

**Gertrude Abercrombie**

b. 1909; Austin, TX

d. 1977; Chicago, IL

*Out in the Country*, 1939

Oil on canvas

Private collection; courtesy Karma Gallery, New York

**Beatrice Wood**

b. 1893; San Francisco, CA

d. 1998; Ojai, CA

*Embracing Couple*, c. 1932

Lithograph

Gift of Francis Naumann 93.133

Clockwise from left:

**Margaret Bourke-White**

b. 1904; New York, NY

d. 1971; Stamford, CT

*Dam at Fort Peck, Montana*, 1936, printed c. 1970

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Sean Callahan 92.55

**Andreas Feininger**

b. 1906; Paris, France

d. 1999; New York, NY

*West Side Highway, New York*, 1940

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Feininger Family 2001.81

**Ilse Bing**

b. 1899; Frankfurt, Germany

d. 1998; New York, NY

*Dead End II (Smokestacks, Queensborough Bridge)*,  
1936

Gelatin silver print

Bequest of Ilse Bing Wolff 2001.381

**Isabel Bishop**

b. 1902; Cincinnati, OH

d. 1988; New York, NY

*Subway Scene*, 1957–58

Tempera, graphite pencil, and oil on composition board

Purchase and exchange 58.55

**Alexander Calder**

b. 1898; Lawnton, PA

d. 1976; New York, NY

*Calder's Circus, 1926–31*

Wire, wood, metal, cloth, yarn, paper, cardboard, leather, string, rubber tubing, corks, buttons, rhinestones, pipe cleaners, and bottle caps

Purchase with funds from a public fundraising campaign in May 1982. One half the funds were contributed by the Robert Wood Johnson Jr. Charitable Trust. Additional major donations were given by The Lauder Foundation; the Robert Lehman Foundation, Inc.; the Howard and Jean Lipman Foundation, Inc.; an anonymous donor; The T. M. Evans Foundation, Inc.; MacAndrews & Forbes Group, Incorporated; the DeWitt Wallace Fund, Inc.; Martin and Agneta Gruss; Anne Phillips; Mr. and Mrs. Laurance S. Rockefeller; the Simon Foundation, Inc.; Marylou Whitney; Bankers Trust Company; Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth N. Dayton; Joel and Anne Ehrenkranz; Irvin and Kenneth Feld; Flora Whitney Miller. More than 500 individuals from 26 states and abroad also contributed to the campaign. 83.36.1–72

This work was conserved with funds from the Whitney Conservation Fellows.

Discover *Calder's Circus* with actor Bill Irwin.

 730  730 Kids  730 Access


Carlos Vilardebó, director

*Calder's Circus (Le Cirque Calder)*, 1961

16mm film, color, sound; 28 min.

Featuring Alexander Calder and Louisa James Calder

Courtesy The Calder Foundation, New York

 731 Access

**Alexander Calder**

b. 1898; Lawnton, PA  
d. 1976; New York, NY

*Hanging Spider*, c. 1940  
Painted sheet metal and wire

Mrs. John B. Putnam Bequest 84.41

**Willem de Kooning**

b. 1904; Rotterdam, Netherlands  
d. 1997; East Hampton, NY

*Door to the River*, 1960  
Oil on linen

Purchase with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of  
American Art 60.63

**Charles Demuth**

b. 1883; Lancaster, PA  
d. 1935; Lancaster, PA

*Buildings, Lancaster*, 1930  
Oil and graphite pencil on composition board

Gift of an anonymous donor 58.63

**Marsden Hartley**

b. 1877; Lewiston, ME  
d. 1943; Ellsworth, ME

*Robin Hood Cove, Georgetown, Maine*, 1938  
Oil on cardboard

50th Anniversary Gift of Ione Walker in memory of her husband,  
Hudson D. Walker 87.63

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*Railroad Sunset*, 1929

Oil on canvas

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.1170

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*New York Interior*, c. 1921

Oil on canvas

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.1200

Artist and critic Brian O'Doherty discusses this work.



751



751 Kids

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*(Self-Portrait)*, 1925–30

Oil on canvas

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.1165

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*Soir Bleu*, 1914

Oil on canvas

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.1208

Explore *Soir Bleu* with art historian Rick Brettell.

 750

**Jasper Johns**

b. 1930; Augusta, GA

*Three Flags*, 1958

Encaustic on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Gilman Foundation, Inc., The Lauder Foundation, A. Alfred Taubman, Laura-Lee Whittier Woods, Howard Lipman, and Ed Downe in honor of the Museum's 50th Anniversary 80.32

Whitney chief curator Scott Rothkopf discusses *Three Flags*.

