

DAVID SMITH

American, b. Decatur, IN, 1906;
d. Bennington, VT, 1965

***Hirebecca*, 1961**

Welded and painted steel

Purchase, 1972 (4092.1)

Profoundly inspired by the welded metal sculptures of the Spanish-born French artists Pablo Picasso and Julio González, Abstract Expressionist David Smith introduced the genre of large-scale steel sculpture to American audiences. Smith produced geometric sculptures, adapting Analytic Cubism to his heavy industrial materials, which possessed both austerity and playfulness. His stainless steel *Cubi* are some of the most iconic works of 20th-century sculpture.

The title *Hirebecca* is likely an affectionate combination of the greeting “Hi” and his daughter’s name, Rebecca. Several works of this period are named for his daughters Rebecca and Candida. The idea of the totemic potential of sculpture remained with Smith throughout his career, and the human scale of *Hirebecca* suggests the figure of a protective sentinel.

PHILIP GUSTON

American, b. Montreal, 1913;
d. Woodstock, NY, 1980

***Ceremony*, 1957**

Oil on masonite

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley N. Barbee, 1965
(3430.1)

Philip Guston was a leading proponent of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s and 60s. His disavowal of lyrical abstraction in the late 1960s signaled what critics have described as the artist's profound crisis of faith in the purity of aesthetics and the efficacy of painting to transcend contemporary realities.

An ardent admirer of the German Expressionist, Max Beckmann, Guston's late figurative paintings convey the violence of the world and the artist's uneasy role in it. Guston's cartoon-like imagery represents the artist's attempt to create an allegory of modern life that corresponds to its brutality and crudeness.

LEE BONTECOU

American, b. Providence, RI, 1931

Untitled, 1964

Welded steel, canvas, and wire

Purchase, 1968 (3545.1)

Initially interested in a form of figurative abstraction, Bontecou began building large-scale constructions made with canvas and other materials stretched over welded metal armatures in the mid-1950s. Toward the end of the decade, she began incorporating dark apertures of varying sizes to evoke unknown realms. Two spheres of science, clinical psychology and the exploration of outer space, resonate with Bontecou's work as they deal with spheres of awareness, both interior and exterior, which she strove to synthesize in her art. Drawing out a range of emotions from the viewer, Bontecou's work elicits a sense of wonder and trepidation, desire and repulsion, and addresses veiled aspects of human nature exposed by social and political conflict and war. Bontecou wished to "glimpse some of the fear, hope, ugliness, beauty, and mystery that exists in all of us and which hangs over all the young people today."

GIORGIO DE CHIRICO

Italian b. Vólos, Greece, 1888; d. Rome, Italy 1978

***The Great Machine*, 1925**

Oil on canvas

Gift of the Friends of the Academy, 1945 (309.1)

Born in Greece, de Chirico moved to Italy in 1909 and then to Paris two years later. After serving in the Italian military, de Chirico co-founded the Scuola Metafisica, an informal school of painting that asserted a “metaphysical” viewpoint described as Renaissance techniques applied to twentieth century imagery of the irrational. De Chirico’s desolate architectural images are usually depopulated and frequently depict irrational spaces and enigmatic juxtapositions, with perspective used emotionally instead of structurally. A dramatic use of light and shadow helps to convey a sense of mystery.

The Great Machine rises tower-like against the sky from the center of an Italianate square. The monumental construction is composed of odd-shaped two and three-dimensional forms stacked and topped by a white bust with a featureless, egg-shaped head. De Chirico often used mannequins or statues in place of human images, thereby rendering his paintings devoid of emotional significance. Influencing the work of the later surrealists, de Chirico was an important evolutionary precursor to Abstract Expressionism.

YVES TANGUY

French, b. Paris, France, 1900; d
Woodbury, CT, 1955

***The Long Rain*, 1942**

Oil on canvas

Gift of the Friends of the Academy, 1943 (262.1)

Yves Tanguy started painting in 1923 without any formal training, and by 1925 had joined the Surrealists. Today he is known for his haunting and mildly disturbing dreamscapes. In *The Long Rain*, stretching to the distant horizon, strangely colored and striped abstract forms populate a bleak plain. The large form on the left has some anthropomorphic qualities, but, like the other forms in the painting, it is primarily an odd composite of organic and mineral attributes. The harsh, hard-edged shadows cast by the disquieting forms lead a life of their own, disregarding any distorting effects of the plain or clouded sky. Of all the Surrealists, Tanguy made the fewest references to the everyday world of the five senses, thus creating works that plumb the depths of the imagination and subconscious mind.

