

East Building

GUIDE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



Welcome to the East Building of the National Gallery of Art

The East Building houses the Gallery's growing collection of modern and contemporary art. A just-completed renovation adds 12,250 square feet of new exhibition space within the existing footprint of the building, including two soaring tower galleries and a rooftop terrace for outdoor sculpture that overlooks Pennsylvania Avenue. The number of works on view from the collection has increased from 350 to 500.

In the galleries, a reimagined installation of the collection integrates new acquisitions from the Corcoran Collection and recent gifts from the Collectors Committee, Virginia Dwan, Agnes Gund, the Hakuta Family, the Al Held Foundation, the Patrons' Permanent Fund, Arnold and Joan Saltzman, Victoria and Roger Sant, Deborah and Ed Shein, as well as artists Glenn Ligon, Jenny Holzer, David Novros, Kenneth Snelson, and others. The inclusion of photography, works on paper, and media arts in addition to painting and sculpture tells a more expansive story of modern art. Chronological, stylistic, and thematic arrangements provide new and thought-provoking juxtapositions. Also new are two staircases and an elevator that permit easier access to all levels of the building.

Planning for the East Building began in 1968—on a site set aside by founder Andrew W. Mellon in the 1930s for the Gallery's future expansion. The cultural significance of modern art was on the rise, and the Gallery had begun to acquire works by living artists. Today, modern and contemporary art offers a unique conduit for reflection on shifts in art and society and on our place in the world. The experience is made richer by proximity to a historical collection dating back to the twelfth century that is displayed in the West Building.

The year 2016 also marks the 75th anniversary of the National Gallery of Art. We are pleased to celebrate the renovation and reinstallation of the East Building and to invite you to make your own connections to the works on view.

Earl A. Powell III
Director

Harry Cooper
Curator of Modern Art

Engage

Evenings at the Edge

October 13, 2016, through April 13, 2017: enjoy special programs, drinks, and entertainment on the second Thursday of each month from 6 to 9 pm. Free and open to the public. Register at www.nga.gov/adults.

Community Weekend: Celebrating the Reopening of the East Building

All day November 5–6: Join a sketching group or attend music, dance, and theater performances in the reopened East Building. Free and open to the public, all ages. No registration required. Visit www.nga.gov/families.

Interact with the Collection

Schedule of daily gallery talks and programs is available at the Information Desk or www.nga.gov/tours.

Audio tours are available at www.nga.gov/tours (or via a limited number of devices at the Information Desk).

Access Guide is available at the Information Desk or www.nga.gov/accessibility.

#myngadc

Towers and Roof Terrace

Tower 1

Mark Rothko: The Classic Paintings

Barnett Newman:
The Stations of the Cross

Tower 2

Alexander Calder: A Survey

Tower 3

Special Exhibition

In the Tower: Barbara Kruger
Through January 22, 2017

Roof Terrace

Modern sculpture

Upper Level

Modern Art, 1910–1980

The Birth of Abstraction

Dada, Surrealism, and
Their Legacies

Purity? Brancusi, Mondrian,
Léger

Art in Postwar Europe

Abstract Expressionism:
Pollock and Others

Color: Field and Shape

Pop Art: Warhol, Lichtenstein,
Johns, and Co.

Minimalism and Beyond

Henri Matisse: Cut-Outs

Special Exhibition

*Photography Reinvented:
The Collection of Robert E.
Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker*
Through March 5, 2017

Terrace Café

Restrooms

Mezzanine

Modern Art, 1900–1925

Pablo Picasso: Early Work

Fauvism and Cubism

German Expressionism:
The Saltzman Collection

Collectors Committee: Recent Gifts

Restrooms

Ground Level

American Art, 1900–1950

Bellows, Hopper, Marin,
O'Keeffe, Sheeler, Stieglitz

Extending Tradition:

French Painting, 1890–1940

Bonnard, Braque, Matisse,
Modigliani, Picasso, Vuillard

Fourth Street Entrance

Information Desk

Coat check

Concourse

Markers, Signs, and Flow: Contemporary Art

Special Exhibition

*Los Angeles to New York:
Dwan Gallery, 1959–1971*
Through January 29, 2017

East Building Auditorium

East Building Small
Auditorium

Access to the West Building

East Building Shop

Restrooms

Towers and Roof Terrace



Mark Rothko
Untitled, 1949

Rothko wrote, "I'm not an abstractionist. I'm not interested in the relationship of color or form or anything else. I'm interested only in expressing basic human emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom." Although he had long been interested in such passionate genres as classical opera and ancient theater, the war may have pushed Rothko's work toward extremes of human feeling. Throbbing layers of color envelop the viewer and suggest both weight and weightlessness.



