



# BREAKING IT

# DOWN

## CONVERSATIONS FROM THE VAULT

NOVEMBER 2, 2024–JANUARY 19, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

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PHILLIPS



**UPDATED RELEASE**  
October 29, 2024

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**The Phillips Collection Presents *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

*Showcasing the museum's historic and ongoing support of living artists, the exhibition features recent contemporary acquisitions presented in dialogue with cornerstones of the permanent collection.*



WASHINGTON, DC—The Phillips Collection presents *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*, an exhibition showcasing works from the permanent collection that emphasizes the museum's historic and ongoing dedication to championing living artists. Featuring over 90 works, including paintings, works on paper, photographs, and sculpture, the exhibition presents an in-depth look at artists who are cornerstones of the collection, alongside a growing collection of works by contemporary innovators. *Breaking It Down* employs the museum's legacy strategy of fostering visual dialogues between artists across diverse styles, generations, and cultural backgrounds. Organized by The Phillips Collection, the exhibition is on view from November 2, 2024, through January 19, 2025.

“The Phillips Collection has advocated for living artists from its founding, through early-career acquisitions, exhibitions, and direct financial support. *Breaking It Down* celebrates this rich legacy as we look to the museum's future and imagine new ways to support the artists of our time,” says **Vradenburg Director & CEO Jonathan P. Binstock**. “We hope the exhibition will inspire guests and new generations of artists by offering a space for discovery, learning, and joy.”

From its inception, founders Duncan and Marjorie Phillips envisioned the museum as a place to test new approaches to collecting and exhibiting art, arranging works by aesthetic affinities rather than chronology or geography. At the core of this approach was their enduring support and encouragement of artists; the two nurtured vital relationships with many artists who today are mainstays of the collection. Over time, the museum developed what Duncan Phillips called “units,” or groups of works that survey an artist’s career or represent key aspects of an artist’s voice, vision, or creative development. The “unit” is the key organizing principle of the permanent collection, which enables the Phillips to convene artists in visual conversations, independent of any particular school or movement, with the hope of sparking new ways of seeing, experiencing, and understanding art. *Breaking It Down* explores these novel visual exchanges as well as connections between patron, museum, and artist.

The exhibition highlights several foundational artists from the collection, including **Georges Braque, Richard Diebenkorn, John Marin, Sam Gilliam, Paul Klee, and Georgia O’Keeffe**, alongside works by contemporary artists to showcase how more recently assembled “units” continue to shape the museum. Several acquisitions will have their exhibition debut at the Phillips, including works by **William Christenberry, Walker Evans, Sam Gilliam, Joel Meyerowitz, Sean Scully, Aaron Siskind, Sylvia Snowden, Renée Stout, and Joyce Wellman**.

“The featured artists work across representational and abstract styles, with a personal language of expression,” says **Phillips Associate Curator and exhibition curator Renée Maurer**. “Well-known artists are juxtaposed with a growing collection of works, reinforcing the museum’s active engagement with living artists, several of whom are grounded in the D.C. community.”

The exhibition also examines creative exchange between artists across generations and the museum’s role in fostering these connections. Works by **Richard Diebenkorn** and **Kate Shepherd** are shown alongside examples by **Henri Matisse** and **Piet Mondrian**, respectively. Matisse and Mondrian served as guideposts for the younger artists who ventured into new chapters of artmaking upon responding to the works in the collection. Dedicated galleries spotlight the Phillips’s early support of artists such as **Georges Braque; Arthur G. Dove and Georgia O’Keeffe of the Stieglitz Circle; Augustus Vincent Tack; Sam Gilliam**, whose work the museum was the first in the US to acquire; and **Paul Klee**, whose narrative imagery remains a source of inspiration and study for artists such as **Joyce Wellman**. The vibrant expression of works by **Sylvia Snowden** and Wellman conveys the power of color, which is a driving force of the permanent collection more broadly.

The exhibition includes archival materials, including letters, photos, and other ephemera, to contextualize the relationships between the artists and patrons Duncan and Marjorie Phillips, foregrounding the stories that are foundational to The Phillips Collection’s ethos and that inspire its future.

#### ARTISTS

Karel Appel  
Georges Braque  
Sharon Core  
Henri Cartier-Bresson  
Paul Cezanne  
William Christenberry  
Arthur G. Dove

Richard Diebenkorn  
Walker Evans  
Sam Gilliam  
Sadakichi Hartmann  
Martha Jackson Jarvis  
Paul Klee  
John Marin

Henri Matisse  
Joel Meyerowitz  
Piet Mondrian  
Georgia O’Keeffe  
Lucy T. Pettway  
Albert Pinkham Ryder  
Sean Scully

Kate Shepherd  
Toko Shinoda  
Aaron Siskind

Sylvia Snowden  
Alfred Stieglitz  
Renée Stout

Augustus Vincent Tack  
Joyce Wellman

### EXHIBITION SUPPORT

The exhibition is organized by The Phillips Collection.

The Phillips Collection gratefully acknowledges the Frauke de Looper Trust for lead support of this exhibition.

This exhibition is made possible, in part, by Stephanie and Greg Guyett and the Linda Lichtenberg Kaplan Exhibition Fund.

Presented with the generous support of Martha R. Johnston and Lugano.

### ADMISSION HOURS

The Phillips Collection is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am–5 pm; closed Monday. Beginning Sunday, November 3, the Phillips will pilot a new dedicated Members Hour on Sundays, 10-11 am. Public hours resume 11 am-5 pm.

### IMAGE GALLERY

High-resolution press images are available upon request. Please contact [lcantrell@phillipscollection.org](mailto:lcantrell@phillipscollection.org).

**IMAGE:** Guest in the galleries with Arthur Dove, *Flour Mill II*, 1938, Oil and wax emulsion on canvas, 29 1/8 x 19 1/4 in., The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1934; Henri Matisse, *Studio, Quai Saint-Michel*, 1916, Oil on canvas, 58 1/4 x 46 in., Acquired 1940, © 2024 Succession H. Matisse/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Sylvia Snowden, *George Chavis*, 1984, Acrylic and oil pastel on Masonite, 49 1/2 x 49 1/2 in., The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2024; Photo: Carl Nard.

### ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art, was founded in 1921. The museum houses one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist and American modern art collections and continues to grow its collection with important contemporary voices. Its distinctive building combines extensive new galleries with the former home of its founder, Duncan Phillips. The Phillips's impact spreads nationally and internationally through its diverse and experimental special exhibitions and events, including its award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; renowned Phillips Music series; and dynamic art and wellness and Phillips after 5 events. The Phillips Collection's extensive community partnerships include Phillips@THEARC, the museum's satellite campus in Southeast DC. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

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**PRESS IMAGES*****Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vaults*****November 2, 2024–January 19, 2025**

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**Sam Gilliam***April*

1971

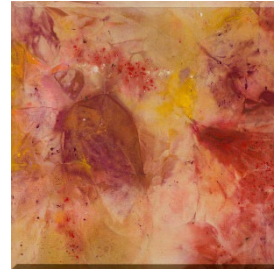
Acrylic on canvas

60 x 60 x 2 1/2 in.

The Phillips Collection

Bequest of Mercedes H. Eichholz, 2013

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY

**George Braque***The Round Table*

1929

Oil with sand on canvas

57 3/8 x 44 3/4 in.

The Phillips Collection

Acquired 1934

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York,

NY/ADAGP, Paris

**Georgia O'Keeffe***Red Hills, Lake George*

1927

Oil on canvas

28 1/4 x 33 3/8 in.

The Phillips Collection

Acquired 1945

© 2024 The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation/Artists

Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY

**Arthur G. Dove***Flour Mill II*

1938

Oil and wax emulsion on canvas

29 1/8 x 19 1/4 in.

The Phillips Collection

Acquired 1934



**Karel Appel**

*Landscape with Wheel*

1980

Oil on canvas

72 x 60 in.

The Phillips Collection

Gift of Karel Appel Foundation, 2016

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY



**Sylvia Snowden**

*George Chavis*

1984

Acrylic and oil pastel on Masonite

49 1/2 x 49 1/2 in.

The Phillips Collection

The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2024



**Paul Klee**

*Tree Nursery*

1929

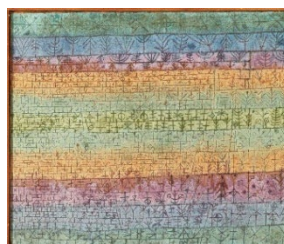
Oil with incised ground on canvas

21 x 24 1/2 in.

The Phillips Collection

Acquired 1930

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY



**Henri Matisse**

*Studio, Quai Saint-Michel*

1916

Oil on canvas

58 1/4 x 46 in.

The Phillips Collection

Acquired 1940

© 2024 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



**Joyce Wellman**

*The Big Five*

2005

Acrylic and mixed media on canvas

72 x 60 in.

The Phillips Collection

Gift of the artist, 2022

© 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY



**Sean Scully**

9.2.96

1996

Pastel on paper

40 x 60 in.

The Phillips Collection

Gift of BJ and Carol Cutler, 2009



**Renée Stout**

*Life Readings (For Nathan Lyons)*

2017

Acrylic on latex on panel

36 x 48 in.

The Phillips Collection

Gift of Sean Scully, 2020



**Henri Matisse**

*Studio, Quai Saint-Michel*

1916

Oil on canvas

58 1/4 x 46 in.

The Phillips Collection

Acquired 1940

© 2024 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights

Society (ARS), New York



**Richard Diebenkorn**

*Girl with Plant*

1960

Oil on canvas

80 x 69 1/2 in.

The Phillips Collection

Acquired 1961

© The Richard Diebenkorn Foundation



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## GALLERY IMAGES

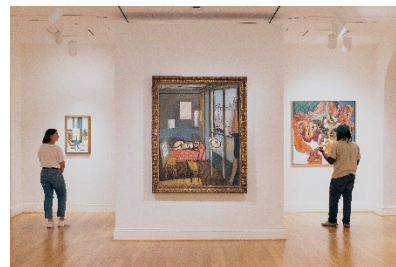
***Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vaults***  
**November 2, 2024–January 19, 2025**

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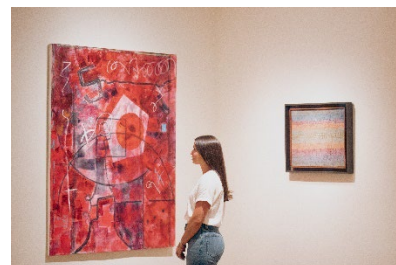
Guest in the galleries with Arthur Dove, *Flour Mill II*, 1938, 29 1/8 x 19 1/4 in., The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1934; Henri Matisse, *Studio, Quai Saint-Michel*, 1916, 58 1/4 x 46 in., Acquired 1940, © 2024 Succession H. Matisse/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Sylvia Snowden, *George Chavis*, 1984, 49 1/2 x 49 1/2 in., The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2024; Photo: Carl Nard.



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Guest in the galleries with Joyce Wellman, *The Big Five*, 2005, 72 x 60 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of the artist, 2022, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Paul Klee, *Tree Nursery*, 1929, 21 x 24 1/2 in., The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1930, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Photo: Carl Nard.



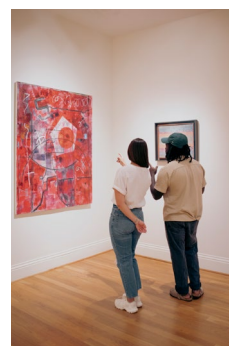
Guests in the galleries with Joyce Wellman, *The Big Five*, 2005, 72 x 60 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of the artist, 2022, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Photo: Carl Nard.



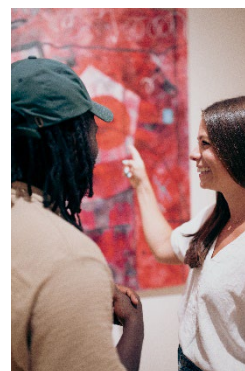


**Page 2—Gallery Images: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

Guests in the galleries with Joyce Wellman, *The Big Five*, 2005, 72 x 60 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of the artist, 2022, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Paul Klee, *Tree Nursery*, 1929, 21 x 24 1/2 in., The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1930, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Photo: Carl Nard.



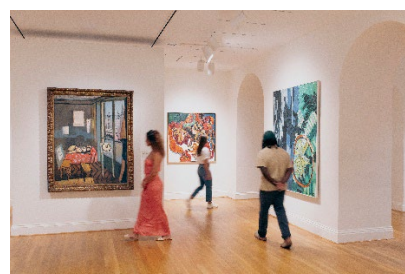
Guests in the galleries with Joyce Wellman, *The Big Five*, 2005, 72 x 60 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of the artist, 2022, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Photo: Carl Nard.



Guests in the galleries with Sylvia Snowden, *George Chavis*, 1984, 49 1/2 x 49 1/2 in., The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2024; Karel Appel, *Landscape with Wheel*, 1980, 72 x 60 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of Karel Appel Foundation, 2016, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Photo: Carl Nard.

