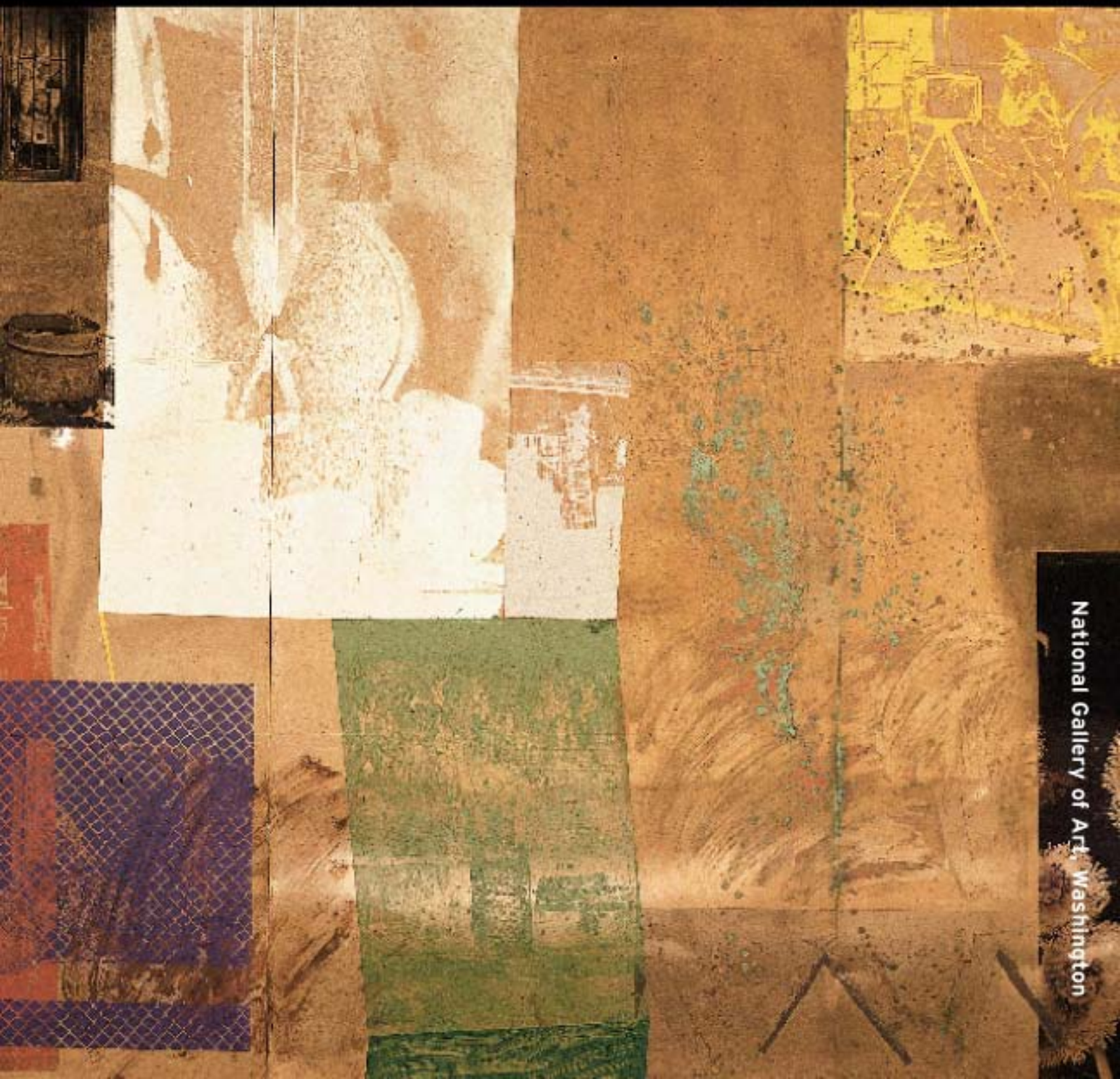
Teaching

Art since 1950



National Gallery of Art, Washington

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NOTE TO THE READER

This teaching packet is designed to help teachers, primarily in the upper grades, talk with their students about art produced since 1950 and some of the issues it raises. The focus is on selected works from the collection of the National Gallery of Art. For more complete information about artists and movements of this period, see the resources listed in the bibliography.

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Designed by The Watermark Design Office

Unless otherwise noted, all works are from the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Cover images: Robert Rauschenberg, *Copperhead Grande/ROCI CHILE* (detail), 1985, acrylic and tarnishes on copper, Gift of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. Jackson Pollock, *Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)*, 1950, oil, enamel, and aluminum on canvas, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund. Andy Warhol, *Green Marilyn*, 1962, silkscreen on synthetic polymer paint on canvas, Gift of William C. Seitz and Irma S. Seitz, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art. Susan Rothenberg, *Butterfly*, 1976, acrylic on canvas, Gift of Perry R. and Nancy Lee Bass. Frank Stella, *Jarama II*, 1982, mixed media on etched magnesium, Gift of Lila Acheson Wallace. Mark Rothko, *Untitled* (detail), 1953, oil on canvas, Gift of the Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc. Roy Lichtenstein, *Look Mickey,* 1961, oil on canvas, Dorothy and Roy Lichtenstein, Gift of the Artist, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art. Eva Hesse, *Test Piece for "Contingent"* (detail), 1969, latex over cheesecloth, Gift of the Collectors Committee.

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Slides, reproductions, and timeline
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and an illustrated timeline poster are
included in this packet

Introduction

The 1950s

Following the outbreak of World War II, the focus of artistic activity shifted, for the first time, from Europe to the United States and to young painters in New York, including Willem de Kooning, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko (see pages 12–19). Grouped under the rubric **abstract expressionism,** their diverse styles generally fall into two categories: one relying primarily on the artist's gesture and the other on color. Although a few painters, such as de Kooning, continued to use recognizable images, most did not. At first their pictures shocked the public, but they soon came to dominate the art world.

So-called **action (or gesture) painting** is epitomized by Pollock's Lavender Mist (see page 13). Its intricate interlace was created by a bold, physical technique that put the artist, as he said, "in the painting." Pollock placed his canvases flat on the floor and poured and flung his paints. His works are records of his creative process, a direct view of his emotions and actions.

The second category within abstract expressionism is represented by the evanescent rectangles of color in Mark Rothko's Untitled (see page 17). Through floating shapes, subtle brushwork, and color modulations, Rothko evoked a range of emotions, from elation to foreboding. His meditative and silent pictures invite contemplation.

Art historians have long pointed to the influence on young abstract expressionists of **surrealist** artists, many of whom had fled war-torn Europe for the United States in the 1930s. This view finds, for example, a parallel between the spontaneity of action painting and the **automatic imagery** used by the surrealists. But while the surrealists mined the subconscious for preexisting mental images to reproduce, action painters found the image in the act of painting itself.

By the early 1950s, existentialist thinkers were in the intellectual vanguard. "We weren't influenced directly by existentialism, but it was in the air. . . . we were in touch with the mood," de Kooning noted in an interview. Existentialism's premise that "existence precedes essence" meant that humankind played the central role in determining its own nature. People had to live in a mode of expectancy and change, always making themselves. They held ultimate, awesome responsibility but were also free. Abstract expressionism took the idea of freedom as a given—and this more than anything else is what is common to its different styles.

The 1960s

By the 1960s both abstract and nonobjective art had lost their ability to shock. Painting with recognizable subjects now seemed radical. **Pop artists,** so named for their use of images drawn from popular culture, broadened the definition of art by painting such everyday things as comic-book characters and soup cans.

Ordinary objects had made their way into fine art before—cubist still-life painters, for example, had incorporated newspaper type and collage elements. David Smith (see page 34) used discarded metal objects in his welded sculpture. But Smith and the cubists were primarily interested in the visual qualities of these objects. This visual emphasis began to shift in the mid-1950s with Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns (see pages 20 and 23). Rauschenberg used ordinary objects in what he called "combine paintings." Johns, whose painted works sometimes incorporated three-dimensional casts, produced painted bronze or plaster versions of such things as lightbulbs and his own paint brushes stuffed into a coffee can. For later pop artists, these ordinary objects became subjects in a more direct way—unabashed reflections of a consumer society. With ironic detachment, pop artists put the mass culture of mid-century America in the spotlight, replacing the high seriousness of abstract expressionism with deadpan coolness.

Roy Lichtenstein's Look Mickey (see page 27) went a step further, not only using characters from popular culture but emulating the dot pattern of commercial printing. Though it looked

Note: Boldface terms are defined in the glossary.

as familiar as the Sunday comic pages, Look Mickey was made with careful consideration of color, composition, and other formal concerns. Lichtenstein's picture was very much hand painted, but other pop artists began to move away from traditional "fine-art" techniques. Andy Warhol's Now Let Us Praise Famous Men (see page 31), for example, was made by a largely mechanical printing process using a silkscreen that had been created from a photograph, not from his own drawing or design. The role of the artist in making art was being reconsidered.

With expanded computer use, wider exposure to media such as television, and faster communications, the 1960s experienced an explosion of information—new kinds of information and new ways of processing it. The visual arts extended into realms that had been considered quite distinct, such as theater, dance, and music. A number of artists, including at various times Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg (see page 33), and Warhol, concentrated their efforts on **performance**-type works, some of which were called **happenings.** The first happening was organized by Allan Kaprow in 1959. "The happening," he said, "is performed according to plan but without rehearsal. . . . It is art but seems closer to life." He had been inspired in part by the music of John Cage, whose performances relied on unscheduled audience participation. In Cage's "4'33'','' for example, a pianist sat without striking a single key for four minutes and thirty-three seconds. The random sounds coming from the audience were the only music. Artists' studios were often sites for happenings. In many ways, Warhol's Factory, which is what he called his studio, was a permanent happening.

For all of its visibility and widespread appeal, pop art's real theoretical complexity—its questioning of assumptions about fine art—was not fully appreciated until much later. Not every artist in the early 1960s was interested in pop, in any case. Abstract expressionism had dominated in the 1950s, and abstraction of different kinds continued to dominate into the 1960s. In a sense, abstraction was modern art—what people first imagined when hearing those words. The generation of abstract artists that followed the abstract expressionists developed diverse coloristic styles sometimes characterized as **postpainterly abstraction.** Some, including Morris Louis (see page 58), let their pigments soak into the fabric of the canvas and become more like a stain than paint on the surface. Their methods were taken up by the younger artist Sam Gilliam (see page 56), whose own unique contribution was to free the canvas from its rectangular support.

The term postpainterly is also used to describe the nongestural approach of Ellsworth Kelly (see page 37). In comparison with the highly subjective art of the 1950s, Kelly's flatly painted panels in bold colors or in black and white seem pristine formal exercises, though he is inspired by things he sees in the world around him. His works have what could be described as "perfect pitch" in terms of color and shape. They are controlled and impersonal, with barely a trace of the artist's hand.

