles and stacks of packages rather than human subjects. To foreground Paris itself in his documentation of the changing metropolis, the photographer focused on overlooked spaces of the city, sites of commercial transactions that are devoid of buyers and sellers.

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After his death, Atget's vast body of work, including some 5000 photographs of Paris and its surroundings taken over more than thirty years, was celebrated by Surrealists and street photographers alike, for its respective qualities of mystery and spontaneity.

Hector Guimard

French 1867–1942

Fence from the Castel Henriette, Sèvres, France

1899–1903

wrought iron

Gift of Joseph H. Heil, by exchange and Agnes Gund, 2010

The Machinery of the Modern World

In the first decades of the twentieth century, multiple artistic movements arose in response to rapid technological advances that were both largely productive, such as the invention of aeroplanes and automobiles, and destructive, including the devastating machines of the First World War.

Pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, Cubism compressed multiple perspectives into flat planes, conveying the fractured nature of vision in a newly stimulated society. Robert Delaunay's and Sonia Delaunay's resplendently coloured canvases addressed the effects of modernity on the perception of time, expressing the phenomenon of simultaneity, or the possibility of multiple experiences existing at once. Italian Futurists, such as Umberto Boccioni and Giacomo Balla, devoted their compositions to tracing the dynamic trajectories of high-speed motion. And Marcel Duchamp, affiliated with Dada, dared to classify an everyday object as a work of art, introducing the radical concept of the readymade.

Machines also figured in artists' inventions, whether in imagery or as actual objects. Fernand Léger paid homage to the propeller in his paintings and harnessed the kinetic quality of film to choreograph a mechanical ballet. Photographs by Margaret Bourke-White and Charles Sheeler document the whirring gears and fiery furnaces of manufacturing equipment. The architect Le Corbusier declared houses to be 'machines for living

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in', and MoMA's landmark 1934 exhibition *Machine Art* put steel objects on pedestals, elevating ball bearings and springs to the status of icons.

Sven Wingquist
Swedish 1876–1953

S.K.F. Industries, Inc. Hartford, Connecticut manufacturer
American est. 1915

Self-aligning ball bearing
1907
chrome-plated steel

Gift of the manufacturer, 1934

American Steel & Wire Co., Worcester, Massachusetts
American est. 1898

Railroad car spring
1920s
painted steel

Gift of the manufacturer, 1934

Aluminum Company of America, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
American est. 1888

Outboard propeller
c. 1925
aluminium

Gift of the manufacturer, 1934

Both efficient and pleasing to the eye, the ball bearing, propeller and railway spring can be seen as emblems of the machine age – a name often used to define the 1920s and 1930s, when industrial designers and consumers took a new interest in the look of commercial products. At this time, even parts of machines could be appreciated for their beauty, derived from the purity of abstract geometry.

The self-aligning quality of the ball bearing made it a superior product in terms of functionality, because it could absorb the misalignment of shafts within a machine and help it to run smoothly. Modernists considered good design essential to the elevation of society, and in 1934 these items were among the first works to enter MoMA's design collection.

Left to right

Margaret Bourke-White
American 1904–71

Untitled
c. 1933
gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Georgia O'Keeffe, 1954

Brazilian clipper
c. 1930
gelatin silver photograph

Gift of the photographer, 1974

Chrysler Corporation
1932
gelatin silver photograph

Gift of the photographer, 1974

Charles Sheeler
American 1883–1965

Criss-crossed conveyers, River Rouge plant, Ford Motor Company
1927, printed 1941
gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Lincoln Kirstein, 1941

Ford plant, River Rouge, blast furnace and dust catcher
1927
gelatin silver photograph

Thomas Walther Collection. Horace W. Goldsmith Fund through Robert B. Menschel and gift of Lincoln Kirstein, by exchange, 2001

With their geometric compositions, radical perspectives, abrupt contrasts of light and shade, and fragmentary details, these photographs by Margaret Bourke-White and Charles Sheeler, depicting whirring propellers, interlocking gears and factory machinery, epitomise the industrial culture of the United States in the 1920s and 1930s.

Adept at committing the graphic contrasts of machine objects to gelatin silver, Bourke-White was enlisted to shoot the polished kettles and coils of the Aluminum Company of America, whose *Outboard propeller*, c. 1925, is on view nearby.

Sheeler's belief that 'our factories are our substitutes for religious experience' is evident in his views of the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge plant in Dearborn, Michigan, where conveyors crisscross the composition, and a blast furnace looms in the sky.

Le Corbusier

French, born Switzerland 1887–1965

This is not architecture (*Ceci n'est pas l'architecture*), drawing from Buenos Aires lecture

1929

charcoal and crayon on paper

Gift of Agnes Gund in honor of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, 2007

Le Corbusier
French, born Switzerland 1887–1965

Pierre Jeanneret collaborating architect
Swiss 1896–1967

Theodore Conrad
model maker
American 1910–94

Villa Savoye, Poissy-sur-Seine, France
1932
wood, aluminium, and plastic

Purchase, 1932

In 1923 Le Corbusier declared houses to be ‘machines for living in’, a point of view reflected in his conception of the Villa Savoye. Along with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier planned the entire composition of the villa as a sequence of spatial effects. Arriving by automobile, the visitor drives underneath the house, circling around to the main entrance. From the entrance hall, he or she ascends the spiral stairs or the ramp to the main-level living area. The ramp continues from the central terrace to the upper-level sun deck.

This model was included in MoMA’s first architecture exhibition, in 1932, which documented the contemporary trends that came to be known as the International Style.

Fernand Léger
French 1881–1955

Propellers
1918
oil on canvas

Katherine S. Dreier Bequest, 1953

Fernand Léger's paintings of this period combined Cubism's simplified, abstract forms with an interest in industrial machinery. The dynamic rhythm of this composition's planes, cylinders and tubes alludes to mechanical motion.

Embodying both solidity and the promise of speed, the propeller emerged as an emblem of modern technology for Léger and his contemporaries. At a visit to an aviation fair in 1912, Marcel Duchamp (whose *Bicycle wheel* is also on view in this gallery) was said to have been so struck by the beauty of a propeller that he remarked to his fellow artists Léger and Constantin Brancusi, 'Painting has come to an end. Who can do anything better than this propeller? Can you?'

For kids

Fernand Léger was fascinated by the machines being built in the early twentieth century, a time in history that is now called ‘the machine age’. New machines were making travel easier and faster, whether by train, plane, car or ship. Many of these use propellers, turbines, pistons and cogs to generate speed and power. Fernand captured the idea of speed in paintings like this one, which includes lots of colourful shapes, such as cylinders, cones and spirals.

Can you find the propeller in this painting? What other shapes and forms can you see?

Sonia Delaunay

French, born Ukraine 1885–1979

Portuguese market

1915

oil and wax on canvas

Gift of Theodore R. Racoosin, 1955

Sonia Delaunay and her husband Robert Delaunay were members of the Orphist group, whose adherents explored colour theory and optical effects (the name refers to Orpheus, the musician of Greek myth, whose eloquence on the lyre represents the power of art).

Portuguese market was painted while the couple were living in the seaside town of Vila do Conde in Portugal. Figurative elements of the scene are subsumed within swirling colour. Orphists referred to juxtaposed areas of intense colour in their paintings as instances of ‘simultaneity’, in which no hue dominated any other. Some of their thinking came from folk and decorative arts; Delaunay’s work in textile and clothing design contributed to her understanding of the possibilities of abstract colour.

Robert Delaunay

French 1885–1941

Simultaneous contrasts: Sun and moon

1913, dated on painting 1912
oil on canvas

Mrs Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1954

A pioneer of early twentieth century abstraction, Robert Delaunay was fascinated by how the interaction of colours produces sensations of depth and movement without reference to the natural world. In *Simultaneous contrasts: Sun and moon*, that movement is the rhythm of the cosmos, for the painting's circular frame is a sign for the universe, and its flux of reds and oranges, greens and blues is attuned to the Sun and the Moon – the rotation of day and night.

Refracted by the light, the star and planet are not described in any literal way. 'These coloured planes are the structure of the picture', Delaunay said, 'and nature is no longer a subject for description, but a pretext'.

Marcel Duchamp

American, born France 1887–1968

Bicycle wheel

1951, third version, after lost original of 1913
metal wheel mounted on painted wood stool

The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection, 1967

Bicycle wheel is Marcel Duchamp's first readymade – a class of objects he invented to challenge assumptions about what constitutes a work of art. Duchamp combined two mass-produced parts, a bicycle wheel and a kitchen stool, to create a type of non-functional machine. (This example is actually an 'assisted readymade', as Duchamp slightly altered the common objects he selected by inverting the bicycle wheel and mounting it on the stool.)

By selecting prefabricated items and naming them art, Duchamp subverted established notions of the artist's craft and the viewer's aesthetic experience. The 1913 *Bicycle wheel* was lost, but nearly four decades later Duchamp assembled a replacement from prefabricated parts and affirmed that the later version was just as valid as the original.

For kids

Why is a bicycle wheel on display in an art gallery? Many people asked this question when Marcel Duchamp first made this work of art in 1913. Marcel took everyday objects, including this bicycle wheel, a snow shovel and a urinal, and called them ‘readymades’. A ‘readymade’ is a manufactured or mass-produced object, rather than an object that an artist has made by hand.

Marcel exhibited these ‘readymades’ as art, because he wanted people to look at them and think about what art could be.

George Grosz

American, born Germany 1893–1959

Explosion

1917

oil on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Irving Moskovitz, 1963

George Grosz's *Explosion* transports the horrors of the First World War from the Western Front to Berlin, the artist's home city. Windows shatter and smoke pours into the night sky. Slices of half-naked body parts, embracing couples, and shadowy faces appear amid the chaos brought about by man-made disaster.

Grosz made this painting of Berlin in the throes of destruction after being discharged from the German army as 'permanently unfit', and he welcomed the purge of old society. Multiple, shifting perspectives and intense colour heighten the feelings of instability and danger, and demonstrate his reworking of the stylistic approaches of the Expressionists and Italian Futurists.

Umberto Boccioni

Italian 1882–1916

Unique forms of continuity in space

1913, cast 1931
bronze

Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), 1948

Umberto Boccioni, who sought to infuse art with dynamism and energy, exclaimed, ‘Let us fling open the figure and let it incorporate within itself whatever may surround it’. The contours of this striding figure appear to be carved by the forces of wind and speed as it forges ahead. While its windswept silhouette is evocative of an ancient statue, the polished metal alludes to the streamlined modern machinery beloved by Boccioni and other Futurist artists.

Exhilarated by early twentieth-century technologies, such as speeding automobiles and sleek aeroplanes, members of this Italian movement rejected the weight of the past and embraced forward-moving force.

For kids

Umberto Boccioni lived at a time when there was a lot of change – the invention of automobiles and aeroplanes, for example. He wanted to make art about his world, when it seemed as though everyone and everything was on the move. Umberto joined a group who were excited about power, speed and change, called the Futurists. Umberto made this sculpture, which is like a powerful machine taking big steps against the wind. It's also made of bronze – the same metal used to make big propellers that moved huge steamships across oceans at record speed.

Can you see how the shiny metal and curved forms create a feeling of movement?

Giacomo Balla

Italian 1871–1958

Swifts: Paths of movement + dynamic sequences

1913

oil on canvas

Purchase, 1949

Giacomo Balla, one of the founding members of Futurism, spent much of his career studying the dynamics of movement and speed. Here, in rendering the flight of birds known as swifts, he creates an image of motion pushed close to abstraction. The shapes of the birds repeat in stuttering bands, but their substance seems to evaporate: melting into light, their bodies are lost in the soaring swoop of their flight paths.

Inspired by the nineteenth-century scientist Etienne-Jules Marey's photographic studies of animal locomotion, Balla looked to science to establish a new, modern language for painting. 'All things move, all things run, all things are rapidly changing', he declared.

Georges Braque
French 1882–1963

Soda
1912
oil on canvas

Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), 1942

Pablo Picasso

Spanish 1881–1973

The architect’s table

1912

oil on canvas on panel

The William S. Paley Collection, 1971

To reflect the experience of modern life, fractured by new technologies and governed by a new pace, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque developed the language of Cubism. Limiting his palette to a muddy selection of browns and greys, Picasso focused on form, condensing multiple perspectives into a single plane.

The oval shape of this canvas reflects the tabletop of the painting’s title; however, its surface is tipped to become parallel to the wall, rather than horizontal. Lying diagonally across the upper centre is a carpenter’s square that points to Picasso as the architect in question. Other recognisable elements emerge from the tight network of angled planes: at lower right, the calling card of writer and collector Gertrude Stein becomes part of the arrangement.

Fernand Léger
French 1881–1955
Dudley Murphy
American 1897–1968

Ballet mécanique
1924
digital file, transferred from 35 mm film, black and white, silent, 12 min

Acquired from the artist, 1935

Ballet mécanique demonstrates Fernand Léger's fascination with the mechanical world during the 1920s. In his first foray into the relatively new medium of motion pictures, the painter realised what he called 'the first plotless film' – an array of abstract images that dispenses with narrative.

In Léger's visionary film, created in collaboration with the American photographer and filmmaker Dudley Murphy, repetition and movement animate the clockwork structure of everyday life. For example, through rhythmic editing, wire whisks and copper pots whir and spin, and a woman carrying a heavy sack on her shoulder climbs and re-climbs a steep flight of stairs.

A New Unity

In the 1920s and 1930s, several international art movements arose that held a utopian view of art's potential to communicate universally. Artists reduced forms to their essentials, eliminating decorative elements to create widely accessible forms of abstraction.

In the years preceding and following the 1917 Russian Revolution, artists of that country's avant-garde sought new languages to express a new society's ideals. Lyubov' Popova and Aleksandr Rodchenko were among those who developed Constructivism, which cast the artist as an engineer and emphasised the material reality of his or her productions, while Kazimir Malevich's Suprematism aimed to transcend the object in pursuit of 'pure artistic feeling'. In the Netherlands, Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg adopted a fundamental language of squares and rectangles, vertical and horizontal lines and a palette of primary colours plus black and white to pioneer a movement known as De Stijl (The Style). And in Uruguay, Joaquín Torres-García created his own Constructivist 'School of the South'.

