

ADOLPH GOTTLIEB

(American, 1903–1974)

Composition

1947

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Burt Kleiner, 1959.77

Adolph Gottlieb was among a number of artists in the post-World War II era who sought to register an individual fraught state of mind in the aftermath of the war's numerous cataclysmic traumas, which included the Holocaust, the dropping of nuclear bombs on Japan, and the dawning possibility of nuclear annihilation in the nascent US-Soviet Cold War. Similar to Torres-García's gridded composition nearby, Gottlieb's painting depicts unclassifiable forms that may appear drawn from ancient art or languages but are of the artist's own making and time. Faces, bodies, limbs and orifices suggest but do not illustrate intense psychological emanations whose origins are historically specific, but whose symbolic language can still be understood by many.

HENRI MATISSE

(French, 1869–1954)

Pont Saint-Michel

ca. 1901

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Bequest of Wright S.

Ludington, 1993.1.5

A bold, nearly-entirely abstract composition from the dawn of the 20th century, Matisse's view of the famous bridge in Paris reduces the complex elements of this urban scene into simplified blocks and lines defined by solid colors, all set off by the dramatic abstract form of a window casing on the painting's left. Matisse never abandoned recognizable subject matter in his art up to his death in 1954, but with compositions such as these he pushed the idea of abstraction into new areas of possibility for future generations of 20th century artists (American artist Richard Diebenkorn among them).



Richard Diebenkorn, *Ocean Park No. 29*, 1970. Oil on canvas. Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of the *Meadows Foundation, Incorporated*. © Estate of Richard Diebenkorn

THEOPHILUS BROWN

(American, 1919–2012)

Football Painting #2

1956

Oil on board

SBMA, Gift of Paul Wonner, 1972.44

Early 20th century European artists sought to depict forms in motion – a three-dimensional activity in constant flux – on a static two-dimensional plane. Here mid-20th century painter Theophilus Brown treats American football in a similar way, relying on areas of shifting pure color to register opposing teams clashing on the gridiron. From a distance a viewer may experience this painting as a complete abstraction, with its subject matter only becoming apparent on closer examination. Brown was an important member of the Bay Area Figuration movement in post-World War II San Francisco, whose artists joined the expansive and energetic gestures of American Abstract Expressionist painting with incidents and people found in everyday life.

DORR BOTHWELL

(American, 1902–2000)

Family Portrait

1940

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by the General Art Acquisition Fund, 2019.14

Born, raised and educated in California, Dorr Bothwell was a multi-faceted, internationally-traveled artist in painting, printmaking and design of many kinds (print, ceramic and more). A committed Surrealist, Bothwell explored how the everyday world could be transformed into dreamlike visions both familiar and alien. Here she presents a figure of a child made of two parts, on the right orderly and human, on the left disheveled and perhaps not human at all. Adding to the curious tableau are the floral elements, one a lily, the other a tree in a small fenced plot, which only add to the symbolic mystery of this double, yet single, "family portrait," the meanings of which a viewer must intuit for themselves.

CLAUDE MONET

(French, 1840–1926)

Villas in Bordighera

1884

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Bequest of Katharine

Dexter McCormick in memory of
her husband, Stanley McCormick,
1968.20.5

This ravishing evocation of the light, heat, trees and buildings found on the Italian Riviera is often mistaken for Santa Barbara. Alas Claude Monet never visited here but did stay in Bordighera for three months in 1884, and what he captured is the scientifically-designated Mediterranean climate shared by both these parts of the world. Beginning in 1860s Paris, Monet revolutionized the art of painting, relying on strokes of pure color to register the everyday world. Such an approach ran counter to the smooth hyper-realism and exalted subject matter of the era's official French painting. Once seen as radical, Monet's now-iconic Impressionist vision finds even more advanced expression in the two London paintings nearby.

ALFRED SISLEY

(French, 1839–1899)

Saint-Mammès, Banks of the Seine

1885

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Bequest of Katharine

Dexter McCormick in memory of her husband, Stanley McCormick, 1968.20.6

British by birth, Alfred Sisley is among the most consistent of the French Impressionists in terms of technique and subject matter. In this shimmering view of a town on the Seine in full sunlight, Sisley uses the short brushstrokes of oil paint characteristic of Impressionist painting to build up a representation of a real place, which is situated around 40 miles south of Paris. Representing everyday life rather than myths, gods, or royalty, Sisley focused on landscapes such as this one, which became newly accessible by train travel and were an escape from the congestion and pressures of rapidly-developing Paris.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN

(American, 1898–1976)

Number 5

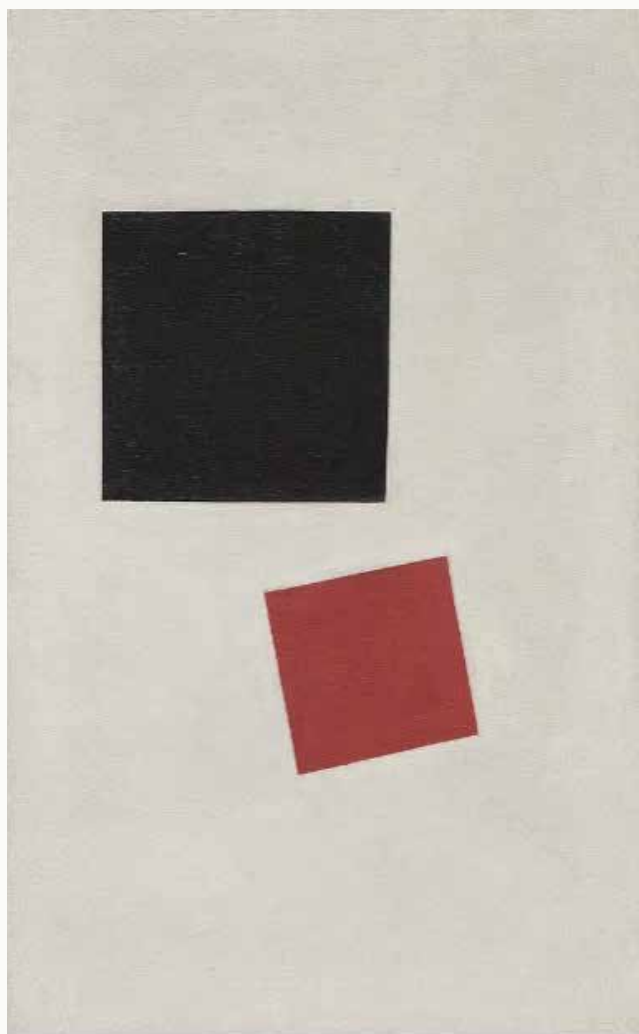
1961

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Katherine Peake in memory of her mother, Alice F. Schott, 1982.67

