

# WHITNEY

## Acquisition Highlights of 2015



Richard Artschwager (1923–2013), *Six in Four – E4*, 2012–15. Stainless steel and powder-coated metal. From *Six in Four*, 2012–15. Series of four elevators, materials and dimensions variable. Commissioned by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York 2015.159.1–4. © 2015 Estate of Richard Artschwager. Photograph by Ronald Amstutz

Four elevators designed by Richard Artschwager bring visitors into contact with art as soon as they enter the Whitney. Each is an immersive installation featuring one or more of the six subjects that occupied Artschwager's imagination for decades: door, window, table, basket, mirror, and rug. Titled *Six in Four*, the elevators are the artist's last major work, and the only permanent commission in the new building. After the museum closes, the elevators are "parked" on the first floor in the Kenneth C. Griffin Hall with doors open, fully visible from the street.



Alexander Calder (1898–1976), *Constellation*, c.1950. Painted steel rods and painted wood, 41 × 28 × 11 11/16 in. (104.1 × 71.1 × 29.7 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; partial and promised gift of Beverly and Peter Lipman 2015.148. © 2016 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

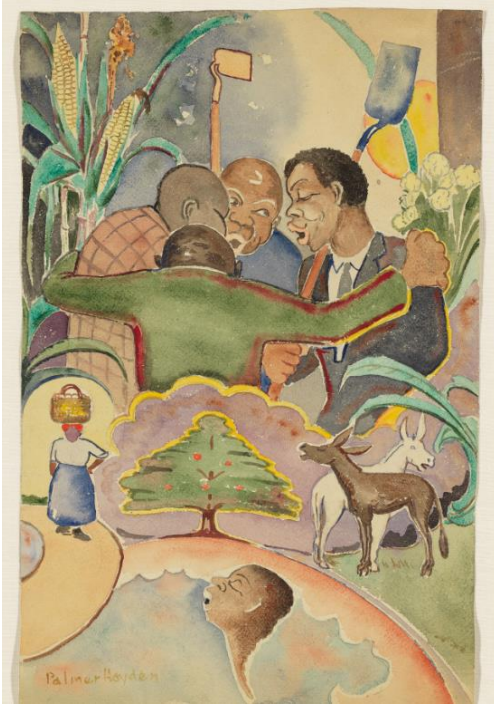
Across the course of more than six decades, Alexander Calder worked with materials ranging from thin pieces of wire to sheets of bolted steel, and experimented with scales ranging from wearable jewelry to monumental outdoor sculpture. Limited metal supplies during World War II inspired Calder to experiment with combining handcarved wooden elements and thin steel rods. Calder called these delicate sculptures “Constellations,” evoking his lifelong interest in astronomy. Some of the Constellations are arranged in tabletop configurations while others, like this one, project from the wall. The combination of carved forms does not correspond to any celestial body; instead, the artist used a Surrealist-inspired vocabulary of biomorphic shapes, paint, and wire to create his own abstract cosmos.



Nicole Eisenman (b. 1965), *Achilles Heel*, 2014. Oil on canvas, 82 x 65 ¼ in. (208.3 x 165.7 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Andrew and Christine Hall 2015.55. © Nicole Eisenman. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Nicole Eisenman moved to Brooklyn soon after graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1987. Since coming to prominence in the early 1990s for bold, sexually charged images with feminist themes and abundant references to art history and pop culture, she has remained central to the discourse that has developed around queer and feminist practices.

Eisenman set *Achilles Heel* in a Greenpoint, Brooklyn bar of the same name. A bartender pours beer while patrons mold and poke a clay-like substance that flows mysteriously from the bar's tap handles. The clay refers to a series of sculptures Eisenman made prior to this painting, and the shared molding of this substance echoes the social space of the bar, which has served as a place for Eisenman to debate, discuss, and develop ideas with fellow friends and artists.