These artists' remarkable synthesis of mediums abolished distinctions between the fine and applied arts. The achievements of the Russian avant-garde included posters, theatre designs and films, and furniture and design objects were crucial manifestations of De Stijl. But it was perhaps the Bauhaus, the pioneering school that made its home in three German cities between 1919 and 1933, which offered the era's ultimate expression

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of interdisciplinary practice: from László Moholy-Nagy's painting and sculpture, to Gunta Stölzl's weaving, to Marcel Breuer's furniture, and beyond.

Dziga Vertov

Russian 1895–1954

The man with the movie camera

1929

digital file, transferred from 35mm film, black and white, silent, 65 min

Acquired by exchange with Gosfilmofond, 1969

Digital file courtesy of Lobster Films

As *The man with the movie camera* begins, the cameraman climbs out of the ‘head’ of the camera. The film then takes its viewer on a kaleidoscopic, humorous ride through three Soviet cities, knitting together footage of rotating bicycle wheels, speeding streetcars and the travels of the tripod-mounted film camera itself.

Like others of his generation, Dziga Vertov – whose name is a pseudonym meaning ‘spinning top’ – wanted to replace human vision with the *kino-eye*, an objective cinematic eye, in order to help build a new proletarian society. By making use of all filming strategies then available, including superimposition, split screens, varied speeds and dramatic camera angles, Vertov revolutionised cinema with his defiant deconstruction of moviemaking and its storytelling conventions.

Kazimir Malevich
Russian, born Ukraine 1878–1935

Suprematist element: Circle
1923
pencil on paper

Suprematist elements: Squares
1923
pencil on paper

1935 Acquisitions confirmed in 1999 by agreement with the
Estate of Kazimir Malevich and made possible with funds from the Mrs. John Hay Whitney Bequest (by exchange), 1935

A pioneer of abstraction, Kazimir Malevich developed a radically new artistic language that presented geometric shapes floating against white backgrounds. Because his new style claimed supremacy over the forms of nature, he named it Suprematism. ‘In my desperate struggle to free art from the ballast of the objective world I fled to the form of the Square’, he said, and the circle soon followed.

While these reductive geometries suggest rational thinking, Malevich’s writings confirm that ultimately he was seeking a strong spiritual feeling. Describing a painting he had made of a black square, he said, ‘The square equals feeling, the white background equals nothingness’.

Lyubov’ Popova
Russian 1889–1924

Painterly architectonic
1917
oil on canvas

Philip Johnson Fund, 1958

In this work, brightly coloured, irregularly shaped planes are layered against a neutral background. The curved bottom edge of a grey shape emerging from beneath a red triangle and a white trapezoid suggests three-dimensionality, while the vibrant colours and jutting edges that seem to extend beyond the frame evoke energetic movement.

Lyubov’ Popova described painting as a ‘construction’, likening the artist’s role to that of an engineer who builds through colour and line. *Painterly architectonic* is one of a series of works she created in the late 1910s drawing on Cubist collage (which she encountered on a trip to Paris in 1912–13); Suprematism, the abstract style developed by her friend Kazimir Malevich; and assertive colours inspired by Russian folk art.

For kids

Lyubov' Popova was one of several female members of the Russian artists' group called *Supremus*. Many of the artists in this group described their works of art as 'constructions', which they made using circles, squares, lines, rectangles and other simple shapes. Lyubov's painting shows many of these shapes, in red, pink, grey and white, stacked on top of each other. Some of their edges seem to reach beyond the frame, as if they are trying to slip out of the painting and into the real world.

If you could reach into this painting and re-arrange the pile of shapes, what forms would you create?

Aleksandr Rodchenko

Russian 1891–1956

Non-objective painting

1919

oil on canvas

Gift of the artist, through Jay Leyda, 1936

Vladimir Stenberg
Russian 1899–1982

Georgii Stenberg
Russian 1900–33

The three million case
Poster for the 1926 film directed by Yakov Protazanov
1927
colour lithograph

Given anonymously, 1987

Vladimir Stenberg
Russian 1899–1982

Georgii Stenberg
Russian 1900–33

Pounded cutlet
Poster for the 1921 film, originally titled *At the Ringside*, directed by Charley Chase
1927
colour lithograph

Gift of The Lauder Foundation, Leonard and Evelyn Lauder Fund, 1986

Alexandra Exter

Russian 1882–1949

Nine designs from the album *Alexandra Exter: Stage Sets* (*Alexandra Exter: Décors de théâtre*)

1930

pochoir prints

Publisher: Éditions des Quatre Chemins, Paris

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nikita Lobanov, 1972

...continued overleaf

Top row, left to right

Project for a review
Revue projet
1927

Don Juan, hell
Don Juan, l’enfer
1929

Othello, Act one
Othello, Acte premier
1927

Centre row, left to right

Operetta
Opérette
1927

Spanish pantomime
Pantomime espanole
1926

Circus
Cirque
1927–28

...continued overleaf

Bottom row, left to right

Ballet, light maquette
Ballet, maquette de lumière
1926–30

Faust
1927

Don Juan and Death
Don Juan et la mort
1926

In 1930 Alexandra Exter published an album of fifteen pochoirs, limited-edition prints made through a hand-coloured stencil technique. Rather than serving as designs for actual productions or commissions, these works, based on original gouaches, are experiments and proposals for various dramatic forums, including operetta, revue, pantomime, ballet, and the circus.

Exter was associated with Constructivism, and her use of ladders and platforms serves that movement's goal of a spatial, abstract theatre that would integrate performers with surrounding scenic elements to fully activate the stage.

László Moholy-Nagy
American, born Hungary 1895–1946

Nickel construction
1921
nickel-plated iron

Gift of Mrs. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, 1956

This welded, nickel-plated work borrows its form and material composition from the world of machines, jettisoning the traditional materials of sculpture and all vestiges of handmade art in favour of ‘what is impersonal and collective in our technological civilisation’, László Moholy-Nagy said.

Published and exhibited extensively in 1922, *Nickel construction* is emblematic of the artist’s clear-sighted, material-based production. Works such as this, and the reputation Moholy-Nagy gained from them, prompted Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius to invite him to join the faculty in 1923 and define a new direction for the institution. This work was shown at the Bauhaus exhibition the same year, and was likely used as an object of instruction in Moholy-Nagy’s version of the school’s preliminary course.

Marcel Breuer
American, born Hungary 1902–81
Gebrüder Thonet, A.G.
manufacturer

...continued overleaf

German and Austrian, est. 1853

Lounge chair (model B25)

1928–29

chrome-plated tubular steel, rattan and wood

Marshall Cogan Purchase Fund, 1982

Marcel Breuer claimed that his experiments with industrially produced tubular steel furniture were inspired by the strength and lightness of his bicycle's handlebars. In this chair model, the gleaming metal frame was combined with a seat and back of wickerwork, a robust and traditional material frequently deployed for bicycle baskets.

Examples of Breuer's early tubular steel furniture were used in the canteen, assembly hall and various offices of the Bauhaus, and he continued to design influential pieces after he left the school in 1928 to open his own office in Berlin.

László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary 1895–1946

Z II

1925

oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, 1956

In this work, made while he was teaching at the Bauhaus, László Moholy-Nagy explored the intersection of abstract elements in space. Broken forms, in varying degrees of transparency, slide past each other on illusory spatial planes.

In these years, Moholy-Nagy also experimented with photography and film, and investigations in these mediums informed his painting process, which he reimagined as an art not of pigment but of light. This kind of cross-medium exploration was strongly encouraged at the Bauhaus, where a broad range of workshops in the fine and applied arts helped to shape productive relationships among faculty and students working in diverse media.

Gunta Stölzl

Swiss, born Germany 1897–1983

Wall hanging

1924

wool, silk, mercerised cotton, and metal thread

Phyllis B. Lambert Fund, 1958

Although materials of all kinds were scarce in the interwar period, the variety of textures, patterns and weaves in this wall hanging demonstrates how an artist could make a virtue out of working with only a few colours and simple forms. The composition of Gunta Stölzl's piece drew on her studies as a Bauhaus student and reflected a modernist belief in the applicability of geometric shapes to industrial production.

Stölzl pursued the new emphasis on standardised design announced by Bauhaus director Walter Gropius in 1923. She progressed to become an instructor and the first woman 'master' at the school in 1927. Under her auspices the weaving workshop became one of the school's most experimental departments.

Josef Albers
American, born Germany 1888–1976

Metallglas A.G., Offenburg, Baden
manufacturer
German

Stencil lettering system, designed at the Bauhaus
1926–28
milk glass and painted wood

Gift of the designer, 1957

Twenty postcards for the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar

1923
lithographs on cardboard

Committee on Architecture and Design Funds, 2015

Left to right, above:

Paul Häberer, Herbert Bayer (2), Farkas Molnár, Georg Teltscher, László Moholy-Nagy, Gerhard Marcks, Rudolf Baschant (2), Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack

Left to right, below:

Oskar Schlemmer, Vasily Kandinsky, Kurt Schmidt, Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, Kurt Schmidt, Dörte Helm, Lyonel Feininger, Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack (above), Paul Klee

Joost Schmidt
German 1893–1948

Staatliches Bauhaus Ausstellung
Poster for the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar
1923
lithograph
Printer: Reineck & Klein, Weimar

Gift of Walter Gropius, 1957

The first Bauhaus exhibition in 1923 was an opportunity for the school not only to display the products of its first four years of operation but also to communicate the institution's educational philosophy to an international audience. Staff and students contributed to a major publicity program designed to attract public attention.

Joost Schmidt's design, for example, was part of a student competition to create a poster for the exhibition, while a set of postcards, designed by sixteen staff and students from various workshops, represented the Bauhaus's interdisciplinary ethos and curricular emphasis on basic forms and primary colours. As cheap, mass-produced souvenirs, the postcards exemplified the theme of *Art and Technology: A New Unity*.

Lucia Moholy

British, born Austria-Hungary (now Czech Republic) 1894–1989

Bauhaus Workshop building from below. Oblique view

1926

gelatin silver photograph

Thomas Walther Collection. Gift of Thomas Walther, 2001

Theodore Lux Feininger

German 1910–2011

Bauhaus balconies

c. 1928

gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Philip Johnson, 1967

Theo van Doesburg
Dutch 1883–1931
Cornelis van Eesteren
collaborating architect
Dutch 1897–1988

Contra-construction project (axonometric)
1923
gouache on lithograph

Gift of Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., 1947

Theo van Doesburg was interested in applying his painterly research to spatial and three-dimensional forms. This axonometric drawing, designed in consultation with Cornelis van Eesteren, illustrates the artist's reductive approach to architecture as a series of asymmetrical planar elements activated by a simple palette of primary colours.

Van Doesburg applied a similar approach to windows, proposing several stained-glass designs that consisted of rectilinear blocks of unmodulated colour. Arguably his most ambitious architectural project was for the interior of the Café Aubette, part of a large-scale cultural complex in Strasbourg that also included a cinema and dance halls. In the largest space, he created an immersive environment of dynamically inclined panels of colour that extended across the walls and ceiling.

Theo van Doesburg
Dutch 1883–1931

Design for a stained-glass window for Christian ULO School, Rehobôth te Drachten, the Netherlands
1922–23
gouache and pencil on paper

The Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation, 1983

Preliminary colour scheme for ceiling and short walls of dance hall in Café Aubette, Strasbourg, France
1927
ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Lily Auchincloss, Celeste Bartos, and Marshall Cogan, 1982

Piet Mondrian

Dutch 1872–1944

Tableau I: Lozenge with four lines and grey

1926

oil on canvas

Katherine S. Dreier Bequest, 1953

Piet Mondrian

Dutch 1872–1944

Composition in red, blue, and yellow

1937–42

oil on canvas

The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection, 1967

This painting is one of a group referred to as Piet Mondrian's 'transatlantic paintings', begun in Paris or London in the mid to late 1930s and finished (or reworked) after his 1940 arrival in New York, where he fled from Europe ahead of the Second World War.

The artist's doctrine of Neo-Plasticism, pioneered in the 1920s, restricted his means to straight horizontals and verticals, and a palette of primary colours, plus white, black and grey. 'As a pure representation of the human mind', Mondrian theorised, 'art will express itself in an aesthetically purified, that is to say, abstract form'. It was in paintings such as this that Mondrian first allowed coloured rectangles to abut white space, unbounded by black lines.

Theo van Doesburg
Dutch 1883–1931

Rhythm of a Russian dance
1918
oil on canvas

Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), 1946

Gerrit Rietveld
Dutch 1888–1964

Red blue chair
designed c. 1918, painted c. 1923
painted wood

Gift of Philip Johnson, 1953

Hanging lamp
designed 1920, manufactured 1982
wood, glass, and tubular bulbs

Emilio Ambasz Fund, 1982

Bart van der Leck
Dutch 1876–1958

Metz & Co., Amsterdam
manufacturer
Dutch 1740–2013

Double-faced rug
1929–35
wool

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, 1974

For kids

Gerrit Rietveld grew up in the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands. Gerrit's father was a cabinet-maker and like his dad, Gerrit became a cabinet-maker too. In 1918 Gerrit designed this wooden armchair. Many armchairs are solid and covered in fabric but, if you count, you will find that this chair is made of fifteen lengths of timber and two flat boards. It looks a bit like the skeleton of a chair! That's because Gerrit challenged himself to design a chair that focused on the spaces around the chair.

A few years after Gerrit finished the chair, he painted it with primary colours. What colours would you paint your chair?

Joaquín Torres-García

Uruguayan 1874–1949

Colour structure

1930

oil on canvas

The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection (by exchange), 2004

While living in Paris between 1926 and 1932, Joaquín Torres-García met Neo-Plasticist artists Theo van Doesburg and Piet Mondrian, with whom he created the group *Cercle et Carré* (Circle and Square), composed of artists who favoured geometric abstraction and opposed Parisian Surrealism. In accordance with the group's artistic tendencies, Torres-García adopted the grid in its most rigorous and geometric sense as a means to preserve the two-dimensionality of a picture.

In *Colour structure*, he created allover patterns by dividing the picture surface into horizontal and vertical formations, each painted with different primary colours. Torres-García emphasised the raw aspect of the composition, highlighting the canvas's imperfections, the impurity of the colours, the thickness of the paint and the manual tracing of the brushstrokes.

