# A century of American drawing from the collection: the Museum of Modern Art, May 23-September 17, 1996

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# A Century of American Drawing from the collection

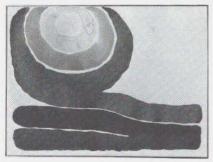
The Museum of Modern Art, May 23-September 17, 1996

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This exhibition emerged out of a recently completed project to catalogue the Museum's permanent collection of works on paper by American artists. sponsored by a grant from The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc. The selection in these galleries represents a small fraction of over two thousand cataloqued works and traces the history of drawing in this country as it unfolded in the twentieth century. Despite widely disparate stylistic developments, these works are unified by certain characteristics: expansiveness, literalness, and the affinity for a distinctly American subject matter.

Early in the century, the conflict between urban realism and European modernist styles defined the search for a uniquely American idiom. In 1895 a group of artists dubbed the Ashcan School emerged, drawing on urban life as a source of inspiration. The journalistic detail and immediacy of observation apparent in William Glackens's Washington Square (1913) embodies the group's enthusiasm for the pulse of the American city. Among other artists of the Ashcan School included here are Maurice Prendergast and George Bellows.

The 1913 Armory Show presented the first opportunity for artists in the United States to view the radically modern work of Paul Cézanne, Henri



Georgia O'Keeffe *Evening Star, III* (1917) Mr. and Mrs. Donald B. Straus Fund

Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Marcel Duchamp. In spite of public derision, the exhibition's effects on American art were profound and irrevocable. The influence of the European avant-garde also marks the work of American artists who spent extended periods of time in Europe, such as Marsden Hartley and Arthur Dove. Hartley's *Birch Grove*, *Autumn* (1910) clearly reveals his contact with the Expressionism of the Blue Rider group, then active in Germany.

An early advocate of modernism, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz opened three galleries in New York—291 (1905–17), The Intimate Gallery (1925–28), and An American Place (1929)—which provided meeting points and exhibition spaces for Hartley, Dove, John Marin, Charles Demuth, and Georgia O'Keeffe. The strongly individual abstractions of O'Keeffe and Dove find

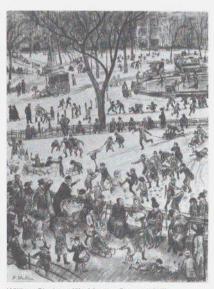
inspiration in the American landscape, as in the former's *Evening Star, III* (1917), which bears a monumental spirit despite its modest size.

In the 1920s, America's burgeoning economy spurred the growth of its cities. Bridges, factories, and skyscrapers were subjects of fascination from which a post-World War I urban and industrial identity was forged. For example, Marin's Lower Manhattan (1920) is a mechanized transmutation of a bridge in watercolor-a medium that lends itself to the artist's buoyant, notational style. Artists outside metropolitan centers studied the machinery of the Industrial Age as well, as typified by Preston Dickinson's Grain Elevators, Omaha (1924). Such specifically American subject matter is a defining feature of Precisionism, the predominant visual idiom of the period. Charles Sheeler's drawings demonstrate the refined aestheticism and gridded framework characteristic of the movement. The realism of Edward Hopper displays the existential uneasiness and economic instability that materialized at the end of the Roaring Twenties, His Box Factory, Gloucester (1928) depicts a bleak, barren street in a run-down industrial town

The unprecedented economic Depression of the 1930s led to the creation of the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Program (WPA/FAP), which supported artists through commissions during this period. The somber climate spawned a group of artists known as the Social Realists, among whom Ben Shahn stands out for his ability to capture the mood of the era.

Stuart Davis, another WPA artist, created works that testify to the continuing influence of the European avant-garde through their reconciliation of Cubism with the American visual vernacular. Like Davis, Jacob Lawrence used expressive color and collage-like patterning in his Migration series (1940–41), which narrates African-Americans' quest for a better life in the North.

Due to the political instability of Europe during the 1930s and subsequently during World War II, the immigration of European artists to the U.S. steadily increased. They introduced Surrealism into the American imagination, sparking a gradual transition from figuration to abstraction. Artists working in New York in the 1940s, such as William Baziotes, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko.