 791  791 Kids  791 Access

**Franz Kline**

b. 1910; Wilkes-Barre, PA

d. 1962; New York, NY

*Mahoning*, 1956

Oil and paper on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art 57.10

**Jacob Lawrence**

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

Clockwise around room:

*War Series: Prayer, 1947*

*War Series: Shipping Out, 1947*

*War Series: Another Patrol, 1946*

*War Series: Alert, 1947*

*War Series: Docking—Cigarette, Joe?, 1947*

*War Series: On Leave, 1947*

*War Series: The Letter, 1946*

*War Series: Beachhead, 1947*

*War Series: How Long?, 1947*

*War Series: Purple Hearts, 1947*

*War Series: Casualty—The Secretary of War Regrets, 1947*

*War Series: Going Home, 1947*

*War Series: Reported Missing, 1947*

*War Series: Victory, 1947*

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.6–51.10, 51.12a–b, 51.11, 51.13–51.19

Hear Lawrence talk about World War II.



770



770 Kids



770 Access

On platforms, clockwise from left:

**John Storrs**

b. 1885; Chicago, IL

d. 1956; Mer, France

*Forms in Space*, c. 1924

Aluminum, brass, copper, and wood on marble base

Gift of Charles Simon 77.58

*Forms in Space #1*, c. 1924

Marble

50th Anniversary Gift of Mr. and Mrs. B. H. Friedman in honor of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Flora Whitney Miller, and Flora Miller Biddle 84.37

*Composition around Two Voids*, c. 1934

Stainless steel

Gift of Monique Storrs Booz 65.34

**Man Ray**

b. 1890; Philadelphia, PA

d. 1976; Paris, France

*New York*, 1917 (re-created 1966)

Nickel-plated and painted bronze

Purchase with funds from the Modern Painting and Sculpture Committee  
96.174



**Alice Neel**

b. 1900; Merion Square, PA

d. 1984; New York, NY

*Elsie Rubin*, c. 1958

Oil on canvas board

Gift of Elaine Graham Weitzen 96.244

**Nick Mauss**

b. 1980; New York, NY

*Images in Mind*, 2018

Fifty-six panels with reverse glass painting, mirrored

Purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee, the Jack E. Chachkes Endowed Purchase Fund, and Jack Cayre 2019.42a–b

**Georgia O'Keeffe**

b. 1887; Sun Prairie, WI

d. 1986; Santa Fe, NM

*Summer Days*, 1936

Oil on canvas

Gift of Calvin Klein 94.171

**Georgia O'Keeffe**

b. 1887; Sun Prairie, WI

d. 1986; Santa Fe, NM

*Music, Pink and Blue No. 2*, 1918

Oil on canvas

Gift of Emily Fisher Landau in honor of Tom Armstrong 91.90

Hear about this painting from art historian  
Wanda M. Corn.



740



740 Kids



740 Access

**Georgia O'Keeffe**

b. 1887; Sun Prairie, WI

d. 1986; Santa Fe, NM

*The White Calico Flower*, 1931

Oil on canvas

Purchase 32.26

**Florine Stettheimer**

b. 1871; Rochester, NY

d. 1944; New York, NY

*New York/Liberty*, 1918–19

Oil on canvas

Bequest of William Kelly Simpson in memory of his father, Kenneth F. Simpson,  
member of the 76th Congress from New York City, and his mother, Helen-  
Louise Knickerbacker Porter Simpson 2017.190a–b

**Andy Warhol**

b. 1928; Pittsburgh, PA

d. 1987; New York, NY

*Elvis 2 Times*, 1963

Screenprint and aluminum paint on linen

Gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation, Inc., Leonard A. Lauder,  
President 2002.272

Listen to art historian Richard Meyer on this painting.



**Andrew Wyeth**

b. 1917; Chadds Ford, PA

d. 2009; Chadds Ford, PA

*Winter Fields*, 1942

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Benno C. Schmidt, in memory of Mr. Josiah Marvel, first  
owner of this picture 77.91

**Gaston Lachaise**

b. 1882; Paris, France

d. 1935; New York, NY

*Standing Woman, 1912–27*

Bronze

Purchase 36.91

**Jackson Pollock**

b. 1912; Cody, WY

d. 1956; East Hampton, NY

*Number 27, 1950, 1950*

Oil, enamel, and aluminum paint on canvas

Purchase 53.12

**Charles Henry Alston**

b. 1907; Charlotte, NC

d. 1977; New York, NY

*The Family*, 1955

Oil on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Artists and Students Assistance Fund 55.47

An influential painter, printmaker, sculptor, teacher, and activist, Charles Henry Alston was a central figure of the Harlem Renaissance. *The Family* is a portrait of four figures, rendered through bold blocks of color and defined by thin lines created with a palette knife. The family was a recurring theme for Alston; he described this painting in particular as “an attempt to express the security, stability and human fulfillment which the ideal family represents.” His artistic challenge, he explained, was “to find the painterly equivalents for these qualities, as well as tell the story”; he found the solution in “a compact, well-organized design with subtle harmonies and discords and a certain solid, monumental quality.” In 1963 Alston, along with artists including Emma Amos, Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis, and Hale Woodruff, would form Spiral, a group of African American artists committed to looking at the relationship between art and the civil rights movement.