After serving in the US military in Japan in both World Wars, John McLaughlin settled in Dana Point, CA south of Laguna, where in the mid-1950s he began to create his signature paintings. McLaughlin sought to translate the calm and balance he found in Japanese art into right-angled abstract paintings, whose origins are found in the early 20th century European abstractions of Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian. Here, right-angled forms and subdued colors exist in contemplative equilibrium and harmony.

McLaughlin gained recognition as one of the four California Abstract Classicists who introduced the Hard Edge aesthetic into American art, when the vigorous Action Painting brushstroke of Abstract Expressionism was the dominant aesthetic.



Kazimir Malevich, *Painterly Realism of a Boy with a Knapsack – Color Masses in the Fourth Dimension*, 1915. Oil on canvas. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

CLAUDE MONET

(French, 1840–1926)

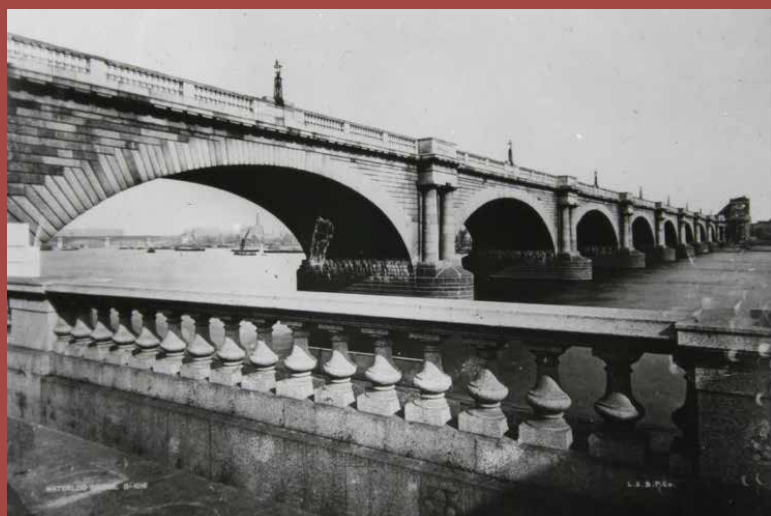
Waterloo Bridge

1900

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Bequest of Katharine Dexter McCormick in memory of her husband, Stanley McCormick, 1968.20.7

Claude Monet's three trips to London between 1899 and 1901 resulted in around 100 paintings of the Thames River: at Charing Cross Bridge, Waterloo Bridge (seen here), and the Houses of Parliament. A recent exhibition at the Courtauld Gallery in London brought together many of these works, demonstrating how Monet faithfully painted in his signature style what he saw before him: in this case, layers of pollution filling the skies of London that transformed the Thames and its city into hazy scenes of light, form and color. Monet's increasingly abstract London views are perhaps ironically due then as much to his Impressionist brushwork as to witnessing the corrosive effects of the 19th century's Industrial Revolution.



Unknown photographer, *Old Waterloo Bridge, London*, ca. 1895.

CLAUDE MONET

(French, 1840–1926)

Charing Cross Bridge

1899

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Bequest of Katharine

Dexter McCormick in memory of her husband, Stanley McCormick, 1968.20.4

Claude Monet stayed at the Savoy Hotel on his three visits to London between 1899 and 1901. From his balcony there he was able to see Charing Cross Bridge, a subject he painted nearly 40 times at various hours of the day and under differing weather conditions. Monet began most of his London paintings on site and finished them once back in his studio. This painting is one of Monet's most abstract renditions of Charing Cross Bridge, a railroad as witnessed by a train's small puffs of smoke on the left. The haze of London's polluted skies, mixed with its fog, greatly obscured the details of bridge and city, presenting Monet with a perfect opportunity to exercise his signature style of quick brushstrokes and sensitively calibrated color.



Unknown photographer, *View Eastward from St. Paul's, London*, ca. 1910.

JOHN SINGER SARGENT

(American, 1856–1925)

Perseus at Night (The Statue of Perseus in Florence)

Ca. 1907

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Sterling Morton to the Preston Morton Collection, 1960.80

Sargent was born in Florence to expatriate American parents. Like American–British author Henry James, whose portrait Sargent painted, Sargent spent his life working and living between Europe and the United States, a course made possible by improved trans-oceanic travel and communication. This moody nocturnal painting is unusual for Sargent in its focus on a human sculpture by another artist rather than a human body itself – Sargent was one of his era’s greatest portraitists. Sargent here portrays the Italian Renaissance artist Benvenuto Cellini’s *Perseus with the Head of the Medusa* in mysterious and seductive light and shadow, a treatment that accentuates the still-potent violence of this remarkable public sculpture in Florence’s central square.



Loggia dei Lanzi, Piazza della Signoria, Florence, Italy. At right: Benvenuto Cellini, *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, 1545–1554. Photographed by Rolf Süssbrich, Wikimedia Commons.

PIERRE BONNARD

(French, 1867–1947)

Garden with a Small Bridge

1937

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Bequest of Wright S.

Ludington, 1993.1.1

Among those in the Nabis group (which included Edouard Vuillard, also on view in this gallery), Bonnard earned the nickname of *le Nabi le très japonais*, meaning “the very Japanese Nabi.” His influence from Japanese printmaking is evident in this composition, with its high vantage point and groupings of flat color and pattern. Gardening was important in both French and Japanese culture as an affirmation of human control over nature. Neat, precise gardens relayed status and knowledge of social customs. The garden here, although tended to, seems wild with life and tall growths. Still, it lends a bountiful, protective aura to the people and animals that populate the scene.