William Glackens Washington Square (1913) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller



Edward Hopper Box Factory, Gloucester (1928) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

embraced automatic drawing as a method of penetrating the subconscious mind and appropriated ritualistic symbols from Native American cultures in their quest for universal imagery. Their responsiveness to the Surrealist vocabulary of dreams stemmed from the desire to break free from the insular provincialism of preceding American art in favor of a vision shaped by the nightmarish reality of world events.

Abstract Expressionism became the first internationally acclaimed American art movement. Its acceptance by the public and the mythic stature assigned to the artists associated with it contributed to shifting the focal point for the creation and discussion of new art from Paris to New York. During the immediate postwar years, the Abstract Expressionists personified the American ideal of individualism, each establishing a highly idiomatic style. Pollock and Rothko sought to transmit the experience of the picture as a whole: in Pollock's Untitled (c. 1950) through the charged energy of his gestures—the black configurations on white paper negating the space read between figure and

ground—and in Rothko's Untitled (1968) through the emotional pull of intense. pure color. The Dutch-born Willem de Kooning remained more closely tied to Cubist notions of pictorial structure, as seen in Seated Woman (1952), part of a series of drawings that were cut up and recombined to create a collaged. disjointed effect evoking the fracture of urban life. Many of the Abstract Expressionists' drawings served as studies for their monumental paintings. For example, the swift, thick, linear brushstrokes on telephone book pages in Franz Kline's Untitled II (c. 1950-52) would be translated into sweeping arm movements over a large-scale canvas.

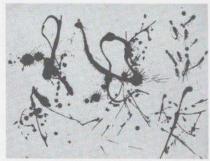
As early as the mid-1950s, artists began to reject the heroic aspirations of the Abstract Expressionists, Strongly influenced by the Duchampian example of composer John Cage and the performances called Happenings, the new generation ushered in the next decade's challenging stance toward the very nature of a work of art. For their subject matter, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns both turned to found objects and images from the everyday environment, a practice that reached its pinnacle with Pop art. Roy Lichtenstein's comic-book-style Brushstrokes (1966-68) subverts the grandiose notion of the painter asserting himself through each gesture, Andy Warhol's Roll of Bills (1962) communicates a detachment indicative of a mechanized, consumeroriented society.

Another aspect of the art of the 1960s reacted against painterly illusionism, reducing art to minimal characteristics, as exemplified in Frank Stella's resolute geometry. In Sol Lewitt's wall drawings the conception of a work of art takes precedence over the finished product, since they were expressly designed to be executed with or by assistants and subsequently destroyed. Increasingly during this time, artworks began to document concepts for larger projects, as evident in Bruce Nauman's Storage Capsule for the Right Rear Quarter of My Body (1966), Eva Hesse's Repetition Nineteen I (1967–68), and Claes Oldenburg's Dropped Cup of Coffee (1967).

The significance of scale has become a critical element of work on paper since the 1970s. Whether working on a large single sheet or using manifold sheets joined together, as in Elizabeth Murray's *Popeye* (1982), artists have increasingly turned to drawing as a primary conceptual medium, producing drawings as autonomous works of art.

A resurgence of figuration has informed much contemporary art, foreshadowed by the cartoonlike style adopted by Philip Guston in the 1970s (seen here in two works from 1980) and also represented in sketchbooks by Tom Otterness (1983-84) and in the untitled 1984 watercolor of a female nude by David Salle. Reacting against the self-referentiality of Minimalism and abstraction, many artists in the 1980s and 1990s have reincorporated subject matter-political commentary, caricature, parody, allegory—into their art. Adapting the idioms of graffiti and cartoons, the drawings of Jean-Michel Basquiat and Richard Prince share a charged, graphic edginess.

The development of contemporary abstraction has been parallel to the



Jackson Pollock **Untitled** (c. 1950) The Joan and Lester Aynet Fund

reemergence of the representational. Robert Morris's *Blind Time III* (1985) (executed by the artist while he was blindfolded), Brice Marden's meditative *Rain* (1991), and Pat Steir's Untitled (*Water*) (1984) comment on the process of drawing and its traditional illusory function, unencumbered by narrative.