 710 Kids

**Mary Ellen Bute**

b. 1906; Houston, TX

d. 1983; New York, NY

*Spook Sport*, 1939

16mm film transferred to video, color, sound; 8 min.

Purchase with funds from the Film, Video, and New Media Committee 2014.266

Mary Ellen Bute's short film *Spook Sport*—titled after the whimsical ghostly presences throughout—interweaves light, sound, and movement to mysterious and painterly effect. Originally a painter, Bute was a pioneer of American experimental film. She identified with the dominant concerns of the modernist avant-garde of that time: an eagerness to move toward abstraction, a desire to capture the frenetic pace of modern life, and an urge to represent movement and duration. In her early films such as this, Bute used a combination of low-tech techniques that create a smoke-and-mirrors effect as well as hand-drawn animation to craft what she described as “visual symphonies.” By blending sounds and visuals, this work is meant to conjure different states of awareness, both emotional and sensorial.



765 Access

**Elizabeth Catlett**

b. 1915; Washington, DC

d. 2012; Cuernavaca, Mexico

*Head*, 1947

Terracotta

Purchase with funds from the Jack E. Chachkes Purchase Fund, the Katherine Schmidt Shubert Purchase Fund, and the Wilfred P. and Rose J. Cohen Purchase Fund in memory of Cecil Joseph Weekes 2013.103

Elizabeth Catlett believed that making artworks about ordinary people was a political gesture. *Head* is part of her series of prints, paintings, and sculptures focusing on Black women. While training as an artist in New York, Catlett had learned to sculpt by vigorously pounding forms out of solid blocks of clay. Working later in Mexico, she began using Indigenous coil techniques, building up each piece layer by layer. This method allowed her to work more directly with the tactile qualities of terracotta, resulting in the elegant and sensuously modeled *Head*.

Hear former Whitney curator Dana Miller on this sculpture.



711

**Ed Clark**

b. 1926; New Orleans, LA

*Winter Bitch*, 1959

Acrylic on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee and partial gift of the artist 2019.307

To make this work, Ed Clark poured paint directly onto the canvas and wielded a wide housepainter's brush to create sweeping gestures. He applied tape to preserve spontaneous drips. The resulting image is a record of the bodily force and careful decision-making involved in the act of painting. An under-recognized but crucial voice in post-World War II abstraction, Clark created *Winter Bitch*—titled after a particularly miserable and impoverished season—shortly after a period studying in Paris under the GI Bill, which covers tuition costs for veterans. Like many Black artists of his generation, he looked to Europe to escape the racism he experienced in the United States.



**Joseph Cornell**

b. 1903; Nyack, NY

d. 1972; Flushing, NY

*Custodian—M. M.*, 1962

Assemblage of mirrors, glass, printed paper, and painted wood

Gift of Jean and Howard Lipman 97.113.2

Joseph Cornell's boxed assemblages resemble both intimate shrines and small dioramas—spaces for the celebration and examination of the unknown and the fantastical. Yet allusions to nature and the passage of time abound, and his constructions are permeated with a sense of loneliness, loss, and nostalgia. Informed by Surrealism's improbable combinations of imagery that evoke the unconscious, Cornell's works conjure an inner universe through the accumulation of associations. With references ranging from astronomical space to ancient myths and children's fairy tales, Cornell's intricate vignettes create a microcosmic realm, perhaps a retreat from daily modern life, or a search for connection to something beyond it.

**Allan D'Arcangelo**

b. 1930; Buffalo, NY

d. 1998; New York, NY

*Madonna and Child*, 1963

Acrylic and gesso on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 2013.2

Allan D'Arcangelo's portrait of First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy and her young daughter, Caroline, adopts the bold style of modern advertising, epitomized by the broad areas of bright, unmodulated color. The image relies upon the Kennedys' celebrity status: its sitters are recognizable merely by virtue of their signature hairstyles and clothing, as well as Jackie's string of pearls.

Made just months before President John F. Kennedy's assassination, this graphic approach to a religious theme is at once optimistic and disquieting. With their bright halos and featureless faces, Jackie and Caroline appear as contemporary icons and saviors—even as they are reduced to mute images for public consumption.

