

This edition of The OG (#14) was produced in collaboration with MoMA on the occasion of the current exhibition "Artist's Choice: Amy Sillman—The Shape of Shape." (The Museum is temporarily closed during the Covid-19 outbreak.) Vol#14 of the zine contains images of all the work in the Shape of Shape show, along with other related stuff.

NOTE FROM AMY: THIS ZINE WAS PULLED TOGETHER FURIOUSLY WHILE AWAY FROM HOME & STUDIO **DURING THE QUARANTINE. ALTHOUGH IT** CONTAINS SOME LIGHTHEARTEDNESS, IT WAS MADE WITH A HEAVY HEART AND FEELINGS OF **GRIEF AND DESPAIR AT WATCHING THE VIRUS FALLING SO HEAVILY AND UNEVENLY, HURTING** PRECARIOUS PEOPLE THE MOST, PEOPLE OF COLOR, OLD PEOPLE, WORKERS, SICK PEOPLE, ETC. IT HAS BEEN AWFUL TO CONTEMPLATE. THE VIRUS EXPOSES THE FULL **DEPRAVITY AND** STUPIDITY OF THE **CURRENT FEDERAL** ADMINISTRATION. THANK YOU TO **ALL WORKERS AND ORGANIZERS** FOR THEIR HARD LABOR **AND THANK YOU TO ART WORKERS OF ALL KINDS WHO** PERSIST IN CREATING FORMS AND MATERIAL **EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL THOUGHT COBBLED** TOGETHER WITH INSTINCT AND FEELINGS. LOVE TO ALL THOSE WHO WEAR THEIR HEARTS ON THEIR SLEEVES AND WHO STRUGGLE. XXX AMY

"The Shape of Shape" exhibition was organized by Amy Sillman with Michelle Kuo, The Marlene Hess Curator, and Jenny Harris, Curatorial Assistant, Dept of Painting & Sculpture. HUGE THANKS TO THEM, to Aimee Keefer, the exhibition designer, & all the people who worked on it.

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Back cover cartoon insert by SANY/SAMUEL NYHOLM

(all other content by AMY SILLMAN)





further notes on shape

"O my body, make of me a grane person who always questions." Franz Fanon PARTONE

A couple of years ago, I realized that I barely knew anything about shape. I didn't even know where to begin reading about it, aside from a few books on still life and one on the psychology of perception. This was odd, because shape seems just as fundamental to vision as color—but there are tons of books about color: color theory, techniques, optics, dyes, rocks, rays, anthropology, RGB/CMYK, politics, etc. My favorite was always Josef Albers's Interaction of Color, because it demonstrated that color is not absolute but relational, dependent on the beholder. And, it turns out, that's also the case with shape, since basically everything in the world is a shape. It's so mundane and so ubiquitous: every edge, corner, blob, form, silhouette, or negative space is something you have to navigate to get through a room. If you think of shape as figure/ground, then every shape is a figure and the ground is the whole world. Shapes are how you make distinctions, get the lay of the land, or even tell time. And doesn't everyone have two shapes, really? The first is your own body, which you can't get out of, and the second is your shadow, which you can't get rid of. Shadows don't talk back and don't cast shadows themselves, they just do whatever you do and go wherever you go. (Only in noir films and spook houses do shadows really rise up with their own agency.) Your shadow is your personal shape, your silent companion,

your own flat echo. It's worse than your ego, it's your creep—always just there. In the mythology of shadow, the devil can snip vours from your feet and make off with it, but if he takes it away, you miss it terribly. In a way, then, isn't your shadow kind of like your subjectivity?





So why was there comparatively little written about shape (and few about shadow)? There were books on geometry and topology, but those are fields based on shape ideals. not shape experience. But then again, maybe "experience" is TOO shiftily subjective to organize into a grand theory anyway, which would account for why the books I found on shape were mostly about gestalt and psychology. Maybe shape is just too vast to talk about, or resistant

to language. Is it that shape doesn't have a specific substance—a commodity—attached to it, like color and pigment? Is there a poetics of shape? (Is that what still life is?) Shapes are essential to modern art, but had there ever been a show specifically about the topic? And was there possibly even a kind of historical bias against shape, or against artists who work with shape, that had kept the whole subject a bit unspeakable, under wraps? Art historian Michael Fried wrote about shape, but he wrote about the issue of its "viability," setting up highbrow standards for success and failure among a handful of advanced modernists. whereas I wanted to look around elsewhere, and I didn't really care about sticking with the "advanced." Fried wrote about winners, but what about all those others creeping around in the shadows-the weirdos, outliers, those relegated to a B-list?



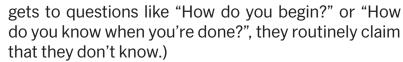
About that B-list: All artists I know carry with them their own personal genealogies. We all have a list of favorite, loveable. off-the-radar artists, the "off-modern," the knight's move, the not-quite-right, the great ones who never got credit. (To wit: Artists especially loved the "Outliers" show, curated by Lynne Cooke at the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 2018.) To use the painter/film critic Manny Farber's term, this is the realm of "Termite art" as opposed to "White Elephant art." You know how everyone loves the Paleolithic? Wouldn't you take antiquity over the Enlightenment any day? Like freak folk over stadium rock, doesn't everyone love the Sienese more than the Florentines, the Medieval over the Renaissance, going to the movies over trudging through hallways of history paintings? (I know I would, and I'm not alone: The one year I hung out with medievalists,



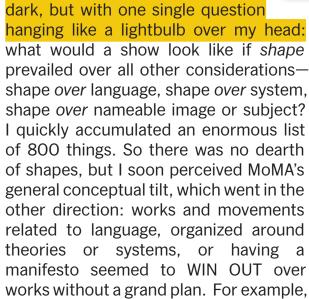
they whispered conspiratorially, "You're one of us!" and assured me that mimesis was the most overrated thing in art history.) The B-list of art history, the artists' artists, the alt-canon, the roster of artists' favorites is an almost predictable one, running from Ensor to Soutine to Morandi. Stettheimer, Lawrence, Avery, Stout, Yoakum, Steinberg, Sugarman, Youngerman, Neel, Nutt, Jaffe, Rama, etc.— And, I wondered, since MoMA seems like the ultimate White Elephant venue, who are the termites in its storehouse? Who of the B-list was in the collection, and who might be missing entirely from view? Certainly some shape-artists are fully canonical—for example, Arp or Matisse or Stella but, given the apparent difficulty of discussing shape, did that make their work harder to be written about? Anyway, who doesn't love poking around in the holes of art history there are so many cracks in it already that at some point it dawns on you that art history might just be wrong, or a mythic fiction made up by certain people, like a religion with its own KoolAid. -

For a long time I'd been nurturing a second idea, too, that somehow got nested in these thoughts: that you could divide artists into draw-ers versus painters, and that drawers were a subculture. Painters, it seemed like, work from an idea, moving deductively from the big picture down to the details in order to produce or construct an image they have in mind. Draw-ers, on the other hand, work from the weeds outward, building up from particulars, inductively, scratching and pawing at their paper with tools the scale of their hands. OR maybe they never get to a bigger picture at all, but move sideways, abductively, from particular to particular. This made drawing itself seem like an activity not founded on logic but made up of contingencies, overflow, stray parts—a process that might be described as working blind, like a mole, or like a beaver building a thatch, rather than like someone with an overarching worldview. Maybe working this way means not necessarily making a truth-claim or asserting a "master" narrative, or getting anywhere at all.

Maybe a practice like this by nature stays on the B-side, staying at the grassroots, in the inchoate experience of the body as the organ of knowing. (Incidentally, I've heard a million talks by artists who fall into the draw-er category, and when the Q-and-A



So when I was invited to curate an "Artist's Choice" show at MoMA from the Museum's collection, I had all these things on my mind. I began burrowing in the



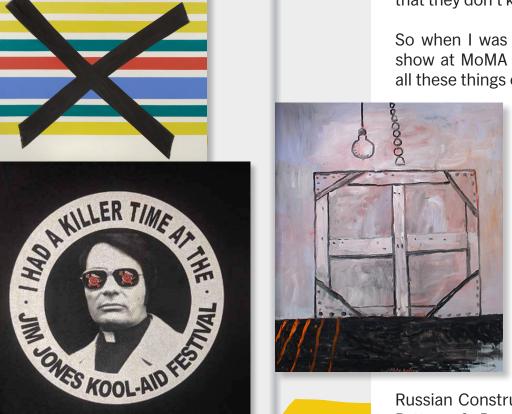
Russian Constructivism over Symbolism, Minimalism over Pattern & Decoration, almost anything over Funk, etc. [EDITOR'S NOTE: This wasn't an accident: For example, the founding director of MoMA, Alfred Barr, visited the Soviet Union in 1927 and met with members of the Russian avantgarde; he then famously championed their work in the 1936 MoMA show "Cubism and Abstract Art," arguing that Russian Constructivism was critical to the very invention

of abstraction. The radical strategy of construction was based on necessity, on rigorous system, and on truth to materials—a revolution in perception that would lead, in theory, to political revolution.