Barnett Newman
Fifth Station, 1962
from *The Stations of the Cross*, 1958–1966

Fourteen stark paintings, limited to black, gray, and white on raw canvas, are meant to carry the urgency of Christ's cry from the cross: "Why have you forsaken me?" With no imagery to identify individual "stations," which traditionally depict inci-

dents leading to the crucifixion, Newman's abstraction leaves visitors with nothing but the experience of being in the room with the paintings. The columnar forms rhythmically mark space as we move from one canvas to the next, yet they also form a fence-like enclosure.



Alexander Calder
Vertical Constellation with Bomb, 1943

Created from wood and wires due to a wartime sheet-metal shortage, this work is part of a series of static *Constellations* that Calder made while living on his farm in Roxbury, Connecticut. The painted bomb is an unusually direct and disturbing note in Calder's generally playful vocabulary. Thin connecting lines between the bomb and the other forms, some humanoid, suggest their interdependence.



Katharina Fritsch
Hahn/Cock, 2013
Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland

This vivid blue rooster is a surprising, raucous presence atop the East Building. (It is also the unofficial national symbol of France.) Fritsch, a German artist, created it in 2013 for display in Trafalgar Square, which hosts changing displays of contemporary sculpture on an empty plinth in front of London's National Gallery. The cock now looks north over Washington's sober federal buildings and civic monuments from the new Roof Terrace.

Upper Level



Robert Delaunay
Political Drama, 1914

An uneasy fusion of avant-garde abstraction and story-telling figuration, of painting and collage, this work relates to a real-life incident. In 1914 the French prime minister's wife shot and killed the editor of the newspaper *Le Figaro*, which had published articles questioning her husband's loyalties. The discordant color and concentric forms suggest emotions spinning out of control as well as the report of a gun. The swags at the top allude to the theatricality of the event, which riveted Paris on the eve of World War I.



Marcel Duchamp
Fresh Widow, original 1920, refabricated 1964

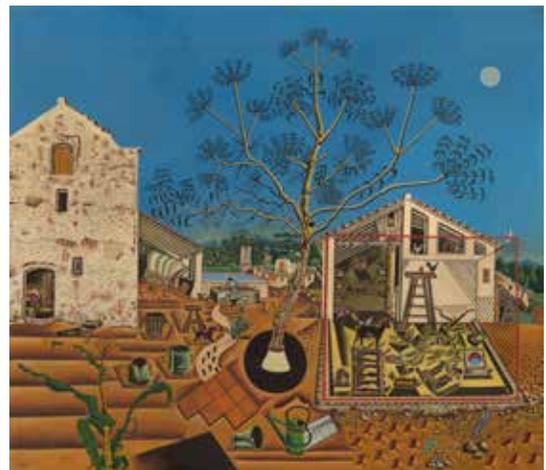
The black leather panes of this small French window yield no view, redirecting our attention to the curious identity of the object itself. Sculpture? Sales model? Toy replica of an ordinary object? Duchamp hired a carpenter to fabricate

the work and instructed that the leather panels be shined. Blacked-out windows and widow's weeds may refer to war and loss. Using puns and double takes ("fresh widow" for "french window"), Duchamp traduces our expectations of art, even assigning the work's authorship to his female alter ego, Rose Sélavy, as inscribed along the bottom.



Kay Sage
A Finger on the Drum, 1940

Unpeopled and exactly painted, Sage's *A Finger on the Drum* produces an unmistakable sense of foreboding. An ambiguous sentinel-like form presides over a sparse landscape that features little more than bony remains baking in a desert. Sage was one of the few Americans accepted within the surrealist movement led by poet André Breton. She lived in Paris until 1939, when she returned to the United States with fellow surrealist painter Yves Tanguy, whom she married the following year in Reno, Nevada.



Joan Miró
The Farm, 1921-1922

Painted largely from memory, *The Farm* depicts the country home of Miró's family in the Spanish village of Montroig, Catalonia, where the artist returned frequently over his lifetime for work and respite. The painting's rigid precision painstakingly inventories physical details, such as the bleached stone and searing blue Catalonian sky, yet it is also a mystical landscape of the mind. Miró said of the painting: "It was a resumé of my entire life in the country. I wanted to put everything I loved about the country into that canvas—from a huge tree to a tiny little snail."