JOHN McCracken

American, b. Berkeley, CA, 1934

***Blue Post and Lintel*, 1970**

Fiberglass

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R. Weisman, 1971
(4036.1)

Initially starting out as a painter, John McCracken moved towards sculpture early in his career, though he was more interested by color than either sculpture or painting. One of the earliest works by McCracken, *Blue Post and Lintel* takes the shape of one of the basic building blocks of architectural form. As simple, highly polished monochromatic forms, his work attempts to deny its own physical existence as an object, instead representing abstract visual ideas and objectifying color as its own structural element. McCracken's main artistic concern was with the correlation between the spiritual, cognitive, and the visual experience—a concern his art has continued to deal with throughout his career, even as his work has become more complex in physical form.

FRANCIS BACON

British, b. Dublin, Ireland, 1909; d. Madrid, Spain, 1992

***Three Studies for a Self-Portrait*, 1983**

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Clark, Jr., 1983
(5165.1)

Conventional concepts of the terms beautiful and ugly help little in coming to terms with Francis Bacon's art. His concentration on the "brutality of fact," his deliberate deforming and distorting of forms—half magic, half menace—is the method he uses to achieve this desire. Among Bacon's most immediate and compelling works are close-up portraits, small single paintings, diptychs, and triptychs, with the subject always a close friend, or as in this painting, himself. In one frontal and two three-quarter or profile views, Bacon records the salient data of his features, but he alters the natural forms, blurring, even obliterating them by dragging a dry brush or rubbing a rag over the surface of the wet paint. The bony substructure and flesh seem to merge and become fluxes or whorls of matter. Although Bacon declares he has no message to deliver, no hidden symbolic meanings, his works evoke a sense of the ephemeral nature of human existence.

MORRIS LOUIS

American, b. Baltimore, MD, 1912;
d. Washington, D.C., 1962

Turning, 1958

Acrylic on canvas

Purchase with Academy funds and funds from
Academy Volunteers, 1971 (3997.1)

In the mid-1950s, Baltimore-artist Morris Louis abandoned his early interest in abstraction influenced by Cubism and began laying unstretched and unprimed canvases on the floor and pouring on thin washes of paint. Over the next several years, Louis developed a distinctly personal approach to abstraction, painting numerous large canvases that are lyrical, even mystical, in mood. One in a series of paintings called *Veils*, this work, *Turning*, is composed of plumes of rich earth colors, that were stained one over the other, wet on wet, and were absorbed by the weave of the raw canvas. Dark reds, pale olives, and moss greens flow upwards, warmed by an underlying incandescent red-orange. The layered, or laminated, effect seems to shift before the viewer's eye. As were other pioneers of his generation such as Helen Frankenthaler, Louis was interested in "all-over" painting (later called "field painting"), which emphasizes the surface of the work and the validity of paint itself.

LOUISE NEVELSON

American, b. Kiev, Ukraine, 1899; d. New York, NY, 1988

***Black Zag X*, 1969**

Wood painted black, formica

Gift of the Estate of the Honorable Clare Booth Luce, 1988 (5719.1)

Abstraction and assemblage (the integration of disparate objects into a unique work of art) have played a key role in the development of modern art and find important expression in the work of Louise Nevelson. Although Nevelson worked in a variety of materials, ranging from Plexiglas to metal and stone, assemblages such as *Black Zag X*, composed of found or manufactured wood pieces, comprise her most noted works.

Nevelson preferred a monochromatic palette and typically painted her works either black or white. In *Black Zag X*, she composed within a selection of boxes numerous truncated cones, hollowed rectangular blocks, and other larger geometric wood cut-outs. The various forms repeat rhythmically, though when juxtaposed contrasting patterns are defined. As Nevelson considered the exchange of positive and negative space, mass and volume, and the standardization of identical forms and individuality of placement, she made an abstract statement of balance and harmony.