Palmer Hayden (1890–1973), detail of *Spirituals (Dreams)*, c. 1935 (recto). Watercolor and graphite on paper (recto); graphite on paper (verso), 14 11/16 x 9 1/2 in. (37.3 x 24.1 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee 2015.270a-b. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Palmer Hayden, born Peyton Cole Hedgeman, began his career at the height of the Harlem Renaissance and first gained critical attention in the mid-1920s for his painted seascapes. While living and working in Paris at the end of that decade, the artist befriended other African American émigrés including writer Alain Locke and painters Henry Ossawa Tanner and Hale Woodruff. By the early 1930s Hayden had returned to New York, where he started to depict scenes of everyday African American life in his adopted hometown as well as his childhood memories of the American south. *Spiritual (Dreams)*, a watercolor composed of flattened figures and soft, muted tones, is derived in part from the artist's recollections of his youth in Virginia, as well as religious themes rooted in oral tradition.



Barkley L. Hendricks (b. 1945), *Steve*, 1976. Oil, acrylic, and Magna on linen canvas, 72 x 48 in. (182.9 x 121.9 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase and gift with funds from the Arthur M. Bullowa Bequest by exchange, the Jack E. Chachkes Endowed Purchase Fund, and the Wilfred P. and Rose J. Cohen Purchase Fund 2015.101. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY

Philadelphia-born painter and photographer Barkley L. Hendricks began making full-size portraits of his friends and neighbors in the late 1960s. *Steve* depicts a young man he met on the street in a striking pose at once commanding and detached. Sharply dressed in a white belted jacket and white pants, the figure seems to emerge from a flat white ground. *Steve* is the first of several portraits in which Hendricks uses what he has described as a “limited palette” to purposefully contrast with the complexity of an individual sitter’s personality. Within the reflection of Steve’s sunglasses the viewer can discern the stained glass windows of Hendricks’s studio and the artist’s face, making this work a double portrait.





Joan Jonas (b. 1936), *The Shape, The Scent, The Feel of Things*, 2004. Five-channel video, color, sound, 74:15 min., with sculptural elements. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Jessica E. Smith and Kevin R. Brine to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and Dia Art Foundation, New York 2015.199. © Joan Jonas. Installation view, Fondazione HangarBicocca, Milan. Image courtesy Fondazione HangarBicocca, Milan. Photograph by Agostino Osio

Joan Jonas's five-channel video installation, *The Shape, The Scent, The Feel of Things*, a joint acquisition with Dia Art Foundation, New York, includes projections of filmed performance, spoken word, props, and sculptures. The work's origins date to the 1960s, when Jonas, a pioneer of video and performance art, witnessed Hopi rituals during a formative trip to the American Southwest. Years later, after reading a text on the region by the German art historian Aby Warburg (1866-1929), Jonas revisited Arizona to consider, as she has explained, "memories of the American landscape," particularly those "from before the Europeans came here." The artist interweaves a staging of Warburg's famous account of ancient Hopi snake dances with images of the landscape, among other filmed components.

Jonas first exhibited *The Shape, The Scent, The Feel of Things* at the Renaissance Society in Chicago and Galerie Yvon Lambert in Paris in 2004. She incorporated live performances with music composed by jazz musician Jason Moran for events at Dia: Beacon in 2005 and 2006. Jonas subsequently integrated footage from these performances into the multimedia installation, underscoring her ongoing exploration into re-presenting earlier works in new ways.



Louise Lawler (b. 1947), *Does Marilyn Monroe Make You Cry?*, 1988. Silver dye bleach print with plexiglass wall label: photograph, 27 5/8 x 39 1/4 in. (70.2 x 99.7 cm); label, 4 1/8 x 6 1/16 in. (10.5 x 15.4 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; promised gift of Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond J. Learsy P.2015.2a-b. © Louise Lawler. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Louise Lawler has used photography since the early 1980s to examine the conditions under which art is seen and the networks through which it is circulated, displayed, and sold. Her photographs have captured items such as wall labels, packing and shipping materials, and exhibition vitrines—ancillary elements, usually unremarked upon or unseen, that nonetheless affect an artwork's reception and meaning.