—MK] And to add to this, Rodchenko and Malevich, who made great shapes, are well known, but I wanted to look at harder-to-classify people. One of my all-time favorites, Aleksei Kruchenykh, did make it into the new MoMA hang, but what about great shape-makers and non-household names like Ksenia Ender and her family of painting teachers, Ilia Zdanevich and







Serge Charcoune, who left Russia for France, or the intriguing Mikhail Matyushin, who you just don't hear much about?

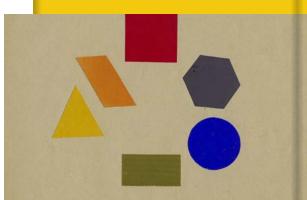
A lot of artists don't have a manifesto. Maybe someone who has worked all their life on shape-perception, shape-fussing, doesn't have what feels like a radical rhetoric to offer. I understand it this way: People who sit around composing are, in part, inheritors of a Romantic ideal. They are often artists in small rooms, sitting at tables or workbenches or in bedrooms, imagining, noodling, editing, and shaping with nothing much to go by but their own experiences. This still requires a room of one's own, time and space and the privilege, perhaps the detachment, to consider that one's own imagination is of enough value to warrant investigation. But in the avant-garde circles of the early 20th c., the conditions required for contemplation were pitted against more worthy-seeming radical acts. Wassily Kandinsky, one of the few people who actually did try to write a book about shapes, was excoriated by his colleagues for being part of a putrid older regime, and thrown out as head of the Institute

of Artistic Culture in Moscow in 1921. As Varvara Stepanova wrote in 1920, "We formalists and materialists have decided to make an explosion by founding a special group for objective analysis, from which Kandinsky is running away." Kazimir Malevich said: "Freedom can be obtained only after our ideas about the organization of solids have been completely smashed." To compose was to re-inscribe the values of a privatized bourgeois class, whereas to construct was the way to make a new society.

This image of radicality was inherited in modern Western art, consecrated

by MoMA, incorporated into art history, and taught at art schools ever since. Even if the very idea of a singular position is precisely what early radicals would have argued against, the result was the establishment of an ideological position, and by implication a kind of conceptual backwardness or naiveté seemed to settle over those artists who did other things, even though their work might involve other skills, other criticalities, other forms of resistance. I was taught this







in school in the 1970s and it has been repeated to me throughout my life as a painter ever since. Sitting around fussing over shapes is not revolutionary. Still, everyone likes play, the carnivalesque, or

some idea of care. Perhaps this was why certain shape-based-artists were beloved but described in slightly lesser terms: "personal," oddballs, offbeat, playful, etc. Morandi was "poetic," Hesse made "eccentric abstraction," Calder, Sugarmzan,

and Saint Phalle were "child-like," Bess was a hermit. Even Louise Bourgeois made the "kook" category, cemented in place by the famous Mapplethorpe photograph of her with a sly smile and giant plaster phallus tucked under her arm. And you've never even heard of a million others who don't quite fit the mold, like the German artist/performer Lavinia Schulz, whose costume designs for her dances look like an earlier Mike Kelley. But how do we deal with the idea of a beloved B-list, or otherness, without mythologizing marginality itself?







Obviously these questions are political, the precise point of decades of struggle. Whom does history validate, deem a radical or a reactionary? Last year, visiting London, I saw four exhilarating survey shows in two packed days by four great and formerly marginalized artists, three of them older women—Dorothea Tanning, Natalia Goncharova, and Lee Krasner—and the fourth the Guyanese-born painter Frank Bowling. What really struck me was how all these artists had been making work all along that was just as formally

invested as it was politically savvy. When I say "formal," I mean they worked with form permissively and inextricably from content, freely using new materials, synthetic pigments, polychromaticism, mixing painting with language, photo, craft, fabrics, and mechanically-produced shapes—and they all worked overtly with composition. What was common to their otherwise very different works was a refusal to separate art into "politics" vs. "form." Or you could say that all worked on the threshold between "language" and "body": as speaking bodies, to paraphrase Franz Fanon, a body that questions. Their works all involved impure negotiations, ideals

that are in conflict with pleasure, and intensities that are in dialectical relation with ideology.









PART TWO

Poking around art history to find out more about these dynamics, I looked in particular at two contentious scenes of postwar art in the 1950s. The first: an English postwar abstract painting scene based in and around St. Ives, particularly the painters Patrick Heron and Prunella Clough. The second: the chronicles of the conversation being held simultaneously in downtown New York City in the pages of the art magazine *IT IS*.

St. Ives is a seaside outpost in Cornwall, and it was a hub for English artists with an outlier vibe, maybe equivalent to the Provincetown scene in America in the 1950s and '60s, a loose confederation of slightly lesser known artists, including many fantastic shape-artists (Marlow Moss, Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron, William Scott, Barbara Hepworth, and others). These artists were not self-declared radicals: They identified with the school of Paris and Cubism, and had some overlaps with the burgeoning American Ab-Ex painting scene. Old photos from the 1950s show Clement Greenberg and Mark Rothko visiting and taking tea in the gardens of the St. Ives painters. Through these connections, the painter/critic Patrick Heron was appointed as London correspondent for the New York journal Arts Digest, and, in turn, I read about my favorite shape-y English painter, Prunella Clough, in texts by Heron

In the '50s, Berger praised Clough's paintings as "machines for seeing" and in the '80s Heron wrote that her work possessed an "electrifying strangeness." Revisiting Clough's work recently, while thinking about shape and outliers, I was struck by how she seemed like a "conceptual painter" avant la lettre; her moves reminded me of the much later R H Quaytman and Charline von Heyl, with a bit of Shirley Jaffe thrown in. I researched Clough's life: Born in 1919, she grew up in an artistic milieu, with a Sunday-poet father and a close relationship with her aunt, the designer/architect Eileen Gray. Clough was known and appreciated in her

and John Berger.







day, taught for many years at the Camberwell art school, had important shows, and won influential prizes. But she suffered (or perhaps occasionally enjoyed the privacy of) what I'd call a "female career." (Do I really have to explain that?) After her death in 1999, Clough fell into relative obscurity, especially outside England, but I could now read her entire life's work as one long, persistent experiment with shape. In her paintings, she gleaned and transformed images from the world at large, taking the shapes of everything from vacuum packs to zigzags, animal skins to power grids, rock formations to plastic toys. She then emptied these forms out, flattening and re-arranging them as fields of puzzling signs, working in an idiom that Berger deemed "abstract still life." Clough exemplified a formal position to which I'd always been instinctively drawn: an artist whose work is radically quiet, innovative but slightly aloof, removed from its own time. Clough said she wanted to "say a small thing, edgily."

For his part, Heron was a champion of slow, thoughtful paintings and anachronistic positions. He began in the '50s as an advocate of the New York School, but by the '60s he was increasingly critical of American painting's "systematic advance towards the extremes of flatness, emptiness and bigness." By the '70s, he'd suffered a bad break-up with American art, and in 1974 Heron published the world's longest poison pen letter to the art world in a bilious

three-day-in-a-row screed published in the Guardian. "As with the stock market, so with the art market: the client public ... needs to have its confusing medley investment choices weighed, determined. and given a reassuring 'objectivity.' " Paradoxically, this champion of Picasso, the old boys' club and its old-school values, came out swinging against the art world's clubbiness and money, advocating instead for a politics of the personal.



ARTS GUARDIAN Thursday October 10 1974

Patrick Heron discloses the American cultural and commercial pressures that have brought about the most extraordinary myth in modern art



and tying this ethical process to the work of composition, to the realm of intimacy, care, and feelings. For Heron, this kind of artmaking was a form of resistance in itself: "Even the crankiest, wobbliest pots, the lumpiest cloth and the dottiest pictures are all effective in one single respect: that they register protest."

Protest is what Heron calls the linkage of process and form, a call to arms against "success" and a commitment to craft and the handmade, to fussy details, editing, glitches, attention to small-bore problems, embodied work, like managing the weight and density of a painting, or struggling with its edges. And this struggle is a metaphor for working against collapse, for art as a kind of non-alienated labor rendered in the delicate intricacies of surface, color, layers. I recognized this earlier attitude I had picked up at art school in the '70s, too, both from old school AB-EXers and from feminists and queers. It was an attitude that circles back to that theory I was nursing about marginalized versus

top-down processes, about draw-ers versus painters.

