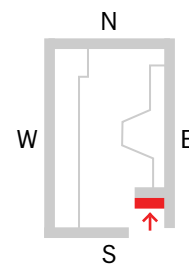
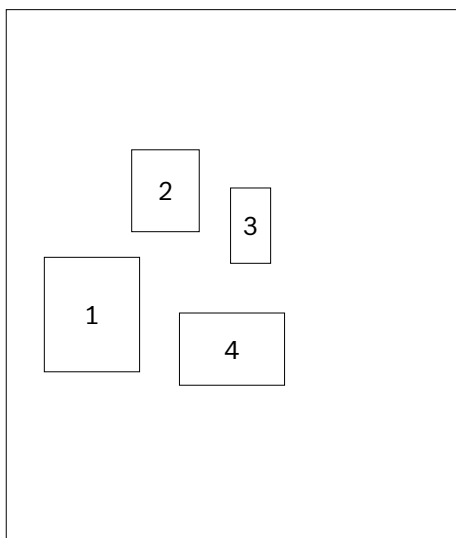


Artist's Choice

Less Is Morbid—Arthur Jafa

Entrance wall (front)



1 Ming Smith

American

David Murray in the Wings, Padova, Italy
1978

Gelatin silver print (hand-painted)

Acquired through the generosity of the Vera Louise Fraser Estate, 1979

In the 1960s, Smith was the first woman to join the Black photography collective Kamoinge—whose name is a Gikuyu word that translates to “a group of people acting together.” This hand-painted print depicts her husband, the acclaimed jazz saxophonist David Murray, before a performance. Jafa recalls being drawn to Smith’s photographic technique of using long exposures to create a blurring effect between her subjects and their surrounding environments.

2 Roy DeCarava

American, 1919–2009

Hallway 1953

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the artist, c. 1957

DeCarava described his photograph of a tenement building interior as being “alive” and “personal.” It was “not just one hallway; it was all the hallways that I grew up in.” With only dim ceiling lights and a tripod, he used a longer exposure to capture the available light—producing an image with grey tones and inky shadows.

3 Lygia Clark

Brazilian, 1920–1988

Study for Modulated Space no. 1

(*Espaço modulado no. 1*) 1958

Cut-and-pasted colored paper on paper

Acquired through the generosity of the Edward John Noble Foundation and Committee on Drawings Funds, 2005

4 Kase2 (Jeff Brown)

American, 1958–2011

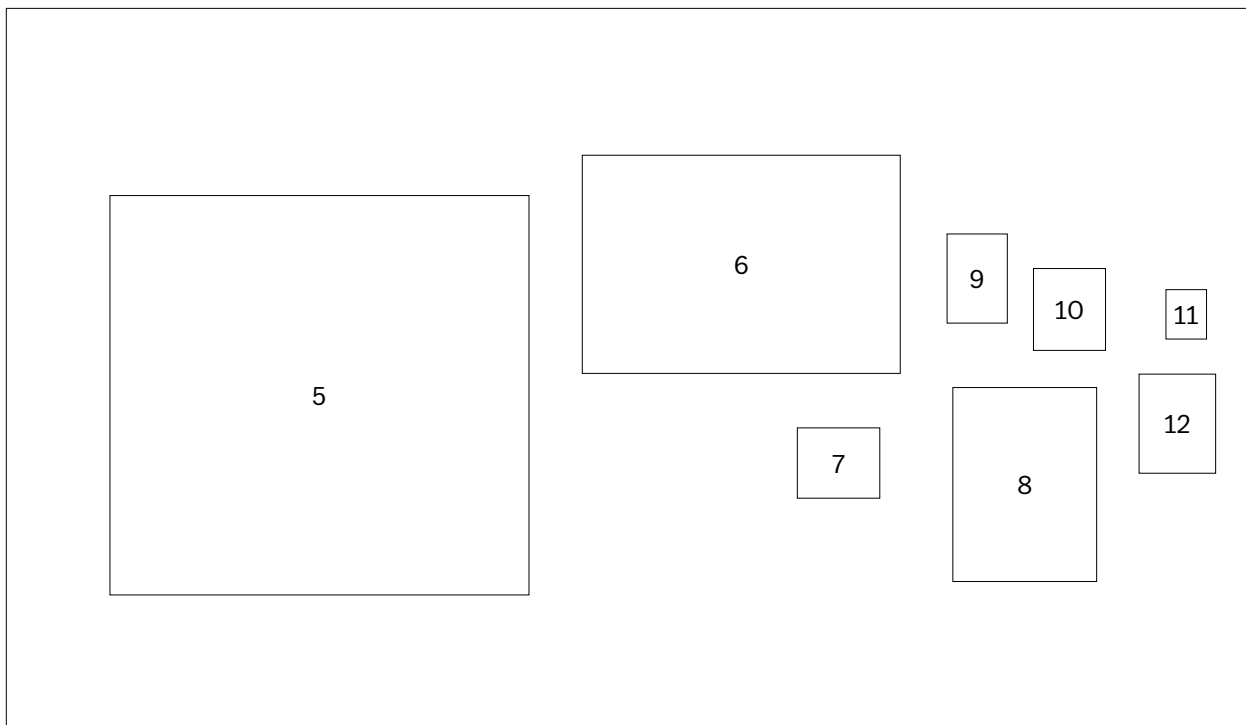
The Pen Master Creator c. 1970–86

Ballpoint pen and felt-tip pen on paper (recto and verso)