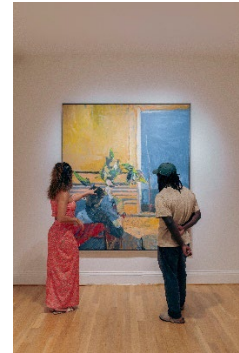


Guests in the galleries with Henri Matisse, *Studio, Quai Saint-Michel*, 1916, 29 1/8 x 19 1/4 in., Acquired 1940, © 2024 Succession H. Matisse/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Sylvia Snowden, *George Chavis*, 1984, 49 1/2 x 49 1/2 in., The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2024; Karel Appel, *Landscape with Wheel*, 1980, 72 x 60 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of Karel Appel Foundation, 2016, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Photo: Carl Nard.

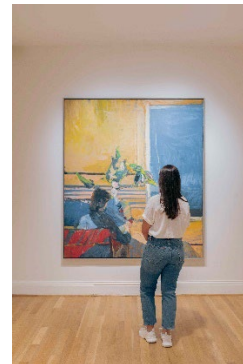


**Page 3—Gallery Images: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

Guests in the galleries with Richard Diebenkorn, *Girl with Plant*, 1960, 80 x 69 1/2 in., The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1961, © The Richard Diebenkorn Foundation; Photo: Carl Nard.



Guest in the galleries with Richard Diebenkorn, *Girl with Plant*, 1960, 80 x 69 1/2 in., The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1961, © The Richard Diebenkorn Foundation; Photo: Carl Nard.



Guest in the galleries with Karel Appel, *Landscape with Wheel*, 1980, 72 x 60 in., The Phillips Collection, Gift of Karel Appel Foundation, 2016, © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY; Photo: Carl Nard.



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**CHECKLIST*****Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*****November 2, 2024–January 19, 2025**

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**Sam Gilliam & Lucy T. Pettway****Lucy T. Pettway***"Bricklayer"*

1960s

Blue denim, cotton, red cotton, white cotton, and wool

81 x 73 in.

Partial gift, partial purchase from Souls Grown Deep Foundation. The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2019

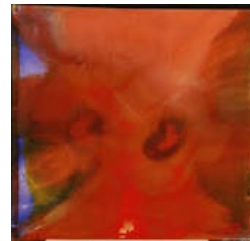
**Sam Gilliam***Red Petals*

1967

Acrylic on canvas

88 x 93 in.

Acquired 1967

**Sam Gilliam***Maya*

1970

Acrylic on canvas

100 x 30 x 9 in.

On loan from the collection of Susan and Dixon Butler

**Sam Gilliam***Red Register*

1970

Acrylic on canvas

89 x 37 x 6 in.

On loan from the collection of Barbara and Aaron Levine

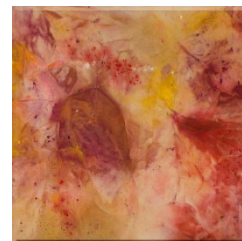
**Sam Gilliam***April*

1971

Acrylic on canvas

60 x 60 in.

Bequest of Mercedes H. Eichholz, 2013



Page 2—Checklist: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*

**Sam Gilliam**

*Broad Cape*

1972

Acrylic on canvas

118 x 50 in.

Gift from Harry and Monika Holmgren, 2023



**Sam Gilliam**

*Sierra*

1972

Acrylic on shaped canvas

54 1/4 x 50 1/4 in.

Anonymous gift, 2024



**Sam Gilliam**

*Coffee Thyme I*

1981

Color lithograph and screenprint with embossing on handmade wove paper

35 1/2 x 40 1/2 in.

Gift of Barbara and Aaron Levine, 2024



**Sam Gilliam**

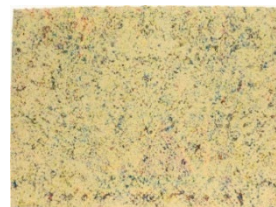
*Coffee Thyme II*

1981

Color lithograph and screenprint with embossing on handmade wove paper

35 1/2 x 40 1/2 in.

Gift of Barbara and Aaron Levine, 2024



**Sam Gilliam**

*Construct*

2018

Watercolor on handmade Japanese paper

70 x 34 in.

Gift of Sam Gilliam in honor of Curlee Holton, 2020



**Georges Braque, Paul Cezanne, Sharon Core & Joel Meyerowitz**

**Paul Cezanne**

*Ginger Pot with Pomegranate and Pears*

1893

Oil on canvas

18 1/4 x 21 7/8 in.

Gift of Gifford Phillips in memory of his father, James Laughlin Phillips, 1939



**Georges Braque**

*Plums, Pears, Nuts, and Knife*

1926

Oil on canvas

9 x 28 3/4 in.

Acquired 1927



**Georges Braque**

*Still Life with Grapes and Clarinet*

1927

Oil on canvas

31 1/8 x 38 3/4 in.

Acquired 1929



**Georges Braque**

*The Round Table*

1929

Oil on canvas

57 3/8 x 44 3/4 in.

Acquired 1934



**Georges Braque**

*The Washstand*

1944

Oil on canvas

63 7/8 x 25 1/8 in.

Acquired 1948



**Georges Braque**

*The Philodendron*

1952

Oil on canvas

51 1/4 x 29 1/8 in.

Acquired 1953



**Joel Meyerowitz**

*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

12 1/2 x 18 11/16 in.

Promised gift from Michal Venera



**Sharon Core**

*Melon and Peas*

2009

Chromogenic print

14 x 18 1/4 in.

Gift of Henry and Tony Podesta, 2015



**Arthur G. Dove, John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe & Alfred Stieglitz**

**John Marin**

*Maine Island*

1922

Watercolor and charcoal on paper

16 7/8 x 20 1/8 in.

Acquired 1926



**Georgia O'Keeffe**

*My Shanty, Lake George*

1922

Oil on canvas

21 5/8 x 28 1/4 in.

Acquired 1926



**John Marin**

*Grey Sea*

1924

Watercolor and graphite

16 1/2 x 20 3/16 in.

Acquired 1926



Page 5—Checklist: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*

**John Marin**

*Back of Bear Mountain*

1925

Watercolor, chalk, graphite on paper

17 x 20 in.

Acquired 1926



**John Marin**

*Near Great Barrington*

1925

Watercolor and graphite

15 1/8 x 18 7/8 in.

Acquired 1926



**Alfred Stieglitz**

*Equivalent*

1925

Gelatin silver print

4 3/4 x 3 3/4 in.

The Alfred Stieglitz Collection, gift of Georgia O'Keeffe, 1949



**Georgia O'Keeffe**

*Red Hills, Lake George*

1927

Oil on canvas

28 1/4 x 33 3/8 in.

Acquired 1945



**John Marin**

*Street Crossing, New York*

1928

Opaque and transparent watercolor, black chalk, and graphite pencil on paper

26 1/4 x 21 3/4 in.

Acquired 1931



**Arthur G. Dove**

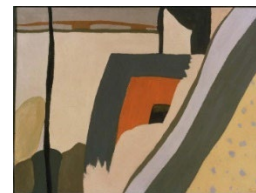
*Sand Barge*

1930

Oil on cardboard

30 1/8 x 40 1/4 in.

Acquired 1931



**John Marin**

*Pertaining to Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street*

1933

Oil on canvas

28 x 36 in.

Acquired 1937



**Arthur G. Dove**

*Me and the Moon*

1937

Wax emulsion on canvas

18 x 26 in.

Acquired 1939



**Arthur G. Dove**

*Flour Mill II*

1938

Oil on wax emulsion on canvas

26 1/8 x 16 1/8 in.

Acquired 1938



**Georgia O'Keeffe**

*From the White Place*

1940

Oil on canvas

30 x 24 in.

Acquired 1941



**Arthur G. Dove**

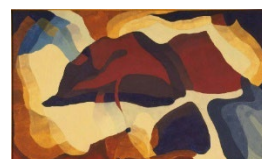
*Pozzuoli Red*

1941

Wax emulsion on canvas

22 1/8 x 36 in.

Acquired 1941



**Arthur G. Dove**

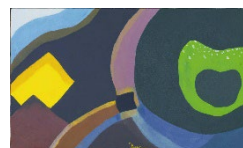
*Flight*

1943

Wax emulsion on canvas

12 x 20 in.

Bequest of Elmira Bier, 1976





Page 7—Checklist: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*

**Arthur G. Dove**

*Rain or Snow*

1943

Oil and wax emulsion with silver leaf on canvas

35 x 25 in.

Acquired 1943



**John Marin**

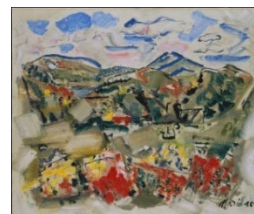
*Tunk Mountains, Autumn, Maine*

1945

Oil on canvas

25 x 30 in.

Acquired 1946



**Sadakichi Hartman**

*Moonrise San Jacinto*

N.d.

Pastel on paper

7 7/8 x 11 5/8 in.

Acquisition date unknown



**Sylvia Snowden & Karel Appel; Martha Jackson Jarvis,  
Toko Shinoda & Aaron Siskind**

**Karel Appel**

*Signs in Red*

1948

Oil, lacquer, and newspaper on burlap mounted on  
canvas

51 5/8 x 31 1/2 in.

Gift of Karel Appel Foundation, 2016



**Aaron Siskind**

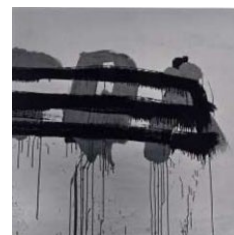
*Lima (Homage to Franz Kline) 63*

1975

Gelatin silver print, printed later

20 x 16 in.

Gift of Michelle and Stan Kurtz in Memory of Saul Levi,  
2019



**Karel Appel**

*Landscape with Wheel*

1980

Oil on canvas

72 x 60 in.

Gift of Karel Appel Foundation, 2016



**Sylvia Snowden**

*George Chavis*

1984

Acrylic and oil pastel on Masonite

49 1/2 x 49 1/2 in.

The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2024



**Martha Jackson Jarvis**

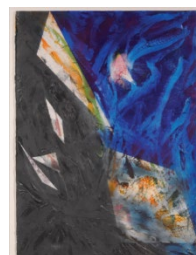
*Time Shifting*

2008

Acrylic over watercolor, ink, and pencil

22 x 29 in.

Gift of Beverly and Chris With, 2021



**Toko Shinoda**

*Passing*

N.d.

Lithograph with hand-painted sumi ink

15 1/4 x 19 1/4 in.

Gift of the Collection of Dr. Irene Gad, 2019



**Henri Cartier-Bresson & Joel Meyerowitz**

**Henri Cartier-Bresson**

*Calagonone Beach, Village of Dorgali, Sardinia, Italy*

1962

Gelatin silver print

9 7/8 x 6 1/2 in.

Acquisition date unknown



**Henri Cartier-Bresson**

*Eaton*

1962

Gelatin silver print

6 1/2 x 9 7/8 in.

Acquisition date unknown



**Joel Meyerowitz**

*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

12 1/2 x 18 11/16 in.

Promised gift from Michal Venera



**Joel Meyerowitz**

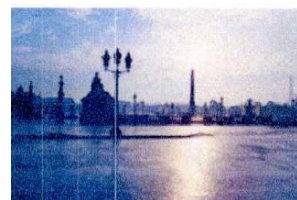
*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

12 1/2 x 18 11/16 in.

Promised gift from Michal Venera



**Joel Meyerowitz**

*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

12 1/2 x 18 11/16 in.

Promised gift from Michal Venera



**Henri Cartier-Bresson**

*Irish Horse*

N.d.

Gelatin silver print

13 3/8 x 19 3/4 in.

Acquired 1964



**Joyce Wellman & Paul Klee**

**Paul Klee**

*Land of Lemons*

1929

Transparent and opaque watercolor on paper mounted on cardboard

10 1/2 x 13 5/8 in.

Acquired 1938



Page 10—Checklist: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*

**Paul Klee**

*Tree Nursery*

1929

Oil with incised ground on canvas

21 x 24 1/2 in.

Acquired 1930



**Paul Klee**

*Figure of the Oriental Theater*

1934

Oil on fabric mounted on canvas

20 1/2 x 15 5/8 in.

Acquired 1942



**Paul Klee**

*Printed Sheet with Picture*

1937

Oil on canvas

23 5/8 x 22 1/4 in.

Acquired 1948



**Paul Klee**

*Efflorescence*

1937

Oil on cardboard mounted on wooden strainer

13 1/8 x 10 1/2 in.

Acquired 1938



**Paul Klee**

*Young Moe*

1938

Color paste on newspaper mounted on burlap

20 7/8 x 27 5/8 in.

Acquired 1948



**Joyce Wellman**

*Journey through Migration*

1985

Color viscosity etching

22 x 16 in.

Gift of the artist, 2022



**Page 11—Checklist: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

**Joyce Wellman**

*Global Blues AKA Big Blue's Love Circle*

2004

Mixed media on plywood panel

38 3/4 in. dia.

Gift of Art and Nancy Saltford, 2024



**Joyce Wellman**

*The Big Five*

2005

Acrylic and mixed media on canvas

72 x 60 in.