Through the immediacy of drawing, this exhibition presents the range and depth of the stylistic inventions that contributed to the evolution of a particularly American aesthetic.

Mary Chan Kathleen Curry Christina Houstian Curatorial Assistants Department of Drawings

This brochure is made possible by The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

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# A Century of American Drawing from the collection

May 23-September 17, 1996

All drawings are from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art. All works are on paper unless otherwise indicated.

# Jean-Michel Basquiat 1960–1988

Untitled (1981)
Oilstick, 40 x 60" (101.6 x 152.4 cm)
Fractional gift of Sheldon H.
Solow

# William Baziotes

1912-1963

The Prisoner (c. 1942) Gouache and pen and ink, 14 x 11¾" (35.6 x 29 cm) The Joan and Lester Avnet Fund

# George Bellows

1882-1925

Under the Elevated (c. 1908–12) Watercolor, brush and ink, and pencil, 5¾ x 9" (14.6 x 22.7 cm) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

#### Peter Blume

Born Russia, 1906–1992 To U.S.A. 1911

Study for Parade (Waterfront, Manhattan) 1929 Gouache and varnish on cardboard, 20 ¼ x 14" (51.4 x 35.6 cm) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

# Louise Bourgeois Born France, 1911

To U.S.A. 1938 Untitled (1989) Ink, charcoal, and colored crayon on burnt paper, 8 ½ x 11" (21.6 x 28 cm) Gift of Agnes Gund and Maria-Gaetana Matisse

# Charles Burchfield

1893-1967

The Night Wind 1918 Watercolor, gouache, and pencil, 21½ × 21½" (54.4 × 55.5 cm) Gift of A. Conger Goodyear

#### Ralston Crawford

Born Canada, 1906–1978 To U.S.A. 1910

Sanford Tanks (1939)
Watercolor, pen and ink, and pencil, 12 x 16" (30.6 x 40.6 cm)
Acquired with matching funds from George M. Jaffin and the National Endowment for the Arts

## **Stuart Davis**

1892-1964

New York Waterfront (1938) Gouache, 12 x 15%\* (30.6 x 40.5 cm) Given anonymously

#### Charles Demuth

1883-1935

Vaudeville Musicians 1917 Watercolor and pencil, 13 x 8" (33 x 20.3 cm) Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Acrobats 1919 Watercolor and pencil, 13 x 7 1/8" (33.2 x 20.3 cm) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

# **Preston Dickinson**

1891-1930

Grain Elevators, Omaha (1924) Brush and pen and ink, charcoal, pencil, and pastel, 20 ½ x 14" (50.8 x 35.6 cm) The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection



Jasper Johns *Jubilee* (1960) The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection

# Richard Diebenkorn

1922-1993

Untitled (Ocean Park) 1977 Watercolor, synthetic polymer paint, gouache, watercolor, and pencil on cut-and-pasted paper, 18% x 33" (47.4 x 84 cm) Purchase

# Arthur G. Dove

1880-1946

Abstraction Untitled (c. 1917–20) Charcoal,  $20 \frac{1}{2} \times 17 \frac{1}{2}$ " (52 x 43.2 cm) Given anonymously

#### Sam Francis

1923–1994 Worked in France, 1950–1960 Untitled (1958) Watercolor, 27 x 40 %" (68.6 x 102 cm) Gift of Udo M. Reinach Estate

# William Glackens

1870-1938

Washington Square (1913) Charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, gouache, and watercolor, 29 ½ x 22 ½" (73.9 x 56.2 cm) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

#### Robert Gober

Born 1954 Untitled (1985) Pencil, 14 x 17" (35.5 x 43 cm) Gift of Barbara G. Pine Arshile Gorky (Vosdanig Manoog Adoian) Born Armenia, 1904–1948

Born Armenia, 1904–1 To U.S.A. 1920

Untitled (Écorché) (1932) Pencil, 24¾ x 19¾" (62.8 x 48.5 cm) Purchased with funds given by Leon D. Black

# **Adolph Gottlieb**

1903-1974

Ashes of Phoenix (1948) Gouache and pencil, 18 x 23%" (45.7 x 60.3 cm) Purchased with funds given by Leon D. Black