Gift of the Gilbert B. and Lila Silverman Instruction Drawing Collection, Detroit, 2018

This is one of many sketches for graffiti planned on walls and subway cars—spaces for individual experimentation and collaborative making. Kase2, a New York City writer and hip-hop legend also known as King of Style, developed a signature approach he called computer rock, in which he camouflaged the letters of his alias to the point of illegibility.

South wall



5 **Cy Twombly**
American, 1928–2011
Leda and the Swan Rome 1962
Oil, pencil, and crayon on canvas
Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest and The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection (both by exchange), 1994

6 **Jean-Michel Basquiat**
American, 1960–1988
Untitled 1981
Oilstick on paper
Fractional and promised gift of Sheldon H. Solow, 1991

7 **Objects included in the MoMA exhibition African Negro Art** 1935
Gelatin silver print
Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

Pulled from MoMA's archives, this photograph shows preparations for the Museum's 1935 exhibition *African Negro Art*. For the installation, MoMA borrowed artworks from private collections and European museums who had acquired the works through colonial looting in western and central Africa. Jafa notes both the image's "resounding absence of context around why the unnamed African artists made the objects they made" and the new meanings that those objects accumulated when presented together in a different context.

8 **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye**
British, born 1977
Skylark 2010
Oil on canvas
Gift of Ninah and Michael Lynne, 2017

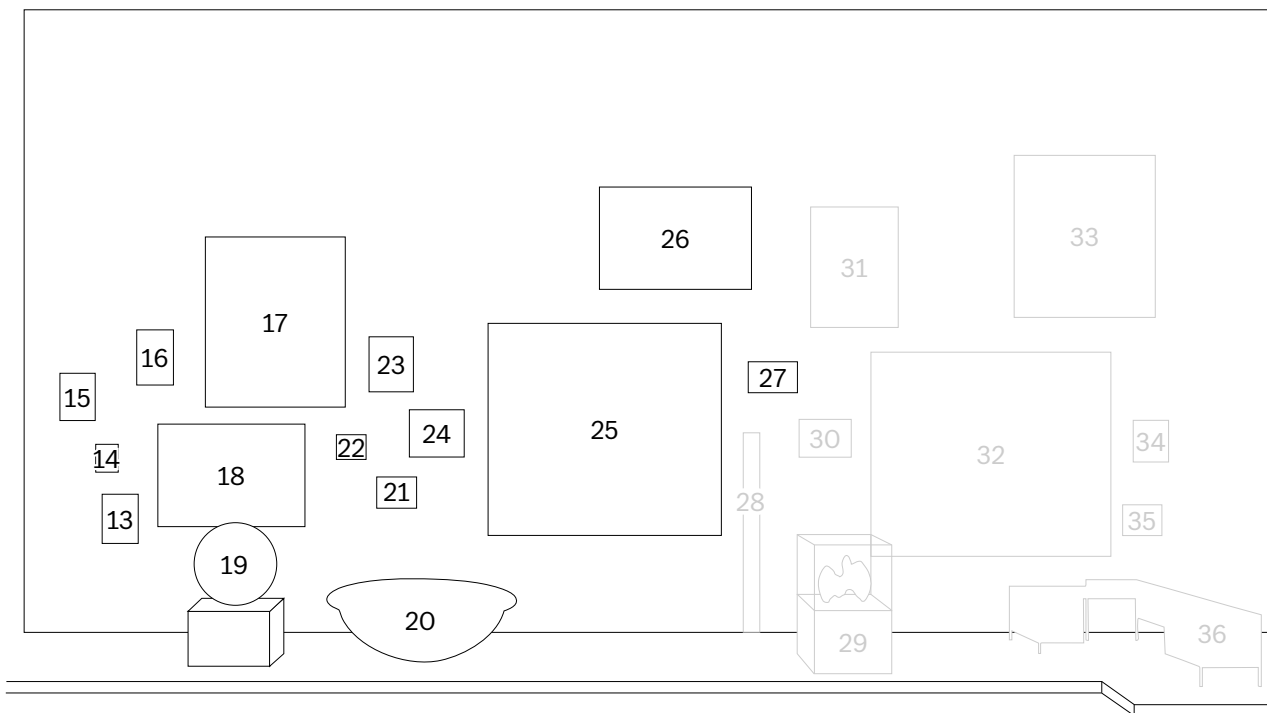
9 **Bill Traylor**
American, c. 1853–1949
Owls in Tree/Shoeing Mule c. 1939
Pencil on board
Gift of Charles and Eugenia Shannon, 1995