The simplification and reduction of works like Kelly's, not the lively irreverence of pop, attracted the attention of many younger artists in the 1960s and 1970s. The sobriety and concentration of Frank Stella's early work (see page 41), especially, was an important influence on what came to be called **minimal art.** In 1965 Donald Judd (see page 44) wrote an essay entitled "Specific Objects" that helped define the aims of minimal art. In some respects, minimalism was more a way of thinking about art than making it. Minimal artists employed industrial means to manufacture impersonal, often rigid, geometric forms. They strongly asserted the object-ness of art.

The 1970s

In the 1970s, if not before, the idea that art fol-

lowed some linear course that could be plotted, perhaps even predicted, had to be set aside. From the time Vasari wrote Lives of the Artists in the sixteenth century, art history had been written as a progression from one style to the next. No longer. The 1970s, sometimes called the "pluralistic 70s," saw the introduction of body art, **conceptual art, process art, land art, performance art,** feminist art, and others. They can all be seen as part of one larger **postminimal** movement, but what is most significant is the very fact of their multiplicity. Anything, it seemed, could be art. And as Joseph Beuys, an influential German performance artist, maintained, everyone is an artist.

In 1970 the exhibition Information at the Museum of Modern Art in New York featured works by conceptual artists. Like Sol LeWitt (see page 46), these artists appreciated the purity of minimalism but not its obsession with the art object. For them, the idea was the art. The object was a mere by-product. Perhaps there was no object per se, only documentation of the artist's idea or activity. At least in part this marked a reaction against the commodification of art, a rejection of the consumer culture so gaudily apparent in 1960s pop. Conceptual art ranged from "body" pieces like those of Chris Burden, who in one work had himself shot in the arm, to the more cerebral word plays of Joseph Kosuth (see page 49). The assumption that a work of art was primarily defined by its visual qualities was being undermined.

Closely related to conceptual art was so-called land or earth art—for example, Robert Smithson's large-scale reshapings of the landscape (see page 55) and the more anonymous efforts of Richard Long (see page 53), whose art includes walks in the countryside. Also related to conceptual art were process works, whose final form was determined by the artist's technique, choice of materials (which included such nontraditional "media" as rubber, ice, and food), and the interaction of natural forces. Process encompassed such works as a transparent box in which moisture condensed and a sculpture created by the random fall of molten metal. Process did not simply allow for but, in fact, relied on change and the element of chance introduced through the action of weather, atmosphere, gravity, oxidation, or other forces. Art was no longer fixed. Like life itself, it encompassed mutability and even decay. One of the first artists to set aside the precision and hard surfaces of minimalism for a more processlike approach was Eva Hesse (see page 50).

In the early 1970s sculptor Martin Puryear (see page 66) began using his fine handworking skills to develop an elegant, abstract style. His (usually) wooden sculptures have a strong, even mysterious "presence." Made using the laborious techniques of woodworker, boatwright, and basketweaver, they derive power from the discipline of craft.

Pop artists painted comic-book characters and movie stars, but most other artists avoided recognizable imagery. About 1970, though, Philip Guston, who had been an abstract expressionist (see page 62), began to paint hobnailed boots and hooded members of the Ku Klux Klan, bewildering admirers of his previous work. By the end of the decade, both figures and more representational styles had made a reappearance. So-called **new image art** of the late 1970s and 1980s typically set a single figure in a dense, often expressionistic, background. Unlike the emotionally detached figures of pop, the motifs, like the horses of Susan Rothenberg (see page 60), are often mysterious and solemn. Like new image painters, Chuck Close (see page 63), who painted hyperrealistic close-up faces of family members and friends, retained theoretical links with minimalism, conceptual art, and process.

The 1980s into the 1990s

In 1981 at London's Royal Academy, the curator of the exhibition A New Spirit in Painting observed, "The artists' studios are full of paint pots again." His comment pointed to the preponderance of sculpture, performance art, and nonpaint media that had preoccupied so many artists in the preceding decade. In the early 1980s, first in Germany and Italy and a bit later in the United States, a number of young painters returned not only to painting on canvas but to expressive styles and emotion-laden, highly charged content. Though enormously varied, their works have usually been labeled together as **neo-expressionism.** These paintings are often large, their surfaces densely worked and frequently encrusted with an array of materials. Like Anselm Kiefer's meditations on the evil of the Holocaust (see page 71), they frequently tackle once-taboo subjects. A booming art market apparently starved for images and emotion paid unprecedented prices for these works in the 1980s.

In the 1990s many artists—and more critics—have identified themselves as **postmodern.** In one sense this label reflects the reaction of painters distancing themselves from the focus of **modernism** on color, line, and composition. But it also reflects the influence of such postmodern thinkers and writers as Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes. Many of the artists who have come of age in the second half of the twentieth century—especially since the late 1960s—have been more widely educated than their predecessors and have a natural affinity for theoretical approaches. Chuck Close, only one of several artists we discuss who attended graduate school at Yale, said that "we learned to talk art before we could really make it." The discourse surrounding such ideas as **semiotics**, **poststructuralism,** and **deconstruction** have tended to make art a more hermetic pursuit, increasingly self-referential.

The techniques of deconstruction, in particular, have been used as tools for the interpretation of works of art and as the theoretical underpinnings of new approaches for artists. They have opened up the meaning of a work of art to multiple interpretations and created new possibilities for appropriated (that is, borrowed) imagery. For Sigmar Polke (see page 74), the imagery he appropriates from another art source becomes new art in his hands because its context and therefore its meaning have changed.

In the 1990s artists have also responded to new social critiques from African Americans, feminists, homosexuals, and other groups. Sharper attention is being paid to issues of the artist's identity. We can note this motivation, for example, in the "interiority" and female imagery of Elizabeth Murray's shaped canvases (see page 77) or in the highly personal symbolism of Louise Bourgeois (see page 68). In Bourgeois' case, this is a path she has been exploring for more than fifty years.

Quoting a Renaissance aphorism, noted art historian Dore Ashton acknowledged that "Truth is the daughter of Time." Our conclusions grow less secure as we approach the present. Many of the assumptions we have held about art since the Renaissance have been questioned or even set aside. We no longer necessarily accept, for example, that art "progresses" along a trajectory we can plot, that it is permanent and relies on traditional fine-art techniques, or that it conveys meaning or emotion through form. In fact, we have been forced to consider whether art is fundamentally defined by the way it looks. Perhaps its "essence" lies elsewhere. Perhaps it has no claim to "essence" at all.

The works in this packet suggest many questions. The following paragraphs consider a few of them.

What distinguishes art from ordinary objects? What is the role of the artist in "making" art?

In 1913 Marcel Duchamp (see page 22) showed his first **readymade,** a bicycle wheel. It was followed in later years by a bottle rack, a urinal, and other "outrages." These were, as **surrealist** author André Breton defined them, "manufactured objects promoted to the dignity of art through the choice of the artist." This was the opening salvo in the assault on the status, on what some later artists called the "fetish," of the art object. It wasn't until the late 1950s, however, that the real battle was joined. Sculptors and collage artists had long incorporated found objects for their value as abstract visual elements. But when Rauschenberg exhibited a stuffed goat (see page 20), he was implying that everyday things were not any less interesting in themselves than the representations of them that we had been calling art. Warhol (see page 30) suggested that, well, anything could be art. Such views of course tended to undermine the object. Eventually conceptual artists asserted that the object was nothing but a residue of the real art that was the artist's idea. No longer possessed of its former aura, the object per se was up for grabs, ready to be appropriated, copied, or even negated.

Must a work of art be unique? What constitutes originality? What distinguishes original and copy?

In a famous essay entitled "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (published originally in the mid-1930s), Walter Benjamin mused about what authenticity meant in the twentieth century. "From a photographic negative, for example," he noted, "one can make any number of prints: to ask for the 'authentic' print makes no sense." He worried about the "depletion" of art's "aura," which he defined as the "here and now of the work of art—its unique existence in space and time." These words still haunt the discussion.

Both Rauschenberg and Warhol (see pages 20 and 30), at about the same time, started to use photosilkscreening. This was a mechanical—in fact a photographic—process that took an image not of the artist's own making and put it at the center of his work. Warhol compounded the issue by repeating his images (coke bottles, soup cans, and Marilyn Monroe, for example) many times over. Moreover, art emerged from Warhol's studio, which he called the Factory, that he had not touched himself. He teased and provoked the public with comments like this one to an interviewer: "Why don't you ask my assistant Gerard Malanga some questions? He did a lot of my paintings."

The question of originality becomes even more complex when we look at the reuse of images that are not simply everyday things such as soup cans but that were themselves created as art by someone else. In appropriating images in this way, artists such as Sigmar Polke (see page 74) can comment on the very practice of art.

Must a work of art endure, or can it be ephemeral?

In the 1970s a number of artists turned to the landscape to make art. One of the largest land-art projects undertaken in the United States was Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty (see page 55). Massive quantities of earth and rock were moved at great expense and human effort. The work has since sunk into the Great Salt Lake, disappearing by design.

In the work of conceptual artists such as Sol LeWitt (see page 46), whose pieces exist more as ideas than as things, the question of permanence is even more complicated, since ideas are able to be reconstructed indefinitely—or may never be given physical form at all. And for process artists, the ephemeral quality of their materials was in itself an art medium, one that adds change and the unpredictability of experience to their "palette." Art is part of lived experience. Does

it need to be permanent in a way life is not? Philosopher Theodor Adorno wondered, "If art, having once recognized duration as illusion, could renounce it, if it could incorporate its own mortality into itself out of sympathy with the ephemeral nature of the living, then that would be appropriate to a conception of truth not as something external and abstract, but as grounded in time."

The other side of this coin is the symbolic value of permanence. Anselm Kiefer (see page 71), for example, uses lead to embody the weight and tragedy of history. It assumes more power, though, for audiences who no longer assume that art must be made to endure.

To what extent, if at all, does art need to fit the traditional definition of high art to be "fine art"?

In the 1960s pop art changed what we accept as fine art. It offered new subjects from the busy, sometimes glaring confusion around us: brand logos and commercial products, comic-strip characters and movie stars. It has changed not only what we see as art but the way we see it. We can now look at art—and at our own surroundings—with what has been called a vernacular gaze, taking in everything at once without judgments about value or hierarchies. Is it any less appropriate, any less strange, really, that our artists paint Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck rather than Venus and Adonis? These characters are part of the iconography we all share, democratic and meaningful perhaps in a way that ancient gods and goddesses can no longer claim to be.

What role does the viewer have to play?

In the questions we have been considering, one thing is consistently clear: the viewer is more critical now than ever before. The viewer has a much greater role to play—as participant, as collaborator. Happenings and performance may naturally imply an active spectator, but the same interaction has been introduced to what we might initially consider more traditional one-way works of painting and sculpture. Robert Rauschenberg's use of reflective surfaces in Copperhead Grande (see page 21) is only one, and a very literal, example. It makes the viewer's own image and surroundings a part of the picture.