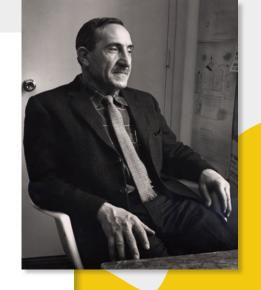
I had a hunch that this all connected with the postwar scene in America. So I went to MoMA's library to dig out all six issues of IT IS, the artist-edited magazine from the '50s. It was a contentious grab-bag of musings, exhortations, and even nonsense, with a soulsearching intro to each issue by the magazine's editor, the sculptor Phillip Pavia. I wanted to see how shape was tackled by the artists who hung out at the 9th Street Club in New York and literally got into fistfights about the artist's responsibilities to form and politics. Their problems were not with composition



vs. construction, but with subject matter, which lay somewhere between public nuisance and felony (depending on who was talking). In a panel discussion from 1960, Ad Reinhardt and Philip Guston squabbled over it, with Reinhardt declaring, "Good artists have no need for content, nor any shape or form," and Guston retorting that such an idea was ridiculous, and that painting was merely the adjustment of impurities. From the first issue in Spring 1958, Pavia set out the central dilemma as something he called "The Problem." Pavia's concerns surpassed the simple binaries of construction vs. composition, or form vs. content: the studio was a total struggle, and artists were engaged in a kind of existential wrestling match just by making art, posing urquestions like "What are we doing here, why, and how?"

As Pavia lays it out, *drawing* is the answer to The Problem. By "drawing," he didn't mean a preparatory act or rehearsal, a sketch, doodle, plan or cartoon. Drawing was a mythic and materialist form of engagement, the bones of thinking itself, the tool for stripping down, the exercise and the equipment for getting into shape. Drawing was "attitude becomes form" way before that phrase existed: it was a dialectical procedure of propositions made, then scraped down, then rebuilt. In Pavia's view, only through "drawing, drawing and more drawing" could an artist perform a vanguard inquiry. A large group of American

artists worked with this belief system, a group that included women as well as men. Reinhardt. Tworkov, Motherwell, Baziotes, Frankenthaler, Guston, Matter, and many others of their generation saw drawing as part-event and partobject, a way to look both inward and outward. They traced their roots back to James Joyce and Cezanne, and attended the New York Studio School on 8th Street to learn the techniques of Cezanne-ist space. Their lineage included heavy hitters like Gorky, Krasner, and De Kooning, but also stretched out to experimental new forms and B-sides, like modern dancers whose own bodies assumed the shapes of The Problem. Mercedes Matter described this as working with "resistance and dissension," echoing Heron's idea of how form registers protest.





circular, a looping act in a continuous present, like the one Robert Smithson later wrote about as "altered daily," or the one Gertrude Stein described decades earlier in "Composition As Explanation": "A continuous present is a continuous present." I'd also argue that the looping, repetitive sensibility of the comic, of slapstick, of drawing cartoons and funnies, is probably not that far from this shape impulse (something Reinhardt knew well).





Reading *IT IS*, it struck me that my show at MoMA was as much about drawing as it was about shape. Almost all the artists in the show flirted with modernism's dictates (as shadows do) by employing flattened spaces and slices of form, but they arrived at their hybrid composition-constructions through procedures that were often uncertain, experimental, close to the body, driven by urges. All follow the urge to define a figure against a ground



with pencil or tool, making form both privately and publicly, in rooms where the clock is ticking and the newscasts are coming in on the radio, grappling with the reality of looking both within and outside, from the consciousness of one's studio table to the political demonstrations and jobs and greater relations that everyone is negotiating. Maybe artists fussing over shapes are not the same people we first think of when we think of political art. But they make lumpen form that registers protest, they make gestures of care and repair, or they merely try to beam out an electrifyingly personal and strange

signal that wakes up the receiver for a moment—one weird moment that could shift the sense of things, and thereby alter the world, even if only slightly. This sounds urgent to me.

Can we really afford *not* to think about composition now, when we seem surrounded by the decomposition and deformation of bodies and social structures? We are in a time of political catastrophe, destitution, doom. We live in a heightened sense-time that feels like it's both spinning backward and outward simultaneously, when the terror and tragic palpability of political events and illness provokes a constant sense of precipice, of exhaustion, the rattling of ongoing crisis. It's so weird and extreme that, if not tragic, it's like a kind of horrible slapstick, something veering way out of control. The scholar Lauren Berlant has written brilliantly about comedy as a "...tableau of repair...that's always teetering on reversal, exposure, and collapse back into raveling and unraveling at once. Flooding... flow, then blockage, then flow... anxiety to be taken in as a successful arrangement of ill-fitting parts."* To be honest, this is exactly how I have always seen painting, or art in general: as the sensation of ill-fitting parts. That points back to the idea of shapes, and the intimacy of parts and labor, of staying close to the body and working from the grassroots, from detail to fussy detail. And in trimming, adjusting, editing, messing around with shapes, one

works not only from the individual expressive body, but with body politics—a politics that, like shapes, includes everything: our ambiguities, our dysphoria, our skin tones, our histories and consciousnesses, all the uncertainties, dangers, ugliness, eroticism, absence—the nights, fogs, dreams, and depth perceptions of our rhythms, losses, laments, and even our senses of humor, as we approach a kind of limit condition at the dead end of seriousness.

*(from "Humorlessness (Three Monologues and A Hairpiece)," published in *Critical Inquiry* 43, Winter 2017)





This whole area was the "beginning" of the show, and i wanted shadows and implications of shadow to bleed over to body parts and silhouettes, moving from tilted space itself to the space of life and death, from friendship to gravitas to absurdity to, something between rhizome and visual crossword puzzle...

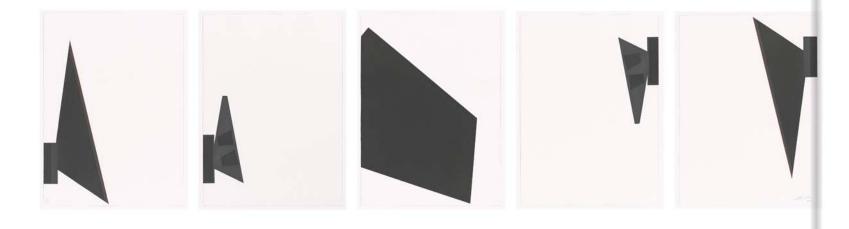
someone told me that Frankenthaler painted this after looking at the tide making a shape in wet sand, but I think it looks like a piece of bread, which made me realize that everything in the show looks a little bit like something from the deli slicer, i.e. very flat.

my cousin said
"It's Morty!" when
she saw this painting,
she knew it was
a picture of the
composer Morton
Feldman. I heard
Guston painted it
after Feldman
angrily "turned his
back" on Guston
for painting
figures.
I think it's true (?)
but I can't say



and the Johns has this mouth/bite shape in a mossy green that echoes Frankenthaler's piece of bread-looking shape.

for sure.





American, born 1968

Five Point One Surround 2014 Portfolio of five aquatints plate (.a, irreg.): $25\,^{13}\!/_{16} \times 10\,^{14}\!/_{17}$; plate (.b, irreg.): $13\,^{7}\!/_{8} \times 6\,^{7}\!/_{16}\!/_{17}$; plate (.c, irreg.): $27\,^{3}\!/_{4} \times 18\,^{14}\!/_{17}$; plate (.d, irreg.): $13\,^{7}\!/_{8} \times 6\,^{7}\!/_{16}\!/_{17}$; plate (.e, irreg.): $25\,^{13}\!/_{16} \times 10\,^{14}\!/_{17}$; sheet (each): $30 \times 22\!/_{17}$

Publisher and printer: Universal Limited Art Editions, Bay Shore, NY

Edition: 15

Acquired through the generosity of Mary M. and Sash A. Spencer, 2014



Henri Laurens

French, 1885-1954

Head of a Woman 1915 Painted wood 20 × 18 1/4"

Van Gogh Purchase Fund, 1937





Philip Guston American, born Canada. 1913–1980

Head 1968 Oil on board 18 × 20"

Gift of Edward R. Broida, 2005

Thomas Mukarobgwa Zimbabwean, born Southern Rhodesia. 1924–1999

Dying People in the Bush 1962 Oil on board 23 ½ × 36 ½"

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hochschild, 1963



Bill Jensen American, born 1945

Eclipse 2010 Aquatint plate: 16 5/16 × 12 5/8"; sheet: 24 × 20 1/16"