10 **Anthony Barboza**
American, born 1944
Untitled 1972
Gelatin silver print
Purchase, 1974

11 **Sanlé Sory**
Burkinabé, born 1943
Untitled 1970–85
Gelatin silver print
Committee on Photography Fund, 2018

12 **Sigmar Polke**
German, 1941–2010
Untitled c. 1973
Gelatin silver print, with applied color
Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder, 2011

West wall



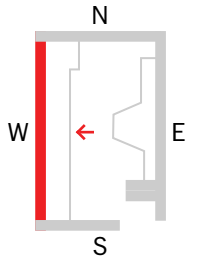
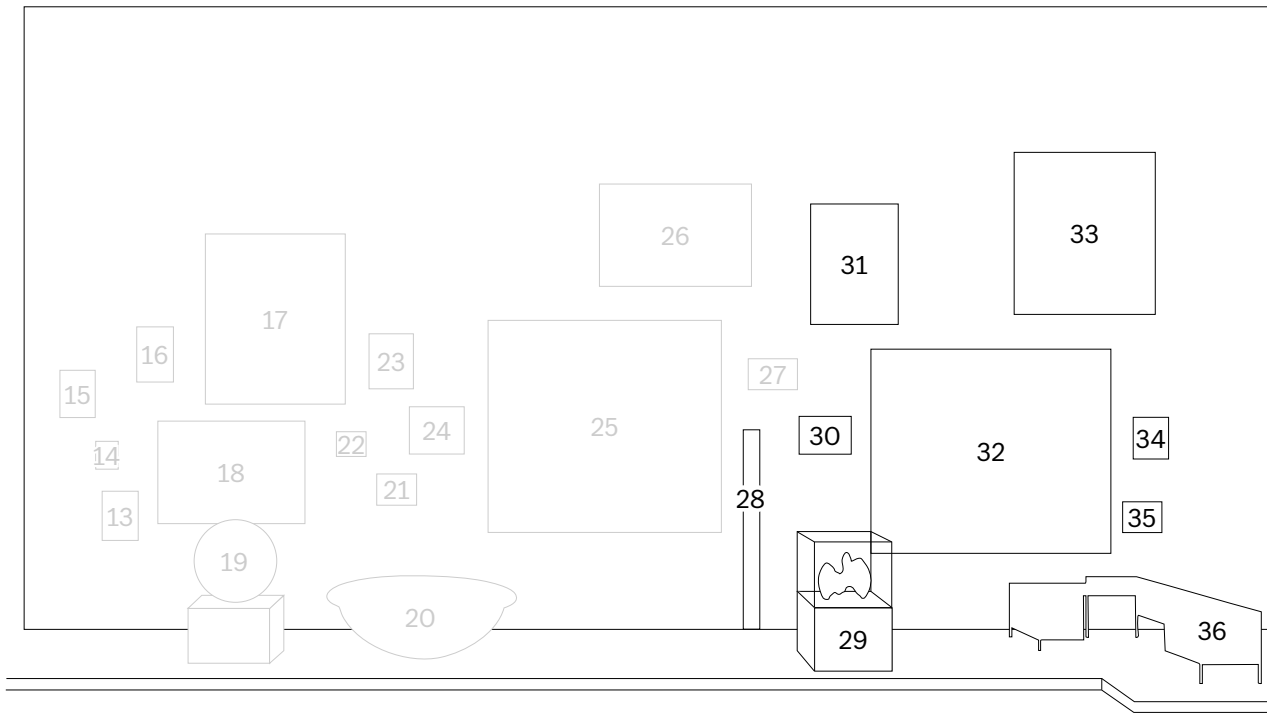
- 13 **Norman Lewis**
American, 1909–1979
City Night 1949
Oil on wood
Gift of Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, 2010
- 14 **Alfred H. Barr, Jr.**
American, 1902–1981
Dust jacket with chart designed by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., for the MoMA exhibition catalogue *Cubism and Abstract Art*, including his annotations 1936
Offset, printed in color, with pencil annotations
Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, VII.B.5. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York
- 15 **Jules Allen**
American, born 1947
Untitled from the series *The Hats and Hat Nots* 1987
Gelatin silver print
Purchase, 1990
- 16 **Christopher Williams**
American, born 1956
Untitled (Sammlung Haubrok, Berlin, Germany, 2007) 2007
Offset lithograph
Gift of the artist, 2013
- 17 **Wade Guyton**
American, born 1972
X Poster (Untitled, 2007, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen, 84 x 69 inches, WG1999) 2015
Digital print
Publisher: Printed Matter, New York
Printers: Supreme Digital and i3 Imaging Group
Edition: 100
Larry Aldrich Fund (by exchange), 2015
- 18 **Romare Bearden**
American, 1911–1988
The Dove 1964
Gelatin silver print, printed 1971
Gift of Marlene Hess and James D. Zirin, 2015