In a different but equally crucial way, appropriation artists also rely on the viewer. The viewer's assumptions are an integral part of the art, no less so than pigment for a painter. Postmodern theory has put the viewer in the driver's seat, so to speak, since it is the viewer who creates the meaning of a work. Moreover, a lot of art produced today is about art. Consider Jasper Johns' references to a Renaissance altarpiece and his own earlier paintings in Perilous Night (see page 24). Looking at art today requires us to have considered the art of all periods, including our own.

Works in focus

Jackson Pollock

American, 1912–1956

Jackson Pollock (Jackson Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Jackson Pollock was born in Cody, Wyoming, and spent most of his youth in California. In 1929—at only seventeen years old—he left Los Angeles for New York, where he studied with painter Thomas Hart Benton. Pollock's early work shared Benton's rhythmic arabesques and undulating contours. The young painter, however, was more attuned to the intense, interior-driven works of Albert Pinkham Ryder than to the folksy narratives of his own teacher.

In 1936 Pollock worked in the New York shop of muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros, and about 1938 he turned from Benton's style to what he saw as the more powerful and epic work of Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, and other Mexican mural painters. The large scale of their paintings and the "controlled accidents" that were a part of the experimental techniques used in Siqueiros' shop also had an impact. Increasingly, Pollock was interested in painting mythic images from a private inner world, and he entered Jungian analysis in 1939. Influenced by surrealism, his work from the early 1940s frequently made use of cryptic, calligraphic scribbles that resembled the automatic writing (see glossary) that surrealists used to access the unconscious. At this time, too, Pollock was reading the ideas of artist Wassily Kandinsky, who saw art not just as an expression of inner states but as evoking "basic rhythms" of the universe. In the mid-1940s Pollock's works lost their totemic images, becoming looser, freer. The scribbles expanded. Placing his canvases flat on the floor and painting with a drip technique, he arrived at the allover style of his most famous works.

By the mid-1950s abstract expressionism had become the style of modern art. Pollock himself was a larger-than-life figure in American culture—he was featured in Life magazine, and Vogue used his works as backdrops for fashion shoots. The last years of his life, however, were troubled by heavy drinking and depression. He died in 1956 in an automobile accident.

Jackson Pollock
Number 1, 1950
(Lavender Mist), 1950
Oil, enamel, and aluminum on canvas,
2.210 x 2.997 m (87 x 118 in.)
Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund
SLIDE 1
AND COLOR REPRODUCTION

Nearly fifty years later, our mental image of the modern artist is still a picture of Jackson Pollock—larger than life, intense, even reckless.

By 1947 Jackson Pollock had begun to place his large canvases on the floor and paint them using a variety of slinging and pouring techniques, working quickly and spontaneously from all sides to create an allover tracery of lines.

Different colors and different painted shapes—broader splotches and softer colors below, and sharper, darker ones on top—lend a shallow frostiness to Lavender Mist. There is no central focus. No concentration of effect locks our gaze, no storyline or compositional dynamic draws our attention from point to point. Instead, our eyes travel freely around the canvas or simply rest. This lack of a focal point and the nearly ten-foot horizontal dimension of the canvas make the painting something we experience as much as see.

Although a derisive reviewer had nicknamed Pollock "Jack the Dripper," the complex and subtle structural interlace of Lavender Mist is the result of both happenstance and split-second decision making—chance and choreography. Its essence lies in the act of its creation. Though the physical performance of painting was a spontaneous and unrepeatable event, the painting itself was always subject to artistic will. "I can control the flow of the paint," Pollock contended. "There is no accident."

Pollock's tracery has the same structure as a drawn line and serves the same organizational purpose. His snap-of-the-wrist technique of flinging paint had surprising accuracy. In effect, it extended his reach and gave him a delicate touch. Pollock often went back into his paintings, adding the lines that knit his pictures together.

My painting does not come from the easel. . . . On the floor I feel more at ease. I feel nearer, more part of the painting, since this way I can walk around it, work from the four sides and literally be in the painting.
—Jackson Pollock

VIEWPOINT **Action painting**

Mark Tansey, American, born 1949, *A Short History of Modernist Painting* (detail), 1979–1980, oil on canvas, 72 x 72 in., The Eli Broad Family Foundation, Santa Monica, California (photo © Douglas M. Parker)

Art critic Harold Rosenberg coined the term action painting, which describes the work of Pollock, de Kooning (see page 15), and many other abstract expressionist painters. In a celebrated essay published in 1952, he wrote, "At a certain moment, the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act. . . . His act-painting is of the same metaphysical stuff as the artist's existence." For Rosenberg, subjective qualities were paramount. Painting was an epic struggle between artist and material. With grand, heroically scaled gestures, the action painter created an art wrung from confrontation and catharsis.

By contrast, critic Clement Greenberg, another champion of abstraction in the 1950s and 1960s, concentrated on the formal properties of the paintings. For him, the total "painting-ness" of Pollock's work was paramount, its denial of external references and sole reliance on line, color, and form—the internal logic of painting itself. Greenberg believed that abstract expressionism was the completion of "modernism with a capital M," the culmination of a pursuit that could be traced to Maurice Denis' comment in 1890: "Remember that a picture—before it is a battle horse or a nude woman or some anecdote—is essentially a flat surface covered with colors in a certain order."

Pollock's allover paint emphasized the flatness of the canvas, as Mark Tansey points out with ironic literalness in A Short History of Modernist Painting. For Greenberg and like-minded critics, flatness—not storytelling, which properly belonged to literature, or depth, which properly belonged to sculpture—was the ultimate source of quality in painting. These views, which approach painting on its own terms, established the outlines of critical discussion for much of the rest of the century.

This is all about freedom

Willem de Kooning
American 1904–1997
Study for Woman Number One, 1952
Pastel, crayon, and graphite, 0.229 x 0.285 m
(9 x 11 1/4 in.)
Andrew W. Mellon Fund
SLIDE 2

Critic Harold Rosenberg had been looking at de Kooning's bold, slashing brushstrokes when he coined the term action painting. But de Kooning departed from purely abstract painting. Between 1949 and 1951 he started to fragment the human figure, arriving finally at a series of unsettling images of women. This drawing is a study for one of them. The grimacing face—and de Kooning's almost violent style—subverted classical images of the beautiful woman and commented on women's role in contemporary culture.

The recognizable imagery in de Kooning's new works struck some as a betrayal of abstract expressionism, but the artist himself remarked, "What's the problem? This is all about freedom." For de Kooning, painting was about drama and the outpouring of the artist's emotions. "Painting isn't just the visual thing that reaches your retina—it's what is behind it and in it," he said. "I'm not interested in 'abstracting' or taking things out or reducing painting to design, form, line, and color. I paint this way because I can keep putting more things in it—drama, anger, pain, love, a figure, a horse, my ideas about space. Through your eyes it again becomes an emotion or an idea. It doesn't matter if it's different from mine as long as it comes from the painting, which has its own integrity and intensity."

Mark Rothko

American, 1903–1970

Mark Rothko (Photographs of Artists Collection One, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Mark Rothko was born Marcus Rothkowitz in what is today Daugavpils, Latvia. His family immigrated to the United States when he was ten, settling in Portland, Oregon. Planning a career in law or engineering, Rothko entered Yale in 1921, but in late 1923 he moved to New York and began art classes. In the 1930s, while earning his living by teaching art classes for children, Rothko painted mostly street scenes and interiors with figures. He stressed the emotional quality of his subjects, something he admired in children's art.

During the 1940s Rothko's imagery became increasingly symbolic. Like many of his contemporaries, he felt that new subjects and a new idiom were required to express the anxiety and tragedy of the war years. He turned to themes of myth, prophecy, archaic ritual, and the unconscious mind. Influenced by the presence in New York of surrealist artists, Rothko relaxed his technique, and his images became more abstract. Figurative associations and references to the natural world finally disappeared altogether in the late 1940s. Rothko progressively eliminated linear elements, and asymmetrically arranged patches of color became the basis of his compositions. By 1950 Rothko had reduced the number of floating rectangles to two, three, or four and aligned them vertically.

In the late 1950s, when Rothko's work darkened dramatically, distinctions between shape and ground became more difficult to discern. The resulting sensation of enclosure lends itself to meditation. Between 1964 and 1967 Rothko was occupied with paintings for the Rothko Chapel, originally commissioned for the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. For the last few years of his life, Rothko was physically ill and suffered from depression. He committed suicide in February 1970.

Mark Rothko
Untitled, 1953
Oil on canvas, 1.951 x 1.723 m
($76^3/_4$ x $67^3/_4$ in.)
Gift of the Mark Rothko
Foundation, Inc.
SLIDE 3

You might as well get one thing straight.... I am not an abstractionist ... not interested in relationships of color or form or anything else.... I'm interested only in expressing basic human emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom, and so on.

—Mark Rothko

By 1950 Rothko had removed all references to either the natural world or myth from his painting and adopted the soft-edged rectangles of Untitled. Stacked vertically and hovering over a hazy ground, they occupy an ambiguous space. Rothko's technique appears simple, but close examination reveals its richly varied effect. He painted with several thin layers applied in differing degrees of saturation and transparency, giving his colors the appearance of luminosity and depth. The liquid paint soaks the canvas, leaving soft, indistinct edges. The shapes seem to float. Their feathery edges impart an aura-like vibration as if they were animated by an interior light.

Using nothing more than these subtle variations, Rothko evoked a range of atmospheres and moods. Some paintings seem buoyant. Others, like this one, somberly meditative.

Rothko wanted the large scale of his paintings to envelop the viewer. He asked that his largest pictures be hung "so that they must be first encountered at close quarters, so that the first experience is to be within the picture." He sought what he termed
"clarity: the elimination of all obstacles between the painter and the idea and between the idea and the observer." He wanted his pictures to inundate the viewer's eye immediately, displacing the everyday. But Rothko's intention was not to overwhelm. On the contrary, he hoped to make the contact between painting and viewer "intimate and human."

The fact that lots of people break down and cry when confronted with my pictures shows that I communicate with those basic human emotions. The people who weep before my pictures are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them.

—Mark Rothko

Rothko was convinced that pure pictorial properties such as color, surface, proportion, and scale could disclose the presence of philosophical truth. He linked luminosity, darkness, broad space, and color contrast to tragedy, ecstasy, and the sublime. His abstract shapes recede or advance according to color. Are these rectangles superimposed on the background or are they voids in the background? This ambiguity in their relationship poses questions of presence and absence—in existential terms, of being and nothingness.

Rothko's ideas about the "meaning" of his works are elusive. He generally avoided explaining the specific content of his work, believing that the abstract image could represent directly the fundamental nature of "human drama." For the most part, he gave up conventional titles too, using numbers or colors to distinguish one work from another. This helped him resist explanations of meaning. "Silence," he said, "is so accurate."