Publisher and printer: Universal Limted Art Editions, Bay Shore, NY Edition: 7

Acquired through the generosity of Mary M. Spencer, 2010



Sandu Darie Cuban, born Romania. 1908–1991

Untitled. Transformable Structure c. 1950s Oil on hinged wood elements Variable (approximately 15 % × 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ × %")

Hillman Periodicals Fund (by exchange), 2016



Michael Hurson American, 1941-2007

Pencil Engraving 1987 Etching and aquatint plate (irreg.): 12 ½ × 11 ½"; sheet: 18 ½ × 17 ½ 6"

Publisher: Joe Fawbush Editions, New York Printer: Jennifer Melby Editions, New York Edition: 35

Gift of Frank Green and Diane Villani, 1987



Fernand Léger French, 1881–1955

The Mirror 1925 Oil on canvas 51 × 39 ½"

Nina and Gordon Bunshaft Bequest, 1994



Maria Lassnig Austrian, 1919–2014

Brain Lobe 1996 Watercolor and pencil on paper 27 ½ × 19 %"

Purchase through funds provided by the Edward Cohen Foundation, 2002

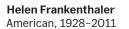


Jim Nutt American, born 1938

Rosie Comon 1968 Pencil, cut-and-pasted printed paper, pressure-sensitive tape, and gouache on paper 38 × 25"

Purchased with funds provided by Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, 2001





Commune 1969 Acrylic on canvas 9' 3 ½" × 8' 9 ¼"

Gift of the artist, 1970



Jasper Johns American, born 1930

Painting Bitten by a Man 1961 Encaustic on canvas mounted on type plate $9 \frac{1}{2} \times 6 \frac{7}{8}$ "

Gift of Jasper Johns in memory of Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, 1989–2001, 2007



Ulrike Müller Austrian, born 1971

Some 2017 Vitreous enamel on steel 15 ½ × 12"

Fund for the Twenty-First Century, 2018



33

Lee Bontecou American, born 1931

Untitled 1959 Welded steel, canvas, black fabric, soot, and wire 58 ½ × 17 ¾"

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold H. Maremont, 1960





Marcel Duchamp American, born France. 1887–1968

Female Fig Leaf 1950 Electroplated copper over plaster 3 ½ × 5 ¼ × 5"

Gift of Jasper Johns, 1998

Vincent Fecteau American, born 1969

Untitled 2007-08 Papier-mâché and acrylic 15 × 33 × 24 ½"

Gift of the Fund for the Twenty-First Century and The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, 2010







American, born Germany. 1936-1970

No title 1965 Cut-and-pasted paper, ink, colored ink, gouache, and pencil on paper $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ "

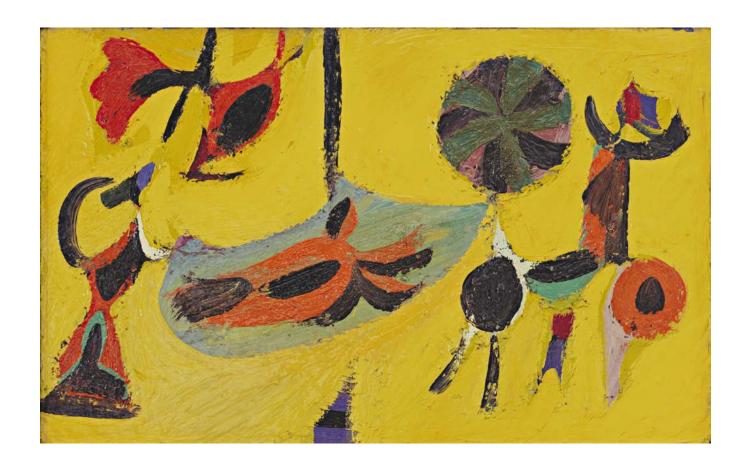
The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift, 2005



Gertrude Greene American, 1904–1956

Construction 1935 Painted wood, board, and metal 16 × 24"

The Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation, 1985





Arshile Gorky American, born Armenia. 1904–1948

Argula 1938 Oil on canvas 15 × 24"

Gift of Bernard Davis, 1941

Serge Poliakoff French, born Russia. 1900–1969 Composition 1956 Oil on burlap 38 ½ × 51 ¼" Gift of M. Knoedler & Company, 1956

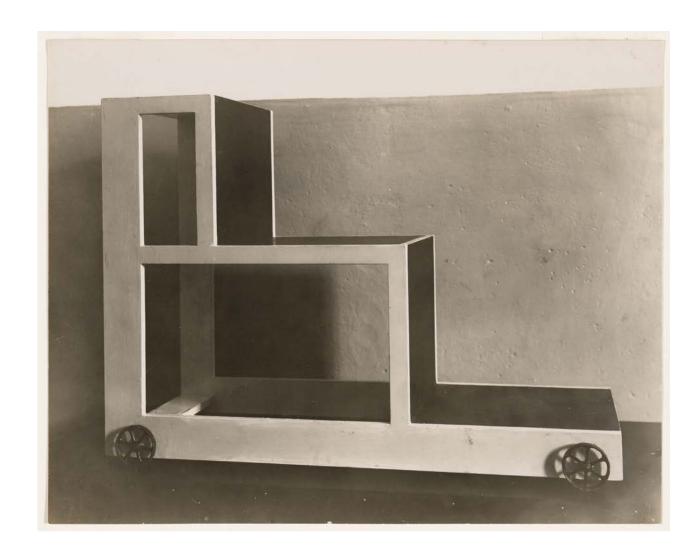




Albert Oehlen German, born 1954

Untitled 1989 Oil and enamel on canvas 7' 10 ½" × 6' 6 ¾"

Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds, 2011



Lucia Moholy British, born Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic). 1894–1989

Alma Buscher's Ladder Chair for Children's Room 1923–25 Gelatin silver print 6 % 8 %"

Thomas Walther Collection. Gift of Thomas Walther, 2001



Ivan Kožarić Croatian, born 1921

The Shape of Space (Refrigerator) 1964 Plaster $11 \times 9^{13}/_{16} \times 9^{7}/_{16}$ "

Gift of Neda Young, and James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach, 2019

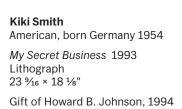


VALIE EXPORT Austrian, born 1940

Cycle of Civilization. The Mythology of the Civilizing Processes 1972 Gelatin silver print 19 %16 × 15 %16"

Acquired through the generosity of the Ronald and Jo Carole Lauder Foundation, 2011







Odilon Redon French, 1840–1916 The Giant c. 1890 Oil on prepared paper 25 ½ × 20 ¼"

Gift of The Ian Woodner Family Collection, 2000



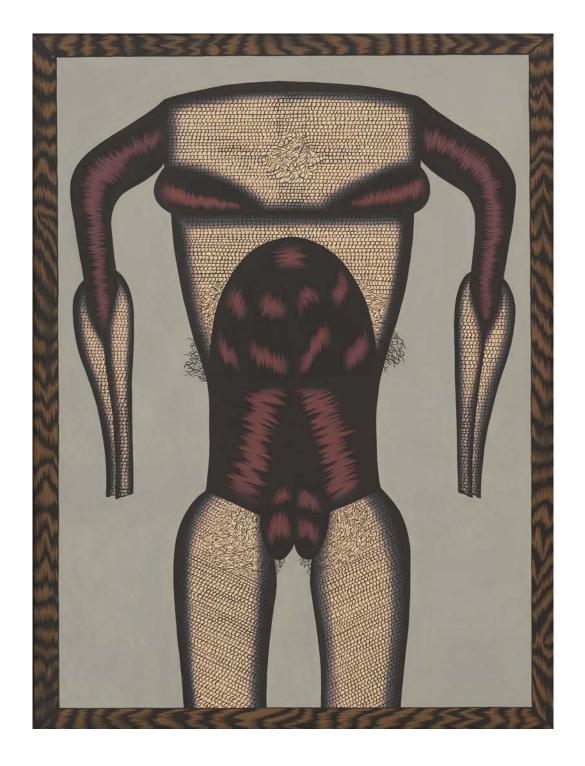
Carroll Dunham

American, born 1949

Nine Color Reduction Print 1993 Linoleum cut composition: 19 ½ × 14 ½; sheet: 23 ½ × 18 ½"

Publisher and printer: The Grenfell Press, New York Edition: 23

Gift of Walter Bareiss, 1993



Christina Ramberg American, 1946–1995

Wired 1974-75 Acrylic on board 48 × 36"

49

Gift of Agnes Gund, 2002





St. Sebastian 1979 Oil and wax on canvas 111 × 66"

Gift of The Brant Foundation, Inc., Agnes Gund, Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine Farley, Michael Ovitz, and Adam Kimmel, 2015



Auguste Rodin French, 1840–1917

Reclining Woman c. 1900–06 Watercolor and pencil on paper $9 \% \times 12 \%$ "