Gift of the artist, 2022



**Sean Scully & Renée Stout**

**Sean Scully**

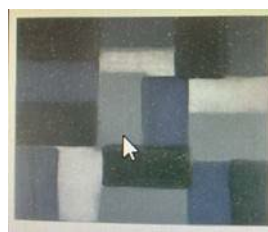
*Night*

2005

Color aquatint with lift ground and spit bite

28 3/4 x 31 in.

Promised gift of the artist



**Sean Scully**

*9.2.96*

1996

Pastel on paper

40 x 60 in.

Gift of BJ and Carol Cutler, 2009



**Renée Stout**

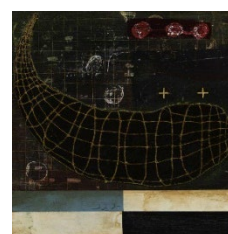
*Escape Plan A*

2017

Acrylic, varnish, collage, on wood panel

10 x 10 in.

Director's Discretionary Fund, 2018



**Renée Stout**

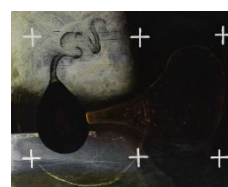
*Mannish Boy Arrive (for Muddy Waters)*

2017

Acrylic and latex paint and pencil on wood panel

16 x 16 in.

Director's Discretionary Fund, 2018



**Renée Stout**

*Life Readings (for Nathan Lyons)*

2017

Acrylic and latex on panel

36 x 48 in.

Gift of Sean Scully, 2020



**Renée Stout**

*What I Saw in the Parallel Universe*

2017

Multiple-color etching, 2 plates, 3 colors

30 x 22 in.

Promised gift of Chris and Beverly With, 2019



**Renée Stout**

*Elixir Eleven*

2018

Mixed assemblage with bottle containing organic materials

8 3/4 x 8 3/4 x 5 in.

Gift of Sean Scully, 2023



**Renée Stout**

*The Forecast*

2021

Mixed media on handmade paper

12 x 12 in.

On loan from the artist and Hemphill Artworks



**Augustus Vincent Tack & Albert Pinkham Ryder**

**Albert Pinkham Ryder**

*Moonlit Cove*

1880s

Oil on canvas

21 3/8 x 24 1/2 in.

Acquired 1924



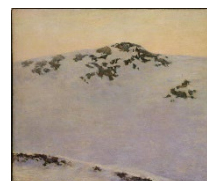
**Augustus Vincent Tack**

*Windswept (Snow Picture, Lyden)*

c. 1900-02

Oil on canvas

31 1/8 x 36 1/4 in.



**Page 13—Checklist: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

Acquired 1959

**Augustus Vincent Tack**

*Storm*

1922-23

Oil on canvas mounted on wallboard

36 7/8 x 48 1/16 in.

Acquired 1923



**Augustus Vincent Tack**

*Canyon*

c. 1923-24

Oil on canvas mounted on plywood panel

29 x 40 in.

Acquired 1924



**August Vincent Tack**

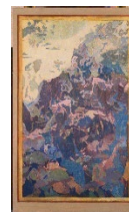
*The Voice of Many Waters*

c. 1923-24

Oil on canvas mounted on wallboard

77 3/4 x 47 7/8 in.

Acquired 1924



**Augustus Vincent Tack**

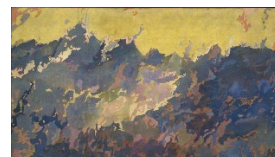
*Aspiration*

1931

Oil on canvas

74 1/4 x 134 1/2 in.

Acquired 1932



**Henri Matisse & Richard Diebenkorn; Piet Mondrian & Kate Shepherd**

**Henri Matisse**

*Studio, Quai Saint-Michel*

1916

Oil on canvas

58 1/4 x 46 in

Acquired 1940



**Richard Diebenkorn**

*Interior with View of the Ocean*

1957

Oil on canvas

49 1/2 x 57 7/8 in.

Acquired 1958



**Richard Diebenkorn**

*Girl with a Plant*

1960

Oil on canvas

80 x 69 1/2 in.

Acquired 1961



**Richard Diebenkorn**

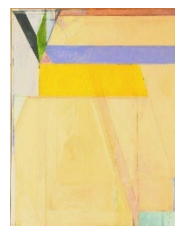
*Ocean Park No. 38*

1971

Oil on canvas

100 3/16 x 81 in.

Gift of Gifford and Joann Phillips, 1999



**Richard Diebenkorn**

*Untitled #7*

1983

Acrylic, opaque watercolor, crayon, and collaged paper on paper

29 3/4 x 24 in.

Gift of Phyllis G. Diebenkorn, 1993; © The Richard Diebenkorn Foundation



**Piet Mondrian**

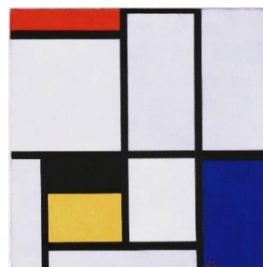
*Composition No. III*

c. 1921/repainted 1925

Oil on canvas

19 3/8 x 19 3/8 in.

Acquired 1946



**Kate Shepherd**

*Chrysanthemum*

2010

Oil and enamel paint on wood panel

28 x 38 in.

Purchase, The Hereward Lester Cooke Memorial Fund and Gift of C. Richard Belger and Evelyn R. Craft, 2010





**Kate Shepherd**

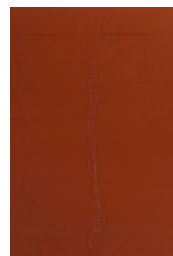
*Red Rabbit*

2010

Oil and enamel paint on wood panel

90 x 50 in.

Gift of the artist and Galerie Lelong & CO, NYC



**Kate Shepherd**

*Black Tiles*

2010

Oil and enamel paint on wood panel

35 x 48 in.

The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2010



**William Christenberry & Walker Evans**

**Walker Evans**

*Ruin of Tabby (Shell) Construction, St. Mary's Georgia*  
1932

Gelatin silver print

10 1/8 x 13 in.

Gift from the Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art,  
2018 (Gift of the Rev. Jo C. Tartt, Jr.)



**Walker Evans**

*Kitchen Wall, Alabama Farmstead*

1936

Gelatin silver print

9 7/16 x 11 15/16 in.

Gift from the Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art,  
2018 (Gift of the Rev. Jo C. Tartt, Jr.)



**Walker Evans**

*Tin False Front Building, Moundville, Alabama*

1936

Gelatin silver print

9 1/2 x 13 in.

Gift from the Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art,  
2018 (Gift of the Rev. Jo C. Tartt, Jr.)



**William Christenberry**

*Tenant House*

1960

Tempera on paper

19 x 25 in.

Gift of Laine R. and Norton N. Katz, initiated 2003,  
completed 2021



**William Christenberry**

*Star Object*

1977

Sheet metal, wood, nails, and paint

14 1/2 x 17 x 15 in.

Gift of Mr. Benjamin Nicolette, 1999



**William Christenberry**

*Rear of Cotton Gin, Greensboro, Alabama*

1984/Printed 1999

Chromogenic print

20 x 24 in.

Gift of Lee and Maria Friedlander, 2002



**William Christenberry**

*Grey Wall Construction*

1985

Sheet metal, wood, roofing materials, nails, and paint  
on wood panel

9 5/8 x 24 5/8 in.

Gift of Jean Nowak, 2009



**William Christenberry**

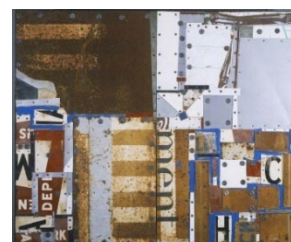
*Wall Construction III*

1985

Painted metal signs, sheet metal, washers, nails, and  
tempera paint on wood panel

30 x 36 in.

Gift of Aaron and Barbara Levine, 2009



**William Christenberry**

*Underground Nite Club, Greensboro, North Carolina*

1986/Printed 2000

Chromogenic print

20 x 24 in.

Gift of Lee and Maria Friedlander, 2002



**William Christenberry**

*Tree*

2003

Kremer German ink on sandpaper

11 x 9 in.

Gift of Sandra and William Christenberry, 2010



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## WALL TEXT

***Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***  
November 2, 2024–January 19, 2025

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### **Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault**

“My idea is not to show all our treasures at once but in ever-varied and purposeful exhibitions, arranging the Collection in units which are frequently changed so that the walls of the various rooms reveal interesting transformations.”—Duncan Phillips, 1926

This exhibition explores how an art museum can be a place for connection and a site for conversation. In their intimate galleries, Duncan and Marjorie Phillips championed living artists in displays that emphasized aesthetic relationships over historical groupings. These installations sparked new discussions and discoveries, powered by the experience of looking closely at art. The Phillipses promoted artists who worked independently, driven to create with intense expression across representational and abstract styles. Over time, they established broad groups or “units” by artists, displayed together in rooms or featured alongside other examples from the collection. They nurtured relationships with artists and supported them by acquiring and exhibiting their work.

The museum continues this legacy of advocating for living artists. *Breaking it Down* offers a fresh look at the collection by featuring more well-known works in surprising combinations with innovators of our time. It explores connections between patrons and artists, highlighting shared moments of growth. The exhibition also considers the Phillips’s influence on generations of artists who found inspiration in the museum’s unique setting and color-drenched collection. Duncan Phillips wanted guests to linger with works that have been “lived with, worked with, and loved.”

We invite you to find your own meaning in the transformative power of art.

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### **Rethinking Surfaces**

Sam Gilliam moved to Washington, DC, in 1962. He often visited the Phillips, informed by the works of Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, and Arthur G. Dove. He also drew inspiration from the Washington Color School artists, known for their vibrant color-stained canvases. In late 1966, Marjorie Phillips offered Gilliam his first solo museum exhibition, which pushed him to explore new artistic directions.

Gilliam experimented with watercolor, creating structure in his abstract images by folding and crumpling the paper. He then extended this process to pouring paint onto unprimed and unstretched canvases, tying and folding the cotton duck and allowing it to dry in a pile to discover later the resulting compositions. He treated the canvas as a physical object to be shaped, like a sculptural material, and not simply as a flat surface on which to paint. In a way, he constructed his compositions by manipulating the canvases as much as he painted them. *Red Petals*, on view in this gallery, is among the first works where the artist used this technique, and the first Gilliam work to enter a museum collection. By the end of the 1960s, Gilliam often abandoned the traditional stretcher, instead choosing the sculptural qualities of draped canvases, exemplified by the artworks displayed in the stairwell.

The Gilliam unit is paired with a work by Lucy T. Pettway, from Gee’s Bend, Alabama, known for her innovative use of color and design in quilting. Her sewn, layered surfaces have inspired many artists.

**Page 2—Wall Text: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

**As you explore this gallery, consider which work attracts you the most. Look closely at its surface and details. What do these details tell you? Think about how the two artists made their works. Why do you think Gilliam and Pettway are shown together?**

Sam Gilliam (b.1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Red Register*

1970

Acrylic on canvas

On loan from the collection of Aaron and Barbara and Levine

Sam Gilliam (b.1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Maya*

1970

Acrylic on canvas

On loan from the collection of Susan and Dixon Butler

Sam Gilliam (b.1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Broad Cape*

1972

Acrylic on canvas

Gift from Harry and Monika Holmgren

Sam Gilliam explained: “Starting in 1968, under the influence of both shaped canvases, and the work of Morris Louis, I started hanging 75-foot lengths of canvas in my studio, upon which I stained paint.” First working on the floor, Gilliam covered the unprimed canvas with poured, thinned layers of acrylic, painting wet-on-wet in some areas and blending colors to manipulate the surface. The work was then suspended, paint reapplied, and the canvas was allowed to dry. *Broad* is part of a series called *Cowls* started in 1970. These works are notable for their long narrow design and folded top edge. *Broad* is the first of Gilliam’s seminal draped works to enter the collection.

Sam Gilliam (b. 1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Sierra*

1972

Acrylic on canvas

Anonymous gift, 2024

In the 1970s, Gilliam used the beveled edge stretcher format to facilitate the visual relationship between painting and sculpture. Depending on the orientation, Gilliam’s beveled edge paintings appear to either float away from the wall or emerge from it as a physical object or slab relief, as this painting does.

Sam Gilliam (b. 1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Untitled*

2019

Watercolor and acrylic on washi paper

Anonymous gift, 2024

Sam Gilliam (b. 1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

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*April*

1971

Acrylic on canvas

Bequest of Mercedes H. Eichholz, 2013

Sam Gilliam (b. 1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Red Petals*

1967

Acrylic on canvas

Acquired in 1967

Sam Gilliam (b. 1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Construct*

2018

Watercolor on paper

Gift of Sam Gilliam in honor of Curlee Holton, 2020,

While stationed in Japan in the mid-1950s, Gilliam experimented with watercolor. He explained: “If you paint on paper, particularly on a hard surface paper, it pushes back. It holds the color up. The water moves with the paper so you can’t stop it. You go with the flow . . . You can learn to do deliberate things; you establish your references on the page. [T]he surface has to have that texture, so everything seems to reside inside the paper, which is very thin, very large, and architectonic. The works are either very strong in color and intensity or they’re strong in concentration of pigment. Most of them are vertical, which means that there is a consideration of how they’re going to operate in the space.”