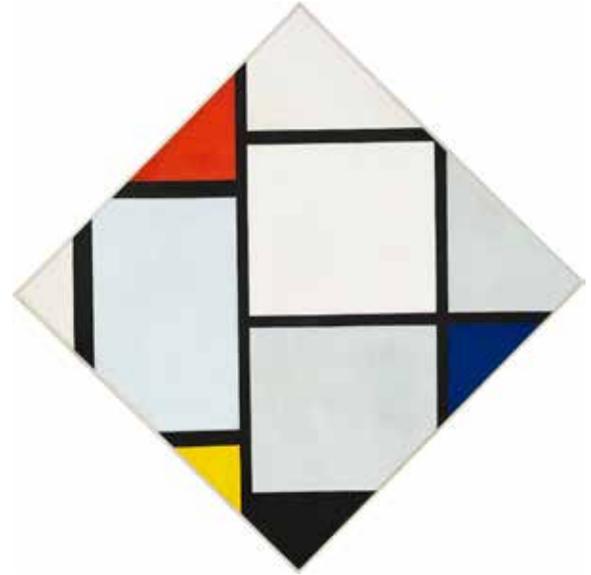
Constantin Brancusi
Bird in Space, 1925

A Romanian émigré to Paris, Brancusi created a new, reductive form of sculpture that revolutionized the medium. Brancusi's insistence on carving and on combining different materials and finishes stood in stark contrast to the modeled sculpture of Auguste Rodin, with whom he studied briefly. He also experimented with multiple pedestals as integral components of his works, including those in this gallery. A series of *Bird in Space* sculptures occupied Brancusi for years; he considered them his highest achievement.



Fernand Léger
Two Women, 1922

Léger's cubist style is distinctive—hard-edged, solid, and monumental—and it reflected his belief in a new, modern way of life driven by machines and technology. Here he addresses a traditional art historical subject, that of women in a domestic interior. But the women look as regimented as the objects around them, their limbs interlocking like the pistons of an engine. The artist noted, "I had broken down the human body, so I set about putting it together again."



Piet Mondrian
Tableau No. IV; Lozenge Composition with Red, Gray, Blue, Yellow, and Black, c. 1924/1925

Mondrian subverts the convention of a painting as a rectangular window by tilting it diagonally, placing the frame behind the canvas, and refusing to offer any hints of perspective or illusion. The dynamic relationships among the forms, which appear to be cut by the edge—except for one—suggest the image's continuation beyond the frame, but it is equally possible to read the work as a tightly arranged puzzle of ten whole pieces and eight black lines. This uncertainty may be part of the "dynamic equilibrium" that was Mondrian's goal.



Jackson Pollock
No. 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist), 1950

Pollock made his famous "drip" paintings by flinging and dribbling paint from the end of a brush or stick onto a canvas laid flat on the floor, overturning centuries of vertically oriented easel painting. The lines, passages, pools, and rhythms of paint echo his movements in making them—and send the eye racing to read the work. No longer serving to describe things or ideas, line and color become free agents, a radical turn in the history of art.



Joan Mitchell
Piano mécanique, 1958

Mitchell was a strong and colorful personality who held her own in the male-dominated world of postwar American painting. Her gestures were as urgent and personal as those of any abstract expressionist, but their source was nature: "I paint from remembered landscapes I carry with me—and remembered feelings of them, which become transformed." Here, angular shapes, suggesting trees or rooftops, build a wide-angle view, while light and dark drips and chunky strokes merge in an unscrolling rhythm.



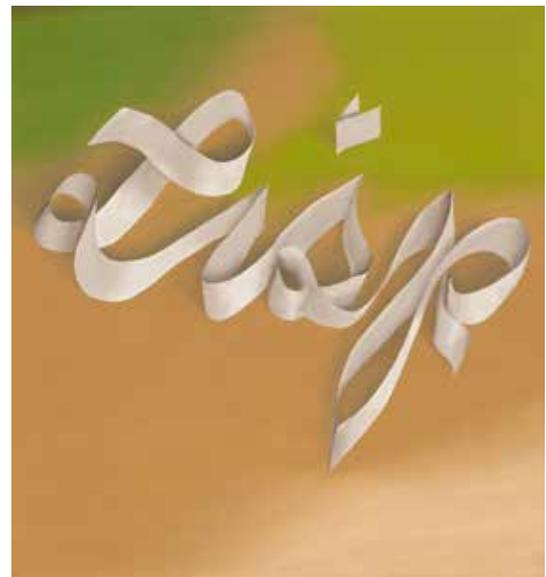
Joseph Cornell
Caravaggio Prince, Medici Slot Machine Variant, c. 1950

Cornell, a self-taught sculptor and filmmaker, worked in solitude in Flushing, New York, for most of his life. The artist said he was devoted to "the art of the commonplace" and created diorama-like dreamscapes out of thrift-store knick-knacks, photos, and pictures drawn from art, science, and popular culture. This box is from a series in which Cornell selected the image of a child from an old master painting. The repeated images of the boy and the blue cast of the glass animate the figure, suggesting moments in a film.