John D. Graham

(Ivan Dombrowski) Born Ukraine, 1881–1961 To U.S.A. 1920

Sketchbook 1938–42 Ink, colored crayon, blue ball-point pen, and cut-and-taped paper, each page 9 ½ x 7" (24.1 x 17.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kahn

Sketchbook 1943–44 Pencil and colored pencil, each page 10 x 8" (25.4 x 20.4 cm) Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kahn

Sketchbook 1949–50 Pencil and colored pencil, each page 9 ½ × 12 ½" (24.2 × 30.9 cm) Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kahn

# Philip Guston

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ller

Born Canada, 1913–1980 To U.S.A. 1919 Untitled 1951 Brush and ink, 17 x 23 ¾" (43.3 x 59 cm) Gift of Richard E. Salomon and Herbert Ferber (by exchange)

Untitled (1980) Synthetic polymer paint and ink on board, 19 ½ x 30" (50.5 x 76 cm) Gift of Musa Guston

Untitled (1980) Synthetic polymer paint and ink on board, 20 x 30" (50.9 x 76.2 cm) Gift of Musa Guston

# Marsden Hartley

1877-1943

Birch Grove, Autumn (1910) Oil on cardboard, 12 % x 12 %" (30.6 x 30.6 cm) Lee Simonson Bequest

# Eva Hesse

Born Germany, 1936–1970 To U.S.A. 1939

Repetition Nineteen I 1967–68 Gouache, watercolor, and pencil, 11¼ x 14½° (28.4 x 37.8 cm) Gift of the Eva Hesse Estate

# **Edward Hopper**

1882-1967

Box Factory, Gloucester (1928) Watercolor and pencil, 13 % x 19 % (35.2 x 50.5 cm) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

# Jasper Johns

Born 1930

Jubilee (1960)
Graphite wash, stencil, and pencil, 31 % x 25 %" (79.7 x 63.6 cm)
The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection

# Franz Kline

1910-1962

Untitled, II (c. 1950–52) Brush and ink and tempera on cut-and-pasted telephone book pages, 11 x 9" (28.1 x 23 cm) Purchase

#### Willem de Kooning

Born the Netherlands, 1904 To U.S.A. 1926

Seated Woman (1952) Pastel, pencil, and oil on two hinged sheets, overall 12 ½ x 9½" (30.8 x 24.2 cm) The Lauder Foundation Fund

# Lee Krasner 1908–1984

Seated Nude 1940 Charcoal, 25 x 187/6" (63.5 x 48 cm) Gift of Constance B. Cartwright

# Jacob Lawrence

Born 1917

They Were Very Poor from
The Migration of the Negro
(1940–41)
Tempera on gesso on composition board, 12 x 18" (30 x 45 cm)
Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy

The Railroad Stations from The Migration of the Negro (1940–41)

Tempera on gesso on composition board, 12 x 18" (30 x 45 cm) Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy

And The Migrants Kept
Coming from The Migration of
the Negro (1940–41)
Tempera on gesso on composition board, 12 x 18" (30 x 45 cm)
Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy

Life In The North... from The Migration of the Negro (1940-41) Tempera on gesso on composition board, 12 x 18" (30 x 45 cm) Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy

#### Sol Lewitt

Born 1928

Plan for Wall Drawing 1969 Pen and ink and pencil, 20% x 20%" (53 x 52.7 cm) D. S. and R. H. Gottesman Foundation Fund

# Roy Lichtenstein

Born 1923

Brushstrokes 1966-68 Pencil and tusche pochoir, 22½ x 29½" (56.5 x 75.5 cm) Gift of Leo Castelli in memory of Toiny Castelli

# Brice Marden

Born 1938

Rain 1991 Ink and colored ink, 25¾ x 34¼\* (65.4 x 87.2 cm) Gift of The Edward John Noble Foundation and Ronald S. Lauder

# John Marin

1870-1953 In Paris 1905-10

Lower Manhattan 1920 Watercolor and charcoal, 21 ½ x 26 ¾" (55.4 x 68 cm) The Philip L. Goodwin Collection