CAMILLE PISSARRO

(French, born St. Thomas, West Indies, 1830–1903)

View of a Farm in Osny

c. 1883

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Hammer

International Foundation,

L.2022.2.5

Pissarro painted en plein air (in the open air) in the small town of Pontoise from 1866 to 1883. This work, painted in Osny (a village two miles from Pontoise) near the end of this period, reflects his idealized and idyllic perspective of rural life. The landscape has an airy vision of agrarian harmony. The pasture is well-maintained, and tidy cottages lay in the background. Painting such scenes allowed Pissarro to experiment with light and texture, but also served as a means to commemorate a moral purity he ascribed to peasant lifestyles.

BERTHE MORISOT

(French, 1841–1895)

View of Paris from the Trocadéro

1871–72

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Hugh N.

Kirkland, 1974.21.2

There is a notable contrast between the well-maintained leisure park of the foreground and the haze over Paris in this sprawling landscape. This is a view from Place du Trocadéro, a garden promenade popular with the Parisian bourgeoisie. The sky is dense with coal pollution and wisps of smoke dot the skyline. By the end of the 19th century, Paris had over two thousand factories for coal processing, metal production, and other industries that supported the rise of the Industrial Revolution in France. Pollutants from fossil fuels began to affect both the environment and public health. Contemporary commentators noted a distinct shift in the city's noise, smell, and air quality.

MARY CASSATT

(American, 1851–1912)

Summertime

1894

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Hammer
International Foundation,
L.2022.2.1

Cassatt portrayed the everyday lives of the mostly wealthy women in her social circle of American expatriates and French friends. The two subjects in this painting were guests of Cassatt at her country home in Le Mesnil-Théribus, where summertime excursions on the garden pond were common. Pleasure-boating, a frequent subject of the Impressionists, was a means of conspicuous leisure for middle-class French society. Particularly popular along the Seine, well-to-do ladies would put on their fineries to set out into the water with male partners, such as the well-dressed woman in Manet's painting *Boating*. The two subjects here, in contrast, wear loose summer frocks, evoking a more private moment between the two women.



Edouard Manet, *Boating*, 1874. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

LÉONARD TSUGUHARU FOUJITA

藤田 嗣治

(Japanese, active in France,
1886–1968)

The Port of St. Cloud

1939

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Hall and Lenore
Adams, 1987.29

Spending time throughout his life between Japan and France, Foujita was known for blending traditional Japanese techniques with Western oil painting. This painting was created during a one-year stay in Paris in between periods working as an official war artist for the Japanese government. Although evoking the formalities of French painting, which Foujita studied closely, the thin, wispy lines of the trees, poles, and wires mimic the look of traditional sumi-e (ink painting). Foujita achieved this by using a menso, a Japanese brush meant to capture precise detail.

RICHMOND BARTHÉ

(American, 1901–1989)

Julius

ca. 1940

Plaster of Paris painted with a dark wash

SBMA, Gift of Ala Story, OO.184

This small bust is a portrait of Julius, the nephew of photographer Carl Van Vechten's housekeeper. Born in Mississippi, Barthé eventually moved to New York and became part of the Harlem Renaissance. Though Barthé gained acclaim and commissions from the mainstream white art world, he remained dedicated to portraying Black subjects. In Barthé's own words:

"I hope that my people will look into my works and see a reflection of themselves. I have been trying to hold up a mirror to them and say 'Look how beautiful you are.'...My dream in life was to make my people proud of me and show them how beautiful the world is. "



Julius, ca. 1940, cast 1943, bronze with brown patina, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Henry D. Gilpin Fund.

ROSA BONHEUR

(French, 1822–1899)

Bull

After 1840

Bronze

SBMA, Gift of Priscilla K. Giesen,
1987.26.1

Bonheur is best known for her paintings, but she also occasionally created sculptures in clay and wax. A few of these were cast in bronze, like this bull, which displays the same anatomical accuracy that she used to depict cattle in her later masterpiece, *Ploughing in the Nivernais*. Bonheur's access to the male-dominated places where she could observe animals like this was famously made possible by a permit from the Paris police so she could legally wear trousers in public. This allowed her to better blend in with the men working there as well as move around easily in environments full of animal carcasses and waste.



Rosa Bonheur, *Ploughing in the Nivernais*, 1849. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

Eternal Spring

ca. 1884, cast between 1898–1918

Bronze

SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Frank Mulhauser
in memory of her husband, 1946.27

The female figure in this sculpture reappears in Rodin's monumental *The Gates of Hell*. Rodin took advantage of how easy it is to use the bronze casting process to make many copies from one clay sculpture. This female torso is based on a frequent Rodin model, Adèle Abruzzesi. The small wings on the man's back suggest he may be some kind of mythological figure, such as Cupid.



Auguste Rodin, *Torso of Adèle*, before 1884. Terracotta. Musée Rodin, Paris.

AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

The Sphinx

Before 1888

Bronze

SBMA, Gift of Joseph Halle

Schaffner, 1961.9

This small figure was originally designed for Rodin's *Gates of Hell* project. She has no direct connection to the sphinx of Greek mythology, which was a hybrid of woman, lion, and eagle. Like many of Rodin's sculptures, the association of a figure with a particular character was less important than Rodin's use of the of the human body to express emotion.



Auguste Rodin, *The Gates of Hell*, modeled 1880–1917, cast 1926–28. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Rodin Museum, Bequest of Jules E. Mastbaum, 1929.

AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

Head of Balzac

Modeled ca. 1892

Bronze

SBMA, Gift of the Cantor,
Fitzgerald Art Foundation,
1976.6

In 1891 the Société des Gens de Lettres, a writers' association, commissioned Rodin to create a monument to French novelist Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850). Rodin conducted a great deal of research for the project, and even found a man who resembled Balzac to model for it. This bust was originally part of one of Rodin's nude studies of the artist. The final sculpture depicts Balzac wrapped in a large coat, and has a noticeably different approach to modeling the face.