Andy Warhol
A Boy for Meg, 1962

Warhol chose to magnify the front page of a New York tabloid paper, which then as now focused on celebrity gossip. He sometimes referred to himself as a mirror of society's fixations. His fascination with fame and consumer culture—and practice of inserting himself into it—anticipated today's reality television and celebrity for celebrity's sake. The hand-painted quality of this early canvas contrasts with the slickness of his later silkscreened work, yet Warhol had already grasped that reproduction and repetition of images would be overriding facts of contemporary life.



Ed Ruscha
Lisp, 1968

Read the word on the painting aloud. Someone has tried: note the telltale drops of spittle at lower right. It is a funny, physical trace of onomatopoeia, which is when a word's sound imitates its meaning. The word-image also evokes the crispness and slightness of the depicted paper ribbon, potentially disarrayed by a whisper of air. Language, sound, and image mingle to effect communication here (or not).



Eva Hesse
Test Piece for "Contingent," 1969

In this experimental work, Hesse explored the inherent qualities of unconventional materials, allowing them to fold, drape, and stiffen. The completed *Contingent* (National Gallery, Australia) consists of eight similar panels hanging parallel to one another, some touching the floor, others not. Although Hesse's life and career were short, her embrace of ephemerality, her play with and against repetition, and her evocations of the body and organic matter were influential for a new generation of artists.



Henri Matisse
Large Decoration with Masks, 1953 (detail)

Starting in the early 1940s, Matisse began to exchange his paints and brushes for a palette of hand-colored papers, ending his career with an artistic triumph. With the help of assistants who pinned shapes to the wall, Matisse conducted rhythmic color symphonies by "drawing with scissors," then composing, recutting, and combining the resulting shapes. "It's like a dance," he said.

Mezzanine



Jean Dubuffet
Site à l'homme assis, 1969-1984

Thick black lines wind around the chalky white planes, holes, and shapes of a man seated among trees. The artist called this distinctive mode *L'hourloupe*, a term he made up from the French words for "howl" and "wolf." Dubuffet related the style, reminiscent of street art, to the fragmented way the mind "reads" images. The tableau of man, foliage, and perhaps architecture around him projects instability, like an off-kilter stack of blocks about to fall.



Pablo Picasso
Family of Saltimbanques, 1905

Their gazes vacant and disengaged, these performers seem the antithesis of the lively entertainment a circus promises. Saltimbanques were itinerant, often poor performers who passed in and out of Paris, where Picasso—also poor and struggling—was beginning his artistic career. The ragtag group is self-referential: Picasso is the harlequin here, and his friend, the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, may be the clown. Blending with the landscape, the ghostly figures' marginality is belied by the monumental size of the canvas and of Picasso's ambitions.



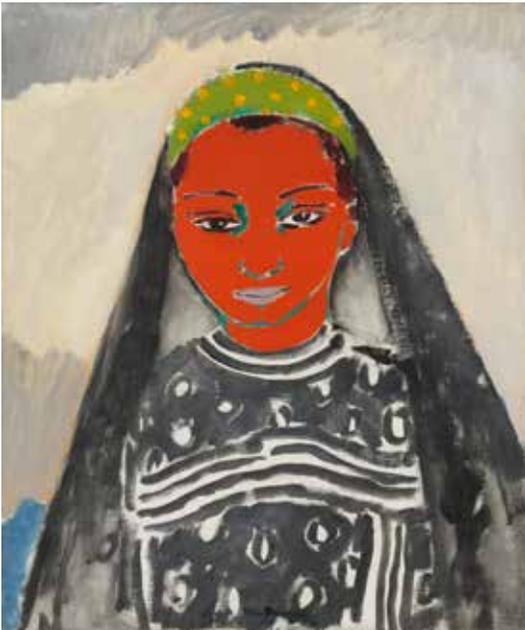
Ernst Barlach
Der Rächer (The Avenger), 1914
Promised Gift, Collection of Arnold and Joan Saltzman

Barlach said, "That which cannot be expressed in words can be made accessible by form." An anarchist, he believed World War I heralded changes that would improve the lives of politically and economically oppressed people. This streamlined figure hurtling forward with sword raised reflects those convictions. (He originally carved it in wood, then had it cast in bronze.) Barlach disavowed these ideas after the war's devastation. In the 1930s, a champion of free expression, he was labeled a "degenerate" artist by the Nazis.



