

Robin Bruch

b. 1948; Cleveland, OH

Untitled, 1980

Acrylic on canvas

Gift of Laura and Rick Schragger in memory of Phillip Schragger 2018.10

Alvin Loving

b. 1935; Detroit, MI

d. 2005; New York, NY

Rational Irrationalism, 1969

Acrylic on shaped canvas

Purchase with funds from the Robert C. Scull Fund for Young Artists not in the Collection 69.74a–b

Loving discusses painting in a 1973 radio interview.

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David Novros

b. 1941; Los Angeles, CA

No title, 1969

Automotive paint on molded fiberglass and resin,
six parts

Purchase with funds from Philip Morris Incorporated 69.51a–f

Kay WalkingStick

b. 1935; Syracuse, NY

Gray Apron, 1974

Acrylic on canvas

Promised gift of the Gochman family and in honor of the Forge Project, traditional lands of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok P.2022.1

This work is part of a series of paintings based on aprons, an item familiar to both domestic and artistic spaces. Kay WalkingStick began work on these canvases in 1973, when at age thirty-eight she enrolled in a master's program at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and was able to make art outside her home for the first time. Here, this familiar protective covering is pinned by its strings to the points of a triangle above a paint-splattered expanse. The draped form suggests an absent body, while spatters of color allude to the process of producing an abstract composition. The result is a painting that references both the artist who made it and the act of its making. The hanging lines also resonated with the artist's surroundings: WalkingStick noted the form's similarity to the drooping suspension cables she observed driving over bridges during her daily commute from New Jersey. "The bridges were the best part of that drive," she explained. "I think they are the best sculpture in the city."

WalkingStick reflects on painting, feminism, and the American Indian Movement.

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Edna Andrade

b. 1917; Portsmouth, VA

d. 2008; Philadelphia, PA

Cool Wave, 1974

Acrylic on canvas

Gift of Luther W. Brady 2022.9

In Edna Andrade's *Cool Wave*, the interaction of seemingly simple components—shades of blue with thin white lines—creates the illusion of shifting, undulating movement across the painting's surface. Andrade had begun making abstract works over a decade earlier, at a time when many artists were stylistically grouped together under the category of Op art (short for optical art), a painting style known for producing ocular sensations such as vibration or afterimages. She focused her attention on how the brain processes visual information and was captivated by "how little it takes to upset the eye," but her interest went beyond the retinal. Influenced by the geometries and textures of quilting, basketry, weaving, and mosaic-tile patterns, she wanted to explore how seemingly simple combinations of color, shape, and line might create, and upset, perceptions of visual stasis.

Freddy Rodríguez

b. 1945; Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic

d. 2022; Queens, NY

Y me quedé sin nombre, 1974

Acrylic on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 2021.20

When Freddy Rodríguez began painting abstract compositions in 1970, he was compelled by what he called the “emotional side” of geometric art. He favored a sharp, precise painting technique because it offered a contrast to the tumult of a childhood lived under the regime of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina, a brutal dictator who ruled the Dominican Republic from 1934 until his assassination in 1961; Rodríguez immigrated to New York two years later, at age eighteen. To be a “geometric artist,” he explained, you “have to be really together, emotionally, physically, intellectually.”

Rodríguez often embedded cultural references into his works. The title *Y me quedé sin nombre* (*And I ran out of names*), for example, riffs on the modernist tradition of leaving abstractions untitled. The artist also frequently drew inspiration from Afro-Caribbean dance traditions. Here, the stacked shapes and variety of angled lines evoke the multisensory experience of Merengue and Bachata, dance forms of deep significance to the Dominican Republic’s cultural traditions that were often coopted as symbols of nationalist propaganda during Trujillo’s dictatorship.

Learn about movement within this painting.