Balzac, 1898. Bronze. Cast by Alexis Rudier, 1935, for the Musée Rodin, Paris. S.01296. © Agence photographique du musée Rodin – Jérôme Manoukian

AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

Study for Galatea

Modeled ca. 1889, cast 1981

Bronze

SBMA, Gift of Iris and Gerald
B. Cantor, 1984.36

This cast of a partial female nude is one of ten produced in 1981 with the authorization of the Musée Rodin, which has occasionally issued new bronze casts and reproductions from Rodin's original plaster or terracotta models. A mirror-image rendition of this figure was used to create *Pygmalion and Galatea*, which Rodin produced in both bronze and marble. The titular couple

is known from the Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8 CE). In Ovid's story, the mythological sculptor Pygmalion falls in love with an ivory sculpture he creates, and the goddess Aphrodite turns the sculpture into a living woman.

Auguste Rodin, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, modeled 1889, carved ca. 1908–9. Marble. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Thomas F. Ryan, in memory of William M. Laffan, 1910, 10.31.



AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

Kneeling Caryatid

1910

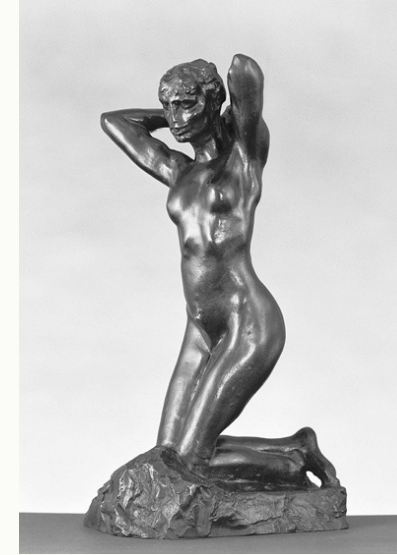
Marble

SBMA, Gift of Patricia Wash

Eaton Norris in Memory of

Mary H. Halliday, 1991.123

This sculpture shows how much of Rodin's process was dedicated to revising and recombining similar forms to create new works of art. The scholar Ruth Butler identifies this marble sculpture as based on a female nude produced for Rodin's *Gates of Hell* project, which later became a stand-alone sculpture, *Kneeling Fauness*. Here she is given a different hairstyle and called a caryatid, a type of sculpture that functions as a support pillar, though there is nothing for her to support. A third version has the woman's face turned in towards her right arm.



Auguste Rodin, *Kneeling Fauness*, modeled c. 1887; cast 1900. Bronze. Rodin Museum, Philadelphia. Bequest of Jules E. Mastbaum, 1929, F1929-7-35.



Auguste Rodin, *Morning*, 1906. Marble. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Gift of Mrs. John W. Simpson, 1942.5.18.

AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

*Burghers of Calais, Monument:
Jean d'Aire, Head, Final State*

Modeled 1886, cast 1966

Bronze

SBMA, Bequest of Wright S.

Ludington, 1993.1.18

In 1884 the city of Calais commissioned Rodin to create a monument to six citizens who, in 1347, offered their lives to end a siege of the city by England's King Edward III. Rodin produced many studies and partial figures of the individual characters, including Jean d'Aire, who holds the city's key. This is one of ten casts of the head made between 1954 and 1965 by the foundry of Georges Rudier. This head was never cast during Rodin's life.



The Burghers of Calais, modeled 1884–1895; cast 1919–1921. Bronze. Rodin Museum, Philadelphia. Bequest of Jules E. Mastbaum, 1929

AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

Crouching Dancer

ca. 1895–1900; cast 1956

Bronze

SBMA, Bequest of Wright S.

Ludington, 1993.1.21

Rodin may have been inspired for this sculpture by Javanese dancers he saw at the 1889 Exposition Universelle, a large exhibition of global culture held in Paris. He later sketched Cambodian dancers he saw perform in Paris in 1906. The twisting posture is likely the result of the way Rodin worked with models, encouraging them to move frequently and combining different limb positions in sketches to create a unique pose.

AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

The Walking Man

ca. 1880, cast between 1942–1965

Bronze

SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by General Acquisition Fund, 1997.9

As Rodin himself said in 1907:

“My Walking Man. He’s not interesting in himself...but rather in the idea of the step that he has taken and the one he must take next. This art that, through suggestion, goes beyond the sculpted figure and makes him part of a whole that the imagination gradually recomposes is, I believe, a fertile innovation.”

AUGUSTE RODIN

(French, 1840–1917)

The Inner Voice or Meditation Without Arms

1896–1897, cast 2017

Bronze

SBMA, Museum purchase,
Ludington General Acquisition
Fund, 2019.29

Rodin wrote to Prince Eugene of Sweden about this sculpture in 1897:

“In it the study of nature is complete,
and I have made every effort to render art as complete as possible. I regard this plaster as one of my best finished, most accomplished works.”

Rodin included this figure in many sculptures, including his monument to Victor Hugo, for which he had to remove portions of the legs and the arms on one of the plaster casts. This version was first cast in bronze in 2017, to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of Rodin’s death.

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

(French, 1861–1944)

Study for Action in Chains

1905

Bronze

SBMA, Bequest of Wright S.

Ludington, 1993.1.40

This larger-than-life figure is a study for a monument to French socialist revolutionary Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881). Blanqui participated in multiple revolutionary actions and was imprisoned for over 33 years over the course of his life. In the full final sculpture, a figure representing Action has her hands bound, a symbol of Blanqui's continued resistance to his imprisonment. In this torso-only study, her lack of limbs draws the focus to the twisting muscles of her stomach and back. The model for this sculpture, as well as many of his other works, was Maillol's wife Clotilde Narcis, though here her muscles may have been enhanced for the sake of the subject.



L'Action enchaînée, before 1937, bronze.
Musée d'Orsay, purchase, 1940.

