

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: Going Home, 1947

War Series: Reported Missing, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.17a-b, 51.18

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: Another Patrol, 1946

War Series: Shipping Out, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.8, 51.7

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: Alert, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.9a-b

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: The Letter, 1946

War Series: Docking – Cigarette, Joe?, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.11, 51.10

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: Beachhead, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.13

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: Purple Hearts, 1947

War Series: How Long?, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.15, 51.14

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: Casualty – The Secretary of War Regrets,
1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.16

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: Victory, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.19

Mabel Dwight

b. 1876; Cincinnati, OH

d. 1955; Sellersville, PA

The Survivor, Staten Island, 1929

Lithograph

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael H. Irving 78.85

Elizabeth Catlett

b. 1915; Washington, DC

d. 2012; Cuernavaca, Mexico

From left to right, top to bottom:

My reward has been bars between me and the rest of the land, 1947 (printed 1989)

I have special reservations . . ., 1946 (printed 1989)

. . . special houses . . ., 1946 (printed 1989)

. . . and a special fear for my loved ones, 1946 (printed 1989)

From the series *I am the Negro woman*, 1946–47 (re-titled *The Black Woman*, 1989)

Linoleum cut

Purchase with funds from the Print Committee 95.197, 95.200, 95.201, 95.202

Elizabeth Catlett

b. 1915; Washington, DC

d. 2012; Cuernavaca, Mexico

My right is a future of equality with other Americans, 1947 (printed 1989)

From the series *I am the Negro woman*, 1946–47 (re-titled *The Black Woman*, 1989)

Linoleum cut

Purchase with funds from the Print Committee 95.203

Elizabeth Catlett

b. 1915; Washington, DC

d. 2012; Cuernavaca, Mexico

Clockwise from left:

In Sojourner Truth I fought for the rights of women as well as Negroes, 1947 (printed 1989); re-titled In Sojourner Truth I fought for the rights of women as well as Blacks, 1989)

In Harriet Tubman I helped hundreds to freedom, 1946 (printed 1989)

In Phillis Wheatley I proved intellectual equality in the midst of slavery, 1946 (printed 1989)

From the series I am the Negro woman, 1946–47 (re-titled The Black Woman, 1989)

Linoleum cut

Purchase with funds from the Print Committee 95.195, 95.194, 95.196

Charles Sheeler

b. 1883; Philadelphia, PA

d. 1965; Dobbs Ferry, NY

Geranium, c. 1926

Oil on linen

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.343

Raphael Soyer

b. 1899; Borisoglebsk, Russia

d. 1987; New York, NY

Office Girls, 1936

Oil on canvas

Purchase 36.149

An astute observer of Depression-era New York, Raphael Soyer evoked the inner lives of anonymous city dwellers. His paintings frequently depict the new generation of female workers he encountered in his Union Square neighborhood. Leaving the home for secretarial and clerical jobs, these “office girls” achieved an independence that was unprecedented for women of the period, even while unemployment remained high among men. While his artist colleagues usually portrayed these young women in optimistic terms, Soyer’s composition strikes a more ambivalent tone. Squeezed between a throng of rushing female workers and a glowering man, the central woman looks out at the viewer with a gaze that is at once weary and unflinching.

Elizabeth Catlett

b. 1915; Washington, DC

d. 2012; Cuernavaca, Mexico

My role has been important in organizing the unorganized, 1947, printed 1989

I have studied in ever increasing numbers, 1947 (printed 1989)

From the series I am the Negro woman, 1946–47 (re-titled *The Black Woman*, 1989)

Linoleum cut

Purchase with funds from the Print Committee 95.198, 95.199

Elizabeth Catlett

b. 1915; Washington, DC

d. 2012; Cuernavaca, Mexico

My role has been important in organizing the unorganized, 1947, printed 1989

I have studied in ever increasing numbers, 1947 (printed 1989)

From the series I am the Negro woman, 1946–47 (re-titled *The Black Woman*, 1989)

Linoleum cut

Purchase with funds from the Print Committee 95.198, 95.199

Elizabeth Catlett

b. 1915; Washington, DC

d. 2012; Cuernavaca, Mexico

From left to right, top to bottom:

I have always worked hard in America, 1946 (printed 1989)

In the fields . . ., 1946 (printed 1989)

In other folks' home . . ., 1946 (printed 1989)

I have given the world my songs, 1947 (printed 1989)

From the series I am the Negro woman, 1946–47 (re-titled *The Black Woman*, 1989)

Linoleum cut

Purchase with funds from the Print Committee 95.190 95.191, 95.192, 95.193

James Castle

b. 1899; Garden Valley, ID

d. 1977; Boise, ID

Clockwise from left:

(Farm Scene with Road), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found board

Gift of an anonymous donor 2001.33

(Farmscape), c. 1910–77

(House and Shed), c. 1910–77

(House), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee and the Director's Discretionary Funds and partial gift of an anonymous donor T.2016.72, T.2016.54, T.2016.48

James Castle made drawings every day for nearly seventy years. Born in rural Idaho, he spent his childhood in remote Garden Valley and his adult years near Boise. He culled his subject matter from his surroundings, particularly the buildings on the three small farms where he lived over the years with his family. Castle drew the interiors of living rooms and bedrooms, and the exteriors of barns, sheds, and chicken houses, often combining elements recalled from memory with abstracted forms from the natural environment.