Mark Rothko, *Street Scene*, 1936/1938, oil on canvas, 0.915 x 0.558 m (36 x 22 in.), Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.

Critics comment

Rothko's paintings have often been compared to landscape, their horizontal bands and luminous colors likened to sunsets over the horizon. Even the projection of his "color-light" was compared by Elaine de Kooning, artist, writer, and wife of Willem de Kooning, to the physical sensation of atmospheric pressure. For her, Rothko's colors recalled the ominous, pervasive light before a hurricane.

Critic Robert Rosenblum presented the classic formulation of this view in his 1961 essay "The Abstract Sublime." He suggested that Rothko's painting could be seen as having descended from eighteenth-century conceptions of the Romantic Sublime—that boundlessness of nature that evokes a religious sort of awe. The precursors of Rothko's painting were to be found in the landscape paintings of J.M.W. Turner and Frederic Church. "We are the monk before the sea," Rosenblum wrote, "standing silently and contemplatively before these huge and soundless pictures as if we were looking at a sunset or a moonlit night."

Unlike the horizon, however, Rothko's horizontals do not extend to the edges of our sight. His vague rectangles float, framed on all sides by their nebulous background. In earlier pictures, Rothko used architectural elements from the city—the subway, apartment blocks, and interiors—to define and compress space and to establish similar fore- and background relationships. His experience, it has recently been argued, was largely urban, and it would seem likely that he was intuitively inclined to locate the tragedy of modern life in city spaces.

Zips through the color field

Barnett Newman
American, 1905–1970
Yellow Painting, 1949
Oil on canvas, 1.71 x 1.33 m
($67\frac{1}{2}$ x $52\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Gift of Annalee Newman
SLIDE 4

In contrast to the gestural energy of works by Pollock or de Kooning—who have been called "heroic"—Rothko and Barnett Newman are more often described as "oracular," as if their works conveyed the cryptic and prophetic messages of some divinity. Newman saw the role of the artist as one of creator, bringing form out of chaos.

After destroying much of his earlier work, Newman arrived in 1948 at a new compositional fulcrum he called the zip. The zip, a usually vertical stripe, is a stark interruption of allover flat color. Often made with the aid of masking tape, the zip at once inhabits and divides the color field. It is a presence, but also a lacuna, a void. The radical reduction of Newman's work would prove to be of great influence on Ellsworth Kelly and Ad Reinhardt (see pages 37 and 40).

Robert Rauschenberg

American, born 1923

Robert Rauschenberg at Graphicstudio in April 1987 (© Graphicstudio, University of South Florida, photo by George Holzer)

Robert Rauschenberg, *Cardbird Door*, published 1971, cardboard, paper, tape, wood, metal, offset lithography, and screenprint, 2.032 x 0.762 x 0.279 m (80 x 30 x 11 in.), Gift of Gemini G.E.L.
SLIDE 5

Rauschenberg printed the logos on these boxes, making an ironic comment on earlier works in which he simply used commercial cartons.

Robert Rauschenberg, *Monogram*, 1955–1959, mixed media, 1.22 x 1.83 x 1.83 m, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (© Robert Rauschenberg, photo by Tord Lund/Moderna Museet Stockholm)

Robert Rauschenberg was born in Port Arthur, Texas. He studied design briefly in Kansas City under the GI Bill and for a few months in Paris. After he learned of Josef Albers' work and the innovative Black Mountain College (see glossary), Rauschenberg returned to the United States. He studied at Black Mountain only briefly but continued to make trips there after he moved to New York in 1949. At Black Mountain, Rauschenberg became friends with dancer Merce Cunningham and composer John Cage, whose use of chance and elements of everyday experience proved to be of great influence.

Among Rauschenberg's first works were several monochromatic pictures, including an all-white series, whose austerity and limited range foreshadow mid-1960s minimalism. However, some of these were backdrops for dance performances. They were meant to be seen in changing patterns of light and shadow and, in a sense, assumed the presence of the human figure.

In 1952, when abstract expressionism dominated the art world, Rauschenberg asked Willem de Kooning for a drawing with the intention of erasing it. After he exhibited the ghostly rubbed-out image, both homage and rebellion, many critics labeled him a neo-Dadist. In 1954 Rauschenberg began incorporating found objects in his paintings. Until about 1961 he produced what he called "combine paintings." They used a variety of techniques, including collage, painting, silkscreening, and dye transfers, and incorporated fabric, stuffed animals, printed elements, and other materials. These works were important precursors of pop, but Rauschenberg's works lack the detached coolness of pop. They are messy and expressive, filled with the whole humming, buzzing confusion of life and the world. For a number of years in the mid-1960s, Rauschenberg concentrated on performance, more elaborate sculpture, and installations. Between 1984 and 1991 Rauschenberg devoted his energies to a project to promote world peace through art. ROCI, or Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange, was funded almost entirely by the artist. Rauschenberg's iconoclastic inventiveness, energy, and humane spirit have made him one of the most influential artists of this century.

Robert Rauschenberg
Copperhead Grande/ROCI CHILE, 1985
Acrylic and tarnishes on copper,
2.286 x 3.658 m (90 x 144 in.)
Gift of the Robert Rauschenberg
Foundation
SLIDE 6

Painting is always strongest when in spite of composition, color, etc, it appears as a fact, or an inevitability, as opposed to a souvenir or arrangement. Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in that gap between the two.)

—Robert Rauschenberg, 1959

Copperhead Grande is one of the products of ROCI, the Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange, a project the artist launched in 1984. It took him to nine countries in seven years: Japan, Mexico, Chile, Tibet, Cuba, Venezuela, Malaysia, the former Soviet Union, and the former East Germany. In each case, he worked with local artists and craftspeople and collected objects that he then incorporated into the works produced there. The areas chosen were outside the mainstream of Western art, and many were dictatorial states. The artist's goal was to focus an artistic dialogue and creative energy on the situation of peoples living under oppressive regimes.

Collaboration has been and continues to be an important element of Rauschenberg's art. He has worked with many other artists and with musicians, dancers, and scientists. His ideas about partnership extend to the audience as well. Rauschenberg helped change the dynamic between the viewer and the work of art, insisting that art is not so much a thing as it is a process that continues, in the repeated act of contemplation, even after the work itself is "complete."

In place of canvas, Copperhead Grande uses a copper sheet as a support. Its images were screened or painted with acrylics or "burned in" with chemicals that tarnish the surface. The effect is of an irregular kaleidoscopic mosaic. The shiny copper surface reflects the viewers, changing as they shift position. It puts them and the space and movements around them literally in the picture.

Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol (see page 30) started to use photosilkscreening processes at about the same time. Earlier Rauschenberg had used a solvent transfer method to add type and printed images to his canvases. Even when he is using the more mechanistic silkscreening technique, however, Rauschenberg remains interested in producing a varied surface. He often paints over the printed image, adding expressive marks that continue to show his connection to abstract expressionism. Warhol's silkscreened images, on the other hand, are more impersonal—more cool.

Chile, I think, is one of the most beautiful places in the world. In the north are deserts and copper fields. To get there, I drove for the better part of a day from Santiago and wanted to photograph the forges and flying fire when we came back from the copper mines. We had a hard time. It took a day and a half, actually to get permission because the mines were a government operation.... On the way back, there were some llamas on the hill grazing. I got out and a couple of llamas approached us and I found three big turquoise stones just lying in this desert. The llamas, the smelting, and the factories, all were real experiences.

—Robert Rauschenberg, 1991

Found objects

Found objects were incorporated in works of art long before the 1950s. In the early twentieth century, cubist still-life artists had incorporated newspaper fragments, ticket stubs, and the like, in part, for their abstract visual qualities. Surrealist artists also used found objects to jolt the mind. Rauschenberg's found objects have more in common with the readymades of Marcel Duchamp, who exhibited ordinary manufactured goods as art without elaboration.

Rauschenberg's everyday objects, even as they become art, retain their original identities. He chooses them not for their abstract form, but for their very "thingness." In Rauschenberg's works the whole is not greater than the parts, it is the parts, something to be experienced in its multifarious detail. An appearance of disorder—almost messiness—prevents Rauschenberg's images from resolving into one coherent form. They must be seen in a series of "instances" whose order is not directed by narrative or compositional device but comes about only through the act of viewing.

Marcel Duchamp, French, 1887–1968, *Bottle Rack*, Collections Mnam/Cci–Centre Georges Pompidou (photo courtesy Photothèque des collections du Mnam/Cci)

Jasper Johns

American, born 1930

Jasper Johns (Rudi Blesch Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Jasper Johns, *Flags I*, 1973, screenprint on J. B. Green paper, sheet: 0.699 x 0.900 m ($27\frac{1}{2}$ x $35\frac{7}{16}$ in.), Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection
SLIDE 7

Jasper Johns was born in Augusta, Georgia, and spent most of his childhood in South Carolina. In 1949 he moved to New York, where he took a few classes in art and design before being drafted by the army and sent to Japan. He was back in New York by 1952, and like Rauschenberg and Warhol, he helped support himself by designing window displays.

In 1954, after a dream, Johns painted an American flag. About this time, he said he had decided to "stop becoming and be an artist." He destroyed most of his earlier work and started to concentrate on mundane objects. During the next three years he did a number of other flags, along with targets, stenciled letters, and numbers—all familiar images. These "things the mind already knows," he said, "gave me room to work on other levels." These were images so recognizable that the viewer could look past what was represented to see them as abstract patterns and to focus on the artist's surprisingly expressive rendering of them. They were iconic images, but their surfaces were rich and tactile. Johns' favored technique was encaustic. He applied warm pigmented wax over laboriously constructed collages.

Johns' work was not exhibited until 1957, but it enjoyed immediate success. During most of this time, he worked closely with Robert Rauschenberg, who lived in the same building. The two reintroduced recognizable imagery after the predominantly abstract work of the previous decade, forming a link between abstract expressionism and pop.

Johns incorporated plaster casts in many of his paintings and in 1958 started to make sculpture of everyday objects. His painting became more complex iconographically in the 1960s and 1970s as he explored relationships between language and thought using visual and verbal puns. Johns' work has been increasingly personal and referential of other art as well as his own.

Jasper Johns
Perilous Night, 1982
Encaustic on canvas with objects,
1.705 x 2.442 x 0.159 m
($67\frac{1}{8}$ x $96\frac{1}{8}$ x $6\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
Robert and Jane Meyerhoff
Collection
SLIDE 8

Seeing a thing can sometimes trigger the mind to make another thing. In some instance the new work may include, as a sort of subject matter, references to the thing that was seen. And, because works of painting tend to share many aspects, working itself may initiate memories of other works. Naming or painting those ghosts sometimes seems a way to stop their nagging.

—Jasper Johns, 1984

One of Johns' overriding interests has been to explore the nature of seeing, of perception, and specifically of "viewing" art. Recently he has turned this lens on the history of art and his own work.