Dorothea Rockburne

b. 1934; Verdun, Canada

Balance, 1985

Oil on linen

Gift of Mari and Peter Shaw 2020.150

Dorothea Rockburne referred to works like *Balance*, with its stacked linen supports and translucent application of paint, as “wickedly balanced,” a description that underscores the ingenuity of the composition. The artist painted it during a period in the 1980s when she was working on an ongoing redefinition of perspective, aiming to “invent and experience a different pictorial space.” The painting’s support as well as the colors applied to it reflect the work’s title: the red triangular shapes, for example, both depict and construct visual geometry. The results further Rockburne’s project to achieve, as she wrote, “a differently conceived use of perspective: *a painting that looked through its layers at itself.*”

In center of gallery:

Lynda Benglis

b. 1941; Lake Charles, LA

Contraband, 1969

Pigmented latex

Purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee and partial gift of John Cheim and Howard Read 2008.14

This work of poured latex takes painting to an extreme. Despite employing a medium that is not itself paint, Lynda Benglis nonetheless draws attention to paint's essential, primary properties: color and liquidity. To make *Contraband*, the artist created mixtures of powdered pigment and latex in five-gallon cans that she then poured and let run on the floor with minimal intervention. The resulting form directly occupies the viewer's space and, in doing so, rejects the notion that painting needs an armature. The work's title suggests the potential controversy of defying this convention, while also referencing the Contraband Bayou that runs through the artist's hometown.

Benglis purposefully allowed her material to flow uninterrupted, subject to physical laws and gravity, as an exploration of what she described as "the visualization of matter." Further inspired by images from NASA's late 1960s space explorations, *Contraband* reflects what the artist understood as a new tension between material physicality and "otherworldly viewing."

Benglis describes ordering five hundred pounds of liquid latex to make works like this one.



Judy Chicago

b. 1939; Chicago, IL

Trinity (Outdoor Version), 1965/2019

Polyurethane paint on stainless steel

Purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 2022.45a–c

When Judy Chicago initially made *Trinity* in 1965, she stretched canvas over plywood units to create its discrete forms. She then spray-painted the surfaces using a technique she had learned in an auto-body school. At that time, many of her fellow—mostly male—artists worked with industrial fabricators to produce Minimalist sculptures, and Chicago was determined to access methods of production typically unavailable to women. The work's title, which has Christian religious connotations, may humorously nod to the dogmatic fervor her contemporaries brought to their work.

Chicago became a leading figure of the feminist art movement in the 1970s. Rejecting the notion that she should “rearrange my life to suit my male partner,” she turned away from “rearrangeable” abstract sculpture during that time. Decades later, however, Chicago refabricated this tripartite sculpture in metal. This revisitation suggests a different kind of triad: the interrelationship of color, spatial patterning, and sites of display.

Alma Thomas

b. 1891; Columbus, GA

d. 1978; Washington, DC

Mars Dust, 1972

Acrylic on canvas

Purchase with funds from The Hament Corporation 72.58

Alma Thomas derived this abstract composition from observations of nature, both earthly and celestial. As the painting's title suggests, the artist used the dust storms that occur on the red planet as the inspiration for the all-over composition of *Mars Dust*. These whirlwinds of iron-rich soil, which can envelop Mars for weeks or months, were first observed at close range during several space missions in 1971 and 1972. Fascinated by television and newspaper reports of these unprecedented images, Thomas decided to render her own version. She used an elastic band to guide the size and spacing of each dappled red brushstroke. The cobalt blue underlayer, visible between strokes, creates a shimmering, otherworldly effect.

Hear how Thomas created this work.



Tishan Hsu

b. 1951; Boston, MA

Outer Banks of Memory, 1984

Acrylic, concrete, Styrofoam, oil, and enamel on wood

Purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 2021.105a–c

The surfaces of Tishan Hsu's sculptural painting *Outer Banks of Memory* both project out into space and recede into themselves. The artist built up some passages using Styrofoam and cement, while elsewhere he carved lines into the painted support. Hsu was attuned to how televisions and computers shared with painting the expectation that they could serve as windows into illusory worlds. The molded, curved shapes evoke human forms or landscapes; accumulated thin indentations in the surface conjure the static of analogue televisions; and the screenlike form near the artwork's center calls attention to these related themes. Instead of leading viewers into another imagined space, the work asserts its physicality. As Hsu explained, "I did not want a square image in the sense of the window of a canvas... I wanted these things to be objects on the wall."

Hear more about the title of this work.



From left:

Mary Ann Unger

b. 1945; New York, NY

d. 1998; New York, NY

Water Spout, 1980–81

Acrylic on birch plywood

Collection of the Mary Ann Unger Estate; courtesy Davidson Gallery, New York

Jane Kaufman

b. 1938; New York, NY

d. 2021; Andes, NY

Untitled, 1969

Acrylic on shaped canvas, two parts

Gift of the Larry Aldrich Foundation 71.17a–b