MILENA PAVLOVIĆ-BARILI

(Serbian, 1909–1945)

The Angels

1939

Oil on board

SBMA, Gift of Margaret P. Mallory,
1991.154.3

Pavlović-Barili's work was heavily influenced by classical antiquity and European art history, from Renaissance masters like Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510) to contemporaries like Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978). Here, she blends Renaissance-inspired figures and architecture with a dreamlike atmosphere and disregard for scale: the angels are as tall as the second story of the buildings. Pavlović-Barili also wrote poetry, worked as a costume designer, and created illustrations for *Vogue* magazine. She traveled extensively in Western Europe and moved to the United States after WWII began.



Sandro Botticelli, *The Annunciation*, 15th century. Tempera and gold leaf on wood. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.

JAMES TISSOT

(French, active England,
1836–1902)

Foreign Visitors at the Louvre

ca. 1883–1885

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of the Estate of
Barbara Darlington Dupee,
2015.32.1

The woman in the foreground is part of a group of tourists. While her companions consult a museum guidebook and remark on the sculptures around them, she looks out towards the viewer, her unused glasses in one hand. By the late nineteenth century museums had long been essential stops for upper-class travelers in Europe, providing educational value and the cultivation of taste. This painting may have been intended as part of a series examining different types of foreign women, to follow Tissot's well-known series *The Woman of Paris*.

PAUL-JOSEPH-VICTOR DARGAUD

(French, active 1873–1904)

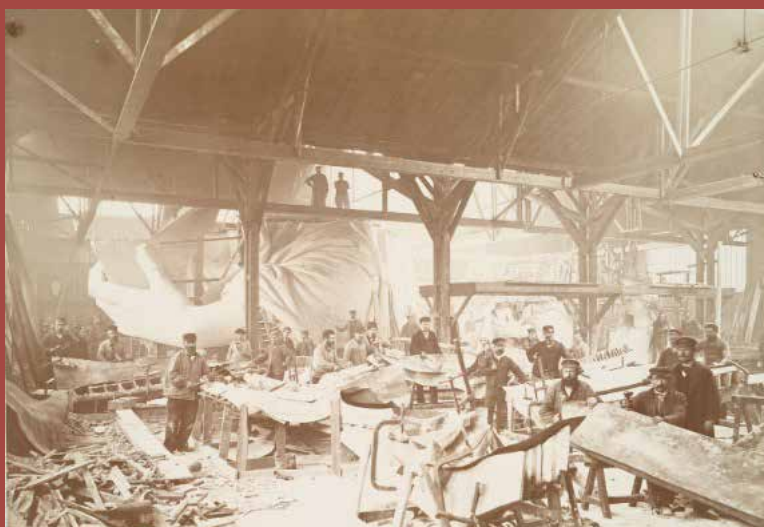
The Statue of Liberty in Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi's Studio, Paris

1884

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Museum purchase, 19th
Century Endowment Funds and
Suzette Davidson Art Acquisition
Endowment, 2001.36.2

The *Statue of Liberty*, or *Liberty Enlightening the World*, was a gift from the French government, and was designed and built in France before being shipped over in pieces and assembled in New York Harbor. Here, Dargaud depicts some of those pieces still in Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi's workshop. The figures that surround them appear to be visitors rather than workmen, and the workshop is otherwise empty and clean. This contrasts markedly with photographs taken during the statue's construction, showing the reality of the labor that took place.



Albert Fernique, *Men in a workshop hammering sheets of copper for the construction of the Statue of Liberty*, 1883. Albumen print. New York Public Library.

JOAQUÍN TORRES-GARCÍA

(Uruguayan, active Spain and France, 1874–1949)

Composition

1932

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by the 20th c. Art Acquisition and Endowment Funds, the Grace Jones Richardson Trust, Jon B. and Lillian Lovelace, and Les and Zora Charles, 1997.69

Torres-García was born in Uruguay and moved to Spain as a child. A leader of international abstract art, he co-founded the Parisian group *Cercle et Carré* (Circle and Square) in 1929. On returning to Uruguay in 1936, he published the journal *Círculo y Cuadrado* (*Circle and Square*), with articles by Italian futurist Umberto Boccioni and Piet Mondrian. He visited New York City in 1919 and was inspired by Manhattan's gridiron of streets crammed with skyscrapers and teeming with people. As a result, he began to paint with grids filled with symbols and ideograms. He exhibited in the United States, Europe, and South America, a testament to the international reach of his abstraction.

GUNTHER GERZSO

(Mexican, 1915–2000)

Time Eats Life to the Core (Le Temps Mange la Vie, El Tiempo Se Come a la Vida)

1961

Oil on masonite

SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by Jon B. & Lillian Lovelace, Eli & Leatrice Luria, The Grace Jones Richardson Trust, an Anonymous Donor, Lord & Lady Ridley–Tree, SBMA Modern & Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund, the Ala Story Fund, and the SBMA Visionaries, 2002.50

Gerzso was born in Mexico to a Hungarian–Jewish father and German mother. Between 1935 and 1941, he designed sets for the Cleveland Play House in Ohio. He directed more than 150 Mexican films between 1943 and 1962. Here, planes of color float and overlap in a shallow space. Could the large white rectangle be a stage or a huge curtain waiting to be lifted to reveal a drama? The poet Octavio Paz described Gerzso's work as "painting at the halfway point of time, suspended over the abyss . . . painting-before-the-event."

OSKAR FISCHINGER

(German, active USA, 1900–1967)

Abstraction #22

n.d.

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of the Joel D.

Rosenblum Trust, 1991.170

Fischinger worked in the German film industry and successfully distributed his animated abstract films to theaters around Europe. In these films, sounds were illustrated with colors, pulsations, and jiggling patterns. The rise of the Nazis and a recruitment call from Paramount Studios in Los Angeles brought him to California in 1936, but he quickly left Paramount, finding Hollywood and the studio system difficult. He had an uncredited role in Disney's *Fantasia* (1940). In later years, he increasingly turned to painting as an outlet, and this painting with its evocation of depth and vibrating fabric of fine lines resembles one of his animated films.



