

James Rosenquist's *House of Fire*: A Masterwork of American Pop Art

James Rosenquist's *House of Fire* is a recent addition to the museum's growing collection of American modernism. The artist made this large-scale lithograph/collage in collaboration with Tyler Graphics, after his eponymous painting now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In it, ordinary objects become unexpectedly menacing: a bag of groceries defies gravity, a glowing bucket sits within and outside an open window, and lipsticks align, seductively and tauntingly, at a narrow angle with the picture plane. A metaphor for the allure of advertising, its promise of absolute satisfaction, and the inconsistencies required to create the fantasy, *House of Fire* is both a wonderful example of Rosenquist's work and an important Pop acquisition.

Rosenquist trained as a billboard painter, and he applied sign-painting techniques to his monumental and highly keyed canvases. His signature glossy imagery—cosmetics, fast food, automobiles, fighter planes, and self-satisfied, depersonalized consumers and political figures—is reminiscent of the larger-than-life reflection of contemporary society associated with the mass media.

We have brought *House of Fire* together with examples of Pop Art prints from the museum's collection. This exhibition marks its debut in our galleries.