Lucy T. Pettway (b. 1921, Boykin, Alabama; d. 2004, Boykin, Alabama)

*“Bricklayer”*

1960s

Blue denim, cotton, red cotton, white cotton, and wool

Partial Gift, Partial Purchase from Souls Grown Deep Foundation. The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2019

Sam Gilliam (b. 1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Coffee Thyme II*

1981

Color lithograph and screenprint with embossing on handmade wove paper

Gift of Barbara Levine

Sam Gilliam (b. 1933, Tupelo, Mississippi; d. 2022, Washington, DC)

*Coffee Thyme I*

1981

Color lithograph and screenprint with embossing on handmade wove paper

Gift of Barbara Levine

During the 1970s, Gilliam experimented with texture, scale, and material in a series of sculptural black-and-white paintings that emphasized the labor and physicality of his process. Also at this time, Gilliam

began exploring complex printmaking techniques like in *Coffee Thyme I* and *II*. Both use lithography, silkscreen, and embossing to reinterpret the layered surfaces of his earlier black-and-white canvases.

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### The Evolving Still Life

Still life paintings often feature familiar objects, letting us closely observe form, color, texture, and line. French artist George Braque is known for taking the still life genre in new directions, representing different fragmented views within the same picture. Duncan Phillips significantly advanced the appreciation of Braque's art in the United States, just as he played a pivotal role in introducing European modernism to a broader audience during the 1920s. Phillips acquired 11 paintings by Braque over his 45 years as museum director. He was especially interested in the artist's still lifes from the 1920s. He organized Braque's first solo exhibition at a US museum in 1939 and dedicated a room to his art starting in the 1940s.

Phillips saw Braque as a kindred spirit with a unique connection to tradition. He exhibited Braque with others to show how "similar subjects may be treated in different manners" by different artists. This gallery features various approaches to still lifes by Braque and Paul Cezanne, along with contemporary photographs by Sharon Core and Joel Meyerowitz.

**As you look at the still life paintings and photos, imagine yourself within the scene. Think about your position relative to the objects: Are they above or below you? Are they close or far away? Look at how the objects are arranged. What might they have meant for the artist? What do they mean to you?**

Georges Braque (b. 1882, Argenteuil, France; d. 1963, Paris, France)

*Plums, Pears, Nuts, and Knife*

1926

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1927

Already an advocate for several living French artists, in 1927 Phillips wrote to dealer Joseph Durand-Ruel: "Braque . . . interest[s] me, and I must have a good example by him." Moved by photographs of Braque's still life exhibited at Durand-Ruel's gallery, Phillips acquired this work for \$2,000, making it the first painting by the artist to enter a US museum collection.

Georges Braque (b. 1882, Argenteuil, France; d. 1963, Paris, France)

*Still Life with Grapes and Clarinet*

1927

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1929

In the latter half of the 1920s, Braque's paintings featured layered pictorial elements like this still life arrangement. Mesmerized by these effects, Phillips envisioned how he would install this painting as he negotiated with New York dealer Paul Reinhardt: "I could make a beautiful wall with my long panel [*Plums, Pears, Nuts, and Knife*] to the right . . . this handsome canvas as a center." Striving for a strong group of Braque paintings, Phillips purchased this work for \$5,400 in December 1929.

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Paul Cezanne (b. 1839, Aix-en-Provence, France; d. 1906, Aix-en-Provence, France)

*Ginger Pot with Pomegranate and Pears*

1893

Oil on canvas

Gift of Gifford Phillips, 1939

Throughout his career, Cezanne painted still lifes filled with modest objects from his home. He meticulously set up fruits of contrasting color, tilting and balancing them using coins or other items to explore the relationships of line, volume, and depth. Phillips acquired this work the same year he hosted Braque's first solo show in the US.

George Braque (b. 1882, Argenteuil, France; d. 1963, Paris, France)

*The Round Table*

1929

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1934

This painting shows Braque's experimental techniques: he lightens the ground layers, brightens his palette with washes of pure color, increases the size of his canvas, and shows multiple and simultaneous viewpoints of objects arranged on a tabletop. By altering his paints—he added sand to the ground layers to form a stucco-like surface and combed through wet paint in areas of the table to replicate a wood grain effect—Braque calls attention to the canvas and the sensation of touch.

Duncan Phillips went to great lengths to acquire this work. When it was purchased, *The Round Table* was the largest, most abstract painting in the museum's collection, and to Phillips "one of the most exciting works." Comparing it to earlier examples in his collection, Phillips described Braque's art as a further distillation of "Cezanne's cubes and cones."

Georges Braque (b. 1882 Argenteuil, France; d. 1963 Paris, France)

*The Philodendron*

1952

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1953

*The Philodendron* is loosely related to Braque's late studio pictures of dark interiors crowded with furnishings, plants, and unfinished canvases. This work features a garden chair and a metal table with a carafe and a large apple. Exposed, bare canvas generates light in the room, echoed as highlights in the background. By 1952, this chair became an established motif in Braque's art, reflecting the comfort and calm of his country home on the Normandy coast.

Georges Braque (b. 1882 Argenteuil, France; d. 1963 Paris, France)

*The Washstand*

1944

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1948



Phillips purchased *The Washstand* for \$12,000 in July 1948. It is the eighth and final painting by Braque that Phillips acquired from the artist's dealer, Paul Rosenberg. Phillips was thrilled with *The Washstand* and exhibited it almost immediately. While Braque's palette remained largely consistent even as his style evolved, during WWII he shifted to more muted tones, and his subjects reflected quiet moments of daily routine.

Sharon Core (b. 1965, New Orleans, Louisiana; active Esopus, New York)

*Melon and Peas*

2009

Chromogenic print

Gift of Heather and Tony Podesta, 2015

In her photographs, Sharon Core renders the physicality of still life objects in convincing detail. Here, against a monochrome backdrop with specific lighting, an assortment of materials is staged to resemble the style of historic still lifes by American painter Raphaele Peale.

Core revealed: "The photographs are completely traditional, involving no digital media whatsoever, so I am staging the 'reality' of an early-19th-century painting in terms of lighting, subject matter, and scale. This requires a lot of planning in advance of the moment of exposure. . . . It is composed of a musk melon, cucumber, lemon cucumber, peas, pea pod, and vine. I grew all the fruits and vegetables in order to control size, scale, and the parts of the plants I wanted to photograph. . . . I used a 4x5 view camera to achieve that. It has two planes. One on the back of the camera, one on the front lens, which can be tilted and shifted to achieve a more dynamic perspective."

Joel Meyerowitz (b. 1938, Bronx, New York; active New York, New York, and London, England)

*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

Promised gift from Michal Venera

"Photography describes a fact of that moment . . . that thing in front of the camera the photographer chooses is important. . . . [T]he colors of fabric, the density of the atmosphere, even the mood of the place; these phenomena have wavelengths of light and we're susceptible to them."—Joel Meyerowitz

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### Advocating for American Artists

Long before opening his museum, Duncan Phillips began advocating for an American art drawn "out of the soil." Photographer and gallery owner Alfred Stieglitz and his group of artists—known as the "Stieglitz Circle"—shared this vision, especially through their depiction of abstract forms found in nature. Phillips first visited Stieglitz's Intimate Gallery in New York in January 1926, where he bought four paintings: two by Arthur Dove and two by Georgia O'Keeffe. Stieglitz predicted that Phillips would "not only have a large group of [John] Marins but undoubtedly groups of Doves and O'Keeffe...not to speak of my own photographs if you really want your gallery to reflect a growth of something which is typically American and not a reflection of France or Europe."

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In collaboration with Stieglitz, Phillips built the world's most extensive collection of Dove's art, obtained significant examples of every aspect of Marin's development, and purchased notable works by O'Keeffe and Stieglitz. The Phillips Collection was the first museum to purchase O'Keeffe's work, host a solo exhibition for Marin, and present a retrospective of Dove's art. Phillips gave financial support to both Marin and Dove in exchange for first pick of their paintings.

**The Phillips Collection was pioneering in its commitment to American artists. What connects these artworks to each other? Do they connect with you and your life experiences? What innovative approaches do these artists use to define the American landscape?**

John Marin (b. 1870, Rutherford, New Jersey; d. 1953, Cape Split, Maine)

*Maine Island*

1922

Watercolor and charcoal on paper

Acquired 1926

Beginning in 1914, Marin spent many summers along the shore of Maine. Recording the landscape, he explained: "I find my brush moving in the rhythm of wave or sail or rock." This view shows a hilltop on Bold Island, a small rocky piece of land off the banks of Stonington Harbor. The diagonal lines framing the scene suggest that the viewer has broken through a barrier to see into the distance. By slashing and scraping paint, Marin pushed the medium of watercolor to its limits. Awed by these experiments, Phillips, who saw Marin's art at Stieglitz's Intimate Gallery in 1926, soon acquired nine watercolors, leading Stieglitz to declare that Phillips had "Marinitis."

John Marin (b. 1870, Rutherford, New Jersey; d. 1953, Cape Split, Maine)

*Back of Bear Mountain*

1925

Watercolor, chalk, graphite on paper

Acquired 1926

In 1925, Marin stayed in the Hudson River Valley in New York and painted six watercolors, including this example. In 1926, Duncan Phillips acquired this watercolor from Marin's second exhibition at Stieglitz's Intimate Gallery for \$6,000, the highest price paid for a work by the artist.

John Marin (b. 1870, Rutherford, New Jersey; d. 1953, Cape Split, Maine)

*Grey Sea*

1924

Watercolor and graphite

Acquired 1926

Phillips described this work: "Surf charges over rocks . . . shot up in a shaggy elemental explosion. The waves are opaque, somber, and unutterably strong and deep . . . The Infinite starts at the horizon's edge and there is something inexorable in the sky—in the straight severe line of cloud contrasted with the

**Page 8—Wall Text: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

thunder and rage of the sea.” By 1931, Phillips called Marin one of his favorite artists, “the most provoking, challenging innovator in the history of painting.”

John Marin (b. 1870, Rutherford, New Jersey; d. 1953, Cape Split, Maine)

*Near Great Barrington*

1925

Watercolor and graphite

Acquired 1926

Marin began his watercolors with the barest of pencil or charcoal underdrawing and built his images using brushes of varying sizes loaded with color. Here, he wet the entire sheet before using any color, allowing select areas to dry before applying additional color and blending. He also frequently applied color with a dry brush or with pastel sticks and scraped away some of the wet media in patterns, as can be seen in *Grey Sea*. This type of manipulation of media required a robust support. Marin’s preference was for English or Italian heavyweight cold press watercolor papers with a rough texture that held color well and allowed the artist to scrape and rub vigorously without distorting the paper. As a final step Marin sometimes used black watercolor or dry charcoal to outline or frame his views.

Sadakichi Hartmann (b. 1867, Nagasaki, Japan; d. 1944, St. Petersburg, Florida)

*Moonrise San Jacinto*

n.d.

Pastel on paper

Acquisition date unknown

Sadakichi Hartmann was a prolific artist, critic, novelist, and poet associated with major artistic and literary figures in Europe and the US, including Alfred Stieglitz. A pioneering advocate for American art, he published one of the field’s first surveys in 1901 and gave hundreds of lectures on the subject.

In the 1930s, Phillips offered financial support to Hartmann. To thank Phillips, Hartmann donated several works. Phillips wrote in response: “You certainly will have made a fine contribution to American art by your writing, and I was entirely unaware that you were also gifted as a painter.”

Alfred Stieglitz (b. 1864, Hoboken, New Jersey; d. 1946, New York, New York)

*Equivalent*

1925

Gelatin silver print on paper

The Alfred Stieglitz Collection, gift of Georgia O’Keeffe, 1949

In 1949, Georgia O’Keeffe honored the long friendship between Stieglitz and Phillips with a gift of 19 photographs from Stieglitz’s series of clouds. Phillips described these works as “miracles of . . . individual perception and interpretation.”

John Marin (b. 1870, Rutherford, New Jersey; d. 1953, Cape Split, Maine)

*Street Crossing, New York*

**Page 9—Wall Text: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

1928

Opaque and transparent watercolor, black chalk and graphite pencil on paper

Acquired 1931

By the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, Marin's art captured the frenzied energy of the city, which he described as "a rhythmic-hearing-breathing." Filling sketchbooks with crowds mingling amidst traffic and electric signs, his works emphasized linear elements and "movements in paint." For Marin, the syncopated beat of jazz best symbolized New York's energy, also illustrated in a passage of free verse he wrote in 1928: "taut taut, loose and taut, electric, staccato."

John Marin (b. 1870, Rutherford, New Jersey; d. 1953, Cape Split, Maine)

*Pertaining to Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street*

1933

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1937

Having lived in Paris from 1905 to 1911, Marin later applied his understanding of Cubism to several city scenes. Creating sequences of movement, he drew with ink or oil, then painted the middle section in washes, and left patches of bare canvas to indicate white. He used a palette knife to create highlights. Interlocking flattened forms capture a city in constant motion, leading Duncan Phillips to remark that for Marin, "New York is sensed as a world rocking with the throb of energy."