Oskar Fischinger, *An Optical Poem* (1938). Film Stills. Distributed by Metro-Goldwyn Mayer. Fischinger animates Franz Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2

VASSILY KANDINKSY

(Russian, 1866–1944)

Line-Spot

1927

Oil on pressed pulp board

SBMA, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Gershwin, 1956.5.4

Kandinsky was born in Russia, left for Germany, returned to Russia to work with the Communists to open an art museum, then left again. He taught at the famed Bauhaus School from 1922 to 1933. For Kandinsky, visual art must be synaesthetic, or relate to multiple senses. Colors should evoke sounds. For instance, the color yellow should conjure a high C note. Notice all the lines and patterns in this painting that resemble musical staves and with marks similar to musical notes. He spelled out his ideas about the symbolism of colors and the power of abstraction to evoke spiritual meaning in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (first edition 1911; English edition 1949).

JOSEF ALBERS

(German, 1888–1976)

Mirage (A)

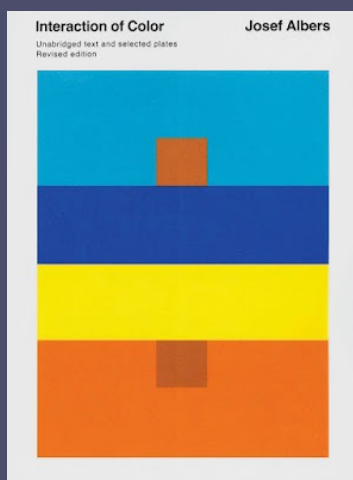
1940

Oil on paper pulp board

SBMA, Museum purchase for the Donald Bear Memorial Collection, 1967.24

Albers painted relatively simple shapes to study how colors interacted, specifically how colors appeared to change, sometimes dramatically, when juxtaposed with other colors. He taught color theory first at the Bauhaus, a German art school shut down by the Nazis, and later at Yale University. He published *Interaction of Color* (1963), which is still in print and used as a guide book for visual artists. Through only three colors, purple, blue, and green, as well as a geometric pattern, Albers conjures trees or buildings that loom but also seem impermanent, like a mirage.

Cover, Josef Albers,
Interaction of Color
(1st Edition), 1963



GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

(American, 1887–1986)

*Dead Cottonwood Tree,
Abiquiu, New Mexico*

1943

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Gary Cooper,
1951.6

After living a peripatetic life mostly centered in New York City, O'Keeffe settled in 1934 at Ghost Ranch, near Abiquiú, north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Like Marsden Hartley, a friend and fellow member of the circle of artists who gathered around Alfred Stieglitz, O'Keeffe's husband, she believed that art could spark a mystic communion with nature and something beyond the everyday. She called this sense of nature's grandeur and power, "the faraway, nearby," and once said that "what I have been able to put into form seems infinitesimal compared with the variety of experience."

JASPER FRANCIS CROPSEY

(American, 1823–1900)

*Janetta Falls, Passaic County,
New Jersey*

August 9, 1846

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Sterling Morton
for the Preston Morton Collection,
1960.55

Cropsey was a premier landscape painter in New York City, and this waterfall was near the home of his father-in-law. He was a devotee of John Ruskin, a British writer and artist, who advocated for direct observation of nature, minute attention to detail, and art connecting with the transcendent and holy. This is an eastern deciduous forest at the height of summer, with foliage so thick that the sky is almost completely blocked out.

WIFREDO LAM

(Cuban, 1902–1982)

The Casting of the Spell

1947

Oil on burlap

SBMA, Gift of Wright S. Ludington,
1956.2.4

After spending time in Paris and meeting Picasso and the Surrealists, Lam fled France in 1941 because of the Nazi invasion. He returned to his native Cuba and explored the nation's Afro-Cuban history. This painting refers to Santería, which combines elements of African religions and Catholicism. Lam's maternal grandmother was an enslaved person from the Congo, and his father was a Chinese immigrant to Cuba. Lam saw his painting as a tool aligned with anti-colonial liberation movements. He said, "My painting is an act of decolonization not in a physical sense, but in a mental one."

RUFINO TAMAYO

(Mexican, active United States and France, 1899–1991)

Noche y día

1953

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Glen Larson, 1998.76

Tamayo was born in Oaxaca de Juárez and throughout his career drew on his Zapotec heritage. He achieved incredible fame and prestige in Mexico and internationally. During the 1950s, he lived in New York City and was part of the ferment around the Abstract-Expressionists, even publishing in the short-lived artist's magazine *Tiger's Eye*. This is a painting of the cosmos, of the sun and moon, night and day, stars, comets, and the arc of the earth's horizon. Though a small painting, Tamayo brings out the rhythms of nature and symbols around which humans build meaning and structure religious and cultural systems.

DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS

(Mexican, 1896–1974)

La colina de los muertos

(The Hill of the Dead)

1944

Duco on board

SBMA, Gift of Mrs. MacKinley Helm,

1969.35.51

An active member of the Communist Party of Mexico, Siqueiros believed artwork must give expression to class struggle and Mexican national identity. Part of that message involved adopting new artistic methods and materials. Siqueiros wrote: "It is easy to see that the artists of each period were never satisfied with the materials and tools of their predecessors...their progress was not only parallel to the development of science... and industry, it was often ahead of them." This painting is made with Duco, a lacquer paint developed by DuPont in the 1920s for automotive applications, to achieve the thick, almost sculptural application of paint.

SALVADOR DALÍ

(Spanish, 1904–1989)

Honey is Sweeter than Blood
(also “*Blood is Sweeter than Honey*”) (*Honig ist süßer als blut*)
1941

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Warren
Tremaine, 1949.17

The Spanish Surrealist painter Salvador Dalí arrived in the United States in August 1940 with his wife Gala, having taken a boat from Portugal. This work was made in rural Virginia in September or October 1940 at the home of Caresse Crosby. Understandably, interpreters want to see this painting as an allegory for fascism—1940 was an especially dire year. France fell in May, and a Nazi invasion of Great Britain was considered imminent. Nonetheless, when a curator at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art wrote the artist in the 1970s with questions, Dalí told an assistant to copy a random paragraph out of a random book and sent it to the museum. Dalí wanted to confound the impulse to give everything meaning. This short-circuiting of logic is a primary goal of Surrealism.

DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS

(Mexican, 1896–1974)

Dos mujeres indias
(*Two Indian Women*)

1930, February

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Charles Grayson,
1971.55.1

This picture—albeit quiet—encapsulates the artist’s ideological stance. At the bottom is a track and the ties of a railroad. As a member of the Communist Party, Siqueiros believed in the struggle against colonialism and oppression of indigenous people, but, like the communists, he saw technology as a tool of progress. The railroad was, with the telegraph, telephone, and steamship, one of the emblems of modern technology, but also the economic subjugation of Mexico because foreign companies, mostly British and American, owned them. By 1930, however, the network had been largely nationalized by the Mexican government.

KAY SAGE

(American, 1898–1963)

Second Song

1943

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Estate of Kay Sage

Tanguy, 1964.32

An American who grew up in Europe, Sage was a member of the Surrealist group, having been recruited by Andre Breton. Faced with the impending threat of a Nazi invasion of France, she returned to the United States in 1939 and from there helped to arrange visas for friends trying to escape France. By 1943, she and her husband Yves Tanguy were living in rural Connecticut, and this painting resembles an angel perched on a tombstone, a common sight in graveyards across New England. Its deep sadness might be a reflection on the tragedies unfolding in Europe because of the Nazis.

FREDERICK HAMMERSLEY

(American, 1919–2009)

Growing game

1958

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Museum Purchase with funds provided by an Anonymous Donor and the Ludington Antiquities Fund, 2012.24

Hammersley was part of a group of painters in Los Angeles called the Abstract Classicists that included Karl Benjamin, John McLaughlin, and Lorser Feitelson. Hammersley studied at Chouinard Art School in LA, which later morphed into CalArts. Like many artists in this show, including George Bellows and Edward Hopper, he illustrated for ads and promotional materials in periodicals. Ads have a picture and a caption explaining what is being sold. Picking up on this pattern, Hammersley's titles act like captions and guide our experience of the painting without over-explaining. This painting seems to have a person on the right and a plant or balloon creature expanding on the left. Perhaps the game is our attempt to understand.

ISAMU NOGUCHI

(American, 1904–1988)

Ceremony

1982

Jasper top, granite base, wood pedestal

SBMA, Museum Purchase with funds provided by the Mary and Leigh Block Fund, 1983.40

Born in Los Angeles to an American mother and Japanese father, Noguchi spent his childhood in Japan, then moved to New York for medical school, then to Paris to work as Constantine Brancusi's assistant for a few years. He returned to New York and established himself as a sculptor. Along with other Japanese-Americans, he was placed in a concentration camp during WWII. After the war, he established studios in Japan and Queens, New York, which today houses the Noguchi Museum. Notice the cedar wood seems like a perfect H, but a careful look reveals the two sides differ. Similarly, the hefty stone on top sticks out a bit to the right.

CARLOS CRUZ-DIEZ

(Venezuelan, active France,
1923–2019)

Psychromie No. 352

1967

Acrylic on board with plexiglass
SBMA, Gift of the ARCO
Collection, 1995.53.5

Walk back and forth and watch as the colors and patterns shift. You, the viewer, complete the work, and there is no correct angle from which to see it. Cruz-Diez sought to make art with no history, no cultural references. He said, "The Psychromies . . . force us to deal with an event of color happening in the moment, without past or future."

Cruz-Diez left Venezuela for Paris because of the political situation during the 1950s, even though he was not political. In an interview, he recalled the military police showing up at an artists' party and everyone feeling afraid and insubstantial, "like flies," as the artist put it.

FREDERICK HAMMERSLEY

(American, 1919–2009)

EQUAL TEA TALK

1969

Computer-generated drawing on paper

SBMA, Gift of Monimos

Foundation, 2023.4.6

In the late 1960s, Hammersley left LA and moved to Albuquerque to teach at the University of New Mexico. There he was introduced to the newly written computer program ART1, codeveloped by Richard Williams and Katherine Nash in Fortran IV, which was among the first programs anywhere made for visual artists. Hammersley used the university's IBM 360/40 with an IBM 1403 printer to print what he called "computer drawings." What he had available to him was limited: the letters A–Z, the numbers 0–9, a selection of punctuation marks, and blanks.

GEORGE WESLEY BELLOWS

(American, 1882–1925)

Steaming Streets

March 1908

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Sterling Morton
for the Preston Morton Collection,
1960.50

Bellows and the so-called Ashcan School made the sometimes dirty but nonetheless authentic life of people in American cities a worthy subject for art. They painted working people in immigrant neighborhoods of New York City with genuine interest and empathy. This was revolutionary at the time and led to much criticism of the group. Set in New York City, where Bellows lived, this shows us a filthy street covered in snow already churned over and turning black. This is not a pretty picture of snow-covered streets. Steam rises up, people wait to cross the street, and the horse is about to rip its harness off.

JOHN DECKER

(American, 1895–1947)

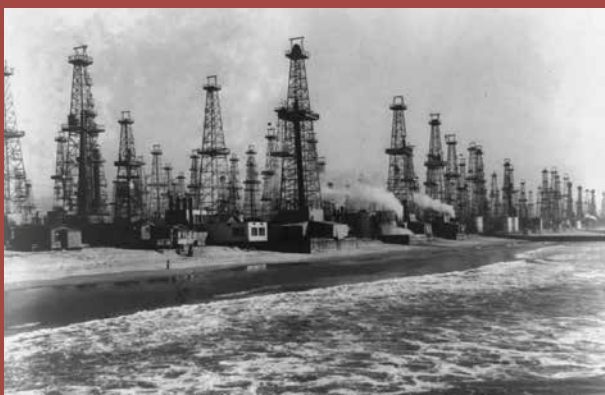
Venice Beach Oil Derricks at Night

1933

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Mary Larsgaard Trust, 2017.23

The United States today is the leading producer of oil globally, larger than Russia or Saudi Arabia. This was also the case in the late 19th and early 20th century, when Southern California had an oil boom. In the 1930s, the canals of Venice Beach were once surrounded by oil derricks. Photographs from the period show modest beach homes and beachgoers with a forest of derricks behind them.