Perplexing juxtapositions and moody colors make Perilous Night a darkly mysterious picture. It combines real and painted objects, abstract and illusionistic styles, the obvious and the obscure. It seems to be disjointed, but the diptych format of two equal halves encourages us to recognize relationships as well as distinctions.

In the upper right is a silkscreened musical score, the beginning of the composition "Perilous Night" by the artist's friend John Cage. This establishes, from the outset, the painting's personal frame of reference. The words perilous and night also suggest the lyrics of "The Star-Spangled Banner." They immediately call to mind the paintings of the American flag that were among Johns' first exhibited works. His signature here also seems to echo the stenciled lettering he used in earlier pictures. And next to the score is yet another reference to Johns' own work, this time a crosshatch painting of the type that occupied him in the 1970s.

Another series of references can be drawn out of the panel on the left side of Perilous Night, which is copied in a smaller scale and rotated on the right. Though difficult to distinguish, its purplish red outlines trace a figure from a German altarpiece completed in 1515. The figure is one of the soldiers who has fallen to the ground at the foot of the sarcophagus as the resurrected Jesus ascends to heaven. Knowing this helps make sense of other elements in the picture. For example, mourning is implied by the handkerchief that is "pinned" to the lower right. Painted in a mock-illusionistic style, this cloth itself refers to a Picasso etching of a weeping woman.

Mathias Grünewald, Isenheim Altarpiece, Resurrection panel, 1513–1515, oil on panel, 2.690 x 1.430 m (© Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, photo by O. Zimmerman)

The arms, so disturbingly like meat suspended from hooks, were cast from the same child at three different ages. What are we to make of their prominent spots? It has been suggested that Johns is referring to either of two other panels from the altarpiece. One shows Christ's arms similarly dotted with wounds. The second shows a diseased demon with sores. With the latter association, Johns may be alluding to AIDS, which was just being identified when he made this piece. Yet another interpretation is that the spots are an extrapolation of the kind
of pattern manipulation Johns was exploring in the crosshatch pictures—examples of which he has placed just behind the arms. One year before, in a painting entitled In the Studio, he made this relationship more explicit. There, the dots can be seen to devolve, as

Jasper Johns, *Untitled (from Untitled 1972)*, 1975/1976, pastel and graphite on gray paper, 0.385 x 0.959 m ($15^{3}/_{16}$ x $37^{3}/_{4}$ in.), Gift of Jasper Johns, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

Untitled is one of several drawings Johns made after a 1972 painting that marked a new direction in his work. The crosshatches explore various systematic manipulations of pattern. Thinking about these pattern manipulations, Johns wrote in his sketchbook, "Another possibility: to see that something has happened. Is this best shown by 'pointing to' or by 'hiding' it?"

Roy Lichtenstein

American, 1923–1997

Left to right: Roy Lichtenstein draws on a lithoplate used in *Roads Collar*, assisted by Tom Pruitt and Alan Holoubek, March 1987 (© Graphicstudio, University of South Florida, photo by George Holzer)

Roy Lichtenstein, *Artist's Studio No. 1 (Look Mickey),* 1973, oil and acrylic on canvas, $96^{1}/_{8}$ x $128^{1}/_{8}$ in., Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Gift of Judy and Kenneth Dayton and the T. B. Walker Foundation, 1981

Roy Lichtenstein was born in New York City. In high school he began to draw and paint, taking summer classes with artist Reginald Marsh at the Art Students League. He left New York to attend the school of fine arts at Ohio State University. After serving three years in the army, Lichtenstein returned to Ohio State in 1946, remaining as student and instructor until 1949. He later taught at the State University of New York in Oswego and at Rutgers.

Lichtenstein had his first exhibition in New York in 1951, which he later recalled was "in the abstract expressionist idiom" then dominating the art world. He spent the next six years in Cleveland, working as a draftsman and graphic designer. In 1957 he was back in New York and soon began to experiment with comic-strip characters in his work. In 1960 Allan Kaprow, an old friend and organizer of happenings, introduced Lichtenstein to other artists with similar concerns, including Andy Warhol (see page 30) and Claes Oldenburg (see page 33). The next year, Lichtenstein painted Look Mickey. It was a turning point. Lichtenstein finally rejected abstract expressionism and its emphasis on brushstroke, gesture, and the artist's mark. He also turned from its elusive "subjects" to the clear-cut images of popular culture. Lichtenstein quickly emerged as one of the most important artists in the new pop style.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Lichtenstein undertook an exploration of the history of Western art. These "quotations" from the history of art culminated with works that incorporated his own earlier paintings. Together they question assumptions about copy and original, reproduction and uniqueness, high and low art.

Roy Lichtenstein
Look Mickey, 1961
Oil on canvas, 1.219 x 1.753 m
(48 x 69 in.)
Dorothy and Roy Lichtenstein,
Gift of the Artist, in Honor of the
50th Anniversary of the National
Gallery of Art
SLIDE 9
AND COLOR REPRODUCTION

Look Mickey, considered a pop icon, was Lichtenstein's first comic-strip subject painted in a style that imitated the look of commercial printing. It used the stuff of popular culture to make "high" art.

Two familiar Disney cartoon characters stand on a fishing pier. Mickey Mouse can barely contain his amusement as he realizes that Donald Duck, who exclaims, "LOOK Mickey, I've hooked a BIG one!!" has in fact hooked his own jacket. The words have a literal connection to the image, of course, but they also suggested to the art world that something else may have been hooked. Perhaps audiences, collectors, or galleries? Did Lichtenstein hook himself a new style?

Lichtenstein said later he remembered seeing this scene on a bubblegum wrapper (attempts to find it have been unsuccessful). He had been drawing cartoons for his children for some time, and he decided to paint the scene in Look Mickey "large, just to see what it would look like." The painting is approximately four by six feet. He used bright primary colors, without complexity or ambiguity, and painted dots—mimicking the Benday dots used in inexpensive color printing—in the faces of the two characters. "This was the first time I decided to make a painting really look like commercial art. The approach turned out to be so interesting that eventually it became impossible to do any other kind of painting," Lichtenstein recalled.

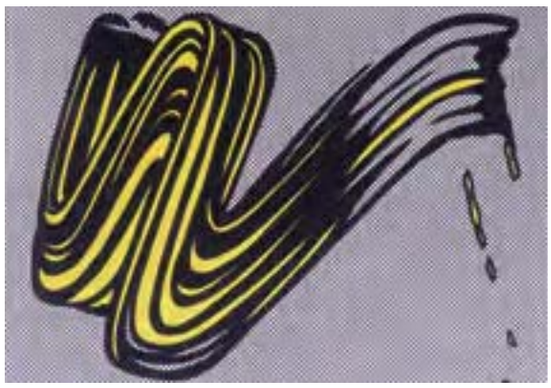
To accept pop's pervasive and for the most part commercial images as art, many people wanted to understand them as somehow transformed by the artists who used them. But Lichtenstein demurred, not believing "transformation" was a part of art's function: "I think my work is different from comic strips—but I wouldn't call it transformation.... What I do is form, whereas the comic strip is not formed in the sense I'm using the word; the comics have shapes, but there has been no effort to make them intensely

Roy Lichtenstein, *Look Mickey* (detail)

Benday dots

Benjamin Day (1838–1916), a New York printer, first used small dots in photoengraving. While his purpose was to increase the range and subtlety of halftone reproductions, Lichtenstein's large dots have the reverse effect. Rather than coalescing into a more refined image, they become features in themselves. In contrast to abstract expressionism, in which the painted brushstroke was a highly charged mark of the artist at work, Lichtenstein's Benday dots, though applied by hand, have an impersonal look. At first Lichtenstein painted them using a plastic dog brush, which he dipped into paint and then pressed on the canvas. Later he stenciled the dots through a screen he had made by drilling a metal sheet. Eventually he purchased perforated metal and paper screens.

Roy Lichtenstein, *Brushstroke*, 1965, color screenprint on heavy, white wove paper, image: 0.564 x 0.724 m ($22^{3}/_{16}$ x $28^{1}/_{2}$ in.), Gift of Roy and Dorothy Lichtenstein
SLIDE 10



unified. The purpose is different, one intends to depict and I intend to unify."

In fact, Lichtenstein was concerned with the formal aspects of art. In Brushstroke and other works, Lichtenstein paid ironic homage to abstract expressionism, removing from the artist's mark its individuality and gesture. By freezing and objectifying it, Lichtenstein reduced the high seriousness of abstract expressionism's brushstroke even while he was projecting it into monumental scale. The contrast challenges viewers to question their own notions of what constitutes "the art" in painting.

VIEWPOINT **Pop**

The term pop art was picked up and applied in print by critic Lawrence Alloway. But "POP" first appeared, literally (written on a candy wrapper) and as a new style, in a collage by English artist Richard Hamilton. In his subversive image of postwar consumer culture, a cover of the pulp magazine Young Romance hangs like a painting. Hamilton later defined pop this way:

Popular (designed for a mass audience)
Transient (short-term solution)
Expendable (easily forgotten)
Low cost
Mass produced
Young (aimed at youth)
Witty
Sexy
Gimmicky
Glamourous
Big Business...

Clearly, pop veered toward kitsch. It was despised by formalist critics such as Clement Greenberg (see page 14) since it lacked "quality." For Greenberg, quality was autonomous—that is, solely dependent on intrinsic elements—but it was also universal, even transcendent. Certainly, as one critic paraphrasing Robert Rauschenberg quipped, quality did not lie "between art and Life." While many critics of pop in the United States were troubled by the banality of its images, others regarded this as its strength. Critic Henry Geldzahler, a contributor to a pop symposium in 1962, noted, "The popular press, especially and most typically Life magazine, the movie close-up, black and white, technicolor and wide screen, the billboard extravaganzas, and finally the introduction, through television, of this blatant appeal to our eye into the home—all this has made available to our society and thus to the artist, an imagery so pervasive, persistent and compulsive that it had to be noticed."

Pop did not simply make use of American popular culture. It gave Americans a new way to see and think about their culture. Art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto described his own experience in an essay entitled "The Abstract Expressionist Coca-Cola Bottle": "Pop redeemed the world in an intoxicating way. I have the most vivid recollection of standing at an intersection.... There were used-car lots on two corners, with swags of plastic pennants fluttering in the breeze and brash signs.... Heavy trucks roared past, with logos on their sides. Lights were flashing. The sound of raucous music flashed out of the windows of automobiles. I was educated to hate all this. I would have found it intolerably crass and tacky when I was growing up an aesthete. As late as my own times, beauty was, in the words of George Santayana, 'a living presence, or an aching absence, day or night.' I think it still is for someone like Clement Greenberg or Hilton Kramer. But I thought, Good heavens. This is just remarkable!"