James Castle

b. 1899; Garden Valley, ID

d. 1977; Boise, ID

Above vitrine:

(Landscape with Forms), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found board

(Two Trees), c. 1910–77

Color wash on found paper

(Tree Forms in Landscape), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee and the Director's Discretionary Funds and partial gift of an anonymous donor T.2016.73a–b, T.2016.56, T.2016.58

Clockwise from top:

(Landscape with Culmнар Forms), c. 1910–77

Spit, soot, and color wash on found paper

(Shed with Milk Separator), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper

(Landscape with Sculptural Elements), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper

(Culmнар Forms in Landscape), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee and the Director's Discretionary Funds and partial gift of an anonymous donor T.2016.45, T.2016.51a–b, T.2016.49, T.2016.64a–b

Walker Evans

b. 1903; St. Louis, MO

d. 1975; New Haven, CT

Westchester, New York, Farmhouse, 1931, printed 1971

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Marcia Due and Jerry Thompson 2006.319

James Castle

b. 1899; Garden Valley, ID

d. 1977; Boise, ID

(Shed), c. 1910–77

(Interior with Stove), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee and the Director's Discretionary Funds and partial gift of an anonymous donor T.2016.53a–b, T.2016.46a–b

James Castle never learned to speak, sign, read, or write; largely unschooled and self-taught, he developed his own techniques for creating works of art. To make his black-and-white drawings, he combined saliva with soot from a wood-burning stove and used sharpened sticks to apply the mixture to his paper. For his color works, Castle ignored the traditional art supplies that supportive family members purchased for him and instead transferred pigments by soaking bits of colored paper in water and rubbing the wet pulp against the surface of his drawings. He frequently made use of both sides of papers he found around the house—flattened matchstick boxes, ice cream carton lids, envelopes, and even his nieces' old homework assignments. The resulting works provide insight into subjects ranging from twentieth-century rural Idaho and consumer culture to Castle's own highly inventive mind.

George C. Ault

b. 1891; Cleveland, OH

d. 1948; Woodstock, NY

The Artist at Work, 1946

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs. George Ault 73.38

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

 703 Kids

Alex Katz

b. 1927; Brooklyn, NY

Ada on Blue, 1959

Oil on composition board

Gift of the artist 97.44.2

Edward Steichen

b. 1879; Bivange, Luxembourg

d. 1973; West Redding, CT

Mr. and Mrs. Sandburg, Elmhurst, Illinois (Vanity Fair), 1923

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Richard and Jackie Hollander in memory of Ellyn Hollander 2012.236

Alice Neel

b. 1900; Merion Square, PA

d. 1984; New York, NY

Blanche Angel Pregnant, 1937

Pastel on paper

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee 87.53

Beauford Delaney

b. 1901; Knoxville, TN

d. 1979; Paris, France

Untitled, 1948

Oil on canvas

Gift of Lotte Falkenberg 93.151

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

Edward Hopper

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

Cape Cod Sunset, 1934

Oil on canvas

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.1166

Edward Hopper

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

Apartment Houses, East River, c. 1930

Oil on canvas

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.1211

Andreas Feininger

b. 1906; Paris, France
d. 1999; New York, NY

Tenement on Perry Street, New York, 1940
Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Feininger Family 2001.73

Helen Levitt

b. 1913; Brooklyn, NY
d. 2009; New York, NY

New York City, 1940
Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 97.98.9

Charles Sheeler

b. 1883; Philadelphia, PA
d. 1965; Dobbs Ferry, NY

*Living Room of New York Apartment of Louise and
Walter Arensberg (Southeast Corner), c. 1918*

*Living Room of New York Apartment of Louise and
Walter Arensberg (Section of South Wall), c. 1918*

Gelatin silver print

Gift of James Maroney and Suzanne Fredericks 80.30.1, 80.30.4

Hale Aspacio Woodruff

b. 1900; Cairo, IL

d. 1980; New York, NY

Coming Home, c. 1931–46 (printed 1996)

Linoleum cut with chine collé

Gift of E. Thomas Williams, Jr. and Auldlyn Higgins Williams 98.22.3

Ben Shahn

b. 1898; Kaunas, Lithuania

d. 1969; New York, NY

Squatter's Camp, Route No. 70, Arkansas, c. 1936

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2012.51

Henry Billings

b. 1901; Bronxville, NY

d. 1987; Sag Harbor, NY

Machines and Men, 1931

Lithograph

Purchase with funds from the Print Purchase Fund 79.61

Henry Billings

b. 1901; Bronxville, NY

d. 1987; Sag Harbor, NY

Machines and Men, 1931

Lithograph

Purchase with funds from the Print Purchase Fund 79.62

Henry Billings

b. 1901; Bronxville, NY
d. 1987; Sag Harbor, NY

Machines and Men, 1931
Lithograph

Purchase with funds from the Print Purchase Fund 79.64

Henry Billings

b. 1901; Bronxville, NY
d. 1987; Sag Harbor, NY

Machines and Men, 1931
Lithograph

Purchase with funds from the Print Purchase Fund 79.65

Jerome Liebling

b. 1924; New York, NY
d. 2011; Northampton, MA

Grain Worker, Minneapolis, MN, 1950
Gelatin silver print

Gift of Ronald B. and Susan N. Milch 2001.319.7

Andreas Feininger

b. 1906; Paris, France
d. 1999; New York, NY

U.S. Steel, Blooming Mill, 1944

Drop Forge, 1944

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Feininger Family 2001.98, 2001.93