Bequest of Mina Turner, 1976



Edvard Munch

Norwegian, 1863-1944

The Bear 1908-09 Transfer lithograph sheet: 15 13/16 × 20 5/16"

Publisher: the artist, Copenhagen Printer: Dansk Reproduktionsanstalt, Copenhagen Edition: approx. 90

Gift of Samuel A. Berger, 1954



Pierre Bonnard French, 1867–1947

Young Woman in Black Stockings 1893 Lithograph composition: 11 1/16 × 5 1/16"; sheet: 14 1/16 × 11"

Publisher: Édouard Kleinmann, Paris

Printer: unknown Edition: 120

Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1947





Senga Nengudi American, born 1943

Performance with "Inside/Outside" 1977 Gelatin silver print Sheet: 40 × 29"

Committee on Media and Performance Art Funds, 2014



Henry Moore British, 1898–1986

Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), 1947

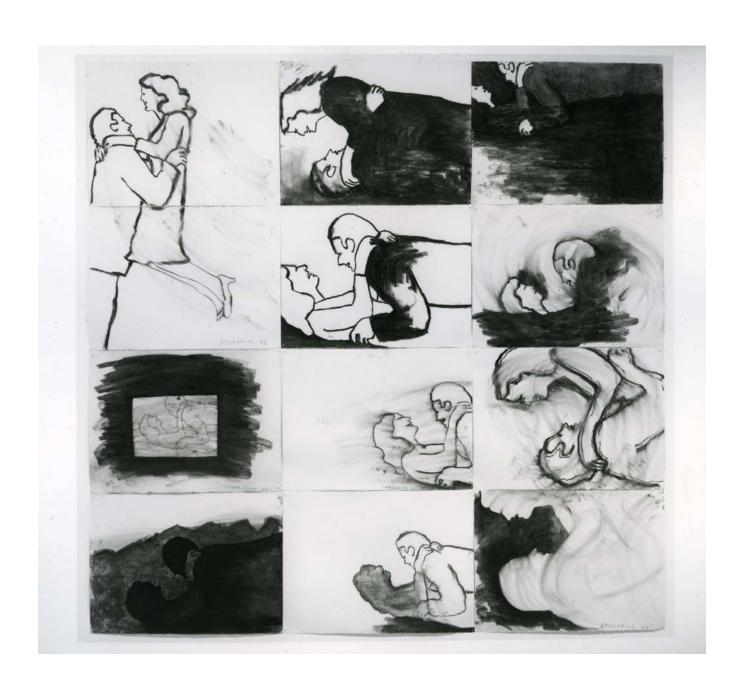




Forrest Bess American, 1911–1977

Number 40 1949 Oil on canvas with wood frame $10\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$ "

Gift of Betty Parsons, 1982



Ida Applebroog American, born 1929

Couples I 1983 Charcoal on twelve sheets of paper 22 \% × 30 1/8"

Gift of Dr. Walter and Phoebe Burnstein, 1984



4 WORKS IN THE SHOW HAVE TO BE SWAPPED OUT FOR CONSERVATION REASONS. HERE ARE SOME OPTIONS OF WHAT THEY WOULD BE REPLACED WITH.

VALIE EXPORT

Austrian, born 1940

Encirclement from the series Body Configurations 1976 Gelatin silver print with red ink $14 \times 23 \%6$ "

Carl Jacobs Fund, 2011



Roy DeCarava

American, 1919–2009

Strikers c. 1951 Screenprint composition: $12\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{13}{16}$ "; sheet: $13\frac{3}{4} \times 11$ "

Ralph E. Shikes Fund and funds given by Dave Williams, 1996





Edward Avedisian American, 1936-2007

The Whole World Has Gone Surfing 1963 Acrylic on canvas 68 1/8 × 68 1/8"

Gift of Andy Warhol, 1973

Francis Picabia French, 1879–1953

Conversation II c. 1922 Watercolor on composition board 17 1/8 × 23 1/8"

Mary Sisler Bequest, 1990





Carolee Schneemann American, 1939–2019

Eye Body Portfolio 1963/2005 Gelatin silver print 24 × 20"

Gift of the artist, 2015

Arthur Dove American, 1880-1946

Willows 1940 Oil on canvas 25 × 35"

Gift of Duncan Phillips, 1941



Ron Gorchov

American, born 1930

Comet 1974 Oil on canvas 62 ½" × 6' 3 ½" × 17"

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gifford Phillips, 1979

Louise Bourgeois

American, born France. 1911-2010

Untitled 1950 Gouache, pencil, and colored pencil on colored paper 28 × 21 %"

Purchase through the Vincent d'Aquila and Harry Soviak Bequest Fund, 1995





Lee Lozano American, 1930–1999

No title 1963 Pencil and crayon on paper 17 ½ × 11 ¾"

The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift, 2005







Alexander Calder American, 1898–1976

Untitled 1943 Painted wood 28 1/8 × 10 × 8 3/4"

Gift of Pierre Matisse in memory of Patricia Kane Matisse, 1982



Robert Kobayashi American, 1925–2015

Three Plums 1984
Found pressed-tin and nails on wood 62 1/4 × 21 × 17 1/4"

Gift of General Felt Industries, Knoll, 1984

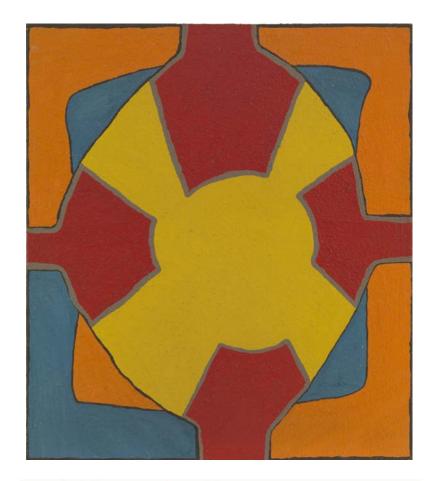


Lawrence Weiner

American, born 1942

Title Unknown 1965 Synthetic polymer paint and sawdust on canvas 22 × 24 ½"

Gift of Seth Siegelaub and the Stichting Egress Foundation, Amsterdam, 2010



SWAP OPTIONS

Marcel Broodthaers Belgian, 1924–1976

Puzzle 1969

Painted vacuum-formed plastic plate 32 ½ 6 × 23 ½ 6 × 3%

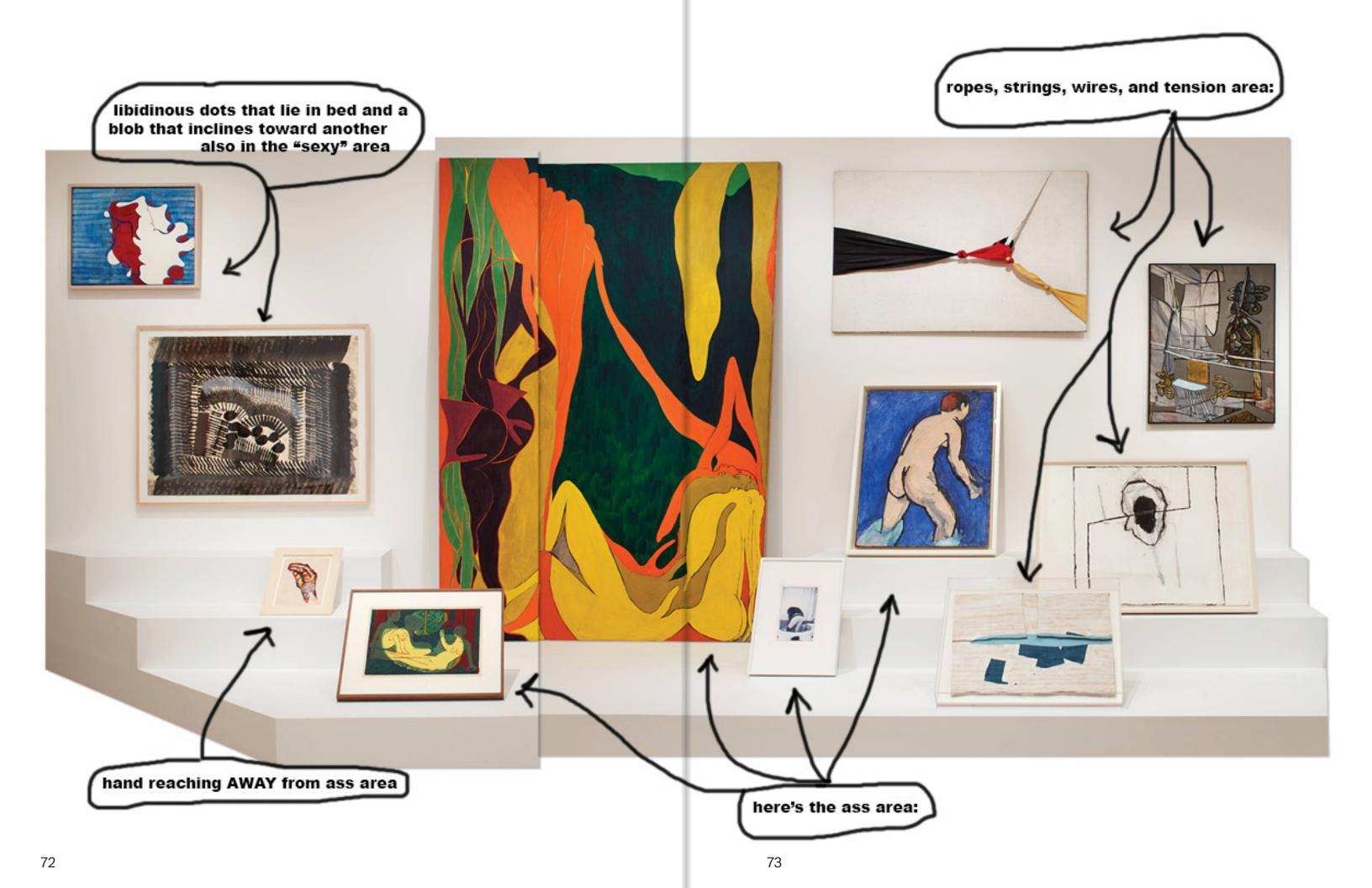
Partial gift of the Daled Collection and partial purchase through the generosity of Maja Oeri and Hans Bodenmann, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, Agnes Gund, Marlene Hess and James D. Zirin, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, and Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, 2011