**Jay DeFeo**

b. 1929; Hanover, NH

d. 1989; Oakland, CA

*The Rose*, 1958–66

Oil with wood and mica on canvas

Gift of The Jay DeFeo Trust and purchase with funds from the Contemporary Painting and Sculpture Committee and the Judith Rothschild Foundation  
95.170

Jay DeFeo, who emerged as part of a vibrant community of artists, poets, and musicians active in San Francisco in the 1950s, worked on this monumental painting for nearly eight years. She later described *The Rose* as “a marriage between painting and sculpture.” Built almost entirely from thick layers of paint—supported in some cases by wooden dowels—the work weighs more than 1,500 pounds. DeFeo made it using a laborious process of building up, carving back, and repainting. Her original idea was simply to produce a painting that had a center. Over the ensuing years, she extended its length and width, and worked and reworked the painting stylistically. In the end, *The Rose* had to be removed from her second-story studio through a partially dismantled window using a forklift.

**Charles Demuth**

b. 1883; Lancaster, PA

d. 1935; Lancaster, PA

*My Egypt*, 1927

Oil, fabricated chalk, and graphite pencil on composition board

Purchase with funds from Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.172

*My Egypt* portrays the steel and concrete grain elevator of John W. Eshelman and Sons, an animal-feed manufacturer in Charles Demuth's hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Painted from a low vantage point, the structure looms over the smaller buildings depicted at the bottom of the painting.

In Demuth's image, the grain elevator rises up majestically as the pinnacle of American achievement—a modern-day equivalent to the monuments of ancient Egypt. A series of intersecting diagonal planes add both geometric dynamism and an otherworldly radiance to the composition, reflecting common contemporary associations between industry and religion. The pyramids' association with life after death might also have appealed to the artist, who was bedridden with diabetes at the time of the painting's execution.

Explore this work with Whitney director Adam D. Weinberg.



722



722 Kids

**Roy Lichtenstein**

b. 1923; New York, NY

d. 1997; New York, NY

*Little Big Painting*, 1965

Oil and acrylic on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art  
66.2

With its depiction of large, dripping brushstrokes, Roy Lichtenstein's *Little Big Painting* offers a wry commentary on the Abstract Expressionist paintings that dominated the New York art world in the 1940s and 1950s. Lichtenstein parodied his predecessors' signature bold brushstrokes, rendering them flat and stylized, even mimicking the drips of paint that would have resulted from the artists' sweeping, spontaneous gestures. While the Abstract Expressionists largely understood their work as standing in opposition to popular culture, Lichtenstein set his brushstrokes against a field of repeating Benday dots—a mechanical process for creating shades of color in commercial printing. Likewise, the thick black lines painted around bands of solid white, yellow, and red recall graphic devices used in comic strips.

Hear how Lichtenstein played with the visual language of abstraction.



On platform:

**Marisol**

b. 1930; Paris, France

d. 2016; New York, NY

*Women and Dog*, 1963–64

Wood, plaster, acrylic, and taxidermied dog head

Purchase with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art  
64.17a-i

Marisol developed a distinctive approach to sculpture that combined elements of Surrealism, Pop art, assemblage, and even folk art. Each of the four life-size blocky female figures in *Women and Dog* is a self-portrait of the artist, carved from wood and painted. One of the figures incorporates a black-and-white photograph of Marisol; the multiple faces on two of the others were cast in plaster directly from the artist herself; and the small figure is a representation of Marisol as a child. Each sports a fashionable outfit of the period, accessorized with found objects that include a real purse and hair bow. Although the work explores variations on the midcentury American woman of a certain class, Marisol, commenting on the work in 1964, claimed to have been “inspired by the dog.”

Hear the artist talk about this sculpture.



792



792 Kids

**Rosalyn Drexler**

b. 1926; Bronx, New York

*Marilyn Pursued by Death*, 1963

Acrylic and silver gelatin photograph on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 2016.16

Rosalyn Drexler's work often explores the dark backstories of postwar media culture and gender roles. She frequently clipped subjects from printed materials—here, a news photograph of Marilyn Monroe fleeing the paparazzi with her bodyguard in tow—enlarged and collaged them onto canvas, and then painted over the image. In the artist's words, her source images were “hidden but present, like a disturbing memory.” On the day this source photograph was taken in 1956, Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller were to announce their upcoming marriage; in the frenzy to cover the event, a car carrying reporters crashed, killing at least one member of the press.

**Elsie Driggs**

b. 1895; Hartford, CT

d. 1992; New York, NY

*Pittsburgh, 1927*

Oil on canvas

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.177

Elsie Driggs was inspired to make this painting by a childhood memory of Pittsburgh's steel mills. Returning to the site as an adult, she initially tried to capture the scene from inside the mill. The owners thought the factory floor was no place for a woman, though, and management worried that she might be a labor agitator or industrial spy.

She based the work on drawings she made from a hill above her boardinghouse, later writing that she stared at the mills and told herself: "This shouldn't be beautiful. But it is.' And it was all I had, so I drew it."