Clockwise from left:

Dorothea Lange

b. 1895; Hoboken, NJ

d. 1965; San Francisco, CA

Howard Street, San Francisco, 1934

Gelatin silver print

Promised gift of Sondra Gilman Gonzalez-Falla and Celso Gonzalez-Falla to the Whitney Museum of American Art and The Gilman and Gonzalez-Falla Arts Foundation P.2014.85

Victoria Hutson Huntley

b. 1900; Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

d. 1971; Chatham, NJ

Kopper's Coke, 1932

Lithograph

Purchase 33.94

Kyra Markham

b. 1891; Chicago, IL

d. 1967; Port au Prince, Haiti

Lockout, 1937

Lithograph

Purchase 38.19

Isaac Soyer

b. 1907; Tambov, Russia

d. 1981; New York, NY

Employment Agency, 1937

Oil on canvas

Purchase 37.44

Charles Sheeler

b. 1883; Philadelphia, PA

d. 1965; Dobbs Ferry, NY

River Rouge Plant, 1932

Oil and graphite pencil on canvas

Purchase 32.43

**Wood Gaylor**

b. 1883; Stamford, CT

d. 1957; Glenwood Landing, NY

H. E. F. Auction, 1931

Oil and ink on paper

Gift of Howard and Jean Lipman 80.48.2

Between world wars, Wood Gaylor chronicled the activities of various artist-run groups in New York whose members exhibited together and planned elaborate parties. His community included prominent figures of American modernism, such as Marsden Hartley, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and Walt Kuhn. Here, artists and patrons attend an auction to raise money for the Hamilton Easter Field Art Foundation, which promoted emerging American artists. These annual events were typically held at Teutonia Hall, a gathering place for various heritage clubs. The podium is decorated with flags that signify the building's various occupants, including the Schuetzen Corps, the city's oldest traditional German shooting club. This symbolic meeting of cultures, with an American flag hanging near the German banner, would be unthinkable just years later at World War II's outset.

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 Edward 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 a New York City 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 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.

Roy Lichtenstein

b. 1923; New York, NY

d. 1997; New York, NY

Bathroom, 1961

Oil on canvas

Gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundatio, Inc., Leonard A. Lauder,
President 2002.253

In center of gallery:

Richmond Barthé

b. 1901; Bay St. Louis, MS

d. 1989; Pasadena, CA

African Dancer, 1933

Plaster

Purchase 33.53

Richmond Barthé studied sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago, where he was steeped in the classical sculptural tradition. In *African Dancer* he used that sculptural vocabulary to counter the racist stereotypes that still prevailed in early-twentieth-century depictions of African Americans. Like many participants in the Harlem Renaissance—including poet Langston Hughes—Barthé used his art to forge connections with his African heritage. This sculpture is most likely a reference to Hughes's *Danse Africaine*, published in 1926:

The low beating of the tom-toms,
The slow beating of the tom-toms,
Low . . . slow
Slow . . . low—
Stirs your blood.
Dance!
A night-veiled girl
Whirls softly into a
Circle of light.
Whirls softly . . . slowly,
Like a wisp of smoke around the fire—
And the tom-toms beat,
And the tom-toms beat,
And the low beating of the tom-toms
Stirs your blood.

Fairfield Porter

b. 1907; Winnetka, IL
d. 1975; Southampton, NY

Portrait of Ted Carey and Andy Warhol, 1960
Oil on linen

Gift of Andy Warhol 74.117

Margaret Bourke-White

b. 1904; New York, NY
d. 1971; Stamford, CT

Industrial Rayon Corporation. Painesville, Ohio, 1939
Gelatin silver print

Gift of the John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation 2012.40

John Steuart Curry

b. 1897; Dunavant, KS
d. 1946; Madison, WI

The Stockman, 1929
Oil on linen

Purchase 31.161

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

Andy Warhol

b. 1928; Pittsburgh, PA

d. 1987; New York, NY

\$199 Television, 1961

Acrylic and oil stick on canvas

Gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation Inc., Leonard A. Lauder,
President 2002.268

Andreas Feininger

b. 1906; Paris, France

d. 1999; New York, NY

House-Moving in Nyack, New York, 1954

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Feininger Family 2001.99

Jared French

b. 1905; Ossining, NY

d. 1988; Rome, Italy

State Park, 1946

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Donnelley Erdman 65.78

Ilse Bing

b. 1899; Frankfurt, Germany

d. 1998; New York, NY

Play of Sounds, American Flag, 1931

Gelatin silver print

Bequest of Ilse Bing Wolff 2001.396

Diane Arbus

b. 1923; New York, NY

d. 1971; New York, NY

Max Maxwell Landar, Uncle Sam, N.Y.C., 1961

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Jeffrey Fraenkel 2008.303

Jasper Johns

b. 1930; Augusta, GA

Flag Study, 1959

Watercolor and graphite on found paper

Purchase with funds from The American Contemporary Art Foundation Inc.,
Leonard A. Lauder, President 2016.163a-b

Abraham Walkowitz

b. 1878; Tyumen, Russia

d. 1965; New York, NY

Parade, 1910

Oil on paper

Gift of the artist in memory of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 66.85