HANS HOFMANN

American, b. Weissenberg, Bavaria, 1880;
d. New York, NY, 1966

***Fragrance*, 1956**

Oil on canvas

Purchase, 1968 (3529.1)

Conservation treatment supported by
Mark Olival in honor of his nephew,
Mala'e Lowell Olival-Heffelfinger, 1998

A theoretician, teacher, and painter, Hofmann was one of the leading proponents of American abstract art, especially Abstract Expressionism. Having built his reputation in Europe, Hofmann travelled to America to teach at UC Berkeley during the summers of 1930 and 1931; soon after, he relocated to New York City where he taught at the Art Students League before opening his own art school in 1933. Nature was the starting point for Hofmann's creative ideas. His paintings are interpretations of sensations and objects experienced in nature, three-dimensional reality transformed into two-dimensional patterns of high-keyed colors.

Hofmann painted *Fragrance* in 1956, a time when he was working out a method of applying rectangularly shaped dabs of paint in heavy impasto. Bright blues, reds, oranges, and yellows seem drawn, as if by a magnet, to the center of the canvas, each interacting to create an explosive surface vitality. This vitality is reinforced by the illusion of advancing and receding planes, brought about by the properties of colors and the shape, size, and placement of the brushstrokes.

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

American, b. Port Arthur, TX, 1925; d.
Captiva Island, FL, 2008

***Trophy V (for Jasper Johns)*, 1962**

Combine-painting on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R. Weisman in
honor of James W. Foster, 1971 (4022.1)

In the 1950s, Rauschenberg was one of the leading proponents of the idea that painting should not be categorized as a purely two-dimensional art form. He helped break the traditional boundaries between sculpture and painting by creating works that joined both, a form he called "combines." *Trophy V (for Jasper Johns)* is an example of a combine, composed of freely painted areas and three-dimensional objects either attached to or set into the canvas. By selecting banal objects from contemporary life, Rauschenberg demonstrated that ordinary entities are worthy of aesthetic consideration.

Rauschenberg's use of recognizable subjects made him a transitional link, along with Jasper Johns, between Abstraction, Expressionism, and Pop Art. The title of this work, *Trophy V (for Jasper Johns)*, is a tribute to Rauschenberg's artist friend, with elements in the canvas alluding to the work of Jasper Johns. The manner in which the box was "painted out," the variety of gray tones, and the small map of the United States are each witty references to the work of Johns, an example of which may be viewed in this gallery.

HELEN FRANKENTHALER

American, b. New York, NY, 1928

Sun Frame, 1966

Acrylic on canvas

Purchase, Margaret Emerson Fund, 1966
(3386.1)

A pioneer in the development of color field painting, Frankenthaler adopted from the abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock the technique of pouring pigment on a large expanse of unstretched canvas laid on the floor. By initially saturating her unprimed support with oil and subsequently with acrylic paints, Frankenthaler eliminated the painterly brushstroke technique of earlier artists and created buoyant, spontaneous, color-filled abstractions. Her panoramas of light and color, begun in the 1950s, exerted a strong influence on other artists such as Morris Louis, a stained canvas of whose is exhibited nearby.

ADJA YUNKERS

American, b. Riga, Russia, 1900;
d. New York, NY, 1983

***The Polish Messenger*, 1962**

Pastel on canvas

Partial gift of an anonymous donor and partial purchase, 1965 (3331.1)

Adja Yunkers was born in the Imperial Russian Province of Latvia and received his art education in St. Petersburg. He left Russia at the time of the Revolution in 1917, and for the next twenty-two years lived and worked in southern Europe and Latin America. In 1939, Yunkers settled in Stockholm where he edited and published an art magazine.

In 1947 Yunkers immigrated to the United States, acquiring citizenship in 1953. At that time, he embarked on large-scale print and painting projects. Additionally, he illustrated books; the most important of which was a collection of poems written by the noted Mexican poet, Octavio Paz. As an artist Yunkers occupies an important position in the late stages of Abstract Expressionism.