Andy Warhol

American, 1928–1987

Andy Warhol with assistants (Photographs of Artists Collection One, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Andy Warhol, *A Boy for Meg*, 1962, oil on canvas, 1.829 x 1.321 m (72 x 52 in.), Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine
SLIDE 11

Andy Warhol was born Andrew Warhola in Pittsburgh to an immigrant family from central Europe. After studying at the Carnegie Institute of Technology between 1946 and 1949, he moved to New York and quickly achieved success as a commercial artist and illustrator. The charming and whimsical style of his line drawings, particularly of shoes, won him recognition and advertising awards, and he continued to do this kind of work into the early 1960s, even after he had determined to paint "seriously."

Warhol's first serious paintings, based on comic strips and advertisements, are among the earliest examples of pop. Initially he employed a loose style that was a send-up of abstract expressionist gestural painting, but he soon adopted a more anonymous look, with flatter colors and harder outlines. Critics inclined to view painting as a means of conveying emotion and the artist's personality were shocked—not so much by the deliberate vulgarity of Warhol's pictures as by their impersonality.

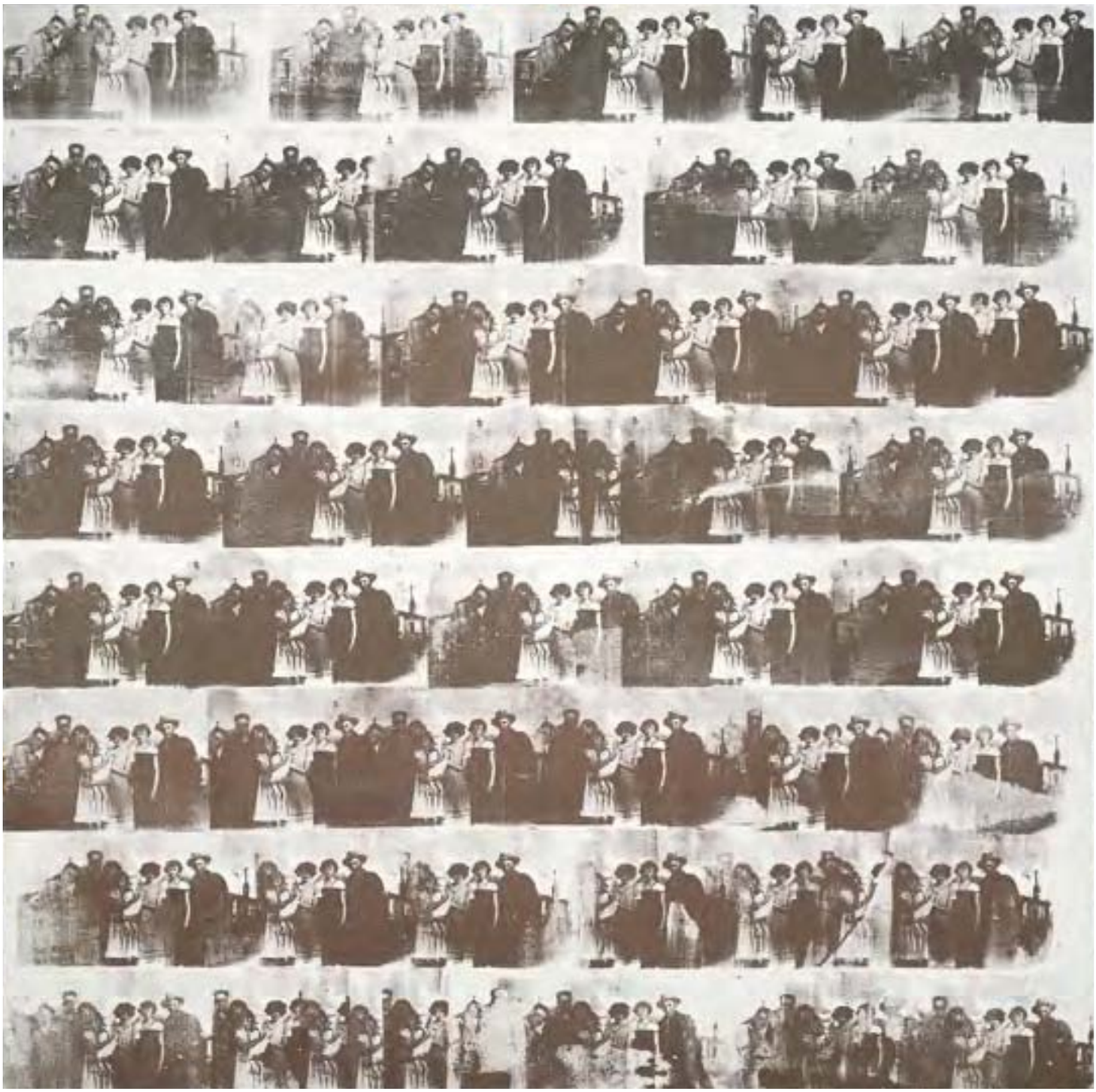
Warhol once said that he wanted to "be a machine," and his concern for eliminating conventional signs of the artist is clear from his shift to techniques that gave his pictures the look of printed materials. At first he used stencils and rubber stamps. Beginning in 1962 Warhol used a photomechanical silkscreen process—a technique that employs photographs and ready-made images in place of those drawn by the artist.
Many of these prints were produced by assistants in his studio, dubbed the Factory. Their imagery included car crashes, violent protests in the civil rights movement, the electric chair, and celebrity portraits. In many of these works there is an underlying concern with death—even the celebrities, like Marilyn Monroe, were recently deceased.

Warhol began experimenting with film in 1963, and from 1965 devoted more attention to film and other media, although he continued to make paintings and prints. Multimedia events billed as productions of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable included rock music performances by the Velvet Underground. The Factory became a free-form arena of music and performance art, occupied by an ever-changing cast of artists, drug addicts, transvestites, and celebrities.

Andy Warhol, *Green Marilyn*, 1962, silkscreen on synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 0.508 x 0.406 m (20 x 16 in.), Gift of William C. Seitz and Irma S. Seitz, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art
SLIDE 12

In 1968 Warhol was severely wounded during an attempt on his life by an unbalanced would-be member of the Factory. Thereafter, he distanced himself from some of the fringe characters in his entourage, associating instead with the rich and famous. During the 1970s he was largely occupied with commissioned portraits done from photographs. In the 1980s Warhol's work was reinvigorated by his collaboration with younger artists like Francesco Clemente and Michael Basquiat, who had been influenced themselves by Warhol's earlier

Andy Warhol
Let Us Now Praise Famous Men
(Rauschenberg Family), 1963
Silkscreen on canvas, 2.082 x 2.082 m
(82 x 82 in.)
Gift (Partial and Promised) of
Mr. and Mrs. William Howard Adams
SLIDE 13



Andy Warhol's fame and celebrity tend to obscure his importance. He helped redefine what we accept as art.

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men is one of several portraits of artist Robert Rauschenberg (see page 20) that Warhol made in the early 1960s. While Warhol was still working as a commercial artist, the inventive works of Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns (see page 23) had been important influences on his own decision to transform himself into a "serious" artist.

Warhol took his title, a phrase found in the biblical apocrypha, from a book by James Agee and Walker Evans. Focusing on the dignity of poor tenant farmers during the Depression, the book paired Agee's text with photographs by Evans. Originally published in 1941, it received even greater attention in 1960 when it was reissued. Rauschenberg, still an infant in the old family photograph he supplied to Warhol, had grown up in Depression-era Texas in a family of modest means, though not so poor as Agee's and Evans' sharecroppers.

Warhol used the photograph to make a silkscreen that he printed on the canvas more than forty times, in eight rows. Most of the rows have the sepia coloring of old family heirloom photographs. Two, however, Warhol chose to print with black ink over silver. This is the color of modern photographs, the color, in fact, of Evans' photographs. It would be easy to accept Warhol's image as another one from the Agee-Evans book. He uses the color to suggest the transition from old to new, as well as to focus attention on the source of his image as a photograph.

Andy has fought by repetition to show us that there is no repetition really, that everything we look at is worthy of our attention. That's been a major direction for the twentieth century, it seems to me.
—John Cage

The mechanical means of Warhol's production called into question the role of the artist in making art. Warhol himself joked in 1963 that he thought someone else should be able to do all his paintings for him. In fact, assistants at the Factory did help produce many of them. Moreover, the serial multiplication of Warhol's images—most famously his soup cans and Coke bottles—challenged traditional ideas about art's uniqueness. Warhol was also testing the relationship between art and ordinary object,

Andy Warhol, *Brillo Box*, 1964, silkscreen ink on wood, $17\frac{1}{16} \times 14\frac{1}{8} \times 17\frac{1}{8}$ in., Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Harry Lynde Bradley (photo by Larry Sanders)

In 1965 Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* was scheduled for exhibition in Toronto. Canadian inspectors demanded payment of the duties applicable to normal merchandise—such as boxes of Brillo pads. The director of the National Gallery of Canada, called in to consult, said, "I could see that they were not sculpture." He was not alone. Many in the established art world—other artists included—were appalled. The public, however, was more receptive. A pervasive 1960s distrust of authority extended to so-called art experts.

Pop art and happenings at Oldenburg's Store

Claes Oldenburg
American, born 1929
Glass Case with Pies (Assorted Pies in a Case), 1962
Burlap soaked in plaster, painted with enamel, with pie tins, in glass-and-metal case, 0.476 x 0.311 x 0.276 m ($18^{3}/_{4}$ x $12^{1}/_{4}$ x $10^{7}/_{8}$ in.)
Gift of Leo Castelli, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art
SLIDE 14

Claes Oldenburg described his environment, the Store, on a poster in 1961:

This store will be constantly supplied with new objects which I will create out of plaster and other materials in the rear half of the place. The objects will be for sale in the store. The store will be open every day at hours I will post … the hours when I will be able to be in the store, which is also of course my studio.

The store may be thought of as a season-long exhibit, with changing & new material. It will be the center of my activities during the season.

Pies in a Glass Case is just one of the "goods" that were for sale. The Store and an earlier environment called the Street were extensions, in a way, of the happenings organized at the end of the 1950s and early 1960s by Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg (see page 20), and others. In fact, Oldenburg's environments served as locales for happenings. But the Store and its commodities offered the artist one great advantage—something he could sell.

The brightly painted plaster goods, executed in different scales, were inspired by things Oldenburg saw in shop windows of his neighborhood in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Unlike the slick, mechanical appearance of some pop art, they are splotchy and tactile. Oldenburg's manipulation of scale and material unsettle our expectations about the objects he makes, forcing us to see them within a different frame of reference.

The Store, 107 East Second Street, New York, December 1961 (photo courtesy Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen)

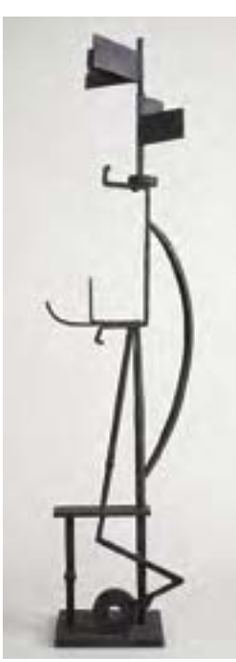
I want these pieces to have an unbridled intense satanic vulgarity unsurpassable, and yet be art.