Lyubov Popova Russian, 1889-1924

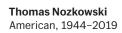
Untitled c.1916-17 Gouache on board 19½ × 15½"

The Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation, 1983









Untitled 8-19 2001 Oil on linen on panel 22 × 28"

Purchase, 2001



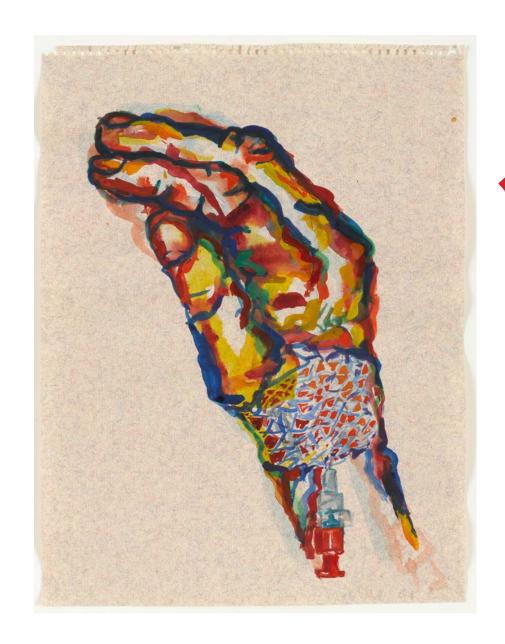
Howard Hodgkin British, 1932-2017

Two To Go 1981 Lithograph with gouache additions 36 1/8 × 48 1/4"

Publisher: Jacobson/Hochman Gallery,

New York
Printer: SOLO Press, Inc., New York
Edition: 100

Gift of the artist, 1983



Rosemarie Trockel

German, born 1952

Untitled 1984 Acrylic emulsion paint and ink on graph paper 8.14×5.78 "

Gift of Walter Bareiss, 1996





American, 1922-1981

Social Problems 1964 Pine, glass, steel wool, metal, rubber and paint $22\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ "

Foundation Inc. Funds, 1991



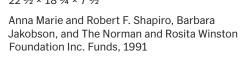


American, 1940-1993

Intra-Venus Hand No. 9 October 26, 1991

Gouache and watercolor on notebook paper $12\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ "

The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift, 2005





Ernst Ludwig Kirchner German, 1880–1938

Three Nudes in the Forest 1933 Woodcut composition: 13 % × 19 $^{11}/_{16}$ "; sheet: 16 $\%_{16}$ × 22 %"

Publisher: unpublished Printer: the artist, Davos-Frauenkirch, Switzerland Edition: 21 known impressions

Curt Valentin Bequest, 1955



Chris Ofili British, born 1968

The Raising of Lazarus 2007 Oil and charcoal on canvas 109 3⁄4 × 79"

Hillman Periodicals Fund (by exchange), 2016

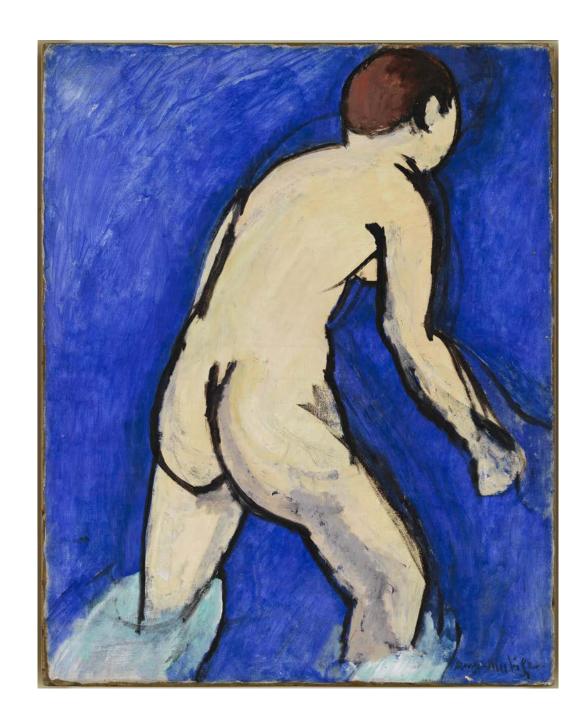


Christopher Wool American, born 1955

Untitled 1994 Photo etching image size: 10 ½ × 6 ¾"; paper size: 14 × 11"

Publisher: Texte zur Kunst, Cologne Edition: 80 and 20 APs

Gift of the artist, 2017



Henri Matisse French, 1869-1954

Bather 1909 Oil on canvas 36 ½ × 29 ⅓"

Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1936

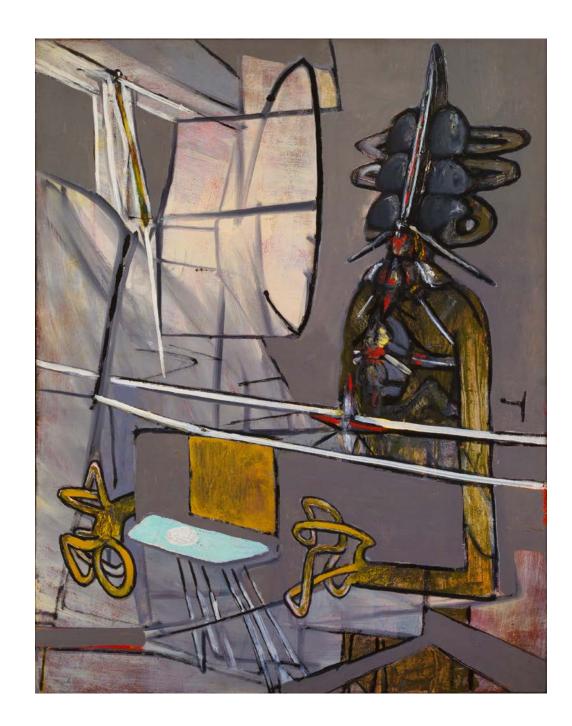
82





White Quipus 1964 Cloth and tempera on canvas 37 ½ × 59 ½"

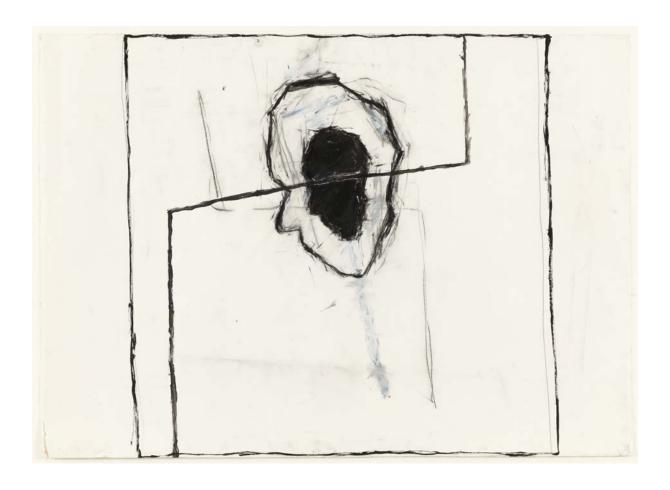
Inter-American Fund, 1965

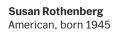


Roberto Matta Chilean, 1911-2002

My Blind 1946-47 Oil on canvas 36 1/8 × 28 1/2"