Herman Trunk Jr.

b. 1899; New York, NY

d. 1963; New York, NY

Mount Vernon, 1932

Oil on canvas

Purchase 33.26

George Grosz

b. 1893; Berlin, Germany

d. 1959; Berlin, Germany

Waving the Flag, 1947–48

Watercolor on paper

Purchase and exchange 54.9

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

Hanging:

Ruth Asawa

b. 1926; Norwalk, CA

d. 2013; San Francisco, CA

Number 1 – 1955, 1954 (refabricated 1958)

Brass and steel wire

Gift of Howard Lipman 63.38

Agnes Pelton

b. 1881; Stuttgart, Germany

d. 1961; Cathedral City, CA

Untitled, 1931

Oil on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Modern Painting and Sculpture Committee
96.175

Barnett Newman

b. 1905; New York, NY

d. 1970; New York, NY

Day One, 1951–52

Oil on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art 67.18

Arthur Dove

b. 1880; Canandaigua, NY

d. 1946; Centerport, NY

Ferry Boat Wreck, 1931

Oil on canvas

Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 56.21

Jared French

b. 1905; Ossining, NY

d. 1988; Rome, Italy

State Park, 1946

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Donnelley Erdman 65.78

Roy Lichtenstein

b. 1923; New York, NY

d. 1997; New York, NY

Bathroom, 1961

Oil on canvas

Gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundatio, Inc., Leonard A. Lauder, President 2002.253

Andy Warhol

b. 1928; Pittsburgh, PA

d. 1987; New York, NY

\$199 Television, 1961

Acrylic and oil stick on canvas

Gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation Inc., Leonard A. Lauder,
President 2002.268

Joseph Stella

b. 1877; Muro Lucano, Italy

d. 1946; New York, NY

The Brooklyn Bridge: Variation on an Old Theme, 1939

Oil on canvas

Purchase 42.15

Clyfford Still

b. 1904; Grandin, ND

d. 1980; Baltimore, MD

Untitled, 1956

Oil on canvas

Gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation Inc., Leonard A. Lauder,
President 2002.265

Clockwise from left:

Edward Hopper

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

*Three Studies: Man with Eyes Closed and Two Heads
in Profile*, 1899–1906

Charcoal on paper

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.1508a–b

Alfred Stieglitz

b. 1864; Hoboken, NJ

d. 1946; New York, NY

Songs of the Sky B3, 1923

Gelatin silver print

Promised gift of Sondra Gilman Gonzalez-Falla and Celso Gonzalez-Falla
to the Whitney Museum of American Art and The Gilman and Gonzalez-Falla
Arts Foundation P.2014.105

Charles Burchfield

b. 1893; Ashtabula, OH

d. 1967; West Seneca, NY

Sunlight in Forest, 1916

Watercolor and graphite pencil on paper

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee 2002.331

Walker Evans

b. 1903; St. Louis, MO

d. 1975; New Haven, CT

Negro Church, 1936

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 97.68

Ellsworth Kelly

b. 1923; Newburgh, NY

d. 2015; Spencertown, NY

Red, White and Blue, 1961

Oil on linen

Gift of Betty Parsons 70.1582

Near windows:

Isamu Noguchi

b. 1904; Los Angeles, CA

d. 1988; New York, NY

Humpty Dumpty, 1946

Ribbon slate

Purchase 47.7a-e



Larry Rivers

b. 1923; Bronx, NY

d. 2002; Southampton, NY

Washington Crossing the Delaware, 1960

Oil and oil stick on linen

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Laurance S. Rockefeller 80.27

William Glackens

b. 1870; Philadelphia, PA

d. 1938; Westport, CT

Parade, Washington Square, 1912

Oil on canvas

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.215

Edward Hopper

b. 1882; Nyack, NY

d. 1967; New York, NY

Railroad Sunset, 1929

Oil on canvas

Josephine N. Hopper Bequest 70.1170

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



702



702 Kids

Clockwise from top left:

PaJaMa

active 1937–1955; Fire Island, NY, Provincetown, MA,
Nantucket, MA, and New York, NY

*Margaret French, George Tooker and Jared French,
Nantucket, c. 1946*

Chuck Howard and Ted Starkowski, c. 1953

Gelatin silver print

Promised gift of Jack Shear E.2017.0242, E.2017.0241

James Van Der Zee

b. 1886; Lenox, MA
d. 1983; Washington, DC

Atlantic City, 1930

Gelatin silver print

Gift of an anonymous donor 2001.43

James Castle

b. 1899; Garden Valley, ID

d. 1977; Boise, ID

(Brown and Black Wall Construction), c. 1910–77

Soot, spit, string, wax crayon, and corrugated cardboard

Gift of an anonymous donor 2001.34

(3 Figures), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper

(Studio), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper

(Studio), c. 1910–77

Soot and spit on found paper with string

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee and the Director's Discretionary Funds and partial gift of an anonymous donor T.2016.66a–b, T.2016.75a–b, T.2016.44

Many of James Castle's drawings feature constructions that he made primarily from paper, cardboard, and string, depicting people, animals, clothing, furniture, and even architectural elements. Creating temporary installations, Castle would hang or lean the assemblages against the walls of his workspace or arrange them into tableaux before incorporating them into his interior scenes.