Hear about the childhood memories that inspired this painting.



721



721 Kids



721 Access



**Herbert W. Gleason**

b. 1855; Malden, MA

d. 1937; Boston, MA

*White Pond—Blue Flag along Shore*

*Partridge's Nest, near Brister's Spring*

From the portfolio *Walden, Life in the Woods*, 1908

Palladium prints

Gift of Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz 98.78.9, 98.78.7

Herbert W. Gleason was part of an early generation of professional photographers capturing the American landscape. These photographs were created to illustrate a 1908 reissue of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, originally published in 1854. The book details the years Thoreau spent living alone in a cabin on Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts. For the commission, Gleason created an exhaustive photographic archive of the area around the pond—revisiting the precise locales and times of day detailed in the book. The resulting photographs illustrate the sense of isolation and closeness with nature that Thoreau sought to convey in *Walden*. He wrote: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life."

**Horace Pippin**

b. 1888; West Chester, PA

d. 1946; West Chester, PA

*The Buffalo Hunt*, 1933

Oil on canvas

Purchase 41.27

In Horace Pippin's *The Buffalo Hunt*, a buffalo moves across a snowy landscape, encircled by dogs, while a hunter waits, perched behind a hill. Pippin likely never witnessed a buffalo hunt. To make this work he may have called upon his memories of trapping in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains as well as images from nineteenth-century engravings of the American West and other sources.

Pippin, an African American, served in World War I in the Third Battalion of the 369th Infantry, which was nicknamed the Harlem Hellfighters. The war, he later recounted, "brought out all the art in me"—but a severe shoulder wound he suffered then would limit the use of his right arm. Despite the injury, he continued to make art, and by the late 1920s began to work with oil paints. The artist started his career by showing his works in local stores in West Chester, Pennsylvania, but soon attracted the attention of collectors and museums.

On adjacent wall:

**Herbert W. Gleason**

b. 1855; Malden, MA

d. 1937; Boston, MA

*White Pond—Blue Flag along Shore*

*Partridge's Nest, near Brister's Spring*

From the portfolio *Walden, Life in the Woods*, 1908

Palladium prints

Gift of Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz 98.78.9, 98.78.7

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*Early Sunday Morning*, 1930

Oil on canvas

Purchase with funds from Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.426

Although Hopper described *Early Sunday Morning* as “almost a literal translation of Seventh Avenue,” the painting actually removes many of the street’s particulars, leaving it difficult to identify as the New York thoroughfare. The lettering in the signs is illegible, architectural ornament is loosely sketched, and human presence is merely suggested by the variously arranged curtains differentiating apartments. The long early morning shadows in the painting could never appear on Seventh Avenue, which runs north-south. Yet these very contrasts of light and shadow, coupled with the composition’s series of verticals and horizontals, create the charged, almost theatrical atmosphere of an empty street at the beginning of the day. This could be any Main Street in the country, and the uncanny sense of disquietude Hopper distilled here and in other paintings has come to be identified as part of the collective American psyche.

Learn more about this painting.



752



752 Kids



752 Access

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*Seven A.M.*, 1948

Oil on canvas

Purchase and exchange 50.8

*Seven A.M.* depicts an anonymous storefront cast in the oblique, eerie shadows and cool light of early morning. The store's shelves stand empty, and the few odd products displayed in the window provide no evidence of the store's function. A clock on the wall confirms the time given in the title, and indeed the painting seems to depict a specific moment and place. Yet a series of Hopper's preparatory sketches reveal that he experimented with significant compositional variations, depicting a figure in the second-story window. He even considered setting the painting at another time of day. Josephine Hopper described the store as a "blind pig," a front for some illicit operation, perhaps alluding to the painting's forbidding overtones.

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*A Woman in the Sun*, 1961

Oil on linen

50th Anniversary Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hackett in honor of Edith and Lloyd Goodrich 84.31

Josephine Nivison Hopper, Edward Hopper's wife, served as the model for the figure in *A Woman in the Sun*, as she did for many of the women depicted in his compositions. She was seventy-eight at the time this work was created; rather than adhere faithfully to realistic detail, Hopper depicted her according to his own internal vision and memory. Raking light floods the room, and the woman's naked body meets the sun's rays yet her expression is enigmatic. The voyeuristic scene invites the viewer to imagine a narrative.

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

Clockwise from left:

*(Three Studies of the Artist's Hands)*, 1943

Fabricated chalk, charcoal, and graphite pencil on paper

*(Self-Portrait and Hand Studies)*, c. 1900

Pen and ink and graphite pencil on paper

*(Two Self-Portraits and Two Studies of Hands)*, c. 1900

Pen and ink on paper

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.337, 70.1559.28, 70.1559.21

Although in later life Hopper drew and painted himself infrequently, he made numerous attempts at self-portraiture during his student days at the New York School of Art. In addition to drawing his face, he showed a sustained fascination with representing his hands. In this series of drawings, Hopper expresses a self-awareness of his chosen profession; in one he clearly holds a drawing instrument. The combination of head and hands together may allude to the relationship between manual dexterity and imagination that is at the heart of the painter's craft.