Juan Gris
Fantômas, 1915

Fantômas, the sadistic protagonist of best-selling, early twentieth-century crime novels—said to be nowhere and everywhere at the same time—haunts this still life that seems anything but still. A table, a glass, a newspaper, some fruit, a pipe, and more: each offers only a trace of itself, a contour here, a texture or color there. One of the core group of cubists, Gris was as much a master as Picasso or Braque at playing with levels and degrees of representation.



Kees van Dongen
Saida, 1913 or 1920

The Dutch-born Van Dongen was a member of a group of artists in Paris dubbed the *fauves* (wild beasts) by an early critic for their use of explosive colors. On a trip to Egypt and Morocco, he was inspired to create this image of a woman wearing a veil, whose red face is accented by viridian highlights (or shadows) and a yellow-green headband, all set off by surrounding blacks and grays. Van Dongen imparts a quiet dignity to his subject, whose gaze rivets us.

Ground Level



Andy Goldsworthy
Roof, 2004–2005

Created for this site, *Roof* consists of nine hollow domes of stacked slate. The view from the mezzanine reveals a configuration rippling around velvety black oculi. “I wanted to make a piece that had a physical connection between the city and its origins,” he said. The black slate refers to the region’s geologic past, when rich strata of sediment formed the stone that constitutes many federal buildings. The forms recall a variety of constructed chambers—from burial crypts and hives to Washington’s many neoclassical domes.



Georgia O'Keeffe
Jack-in-the-Pulpit No. 3, 1930

In a series of six paintings, O'Keeffe progressively simplified and magnified an otherworldly-looking flower that grew at her home near Lake George, New York. The series zooms in on the plant's inner, reproductive core, the spadix or “jack.” O'Keeffe rejected the sexual and Freudian interpretations that critics put forward and maintained that she sought to find the real meaning of things through visual exploration. The artist left five paintings from this series to the Gallery.



Amedeo Modigliani
Nude on a Divan, 1918

Modigliani's series of nudes—more than thirty in his short career—celebrated the Venuses of Renaissance painting he saw growing up in Italy. He also assimilated cues from contemporary sources in Paris, where he worked, such as West African masks and the work of predecessors Paul Cézanne and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. However stylized the elongated faces and flattened forms might appear, the erotic states that the paintings capture, from coquettish to languid, were scandalous at the time.



Henri Matisse
Les Gorges du Loup, 1920/1925

Les Gorges du Loup is a pass in the Maritime Alps of southern France, a place of lush greenery, waterfalls, and mountain trails. Matisse painted this calming landscape while living nearby in Nice, where he retreated following World War I. The cerulean sky, bright light of the region, and a breeze rustling the trees can almost be felt. Wide, parallel brushstrokes throughout unify the patterns and rhythm of the painting and recall Cézanne, whom Matisse considered “a god.”

Concourse



Jasper Johns
Target, 1958
Collection of the Artist

Johns employs forms with everyday currency—“things the mind already knows,” as he put it. The target may conjure a game of darts or the focus of one’s attention and energy. Johns plays with the emblem’s flexible, associative qualities while creating an object that is unavoidably painterly. His approach, eschewing personal expression, reflects on the nature of depiction and how meaning in art is established.



Jessica Stockholder
No Title, 1994

Stockholder’s sculptural installations have been called “paintings in space.” Common domestic objects— a cot, a chair, a pole—rest incidentally on the gallery floor or attach to the wall and collectively become the canvas for vibrant expressive incursions and extensions of color.

“I love the chaos... I don’t make minimal, controlled things,” she says. Each item’s functional identity is slightly at odds with its role in an abstract composition, making the whole feel unsettled, transitory.



Glenn Ligon
Double America, 2012

Ligon’s neon sculpture/sign presents a conundrum. Resolving the letter arrangements is a perplexing exercise in becoming oriented to the work. The only “correct” reading of the name turns out to be upside-down with the letters reversed, as in the lower register. Ligon has said that his neon works echo the dichotomies in US democracy that he sees as an African American.

Please do not touch the art. Maintain a three-foot distance from all works, including those behind you.

Some works may be temporarily off view.

Cover: Details of Jackson Pollock, *No. 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)* (front), and Georgia O’Keeffe, *Jack-in-the-Pulpit No. 3* (back).

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