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: On Leave, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.12a–b

Thomas Hart Benton

b. 1889; Neosho, MO

d. 1975; Kansas City, MO

Poker Night (from A Streetcar Named Desire), 1946

Tempera and oil on linen

Mrs. Percy Uris Bequest 85.49.2

Paul Cadmus

b. 1904; New York, NY

d. 1999; Weston, CT

Finistere, 1952

Tempera on paper mounted on cardboard

Gift of an anonymous donor 64.41

Andreas Feininger

b. 1906; Paris, France

d. 1999; New York, NY

House-Moving in Nyack, New York, 1954

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Feininger Family 2001.99

Thomas Hart Benton

b. 1889; Neosho, MO

d. 1975; Kansas City, MO

Poker Night (from A Streetcar Named Desire), 1946

Tempera and oil on linen

Mrs. Percy Uris Bequest 85.49.2

Jacob Lawrence

b. 1917; Atlantic City, NJ

d. 2000; Seattle, WA

War Series: Prayer, 1947

Tempera on composition board

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger 51.6

Jacob Lawrence's *War Series* describes firsthand the sense of regimentation, community, and displacement that the artist experienced during his service in the United States Coast Guard during World War II. Lawrence initially served in a racially segregated regiment where he was given the rank of steward's mate, the only one available to Black Americans at the time. He befriended a commander who shared his interest in art, however, and went on to serve in an integrated regiment as Coast Guard artist. Lawrence said that he wanted the *War Series* "to capture the essence of war" by "portraying the feeling and emotions that are felt by the individual, both fighter and civilian." Historically, paintings of war have most often emphasized the triumph of victory. But in these images, heroism cannot be separated from drudgery and suffering, and victory is not free from sorrow and loss.



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603 Kids

Louise Bourgeois

b. 1911; Paris, France

d. 2010; New York, NY

Quarantania, 1941

Painted wood

Gift of an anonymous donor 77.80

Soon after emigrating from Paris to New York in 1938, Louise Bourgeois made *Quarantania*, one of her earliest carved and painted sculptures. Comprising five rough-hewn, upright wood forms on a low base, *Quarantania* resembles a group of standing figures huddled together. Bourgeois's three-dimensional works from this period, which she called "Personages," offered her a way to reimagine people she had left behind in her native France; it is not incidental that she came from a family of five. Additional echoes from her past emerge: the five elements might also evoke sewing needles or weaving shuttles, tools used in her family's tapestry restoration trade. At the same time, the forms have a totemic quality that gives them a wider resonance, reflecting efforts by Bourgeois and her contemporaries to develop abstract, universal languages that would transcend time and national boundaries. The sculpture could also be read as a family portrait: by 1941, Bourgeois and her husband, Robert Goldwater, were the parents of three children.

John Steuart Curry

b. 1897; Dunavant, KS

d. 1946; Madison, WI

Baptism in Kansas, 1928

Oil on canvas

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.159

Baptism in Kansas recalls a scene that John Steuart Curry witnessed in 1915 in the devout religious community of his childhood: the local creeks were dried up, and the only suitable site for a full-submersion baptism was a water tank. A preacher and a young woman appear at center, poised dynamically at the moment when they will begin her immersion. In the rays of sunlight shining over them hover a raven and a dove—a biblical reference to the birds Noah released from the ark after the flood. When the painting was first exhibited in 1928 at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, critics hailed its assertive portrayal of rural American values, which marked a departure from the urban imagery and abstracted landscapes of contemporary American modernism. Curry's vision of an idealized American heartland signaled the emergence of Regionalism, the movement that would glorify grassroots rural values during the poverty-stricken years of the Great Depression.

Arshile Gorky

b. 1904; Khorgom, Armenia

d. 1948; Sherman, CT

The Artist and His Mother, 1926–c. 1936

Oil on canvas

Gift of Julien Levy for Maro and Natasha Gorky in memory of their father 50.17

Arshile Gorky based this portrait of himself and his mother on a photograph taken in his native Armenia in 1912, when he was eight years old. Three years later, during the Ottoman Turk campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Armenians, Gorky, his mother, and his younger sister all survived a death march. But his mother never recovered her health. She died in 1919 from starvation—one of the estimated one million to one and a half million victims of what is now widely held to be the Armenian genocide. The following year, at the age of fifteen, Gorky emigrated to the United States with his sister. As he established his career as an artist, he became preoccupied with the photograph. This painting, made over a span of ten years, does not attempt to reproduce the camera's image precisely but instead reduces it to broad areas of muted, softly brushed color. The masklike faces and undefined hands of the figures at once suggest their loss of physical connection and the difficulty of accessing memories over time.

Archibald 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 quarter. Its inhabitants became Motley's primary artistic inspiration, and in this night scene he captured the full spectrum of urban experiences, 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 contemporary African Americans and was meant to be both sardonic and affectionate.