Joaquín Torres-García

Uruguayan 1874–1949

Composition

1932

oil on canvas

Gift of Dr. Román Fresnedo Siri, 1942

For kids

Joaquín Torres-García helped the important architect Antoni Gaudí create designs for colourful church windows. Joaquín believed that, like pictures on church windows, art should be easy to understand. Joaquín has split this painting into different sections using dark lines. Each section contains symbols representing everyday things – people, animals and buildings. In the top left corner, there is a section containing a clock, to represent the passing of time. On the right, there is a section containing a heart, to represent love. These are symbols everybody can understand.

Look at this painting – can you guess what the other symbols might mean?

Inner and Outer Worlds

Many artists in the 1920s and 1930s broke from the formal restraint and rational order of abstraction to embrace narrative excess and the unconscious. Looking to both internal and external landscapes, their works draw on forms in nature and imbue everyday observations with a sense of the uncanny.

Surrealism, which began as a formal movement in Paris but also attracted more casual and widespread fellow travellers, comprised two dominant approaches. Painters including Salvador Dalí, Yves Tanguy and René Magritte applied, to quote Dalí, 'the most imperialist fury of precision' to their canvases, making incongruous scenes appear possible through the meticulousness of their technique. Others, such as Joan Miró, Jean Arp and Meret Oppenheim adopted biomorphic forms, evoking the soft structures of living organisms.

As the looming Second World War forced many of these artists to disperse from Europe, their networks became more far-reaching and came into contact with longstanding cultural traditions. In Cuba, Wifredo Lam merged Surrealist aesthetics with the religious iconography of Afro-Cuban Santeria. In Mexico, Frida Kahlo cited native folklore and nineteenth-century devotional paintings in her dreamlike canvases.

The work of various American artists during this period similarly engages both physical and psychic landscapes. Edward Hopper's desolate scenes possess a palpable psychological charge; highly detailed drawings

...continued overleaf

by Georgia O'Keeffe and photographs by Imogen Cunningham render flora otherworldly; and the architect Frederick Kiesler's amoebic *Endless House* was designed to negotiate the relationship between the individual and his or her environment, making room for 'the "visitors" from one's own inner world'.

Salvador Dalí

Spanish 1904–89

The persistence of memory

1931

oil on canvas

Given anonymously, 1934

In *The persistence of memory*, hard objects become inexplicably limp within a bleak and infinite landscape, while a metal watch attracts ants like rotting flesh. Salvador Dalí painted his fantastic visions with what he called ‘the most imperialist fury of precision’, giving the representations of dreams a tangible and credible appearance. Some literal reality is included too: the monstrous fleshy creature draped across the painting’s centre is an approximation of Dalí’s own face in profile, and the distant golden cliffs evoke the coast of his native Catalonia.

For kids

This small painting is one of the best known pictures in the history of modern art. In the background you can see the ocean – the cliffs are like those in Cadaqués, a town in Spain where the painter, Salvador Dalí, grew up. When you take a closer look, you will see some strange objects in the foreground – clocks that seem to be melting, ants swarming over a gold fobwatch and something that looks like a face drapped over a small ridge on the ground. Salvador was a member of a group of artists called the Surrealists, who wanted to make pictures that were like their dreams.

Do you remember your dreams?

Giorgio de Chirico

Italian, born Greece 1888–1978

Gare Montparnasse (The melancholy of departure)

1914

oil on canvas

Gift of James Thrall Soby, 1969

This painting depicts Gare Montparnasse, a train station in Paris close to painter Giorgio de Chirico's studio. Yet the composition's spatial and temporal ambiguities belie its character as a straightforward depiction of the site. A series of dramatic diagonals lead to multiple, conflicting vanishing points, destabilising the viewer's position in relation to the scene.

Although the clock's hands read 1.30, the work's saturated glow seems more appropriate to a twilight hour. And despite the departure of the work's title, the puffing locomotive looks to be arriving. It was just this kind of enigmatic arrangement that led a later generation of Surrealist artists, such as Max Ernst and René Magritte (both on view in this gallery), to credit De Chirico as a crucial influence.

Yves Tanguy

American, born France 1900–55

Mama, papa is wounded!

1927

oil on canvas

Purchase, 1936

Joan Miró

Spanish 1893–1983

Portrait of Mistress Mills in 1750

1929

oil on canvas

James Thrall Soby Bequest, 1979

This painting, from a series Joan Miró named his *Imaginary Portraits*, takes its cues from an eighteenth-century British portrait by George Engleheart of the singer and actress Mrs Isabella Mills. The original painting supplied the Catalan Surrealist with a composition he could willfully distort; he disfigured once-realistic features into biomorphic forms, and retuned a naturalistic palette into an intense array of earthy red, green, brown and ochre.

Despite these metamorphoses, certain details of the original composition remain visible, albeit in simplified form: the plume of the subject's hat becomes a wiry squiggle, and the letter she is reading is marked with lines of scrawl.

Frida Kahlo

Mexican 1907–54

Self-portrait with cropped hair

1940

oil on canvas

Gift of Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., 1943

Following her divorce from fellow artist Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo cut her long hair; she records this gesture here, chronicling herself amid a mess of tendrils, scissors in hand. The costume of an oversized man's suit, traditionally identified as Rivera's, allows her to seize the part of the dominant, independent male artist he embodied. By wearing a dangling earring and high-heeled shoes, however, Kahlo simultaneously maintains her feminine identity.

With the lyrics to a Mexican song inscribed at the top of the composition, Kahlo also claims her nationality, aligning her work with the tradition of nineteenth-century religious painting. The song's message – 'Look, if I loved you it was because of your hair. Now that you are without hair, I don't love you anymore' – provides a fitting score to the tableau.

For kids

Frida Kahlo painted a total of fifty-five self-portraits in her life, and they all tell stories about her experiences and feelings. This painting shows Frida just after she cut her hair during a time when she was feeling sad and angry. Even though Frida was unhappy, she was determined to continue painting. In happier times, Frida painted other self-portraits with her hair braided and decorated with flowers.

Can you read music? At the top of the canvas, Frida has painted the lyrics and music notes to a song.

René Magritte
Belgian 1898–1967

The portrait
1935
oil on canvas

Gift of Kay Sage Tanguy, 1956

For kids

Like many of the other artists whose work is on display in this room, René Magritte made works of art that depict dreamlike scenes. Many of his paintings show ordinary objects in unexpected places. This is a painting of a meal with a twist! An eye stares back from the thinly sliced ham on the plate. An everyday activity has been transformed into a strange and impossible encounter.

Would you dare to eat this meal?

Wifredo Lam
Cuban 1902–82

Satan
1942
gouache on paper

Inter-American Fund, 1942

Cuban-born Wifredo Lam spent most of the 1920s and 1930s in Spain, where the influence of Pablo Picasso, whom he befriended in Paris in 1938, loomed large. Indeed, the same monstrous figuration that characterises Picasso's *Seated bather*, 1930 (on view nearby), can be seen in this part-horse, part-human figure of *Satan*.

Lam executed this gouache upon his return to Cuba, where his European absorption of Surrealist ideas merged with the religious iconography of Afro-Cuban Santeria. 'My encounter with Paris and with Picasso produced an effect like a detonation in me', Lam reflected. But, he also affirmed, 'My return to Cuba meant, above all, a great stimulation of my imagination, as well as the exteriorisation of my world'.

Isamu Noguchi
American 1904–88

My Pacific (Polynesian culture)
1942
driftwood

Florene May Schoenborn Bequest, 1996

This driftwood sculpture is both anthropomorphic, resembling an upright figure, and environmental: it is carved from wood tossed and weathered by water. A model of the itinerant artist, Isamu Noguchi created *My Pacific* (*Polynesian culture*) the same year he voluntarily entered a war relocation camp for Japanese-Americans in the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor. ‘To me art is part of the environment’, he once reflected, ‘it is an element in asymmetrical flux’.

For kids

Isamu Noguchi believed that art was part of the environment and described his works of art as ‘landscapes’. He often used materials he found in nature to create his sculptures. To carve this sculpture, Isamu used a piece of driftwood – wood tossed around by water and weathered by the sun.

Can you imagine being a piece of driftwood, travelling from mountain forests to the ocean’s shore?

Pablo Picasso
Spanish 1881–1973

Seated bather
1930
oil on canvas

Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1950

Constantin Brancusi

French, born Romania 1876–1957

The newborn

version I, 1920, close to the marble of 1915
bronze

Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), 1943

The sculpture of Romanian-born, Paris-based Constantin Brancusi pares complex forms down to their essentials and, as its title suggests, this work evokes a newborn child with minimal yet powerful means. Its smoothly polished, ovoid form recalls an egg – the very seed of existence – while a concave area with a dimpled protrusion conjures a baby's wide-mouthed bawl.

Brancusi often experimented with rendering his sculptures in different materials, and this bronze was cast after an initial white marble version. The sculpture forgoes the traditional apparatus of a pedestal to rest directly on its rounded bottom, lending it the precarious-seeming quality of new life.

Max Ernst

French and American, born Germany
1891–1976

Plates from *Natural history* (*Histoire naturelle*)

1926
collotypes after frottage, edition of 300
Publisher: Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Paris

Gift of James Thrall Soby, 1958

Left to right, above

The idol
L'Idole

To forget everything
A tout oublier

The vaccinated bread
Le Pain vaccine

Shaving the walls
Rasant les murs

Scarecrows
Les Épouvantails

A glance
Un coup d'oeil

...continued overleaf

Left to right, below

Fields of honour, flood, seismic plants
Les Champs d'honneur, les inondations, les plantes sismiques

Iceflower shawl and Gulf Stream
Le Châle à fleurs givre

Stallion and bride of the wind
L'Étalon et la fiancée du vent

The pampas
Les Pampas

Earthquake
Le Tremblement de terre

Solar currency-system
Système de monnaie solaire

To explore the unconscious as a source for his art, Max Ernst experimented with the process of frottage: rubbings made from textured objects or surfaces. The patterns generated by such impressions – of materials including wood floorboards, lengths of twine, leaves, wire mesh, crumpled paper and crusts of bread – were the starting point for this portfolio's printed images.

Ernst described *Natural history* as 'a sequence of plates on which I had transcribed, with maximum precision, a series of optical hallucinations'. By adding details to the rubbings, Ernst transformed their everyday origins into an expanded, external universe of fantastical landscapes, objects and creatures.

Frederick Kiesler

American, born Austria–Hungary 1890–1965

Endless House.
Plan of first mezzanine

1951

ink and ink wash on paper

Endless House.
Plan of second mezzanine

1951

(a) ink and ink wash on paper

(b) cut-and-pasted printed paper on tracing paper

Purchases, 1966

Frederick Kiesler

American, born Austria–Hungary 1890–1965

Model for Endless House

1950–60
ceramic

Purchase, 1952

Ovoid and biomorphic, with floors that slope into walls and walls that slope into ceilings, the sculpted form of the *Endless House* is designed, the architect said, to be ‘endless like the human body – there is no beginning and no end’. In his project to invent a new kind of architectural space, Kiesler sought to combine sculpture, architecture, the environment and poetry. To describe its multitasking space, plan drawings of cocoon-like interiors are layered with acetate sheets noting possible architectural programs in red (‘group living’ and ‘individual recreation’), and lines indicating new vectors of space which could be added to or subtracted from the design.

Jean (Hans) Arp

French, born Germany 1886–1966

Bell and navels

1931

painted wood

Kay Sage Tanguy Fund, 1968

The title of this sculpture identifies its two spherical shapes as navels, and the larger, upturned form as a bell. Jean (Hans) Arp considered the navel's associations with birth, growth and procreation to be particularly resonant, and it was one of his signature motifs. In his work it can resemble an egg, a seed, a womb, breasts (as paired here) or the orb of the Earth itself. As Arp explained, 'It's the first thing that exists, the beginning'. He connected human life not only with the cycles of nature but also with the act of artistic creation. The year he made this work Arp declared, 'Art is a fruit that grows in man like a fruit on a plant or a child in its mother's womb'.

Meret Oppenheim

Swiss 1913–85

Red head, blue body

1936

oil on canvas

Meret Oppenheim Bequest, 1991

Edward Hopper

American 1882–1967

Gas

1940

oil on canvas

Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1943

Rather than depicting a single scene, this painting resulted from a composite representation of several gasoline stations seen by the artist. Edward Hopper orchestrated a play of solid verticals (the gas pumps and station signpost) and gaze-directing obliques (the receding road), guiding the viewer's eye across the canvas.

Similarly, the light here is both natural and artificial, lending an underlying sense of drama to the view of a lone attendant at dusk. Instead of simply depicting a straightforward narrative, Hopper's aim was 'the most exact transcription possible of my most intimate impressions of nature' – in this case, the loneliness of an American country road.

Georgia O’Keeffe

American 1887–1986

Eagle claw and bean necklace

1934

charcoal on paper

Given anonymously (by exchange), 1936

Georgia O’Keeffe
American 1887–1986

Banana flower
1934
charcoal on paper

Given anonymously (by exchange), 1936

Left to right

Edward Weston
American 1886–1958

Rock erosion, Point Lobos
1935
gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Merle Armitage, 1935

Stump against sky
1936, printed 1941
gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Albert M. Bender, 1939

Imogen Cunningham
American 1883–1976

Magnolia blossom, tower of jewels
1925
gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Albert M. Bender, 1940

...continued overleaf

Agave design 2
1932
gelatin silver photograph

Gift of the photographer, 1964

Man Ray
American 1890–1976

Untitled
1931
gelatin silver photograph

Untitled
1931
gelatin silver photograph

Gifts of James Thrall Soby, 1941

Imogen Cunningham, Man Ray and Edward Weston were leading figures in twentieth-century photography. Cunningham and Weston, both associated with the American West coast group f.64 (named for an aperture setting), employed the technical capabilities of the camera to produce ‘straight’ photographs – unmanipulated images of great clarity and detail. Man Ray moved from New York to Paris in 1921 and quickly became a central figure in European Surrealism. He often used darkroom manipulations and other non-traditional techniques to court ambiguity in his images.

Despite differences in location, vision and approach, these artists are united here through their abstraction of natural forms. Floral growth, eroded surfaces, and a sensuous still life of peach and fig leaf have been precisely isolated. Though depicting the exterior world, these photographs, in Weston’s words, ‘take one into an inner reality,’ allowing for ‘seeing through one’s eyes, not with them.’