Photographs of Venice Beach at the height of the brief oil boom, c. 1931

FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH

(American, 1826–1900)

Konigssee

1868

Oil on paper mounted on canvas
SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Lockwood de
Forest, 1984.53.4

Church was the most famous artist of his time in the United States, and his paintings grew out of his travels to South America, Jamaica, and the present-day Middle East. In 1868, he and his wife traveled to Bavaria, and he spent some time sketching this alpine lake. Church sketched and drew constantly on his many trips, which he then used when he returned to his home in New York to construct the massive landscapes for which he is so famous.

KOBAYASHI KIYOCHIKA

小林清親

(Japanese, 1847–1915)

*From the series "Long Live
Japan: One Hundred Victories,
One Hundred Laughs*

1894–1905

Color woodblock prints

Museum Purchase with funds
provided by SBMA Friends of
Asian Art, 2015.9.11–77

Japan's path through this period was markedly different than any other country. After isolating from the West for centuries, it was pressured to open up by Western interests and began to westernize its culture and military during the Meiji Period (1868–1912). Japan joined the Europeans and Americans to become a colonial power by invading Korea, Taiwan, and parts of China. These prints mock the ineptitude of the Russian military and Czar during the Russo–Japanese War (1905–1906). They also celebrate Japan's rise as a power who could take on Western powers. In one print the rising sun, the emblem of Japan, rises over a frozen and beleaguered Russian army. In the other, an octopus stands for the Japanese navy that sank parts of Russia's Pacific Fleet.

JOSÉ GUADALUPE POSADA

(Mexican, 1852–1913)

Untitled

n.d.

Engraving

SBMA, Anonymous Donor, 00.110

MANUEL MANILLA

(Mexican, 1830–1895)

Untitled

n.d.

Zinc etching

SBMA, Museum Purchase,
20th-century Acquisition Fund,
1999.38.1

Untitled

n.d.

Zinc etching

SBMA, Museum Purchase,
20th-century Acquisition Fund,
1999.38.3.

The second half of the nineteenth century in Mexico was marked by destabilization as a result of the Mexican–American War and the French Empire’s brief appointment of an Emperor of Mexico, Maximilian I, before a Mexican republic was re-established in 1867. Amid this turmoil, printmakers like Posada and Manilla communicated with the public through broadsides, often featuring characters in the form of calaveras (skeletons). Calaveras are a familiar image in Mexican culture thanks to the tradition of Día de los Muertos, a celebration of the memories of deceased friends and family, in which skeleton and skull motifs frequently appear. In Posada’s and Manilla’s work, the calaveras became a means to satirize Mexican politics and society, especially when paired with corridos (narrative ballads).

HONORÉ DAUMIER

(French, 1808–1879)

1830 et 1833

1833

Lithograph

SBMA, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart L. Kadison, 1991.30.12

Projet d'une Medaille

1848

Lithograph

SBMA, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart L. Kadison, 1991.30.22

The nineteenth century in France was rife with political upheaval, and Honoré Daumier was one of its leading political and social satirists. After the July Revolution of 1830 installed Louis-Philippe as monarch, Daumier illustrated anti-monarchist newspapers with caricatures of the new king, often depicting his head as a pear. This did not go unpunished. Louis-Philippe's government, as well as the governments that succeeded it, repeatedly cracked down on political satire and Daumier served six months in prison for one of his caricatures.

JULIUS SHULMAN

(American, 1910–2009)

*Los Angeles City Hall Reflected in
the Foundation of Union Station*

1934, printed 1990s

Gelatin silver print

SBMA, Museum Purchase, 2014.32.3

BERENICE ABBOTT

(American, 1898–1991)

Nightview, New York

1932, December

Gelatin silver print

SBMA, Gift of Arthur and Yolanda

Steinman, 1983.69.4

MAX ALPERT

(Ukrainian, 1899–1980)

Cranes at Night

1930s

Gelatin silver print

SBMA, Gift of Howard Schickler
and David Lafaille, 2004.41.1

LOU STOUMEN

(American, 1917–1991)

Bethlehem Steel Coke Works

ca. 1936

Gelatin silver print

SBMA, Gift of Barry Singer in memory
of Marjorie Vernon, 1999.42

CHRISTINE B. FLETCHER

(American, 1871–1961)

Street Roller

1930s

Gelatin silver print

SBMA, Gift of Margaret W. Weston,
2004.42.23

MILTON INMAN

(American, 1899–1979)

Holiday

1930s

Gelatin silver print

SBMA, Museum Purchase, 2011.5

SHIKANOSUKE YAGAKI

(Japanese, 1897–1966)

Untitled

ca. 1935

Gelatin silver print

SBMA, Museum Purchase with funds
provided by the Donald Bowey Memorial
Fund, 2006.57.3

LOCKWOOD DE FOREST, SR.

(American, 1850–1932)

Carmel

April 12, 1909

Oil on board

SBMA, Gift of Elizabeth Asche, 1992.79.

EDWARD HOPPER

(American, 1882–1967)

November, Washington Square

Begun ca. 1932, completed 1959

Oil on canvas

SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Sterling Morton
to the Preston Morton Collection

1960.64

The nineteenth century in France was rife with political upheaval, and Honoré Daumier was one of its leading political and social satirists. After the July Revolution of 1830 installed Louis-Philippe as monarch, Daumier illustrated anti-monarchist newspapers with caricatures of the new king, often depicting his head as a pear. This did not go unpunished. Louis-Philippe's government, as well as the governments that succeeded it, repeatedly cracked down on political satire and Daumier served six months in prison for one of his caricatures.