A 1988 auction of art from the collection of Burton and Emily Tremaine included Andy Warhol's 1962 painting *Round Marilyn*. Lawler's artwork includes two parts. A photograph taken during a preview of the sale features Warhol's painting at full scale next to the auction house label. The second element is her own label, which is placed adjacent to her photograph. Instead of providing information about Warhol's painting or her own image of it, Lawler's label asks, "Does Marilyn Monroe Make You Cry?" The juxtaposition of the sale estimates and an emotional prompt uncovers the various, often conflicting, interests that underpin the circulation of contemporary art.



Chiura Obata (1885–1975), *Evening Glow at Mono Lake, from Mono Mills*, (1930) from the portfolio *World Landscape Series “America”*, 1928–30. Woodblock print, 17 15/16 × 13 1/8 in. (45.6 × 33.3 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Print Committee 2015.26. © Gyo Obata

As a young artist in Tokyo, Chiura Obata studied Japanese sumi ink-and-brush painting, a technique he continued to use throughout his life, even after immigrating to the United States in 1903. In the summer of 1927 Obata spent six weeks hiking and camping in Yosemite and the High Sierras, producing roughly one hundred landscapes in pencil, watercolor, and sumi ink.

*Evening Glow at Mono Lake, from Mono Mills* is from the *World Landscape Series “America”*, a portfolio of thirty-five woodblock prints, most made after his watercolors from Yosemite. Obata made the prints in Japan at the Takamizawa Print Works over the course of an eighteen-month period beginning in 1928. Each image required between 120 and 205 progressive proofs, resulting in an astonishing level of detail in which the hairs from individual brushstrokes are faithfully captured. The prints represent the deep impact the distinctly American landscape had on Obata, as filtered through his unique synthesis of Eastern and Western traditions and techniques.





Frank Stella (b. 1936), *The Fountain*, 1992. Woodcut, etching, aquatint, relief, drypoint, collage and airbrush, 91 × 291 in. (231.1 × 739.1 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Marabeth Cohen-Tyler and Kenneth Tyler 2015.97a-c. © 2016 Frank Stella/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

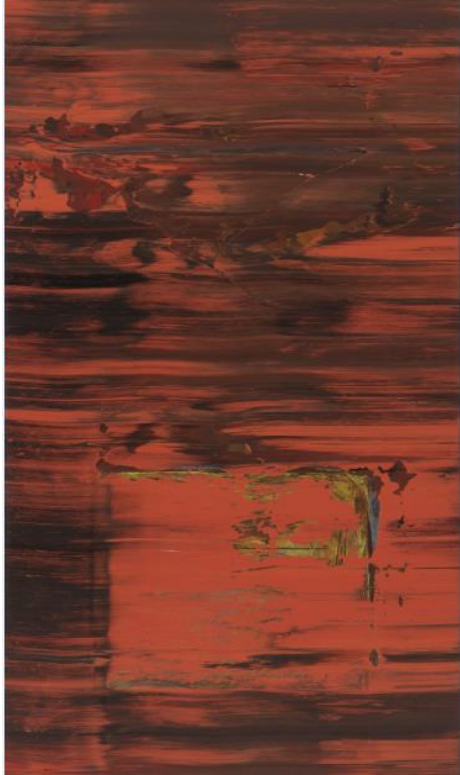
*The Fountain* is an extraordinary work, a print executed at mural scale. Frank Stella mapped out the composition for *The Fountain* in collage, then worked with master printer Ken Tyler to translate it into a sixty-seven-color print. Working on three mammoth sheets of handmade Japanese paper, they used woodcuts for the black sections and metal plates for the colors, and ultimately collaged additional screenprinted sheets onto the surface. The work comes from Stella's *Moby-Dick* series; it is named after a chapter of Herman Melville's 1851 novel that describes the sperm whale's majesty. The chapter begins with a conundrum: that no one, after thousands of years of whale hunting, knew if the whale spouted water or pure vapor. In Stella's print, abstract forms suggest movement, mass, and mystery.