Art as Action

If in preceding decades Surrealism and its affinities represented an art of introspection, the 1950s was an era of action. The discourse of the decade came to be dominated by the large gestures, canvases and personalities of a group of American painters alternately referred to as the Abstract Expressionists or the New York School.

Within this reigning approach, also dubbed Action Painting by the critic Harold Rosenberg, painters developed signature gestures, from Jackson Pollock's vigorous drips to Franz Kline's sweeping, muscular slashes. Other painters within the group imbued their vast canvases with more spiritual concerns: Mark Rothko sought to communicate 'basic human emotions' through his compositions' vibrating, multi-hued rectangles; Barnett Newman aimed to express the sublime through vertical 'zips' of colour; and Ad Reinhardt strove for the absolute in his monochromes.

The kineticism characteristic of art of this period was not exclusive to painting. Fuelled by currents of air, Alexander Calder's mobiles captured nature's dynamism, and Louise Bourgeois's sculptures cut like sharp knives into their surrounding space. Nor was this vitality limited to a single geography: in Brazil, Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica pioneered a Neo-Concrete art, which not only foregrounded the action of the artist, but also prompted participation from the viewer.

Jackson Pollock

American 1912–56

Number 7, 1950

1950

oil, enamel, and aluminium paint on canvas

Gift of Sylvia Slifka in honor of William Rubin, 1993

For ‘drip paintings’, such as *Number 7, 1950*, Jackson Pollock worked from above, flinging and pouring paint across a canvas lying on the ground. What at first may appear as a random web of paint is in fact an intricately wrought composition that offers a record of the artist’s gestures.

The long, horizontal proportions of the canvas oriented Pollock’s movements: in a kind of dance, he made the calligraphic black, white and yellow splatters while moving from one end of the composition to the other. This painting’s rust orange ground – unusual for the artist – offsets the ribbons of colour laid on top, allowing us to follow the order in which he built them up.

For kids

Jackson Pollock created many paintings like this one, which have been called ‘drip paintings’. He would begin each ‘drip painting’ by placing a large piece of blank canvas on the ground. Jackson would then move around it, dripping and splattering paint as he went. This sounds messy, but it wasn’t chaotic! Throughout the process, Jackson would stop and check how his painting was coming together. He liked painting this way because it allowed him to record his gestures, which made him feel like a part of the picture.

Imagine Jackson at work – the painting is full of action!

Mark Rothko

American, born Russia (now Latvia) 1903–70

No. 3/No. 13

1949

oil on canvas

Bequest of Mrs. Mark Rothko through
The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1981

This work follows a compositional structure that Mark Rothko explored for twenty-three years, beginning in 1947. In these so-called ‘multiform’ paintings, narrowly separated, rectangular blocks of colour hover in a column against a differently hued ground. With their soft, irregular edges, the forms appear to vibrate, creating an optical flicker and filling the canvas with gentle movement, as areas of colour emerge and recede.

Rothko warned, however, that ‘If you … are moved only by … colour relationships, then you miss the point’. Interested in the aesthetics of the sublime, he viewed colour as a means to a larger end: ‘I’m interested only in expressing basic human emotions’, he declared, ‘tragedy, ecstasy, doom’.

Barnett Newman

American 1905–70

Onement III

1949

oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Slifka, 1971

Barnett Newman was one of several Abstract Expressionists preferring to work with expanses of deep colour rather than representing the action of the painter's hand. In 1948 he first came upon the compositional device that would become his signature: a vertical band, called a 'zip', which defined the spatial structure of the canvas, simultaneously dividing and uniting the surrounding field.

Onement III was the third painting in this breakthrough series. Its title, which alludes to a sense of being 'at one with the world' and the religious idea of atonement, suggests Newman's interest in the idea of the sublime. 'We are reasserting man's natural desire for the exalted', he wrote, 'for a concern with our relationship to absolute emotions'.

Alexander Calder

American 1898–1976

Snow flurry, I

1948

painted sheet steel and steel wire

Gift of the artist, 1966

Alexander Calder's major contribution to modern art was the invention of a form of kinetic sculpture known as the 'mobile' – a term coined by fellow artist Marcel Duchamp (in French, *mobile* means both 'motion' and 'motive'). Comprising thirty circles cut from sheet steel, painted white and suspended on three main branches of steel wire, *Snow flurry, I* is the first in a series of mobiles inspired by a snowstorm in Roxbury, Connecticut, where Calder settled in 1933. 'You see nature and then you try to emulate it', he said.

Dictated by passing air currents, this mobile's movement mimics the gently windblown course of falling snowflakes.

For kids

This work of art is made from thin silver wire and white-painted metal discs. Alexander Calder made a series of hanging sculptures, or ‘mobiles’, inspired by snowstorms in his home in Connecticut, in the United States. If you look at them for a little while, you will see the white discs float through the air, like snow falling in slow motion. Alexander created many sculptures that moved – early on he made some with built-in motors, but later he preferred to make ones like *Snow flurry, I*, which rely on the surrounding currents of air to create movement.

Alexander’s mobiles create great shadows. How many white circles are there in *Snow flurry, I*?

Ellsworth Kelly

American 1923–2015

Running white

1959

oil on canvas

Purchase, 1960

Louise Bourgeois

American, born France 1911–2010

Quarantania, III

1949–50, cast 2001
bronze

Gift of the artist, 2002

In the late 1940s Louise Bourgeois made her sculptural debut with a series of vertical figures originally carved in wood and later cast in bronze that came to be known as *Personages*. Some suggest a single, autonomous entity, while others comprise an assemblage of forms.

Quarantania, III belongs to the series, and adopts the role of the lone figure. Its threatening, blade-like shape, along with a perilously narrow balancing point, creates a tense atmosphere described by the artist as ‘the drama of one among many’. Bourgeois claimed that the works in her *Personages* series were inspired by the ‘duel between the isolated individual and the shared awareness of the group’.

Anni Albers

American, born Germany 1899–1994

Free-hanging room dividers

c. 1949

cotton, cellophane and braided horsehair; cellophane and cord

Gift of the designer, 1960

These room dividers, crafted from an unconventional combination of synthetic and organic fibres, were designed for use in postwar open-plan rooms. ‘While they can be regarded as architectural elements’, wrote Anni Albers in *Arts and Architecture* magazine, ‘they must also possess a pliability and fluidity in the control of light, in the control of space, in the control of colour that avoids weight or bulkiness and, within reasonable limits, consider the facts of maintenance’.

This approach to weaving both as a form of art-making and utilitarian design reflects the artist’s training at the Bauhaus in Germany and her subsequent role as head of weaving at Black Mountain College in the United States from 1933 to 1949.

Franz Kline

American 1910–62

White forms

1955

oil on canvas

Gift of Philip Johnson, 1977

Ad Reinhardt

American 1913–67

Number 107

1950

oil on canvas

Given anonymously, 1980

With his monochrome paintings, Ad Reinhardt reduced art to its most basic elements, hoping to encourage close observation on the part of the viewer. Here, the combination of the white paint with the natural colour of the underlying canvas emphasises the composition's tonal variations. The rough-edged, horizontal brushstrokes of varying length and saturation create a brick-like pattern that is at once structured and painterly.

Although he was associated with the New York School of painting in the 1950s, Reinhardt aimed for an art that transcended categories: 'Abstract painting is not just another school or movement or style', he wrote, 'but the first truly unmannered and untrammeled and unentangled, styleless, universal painting'.

Lygia Clark
Brazilian 1920–88

Sundial
1960
aluminium with gold patina

Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros in honor
of Rafael Romero, 2004

Sundial belongs to a series named *Bichos* (*Critters*), which Lygia Clark began in Rio de Janeiro in 1960. Her *Bichos* are articulated metal objects that can be manipulated into various configurations along their spine-like hinges. A *bicho* is, according to the artist, 'a living organism, a work essentially active'.

Along with artists such as Hélio Oiticica (whose work is on view nearby), Clark rejected the rationalism of earlier Brazilian Concrete art that was geometrically abstract in favour of a Neo-Concrete art that was more expressive and, crucially, more participatory. 'There is no room for passivity in the relationship that is established between the *Bichos* and us', she said. 'What happens is a body-to-body relationship between two living entities.'

For kids

This work of art is from a series of sculptures by Lygia Clark called *Bichos*, which means ‘critters’ in Portuguese. Lygia described this work as an ‘active sculpture’, because its metal planes can be moved from side to side by its hinges. When you think of a sculpture, you might think of a solid figure carved from marble or stone. Lygia made movable sculptures like this one, so she could create different forms from the one sculpture.

If you were asked to create an ‘active sculpture’, what materials would you use, and what would your sculpture look like?

Hélio Oiticica
Brazilian 1937–80

Metaesquema no. 348
1958
gouache on cardboard

Purchased with funds given by Maria de Lourdes Egydio Villela, 1998

Metaesquema
1958
gouache on cardboard

Purchased with funds given by Patricia Phelps de Cisneros in honor of Paulo Herkenhoff, 1997

Hélio Oiticica's work emerged from the visual vocabulary of geometric abstraction in postwar Brazil, a period of great optimism, renewal and innovation. As a member of the Neo-Concrete group founded in 1959, Oiticica aimed to liberate geometric constructions from the tightly circumscribed prescriptions of an earlier generation, which were seen as too indebted to European (and colonial) influences.

Oiticica's *Metaesquemas* (Meta-structures) are important works from the moment when his constructions become looser and dynamic: the rectangles seem to 'dance' against the strict grid, while the use of a single colour contrasts with this activation of the composition.

Things as They Are

In 1963 the art historian Peter Selz criticised the newly emergent Pop artists for their ‘passive acceptance of things as they are’. Despite Selz’s negative tone, his phrase captures something in common among a diverse group of artistic currents that arose in the 1960s and 1970s: from Pop art, with its unabashed celebration of consumer objects; to Minimalism, with its matter-of-fact repetition of elemental forms; to Post-Minimalism, with its emphasis on how materials respond to processes and exist in space.

As the name implies, Pop artists drew heavily on popular culture of the age, such as the new musical soundscape fuelled by the game-changing Fender Stratocaster guitar and disseminated on vinyl records with iconic cover designs. Roy Lichtenstein’s paintings co-opted the subject and style of mass-produced comics, while John Chamberlain and Kenneth Anger paid tribute to the ascendant American cult of the automobile in sculpture and film, respectively.

Working in a language of reduced geometry and a limited palette, artists such as Agnes Martin and Sol LeWitt explored the infinite variations of primary structures in two and three dimensions. Sculptors including Lynda Benglis and Richard Serra expanded on these Minimalist foundations, subjecting metal to the effects of gravity in objects that intervene into the viewer’s experience.

Left to right

Diane Arbus
American 1923–71

Two men dancing at a drag ball, New York City
1970
gelatin silver photograph
Printer: Neil Selkirk

Acquired through the generosity of the International Program of The Museum of Modern Art, 2004

Boy with a straw hat waiting to march in a pro-war parade, New York City
1967
gelatin silver photograph

The Ben Schultz Memorial Collection. Gift of the photographer, 1967

A child crying, New Jersey
1967
gelatin silver photograph

Lily Auchincloss Fund, 1972

...continued overleaf

Muscle Man contestant, New York City

1968
gelatin silver photograph
Printer: Neil Selkirk

Acquired through the generosity of the International Program of The Museum of Modern Art, 2004

A young Brooklyn family going for a Sunday outing, New York City

1966
gelatin silver photograph

Lily Auchincloss Fund, 1972

Woman with a veil on Fifth Avenue, New York City

1968
gelatin silver photograph
Printer: Neil Selkirk

Purchase, 2004

Diane Arbus was one of several photographers who re-evaluated the role of documentary photography in 1960s America, utilising the camera to capture challenging and intriguing portraits of marginalised people. The subject, for Arbus, was ‘always more important than the picture. And more complicated’.

In these compositions, the significance of the subject is demonstrated through the compositional weight given to the people depicted. Whether a crying baby or a veiled elderly woman, a muscle man or a drag queen, the subject dominates the frame and demands our attention. Arbus’s careful and deliberate description of her subjects encourages us to look at them with close scrutiny, considering the characteristics that make them remarkable.

Roy Lichtenstein

American 1923–97

Drowning girl

1963

oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Philip Johnson Fund (by exchange) and gift
of Mr. and Mrs. Bagley Wright, 1971

Roy Lichtenstein based many of his early Pop art paintings on imagery found in comic books. The source for this work is the cover of issue 83 of the DC Comics book *Secret Hearts* (1962), which the artist altered significantly to arrive at the finished composition.

In the original illustration, the drowning girl's boyfriend appears in the background, clinging to a capsized boat. Lichtenstein cropped the image dramatically, showing the girl alone. He changed the caption from 'I don't care if I have a cramp!' to 'I don't care!', and the boyfriend's name from Mal to Brad.

In addition to appropriating comic books' melodramatic content, Lichtenstein manually simulated the Benday dots used in the mechanical reproduction of images.

Jasper Johns
American born 1930

Map
1961
oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Scull, 1963

Reflecting on his choice of easily recognisable images, Jasper Johns said that he was interested in ‘the idea of knowing an image rather than just seeing it out of the corner of your eye’. The ubiquitous and iconic map of the United States is, in the artist’s words, something ‘seen and not looked at, not examined’.

Preserving the overall proportions of the country and the shape of its states, Johns’s energetic application of paint subverts the conventions of cartography, while referencing the iconic style of Abstract Expressionists like Jackson Pollock. *Map* invites close inspection because its content is both familiar and transformed.

Claes Oldenburg

American, born Sweden 1929

Giant soft fan

1966–67

vinyl filled with foam rubber, wood, metal and plastic tubing

The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection, 1967

Here Claes Oldenburg has rendered a hard object in a soft material so that it sags and droops, and he has greatly inflated its size. There is humour in this transformation of a hard machine into a collapsible object, and the result has a bodily and sexual connotation.

In its focus on the culture of its time, Pop art seemed jarringly up-to-date in the 1960s, but this fan's design was old-fashioned even then, and evoked a sense of nostalgia. Oldenburg imagined that this sculpture could be a public monument: he pictured it 'on Staten Island, blowing up the bay', and later 'as a replacement for the Statue of Liberty … [guaranteeing] workers on Lower Manhattan a steady breeze'.