This painting premiered at the Phillips's Marin retrospective in 1937. After attending the opening, Marin told Phillips: "It has all through it that which I am striving—rhythm and that to me hooks a picture right up with—music." Marin cultivated a friendship with the Phillipses. Their correspondence can be found in the case nearby.

John Marin (b. 1870, Rutherford, New Jersey; d. 1953, Cape Split, Maine)

*Tunk Mountains, Autumn, Maine*

1945

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1946

Georgia O'Keeffe (b. 1887, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin; d. 1986, Santa Fe, New Mexico)

*Red Hills, Lake George*

1927

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1945

"All must recognize the potency of her palette."—Duncan Phillips, 1926

This work may be based on a memory of an autumn sunset at the Lake George vacation home O'Keeffe and Stieglitz shared. O'Keeffe recalled: "The mountain on the other side of the lake is a dark burning red."

Georgia O’Keeffe (b. 1887, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin; d. 1986, Santa Fe, New Mexico)

*From the White Place*

1940

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1941

“It is only by selection, elimination, and emphasis that we get at the real meaning of things.”—Georgia O’Keeffe, 1923

A May 1, 1941, telegram indicates Phillips purchased this painting for \$3,800. Painted from nature, it shows a sixty-million-year-old cliff formation, a dramatic landscape near O’Keeffe’s home in Abiquiu, New Mexico.

Georgia O’Keeffe (b. 1887, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin; d. 1986, Santa Fe, New Mexico)

*My Shanty, Lake George*

1922

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1926

While living in Manhattan in the 1920s, Georgia O’Keeffe and her husband Alfred Stieglitz vacationed at Lake George in the Adirondack Mountains. There, O’Keeffe transformed this old farm building into her studio. O’Keeffe described this work in the context of the male artists Stieglitz supported: “The clean, clear colors were in my head, but one day as I looked at the brown burned wood of the Shanty I thought, ‘I can paint one of those dismal-colored paintings like the men. I think just for fun I will try.’” She went on to say, “[t]he men seemed to approve of it. They seemed to think that maybe I was beginning to paint.” Acquired by Phillips in 1926, it became the first painting by O’Keeffe to enter a museum collection.

Arthur G. Dove (b. 1880, Canandaigua, New York; d. 1946, Huntington, New York)

*Rain or Snow*

1943

Oil and wax emulsion with silver leaf on canvas

Acquired 1943

From 1924 to 1933, artists Arthur G. Dove and Helen Torr lived aboard their 42-foot boat docked in Huntington Harbor, New York. Then, after spending five years in Dove’s hometown of Geneva, New York, they returned to Long Island in 1938 and purchased a cottage on the banks of Titus Mill Pond in Centerport, where they resided for the rest of their lives. It is there that Dove painted *Rain or Snow*. It may represent a winter storm seen from his window or reflect motifs from his daybook where he recorded the effects of rain, sun, wind, and snow upon the landscape. Phillips admired this painting, stating: “The space, the balance and directions are all perfect and the aesthetic joy comes from a personal experience in nature.”

Arthur G. Dove (b. 1880, Canandaigua, New York; d.1946, Huntington, New York)

*Me and the Moon*

1937

Wax emulsion on canvas

Acquired 1939

The Dove unit of 56 works that range in date from 1925 to 1944 attest to Phillips's belief that the artist was one of the most significant of his day. Phillips purchased at least two Dove paintings every year until the artist's death. Dove depended on Phillips's support, writing in 1946: "You have no idea what sending on those checks means to me at this time. After fighting for an idea all your life I realize that your backing has saved it for me and I meant to thank you with all my heart and soul for what you have done." This correspondence can be found in the case nearby.

Arthur Dove (b. 1880, Canandaigua, New York; d. 1946, Huntington, New York)

*Flight*

1943

Wax emulsion on canvas

Bequest of Elmira Bier, 1976

Georgia O'Keeffe admired Dove's art, saying he "is the only painter who is of the earth . . . I think it was Dove who affected my start, who helped me to find something of my own. . . . [He] came to abstraction quite naturally . . . . It was his way of thinking."

Arthur Dove (b. 1880, Canandaigua, New York; d. 1946, Huntington, New York)

*Sand Barge*

1930

Oil on cardboard

Acquired 1931

As early as 1910, Dove abandoned representational elements from his compositions. In 1912 he told critics: "[The forms] should tell their own story." He explained to Phillips, "Paintings should exist in themselves. . . . [T]he very essence of what I have found in nature [was] in the motif of choice—two or three colors and two or three forms." Phillips admitted that his discovery of Dove increased his open-mindedness and receptivity to abstract painting.

Arthur G. Dove (b. 1880, Canandaigua, New York; d. 1946, Huntington, New York)

*Pozzuoli Red*

1941

Wax emulsion on canvas

Acquired 1941

Arthur G. Dove (b. 1880, Canandaigua, New York; d. 1946, Huntington, New York)

*Flour Mill II*

1938

Oil and wax emulsion on canvas  
Acquired 1938

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### Rich Textures and Expressive Color

“I enjoy the experience of painting, particularly color and tactile texture. Expressionism is my style. It is a communication between the canvas and me governed by the intellectual and emotional state acting as one. I am painting what we all feel as human beings.”—Sylvia Snowden

Abstract art encourages us to find personal meaning in color, shape, line, and texture. Karel Appel’s charged imagery and experimental techniques influenced Sylvia Snowden’s physical approach to painting. Snowden’s acrylic paint is built up in such thick layers that she must paint with her canvases flat on the floor. Her methods create deep, viscous surfaces that take time to both build-up and dry, inviting a tactile experience. Snowden’s fierce colors and muscular paint application contrast with Martha Jackson Jarvis’s sensuous style and energetic brushstrokes. Informed by the Abstract Expressionists, Toko Shinoda and Aaron Siskind used calligraphy and photography, respectively, to explore mark-making and gestural abstraction in black-and-white images.

**Color, gesture, and texture play key roles in many of the historic and contemporary works at the Phillips. Take time to explore the rich surfaces in this gallery. Look at each work for as long as it holds your interest. Notice how materials are layered and applied. Look for interesting color combinations. Pay attention to how each work makes you feel. If something does not appeal to you, think about what specifically evokes that reaction.**

Sylvia Snowden (b. 1942, Raleigh, North Carolina; active Washington, DC)  
*George Chavis*  
1984  
Acrylic and oil pastel on Masonite  
Acquired 2024

Snowden’s *M Street* series (1978-88) encompasses impressions of the people she observed in her DC neighborhood through color, gesture, and texture. She explained: “I am trying to depict a realistic part of their life. I’m not here to belittle or humiliate or expose anything that would be damaging to them....I used the names of the people who lived on M Street. They have nothing to do with these particular people. They’re just a means of identification. These paintings are about all of us. About human beings, about our struggle in life, about our understanding that we are from the earth, and we will go back to the earth, and that is no matter what race you are, what sex you are, what gender.”

Karel Appel (b. 1921, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; d. 2006, Zurich, Switzerland)  
*Landscape with Wheel*  
1980  
Oil on canvas  
Gift of Karel Appel Foundation, 2016

**Page 13—Wall Text: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault***

In his figurative and abstract work, Appel aggressively applied thick, layered vibrant colors to “mess around a bit.” Starting with the Dutch artist’s first visit to New York on the occasion of his second show at Martha Jackson Gallery in 1957, Appel spent time in the United States, where he gained interest in the art of the Abstract Expressionists. For Appel: “The paint expresses itself. In the mass of paint, I find my imagination and go on to paint it. Painting is tangible, sensory experience.” Constructed with small, repetitive brushstrokes, this work features Appel’s style from the 1980s, which was also influenced by Vincent van Gogh.

Karel Appel (b. 1921, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; d. 2006, Zurich Switzerland)

*Signs in Red*

1945

Oil and newspaper on burlap

Gift of Karel Appel Foundation, 2016

For Appel, “The hardest part is to start a painting; after that, it’s easy. You have to choose the color. It’s very important to start with red.” It was Matisse who led Appel to the color red. Similarly, Sylvia Snowden draws inspiration from the color red. She said, “I make use of a lot of red. Red is for me, you know—life.”

Martha Jackson Jarvis (b. 1952, Lynchburg, Virginia; active Washington, DC)

*Time Shifting*

2008

Acrylic watercolor and ink on paper

Gift of Beverly and Chris With, 2021

Toko Shinoda (b. 1913, Dalian, China; d. 2021, Tokyo, Japan)

*Passing*

n.d.

Lithograph with hand painted sumi ink

Gift of Dr. Irene Gad, 2019

Toko Shinoda fused traditional calligraphy with modern abstraction. Her move from Japan to New York in 1956 was a turning point. She described the experience: “It was the start of Abstract Expressionism and artists were called on to bring forth new forms. I was able to paint my work, first based on calligraphy, to new forms and shapes and I think that it happened first in New York and then continued when I came back to Japan.” While in New York, she participated in exhibitions at the prominent Betty Parsons Gallery. After her return to Japan in 1960, Shinoda began producing lithographs on which she would incorporate gestural brushstrokes in ink or paint.

Aaron Siskind (b. 1903, New York, New York; d. 1991, Providence, Rhode Island)

*Lima (Homage to Franz Kline) 63*

1975

Gelatin silver print, printed later



Gift of Michelle L. Kurtz 2018

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### **Artist, Advisor, Advocate**

Duncan Phillips's most important advisors were artists. Most significant was his wife, Marjorie, a realist painter who also promoted modern artists and pioneering styles. Phillips turned to artists for guidance and opportunities to "see as artists see." He met Augustus Vincent Tack in 1914, and the two became lifelong friends. When the museum opened in 1921, Phillips owned more paintings by Tack than any other artist. The Tack unit now spans the artist's entire career, comprising 81 works. Phillips hosted more than 15 solo exhibitions of Tack's work between 1924 and 1958 and commissioned a series of abstractions for the Music Room that went on view in 1930. Phillips declared Tack a "pioneer into new fields of emotional expression in color," and advocated for his exploration of abstraction in painting. Tack advised Phillips on purchases, including examples by living American artists like Albert Pinkham Ryder. Tack's approach to abstract painting inspired a generation of Washington artists including Sam Gilliam, whose art is on view nearby.

**Phillips described Tack's paintings as motion or mood studies with "deep mystical meaning" that "stimulate the imagination." As you stand in front of his paintings, notice what feelings they elicit in you.**

Augustus Vincent Tack (b. 1870, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; d. 1949, New York, New York)

*The Voice of Many Waters*

c. 1923-24

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1924

Phillips wrote in 1924, "A room decorated by Tack is a place where the spirit and the senses are wonderfully reconciled and where life takes on new meanings."

Augustus Vincent Tack (b. 1870, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; d. 1949, New York, New York)

*Aspiration*

1931

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1932

*Aspiration* is one of a cycle of 13 abstract paintings commissioned in 1928 by Duncan Phillips to decorate a large gallery at his museum. Formerly installed in what is now the Music Room, these paintings invited viewers to contemplate universal emotions and the unity of life and art. The fragmented forms seen here were directly inspired by Tack's experience of the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains.

Augustus Vincent Tack (b. 1870, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; d. 1949, New York, New York)

*Windswept (Snow Picture, Lyden)*

c. 1900-02

Oil on canvas  
Acquired 1959

Augustus Vincent Tack (b. 1870, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; d. 1949, New York, New York)

*Storm*

1922-23

Oil on canvas  
Acquired 1923

Tack's pictures reveal his editing process. He reworked the surfaces of his canvas, painted over certain elements, scraped others out, and toned back bright passages. After reevaluating the canvas, he returned to it and used rollers, cloth, and sponges to sparingly apply paint. Phillips was the first to appreciate Tack's experiments with abstraction, buying the artist's breakthrough works, like *Storm*.

Augustus Vincent Tack (b. 1870, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; d. 1949, New York, New York)

*Canyon*

c. 1923-4

Oil on canvas  
Acquired 1924

Albert Pinkham Ryder (b. 1847, New Bedford, Massachusetts; d. 1917, New York, New York)

*Moonlit Cove*

1880s

Oil on canvas  
Acquired 1924

On Tack's advice, Phillips bought paintings by Ryder, noting their independence of vision and style and their "abstract expression of form through color." Phillips wrote extensively on Ryder and in 1916 stated: "*Moonlit Cove* is one of the world's great romantic pictures—high tide and the glare of the moon. Something is soon to happen in this black corner of the coast. We know this, although we only find, dimly, in the shadow of a great rock, an empty deep-bottomed boat which casts its own shadow across the glistening, seething surf."

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### Capturing a Moment in Time

Henri Cartier-Bresson is renowned for developing the "street photography" style, which brought focused attention to everyday moments, especially in public spaces. He introduced the concept of the "decisive moment," which he described as the simultaneous recognition of an event's significance and the precise arrangement of forms. His 35mm Leica camera allowed him to blend into crowds and capture telling events. Duncan and Marjorie Phillips, who became close friends with Cartier-Bresson, collected several of his works and organized a solo exhibition in 1964.