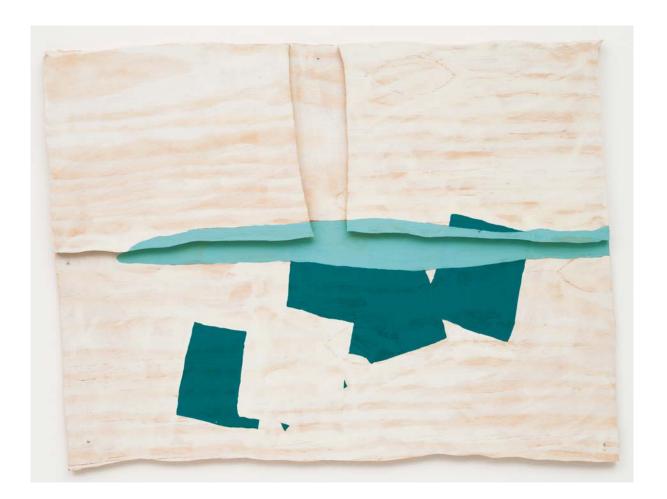
Gift of Pierre Matisse in memory of Patricia Kane Matisse, 1978





Untitled 1977 Charcoal and gouache on paper 29 ½ × 41 ½"

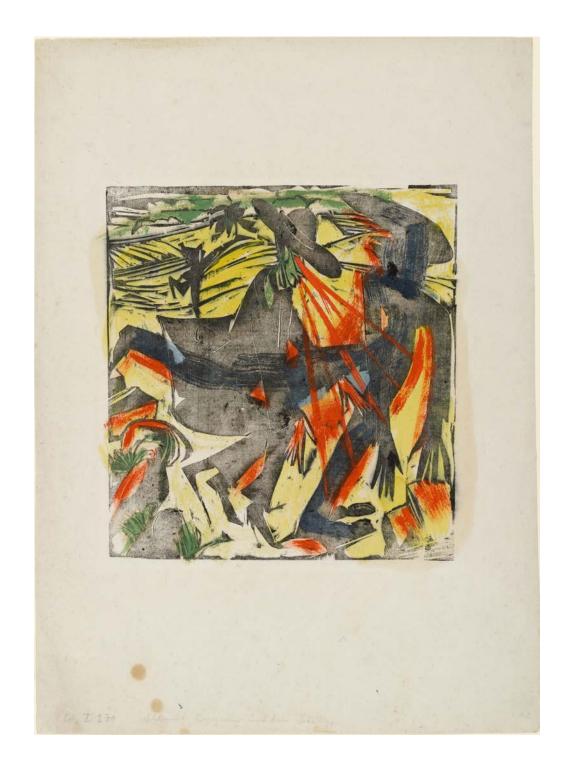
The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift, 2005



Richard Tuttle American, born 1941

New Mexico, New York, D, #13 1998 Acrylic on plywood 21 1/8 × 28"

Emily and Jerry Spiegel and Emily Rauh Pulitzer Funds, 1998



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner German, 1880–1938

Schlemihl Meets His Shadow 1915-16 Woodcut with oil additions composition (irreg.): 12 1/8 × 11 13/16"; sheet (irreg.): 22 1/16 × 16 1/4"

Publisher: unpublished Printer: the artist, Berlin Edition: proof before the edition of 10

Gift of Mrs. Heinz Schultz, 1957



Lois Lane

American, born 1948

Untitled 1979 Oil on canvas 8' x 8'

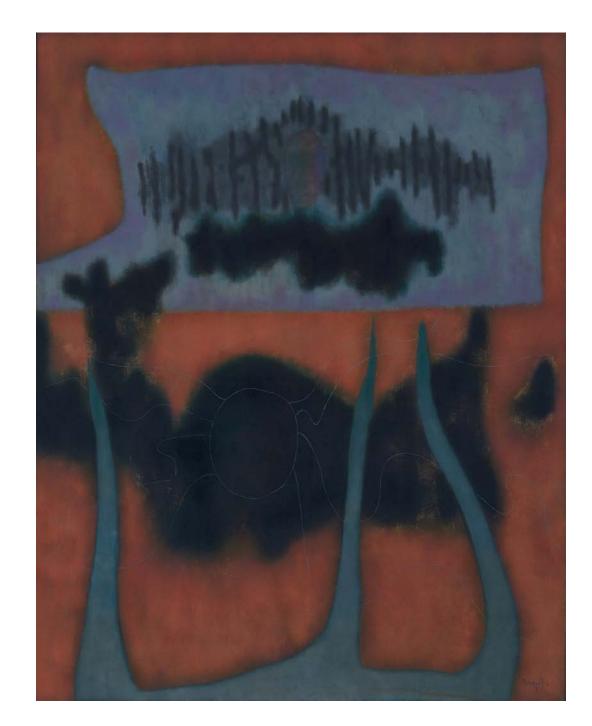
Gift of the Louis and Bessie Adler Foundation, Inc., Seymour M. Klein, President, 1980



Romare Bearden American, 1911–1988

Patchwork Quilt 1970 Cut-and-pasted cloth and paper with acrylic on board 35 ³/₄ × 47 ⁷/₈"

Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund, 1970

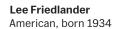


William Baziotes American, 1912–1963

Pompeii 1955 Oil on canvas 60 × 48"

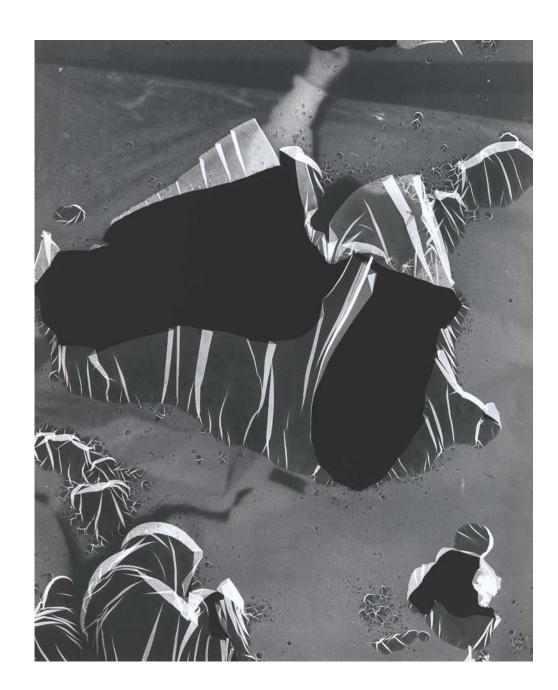
Louise Reinhardt Smith Fund, 1956





New York City 1966 Gelatin silver print 5 3⁄4 × 8 11/16"

Carl Jacobs Fund, 2000



Eileen Quinlan American, born 1972

Passing Through 2013 Gelatin silver print 25 × 20"

Fund for the Twenty-First Century, 2014

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Elizabeth Murray American, 1940-2007

Up Dog 1987-88 Lithograph on fourteen sheets of torn and pasted paper composition and sheet (irreg.): $52\frac{1}{16} \times 36\frac{5}{16}$ "

Publisher and printer: Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, NY Edition: 62

Gift of Emily Fisher Landau, 1988

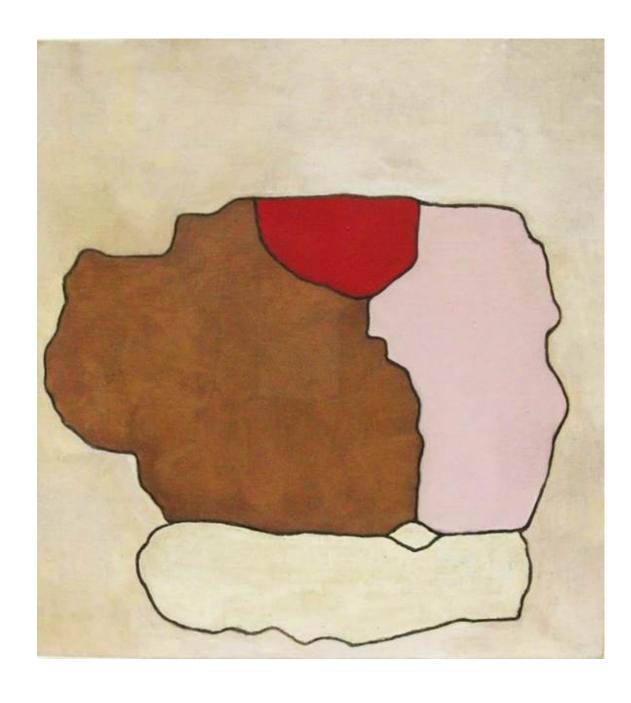


Jay DeFeo American, 1929-1989

Untitled (Tripod) c. 1976 Cut paper with acrylic, oil crayon, ink, pencil, and pressure-sensitive tape pinned to paper 14 × 11"