JAMES BROOKS

American, b. St. Louis, MO, 1906;
d. Brookhaven, NY, 1992

***Untitled*, 1986**

Ink, crayon, and oil on paper

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Nakamura, 1986
(5455.1)

At age seventeen, James Brooks enrolled at Southern Methodist University as an art major; he also studied at the Dallas Art Institute. Three years later, Brooks moved to New York City where he studied at the Art Students League, while earning his living as a commercial letterer and display artist. From 1936 to 1942, he participated in the WPA's Federal Arts Project painting large murals, most of which were later destroyed.

During World War II, Brooks served as an artist correspondent, painting in a representative style. After the war, his style became freer and looser, strongly influenced by Analytical Cubism. By the end of the 1940s, he was diluting his paints in order to create stains on raw canvas. His use of subtle tone and calm moods sets his work apart from the more aggressive Abstract Expressionists. In his later paintings, Brooks introduced elegant calligraphy into the flat irregular shapes stained onto his canvas.

Brooks is considered a first generation Abstract Expressionist and for almost thirty years he taught at various art schools, mostly in the New York area.

JASPER JOHNS

American, b. Augusta, GA, 1930

NO, 1968/1969

Four color lithograph (aluminum and stone)
with embossing overall

Purchase, John Levas Fund, 1995 (25,748)

Jasper Johns moved to New York in 1952, supporting himself as a window decorator for fashionable stores. Although he attended art school for a short time, Johns is considered to be a self-taught artist. In spite of having very different painting styles, Johns and Robert Rauschenberg are credited with initiating the transition from Abstract Expressionism to Pop Art.

In 1958, Johns was catapulted from obscurity to fame due to a one-person show of his beautifully executed renderings of objects that he said, "were so well known that they were not well seen." These objects usually were flags, targets, numbers or letters. In 1960, Johns began to create lithographs, becoming so skilled in this medium that art historian Fredrick Hartt called him, "one of the greatest printmakers of the postmedieval era."

Emerson Woelffer

American, b. Chicago, IL, 1914;
d. Los Angeles, CA, 2003

***October Collage*, 1978**

Torn and cut paper collage

Purchase, in Memory of Nancy M. Spalding,
1978 (4703.1)

Emerson Woelffer attended The School of the Art Institute of Chicago for two years where his emphasis was on teaching art rather than on studio art training. During the 1930s and 1940s he worked as an art teacher in several schools in the eastern part of the United States.

In 1949 he moved to Italy and then to Mexico for ten years. When he returned to the United States he settled in Los Angeles. As well as producing many works of Abstract Expressionism, he taught at Southern California art schools and served as artist in residence at several Western museums including the Honolulu Academy of Arts. In 1970 while he was teaching in Honolulu, the Academy mounted a one person exhibition of his work.

In an exhibition catalogue of Woelffer's paintings Robert Motherwell wrote, "Emerson Woelffer has never wavered in his commitment to Abstract Expressionism".

SUEKO M. KIMURA

American, b. Honolulu, HI, 1912; d. 2001

Pali Cliffs

Ink on paper

Gift of Charlotte and Henry B. Clark, Jr., 2001
(26,938)

The culmination of Sueko Kimura's artistic career came in 2001 when the Honolulu Academy of Arts held a two person exhibition of her work and that of her former husband, Keichi Kimura. Her entire life centered around her intense desire to be an accomplished artist. As a teenager, Kimura left her rural Maui home to come to Honolulu to study art at the University of Hawai'i. In the late 1940s she and Keichi went to study art in Los Angeles and in New York City. At that time, New York was the art center of the world, and a loose association of painters, writers, poets, musicians and dancers were known as the New York School. The major thrust of the painting style was moving from Surrealism and abstract linearity to a much more emotional and lyrical style of painting. This emerging style, Abstract Expressionism, is a style in which the fluid movement of the lines in the painting are as important as balance and color harmony. The influence of this style is very evident in Kimuras' work.

Like many artists in this exhibition, Kimura worked first as a commercial illustrator and then, for twenty-five years, as an art teacher. In 1952, she was one of the first full-time female art instructors hired by the University of Hawai'i.

JULIO GONZALES

Spanish, b. Barcelona, Spain, 1876; d.
Arcueil, France, 1942

***Bound Figure*, 1936**

Pen and ink with crayon over graphite
on paper

Anonymous Gift, 1971 (15,875)

As a young man, Julio Gonzales worked in his father's metal smith workshop, taking art classes in the evening at the Escuela de Bellas Artes. When he was 24, he left Spain to study art in Paris.