Paul Cadmus

b. 1904; New York, NY

d. 1999; Weston, CT

The Bath, 1951

Tempera on composition board

Gift of an anonymous donor 64.40

Paul Cadmus's *The Bath* presents the daily ritual of washing as both an ordinary act and one suffused with erotic tension. In this careful depiction of a cramped bathroom, the artist contrasted mundane details—a hanger, rumpled towels, and dangling socks—with the figures of two young men whose naked bodies seem offered up for voyeuristic pleasure. Cadmus's meticulous style recalls the virtuoso realism of old master anatomical drawings. His chosen medium also has historical origins: Renaissance artists frequently used egg tempera, a fast-drying mixture of pigment, egg yolk, and water. One member of the artist's circle of openly gay and bisexual friends, Lincoln Kirstein, noted Cadmus's reference to the hushed intimacy of Renaissance baptismal images: "An old salvaged iron tub could serve as baptismal font," Kirstein wrote, "giving each morning a soapy start—a mild and modest resurrection."

Richard Correll

b. 1904; Springfield, MO

d. 1990; Oakland, CA

The Prisoner (Robert Wesley Wells), 1959

Lithograph

Gift of Leslie Correll 2014.252

Known for his depictions of social and political issues, Richard Correll portrays Wesley Robert Wells (1909–1976) in his prison cell. In 1928, at age nineteen, Wells was arrested in Los Angeles for property theft. Following a mounting series of conflicts with guards and other inmates, Wells's initially brief term was lengthened to life in prison. Wells came to national attention when his sentence was escalated to the death penalty in 1947 after he threw a spit bucket at a guard. The Civil Rights Congress—an organization that fought racial injustice—filed a suit on his behalf arguing that the prison's segregationist policies were discriminatory. Although the death sentence was eventually commuted, Wells remained in prison for two more decades, until just before his death. This portrait draws attention not only to Wells's story but to the intertwined histories of racism and incarceration in the United States. In the context of this installation, it is also a reminder that the place where one lives is not necessarily home.

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

This early example of Edward Hopper's interest in enigmatic indoor scenes offers an unconventional view of a woman sewing, suggesting the impersonal, yet strangely intimate, quality of modern urban life. We glimpse this private moment through a window, with the figure's turned face and exposed back heightening her anonymity and our awareness of her vulnerability. The woman's clothing and gesture are reminiscent of the iconic ballet dancers painted by French Impressionist Edgar Degas, whom Hopper singled out as the artist whose work he most admired.

 722

Henry Koerner

b. 1915; Vienna, Austria

d. 1991; St. Pölten, 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 the Second World War. Born in Vienna to Jewish parents, Koerner escaped Austria following Hitler's 1938 invasion, fleeing first to Italy and subsequently to America. Soon after, he was drafted by the United States military and stationed in Europe, where he was assigned to sketch the proceedings of the Nuremberg trials. Koerner returned to Vienna 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.

John Sloan

b. 1871; Lock Haven, PA


d. 1951; Hanover, NH

Backyards, Greenwich Village, 1914

Oil on canvas

Purchase 36.153

John Sloan devoted himself to creating art from what he observed on the streets of New York, finding “beauty in commonplace things and people.” He portrayed squalid tenements, colorful neighborhood characters, and bustling crowds—subjects deemed vulgar by the academic art establishment that he and the other Ashcan painters rejected. *Backyards, Greenwich Village* is based on the view from the window of Sloan’s working-class apartment on West Fourth Street. Today it is difficult to appreciate the radical character of his paintings since they often seem nostalgic by twenty-first-century standards. In his time, however, the everyday subject matter and loose, exuberant paint handling of Sloan’s works represented a forceful challenge to the power of the art establishment.

 720

Bill Traylor

b. 1854; Benton, AL

d. 1949; Montgomery, AL

Man in Blue House with Rooster, 1939–42

Opaque watercolor and graphite pencil on board

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee 95.176

To make his work, Bill Traylor scoured the streets of Montgomery, Alabama, for scraps of cast-off cardboard. Using the random smudges and stains to guide his compositions, he depicted scenes of animals interacting with human figures, passersby on the street, as well as his observations from life and memory. Traylor took up drawing in the late 1930s after moving to Montgomery from the Alabama plantation where he had been born into slavery. He was in his mid-eighties when he began to draw, and for the next four years he did little else. The artist's late-in-life outpouring of creativity resulted in more than 1,200 pictures.

Elizabeth Catlett

b. 1915; Washington, DC

d. 2012; Cuernavaca, Mexico

I am the Negro woman, 1946 (printed 1989), from the series *I am the Negro woman*, 1946–47 (re-titled *The Black Woman*, 1989)

Linoleum cut

Purchase with funds from the Print Committee 95.189

Elizabeth Catlett's *I am the Negro woman* series commemorates the courage, strength, and leadership of African American women. Created at the Taller de Gráfica Popular (People's Graphic Workshop) in Mexico City, the prints form a sequential narrative that honors anonymous Black women's labor—whether in the fields, in domestic settings, as educators, or as activists—alongside the achievements of the abolitionists Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth and the poet Phillis Wheatley. Catlett hoped her art would stimulate social change: “Art for me now must develop from a necessity within my people. It must answer a question, or wake somebody up or give a shove in the right direction—our liberation.”

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 a steel and concrete grain elevator belonging to John W. Eshelman and Sons in Charles Demuth's hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Painted from a low vantage point, the structure towers over the smaller buildings depicted at the bottom of the painting. In Demuth's image, the majestic grain elevator rises up 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 a heavenly radiance to the composition, reflecting widespread contemporary correlations between industry and religion. At the same time, 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.



752



752 Kids

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 twenty years later to capture the scene, she initially tried to paint it 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.