# Reginald Marsh

1898-1954

H. Dummeyer Bar & Grill (n.d.) Watercolor, 14 ½ x 21" (37.8 x 53.1 cm) Dorothy Williams Garrett Bequest in memory of her husband Garet Garrett

# Robert Morris

Born 1931

Blind Time III 1985 Graphite, 38 x 50" (96.5 x 127 cm) Acquired with matching funds from Michael Blankfort and the National Endowment for the Arts and purchase (by exchange)

# Elizabeth Murray

Born 1940

Popeye (1982) Pastel on cut-and-pasted paper, 76 ¼ x 37 %" (193.8 x 95.8 cm) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (by exchange)

#### **Bruce Nauman**

Born 1941

Storage Capsule for the Right Rear Quarter of My Body 1966 Watercolor and graphite, 38 x 24¾" (95.5 x 63 cm) Gift of Alexis Gregory and purchase

Fist in Mouth 1990 Watercolor, pencil, and collage, 20 ¼ x 23¾" (50.6 x 59.3 cm) Purchased with funds given by Edward R. Broida

#### Barnett Newman

1905-1970

Untitled (1946)
Brush and ink, 24 x 18"
(61 x 45.8 cm)
Gift of the Committee on
Drawings in honor of Richard E.
Oldenburg

# Isamu Noguchi

1904-1988

Worked in U.S.A., Japan, and Italy

Metamorphosis 1946 Pencil on cut-and-pasted graph paper on black construction paper, 21% x 29%" (55 x 75.3 cm) Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

# Georgia O'Keeffe 1887-1986

Train at Night in the Desert (1916) Watercolor and pencil, 11½ × 8½" (30.3 × 22.5 cm) Acquired with matching funds from the Committee on Drawings and the National Endowment for the Arts

Evening Star, III (1917) Watercolor, 8% x 11%" (22.7 x 30.4 cm) Mr. and Mrs. Donald B. Straus Fund

Eagle Claw and Bean Necklace (1934) Charcoal, 19 x 25 1/8\* (48.5 x 63.9 cm) Given anonymously (by exchange)

#### Claes Oldenburg

Born Sweden 192. To U.S.A. 1936

Dropped Cup of Coffee:
Preliminary Study for
"Image of the Buddha Preaching" by Frank O'Hara 1967
Pencil, crayon, and wash,
30 % x 22 %" (76.5 x 56.4 cm)
Gift of the artist

#### Tom Otterness

Born 1952

The European Notebook 1983 Spiral sketchbook with twentyfour pen-and-brown-ink drawings (recto and verso), each 6 1/4 x 4 1/8" (15.9 x 11.1 cm) Gift of the artist

The European Notebook 1984 Spiral sketchbook with twentysix pen-and-brown-ink drawings (recto and verso), each  $6 \times 4 \% (15.9 \times 11.1 \text{ cm})$ Gift of the artist

# Jackson Pollock

1912-1956

Untitled (c. 1933–39) Pencil, colored pencil, and colored crayon, 13 ½ x 9 ¾" (35 x 25 cm) Gift of Lee Krasner in memory of Jackson Pollock

# Untitled 1945

Pastel, gouache, and pen and ink, 30% x 22%\* (77.7 x 56.9 cm) Blanchette Rockefeller Fund

Untitled (c. 1950) Ink, 18½ x 24¾" (47.9 x 63.1 cm). The Joan and Lester Avnet Fund

#### **Maurice Prendergast**

Born Newfoundland, 1859–1924
The East River 1901
Watercolor and pencil,
13¾ x 19¾" (35 x 50.2 cm)
Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

#### Richard Prince

Born 1949

Untitled 1984 and 1990 Silkscreen, graphite, and spray paint, 40 x 26" (101.5 x 66 cm) Gift of the Robert Lehman Foundation, Inc.