—Claes Oldenburg, 1967

David Smith

American, 1906–1965

David Smith (Photographs of Artists Collection One, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)



David Smith, *Sentinel I,* 1956, steel, 2.276 x 0.429 x 0.575 m ($89^5/_8$ x $16^7/_8$ x $22^5/_8$ in.), Gift of the Collectors Committee

David Smith was born in Decatur, Illinois. He briefly attended art school in Ohio, but his real training began when he moved to New York in 1926 and took painting classes at the Art Students League. He never studied sculpture formally and said he always belonged with the painters. It was while he was studying with a cubist painter that he began to make painted reliefs and works in the round. He was strongly influenced by photographs he saw in an art magazine of welded metal sculpture by Picasso and the Mexican artist Julio González. By 1933 Smith was making his own welded sculpture of found materials, using skills he had acquired during a summer job as a metalworker in a Studebaker automobile plant.

His friendship with connoisseur and collector John Graham introduced Smith to the ideas of Carl Jung, to tribal, particularly African, art, and to non-Western mythologies—an experience he shared with Jackson Pollock and other abstract expressionist painters. In the mid-1930s he was increasingly devoted to sculpture, and he rented studio space from a commercial welding operation in Brooklyn, the Terminal Iron Works. He used this name for his studio, which he ran like a factory, and continued using it even after he moved to upstate New York.

In the 1940s Smith's sculpture was a highly personal exploration of primitive mythologies. Into the 1950s he continued to make works—totemlike human figures—that have been called abstract anthropomorphisms. During the 1950s and 1960s Smith worked on a larger scale. He often erected his pieces outdoors, where they were silhouetted against the open sky of his rural home. He died in 1965 in an automobile accident.

Twentieth-century sculpture

Because it is not on a pedestal, Voltri VII establishes a different kind of relationship with the viewer. Not simply something we look at, it is in the same space we ourselves inhabit. The use of space as an active element in sculpture had begun to occupy constructivist sculptors (see glossary) earlier in the century. Before that, sculpture had usually been defined in terms of mass rather than space—of substance rather than void. Mass was either subtracted (as in stone carving, for example) or added (as in modeling clay or wax for a bronze casting). Smith's dynamic balance of void and solid uses form to shape space itself.

David Smith
Voltri VII, 1962
Iron, 2.158 x 3.116 x 1.105 m
(85 x 122 x 43$^{1}/_{2}$ in.)
Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund
SLIDE 15

If you ask me why I make sculpture, I must answer that it is my way of life, my balance....

—David Smith, 1952

David Smith's *Voltri VII* in the Roman amphitheater in Spoleto, 1962 (© Archivio Ugo Mulas)

David Smith, *Cubi XXVI*, 1965, steel, 3.034 x 3.834 x 0.656 m ($119^1/_2$ x 151 x $25^7/_8$ in.), Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund
SLIDE 16

During thirty days in May and June 1962, Smith produced an astonishing twenty-six sculptures, all but four of which are large scale, like Voltri VII. He had been invited to Italy to participate in the Spoleto Festival of Two Worlds by organizer and composer Gian Carlo Menotti. Smith set up shop with several Italian assistants in an abandoned factory in the small town of Voltri. He used only the materials he found in the factory—sheet metal, wheels from discarded machinery, old tools, and the like.

The works were first exhibited together on the steps of Spoleto's Roman amphitheater, and many of them seem to respond to the region's ancient past. Smith said: "Voltri VII is a chariot ram with 5 bar forgings—they are not personages—they are forgings." The writhing shapes nonetheless evoke an image of wailing mourners. When an interviewer pressed Smith about whether his abstract forms were personages, he said, "They don't start off that way. But how can a man live off of his planet?... He can't get away from it. There is no such thing as truly abstract. Man always has to work from his life." The swaying rhythm of these uprights has also been likened to the undulating curves that decorate some Roman sarcophagi. And the cart's austerity and attenuation seem, in themselves, to have the bleakness of a funeral caisson (wagon).

Smith's sculptures often layer on visual allusions in this way, without making any specific reference. There are no subjects, only suggestions that are allowed to play out. He described how he got ideas for his works: "They can begin with a found object, they can begin with no objects. They can begin sometimes even when I'm sweeping the floor and I stumble and kick a few parts and happen to throw them into an alignment that sets me off thinking and sets off a vision of how it would finish if it all had that kind of accidental beauty to it."

To this degree, like the action painters, Smith let chance and the process of creation play a role: "I do not work with a conscious and specific conviction about a piece.... It is always open to change and new association. It should be one of celebration, one of surprise, not one rehearsed.... In a sense it is never finished. Only the essence is stated, the key presented to the beholder for further travel."

In Smith's constructions, found objects are given a whole new identity that has nothing to do with their original purpose or scale. New relationships and unexpected juxtapositions turn them into something else. This sense of risk and possibility further connects them to the work of contemporary abstract expressionist painters.

When he arrived in Italy, Smith was planning to work in steel and to set up shop in a modern factory. Before going to Spoleto, he had been working in stainless steel, and once back in New York, he returned to this highly reflective material. Cubi XXVI is one of his last sculptures.

The simple forms of Cubi XXVI may suggest the severe geometry of minimalist works (see page 44) made about the same time, but Smith's intention and approach were different. Not only do the long extensions of the work suggest the limbs of a running and jumping human figure—a reference to narrative avoided by minimalists—but Smith's approach to his materials is also at odds with minimalism's impersonal industrial production. Because of the technical difficulty of working with stainless steel, Smith had individual elements fashioned outside his shop. However, he assembled the works and finished their surfaces by hand. Throughout his career Smith paid particular attention to the surfaces of his works, sometimes painting them. Remarking on the surfaces of Cubi XXVI, Smith said, "I made them and I polished them in such a way that on a dull day they take on a dull blue, or the color of the sky in the later afternoon sun, the glow, golden like the rays, the colors of nature."

Ellsworth Kelly

American, born 1923

Ellsworth Kelly (right) and Jim Reid at Gemini, canceling print from Portrait series, February 1990 (© Sidney B. Felsen, 1990, courtesy Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, California)

Ellsworth Kelly was born in Newburgh, New York, and grew up in northern New Jersey. He studied at the Pratt Institute in New York City, concentrating, because of parental pressure, on industrial arts. During part of his time in the army, he worked in a camouflage unit at Fort Meade, Maryland, and in 1944 and 1945 saw duty in England and France. After his discharge, Kelly studied briefly at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In 1948 he returned to France, where he stayed for the next six years.

A devoted museumgoer in Paris, Kelly was most attracted to the formal qualities of Byzantine and Romanesque art. He also visited sculptors Jean Arp and Constantin Brancusi and was influenced by a chance meeting with John Cage and Merce Cunningham. Kelly later recalled that seeing the geometric grid of a window in Paris' Museum of Modern Art prompted him to paint his first abstract work, and he has continued to draw inspiration from things he sees around him. Since 1949, when Kelly made that first abstract painting, he has never veered.

He moved back to the United States in 1954, and by 1960 all the elements of his style were firmly in place: large canvases, simple shapes in black and white or in flat color, explorations of figure and ground. He often used nonrectangular canvases and showed them in groups. In the 1970s these shapes frequently became curves and arcs. His reduced forms would prove to be a bridge between 1950s abstraction and the minimal art made in the 1960s and 1970s.

Ellsworth Kelly
White Curve VIII, 1976
Oil on canvas, 2.440 x 1.954 m
($96\frac{1}{16}$ x $76\frac{15}{16}$ in.)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Helman
SLIDE 17

One of Kelly's preoccupations has been to explore the tension in our perceptions of volume and plane, foreground and background. He uses perceptual ambiguities and optical effects to force us to acknowledge their simultaneous presence and recognize the play between them.

Ellsworth Kelly, *Untitled*, 1988, bronze, 3.035 x 0.622 x 0.025 m (119 1/2 x 24 1/4 x 1 in.), Gift of the Artist, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art
SLIDE 18

Untitled, ten feet tall, seems to rest magically on its one-inch thickness. Its unequal curves suggest its continuation in an unseen part. Kelly described it as stemming from a memory he had of a shark fin cutting through the water.

The painting White Curve VIII seems to be of utmost simplicity. A rectangular canvas is divided into two roughly equal-size blocks of black and white, both masses of flat color. The boundary between them carves only the slightest of curves, its arc barely greater than that of the horizon over the ocean. The dark mass above seems heavy, as if the white below were bowed under the strain of supporting it. The colors seem to be stretched tight—we could almost believe the canvas itself is curved. No longer perceived as flat, it seems to flex from the sides. Suddenly it seems more like a sculpture attached to the wall.

Kelly does, in fact, make sculpture—and he sets up canvases outdoors so they become reliefs against the sky. He does not make a distinction between painting and sculpture. For minimalists, this view would be a point of departure, as would the seeming impersonality of the paintings. "I want to eliminate the 'I made this' from my work," Kelly said.

White Curve VIII appears to have been constructed out of pure geometry—more like a Platonic ideal existing solely in the realm of ideas than, say, a paper cup. But, in fact, it was a crushed paper cup that inspired its design. Imagine the curve of a cup's flattened base held a scant inch or less before your eyes. On a huge scale it loses its identity and assumes almost architectural form.

Kelly's development seems, above all, the record of a series of encounters with visual phenomena he felt the urge to seize permanently and turn into art. . . . they stem initially—no matter how far they ultimately diverge—from encounters with reality. . . .
—Barbara Rose, 1979

The ambiguity of curved versus flat plane is underscored by our ambivalent perception of which color is "in front." Normally dark colors recede. Looking only at the vertical edge of White Curve VIII gives the impression that the black section is set back from and actually smaller than the white area below it. Looking instead at the center of the painting, the two blocks seem to alternate in moving forward and back.

In White Curve VIII, Kelly is both asserting and denying the flatness of the surface. This optical effect could never happen with a more tactile painting style. It relies on the matte sameness of his textureless colors.

Kelly is one of the artists often identified with hard-edge abstraction, but he is adamant about his dislike of this association. "I'm not interested in edges. I'm interested in the mass and color, the black and white. The edges happen because the forms get as quiet as they can be. I want the masses to perform. When I work with forms and colors, I get the edge. . . . In my work, it is impossible to separate the edges from the mass and color."

Hard-edge abstraction

The term hard edge was first used in 1959. Shortly thereafter Lawrence Alloway described the style: "[F]orms are few in hard-edge and the surface immaculate. . . . The whole picture becomes the unit; forms extend the length of the painting or are restricted to two or three tones. The result of this spareness is that the spatial effect of figures on a field is avoided." Hard-edge painters were uninterested in the brushy gestures of abstract expressionism and pursued a unified surface.