For kids

This saggy, droopy fan is far too big, and doesn't even work! Claes Oldenburg wanted to transform ordinary household items, like fans, into monuments, to make people think differently about what sculpture could be. Claes made lots of 'soft sculptures', including a giant icecream cone, a big hamburger and even a huge toilet.

There is more than one fan in this exhibition. Can you remember seeing a fan in the first room? Keep your eyes peeled for another fan as you walk through Federation Court.

Kenneth Anger

American born 1927

Kustom Kar Kommandos

1965

digital file, transferred from 35mm film, colour, sound, 3 min

Acquired from the artist, 1973

Digital file courtesy of Anger Management

Klaus Voormann
German born 1938

Robert Whitaker
photographer
British 1939–2011

Album cover for The Beatles, Revolver
1966
lithograph

Gift of Christian Larsen, 2008

Hipgnosis, London art design studio
British 1968–82

Storm Thorgerson
British 1944–2013

Aubrey Powell
British born 1946

Album cover for Led Zeppelin, Houses of the Holy
1973
lithograph

Committee on Architecture and Design Funds, 2014

...continued overleaf

Martin Sharp
Australian 1942–2013
Robert Whitaker
photographer
British 1939–2011

Album cover for Cream, Disraeli Gears
1967
lithograph

Committee on Architecture and Design Funds, 2014

Andy Warhol
American 1928–87
Billy Name
photographer
American born 1940
Craig Braun
designer
American born 1939
John Pasche
typographer
American born 1945

Album cover for The Rolling Stones, Sticky Fingers
1971
lithograph with metal zipper

Committee on Architecture and Design Funds, 2014

Leo Fender
American 1909–91
George Fullerton
American 1923–2009
Freddie Tavares
American 1913–90

Fender Stratocaster electric guitar
designed 1954, made 1957
wood, metal and plastic

Committee on Architecture and Design Funds, 2014

The *Stratocaster* designed by Leo Fender, a self-taught electrician, inventor and amateur musician from Southern California, is one of the most successful musical instrument designs of the twentieth century. Sold with a range of finishes adapted from the automotive industry and detachable elements easily repaired or replaced, these guitars were designed to withstand heavy use and amplification.

The ergonomic and balanced form was contoured to fit comfortably with the player's body, and technical innovations included three pickups for a bright, glassy sound, and a Fender-patented, built-in tremolo arm ('whammy bar'). The *Stratocaster's* user-friendly design and unique sound meant it soon dominated the market, attracting numerous devotees including Buddy Holly, Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Bonnie Raitt and Jeff Beck.

Tom Wesselmann

American 1931–2004

Study for Mouth, 8

1966

synthetic polymer paint and pencil on paper

John B. Turner Fund, 1969

Robert Indiana

American 1928–2018

LOVE

1967
screenprint, edition of 250
Publisher: Multiples, Inc., New York
Printer: Sirocco Screenprinters, North Haven, Connecticut

Riva Castleman Fund, 1990

Few Pop images are more widely recognised than Robert Indiana's *LOVE*, which speaks to the artist's fascination with signage, seriality and the power of ordinary words. Originally designed as a Christmas card commissioned by MoMA in 1965, *LOVE* has appeared in prints, paintings, sculptures, banners, rings, tapestries and stamps.

Full of erotic, religious, autobiographical and political underpinnings – especially when it was co-opted as an emblem of 1960s idealism – *LOVE* is both accessible and complex in meaning. Its simplified forms and electric colours, ideally suited to this screen-printed version, relate to hard-edge abstraction of the day.

John Chamberlain
American 1927–2011

Tomahawk Nolan
1965
welded and painted metal automobile parts

Gift of Philip Johnson, 1971

John Chamberlain’s metal sculptures are composed of crushed and twisted car parts, which he combines into assemblages, turning cast-off detritus into dynamic art objects. While these works share the intense colour and gestural energy of Abstract Expressionism, their vibrant palette is readymade, courtesy of the automobile’s industrial paints, rather than subjectively chosen. At the same time, by deconstructing the automobile, one of the dominant consumer icons of 1960s America, Chamberlain engages with Pop art’s simultaneous embrace and critique of commodity culture.

Andy Warhol
American 1928–87

Marilyn Monroe
1967
portfolio of nine screenprints, edition of 250
Publisher: Factory Additions, New York
Printer: Aetna Silkscreen Products, Inc., New York

Gift of Mr. David Whitney, 1968

Trained as an illustrator, Andy Warhol embraced popular culture and commercial printmaking processes, and in 1967 established a print-publishing business, Factory Additions, through which he issued a series of screen-print portfolios of his signature subjects. For *Marilyn Monroe*, his first series, Warhol used the same publicity still of the actress that he had previously used for dozens of paintings. He created ten highly variable portraits, each one printed from five screens, exploiting the medium's potential for shifting colours and off-register effects.

By celebrating this iconic celebrity's veneer of glamour and fame, but acknowledging her darker inner complexity (Monroe died from an overdose in 1962 at the age of thirty-six), these prints reveal Warhol's nuanced grasp of American culture.

John Baldessari

American born 1931

What is painting

1966–68

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Donald L. Bryant, Jr., 1998

In the mid 1960s, the Southern California–based artist John Baldessari began to reconsider both the nature of painting and, more broadly, the practice of art-making itself. Undermining the importance of the artist's hand in creating a work, Baldessari hired a commercial sign painter to execute *What is painting*. Challenging the artist's contribution of content, he appropriated the work's text from an instructional book, turning sentences on how to compose an artwork into a self-referential painting.

'I think the wonderful irony about this piece is that it's text', Baldessari has said. 'But in fact it is a painting, because it's done with paint on canvas. So I'm really being very slyly ironic here in saying, "Well, this is what painting is."'

For kids

John Baldessari paid a sign painter to paint the message on this canvas. The text describes how to make a good painting. John found some of these words in an instructional book about art. The way John created this work of art might seem a bit confusing. Why would an artist ask someone else to paint their painting for them? John is a conceptual artist. This means that he thinks the idea or concept of a work of art is more important than how it looks.

Have a think about some of your favourite paintings. What do you like about them?

Top to bottom

Lee Lozano
American 1930–99

Untitled (Tool)
c. 1964
pencil and crayon on paper

Untitled (Tool)
c. 1963
pencil and crayon on paper

Untitled (Tool)
c. 1964
pencil and crayon on paper

The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gifts, 2005

Lynda Benglis

American born 1941

Modern art

1970–74, cast 1973–74
bronze and aluminium

Gift of J. Frederic Byers III, 1977

In late 1969, Lynda Benglis made a group of works by pouring coloured liquid latex on the floor and letting it dry into irregular, rubbery chunks. Soon afterwards, she began subjecting liquid metals to the same methods, pouring them into freestanding sculptures.

Works such as *Modern art* – which was executed in bronze and aluminium (on view here), as well as lead and tin – share the industrial materials of their Minimalist antecedents, yet their forms are insistently biomorphic, even scatological. Recording the behaviour of fluid substances in action, the final forms of these sculptures capture the process of their making.

Gerhard Richter
German born 1932

Dead
Tote
1963
oil on canvas

The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection (by exchange), 2013

On Kawara

Japanese 1933–2014

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 1979

1979

synthetic polymer paint on canvas, artist-made cardboard box

Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund, 1981

This work belongs to On Kawara's *Today* series, which consists of thousands of 'date paintings' made between 1966 and the artist's death in 2014.

To create the starkly uniform series, Kawara adhered to a precise set of rules. Each canvas depicts the date when it was painted, inscribed in white paint against a dark, monochromatic background in the language native to where the artist was at the time. Many of the canvases are accompanied by a handmade cardboard box lined with newspaper clippings from the same day and location. If a work was not completed by midnight, it was destroyed.

By diligently repeating the same process for almost five decades, Kawara succeeded in tangibly representing the abstract concept of time itself.

Martha Rosler

American born 1943

Semiotics of the kitchen

1975

black and white video, sound, 6 min 9 sec

Gift of the artist and Galerie Nagel, Berlin, 1981

In Martha Rosler's video, the artist assumes the role of an apron-clad housewife and parodies television cooking demonstrations. Standing in a kitchen, surrounded by refrigerator, table and stove, she moves through the alphabet from A to Z, assigning a letter to each of the tools found in this domestic space. Wielding knives, a nutcracker and a rolling pin, Rosler warms to her task, her gestures sharply punctuating her rage and frustration with women's oppressive roles.

Sanja Iveković
Croatian born 1949

Instructions no. 1
Instrukcije br. 1
1976
black and white video, sound, 5 min 59 sec

Gift of Jerry I. Speyer and Katherin G. Farley, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, and Committee on Media and Performance Art Funds, 2011

Like American artist Martha Rosler, whose video *Semiotics of the kitchen* is playing on the other monitor, Croatian artist Sanja Iveković is an activist feminist, whose video *Instructions no. 1* is a razor-sharp critique of traditional images of femininity. In Iveković's video work we see the artist applying make-up with a mascara wand; instead of outlining her eyes, however, she draws arrows on her forehead and under her chin, as a very different kind of 'war paint'. Both fierce and disconcerting – reminiscent of tribal tattoos as well as plastic surgeons' operation guidelines – the markings suggest the fragility of, and effort underpinning, traditional notions of feminine beauty.

Robert Rauschenberg

American 1925–2008

Surface series from *Currents*

1970
portfolio of eighteen screenprints, edition of 100
Publisher: Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis and Castelli Graphics, New York
Printer: Styria Studios, Glendale, California

Gift of the artist, 2008

For his 1970 series *Currents*, Robert Rauschenberg gathered clippings from multiple US newspapers, assembled them into collaged configurations and screen-printed the results into three versions: one 18-metre frieze, and two sets of individual prints – *Surface series* (on view here) and *Features*.

The accumulation of headlines – referring to then-president Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War, sewage leaks and real estate scandals, stabbings and strikes, and the death of philosopher Bertrand Russell – presents a snapshot of the world at the moment of the work's making. In the announcement accompanying the project's inaugural exhibition, Rauschenberg described *Currents* as 'an active protest attempting to share + communicate my response to + concern with our grave times + place'.

Al Loving
American 1935–2005

Untitled
c. 1975
dyed canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Rodgers and
A. Conger Goodyear (both by exchange), 2013

Part painting, part wall-hanging, part relief sculpture, Al Loving's *Untitled* is composed of many carefully torn and stitched together strips of canvas, individually dyed in a radiant array of tones. Loving was interested in making abstract paintings that manifested process, and whose free-form shapes eschewed the traditional, rectilinear boundaries of Western painting. He later recalled that his torn canvas works were inspired by the question of 'whether there is black art and what it looks like'.

The geometric, pieced-together fabric components of this work recall those of quilts and African textile traditions. At the same time, its irregularly stained surfaces, soft eccentric contours and intentionally raw handmade quality represent Loving's unique updating of Abstract Expressionist and Colour Field painting.

For kids

Al Loving made this work of art by cutting strips of canvas, and then dyeing and painting them different colours. Together, the strips create a beautiful pattern of purples, blues, pinks, yellows and reds. The techniques used to create this work relate to Al's childhood and African-American identity. Al's mother was a quilt-maker. To make *Untitled*, Al used some of the African textile traditions his mother used to make her quilts.

What are some traditions in your family's history? How would you represent those traditions in a work of art?

Sol LeWitt

American 1928–2007

Cubic construction: Diagonal 4, opposite corners 1 and 4 units

1971

painted wood

The Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation, 1983

Sol LeWitt produced ‘structures’ – as he referred to his sculptures, wall drawings and prints – in response to specific geometric ideas. Although he was a leading figure of the Conceptual Art movement, the serial aesthetics of Minimalism also feature in LeWitt’s work in which a single geometric concept gives rise to multiple permutations.

To make this object, LeWitt arranged cubes in a grid with five modules on each side. Beginning with a single cube in the corner, the artist filled each row and column with progressively taller stacks of cubes, starting again after reaching a height of five cubes. This simple system results in an undulating pattern that multiplies diagonally across the structure.

Agnes Martin

American, born Canada 1912–2004

Untitled number 5

1975

synthetic polymer paint and pencil on gesso on canvas

Gift of The American Art Foundation, 1976

Celebrated as a pivotal figure spanning the essential emotion of Abstract Expressionism and cool geometry of Minimalism, Agnes Martin embraced a muted colour palette and restricted formal vocabulary of lines and grids, squares and rectangles. Throughout her two major periods of activity – from the 1940s to 1967 in New York, and from 1972 until her death in New Mexico – Martin made spare and repetitive compositions that seem to hover between presence and absence.

This painting draws attention to the material presence of the canvas by using pencil and thin washes of colour in vertical bands. Early in her career, Martin was a neighbour of Mark Rothko and Ellsworth Kelly, and her work, like theirs, explores the juncture between abstract space and internal emotional states.

Richard Serra

American born 1938

Close pin prop

1969–81
steel

Gift of Edward R. Broida, 2005

Close pin prop bridges the space between wall and floor, balancing upright without the aid of any external support. Richard Serra has spoken of his art as ‘nonmetaphorical, nondepictive, and nonillusionist’, and considers the process of construction and the weighty physicality of his sculptures to be crucial to their meaning.

‘To deprive art of its uselessness is to make other than art. I am interested in sculpture which is nonutilitarian, nonfunctional. Any use is a misuse,’ he has said. The titles of many of Serra’s works allude to artists and public figures; the title of *Close pin prop* refers to the American painter and photographer Chuck Close.

Bernd Becher
German 1931–2007
Hilla Becher
German 1934–2015

Winding towers
1966–97
gelatin silver photographs

Acquired in honor of Marie-Josée Kravis through the generosity of Robert B. Menschel, 2010

Bernd and Hilla Becher began their lifelong collaborative project of documenting the industrial infrastructure of Germany soon after they met at art school in Düsseldorf, in 1957. In these buildings they saw the physical signs of a disappearing economy, and photographed them with scientific rigour, as if documenting a disappearing species.

The Bechers arranged their photographs into typological grids, taking a serial approach that aligned them with American Minimalists such as their friend Sol LeWitt (whose sculpture is on view nearby). In *Winding towers* the metal structures are framed uniformly. As Bernd commented, ‘the winding towers … look very similar, and you could think that they came from a production series … Only when you put them beside each other do you see their individuality’.