Joel Meyerowitz also embraces the energy of the street, describing it as "a mosaic of life." He emphasizes the importance of being present in the moment, likening photographers to "visual athletes

eager to capture the next intriguing mix of human behavior, architecture, light, and shadow.” Meyerowitz fondly recalls meeting Cartier-Bresson in 1963, saying “to meet Cartier-Bresson when I was 25 years old and to sit and talk with [him] and to hear him talk about photography was one of those turning points that just spins your life out of control.” Since 2014, the museum has acquired 175 color photographs by Meyerowitz—a new unit for the museum—further enriching its growing photography collection.

**Meyerowitz was still influenced by Cartier-Bresson when he shot these images for *The French Portfolio*. At the time he was using both black and white and color film. How would the color images look different if they were in black and white and vice versa? How do these photographs evoke the textures and fabric of life?**

Henri Cartier-Bresson (b. 1908, Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; d. 2004, Céreste-en-Luberon, France)

*Irish Horse*

n.d.

Gelatin silver print

Acquired 1964

Cartier-Bresson described how he captured his subjects: “approach tenderly, gently on tiptoe.” Printing the entire negative, never cropping or editing the image, his photographs display a rich range of middle grays with accents of black and white. This work was purchased from the artist’s solo show at the Phillips in 1964. In a letter to Marjorie Phillips, Cartier-Bresson expressed his thanks that “you have so beautifully presented my work at the collection.”

Henri Cartier Bresson (b. 1908, Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; d. 2004, Céreste-en-Luberon, France)

*Calagonone Beach, Village of Dorgali, Sardinia, Italy*

1962

Gelatin silver print

Acquisition date unknown

This photograph and *Eaton* were recently discovered in an exhibition file in the museum’s archives. Cartier-Bresson most likely mailed these photographs and other examples to the Phillipses to motivate them to host a show of his art at their museum, which they presented in 1964.

Henri Cartier-Bresson (b. 1908, Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France ; d. 2004, Céreste-en-Luberon, France)

*Eaton*

1962

Gelatin silver print

Acquisition date unknown

Joel Meyerowitz (b. 1938, Bronx, New York; active New York, New York, and London, England))

*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

Promised gift from Michal Venera

“Photography is about seeing the world through the pieces of it that make you feel connected....It is a tool for us to find bits of time, light, everything.”

Joel Meyerowitz (b. 1938, Bronx, New York; active New York, New York, and London, England))

*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

Promised gift from Michal Venera

In 1963, Meyerowitz began shooting in both black and white and color, using two 35 mm cameras. The color photographs in *The French Portfolio* reflect the extensive time Meyerowitz spent in France, specifically a yearlong road trip of Europe in 1967 where he focused on photographing chance encounters with various people in public spaces. He described it as “an amazing year . . . the year of my coming of age as an artist and a man.”

Joel Meyerowitz (b. 1938, Bronx, New York; active New York, New York, and London, England))

*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

Promised gift from Michal Venera

Joel Meyerowitz (b. 1938, Bronx, New York; active New York, New York, and London, England))

*Paris, France, 1967*

Printed 1980

Dye transfer print

Promised gift from Michal Venera

Meyerowitz began shooting exclusively in color in 1973 and taught the first color photography course at Cooper Union in New York City. His work helped make color photography an accepted art form. He explained “I had to make use of the sweep of my peripheral vision to work the streets of New York and use this kind of sensory space that I pass through as a space full of subject matter that I can attune myself to if I can be just quick enough. And color played a huge role in that because I began really seeing color, details and subtle relationships.”

“Color and I are one.”—Paul Klee

“My work reveals itself through an unconscious process of placing color, form, and marks on the surface.”—Joyce Wellman

Paul Klee is a source of inspiration to many artists, and his unit is considered a cornerstone of the Phillips. It includes 13 works from the artist’s mature period, assembled between 1938 and 1948, except for one early purchase in 1930. Phillips championed Klee’s art and installed his pictures together and in dialogue with works by other artists. He later created a dedicated “Klee Room” that was on constant view from 1948–82.

Klee’s experiments with surface and texture, his use of color banding, and his treatment of geometric motifs have excited many Washington artists, including Joyce Wellman. A former math and art teacher and a frequent Phillips visitor, Wellman felt an immediate connection with Klee’s mark-making. Her visual style features colorful, interlocking geometric shapes and owes much to Klee’s technique and imagery. Like Klee, Wellman populates her work, as she has stated, “with seemingly random numbers, marks, symbols, letters, degrees of vibrant color, and the narrative imagery of storytelling.”

**Consider how seeing multiple works by the same artist, in a unit and in conversation with examples by other artists, helps you appreciate them in a different way. What other artists complement the Klee unit?**

Joyce Wellman (b. 1949, Brooklyn, New York)

*The Big Five*

2005

Acrylic and mixed media on canvas

Gift of the artist, 2022

“Using abstract geometry as a compositional structure . . . I want my art to explore [and] recall memories and experience, ways that visual imagery can connect us to our spiritual yet universal selves.” For Wellman the symbol “X” represents “a variable factor. It is a very powerful placeholder. It represents the preconscious.” This work also draws on the symbolism of the number five, signifying human perfection and the pentagon, referencing unity and strength. Wellman also explained: “Anytime there’s a five or a pentagon, I’m talking about humankind, and inside the pentagon is that circle.”

Joyce Wellman (b. 1949, Brooklyn, New York; active Washington, DC)

*Global Blues AKA Big Blue’s Love Circle*

2004

Mixed media on plywood panel

Gift of Art and Nancy Saltford, 2024

Wellman’s inclusion of shapes and text reference memories of her mother who played the numbers, a form of gambling where three-digit numbers are randomly chosen. “I process my work by constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing . . . the scrambling and unscrambling of ideas.” For *Global Blues*,

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Wellman mixed her acrylics, which she then poured across the surface, letting the paint drip down to the edges. The “beauty of abstraction is that it’s so expansive and it doesn’t know size, shape, designation, nothing.”

Joyce Wellman (b. 1949, Brooklyn, New York)

*Journey Through Migration*

1985

Color viscosity etching

Gift of the artist 2022

Paul Klee (b. 1879, Münchenbuchsee, Switzerland; d. 1940, Muralto, Switzerland)

*Tree Nursery*

1929

Oil with incised ground on canvas

Acquired 1930

*Tree Nursery* culminates a series of more than 20 “script pictures” that build upon an inventive system of notational signs, both familiar and imaginary. Scratches and incisions painted on the surface recall hieroglyphs. Over these markings, painted horizontal bands of alternating color create a measured composition suggestive of a musical score. To express his ideas, Klee employed the circle, square, and triangle, believing that mathematical principles were at the heart of creation due to the countless possibilities of growth through multiplication, repetition, or combination.

Paul Klee (b. 1879, Münchenbuchsee, Switzerland; d. 1940, Muralto, Switzerland)

*Printed Sheet with Picture*

1927

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1948

“What artist would not like to live where the central organ of all space-time motion, call it brain or heart of creation as you will, activates all functions: In the womb of nature, in the primal ground of creation, where the secret key to all things lies hidden.”—Paul Klee

For Phillips, Klee was a dreamer, poet, and brooding rebel. “[He] believes that art is nothing if it is not personal expression.”

Paul Klee (b. 1879, Münchenbuchsee, Switzerland; d. 1940, Muralto, Switzerland)

*Young Moe*

1938

Color paste on newspaper mounted on burlap

Acquired 1948

*Young Moe* refers to Albert Moeschinger, a professor of music theory at the conservatory of Bern, Switzerland, from 1937 to 1943. Moeschinger or “Moe” dedicated three compositions for violin and piano to Klee, who gave him two paintings in return. Klee noted that *Young Moe* is considered a sketch, where paint has been applied in rapid strokes and the newsprint beneath the surface is left exposed.

Paul Klee (b. 1879, Münchenbuchsee, Switzerland; d. 1940, Muralto, Switzerland)

*Land of Lemons*

1929

Transparent and opaque watercolor on paper mounted on cardboard

Acquired 1938

Paul Klee (b. 1879, Münchenbuchsee, Switzerland; d. 1940, Muralto, Switzerland)

*Figure of the Oriental Theater*

1934

Oil on fabric mounted on cardboard

Acquired, 1942

Paul Klee (b. 1879, Münchenbuchsee, Switzerland; d. 1940, Muralto, Switzerland)

*Efflorescence*, 1937

Oil and cardboard mounted on wooden strainer

Acquired 1938

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### Artists Supporting Artists

The work of Sean Scully and Renée Stout invites us to reflect deeply. It challenges us to look beyond what we see and to engage with our emotions, memories, and the mysterious aspects of life. Sean Scully is known for his large-scale abstract work, characterized by vertical and horizontal bands of color that often suggest architectural forms. Renée Stout’s art often explores the meaning embedded in her materials, the African Diaspora experience, life in Washington, DC, the inspiration of New Orleans, and a myriad of contemporary issues. The two artists met through former Phillips curator Stephen Phillips (of no relation to Duncan and Marjorie), who organized Scully’s solo exhibition *Wall of Light* for the museum in 2005. Stout, already familiar with Scully’s art, said that after her first encounter it “remain[ed] someplace at the periphery of my mind.” Scully was impressed by Stout’s painting and offered her an exhibition in his New York studio. Phillips was fascinated by passages of abstraction he saw in Stout’s canvases, and he challenged her to explore new artistic directions. As a result, Stout shifted her approach and made a series of about 30 abstract works which Scully exhibited in 2017. Their mutual support continues, with both artists writing about each other’s work and Scully donating Stout’s art to the Phillips.

**Scully described Stout’s art as “somewhere between baroque, mystical, and confessional.” Instead of trying to decipher a specific message, we can approach unfamiliar artworks with a freedom to make our own connections. Focus on the emotions you feel when you look at these artworks.**

Sean Scully (b. 1945, Dublin, Ireland; active New York, New York, and London, England)

9.2.76

Pastel on paper

Gift of BJ and Carol Cutler, 2009

For his pastels, Scully applies a more physical approach. He rubs and pushes the pastel into the paper with his hands to create densely saturated surfaces. He said of pastels: “They are very hard work and they’re absolutely filthy . . . that’s really a labor of love. The effect of course is quite spectacular visually because it looks very smoky.”

Sean Scully (b. 1945, Dublin, Ireland; active New York, New York, and London, England)

*Night*

2005

Color aquatint with lift ground and spit bite

Promised gift of the artist

“I had a relationship with the Phillips very early on. I think the first painting bought by an American museum was bought by Gifford Phillips [Duncan Phillips’s nephew]. . . . I’ve maintained a strong relationship with the Phillips ever since. It has a special place in my life.”—Sean Scully

Scully embarked on a significant body of work following several trips to Mexico in the 1980s and 1990s. The *Wall of Light* series transcribes Scully’s experience of color and light—first in watercolors and later in oil paintings, pastels, and prints—as he traveled through Mexico and witnessed the interplay of light and shadow on the stacked stones of ancient ruins and architectural formations.

Renée Stout (b. 1958, Junction City, Kansas; active Washington, DC)

*Life Readings (for Nathan Lyons)*

2017

Acrylic on latex on panel

Gift of Sean Scully, 2020

In this painting, Stout pays homage to the late curator and photographer Nathan Lyons. As the artist explains, “My painting actually has a rendering of the palmist’s hand from Nathan’s photograph embedded in the left half of the painting, which I did as homage to him. The right half of the painting has a reading on the future—which was done by an astrologer at an artist’s camp I attended a few years back—in which she predicted the major changes and turmoil we’re seeing play out now in our country. I painted out the notes I made on the entire reading, then obscured them so that they are also embedded in the painting, with the viewer just barely able to make out some words. The metaphor of the painting being that no matter what systems we employ to gain insight, understanding, and control, life ultimately remains an unpredictable, uncontrollable mystery.”

Renée Stout (b. 1958, Junction City, Kansas; active, Washington, DC)

*The Forecast*



2021

Mixed media on handmade paper

On loan from the artist and Hemphill Artworks

According to Stout: “*The Forecast*, like *Life’s Readings*, were both inspired by a set of notes that I had made several years ago about an astrological reading dealing with what was in the future when the reading was done but is now the present.” Stout lent this work to the exhibition so that “the viewer gets the layers of meaning of the words that are obscured under layers of paint in *Life’s Readings*.”

Renée Stout (b. 1958, Junction City, Kansas; active, Washington, DC)

*Escape Plan A*

2017

Acrylic, varnish, collage, on wood panel

Director’s Discretionary Fund, 2018

For this work and others, Stout “had to feverishly paint and focus on abstraction. I liked the challenge . . . . It gave me permission to explore and I fell in love with painting again. I realized how much I love paint. I do like abstraction, but my work is a balance of realism and abstraction. Every painting that I do will probably have both.”

According to Sean Scully, “In *Escape Plan A*, there is a net that can be seen as an exit tube, but it’s also read, by me at least, as a trap. There’s order trying vainly to re-establish itself at the bottom of the painting. . . . [T]hese elements . . .

inhabit her world of the painted night . . . where nothing, including the value of escape, is that simple.”