Today the painting may seem to warn of the dangers of industrial pollution, but Driggs did not have an oppositional agenda. She ended up basing 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."

Frank Stella

b. 1936; Malden, MA

Die Fahne hoch!, 1959

Enamel on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene M. Schwartz and purchase with funds from the John I. H. Baur Purchase Fund, the Charles and Anita Blatt Fund, Peter M. Brant, B. H. Friedman, the Gilman Foundation Inc., Susan Morse Hilles, The Lauder Foundation, Frances and Sydney Lewis, the Albert A. List Fund, Philip Morris Incorporated, Sandra Payson, Mr. and Mrs. Albrecht Saalfield, Mrs. Percy Uris, Warner Communications Inc., and the National Endowment for the Arts 75.22

Frank Stella used the tools of a housepainter to achieve the rigorous symmetry of *Die Fahne hoch!* There is little evidence of the artist's hand here; instead, each black band of enamel paint measures the width of a standard brush, and the thin spaces in between are simply the unprimed canvas. Stella's technique replaces the mystery of painting as a creative act with the fact of painting as labor.

Working in the wake of Abstract Expressionism, in which artists like Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko had privileged personal gesture and the primacy of the unconscious, Stella sought another direction. The artist famously declared: "What you see is what you see." Yet the title he chose—*Die Fahne hoch!*, a line from the Nazi Party's marching anthem that translates roughly to "hoist the flag"—seems to test his own claim. As this and other works in this gallery attest, labor is never free of history.

James B. Turnbull

b. 1909; St. Louis, MO

d. 1976; Croton on Hudson, NY

Birth of a Sharecropper, 1939

Transparent and opaque watercolor, and graphite pencil on paper

Purchase 43.16

James Turnbull, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, was one of the Midwestern Regionalist painters who portrayed agrarian life during the Great Depression. In the late 1930s, Turnbull created a series focused on sharecroppers, farmers who worked fields owned by wealthy landlords and received as payment a small portion of the harvest—creating a system of indebtedness that perpetuated some of the socioeconomic structures of slavery even after abolition. This watercolor depicts a group of sharecroppers as they assist with a child's birth taking place inside the tent. Although Turnbull foregrounded the collaborative efforts of these men and women, he also conveyed the anxiety resulting from the constant risk of eviction and displacement, common occurrences in the late 1930s, especially among groups as economically marginalized as the sharecroppers. The work's title, along with the makeshift living quarters and foreboding sky, suggests that the next generation may not escape this life of harsh labor and dire poverty.

Jay DeFeo

b. 1929; Hanover, NH

d. 1989; Oakland, CA

The Eyes, 1958

Graphite pencil on paper

Gift of the Lannan Foundation 96.242.3

In this drawing, Jay DeFeo's ambitious sense of scale, along with the numerous vertical striations and erasures across the disembodied eyes, makes this image of a familiar subject (inspired by a photograph of the artist) arresting and unexpected. *The Eyes* is one of several works in which she addressed the act of seeing. The drawing has a remarkable physical presence, while the eyes seem to look to what lies beyond human vision. DeFeo inscribed the back of this drawing with a stanza from a poem by Philip Lamantia, a fellow member of San Francisco's Beat community: "Tell him I have eyes only for Heaven as I look to you Queen Mirror of the Heavenly Court."

Morris Louis

b. 1912; Baltimore, MD

d. 1962; Washington, DC

Tet, 1958

Acrylic on canvas

Purchase with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art 65.9

In the early 1950s, Morris Louis started pouring paint directly onto unprimed canvas. This staining method—one he had learned from fellow artist Helen Frankenthaler—permitted the paint to be guided less by hand or brush than by gravity, and resulted in integrated and luminous surfaces. *Tet* is part of a series of paintings called the *Veils*, which Louis began in 1954 and returned to later in the decade. In 1959 a reviewer wrote that “Louis translates the chromatic calculations of Rothko into something that might be called chromatic mysticism.” Louis did not name the painting; the title *Tet* was assigned after the artist’s death and refers to the ninth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

 710

Daniel Chester French

b. 1850; Exeter, NH

d. 1931; Stockbridge, MA

Standing Lincoln, 1912

Bronze

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.25

Standing Lincoln is a model for the nine-foot-tall memorial sculpture that Daniel Chester French created for the grounds of the State Capitol in Lincoln, Nebraska. With funds provided by the state legislature, the Lincoln Centennial Memorial Association commissioned the statue on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the sixteenth U.S. president's birthday. French's sculpture depicts Lincoln (1809–1865) delivering the Gettysburg Address; in that speech, made during the Civil War, he rallied for continued resolve in the Union battle for national unity and the abolition of slavery. French explained that he “purposely tried to represent Lincoln bearing the burdens and perplexities and problems of the Great War.” The success of *Standing Lincoln* led to French's subsequent commission for the monumental sculpture in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, which was completed in 1922.

Wood Gaylor

b. 1883; Stamford, CT

d. 1957; Glenwood Landing, NY

H. E. F. Auction, 1931

Oil and ink on paper

Gift of Howard and Jean Lipman 80.48.2

Between world wars, Wood Gaylor chronicled the activities of various artist-run groups in New York whose members exhibited together and planned elaborate parties. His community included prominent figures of American modernism, such as Marsden Hartley, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and Walt Kuhn. Here, artists and patrons attend an auction to raise money for the Hamilton Easter Field Art Foundation, which promoted emerging American artists. These annual events were typically held at Teutonia Hall, a gathering place for various heritage clubs. The podium is decorated with flags that signify the building's various occupants, including the Schuetzen Corps, the city's oldest traditional German shooting club. This symbolic meeting of cultures, with an American flag hanging near the German banner, would be unthinkable just years later at World War II's outset.