# Robert Rauschenberg

Born 1925

Quiz 1958 Transfer drawing, gouache, crayon, and pencil, 22½ x 29° (58.2 x 73.6 cm) Gift of Mrs. Iola S. Haverstick

# James Rosenquist

Born 1933

Fahrenheit 1982° 1982 Ink and pencil on plastic sheet, 33¼ x 71%" (84.4 x 182.1 cm) Gift of The Lauder Foundation

# Mark Rothko

Born Latvia, 1903–1970 To U.S.A. 1913

Archaic Idol (1945) Wash, pen and ink, and gouache, 21 1/8 x 30" (55.6 x 76.2 cm) The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection

Untitled (1968) Synthetic polymer paint on paper mounted on masonite, 23 ¼ x 17 ½" (59.1 x 43.5 cm) Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.

# Morgan Russell

1886-1953

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Three Apples (1910) Oil on cardboard,  $9\% \times 12\%$ " (24.6  $\times$  32.5 cm) Given anonymously

#### **David Salle**

Born 1952

Untitled 1984 Watercolor and pencil, 17 ½ x 23 ¾" (45.5 x 60.5 cm) Gift of Carol O. Selle

# **Richard Serra**

Born 1939

Egypt (1989)
Twenty page sketchbook of charcoal drawings, each page 13 ½ x 9 5 (33.6 x 24.4 cm).
Gift of the artist

#### Ben Shahn

Born Lithuania, 1898–1969 To U.S.A. 1906

Handball (1939)
Tempera on paper mounted on composition board, 22¾ x 31¾" (57.8 x 79.4 cm)
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund (on view through June)

Portrait of Myself When Young (1943) Tempera on cardboard, 20 x 27 1/6" (50.8 x 70.8 cm) Purchase

# Charles Sheeler

1883-1965

Of Domestic Utility 1933 Conté crayon, 25 x 19 ½" (63.5 x 49.6 cm) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

#### Pat Steir

Born 1940

Section from Eight Untitled Sections (*Water*) (1984) Pencil and colored pencil, 10 ½ x 19 ½° (25.6 x 48 cm) Gift of the artist

# Frank Stella

Born 1936

Untitled (1965)
Felt-tipped pen and colored ink on graph paper, 17 x 217/6"
(43.4 x 55.8 cm)
Gift of the artist

#### Joseph Stella

Born Italy, 1877–1946 To U.S.A. 1896 Street in Allegheny (1908) Charcoal, 12% x 9 ½" (32.2 x 24 cm) Gift of Mrs. Bliss Parkinson

# Maurice Sterne

Born Latvia, 1877–1957 To U.S.A. 1889

Rocks, Maine Coast (1916) Brush and ink, 17 ½ x 22 ½" (43.6 x 56.8 cm) Given anonymously (by exchange)

#### Paul Thek

1933-1988

Untitled (*Green Potato*) (c. 1974) Synthetic polymer paint and gesso on newspaper, 22 ¾ x 33" (57.8 x 83.8 cm) Purchase through the Vincent d'Aquila and Harry Soviak Bequest

#### Helen Torr

1886-1967

Buildings (n.d.) Charcoal, 14¾ x 12" (37.3 x 30.4 cm) Gift of Carol O. Selle

# Bill Traylor

1854-1947

Fat Man in Blue (c. 1939–42) Gouache and pencil on cardboard, 13% x 13%" (34.6 x 34 cm) Gift of Charles and Eugenia Shannon

Figures on Blue Construction (c. 1939–42) Pencil and charcoal on cardboard, 14 ½ x 13¼" (40.3 x 33.6 cm) Gift of Charles and Eugenia Shannon

Man on Triangle Reaching for Bottle (c. 1939–42) Pencil and charcoal on cardboard, 12 x 8" (30.5 x 22.3 cm) Gift of Charles and Eugenia Shannon

Yellow Chicken (c. 1939–42) Gouache and pencil on cardboard, 14¾ x 9" (37.5 x 22.9 cm) (irreg.) Gift of Charles and Eugenia Shannon

# Cy Twombly

Born 1928 To Italy 1957 Untitled (1955) Pencil on buff paper, 24% x 36%" (61.9 x 91.7 cm) Gift of Ronald S. Lauder

# **Andy Warhol**

1930-1987

Roll of Bills (1962) Pencil, felt-tipped pen, and crayon, 40 x 30%" (101.6 x 76.4 cm) Purchase