Renée Stout (b. 1958, Junction City, Kansas; active Washington, DC)

*Mannish Boy Arrive (for Muddy Waters)*

2017

Acrylic and latex paint and pencil on wood panel

Director’s Discretionary Fund, 2018

Renée Stout (b. 1958, Junction City, Kansas; active, Washington, DC)

*What I Saw in the Parallel Universe*

2017

Multiple-color etching, 2 plates, 3 colors, Edition of 20

Promised gift of Chris and Beverly With, 2019

Renée Stout (b. 1958, Junction City, Kansas; active, Washington, DC)

*Elixir Eleven*

2018

Mixed assemblage with bottle containing organic materials

Gift of Sean Scully, 2023

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### The Power of Place: The Phillips Collection

For many artists, The Phillips Collection is and continues to be a destination for discovery. During the 1940s, while stationed near Washington, DC, artist Richard Diebenkorn found inspiration in Henri Matisse's painting *Studio, Quai Saint-Michel*. He was captivated by Matisse's use of color, his depiction of indoor and outdoor spaces, the geometrical structure of his figurative compositions, and his technique of layering and scraping paint. Both Diebenkorn and Matisse were motivated by color's expressive possibilities and often used drawing to explore new ideas.

In the mid-1960s, Diebenkorn also considered his art in relation to Piet Mondrian's austere modernist grids. Similarly, artist Kate Shepherd was inspired by both Matisse and Mondrian. She noted, "I tend to remember paintings I have studied—I scrutinized [them] from the point of view of color and composition." In 2010, she engaged directly with Mondrian's *Composition No. III* to produce her color-drenched paintings filled with delicate lines. While Shepherd's work appears structured and controlled like Mondrian's, a closer look reveals a dynamic emotional quality, driven by the movement of line and the intensity of color.

**Duncan and Marjorie Phillips encouraged visitors to linger and return to their intimate galleries. Duncan wrote, "Pictures send us back to life and to other arts with the ability to see beauty all about us." What artwork at the Phillips will you remember after your visit?**

Richard Diebenkorn (b. 1922, Portland, Oregon; d. 1993, Berkeley, California)

*Interior with View of the Ocean*

1957

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1958

The Phillipses first became interested in Diebenkorn at the urging of Duncan's nephew, Gifford Phillips, who in the early 1950s became one of the artist's foremost patrons. The Phillipses purchased this painting in 1958, gave Diebenkorn his first East Coast solo museum show in 1961, and presented a retrospective of the artist's works on paper in 1989.

*Interior* represents a moment when Diebenkorn moved away from his earlier abstract *Berkeley* series toward more figurative subjects. On the back of the canvas, a signature with a crossed-out inscription indicates Diebenkorn painted this picture over a *Berkeley* painting with the date "Jan 55." Along the canvas edges, visible during a recent conservation treatment, colorful splatters of rose, peach, green, and purple offer a glimpse of the palette.

Diebenkorn painted *Interior* directly over the abstract picture, developing the composition in stages. He initially painted the view of the ocean across the upper half of the canvas before adding the architecture of the interior walls. Colors of the sky and landscape can still be seen through the thin application of the dark blue paint. In an infrared image, the interior walls become transparent and the extended landscape and horizon line across the center are revealed, along with other altered features, such as the figure seen standing at right.

Richard Diebenkorn (b. 1922, Portland, Oregon; d. 1993, Berkeley, California)

*Girl with a Plant*

1960

Oil on canvas  
Acquired 1961

During WWII, Diebenkorn was assigned to a military base in Quantico, Virginia, and on weekends he visited DC. He saw works by Matisse at the Phillips and other institutions, and by 1952 had significantly brightened his palette. Diebenkorn explained his encounters at the Phillips: “I went to that place often as a kind of retreat from service. I looked at the paintings of Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Bonnard . . . I was fortunate in the service to have . . . a bit of free time so I was able to paint quite a bit, so I was working on this during the week, and then...I would go up and look at the paintings in Washington. It was sort of an art school thing for me . . . Duncan Phillips’s lifelong enthusiasm—indeed, his passion—went far beyond the appreciation, and study, and acquiring of paintings. An integral part of that passion was to share it—to infect others with it. This was his life—and that life was a great and profound gift to all of us.”

Henri Matisse (b. 1869, Le Cateau-Cambrésis, France; d. 1954, Nice, France)  
*Studio, Quai Saint-Michel*  
1916  
Oil on canvas  
Acquired 1940

Richard Diebenkorn said of this work: “It wasn’t until Washington that Matisse really hit me hard . . . The painting has stuck in my head ever since I first laid eyes on it here [at the Phillips]. I’ve discovered pieces of that painting coming out in my own [work] over the years.” Painted during WWI, this work depicts Matisse’s studio at 19 Quai Saint-Michel in the heart of Paris. Matisse made extensive changes while developing the composition.

To create the square tabletop beneath the window, Matisse scraped previously applied layers down to the white ground, seen in the tabletop’s lower right corner. Its first shape was round, visible underneath the upper edge, before he decided to make it square. He then painted a smaller black circle, presumably a plate, inside it.

The infrared image reveals that Matisse originally painted a decorative iron grill in the window but painted over it. This architectural feature is seen in a similar but earlier composition, *Interior with a Goldfish Bowl*.

Matisse reworked the chairs several times, visible in the infrared photo and in the painting itself. He reworked the plane and dimension of the seat as well as the shape and dimension of its legs.

The prominent drying cracks above the nude point to a shift in her placement. As seen in the x-radiograph, the nude was initially painted higher on the canvas. Drying cracks, distinguished by their roundness, are the result of fast drying paint being applied over slower drying paint. A 1951 letter from the artist’s son, Pierre Matisse, to Duncan Phillips acknowledges that these types of cracks were common in the artist’s work between 1913 and 1917. He explained that his father was “baffled” at the appearance of cracks “after all the care he had taken to avoid them.” Pierre Matisse assured Phillips that “these cracks are not dangerous and should not enlarge very much more.”

Richard Diebenkorn (b. 1922, Portland, Oregon; d. 1993, Berkeley, California)

*Untitled #7*, 1983

Acrylic, opaque watercolor, crayon, and collaged paper on paper

Gift of Phyllis G. Diebenkorn, 1993

Diebenkorn frequently adjusted his compositions. Here, his thought process is illustrated by shifted and painted-out lines. In *Ocean Park No.38* (on view nearby), indentations in the canvas and fragments of brush hairs embedded throughout the paint layers suggest vigorous re-working of the paint. On *Girl with Plant* (on view nearby), multidirectional drips of paint indicate Diebenkorn rotated the canvas as he worked, and examination of the painting with x-radiography reveals he initially conceived of a horizontal composition for this picture.

Richard Diebenkorn (b. 1922, Portland, Oregon; d. 1993, Berkeley, California)

*Ocean Park No. 38*

1971

Oil on canvas

Gift of Gifford and Joann Phillips, 1999

In September 1966, Diebenkorn moved into Ocean Park, a neighborhood in Santa Monica, California. He explained: “One day I was thinking about abstract painting again. Then suddenly I abandoned the figure altogether.” His interest in abstraction also informed the drawings and watercolors in his *Ocean Park* series (1967-88). Exploring geometry and architectural elements, these reworked paintings and drawings show fragmented views of the landscape made with thin layers of color.

Piet Mondrian (b. 1872; Amersfoort, Netherlands; d. 1944, New York, New York)

*Composition No. III*

c. 1921/repainted 1925

Oil on canvas

Acquired 1946

Writing to dealer Valentine Dudensing in 1946, Phillips expressed his desire to have this work at the museum: “It cast a sort of spell over me, and I became converted to an artist whose style I thought was too cold and austere for my taste . . . I keep thinking about it . . . I [want] to see if it continues to give me a strange sense of well being and satisfaction.” He acquired it shortly thereafter for \$4,000.

Kate Shepherd (b. 1961, New York, New York; active New York, New York)

*Chrysanthemum*

2010

Oil and enamel paint on wood panel

Purchase, The Hereward Lester Cooke Memorial Fund and Gift of C. Richard Belger and Evelyn R. Craft, 2010

“Color is essential to me because it carries emotional content . . . Colors are calibrated to activate a surface while making a harmonic unity.”—Kate Shepherd

This work was influenced by Mondrian’s depictions of chrysanthemums from early in his career. Prior to making it, Shepherd had never featured this flower motif or used yellow: “I had never used yellow because my white lines need a dark foundation to be properly seen. I had to alter the yellow enough to make it darker, but not so much so as to turn it into a different color.” She explained her interest in a sense of ambiguity between the shiny surface and the image: “The enamel paint is very shiny. I want the surface to be resilient and sexy with delicate lines. I am also interested in how the shininess of the enamel reflects the space where the painting is hung.”

Kate Shepherd (b. 1961, New York, New York; active New York, New York)

*Black Tiles*

2010

Oil and enamel paint on wood panel

The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions, 2010

“The dark blue-black color in *Black Tiles* counterbalances the soft romantic gesture of the drawing which is a lace like curtain.”—Kate Shepherd

For her exhibition at the Phillips in 2010, Kate Shepherd created monochrome paneled works, coated with high-gloss enamel paint. Their vibrant colors, delicate lines, and multiple perspectives suggest structures and patterns in three-dimensional space that engage with Mondrian’s palette of primary colors and vocabulary of geometric forms. For *Black Tiles* she was interested in “how a plane in space could either tilt or morph into a natural or moving form to breathe life into it.”

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### **The Power of Place: Hale County, Alabama**

Walker Evans’s photographs of the South in James Agee’s book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941) were an inspiration to William Christenberry. Several of Evans’s images depicted Hale County, Alabama, Christenberry’s hometown, motivating the younger artist to begin documenting his surroundings with two box Brownie cameras, which he discovered at his parents’ home. In 1961, Christenberry presented his photographs to Evans, who remarked, “Young man, this little camera has become a perfect extension of your eye, and I suggest that you take these seriously.”

Christenberry’s childhood experiences in Hale County provided him with compelling subjects for his photography. “I was deeply taken by the surfaces, textures, and colors of those buildings—the roofs, the way the corrugated tin rust ages—just the aging of the wood intrigued me.” Some of Christenberry’s photographs of the rural Alabama landscape also served as color and subject references for later works.

**On view are photographs by Evans along with selections from the Phillips’s Christenberry unit, which includes over 100 works spanning his career. Consider how each artist captures a sense of place. What memories do these works evoke for you? What images would you capture of your own hometown?**

William Christenberry (b. 1936, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; d. 2016, Washington, DC)

*Star Object*

1977

Metal, woods, nails

Gift of Benjamin Nicolette, 1999

“As far back as 1964, I was trying to find a way to incorporate objects in my work and moved from the two-dimensional plane of thick paint to using some of the objects I found.”—William Christenberry

William Christenberry (b. 1936, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; d. 2016, Washington, DC)

*Grey Wall Construction*

1985

Metal, wood, roofing materials

Gift of Jean Nowak, 2009

Much of Christenberry’s art represents meditations on the architecture and landscape of the American South, the region where he grew up. Christenberry made regular trips there beginning in 1968: “Everything I want to say through my work comes out of my feelings about that place. . . . The place is so much a part of me. I can’t escape it and have no desire to. . . . The place is my muse.” In 1974, Christenberry started translating certain photographic motifs into sculptural work and assemblages, like this example, which incorporates roofing material, metal, a button, and wood pieces.

Walker Evans (b. 1903, St. Louis, Missouri; d. 1975, New Haven, Connecticut)

*Ruin of Tabby (Shell) Construction, St. Mary’s Georgia*

1932

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Trustees of the Corcoran, 2018 (Gift of the Rev. Jo C. Tartt, Jr.)

William Christenberry (b. 1936, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; d. 2016, Washington, DC)

*Rear of Cotton Gin, Greensboro, Alabama*

1984, printed 1999

Chromogenic print

Gift of Lee and Maria Friedlander, 2002

Walker Evans (b. 1903, St. Louis, Missouri; d. 1975, New Haven, Connecticut)

*Tin False Front Building, Moundville, Alabama*

1936

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Trustees of the Corcoran, 2018 (Gift of the Rev. Jo C. Tartt, Jr.)

Walker Evans (b. 1903, St. Louis, Missouri; d. 1975, New Haven, Connecticut)

*Kitchen Wall, Alabama Farmstead*

1936

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the Trustees of the Corcoran, 2018 (Gift of the Rev. Jo C. Tartt, Jr.)

Evans created photographs notable for their clarity and simplicity, like *Kitchen Wall*, *Alabama Farmstead* and *Tin False Front Building*, *Moundville, Alabama*, both featured in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a publication which greatly influenced Christenberry.