Bearden set out to make *The Dove* in collaboration with members of the Black artist collective Spiral, but ultimately completed the work on his own. The cascading, irregular shapes of bodies and buildings in the collaged image produce a feeling of movement that evokes the hustle and bustle of a New York City street.
- 19 **Fred Eversley**
American, 1941–2025
Untitled (Parabolic Lens) 1971
Three-color, three-layer cast polyester
Acquired through the generosity of Michael S. Ovitz and Gary and Karen Winnick, and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2017
- 20 **Cameron Rowland**
American, born 1988
Ingenio 2023
Nineteenth-century sugar kettle, made in England, used in Louisiana
Gift of Lonti Ebers, 2024

In Spanish, the colonial sugar mill was called the *ingenio*, which meant “the engine.” The mill was a necessary component of the sugar plantation. Harvested cane had to be milled quickly to keep it from rotting. The mill operated 16–18 hours a day. Enslaved black people grew the cane, harvested the cane, crushed the cane, and boiled the juice. The mill consisted of a series of open kettles that were made in Europe, exported to the colonies, and used by slaves to reduce cane juice into syrup and raw crystals. The ingenio operated through systematic torture. The regularity of punishment kept the sugar mill in near-constant production. “The slaves received the whip with more certainty and regularity than they received their food. It was the incentive to work and the guardian of discipline.”¹ Sugar was made this way for 400 years.
¹ C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Touissant l’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 12.
- 21 **Alfred Stieglitz**
American, 1864–1946
The Terminal 1893
Photogravure
Gift of Georgia O’Keeffe
- 22 **Hélio Oiticica**
Brazilian, 1937–1980
Red Monochrome 1959
Alkyd on board
Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros through the Latin American and Caribbean Fund in honor of Paulo Herkenhoff, 2016
- 23 **John Steuart Curry**
American, 1897–1946
John Brown 1939, published 1940
Lithograph
Publisher: Associated American Artists, New York
Printer: George C. Miller
Edition: One of two proofs before an edition of 250
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund (by exchange), 1990

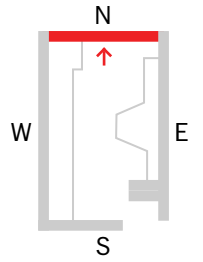
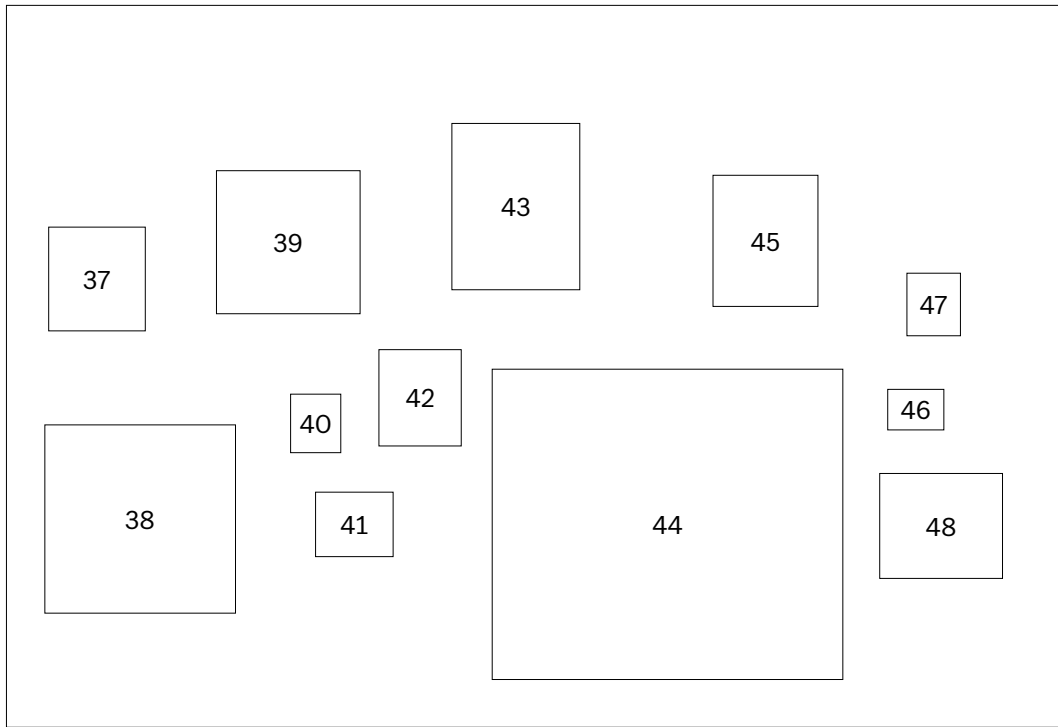
Curry portrays the white abolitionist John Brown—an evangelical who incited a slave insurrection in 1859—in a cross-like pose. Curry later incorporated the image into his mural for the State Capitol in Kansas, a battleground of pro- and anti-slavery forces during Brown’s life. The artist had recently seen Michelangelo’s *Moses* (1513–15) in Rome, which prompted him to depict Brown with a long beard.
- 24 **Andy Warhol**
American, 1928–1987
Birmingham Race Riot from *X + X (Ten Works by Ten Painters)* 1964
One from a portfolio of ten screenprints
Publisher: Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut
Printers: Ives-Sillman, Inc., and Sirocco Screenprinters, New Haven, Connecticut
Edition: 500
Gift of Harry C. Oppenheimer (by exchange), 1965
- 25 **Mark Rothko**
American, born Russia (now Latvia). 1903–1970
No. 16 (Red, Brown, and Black) 1958
Oil on canvas
Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1959
- 26 **Kazuo Shiraga**
Japanese, 1924–2008
Untitled 1964
Oil on canvas
Given anonymously, 2019
- 27 **Kase2 (Jeff Brown)**
American, 1958–2011
13 c. 1970–86
Spray paint, pencil, and ballpoint pen on paper
Gift of the Gilbert B. and Lila Silverman Instruction Drawing Collection, Detroit, 2018