The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift, 2005

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Stone 1985 Oil on canvas 31 1/8 × 29 15/16"

Gift of Amy Sillman, 2019



Charline von Heyl German, born 1960

Igitur 2008 Acrylic on canvas 6' 10" × 6' 2" × 1½"

Enid A. Haupt Fund and The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, 2010





Jean (Hans) Arp French, born Germany (Alsace). 1886–1966

Birds in an Aquarium c. 1920 Painted wood $9 \frac{7}{8} \times 8 \times 4 \frac{1}{2}$ "

Purchase, 1937



Louise Nevelson

American, born Ukraine. 1899–1988

That Silent Place 1954-55 Painted wood 20 ½ × 37 ½ × 7 ½"

Gift of Devorah Sherman, 1979





First Requiem 1977 Acrylic on wood 91 × 8 × 8"

Gift of Robert B. and Mercedes H. Eichholz, 2013



Jean (Hans) Arp French, born Germany (Alsace), 1886–1966

Floral Nude 1957 Marble 47 ½" high, 10 ½" in diameter at base

Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1961



QUESTIONS FOR ULRIKE MUELLER:

[About your process: do you fuss over shapes? Do they change a lot? How do you know when you've arrived at a keeper? Do shapes come to mind separate from language or ideas, or does it all go hand in hand?]

ANSWER:

When it comes to finding shapes, I draw and re-draw a lot, usually starting from outline drawings in pencil. I do fuss about shapes, especially about curves: I have to get a shape to "work." My curves are partially traced from round objects and partially drawn freehand, without that distinction registering in an obvious way. I would say the eraser is the tool I couldn't do without, but I also often fully finish a drawing to then start it over with some kind of edit in place. I'm constantly holding drawings against the window and tracing from them. More recently, in the printshop, I started drawing with a marker on plexiglass. I love the smoothness of the surface and how the ink flows across it. The shaping process becomes even more plastic, and it allows me to scale up. The drawing on plexi is a temporary, transitional thing, a tool in a process. It is a template to trace from, and can itself be traced and edited from another form. You're asking what makes a good shape, one that I keep. I don't fully know in all instances, but one thing I keep returning to is a sense of built-in contradiction. This can mean many things: a shape that's both flat and sticking out into space, both geometric and organic, or a bright shadow...just to name a few. I would say that shapes come before recognizable forms, and that I treat them almost as building blocks that can be stacked, precariously, to invite signification as an inter-subjective process between the thing I made and the person looking at it.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT SHAPE, RACHEL HAIDU

I first hit on the idea of shape as a way to think about selfhood well after I'd been doing it forever, instinctively—and I guess that's in a nutshell what I think about shapes: **they are us.** Not just that we are inclined, gestalt-wise, to identify with them (the idea that we are shapes) but that that identification pushes us into other ways of thinking about shapes—and selves—that we don't normally acknowledge. For example: the fact that a shape is one shape until it changes into another shape. That's how a shape is a whole form, even if half of it is hanging open, like a mouth. Once the mouth closes: new shape. Just that alone speaks to the sharpness of demarcations that I think we rely on when we consider our own outlines. (This has nothing to do with emotional "boundaries"—if only.) It doesn't have to do with how we change or anything like that, but it does have to do with the firmity with which we see ourselves as "one," each of us.

Once you start thinking about shapes, they're everywhere.

Ulrike Mueller first got me into thinking about shapes as a rigorous way to "enter" painting, admitting both their anthropomorphism and their readiness to signify inside the histories of abstraction (and everything that gets entailed once those histories are admitted as plural). Once you're there, you're not looking away. Shapes don't have to conceal their own figural pushiness—the way they ask you to see a knobby joint or a flattening breast. They live in their own ambivalence: that, at least, is where "modernism" caves under its own dogma and lets us see something less authored, both about our histories and about ourselves.

But if I wanted to take this a step further, I'd say: look, shapes aren't boundaries, and they aren't color; if anything, they ask you to see both everything that we separate out from shape (weight, texture, color, and so on) and then how those "other" aspects become shape. So the next time you think that a shape is a boundary or a self is its boundaries: think again. The comedy starts as soon as you have certainty (think of all those comic characters who are funny because of the ways that they are led around by whatever it is—Adam Sandler's anger—for instance). That alliance between the certainty that a painted shape depends on and the comedy that starts as soon as you agree with it—as soon as you see with the shape: that's painting.

QUESTIONS FOR TORKWASE DYSON

I dedicate this to Ahmaud Arbery (2020) and Anna (1815).

"I think blackness will swallow the whole of terror to be free. It will move across distances, molecules, units—through architecture, atmospheres and concrete, in magic and bloodstreams to self-liberate. To imagine movements and geographies of freedom, known and unknown, is to regard this space as irreducible, or to regard black spatial movement as irreducible."

[Q: when you're working on a shape, do you fuss over it? does it change a lot?] My shapes are ongoing and everywhere during preparation (sketches). I exact it on the paper/painting surface through improvisation. No fuss.

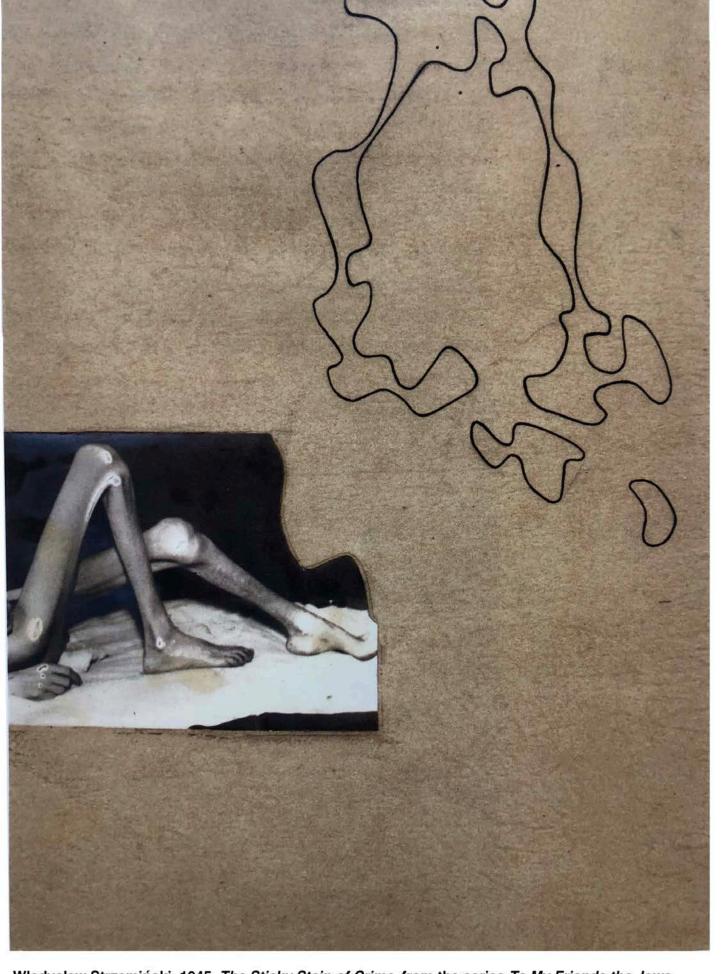
[*Q: how do you know when you've arrived at THE shape, the one you keep?*] Sometimes that second, sometimes days laters, sometimes years later. (Sometimes when working on the canvas I use shape to un-keep things. I think I'm close. Ask me again next year.)

[Q: do shapes come into your mind first as distinct from language or forms in the world? or are they "autonomous"? or does it go hand in hand?] My shape production comes out of this exact tension. It's a question of proximity, use, space, power, science, liberation and imagination. There is no such thing as autonomy, there are only registers of semi autonomy embedded in a prism sense perception. No symbols in my work, indexes.

[Q: curious about how shapes initially arise for you in your work and how you change them over time?]

When I understood the power of architecture and infrastructure. It changed as I began to comprehend how this power was used historically and negated.

That "and" is the moment of invention.



Władysław Strzemiński, 1945, *The Sticky Stain of Crime*, from the series *To My Friends the Jews*, photomontage, from the book Foto: Modernity in Central Europe: 1918-1945 by Matthew S. Witkowsky







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