Stan VanDerBeek (1927–1984), *Photomontage of stills from "Facescapes"*, 1965. Photomontage of gelatin silver prints and magazine photographs mounted on paper and cardboard, 11 5/8 x 17 1/2 in. (29.5 x 44.5 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee, the Film, Video, and New Media Committee, the Photography Committee, Gregg G. Seibert, and Craig F. Starr 2015.70. © Estate of Stan VanDerBeek. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

From the 1950s until the early 1980s, experimental filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek explored the relationship between art, technology, and mass media. Although celebrated for innovative non-narrative films and expanded cinema environments, the paintings and collages VanDerBeek made to compose his humorous and absurdist animated films from the 1950s and 1960s are significantly less well known.

In *Photomontage of stills from "Facescapes"*, VanDerBeek combined gelatin silver prints and clippings from magazine reproductions to create his 1964-65 stop-motion film *Facescapes*. In addition to this collage, the Whitney recently acquired thirteen other works on paper by VanDerBeek. He used each of these collages, gouaches, and pastels in the making of experimental films including *A La Mode* (1958), *Astral Man* (1958), and *Wheeeeeels* (1958).



Jack Whitten (b. 1939), *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, 1974. Acrylic on canvas with string, 88 1/4 × 51 in. (224.2 × 129.5 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 2015.49. © 2016 Jack Whitten/Artist Rights Society (ARS) New York. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Shortly after graduating from Cooper Union in 1964, Jack Whitten met Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, and other lions of Abstract Expressionism. Galvanized, like many of his contemporaries, by that idiom, he produced gestural, expressive paintings in the 1960s that were often inspired by the tumultuous sociopolitical events of the decade. Whitten's work became more abstract and process-based in the 1970s: he began manipulating layers of wet paint on canvas with implements that included Afro combs, carpenters' saws, rakes, and squeegees (including one specially devised squeegee that was twelve feet long). The artist explained that his technique was "a physical way of getting light into the painted surface without relying on the mixture of color." *Sorcerer's Apprentice* was included in Whitten's first one-person museum exhibition, organized by the Whitney Museum in 1974.

## Other Significant 2015 Acquisitions



Ericka Beckman (b. 1951), still from *You the Better*, 1983. 16mm film, color, sound; 30 min. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Film, Video, and New Media Committee 2015.54. © Ericka Beckman



Paul McCarthy (b. 1945), *White Snow #3*, 2012. Bronze. 99 ½ x 78 ¼ x 73 ½ in. (252.7 x 198.8 x 186.7 cm) overall. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee, courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth 2015.103. © Paul McCarthy; courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photograph by Melissa Christy



Ana Mendieta (1948–1985), *Untitled*, 1973. Gelatin silver print, 9 3/16 x 6 7/16 in. (23.3 x 16.4 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2015.47 © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy Galerie Lelong, New York and Alison Jacques Gallery, London





Catherine Opie (b. 1961), *Dyke*, 1992. Silver dye bleach print, 39 9/16 x 29 1/2 in. (100.5 x 74.9 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Barbara Gladstone 2015.269 © Catherine Opie



Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), *Kitty Hawk*, 1974. Lithograph, 78 11/16 x 39 15/16 in. (199.9 x 101.4 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Stephen Dull 2015.266 © Robert Rauschenberg/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), *Hog Heaven*, 1978. Solvent transfer, fabric collage and acrylic on wood panels with collaged and painted tire and wood plank, 84 x 133 1/4 x 92 in. (213.4 x 338.5 x 233.7 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Barbara and Richard S. Lane 2015.200a-f © Robert Rauschenberg/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, New York