West wall



- 28 **Ellsworth Kelly**
 American, 1923–2015
Curve XLIII 1984
 Sapele wood
 Gift of Douglas S. Cramer (by exchange), 2013
- 29 **Lygia Clark**
 Brazilian, 1920–1988
Sundial 1960
 Aluminum with gold patina
 Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros in honor of Rafael Romero, 2004
Sundial is one work within a series of movable metal sculptures originally intended to be rearranged by viewers into different shapes and ultimately folded up to lay flat. Clark’s interest in three-dimensional space led her to take on a prominent role in the Brazilian art movement Neo-Concretism, before eventually abandoning it.
- 30 **Joseph E. Yoakum**
 American, 1891–1972
Mt Popocatepetl of Sra Madre Occidental Range near Mexico City C.M. 1967
 Blue and brown ballpoint pen and colored pencil on paper
 Gift of the Raymond K. Yoshida Living Trust and Kohler Foundation, Inc., 2011
- 31 **Romare Bearden**
 American, 1911–1988
The Silent Valley of Sunrise 1959
 Oil and casein on canvas
 Given anonymously, 1960
- 32 **Jean-Michel Basquiat**
 American, 1960–1988
Glenn 1985
 Acrylic, oil stick, and photocopy collage on canvas
 Private collection
 Basquiat’s title refers to Glenn O’Brien, a writer who was the artist’s friend from age eighteen. O’Brien wrote that Basquiat bantered about the artists Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol “like they were the heavyweight champions, and he was a contender.” Jafa attributes Basquiat’s artistic greatness to being “a Black everyman” who expressed the complexity of diasporic Blackness poetically by layering text, images, and other found material.
- 33 **Willem de Kooning**
 American, born the Netherlands. 1904–1997
Untitled V 1982
 Oil on canvas
 Gift of Philip Johnson, 1998
- 34 **Frank Auerbach**
 British, born Germany. 1931–2024
Ruth I 1994
 Etching and aquatint
 Publisher: Marlborough Graphics Ltd., London
 Printer: Studio Prints, London
 Edition: 30
 Johanna and Leslie J. Garfield Fund, 1994
- 35 **Kase2 (Jeff Brown)**
 American, 1958–2011
Kool Kid #1 1979
 Felt-tip pen on paper
 Gift of the Gilbert B. and Lila Silverman Instruction Drawing Collection, Detroit, 2018
- 36 **Cameron Rowland**
 American, born 1988
Attica Series Desk 2016
 Steel, powder coating, and laminated particleboard, distributed by Corcraft
 Rental at cost with funds provided by the Fund for the Twenty-First Century, 2016
 The Attica Series Desk is manufactured by prisoners in Attica Correctional Facility. Prisoners seized control of the D-Yard in Attica from September 9th to 13th 1971. Following the inmates’ immediate demands for amnesty, the first in their list of practical proposals was to extend the enforcement of “the New York State minimum wage law to prison industries.” Inmates working in New York State prisons are currently paid \$0.16 to \$1.25 an hour. Inmates in Attica produce furniture for government offices throughout the state. This component of government administration depends on inmate labor.
 Rental at cost: Artworks indicated as “Rental at cost” are not sold. Each of these artworks may be rented for 5 years for the total cost of the Corcraft products that constitute it.