Marsden Hartley

b. 1877; Lewiston, ME

d. 1943; Ellsworth, ME

Painting, Number 5, 1914–15

Oil on linen

Gift of an anonymous donor 58.65

Marsden Hartley began this work before the First World War, during an extended stay in Berlin, where he was captivated by the city's vitality and the military pageantry of imperial Germany. The painting is a memorial to Karl von Freyburg, a young German officer whom Hartley loved and who was killed in battle soon after the war began. Combining the fragmented forms of Cubism with German Expressionism's brilliant colors, Hartley broke apart and rearranged motifs derived from German flags and such military regalia as epaulets, brass buttons, and an Iron Cross medal (awarded for bravery), as well as a chessboard recalling von Freyburg's favorite game. The result is both an energetic abstraction and a veiled memorial to the artist's experience of love and tragic loss.

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

In 1954, Jasper Johns began painting what would become one of his signature emblems: the American flag. Johns realized that the flag—as an iconic image comparable to the targets, maps, and letters that he also has depicted—was generally “seen and not looked at, not examined.” The execution and composition of *Three Flags* encourage close inspection. Johns painted it using encaustic, a mixture of pigment suspended in warm wax that congeals as each stroke is applied; the discrete marks that result create a sensuous, almost sculptural surface. The work's structure adds to its complexity. The trio of flags, each successively diminishing in scale by about twenty-five percent, projects outward—contradicting classical perspective, in which objects appear to recede from the viewer's vantage point. Through shifting the emphasis from the flag's symbolic meaning to the patterns, textures, and structure of the composition, Johns explored the boundary between abstraction and representation.

Bernarda Bryson Shahn

b. 1903; Athens, OH

d. 2004; Roosevelt, NJ

30,000,000 Immigrants, 1935–36, from the series

The Vanishing American Frontier

Lithograph

Gift of Jake Milgram Wien in honor of the 95th birthday of Bernarda Bryson Shahn 98.97.4

Bernarda Bryson Shahn's *30,000,000 Immigrants* depicts recent arrivals to the United States. They are being ferried to Manhattan from Ellis Island, America's busiest port of entry in the early twentieth century. The majority of the figures look straight ahead, but one man looks back—past the immigration inspection station and the Statue of Liberty—in the direction of the home that he has left behind.

Although some politicians advocated closing America's borders while the country recovered from the economic devastation of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt encouraged immigration from Europe and enacted legislation to assist newcomers. Bryson Shahn created *30,000,000 Immigrants* directly in support of Roosevelt's welcoming stance. The figure in the title may refer to the number of European immigrants who arrived in the United States during the Age of Mass Migration, between 1850 and 1913.

Joseph Pennell

b. 1857; Philadelphia, PA

d. 1926; New York, NY

Hail America, 1908

Etching and mezzotint

Gift of Fern and Hersh Cohen 97.118

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b. 1903; Athens, OH

d. 2004; Roosevelt, NJ

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Minnie Evans

b. 1892; Long Creek, NC

d. 1987; Wilmington, NC

My Very First, 1935

My Second, 1935

Pen and ink on paper

Gift of Dorothea M. and Isadore Silverman 75.8.1, 75.8.2

Minnie Evans created *My Very First* on Good Friday, the day on which Christians commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, in 1935. Evans, who was then forty-three years old and employed as a domestic service worker in North Carolina, said that a spiritual force compelled her to begin drawing: “I had a dream,” she recalled; “its voice spoke to me, ‘Why don’t you draw or die?’” *My Very First* offers a visual response to this existential question, with a dense weave of circles, lines, and spirals that evokes the most elemental life-forms and announces Evans’s intention to devote herself to making art. *My Second*, produced the next day, includes animal forms and pictographic figures in a boat, hinting at the subjects—including biblical imagery, plants, and fantastical beasts—that Evans would pursue in the decades to come.

Palmer Hayden

b. 1890; Widewater, VA

d. 1973; New York, NY

Spirituals (Dreams), c. 1935

Watercolor and graphite pencil on paper

Purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee 2015.270a–b

James Van Der Zee

b. 1886; Lenox, MA

d. 1983; Washington, DC

Cousin Susan Porter, 1915

Gelatin silver prints

Gift of an anonymous donor 2001.40

James Van Der Zee's photographs chronicle the rise of Harlem as an epicenter of Black life in America. In 1916, Van Der Zee opened a studio on West 135th Street, and for decades to come he would portray prominent figures of the Harlem Renaissance as well as ordinary families and community groups. *Cousin Susan Porter*, an early work, depicts the photographer's relative in her home on West 134th Street. The particulars of the scene—the graceful interior, the subject's lace gown and studious absorption in her book—suggest Van Der Zee's desire to show images of Black middle-class well-being as a way to counter the era's prevailing negative stereotypes of African Americans.

Gordon Parks

b. 1912; Fort Scott, KS

d. 2006; New York, NY

Untitled, 1950

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2006.26