**Edward Hopper**

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*Artist's Ledger—Book I, 1913–63*

Pen and ink, graphite pencil, and colored pencil  
on paper

*Artist's Ledger—Book II, 1907–62*

Ledger book with pen and ink and graphite pencil  
on paper

*Artist's Ledger—Book III, 1924–67*

Pen and ink, graphite pencil, and colored pencil  
on paper

Gift of Lloyd Goodrich 96.208, 96.209, 96.210

After Hopper completed a work he intended to sell, such as a watercolor or print, he would make a small sketch of it for his records, documenting the compositions in precisely rendered configurations of bold strokes and intricate cross-hatching. The sketches, kept in ordinary ledger books from Woolworth's five-and-dime store, chronicle a lifetime of work. Josephine (Jo) Nivison Hopper, the artist's wife, added lively descriptions of each work, often imagining anecdotal details that Hopper—a man of few words—never discussed himself. The ledger books document the business and administration of Hopper's creative practice, as Jo Hopper logged the date of completion, description, sale price, and buyer for each work. The ledgers also include lists of exhibited works, references to articles and reviews, and details about trips and prizes, making them an invaluable resource for art historians and scholars.

**Henry Koerner**

b. 1915; Vienna, Austria

d. 1991; St. Polten, Austria

*Mirror of Life*, 1946

Oil on composition board

Purchase 48.2

*Mirror of Life*, like many of Henry Koerner's paintings, reveals the artist's preoccupation with his experiences during World War II. Born in Vienna to Jewish parents, Koerner escaped Austria following Hitler's 1938 invasion, fleeing first to Italy and subsequently to the United States. Soon after, he was drafted by the U.S. military and stationed in Europe, where he was assigned to sketch the proceedings of the Nuremberg trials, the military tribunals in which leaders of Nazi Germany were tried for war crimes. Koerner returned to Vienna in 1946 only to learn that his parents, who had stayed in Austria, had died in concentration camps during the war. *Mirror of Life* emerges from this context of conflict and loss. Disorienting juxtapositions—night and day, biblical events and present-day life, ordinary pastimes and bizarre phenomena—present a chaotic and disjunctive reflection of reality. The shirtless man leaning out of his window seems to be a stand-in for the artist. Home, for him, is not only the place where one resides but also a vantage point from which to witness all that has been lost.

Hear from the artist's son, Joseph Leo Koerner.





**Norman Lewis**

b. 1909; New York, NY

d. 1979; New York, NY

*American Totem*, 1960

Oil on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund in memory of Preston Robert and Joan Tisch, the Painting and Sculpture Committee, Director's Discretionary Fund, Adolph Gottlieb, by exchange, and Sami and Hala Mnaymneh 2018.141

*American Totem* is one of a series of black-and-white paintings that Norman Lewis made exploring the emotional and psychic impact of the civil rights movement. Lewis, one of the few Black artists associated with Abstract Expressionism, created a form that evokes the infamous hooded Klansman. But the monolith is composed of a multitude of smaller forms resembling apparitions, skulls, and masks. Lewis's work suggests that terror is both representable and abstract, conscious and unconscious, visible and hidden. The painting was made more than a decade after Lewis's first solo show at the Willard Gallery in New York in 1949, which had earned him considerable renown but neither the financial rewards nor exhibition opportunities of his peers.

**Joan Mitchell**

b. 1925; Chicago, IL

d. 1992; Paris, France

*Hemlock*, 1956

Oil on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art 58.20

In Joan Mitchell's *Hemlock*, strokes of dark color zigzag across a field of thickly applied white paint. The labored surface dissipates any reference to recognizable form or content; instead, the painting evokes emotion. The tension of simultaneously being drawn in and pulled apart is evident in much of Mitchell's work. Although its title suggests a tree or the fatal poison, Mitchell named *Hemlock* after a line of poetry in "Domination of Black," by Wallace Stevens (1916).

Discover the ideas behind this painting.



**George Morrison**

b. 1919; Chippewa City, MN

d. 2000; Grand Marais, MN

*The Antagonist*, 1956

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs. Helen Meredith Norcross 57.26

In *The Antagonist*, George Morrison depicts equal and opposing vertical forms—which he described as resembling chess pieces—locked in a battle for primacy. The painting is constructed like a mosaic, with irregular shapes compressed to create a formal tension that reverberates throughout the canvas.