North wall



37 **Frank Auerbach**
British, born Germany. 1931–2024
Head of Jake 2006–07
Oil on canvas
Gift of an anonymous donor, 2008

38 **Piet Mondrian**
Dutch, 1872–1944
Broadway Boogie Woogie 1942–43
Oil on canvas
Given anonymously, 1943

Mondrian fled Nazi Germany in 1941 with the help of the art historians Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and Margaret Scolari Barr, MoMA's first director and his wife. The night Mondrian arrived in New York, the Barrs introduced him to Boogie Woogie music, a form of syncopated jazz characterized by piano playing with repetitive bass patterns on the left hand and improvisational melodies on the right hand.

39 **Alma Woodsey Thomas**
American, 1891–1978
Fiery Sunset 1973
Acrylic on canvas
Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2015

Thomas's abstract paintings, like *Fiery Sunset*, often depict the sky and celestial bodies using her trademark streaks of color and thick brushstrokes. Jafa's inclusion of *Fiery Sunset* reflects his interest in cosmological imagery, which he describes as portraying "individual entities" or "clustered groups," depending on the perspective of the viewer.

40 **Roy DeCarava**
American, 1919–2009
Untitled c. 1950
Gelatin silver print
Nelson Rockefeller Fund, 1950

41 **Hélio Oiticica**
Brazilian, 1937–1980
Metaesquema No. 348 1958
Gouache on board
Purchased with funds given by Maria de Lourdes Eglydio Villela, 1998

42 **William Eggleston**
American, born 1939
Greenwood, Mississippi c. 1972
Dye transfer print, printed 1986
Acquired through the generosity of the John E. Galvin Charitable Trust on behalf of the Crouse Family, 1987

Eggleston photographed everyday life in Tennessee and Mississippi, where he lived. His images capture scenes with a directness that causes them to appear strange or uncanny. Jafa notes the way Eggleston's Southern Gothic images picture "some very sleazy shit": "The misbegotten nature of American society often gets normalized. But in Eggleston's work, it gets denormalized."

43 **Ming Smith**
American
Invisible Man, Somewhere, Everywhere 1991
Inkjet print, printed 2010
Geraldine J. Murphy Fund, 2010

44 **Lutisha Pettway**
Bars c. 1950
Cotton and denim
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Museum purchase, 2002

This work's title refers to a pattern of the same name established during the 1930s by the first generation of women quilters in Gee's Bend, Alabama. Rectangular strips of work clothes, worn by Black American farmers when harvesting cotton, are adjoined in shapes resembling the wood planks of local architecture. This quilting practice continues to take place in intimate settings in Alabama.

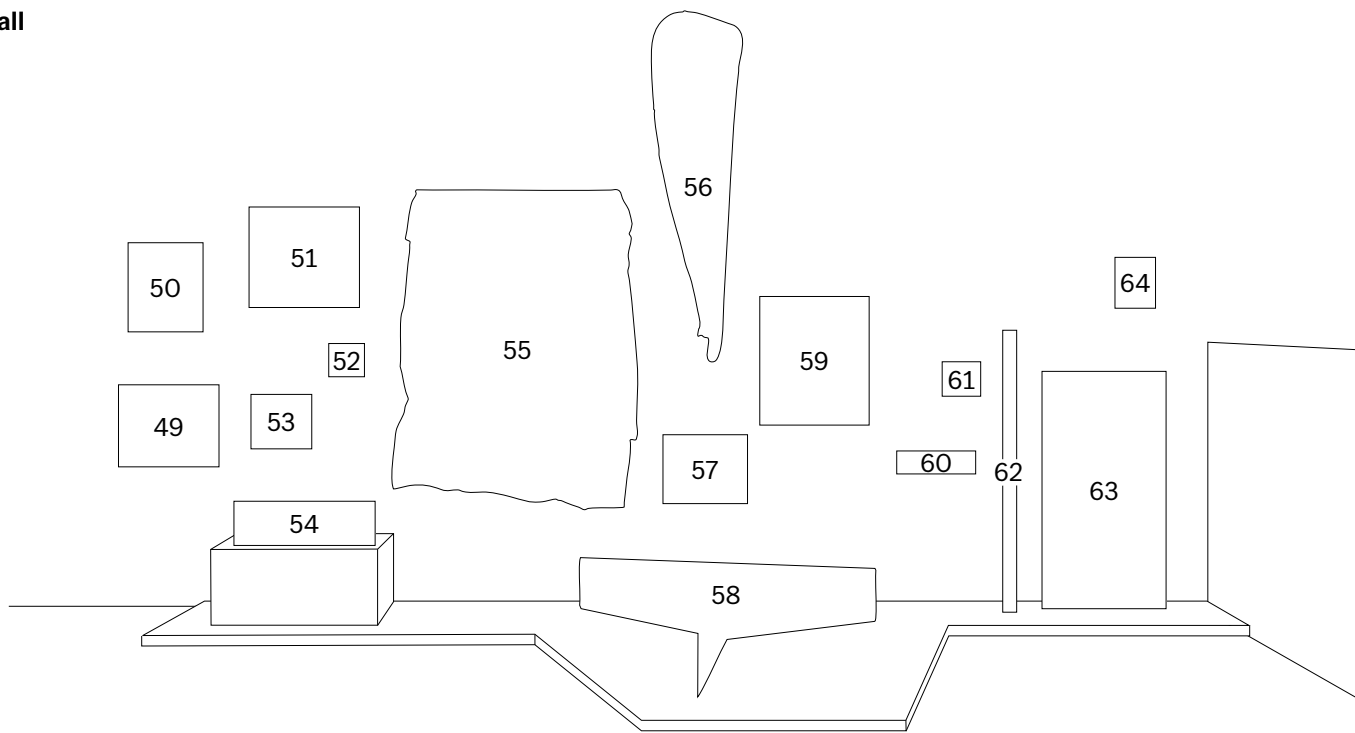
45 **Lucio Fontana**
Italian, born Argentina. 1899–1968
Spatial Concept: Expectations 1959
Synthetic polymer paint on slashed burlap
Philip Johnson Fund, 1960