Things as They Are (… Or Could Be)

In the 1960s, disaffection with functionalist modernism had permeated the fields of architecture and design. The emergence of a youth consumer market, more informal patterns of socialising and increased awareness of cultural diversity defied commitment to a single set of attitudes and beliefs. Openly taking the lead from popular culture and science fiction, collectives such as Archigram, a radical London-based group of architects, produced visionary creations that proposed nomadic and flexible alternatives to traditional ways of living. At the same time, in Italy, Ettore Sottsass envisaged a futurist techno-utopia in which there would be no work and no social conditioning or sexual inhibition.

Electronics and plastics technologies were hallmarks of MoMA's landmark 1972 exhibition *Italy: A New Domestic Landscape*. On that occasion, a series of multipurpose living environments, colourful plastic furniture and innovative lighting, such as the *Pillola* lamp in the form of a giant drug capsule, reflected a fresh and playful approach to design. In a sign of things to come, early video games heralded new forms of leisure, and computers opened up a language of virtual communication through universally accepted icons.

Ron Herron

British 1930–94

Cities: Moving, master vehicle-habitation (aerial perspective)

1964

ink and graphite on tracing paper

Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2000

Peter Cook
British born 1936

Plug-in city. Section indicating maximum pressure area
1964
ink and gouache on photomechanical print

Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2000

Plug-in city is one of many vast, visionary creations produced in the 1960s by the radical British architecture collective Archigram, of which Peter Cook was a founding member. A ‘megastructure’ that incorporates residences, access routes and essential services for its inhabitants, *Plug-in city* was designed to encourage change through obsolescence: each building is removable, and a permanent ‘craneway’ facilitates continual rebuilding.

Between 1960 and 1974, Archigram published nine issues of its provocative magazine and created more than 900 exuberant drawings of imaginary architectural projects, from technological developments to counterculture, space travel to science fiction. In opposition to the period’s functionalist ethos, Archigram designed alternatives to traditional ways of living – flexible, impermanent architecture that they hoped would be liberating.

Top, left to right

Roberto Matta
Chilean 1911–2002
Knoll International, New York
manufacturer
American est. 1938

Malitte lounge furniture
1966
wool and polyurethane foam

Gift of Knoll International, 1970

The *Malitte* lounge – a collection of colourful, lightweight forms – can be stacked into a rectangular wall or used as individual pieces of furniture. This new sculptural approach to furniture was made possible by technological advances in the manufacture of polyurethane foam and synthetic stretch jersey fabrics.

The design concept is playful and flexible. *Malitte*'s interlocking organic shapes reflect Roberto Matta's training as an architect in his native Chile, as well as the kind of biomorphic forms to be found in his Surrealist paintings, which he developed after his move to Paris in 1935.

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Joe Colombo

Italian 1930–71

Kartell S.p.A., Milan

manufacturer

Italian est. 1949

Universale stacking side chairs

1967

polypropylene and rubber

Gift of the manufacturer, 1988

Solid, stackable and colourful, these chairs reflect a late-1960s enthusiasm for modern plastic furniture that was particularly strong in Italy. Contemporary advertisements celebrated the design's adaptability and durability, declaring, 'It won't age or break, you can throw it out the window, leave it outside, put it under water, take it to the North Pole or the desert: it will always be like new'. As the model name *Universale* suggests, the chair could be used indoors or out, in public or private environments.

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Internotredici Associati, Florence

design studio
Italian 1970–83

Carlo Bimbi

Italian born 1944

Gianni Ferrara

Italian born 1928

Nilo Gioacchini

Italian born 1946

Tuttuno

1971
plywood covered with plastic laminate

Gift of Irwin T. Holtzman, 2007

The *Tuttuno* is a compact unit that incorporates storage, sleeping, eating, socialising and relaxing areas. When not in use, the bed, table and drawers slide into the unit and out of sight. This 'living system' designed by the Florence-based collective Internotredici Associati paid special attention to new forms emerging as a result of more informal social and family relationships, evolving notions of privacy and territoriality as well as the exploration of new materials and production techniques. It was one of the radical domestic environments shown in MoMA's landmark 1972 exhibition *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* that celebrated innovative, flexible designs and adaptable living.

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Bottom, left to right

Cesare Casati
Italian born 1936
C. Emanuele Ponzio
Italian 1923–2015

Pillola lamps
1968
acrylonitrile butadiene styrene and acrylic plastic

Celeste Bartos Purchase Fund, 2000

...continued overleaf

Mario Bellini
Italian born 1935

Brionvega S.p.A, Milan
manufacturer
Italian est. 1945

Totem stereo system with detachable speakers (model RR 130)
1970
lacquered wood
Gift of the manufacturer, 1972

...continued overleaf

Olivier Mourgue
French born 1939

Airborne International, France
manufacturer
French est. 1951

Djinn chaise longue
1964–65
tubular steel frame, foam padding and nylon jersey upholstery

Gift of George Tanier, Inc., 1966

Olivier Mourgue created undulating, low-slung seating that experimented with colours and materials, as well as flexibility and disposability (zip-off nylon jersey covers could be changed by season). He grew up in a Paris apartment filled with Empire-style antique furniture, which he detested. ‘Furniture like that has nothing to do with life’, he proclaimed in 1965. ‘One is never at ease in such rooms.’

This chaise longue is named after the supernatural *djinni* (genie) of the Koran. It became particularly famous after featuring in Stanley Kubrick’s film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).

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Gaetano Pesce
Italian born 1939

Bracciodiferro, Genoa
manufacturer
Italian 1970–75

Moloch floor lamp
1970–71
metal alloy and steel

Gift of the manufacturer, 1972

For kids

In Italian, *tuttuno* means ‘all in one’ – making it the perfect title for this compact living unit! Various items of furniture are tucked under a large C-shaped lounge known as a ‘conversation pit’. When the bed, table and drawers aren’t being used, they slide back into the unit. The *Tuttuno* was created by a group of Italian designers who wanted to make new and exciting furniture that would help friends hang out together even if their apartments were small.

There are some pretty groovy pieces of furniture in this gallery. Which one is your favourite?

Clockwise from top left

Ettore Sottsass
Italian, born Austria 1917–2007

The Planet as Festival: Study for rafts for listening to chamber music (perspective)
1972–73
graphite on paper

Gifts of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2000

The Planet as Festival: Study for a dispenser of incense, LSD, marijuana, opium, laughing gas (perspective)
1972–73
graphite on paper

The Planet as Festival: Study for temple for erotic dances (aerial perspective and plan)
1972–73
graphite and cut-and-pasted gelatin silver photograph on paper

Ettore Sottsass was concerned by what he perceived to be the declining quality of urban life, and used his series

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of studies *The Planet as Festival* to depict a utopian land where humanity is free from work and social conditioning. Sottsass illustrates ‘super-instruments’ for entertainment, including a chain of temples for observing erotic dances; rafts for listening to chamber music on a river; and a monolithic dispenser for incense, drugs and laughing gas towering over a campground.

Liberated from banks, supermarkets and subways, individuals can ‘come to know by means of their bodies, their psyche, and their sex, that they are living’, he said. In this futuristic vision, goods are free, abundantly produced and distributed around the globe, and life is in harmony with nature.

Yona Friedman

French, born Hungary 1923

Spatial city (perspective)

1958–59

felt-tipped pen on tracing paper

Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2000

Tomohiro Nishikado
Japanese born 1944

Taito Corporation, Tokyo
manufacturer and publisher
Japanese est. 1953

Space Invaders
1978
video game software

Gift of the Taito Corporation, 2013

Tomohiro Nishikado's *Space Invaders* is an early two-dimensional bitmap shooter game in which the player operates a fixed cannon at the bottom of the screen from side to side while trying to shoot as many invading aliens as possible as they move down the playing field.

Instead of creating a military game in which the player would have to shoot humans, Nishikado opted to design aliens, thinking it more playful and less 'immoral'. Now iconic, these octopus-like aliens represent a creative and influential step in character development in early video gaming – shapes abstract enough that they can be interpreted as monsters, bugs, machines or, of course, aliens.

Ray Tomlinson

American 1941–2016

@

1971

ITC American Typewriter Medium

Acquired, 2010

In 1967 Ray Tomlinson created the world's first email system for the United States Government's Advanced Research Projects Agency Networks (ARPAnet), adopting @ as a stand-in for the long and convoluted programming language indicating a message's destination. This was a design decision of extraordinary elegance and economy that repurposed an existing, underutilised symbol for a revolutionary new technology.

The sign's new function was in keeping with its origins: in computer language, as in financial transactions, @ designates a relationship between two entities, establishing a link based on objective and measurable rules.

For kids

MoMA has collected many interesting items over the years, including these symbols. One is the @ symbol, which you can find on your computer keyboard. This symbol is included in emails to make sure they are delivered to the right person. You can find the recycling symbol on a range of packaging such as soft drink cans and plastic water bottles, or on bins that collect recyclable waste. Both symbols are in the public domain. This means people can use them without having to ask permission.

If you were in charge of a museum or an art gallery, what kind of items would you collect?

Gilbert Baker

American 1951–2017

Rainbow flag

1978

Nylon

Proposed acquisition, National Gallery of Victoria

Displayed here with two other universal symbols – the @ and recycling symbols – *Rainbow flag*, 1978, is a widely recognised emblem of pride and activism for the LGBTI+ community. Its six coloured stripes are each imbued with meaning: red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, blue for serenity, and violet for spirit.

The flag was conceived by Gilbert Baker, a San Francisco–based activist and designer who created it for the city's Gay Freedom Day Parade, held on 25 June 1978. Baker refused to trademark his design, feeling that it was created for everyone and should therefore be in the public domain.

A similar flag entered The Museum of Modern Art's collection in 2015.

Gary Anderson

American born 1947

Recycling symbol

1970
digital image file

Acquired, 2015

In 1970 Gary Anderson, then a twenty-three-year old student studying engineering at the University of California in Los Angeles, submitted this design for a competition held by the Container Corporation of America to devise a symbol for recycled paper. Anderson created the now widely recognised recycling symbol, consisting of a three-part möbius strip with open points to denote the ongoing cycle of use–reuse, in a matter of days.

Anderson said, ‘I’d already done a presentation on recycling waste water and I’d come up with a graphic that described the flow of water, from reservoirs through to consumption, so I already had arrows and arcs and angles in my mind’.

Olafur Eliasson
Ventilator

Olafur Eliasson
Danish and Icelandic born 1967

Ventilator
1997
altered fan, wire, and cable

Collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Gift of Gwen and Peter Norton in honor of the appointment of Klaus Biesenbach as director of MoMA PS1, 2011

Exhibition copy courtesy of the artist, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York and neugerriemschneider, Berlin

This fan, hanging from the ceiling on a long tether, circulates in unpredictable orbits on currents produced by the rotation of its blades. Shifting the emphasis from the art object to its audience, *Ventilator* invites spatial interaction, encouraging the viewer to move toward the blast of air, only to duck or retreat when the fan inevitably swings too close. ‘I always try to turn the viewer into what’s on show, make him mobile and dynamic’, Olafur Eliasson has said. Although its materials are modest, this work activates a large space, choreographing a subjective and social experience.

Immense Encyclopedia

Describing the landscape of art in 1982, Sherrie Levine expressed the feeling that ‘every word, every image is leased and mortgaged’, making the artist a ‘plagiarist’ who draws on an ‘immense encyclopedia’ of sources. Indeed, appropriation was a key strategy used by artists in the 1980s and 1990s to co-opt and comment on a vast trove of cultural references.

Jeff Koons’s readymade sculptures, for example, turn everyday objects into icons, adopting conventions of display from commercial advertising. Christian Marclay’s videos splice snippets of found footage, stitching together fragmented narratives through judicious edits. These strategies often shaped investigations of identity, as in the photographs of Cindy Sherman and Laurie Simmons, which stage tableaux that question the roles played by women, or in works by Kara Walker and Glenn Ligon, which examine African-American experience by citing history and literature. Appropriation also gave shape to expressions of protest and mourning, as in artist group General Idea’s viral methods of raising AIDS awareness, or Felix Gonzalez-Torres’s metaphorically charged installations.

A punk spirit also permeated art of these decades, with poster designs for bands such as the Sex Pistols and The Clash influencing the vocabularies of young artists. It was a cultural era in which concepts of ‘high’ and ‘low’ were forcibly inverted. Both Mike Kelley and Raymond Pettibon designed album covers and zines before applying an

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underground ethos to sculptures and drawings, including those on view here.

General Idea
artists' group
active 1968–94

AA Bronson
Canadian born 1946

Felix Partz
Canadian 1945–94

Jorge Zontal
Canadian, born Italy 1944–94

AIDS (Wallpaper)
1988
screenprinted wallpaper

Gift of Richard Gerrig and Timothy Peterson in celebration of the Museum's reopening, 2004

The logo repeated in this wallpaper is based on Robert Indiana's famous *LOVE* design from 1965 (on view earlier in the exhibition). Members of the collective General Idea re-appropriated the logo, exploiting its familiarity to communicate a message relevant to their own historical moment, when the AIDS epidemic was first being recognised as a national crisis.

'Our idea was that this was a kind of advertising campaign for a disease that nobody wanted to talk about at the time', collective member AA Bronson recalled. 'It was being kind of hushed up'. General Idea wanted to normalise the word by disseminating it throughout mass media and public consciousness. Like viral advertising, the logo was plastered across streets, subways, stamps and other outlets.

Left to right

Raymond Pettibon
American born 1957

No title (Vavoom vavoom his)
1987
ink on paper

No title (Vavoom the terrible)
1987
ink on paper

No title (Vavoom if they)
1987
ink on paper

The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gifts, 2005

Raymond Pettibon began his career in the underground punk scene of Southern California. In the 1990s, he became increasingly well-known in the art world for drawings that merge the irreverent spirit of punk with the graphic sensibilities of fanzines, classic American sports, cartoons and countercultural politics, often aided by darkly humorous and poetic texts. His distinctive graphic style is deliberately old-fashioned and direct, harking back to the golden age of American animation.

Vavoom is a recurring character from the animated series *Felix the Cat*, a little Inuit who can move mountains by

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shouting his own name. By reducing language to a single utterance that can speak the truth, Vavoom is, Pettibon suggests, ‘America’s greatest poet’.