Morrison, who identified himself as Chippewa (Ojibwe), was born in 1919 on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation near Chippewa City, Minnesota. He moved to New York in 1943 after receiving a scholarship to attend the Art Students League, and would go on to become a key figure in the Abstract Expressionist movement.

**Archibald John Motley, Jr.**

b. 1891; New Orleans, LA

d. 1981; Chicago, IL

*Gettin' Religion*, 1948

Oil on linen

Purchase Josephine N. Hopper Bequest, by exchange 2016.15

Archibald Motley was a leading painter of Chicago's Black community. By 1930, African American migrants from the South had dramatically transformed the neighborhoods on that city's South Side into a culturally thriving area. Its inhabitants became Motley's primary artistic inspiration, and in this night scene—almost hallucinatory in color—he captured the full spectrum of urban experience, including residents in the background voyeuristically regarding the bustling parade of life in front of them. Motley often made strategic use of visual stereotypes, such as those common to minstrel shows. He rendered the man standing on a platform emblazoned with "Jesus Saves," for example, with exaggerated red lips. With such caricatures, Motley may have been poking fun at the ecstatic forms of worship he associated with recent arrivals from the rural Deep South. This approach would have been readily understood by African Americans at the time and was meant to be both sardonic and affectionate.

American studies professor Davarian L. Baldwin discusses this painting.

 760  760 Access

From left:

**Andreas Feininger**

b. 1906; Paris, France

d. 1999; New York, NY

*Gathering Machine, Book Binding*, n.d.

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Feininger Family 2001.92

**Alice Neel**

b. 1900; Merion Square, PA

d. 1984; New York, NY

*Pat Whalen*, 1935

Oil, ink, and newspaper on canvas

Gift of Dr. Hartley Neel 81.12

Over the course of a career that stretched from the 1920s to the 1980s, Alice Neel painted portraits of hundreds of friends, family members, lovers, artists, art historians, writers, and political activists, believing that “people are the greatest and profoundest key to an era.” Neel was a longtime supporter of leftist causes. In *Pat Whalen*, she depicts the Communist activist and union organizer for the longshoremen of Baltimore along with a copy of the *Daily Worker*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party USA. With Whalen’s face creased with concern and his large, clenched fists at the ready to fight, Neel presents him as a paragon of social justice.

**Georgia O'Keeffe**

b. 1887; Sun Prairie, WI

d. 1986; Santa Fe, NM

*Flower Abstraction*, 1924

Oil on canvas

50th Anniversary Gift of Sandra Payson 85.47

*Flower Abstraction* is among the earliest of Georgia O'Keeffe's large-scale flower paintings, which she continued to produce through the 1950s. In these paintings, O'Keeffe harnessed the technique of close cropping that she had learned from modernist photography, especially the work of Paul Strand, with her own pictorial vocabulary of undulating forms and soft gradations of tone. In this way, she transformed her botanical subjects into compositions that oscillate between abstraction and representation. The magnified flower in *Flower Abstraction* seems to extend beyond its frames, as if without measurable boundaries. By utilizing a small, ordinary flower to suggest the immensity of nature, O'Keeffe sought to undermine her viewers' habitual ways of looking. As she remarked, "Paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it—I will make even busy New Yorkers take time to see what I see of flowers."

**Charles Sheeler**

b. 1883; Philadelphia, PA

d. 1965; Dobbs Ferry, NY

*River Rouge Plant*, 1932

Oil and pencil on canvas

Purchase 32.43

Charles Sheeler based this painting on photographs he had made of the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge complex in Dearborn, Michigan, five years earlier. An advertising agency had hired him to document the 2,000-acre plant, the first factory to manufacture a car—in this case the Model A—in its entirety, from the processing of raw materials to the finishing touches. The photograph that became the basis for this painting was typical of Sheeler's series in that it did not show any of the plant's thousands of workers. The radiant calm that pervades the painting belies how much had changed in the five years since Sheeler had visited the plant. By 1932, the depths of the Depression, brutal hostilities had broken out between the workers and management.

**Joseph Stella**

b. 1877; Muro Lucano, Italy

d. 1946; Queens, NY

*The Brooklyn Bridge: Variation on an Old Theme*, 1939

Oil on canvas

Purchase 42.15

For Joseph Stella and many of his contemporaries, the central icon of American cultural achievement was the Brooklyn Bridge, which had been completed in 1883. He first depicted it in 1918 and returned to it throughout his career. He saw the bridge in religious terms, as a “shrine containing all the efforts of the new civilization of *America*—the eloquent meeting point of all forces arising in a superb assertion of their powers, in *apotheosis*.” Fittingly, he depicted the bridge as a modern-day altar, its soaring cables and pointed Gothic arches emphasized by his palette of blues, reds, and blacks that alludes to light filtering through a stained-glass window.