46 **Kase2 (Jeff Brown)**
American, 1958–2011
AND
Unidentified artists
Nationalities unknown
Henry 1982
Ink and pressure-sensitive tape on paper
Gift of the Gilbert B. and Lila Silverman Instruction Drawing Collection, Detroit, 2018

47 **Robert Ryman**
American, 1930–2019
Surface Veil 18 1/2" × 15" 1970
Oil on fiberglass with waxed paper frame and masking tape
Gift of the Denise and Andrew Saul Fund and the Scaler Foundation, 1986

48 **Beauford Delaney**
American, 1901–1979
Composition 16 1954–56
Oil on canvas
Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2012

East wall



49 Kerry James Marshall

American, born 1955

Untitled 2004

Ink and graphite on paper

Gift of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, and purchase, 2004

50 Helen Frankenthaler

American, 1928–2011

Rambles 1987–88

Lithograph, drypoint, and etching

Publisher and printer: Polígrafa Obra Gráfica, Barcelona

Edition: 75

Gift of Dian Woodner in honor of Bill and Bobbie Thomas, 2019

51 Torkwase Dyson

American, born 1973

Metamorphosis 1 2023

Aquatint with chine collé

Publisher and printer: Paulson Fontaine Press, Berkeley, California

Edition: 12

Gift of Richard J. Gerrig and Timothy Peterson, 2024

52 Arthur P. Bedou

American, 1882–1966

Booker T. Washington on Horseback 1915

Gelatin silver print

Acquired through the generosity of Jill and Norman Korostoff in honor of Edythe Korostoff, 2011

53 Jacques-Enguérand Gourgue

Haitian, 1930–1996

Magic Table 1947

Oil on board

Inter-American Fund, 1948

54 Hélio Oiticica

Brazilian, 1937–1980

B16 – Bolide – Box 12, “Archeological” 1964–65

Polyvinyl acetate and vinyl-acrylic paint with earth on wood structure, nylon net, corrugated cardboard, mirror, glass, rocks, earth, and fluorescent lamp

Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros in honor of Paulo Herkenhoff, 2004

55 David Hammons

American, born 1943

Untitled 2010

Acrylic and metallic enamel paint on canvas with plastic

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan L. Halpern and bequest of Richard S. Zeisler (both by exchange), 2011

Jafa has called this canvas not a painting but a “painted,” emphasizing Hammons’s action in making the object. The abstract canvas is cloaked in everyday materials often used for moving house. Barely visible through the plastic’s rips and tears, Hammons’s gestural brushstrokes appear like a secret language being revealed.

56 Martin Puryear

American, born 1941

Greed’s Trophy 1984

Steel rod and wire, wood, rattan, and leather

David Rockefeller Fund, 1984

In the mid-1960s, Puryear learned practical woodworking in both Sierra Leone and Sweden. The wire and cage-like shape of this sculpture resemble a hunter’s trap or a fisherman’s basket, although the work was not modeled on any one object’s design. While Puryear’s artistic process takes cues from utilitarian items, Jafa observes that “there’s nothing accidental or unauthored about Puryear’s pieces.”