Around 1918, Gonzalez developed an interest in the artistic possibilities of welding, providing technical assistance in executing sculptures in iron to Pablo Picasso. He also forged the armature for Constantin Brancusi's plaster sculptures. This drawing, *Bound Figure*, could well have been a sketch for a planned sculpture.

HARRY BERTOIA

American, b. San Lorenzo, Italy, 1915; d.
Barto, PA, 1978

***Sounding Sculpture*, 1971**

Bronze

Purchase, 1971 (4005.1)

ALEXANDER CALDER

American, b. Lawnton, PA, 1898;
d. New York, NY, 1976

Untitled

Lithograph

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R. Weisman, 1971
(15,916)

ALEXANDER CALDER

American, b. Lawnton, PA, 1898;
d. New York, NY, 1976

Untitled, 1967

Gouache on paper

Gift of Mr. Edgardo Acosta, 1971 (15,800)

JEAN DUBUFFET

French, b. La Havre, France, 1901; d.
Paris, France, 1985

Personage in a Landscape, 1960

Ink on paper

Purchase, Geraldine P. Clark Acquisition Fund,
1976 (16,824)

HARRY FONSECA

American, b. Sacramento, CA, 1946

***The Discovery of Gold in
California***, 1997

Acrylic on paper

Gift of Charlotte and Henry B. Clark, 2001
(26,890)

PHILIP GUSTON

American, b. Montreal, Canada, 1932;
d. Woodstock, NY, 1980

Untitled

Acrylic ink silkscreen on plexiglass

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R Weisman, 1971
(15,921)

CARL HOLTY

American, b. Freilburg, Germany, 1900;
d. New York, NY, 1973

Typing, 1942

Ink on paper

Purchase, 1994 (25,452)

ROBERT HUDSON

American, b. Salt Lake City, UT, 1938

Untitled, 1975

Acrylic on paper

Bequest of Karl K. Ichida in Honor of Robert S.
Ichida and Marie M. Ichida, 1994 (25,548)

KEICHI KIMURA

American, b. Waianae, HI, 1914;
d. Honolulu, HI, 1988

Untitled

Ink on paper

Gift of Charlotte and Henry B. Clark Jr., 2001
(26,935)

JOHN MCCRACKEN

American, b. Berkeley, CA, 1934

***Chimu*, 1965**

Wood, fiberglass, lacquer

Gift-Purchase, from the Frederick and Marcia
Weisman Foundation, 1972 (4034.1)

JOHN MCNAMARA

American, b. Cambridge, MA, 1950

***Specchio e Figura*, 1982**

Oil on canvas

Partial gift of the Artist and the Bess Cutler
Gallery and purchase, Shidler Family Foundation
Fund, 1987 (5657.1)

LOUISE NEVELSON

American, b. Kiev, Ukraine, 1899; d. New
York, NY, 1988

***Sky Enclosure II*, 1973**

Wood and painted metal

Purchase, National Endowment for the Arts
Grant and matching donations, 1974
(4235.1)

KENNETH NOLAND

American, b. Asheville, NC, 1924

Pixie's Green, 1971

Acrylic on canvas

Purchase, Funds from the National Endowment
for the Arts and Academy Friends, 1971

(4001.1)

MINORU OHIRA

Japanese, b. Niigata, Japan, 1950

Untitled, 1983

Pencil and ink wash on paper

Gift of Jeri Coates, 1987 (19,796)

RICHARD POUSETTE-DART

American, b. St. Paul, MN, 1916;
d. New York, NY 1992

Savage Rose, 1951

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Weisman in honor
of James W. Foster, 1971 (7990.1)

MARK TOBEY

American, b. Centerville, WI, 1890; d.
Basle, Switzerland, 1976

Fogged Perspective, 1961

Tempera on paper

Purchase, 1965 (3372.1)

MARK TOBEY

American, b. Centerville, WI, 1890; d.
Basle, Switzerland, 1976

Untitled, 1954

Tempera on paper

Gift of R. R. Heyum Trust, 1995 (25,753)