William Christenberry (b. 1936, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; d. 2016, Washington, DC)

*Underground Nite Club, Greensboro, North Carolina*

1986 printed 2000

Chromogenic print

Gift of Lee and Maria Friedlander, 2002

“I went into the landscape that I was so familiar with from my childhood, and I would photograph things that caught my eye. . . . I can’t really express the excitement of finding a subject, the sense of wonderment, when you see it for the first time. Or go back the next year and see it again, look at it differently.”—William Christenberry

William Christenberry (b. 1936, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; d. 2016, Washington, DC)

*Tree*

2003

Kremer German ink on sandpaper

Gift of Sandra and William Christenberry, 2010

“One of my cathartic activities, and my first love, is drawing. Drawing is so immediate; you either win the battle or lose the battle. And even if you lose the battle, it is just a piece of paper.”—William Christenberry

While a student at the University of Alabama in 1959, Christenberry attempted to make a representational drawing of the early buds of a tree using a series of quick sharp lines. He drew chinaberry trees, oak trees, and “gourd trees,” also known as purple martin trees, as featured here. He painted the trees on textured paper, using a dense shellac ink and a worn-out brush.

William Christenberry (b. 1936, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; d. 2016, Washington, DC)

*Wall Construction III*

1985

Painted metal signs, sheet metal, washers, nails and tempera paint on wood panel

Gift of Aaron and Barbara Levine, 2009

In this work, Christenberry collaged together the shapes and letters of several signs. He explained, “It’s unusual for me to do a piece that relates to something other than where I am from. . . . The major component of this is an old cola sign that I found . . . in the landscape.” Describing his interest in the natural weathering of objects, Christenberry stated: “One thing that dramatically affects metal signage is

sunlight. It is so powerful the way it bleaches...the way sunlight can make the signage more beautiful as it ages and fades.”

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### **Time Capsule: The Phillips Collection Library and Archives**

On view Phillips House, Floor 2U

Think about your favorite artwork. It, like a person, has a life story. The Phillips Collection’s Library and Archive preserves these stories behind the art through letters, correspondence, receipts, and ephemera, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the collection.

Well before The Phillips Collection opened its doors, founder Duncan Phillips had begun formulating his idea for an experiment station. He envisioned a museum intimate in nature and progressive in its curation. At the core of this method were groupings—or “units”—of works by his favorite artists. Up until the early 1980s, unit artists such as Georges Braque and Paul Klee continued to have dedicated galleries. Today the museum has approximately 40 historical units, which are exhibited on their own or juxtaposed with other artists across generations and genres, inviting new interpretations and connections. This concept continues to shape the museum through curatorial projects with contemporary artists and the formation of new units by diverse artists.

Time Capsule presents materials from the archives that reveal the Phillips’s dynamic relationships with unit artists Augustus Vincent Tack, Georges Braque, Paul Klee, and Richard Diebenkorn.

**As you explore this gallery and others throughout the museum, consider how Duncan Phillips’s experimental spirit lives on. Look for artists and artworks that make you curious to learn more. Dive deeper into our digitized archives catalogue at [PhillipsCollection.org/archives](https://PhillipsCollection.org/archives).**

### **Augustus Vincent Tack & The Music Room**

Duncan Phillips and Augustus Vincent Tack met in 1914, beginning a lifelong relationship of friendship and patronage. Phillips was the first collector to acquire Tack’s art, which Phillips described as “color-music.”

In the wood-paneled room known today as the Music Room, then called the North Library or Art Library, Phillips presented *Exhibition of Recent Decorative Paintings by Augustus Vincent Tack*. In 1928, Phillips commissioned Tack to create a cycle of paintings to be permanently installed in the Music Room. Phillips conceived of Tack’s monumental abstractions as unfolding through space, unified by a mystical sense of transcendence and universal order. Tack ultimately created 12 lunette-shaped paintings with gilded borders.

These samples of their correspondence from 1930 capture parts of their discussion about the commission. After 1930, Phillips embraced a more dynamic model of changing exhibitions that required flexibility for his rapidly growing collection. Although Phillips abandoned the idea of a permanent Tack installation, he continued to champion Tack’s work for the next 30 years. The Phillips Collection Library & Archives preserves decades of correspondence between the two, including hundreds of handwritten and typed pages documenting their lives and work.

### **Georges Braque’s Bird**



In 1960, The Phillips Collection expanded to include a new building and a new main entrance. The double glass doors of the Goh Annex were sleek and modern with an overhead embellishment: a relief sculpture of a bird in flight that would become a lasting symbol of the museum.

The sculpture's inspiration was a print by Georges Braque which Duncan Phillips noticed in a volume of *Cahiers d'Art*. He wrote to Braque asking the artist to re-create it on a larger scale to hang above the entryway. Phillips was a devoted collector of Braque's art with a unit of nearly a dozen paintings. He wrote, "It struck me as so beautiful with a great universal feeling and design that I could not forget it." Art dealer Cesar M. De Hauke responded on the artist's behalf and a deal was reached. Phillips would pay one million francs for the image and for Braque's input about the color and type of stone. De Hauke suggested Pierre Bourdelle, a sculptor based in New York, to complete the project for the opening of the museum's addition.

Since then, *Bird* has appeared on the museum's letterhead, on staff pins, and on merchandise in the shop. When the annex was renovated in 1989, *Bird* was reinstalled adjacent to the new entrance, where it continues to greet guests today.

### The Klee Room

"Klee builds himself a little house of art in a realm somewhere between childhood's innocence and everyman's prospect of infinity."—Duncan Phillips, c. 1938

In 1930, Duncan Phillips acquired *Tree Nursery* by Paul Klee, becoming the third United States museum to own his work, after the Detroit Institute of Arts and New York University's former Gallery of Living Art. From the 1930s through the 1950s, Duncan Phillips acquired 13 of Klee's oil and watercolor works. They spanned the artist's career—a strong unit that remains a cornerstone of the museum's permanent collection. As a memorial to Klee, Phillips and art dealer Karl Nierendorf developed a loan show in 1942. In a June letter Phillips explained, "We have a delightful room of Paul Klee's paintings installed ... I think we should have a price list not only for our own interest and information but the possibility that we might find purchasers among our visitors."

As you explore how Paul Klee's work has been displayed and read about his importance to Duncan Phillips, consider the role a single artist can play in influencing a generation of artists.

### Richard Diebenkorn

The collection of works by Richard Diebenkorn at The Phillips Collection began not with Duncan, but with his nephew, Gifford. The younger Phillips and his wife Joann purchased a large home in Santa Monica, California in 1953. "We knew little or nothing about the latest trend in contemporary art," Gifford wrote in a 2009 essay. But with wall space to fill, Gifford and Joann began visiting art dealers around Los Angeles, including the Paul Kantor Gallery. There, Gifford and Joann purchased four works by Diebenkorn in 1954, and they sent one to the museum for consideration. Underwhelmed by what he described as a "composition of ambiguous shapes," Duncan returned *Berkeley #16* to Paul Kantor. Within the decade, his opinion had shifted. He acquired both *Interior with View of the Ocean* and *Girl with Plant* by 1961.

Today the Diebenkorn Unit consists of 14 works, though only those first two were acquired by Duncan himself. The remaining were gifts to the museum largely by the artist and his widow, Phyllis Diebenkorn. One notable exception is the first work in Diebenkorn's *Berkeley* series, which originally hung in Gifford and Joann's home. The letters on view give insight into how and when Diebenkorn's art entered the collection.

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

*Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*  
November 2, 2024–January 19, 2025

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The information below was updated October 2024 and is subject to change.  
Please visit [PhillipsCollection.org/events](https://PhillipsCollection.org/events) for the most up-to-date programming information.

### ARTIST CONVERSATIONS

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Join us for a special series of conversations between acclaimed artists and their greatest supporters today. *Breaking it Down: Conversations from the Vault* is a deep dive and a new take on key artists in the collection and the support given to them by the Phillips. In this spirit of foregrounding the artist's career, The Phillips Collection hosts a series of conversations between artists and their greatest supporters, as selected by the artist.

*Free; reservation required*

[Artist Kate Shepherd & Critic/Writer Tyler Green](#)

Thursday, November 21, 6:30-8 pm

[Artist Renée Stout & Curator Stephen Phillips](#)

Thursday, December 19, 6:30-8 pm

[Keynote: Artist Zoë Charlton & Artist Derrick Adams](#)

Thursday, January 16, 2025, 6:30-8 pm

### PROGRAMS

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#### Art and Wellness

[Guided Meditation and Artist Talk](#)

November 6, 12:45-2 pm

Join us for a free, 30-minute weekly meditation led by local yoga teacher Aparna Sadananda via Zoom. Inspired by a work in the collection, we will practice techniques for mindful looking and. No prior experience needed. Following the meditation, artist Joyce Wellman talks about her work.

*Free; registration required to access Zoom information*

#### Drop-In Family Program

[The Phillips Plays with Sculptural Paintings](#)

Saturday, November 9, 10 am-1 pm

Inspired by Sam Gilliam's chromatic drape paintings, create mixed-media sculptures that play with space and explore the capabilities of color. A family-friendly tour of *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault* will be offered at 11 am.

*Included with general admission; free for members. Reservations encouraged. Children must be accompanied by their adult. This drop-in program is suitable for children of all ages.*

#### Member Morning

[Coffee and Conversation](#)

Wednesday, November 19, 10-11 am

## Page 2—Public Programs: *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*

Come enjoy coffee and light breakfast fare with your fellow members, followed by a presentation in the auditorium by Renée Maurer, curator of *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*.

*Free; reservation encouraged*

### Drop-In Family Program

#### [The Phillips Plays with Music and Art](#)

**December 14, 10 am-1 pm**

Take a family-friendly tour of *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault* at 11 am to learn about painter Paul Klee's lifelong love of music. Then, in the workshop, create lyrical drawings as you listen to different musical genres. Where will music take your art? In addition to exploring art materials and methods in the studio, families may enjoy the carpeted, creative-play area with blocks, books, toys, and games.

*Included with general admission; free for members. Reservations encouraged. Children must be accompanied by their adult. This drop-in program is suitable for children of all ages.*

### Drop-In Family Program

#### [The Phillips Plays with Wintry Landscapes](#)

**January 11, 2025, 10 am-1 pm**

Take a family-friendly tour of *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault* at 11 am to learn about Arthur G. Dove, one of Duncan Phillips's favorite artists. Then, in the workshop, inspired by Dove's *Rain or Snow*, create a mixed-media, wintry landscape. In addition to exploring art materials and methods in the studio, families may enjoy the carpeted, creative-play area with blocks, books, toys, and games.

*Included with general admission; free for members. Reservations encouraged. Children must be accompanied by their adult. This drop-in program is suitable for children of all ages.*

### Member Morning

#### [Coffee and Conversation](#)

**Wednesday, January 16, 10-11 am**

Come enjoy coffee and light breakfast fare with your fellow members, followed by a presentation in the auditorium by Renée Maurer, curator of *Breaking It Down: Conversations from the Vault*.

*Free; registration encouraged*

## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

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The information below was updated in October 2024 and is subject to change.

### [\*Timeless Mucha: The Magic of Line\*](#)

**February 22–May 18, 2025**

*Timeless Mucha: The Magic of Line* reappraises the work of Art Nouveau pioneer Alphonse Mucha (b. 1860, Ivančice, Moravia, Austrian Empire; d. 1939, Prague, Czechoslovakia) and explores his impact on graphic art since the 1960s. This exhibition provides an opportunity to survey the development of Mucha's style, and to explore how his art was rediscovered by later generations of artists. Mucha was a key influence on Psychedelic Art of the 1960s–70s, as well as on a wide range of visual culture from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to today, exemplified by American comics, Japanese manga, and street murals.

This exhibition is organized by the Mucha Foundation.

### [\*Essex Hemphill: Take care of your blessings\*](#)

**May 17–August 31, 2025**

This exhibition charts the relationship between the writings of poet and activist Essex Hemphill (b. 1957, Chicago, IL; d. 1995, Philadelphia, PA) and contemporary visual art. Raised in Washington, DC, Hemphill emerged as a luminary in the DC arts scene of the 80s and 90s. He self-published chapbooks including *Earth Life* (1985) and *Conditions* (1986), before publishing his full-length collection *Ceremonies: Prose and Poetry* (1992). Whereas Hemphill died of AIDS-related illness at just 38, his work persists, reflected in visual dialogues with his contemporaries such as Lyle Ashton Harris and Isaac Julien, and a new generation of artists such as Diedrick Brackens and Tiona Nekkia McClodden.

This exhibition is organized by The Phillips Collection.

### [\*Vivian Browne: My Kind of Protest\*](#)

**June 28–September 28, 2025**

Drawing upon previously unknown works and archival findings, this exhibition recovers the depth and variety of the more than three-decade career of Vivian Browne (b. 1929, Laurel, FL; d. 1993, New York, NY). The exhibition features paintings, prints, and works on paper across seven bodies of work, as well as ephemera that highlight Browne's pioneering activism and influential teaching career. Browne was a founder of the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, an organization that fought for Black representation in New York museums; a founder of SoHo20, one of the first women's art cooperatives in Manhattan; and a professor at Rutgers University (1971–92). Browne's signature approach to color and form challenged the neatly defined categories of abstraction and figuration, and art and politics, revealing a more nuanced approach to art-making that is part of Browne's unique contribution to 20th-century art of the US.

This exhibition is co-organized by The Phillips Collection and the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati.

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