57 Jacob Lawrence

American, 1917–2000

Street Shadows 1959

Egg tempera on board

Gift of Ellen Kern and Gail Garlick in memory of their parents, Jewel and Lewis Garlick, 2000

58 Bruce Nauman

American, born 1941

Model for Triangular Depression 1977

Plaster, burlap, expanded steel mesh, and steel beams

Gift of Werner and Elaine Dannheisser, 1996

Nauman’s *Model for Triangular Depression* features three sections of an unembellished plaster model—for a triangle-shaped hole in the ground—which are displayed as a sculpture in and of itself. Jafa, who grew up in a family of bricklayers and builders, is interested in how Nauman’s sculpture “looks like something discarded from a construction site.” Nauman, Jafa explains, “has this ability to extract from spaces of deformation.”

59 Richard Prince

American, born 1949

Tell Me Everything 1987

Acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas

Gift of Steven and Alexandra Cohen, 2016

60 Donald Judd

American, 1928–1994

Untitled 1969

Brass and plexiglass

Gift of Philip Johnson, 1971

61 Alvin Baltrop

American, 1948–2004

Untitled from The Piers 1975–86

Gelatin silver print

The Family of Man Fund, 2017

62 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

American, born Germany. 1886–1969

Column Cover for the German Pavilion, International Exposition, Barcelona, Spain 1928–29

Chrome-plated steel

Purchase, 1986

63 Wade Guyton

American, born 1972

Untitled 2009

Digital print on plywood

Publisher: Wade Guyton

Printer: Selecto-Flash, New Jersey

Edition: 7

Acquired through the generosity of Peter H. Friedland, 2012

64 David Hammons

American, born 1943

Money Tree (for Parkett, no. 31) 1992

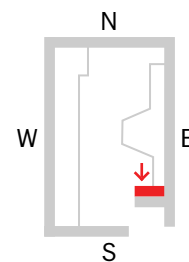
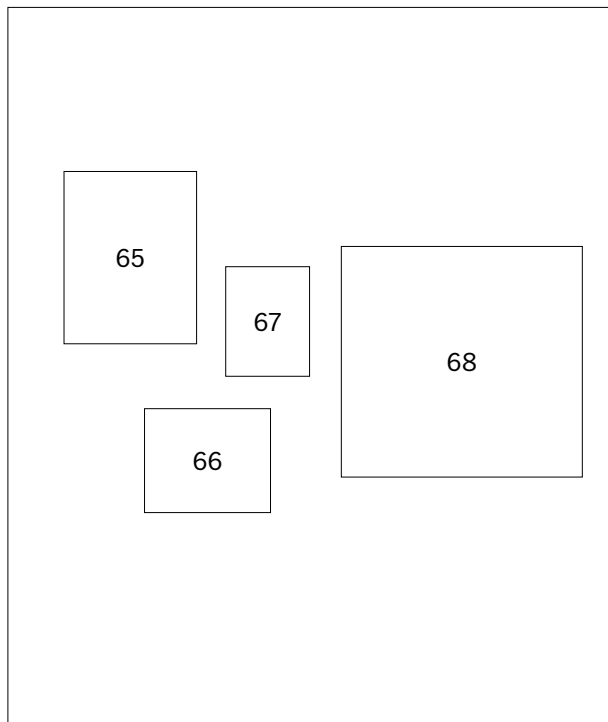
Gelatin silver print

Publisher: Parkett Publishers, Zürich and New York

Edition: 70

Riva Castleman Endowment Fund, Lily Auchincloss Fund, and Gift of Parkett, 1998

Entrance wall (back)



65 Roy DeCarava

American, 1919–2009
Man Coming Up Subway Stairs 1952
Gelatin silver print
Gift of the artist, 1953

66 Ming Smith

American
Mother and Child, Harlem, NY 1976
Gelatin silver print
Committee on Photography Fund, 2018

67 Eugene Buechel

American, born Germany. 1874–1954
Mary Jackson from Rosebud and Pine Ridge Photographs February 11, 1923
Gelatin silver print
Gift of David Wing, 1976

Mary Jackson's photo portrait was taken by Buechel, a Jesuit missionary, on Rosebud Indian Reservation of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Her hooded, black dress and short hair suggest that Jackson likely participated in activities at Rosebud's St. Francis Mission. Missions sought to convert Indigenous peoples to Christianity and to eliminate Native spirituality, culture, and language. Her hands folded gracefully, Jackson confronts the camera with a self-assured gaze—enlivening the photo with her presence.

68 Gerhard Richter

German, born 1932
Meadowland 1985
Oil on canvas
Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller, Betsy Babcock, and Mrs. Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Funds, 1985

These annotations were written by Sarah Lou Haddad, Summer 2025 Curatorial Intern; Thomas Lax, Curator; and Cam McEwen, Studio Museum/MoMA Fellow, Department of Media and Performance. Cameron Rowland's texts are components of the artworks.

Certain works in this display are swapped out for conservation reasons throughout the duration of the exhibition. This handout is accurate for the following dates: May 29–July 5, 2026.