Keith Haring

American 1958–90

Totem

1989
woodcut on three sheets, edition of 60
Publisher: Edition Schellmann, Munich and New York
Printer: Karl Imhof, Munich

Gift of Edition Schellmann, Munich and New York, 1989

Keith Haring's artistic practice was countercultural in spirit and grounded in social activism. Drawing on multiple sources, including children's cartoons and Egyptian hieroglyphics, he devised a unique visual language of animated lines and forms, which he used to reach beyond gallery walls and publically speak out against political inequalities and injustices.

The sarcophagus-like form depicted in *Totem*, constructed from iconographic symbols (crosses, haloes and figures with raised arms), suggests Haring's personal struggle within the wider social context of the AIDS crisis that decimated New York's artistic community in the 1980s and early 1990s. He died in 1990 at the age of thirty-one from HIV/AIDS-related complications.

Allan McCollum

American born 1944

Collection of Forty Plaster Surrogates

1982, cast and painted 1984
enamel on cast Hydrostone

Robert and Meryl Meltzer and Robert F. and
Anna Marie Shapiro Funds, 1988

Allan McCollum's plaster models of forty monochromatic paintings in various sizes are displayed in a nineteenth-century salon style configuration. To produce this work, McCollum and his assistants engaged in repetitive and communal labour that systematised and broke down the artistic process into stages of production: the creation of moulds, the casting of plaster and the application of enamel paint to create a smooth surface with no trace of the artist's hand.

Although the panels were all executed in this way, no two share the same dimensions and frame colour. McCollum has said that he thinks of them as 'sort of stand-ins for a painting, which is the way the word surrogate came to mind'.

Jeff Koons

American born 1955

New Shelton wet/dry doubledecker

1981

vacuum cleaners, plexiglass, and fluorescent lights

Gift of Werner and Elaine Dannheisser, 1996

Jeff Koons blends the worlds of advertising, commerce and high culture to alter the way we perceive ordinary objects and to question the boundary between art and popular culture. Here, two immaculate, unused wet/dry vacuum cleaners are stacked, one atop the other, and hermetically sealed in plexiglass boxes lit from below with fluorescent lights. Separated from their domestic role as cleaning machines, the objects are elevated to the status of sculpture.

‘I chose the vacuum cleaner because of its anthropomorphic qualities’, Koons said. ‘It is a breathing machine’. The curving armature of the hose circles the canister in an embrace, and the machine’s bold maroon and gold stripes are colourful flourishes within an otherwise sterile environment.

Sherrie Levine

American born 1947

Black newborn

1994

cast and sandblasted glass

Committee on Painting and Sculpture Fund and gift of Susan G. Jacoby in honor of her mother Marjorie Goldberger, 2004

Sherrie Levine's *Black newborn* is a smooth, egg-shaped object made from black glass. An appropriation of Constantin Brancusi's *The newborn* (on view earlier in this exhibition), the sculpture is emblematic of Levine's career-long practice of creating works of art that masquerade as existing modernist masterpieces.

Levine not only draws on Brancusi's engagement with themes of origin and creation, but also calls attention to his use of repetition: Brancusi created multiple versions of *The newborn* in marble, bronze and stainless steel. A similar proliferation is at play in Levine's reinterpretation of *The newborn*, which she has rendered in both white and black glass.

Jenny Holzer

American born 1950

Living: Some days you wake up and immediately...

1980–82

bronze

Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2007

Since the late 1970s, Jenny Holzer has used text as her primary artistic vehicle to present pithy, ironic or disturbing statements on such varied supports as posters, clothing and flashing screens. For her *Living* series, Holzer adopted the bronze plaque in order ‘to have the look of a voice of authority, of the establishment’.

In this work, however, the institutional form is belied by the personal quality of its content, an anxiety-ridden confession that invites the viewer to identify with the feeling being expressed. In texts such as this, Holzer describes ‘everyday events that just happened to have some kind of kink in them’.

Glenn Ligon
American born 1960

Untitled (I am an invisible man)
1991
oilstick on paper

Untitled (How it feels to be colored me)
1991
oilstick on paper

Gifts of The Bohen Foundation, 1992

Both of these drawings by Glenn Ligon use quotes from significant African-American literature as starting points: *Untitled (How it feels to be colored me)* repeatedly spells out the title of Zora Neale Hurston's 1928 essay about her sensation of becoming black after moving to a larger city; and *Untitled (I am an invisible man)* reproduces the opening paragraph of Ralph Ellison's famous 1952 novel *Invisible Man*.

In both drawings, legible text becomes dense black smudges, with the words increasingly difficult to decipher. In *Untitled (I am an invisible man)*, Ligon leaves one word – 'not' – sharply defined at the bottom of the sheet, defying the tendency of blackness, in drawing and identity politics, to render its subject invisible.

For kids

Glenn Ligon uses words from famous books and stories in his pictures. ‘I am an invisible man’ are the opening words of a novel by Ralph Ellison, published in 1952. In it, an African-American man describes feeling invisible in his city, where his skin colour means he is often ignored. Glenn has copied out the story’s opening sentences, but they become impossible to read as the oil stick he used to write smudged the words.

What do you think it would feel like to be invisible?

Cindy Sherman

American born 1954

Untitled #131

1983

chromogenic colour photograph

Joel and Anne Ehrenkranz Fund, 1995

Cindy Sherman's meticulously staged compositions mimic the look of popular media, from film stills to centrefold pin-ups, and almost always feature the artist herself as characters of her own creation. In this photograph, Sherman takes on the coy attitude of a woman clutching her jumpsuit and raising her shoulders in front of a floral fabric backdrop.

Sherman rose to prominence in the late 1970s and early 1980s as part of the so-called Pictures Generation, a group of New York–based artists inspired by appropriated imagery and the language of advertising. Created in response to a commission from a New York fashion boutique, this photograph probes the artificial construction of femininity and parodies the fashion industry's excesses and eccentricities.

Robert Gober

American born 1954

Untitled

1991

wood, beeswax, leather shoe, cotton fabric, human hair, and steel

Robert and Meryl Meltzer, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro, The Norman and Rosita Winston Foundation Inc. Funds,
The Millstream Fund, and Jerry I. Speyer Fund, 1992

Robert Gober describes his sculptures as ‘memories remade’. *Untitled* is one of several wax sculptures he created of a man’s leg, complete with leather shoe and sock, emerging uncannily from the wall. The artist has cited the memory of being seated next to a handsome businessman on a flight, whose exposed calf captivated Gober: ‘His sock didn’t meet his pants on his crossed leg and I was transfixed by this hairy bit of being. It seemed so vulnerable and exposed’.

The meaning of Gober’s sculpted limbs is not fixed, however. Artist Zoe Leonard says his works, produced at the height of the AIDS epidemic, carry a political message about the ‘sense of fear and violence permeating society’ at that time.

Laurie Simmons

American born 1949

Walking house

1989

silver dye bleach photograph

The Abramson Collection. Gift of Stephen and Sandra Abramson, 2016

Laurie Simmons was raised in the 1950s and 1960s, during the ‘golden age’ of television and advertising, and cites media depictions of that time as a motivation for her photographic practice. Her *Walking objects* series of the late 1980s was inspired by a 1952 television advertisement for Old Gold cigarettes which featured women dressed as cigarette boxes dancing across the screen. Each photograph in the series depicts a symbolic object atop a pair of women’s legs, dramatically lit against a dark backdrop.

In *Walking house*, a red-brick, gabled, all-American home has been animated to play the part of ‘woman as homemaker’. By self-consciously engaging with female stereotypes and clichés, Simmons critiques the construction of feminine identity in popular culture.

For kids

Laurie Simmons was born in 1949 and grew up on Long Island in the state of New York in the United States. When Laurie was little, she saw a TV commercial that showed women dressed up like boxes, dancing across the screen. The boxes were packages for products you could buy at a store. Laurie drew on her memory of this to create *Walking house*, which shows a dollhouse on top of a mannequin's legs.

Laurie's photograph, and the photograph by Cindy Sherman nearby, make us think about how women are pictured in advertising that we see all around us.

Mike Kelley

American 1954–2012

Untitled

1990

found crocheted rugs and dolls

Gift of the Louis and Bessie Adler Foundation and purchase, 1990

Mike Kelley worked in performance, music, sculpture and installation art, mining American vernacular culture to develop what has been described as ‘an aesthetics of delinquency’. He claimed that the materials in this piece were not meant to suggest childhood comforts, but were chosen instead for their formal elements: the crocheted rugs (‘afghans’), for example, for their abstract patterns.

‘There was a general tendency amongst a number of New York artists at that time to try to capture the look of the brand new manufactured object’, Kelley said, ‘so I started collecting things that are obviously handmade, and that weren’t made to be sold. Hand-knitted afghans and hand-sewn stuffed animals’.

Christian Marclay

American and Swiss born 1955

Telephones

1995

black and white and colour video, sound, 7 min 30 sec

Gift of Gwen and Peter Norton, 2011

Clockwise from left

Designer unknown
Rocco Redondo
photographer
Spanish born 1950

Poster for The Clash album, Black Market Clash
1980
lithograph

Jamie Reid
British born 1947

Poster for the Sex Pistols soundtrack and film, The Great Rock ‘N’ Roll Swindle
1979
lithograph

Designer unknown

Poster for the Cabaret Voltaire album, 2x45
1982
lithograph

...continued overleaf

Designer unknown

Poster for The Clash, Give ‘em Enough Rope tour

1979
lithograph

Gifts of Lawrence Benenson, 2012

Pearl Thompson
British born 1957
Andy Vella
British born 1961

Poster for The Cure album, Head on the Door

1985
lithograph

Peter Saville
British born 1955
Trevor Key
British 1947–95

Poster for the New Order single, Fine Time (after a painting by Richard Bernstein)

...continued overleaf

1989
lithograph

Linder (Linda Sterling)
British born 1954

Malcolm Garrett
British born 1956

Poster for the Buzzcocks single, Orgasm Addict
1977
lithograph

Gifts of Lawrence Benenson, 2012

These posters, all designed in a punk spirit, would have been sent out to record shops, inserted in albums or distributed at clubs and gigs. As a group, they exhibit the anarchic experimentation, crude collage aesthetic and abrasive imagery, often pornographic or macabre in nature, of a movement opposed to establishment values and the perceived blandness of commercial pop music.

In the British punk and post-punk movements beginning in the late 1970s, artists asserted their creativity as musicians, performers and designers of fashion and graphics, at times combining several of these roles. The music and fashion scenes of which they were part were rooted in the culture of art schools, pub rock and non-metropolitan venues, such as the Hacienda in Manchester, England.

Zaha Hadid

British, born Iraq 1950–2016

The Peak project, Hong Kong, China (exterior perspective)

1991

synthetic polymer paint on paper mounted on canvas

David Rockefeller, Jr. Fund, 1992

This unrealised design for a health club in Hong Kong's Kowloon neighbourhood shows architect Zaha Hadid's efforts to incorporate painterly processes in her ideas for buildings. Hadid proposed transforming the site by excavating the rocky hills in order to build artificial cliffs. In this work she reimagines the topography by interjecting cantilevered beams and shard-like fragments that seem to splinter the structure into myriad parts.

By dissecting the landscape and structure into geometric forms, suggesting multiple viewpoints at once, Hadid reveals her interest in Russian artist Kazimir Malevich's Suprematist paintings. This composition of fractured geometries demonstrates an approach known as 'deconstructivist architecture'.

Andreas Gursky

German born 1955

Times Square, New York

1997

chromogenic colour photograph

The Family of Man Fund, 1997

The viewer of this monumental photograph is struck from afar by eye-popping bands of colour, but on approaching is invited to study details of the vast atrium of the Marriott Marquis Hotel, built in New York's Times Square in 1985. To a considerable degree, the composition is an invention – a seamless image derived from photographs recomposed and manipulated in Andreas Gursky's computer. It is at once hyperreal and unreal, an indelible image of our artificial world, created with the tools of our time.

Gursky emerged from art school in Düsseldorf, Germany, in the mid 1980s, just as photographers were beginning to experiment with the scale of their work and compete with painters for wall space in galleries and museums.

For kids

Andreas Gursky likes to capture different views of the same location with his camera. Once he has taken lots of photographs of a site, Andreas carefully stiches them together on his computer to create enormous and very detailed images like this one. *Times Square, New York* depicts the inside of a hotel in New York City which, as you can see, has identical rows of bright yellow walls with plants flowing over them, and a deep red carpet.

Look closely at this image. What other details can you spot that have not been described above?

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

American, born Cuba 1957–96

“Untitled” (Toronto)

1992

light bulbs, porcelain light sockets, and extension cord

Gift of Emily and Jerry Spiegel, 1997

Here Felix Gonzalez-Torres has imbued common light bulbs, strung together, with poetic significance. The lifespan of each bulb, like that of a person, is of a particular duration and will ultimately burn out.

The artist made this work soon after the death of his partner, Ross Laycock, from AIDS-related causes (the title refers to the city where they spent much of their relationship). Despite its elegiac tone, a sense of playfulness is also present in the freedom Gonzalez-Torres allows for the work’s installation: ‘I don’t necessarily know how these pieces are best displayed … you [the owner] decide … Whatever you want to do, try it … Play with it, please. Have fun’.

Isa Genzken
German born 1948

MLR
1992
alkyd resin spray paint on canvas

Gift of The Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation (by exchange) and The Modern Women's Fund, 2014

Anselm Kiefer

German born 1945

To the unknown painter
Dem unbekannten Maler

1982

watercolour and pencil on three sheets of paper

Gift of UBS, 2002

Luc Tuymans

Belgian born 1958

The heritage IV

1996

oil on canvas

Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 1996

The paintings of Belgian artist Luc Tuymans are always founded on something from the ‘real world’. By appropriating photographs, or images from films, television or the internet, he questions the authority of visual documents and collective memory.

The heritage IV, 1996, is one of ten paintings Tuymans made following the Oklahoma City bombing in April 1995. Tuymans wanted to capture a mood he perceived in the United States following this domestic terrorist attack. Based on an unidentified photograph, *The heritage IV* shows a man wearing a gasmask, possibly fumigating or spraying. Using sepia tones and light brushstrokes, Tuymans creates a composition of ambiguous and incomplete details, detaching the subject from its original source.