Learn more from civil engineering professor Henry Petroski.



720



720 Kids



720 Access



On platforms, clockwise from left:

**John Storrs**

b. 1885; Chicago, IL

d. 1956; Mer, France

*Forms in Space*, c. 1924

Aluminum, brass, copper, and wood on marble base

Gift of Charles Simon 77.58

*Forms in Space #1*, c. 1924

Marble

50th Anniversary Gift of Mr. and Mrs. B. H. Friedman in honor of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Flora Whitney Miller, and Flora Miller Biddle 84.37

*Composition around Two Voids*, c. 1934

Stainless steel

Gift of Monique Storrs Booz 65.34

**Man Ray**

b. 1890; Philadelphia, PA

d. 1976; Paris, France

*New York*, 1917 (re-created 1966)

Nickel-plated and painted bronze

Purchase with funds from the Modern Painting and Sculpture Committee 96.174

At right:

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720



720 Kids



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**Tom Wesselmann**

b. 1931; Cincinnati, OH

d. 2004; New York, NY

*Still Life Number 36*, 1964

Found paper, oil, and acrylic on linen, four parts

Gift of the artist 69.151a–d

The enormous sandwich and pack of cigarettes in *Still Life Number 36* reflect Tom Wesselmann's nonhierarchical approach to subject matter and technique. He believed that anything could be art, including the ordinary consumer items that fill our pockets and kitchen cabinets. In 1962 Wesselmann began a series of large-scale still lifes that incorporated fragments of discarded commercial billboards, which he initially scavenged from trash cans but later procured in new, pristine condition directly from advertising agencies. The larger-than-life proportions of the objects in *Still Life Number 36* at first seem to celebrate the surfeit of commercial goods in America's postwar consumer culture. Yet the layers of collage and painted areas bring together incongruent depictions of reality, creating tensions in the composition that Wesselmann described as "reverberations."

**Hedda Sterne**

b. 1910; Bucharest, Romania

d. 2011; New York, NY

*New York, N.Y., 1955, 1955*

Airbrushed enamel and oil on canvas

Gift of an anonymous donor 56.20

Hedda Sterne's *New York, N.Y., 1955*, was inspired by the city's bridges. Elements resembling beams, girders, and trusses emerge from overlapping lines. Sterne used an airbrush to apply green, black, and red pigment onto the surface of the canvas. This "speedy way of working," she explained, best captured the constant motion of the urban landscape.

The founding collection of the Whitney Museum, selections from which are on display on this wall, reveals an openness to acquiring works that reflect the vast spectrum of American artmaking during the early twentieth-century. Pastoral scenes by Katherine Schmidt, Regionalist painting by John Steuart Curry, and expressionistic landscape by Yasuo Kuniyoshi offered views of the nation beyond the depictions of urban space and New York also represented in this display. Other works reveal European traditions but as interpreted through an American lens, such as the modernist abstraction of Stuart Davis or Precisionist adaptations of Surrealism by George Ault. Also emphasized here is the Museum's ongoing commitment to portraiture, not only of famous icons but of lesser-known individuals, a theme that continues in the entryway to the exhibition.

**Jean de Strelecki**

b. 1882; Poluwy, Poland

d. 1947; Baltimore, MD

*Portrait of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, 1919*

Gelatin silver print

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

**Cecil Beaton**

b. 1904; London, United Kingdom

d. 1980; Broad Chalke, United Kingdom

*Portrait of Juliana Force, c. 1931*

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 93.25

**William Winter**

b. 1899; Albany, NY

d. 1939; Glenville, NY

Selections from the portfolio *Camera Studies of the Whitney Museum of American Art*, c. 1933

Gelatin silver prints

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

The precursor to the Whitney Museum of American Art was the Whitney Studio Club, an exhibition space opened by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1918 in her sculpture studio at 8 West Eighth Street in Greenwich Village. Over the next decade, under the leadership of Juliana Force and with Mrs. Whitney's backing, the Studio Club expanded into neighboring townhouses, creating a social and professional hub for its artist-members.

In 1929, Mrs. Whitney approached the Metropolitan Museum of Art with an offer to donate the collection she had amassed through her patronage of the Studio Club. When the Met declined the donation, she set up her own institution, transforming the Studio Club into a museum focused exclusively on American art.

These "Camera Studies," commissioned by Juliana Force, document the Whitney Museum as it was arranged in 1933, two years after it opened. The early Museum showed hundreds of artworks at a time in regularly rotating group exhibitions in order to maximize the number of artists whose work could be displayed. Admission was free, and the galleries were designed to recall the intimate space of the Studio Club, with brightly colored walls and domestic furniture.

On platforms, clockwise from left:

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d. 1956; Mer, France

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Aluminum, brass, copper, and wood on marble base

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