Kara Walker

American born 1969

Gone: An historical romance of a civil war as it occurred b'tween the dusky thighs of one young negress and her heart

1994

paper

Gift of The Speyer Family Foundation in honor of Marie-Josée Kravis, 2007

This wall installation inaugurated Kara Walker's signature medium: cut-out caricatural silhouettes of figures arranged on a white wall in uncanny, sexual and violent scenarios. In reviving the eighteenth-century cut-paper silhouette to critique historical narratives of slavery and the perpetuation of ethnic stereotypes, Walker has transformed the craft into a new type of epic history painting.

In the work's elaborate title, *Gone* refers to Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel *Gone with the Wind*, set during the American Civil War. While Walker's narrative begins and ends with coupled figures, the chain of tragicomic, turbulent images refutes the promise of romance and confounds conventional attributions of power and oppression.

Flight Patterns

As the twentieth century turned into the twenty-first, digital technologies both enabled an increasingly globalised world and allowed its contemporary networks to be represented. These open currents of information do not always guarantee borderless movement, however, and some of today's artists and designers employ more traditional materials and methods to call attention to issues of immigration and displacement.

Designed by the Italian company Solari di Udine, the *Split flap board flight information display system*, 1996, exhibits an ever-changing array of potential destinations, while Aaron Koblin's 2005 project *Flight patterns* plots data to model the crisscrossing paths of commercial aviation. Investigating the ways we store and categorise knowledge, Camille Henrot's video *Grosse fatigue*, 2013, alludes to the exhaustion that can accompany an excess of information in an over-connected age.

Other contemporary projects address similar issues using more analogue methods. Composed of crumpled pieces of cast-off metal, El Anatsui's shimmering wall sculpture speaks to cycles of colonialism and consumption. A panel woven by the National Union of Sahrawi Women maps the Algerian refugee camp in which that population has remained dislocated for more than four decades. And on a more individual level, Rineke Dijkstra's recurring series of photographs of a Bosnian refugee – taken periodically since 1994 – powerfully traces the growth and movement of a single subject.

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Turkish 1957–2007

Motel Beirut

from the *H-fact: Hospitality/Hostility* series 2003–07

light box

Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2012

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Turkish 1957–2007

Pension Cadiz

from the *H-fact: Hospitality/Hostility* series 2003–07

light box

Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2012

Mona Hatoum

British of Palestinian origin, born Lebanon 1952

Routes II

2002

coloured ink and gel pen on five maps

The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Asylum Centre, Leiden, the Netherlands

March 14, 1994
chromogenic colour photograph

Horace W. Goldsmith Fund through Robert B. Menschel, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra first photographed Almerisa, a Bosnian girl whose family relocated to the Netherlands, as part of a project documenting children of refugees. Dijkstra has continued to photograph Almerisa, and the current installation includes eleven photographs taken over fourteen years.

The images maintain a consistent format, which makes the differences between them more apparent. ‘If you look at the third picture, the moment that she gets grounded in the Netherlands, her feet also reach the ground’, Dijkstra has observed. ‘And you can see how Almerisa is changing, transforming from a child into a young woman in the way she dresses, but also in her attitude, you can see how she’s adapting to West European culture’. By the last photograph, Almerisa’s own child appears.

For kids

This series of photographs by Rineke Dijsktra shows the same person, Almerisa, at different stages in her life. Rineke first met Almerisa in 1994, when she was taking photographs of people in an asylum centre. An asylum centre is a place where people go when they are forced to move to a new country, to seek protection that their home country cannot provide. Almerisa put on her best dress and sat on a red chair with her feet dangling above the ground. Every two or so years after the first portrait was taken, Rineke visited Almerisa's home and took a picture of her in her favourite clothes. In the last photograph, taken fourteen years after the first, Almerisa's feet reach the floor and she is holding a child of her own.

Look back at some of the photographs people have taken of you growing up. What differences can you spot between them?

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Wormer, the Netherlands

June 23, 1996

chromogenic colour photograph

Horace W. Goldsmith Fund through Robert B. Menschel, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Wormer, the Netherlands

February 21, 1998

chromogenic colour photograph

Horace W. Goldsmith Fund through Robert B. Menschel, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Leidschendam, the Netherlands

March 19, 2000

chromogenic colour photograph

Horace W. Goldsmith Fund through Robert B. Menschel, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Leidschendam, the Netherlands

December 9, 2000
chromogenic colour photograph

Acquired through the generosity of Leila and Melville Straus, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Leidschendam, the Netherlands

April 13, 2002

chromogenic colour photograph

Acquired through the generosity of Leila and Melville Straus, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Leidschendam, the Netherlands

June 25, 2003

chromogenic colour photograph

Acquired through the generosity of Leila and Melville Straus, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Leidschendam, the Netherlands

March 29, 2005

chromogenic colour photograph

Acquired through the generosity of Leila and Melville Straus, 2005

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Zoetermeer, the Netherlands

March 24, 2007

chromogenic colour photograph

Horace W. Goldsmith Fund through Robert B. Menschel, 2009

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Zoetermeer, the Netherlands

January 4, 2008

chromogenic colour photograph

Horace W. Goldsmith Fund through Robert B. Menschel, 2009

Rineke Dijkstra

Dutch born 1959

Almerisa, Zoetermeer, the Netherlands

June 19, 2008

chromogenic colour photograph

Gift of the photographer, 2009

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Turkish 1957–2007

Balkan Oteli

from the *H-fact: Hospitality/Hostility* series
2003–07
light box

Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2012

Camille Henrot

French born 1978

Grosse fatigue

2013

colour video, sound, 13 min

Fund for the Twenty-First Century, 2013

 Original music by Joakim. Voice by Akwetey Orraca-Tetteh. Text written in collaboration with Jacob Bromberg. Producer: kamel mennour, Paris; with the additional support of: Fonds de dotation Famille Moulin, Paris. Production: Silex Films. Silver Lion - 55th Venice Biennale 2013. Project conducted as part of the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship Program, Washington, DC. Special thanks to: the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

Grosse fatigue is a meditation on the ways we attempt to categorise, store and relate overwhelming, seemingly infinite troves of knowledge. Made while Camille Henrot was in residence at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC, the video work explores the institution's analogue methods of classification, such as tagged specimens, and books arranged in drawers and cabinets, as well as digital methods, represented by the internet's multiplying windows of images and information.

Set to a poetic, spoken-word account of the history of the universe from void, to God, to animals and humankind (written in collaboration with poet Jacob Bromberg), this work proposes a contemporary creation myth melding science and religion, oral tradition and visual excess.

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Turkish 1957–2007

Hotel Odessa

from the *H-fact: Hospitality/Hostility* series 2003–07
light box

Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2012

In his work, Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin explores the effects of globalisation, immigration and exile on Turkey, and specifically its cultural capital, Istanbul. *H-fact: Hospitality/Hostility* consists of a series of light boxes (seven are on display in this exhibition), each bearing the name of a city, which are fabricated to resemble signs for cheap hotels in Istanbul neighbourhoods frequented by merchants, migrants and budget tourists, in particular from Russia and the Balkans.

Some of the cities featured on the signs were part of the former Ottoman Empire. The work speaks to Turkey's historical and continued role as a fertile meeting place for various civilisations, its Ottoman past and its contemporary identity as a strategic partner in the European political arena.

Manuel Herz Architects, Basel
Swiss est. 1999
National Union of Sahrawi Women
Western Sahara est. 1979

Woven panel
2016
wool

Gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, 2016

This loom-woven panel depicts a map of Rabouni, the administrative headquarters of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Rabouni was established as a refugee camp in 1975 by the indigenous Sahrawi population fleeing the Western Sahara War (1975–91). In 1976, the Sahrawis proclaimed SADR as a sovereign refugee nation.

The map's delineation of camp 'ministries' and built infrastructure reinforces the notion of the Sahrawis' autonomy despite attempts by various governments to ignore them. The textile is a collaboration between the National Union of Sahrawi Women and Swiss architect Manuel Herz, who has spent years documenting the architecture and design of refugee camp-cities in the region. This work demonstrates how stateless individuals continue to actively contribute to cultural production.

Huang Yong Ping

Chinese born 1954

Long scroll

2001

watercolour, pencil, coloured pencil, and ink on joined paper

Purchase, 2002

Huang Yong Ping's work deals with the mixing of artistic cultures, specifically those of China and Western Europe. In the early 1980s, while Huang was studying traditional techniques at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zhejiang, China, information about Western art became available for the first time in decades. Inspired by figures such as Marcel Duchamp, he began to make conceptual artwork, and in 1986 founded a radical Chinese art group named Xiamen Dada.

Executed in a traditional form, *Long scroll* is a non-hierarchical inventory of images relating to Huang's career and wide range of influences: from the many-armed Buddhist figure of Guanyin, to Duchamp's readymade, *Bottle rack*, 1914.

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Turkish 1957–2007

Hotel Rejkyavik

from the *H-fact: Hospitality/Hostility* series 2003–07

light box

Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2012

El Anatsui

Ghanaian born 1944

Bleeding Takari II

2007

aluminium and copper wire

Gift of Donald L. Bryant, Jr. and Jerry Speyer, 2008

El Anatsui creates sculptures that allude to contemporary consumer habits and the history of colonialism in his adopted home of Nigeria. This shimmering, undulating sheet is composed of liquor-bottle tops and seals discarded by Nigerian distilleries. Anatsui and his assistants have flattened, folded and carefully linked the pieces together with copper wire, creating a repetition of forms on a grand scale.

For Anatsui, bottle tops represent ‘the material which was there at the beginning of the contact between two continents’. In the complex networks of exchange established between Africa and Europe as early as the fifteenth century, Europeans used alcohol to barter for African goods, and it eventually became a key commodity in the transatlantic slave trade.

For kids

Believe it or not, this magnificent, shimmering work of art is made from bottle caps. With the help of many workers, El Anatsui flattened, folded, crushed and crumpled the metal caps from drink bottles, and connected them using copper wire to create this beautiful metal sheet. El lives in Nigeria, a country in Africa that exports bottled drinks. Lots of bottles end up coming back to Africa, sometimes for reuse but often they are illegally dumped.

If you could make a work of art from items in your recycling bin, what would it look like?

Asymptote Architecture, New York
American est.1989

Hani Rashid
Canadian, born Egypt 1958

Lise Anne Couture
Canadian born 1959

Wing house, Helsinki, Finland
2011
paper, cardboard, acrylic, polystyrene

Committee on Architecture and Design Funds, 2015

Asymptote Architecture has been at the vanguard of integrating digital technology into architectural design since its founding in 1989. Featured as part of Rashid and Couture's 2008 Venice Architecture Biennale installation, the *Wing house* project is a mathematically modelled architectural form inspired by film and computer technologies. This unusual proposal for a house just outside Helsinki, which was never built, is structured as a sinuous double-bridge of carbon fibre encasing a wood interior, recalling designs for yachts.

Rashid and Couture have explored the possibilities of digital fabrication in the built environment in projects including a virtual trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange, a multimedia theatre in South Korea and a hotel in Abu Dhabi.

Aaron Koblin

American born 1982

Department of Design | Media Arts, University of California, Los Angeles

American est. 1994

Flight patterns

2005

colour video, silent, 55 sec

Gift of the designer, 2008

Flight patterns plots twenty-four hours' worth of aircraft data collected from the United States Federal Aviation Administration, illuminating each flight path with a streak of glowing light. The project was developed as an addition to Celestial Mechanics, a data visualisation project initiated by Aaron Koblin and Gabriel Dunn at the University of California, Los Angeles, that visualised the patterns of flying objects – satellites, aircraft, balloons – that hover around the Earth.

In *Flight patterns*, government-sourced data is deployed to great effect, transforming hard numbers into an aesthetically rich visualisation. As Koblin explains it, 'Through visual traces of airplanes, one gets at any moment a sense of the changing dynamics of traffic in the skies above, as well as insight into the geographies and superstructures guiding the network'.

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Turkish 1957–2007

Hotel Bristol

from the *H-fact: Hospitality/Hostility* series 2003–07

light box

Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2012

Solari di Udine, Udine

Italian est. 1948

Split flap board flight information display system

1996

painted steel and aluminium, Sicodur® coating and synthetic polymer paint

Gift of the A+D Circle, 2004

For kids

In the second half of the twentieth century, boards like this one could be found in many train stations and airports all over the world. They are used to display arrival and departure information for travellers. The board makes a whirring noise as the flaps displaying different letters, numbers and symbols flip over to show new information. Most of these boards have been replaced by faster and cheaper digital screens.

Stand in front of this board for a little while. You will see the names of different cities whizz by! Where would you like to go?

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Turkish 1957–2007

Hotel Estambul

from the *H-fact: Hospitality/Hostility* series

2003–07

light box

Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2012

Shigetaka Kurita et al.
Japanese born 1972

NTT DOCOMO, INC. Japan
manufacturer
Japanese est. 1992

Emoji
1998–99
digital image

Gift of NTT DOCOMO, INC., 2016

Emoji (*e* = picture, *moji* = character) introduce human body language into the deeply impersonal, abstract space of electronic communication. The original 176 emoji were designed on a simple 12 x 12 pixel grid for use on mobile phones and pagers. Drawing from sources as varied as manga, the Zapf Dingbats typeface and commonly used emoticons, Shigetaka Kurita's emoji facilitated the rise of text messaging and email.

Illustrations of weather phenomena, pictograms such as ♥, and a range of expressive faces were all part of the simple, elegant and incisive original emoji set that planted the seeds for an explosive new visual language. Today, with more than 2600 in use, emoji are evolving into an essential, global and increasingly complex companion to written language.

Roman Ondak

Slovak born 1966

Measuring the universe

2007

performance

Fund for the Twenty-First Century, 2009

Roman Ondak, *Measuring the universe*

Measuring the universe is an ephemeral installation that relies on audience participation. You are invited to have your height, first name and today's date recorded on the wall in black pen by a gallery attendant. As more visitors participate, what begins as a random spattering of markings becomes a dense band of ink tracing the perimeter of the installation.

By transforming the domestic custom of recording a child's height on a doorframe into a public event, artist Roman Ondak facilitates the creation of a dynamic environment that recognises both the individual and the collective. When you have your height recorded, you take part in a shared action and become a part of the universe Ondak seeks to record.

If you would like to participate, please enter and wait in the middle of the room for an NGV team member to measure your height.