Hard-edge is one aspect of what critic Clement Greenberg called postpainterly abstraction. The other is the color-field painting of artists such as Morris Louis (see page 58).

"Ultimate" painting

Ad Reinhardt
American, 1913–1967
Black Painting No. 34, 1964
Oil on canvas, 1.530 x 1.526 m
($60^1/_4$ x $60^1/_8$ in.)
Gift of Mr. and
Mrs. Burton Tremaine
SLIDE 19

Early in the 1950s, about the time Rauschenberg exhibited a series of monochrome canvases, Ad Reinhardt also restricted himself to single colors and eventually only to shades of black. His all-black paintings were laboriously made. He mixed reds, blues, and other colors with black, creating subtly differentiated hues that seem to unfold as the viewer looks at the canvas, and he minimized the signs of his brush. His pictures are static—"timeless" he called them. He insisted they were the ultimate paintings. Reinhardt's incisive criticism about "art as art"—in which anything outside the painting was excluded—and the severe reduction of his works influenced minimal and conceptual artists in the 1960s, including Joseph Kosuth (see page 49). "Ad Reinhardt's paintings, for many of us, were a kind of passage," Kosuth said. "His contradictions were the contradictions of modernism being made visible to itself. After Reinhardt, the tradition of painting seemed to be in the process of completion, while the tradition of art, now unfettered, had to be redefined.... That tradition ... had to negate painting in order to proceed."

1. Art is art. Everything else is everything else.
11. Painting as central, frontal, regular, repetitive.
18. Brushwork that brushes out brushwork.
20. The strictest formula for the freest artistic freedom.
21. The easiest routine to the difficulty.
23. The extremely impersonal way for the truly personal.
24. The completest control for the purest spontaneity.

—Ad Reinhardt, from "25 lines of words on art: Statement," 1958

Frank Stella

American, born 1936

Frank Stella (Hans Namuth Photographs and Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Frank Stella was born in Walden, Massachusetts. He was already studying art while still in high school. After graduating from Princeton in 1958, he went to New York, planning to stay only the summer. He had been painting in an abstract expressionist manner but was struck when he saw an exhibition of Jasper Johns' works (see page 23). Johns' flags and targets were factual, direct, and their geometric stripes and rings made an impact as abstract pattern. "What struck me most," Stella recalled, "was the way he stuck to the motif . . . the idea of stripes—the rhythm and interval—the idea of repetition."

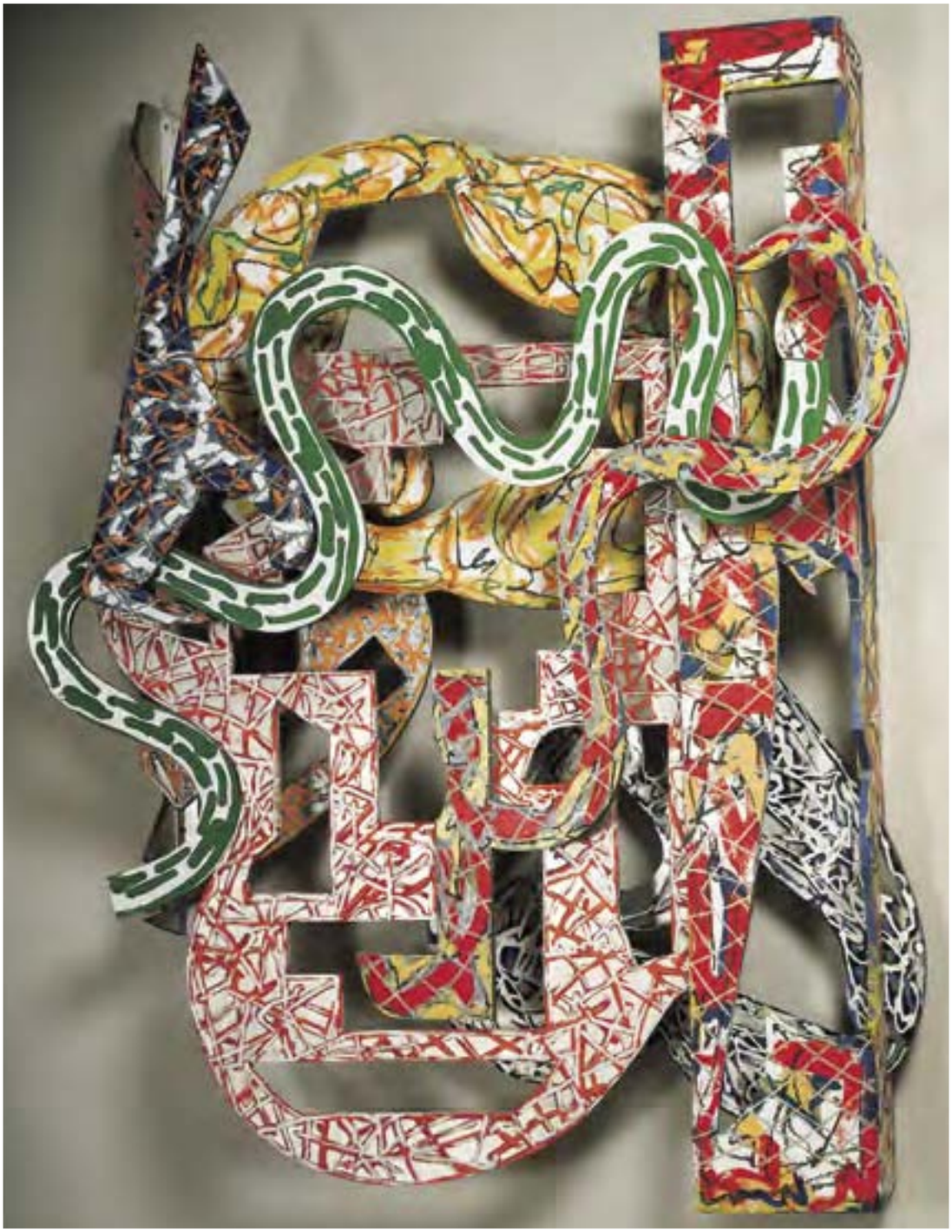
When Stella was not drafted after college, as he had expected to be, he decided to remain in New York and pursue painting seriously. For the first sixteen months he worked on a group of black paintings. Unlike Johns, whose pictures were thickly painted, Stella applied his paint flatly and with little inflection, keeping it within lines he had penciled at two-and-a-half-inch intervals on the canvas. The regular units echoed the rectangular shape of the canvas and gave the impression of pinstripes. He wanted the work to be grasped as a whole immediately: "My painting is based on the fact that only what can be seen there is there.... All I want anyone to get out of my painting . . . is the fact that you can see the whole idea without any confusion.... What you see is what you see."

Frank Stella, *Chyrow II*, 1972, mixed media, 2.845 x 2.540 m (112 x 100 in.), Gift of the Collectors Committee
SLIDE 20

In the early 1960s Stella began notching the edges of his canvases, still letting the shape of a canvas dictate the configuration of the painted bands, which were now filled with brilliant color. In subsequent years he elaborated the shapes into interlocking polygons and curves.

Between 1970 and 1973 Stella made more than 130 painted reliefs in what he called the Polish Village series. Like Chyrow II, each is titled after a Polish synagogue destroyed by the Nazis in World War II. Stella has said that these works opened "a second career." They employ a variety of materials in interlocking forms and planes. Unlike his earlier works, their complex relationships are not apprehended all at once but seem to unfold. Stella has continued to make painted reliefs in series. Their forms have become looser and more sinuous and their colors, in graffiti-like patterns, more vivid.

Frank Stella
Jarama II, 1982
Mixed media on etched magnesium,
3.199 x 2.539 x 0.628 m
(126 x 100 x 24 3/4 in.)
Gift of Lila Acheson Wallace
SLIDE 21



In the 1960s Stella seemed to straddle modernist abstraction and minimalist reduction. More recently he has appeared to challenge the distinction between abstraction and representation.

Jarama II—it is as much wall sculpture as it is painting—comes from a series named after Grand Prix racecourses around the world, this one outside Madrid. Long interested in racing, Stella had even painted a racing car for BMW in 1974. He was friends with drivers on the circuit, including Peter Gregg and Brian Redman, who drove Stella's car in the 24-hour LeMans race.

The actual track's twists and turns are echoed—to a degree mapped out—in Stella's elaborate curves. His nonrepresentational shapes, in a way, physically reproduce the track—establishing an identity, a kind of oneness, between the track in Madrid and Stella's on the wall. Form and content in Jarama II converge to a point where the distinction between painting as an object and painting as an image is blurred.

Opposition of rigid and swerving forms, bright colors, and emphatic patterns impart a sense of energy and dizzying motion. The evident weight of the metal relief is negated by its exuberance, and paradoxically, the entire object seems light.

Stella designed Jarama II on paper using a flexicurve and other drafting tools. From this design he cut a model in polystyrene foam board. By reincorporating some of the cutaway parts, he reinforced the play of positive and negative space. The model was then sent to a metal fabricator. In the studio Stella assembled the individual pieces and painted them. Although works like Jarama II blur the line between painting and sculpture, Stella's concerns remain those of a painter. His cutout forms are like sinuous lines patterned by paint.

Critics comment

Early in his career, Stella was courted and claimed by critics and apologists of both modernism and minimalism. Minimalists were attracted to his modular units, flat and impersonal application of paint, and rigorous geometry. At the same time, however, his apparent dedication to the internal logic of painting—its reliance on color, line, and form and its exclusion of illusion—appealed to modernist critics. Both Carl Andre, who would become a minimalist sculptor, and writer Michael Fried, who would be extremely critical of minimal art, contributed statements about Stella's work to exhibition catalogues.

Commenting on the pinstripe paintings, in which Stella let the dimensions of the canvas dictate the size and path of the stripes, Fried wrote, "Stella is concerned with deriving or deducing pictorial structure from the literal character of the picture support." Andre remarked, "Art excludes the unnecessary. . . . Frank Stella has found it necessary to paint stripes. There is nothing else in his painting. Frank Stella is not interested in expression or sensitivity. He is interested in the necessities of painting."

Donald Judd, American, 1928–1994, *Untitled*, 1969, brass and colored fluorescent plexiglass on steel brackets, ten pieces, each $6^1/_8$ x 24 x 27 in., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1972

VIEWPOINT **Minimal art**

Minimal artists sought to avoid the broad gestures—what they regarded as the excessive personality—of abstract expressionism by repeating neutral forms and employing impersonal methods of fabrication.

Beginning in the 1950s, several artists had produced works that could be considered forerunners of minimalism. Among the first were the all-white pictures of Rauschenberg (see page 20) and the all-black ones of Reinhardt (see page 40). Minimalist Donald Judd, active as a critic and an artist, was struck by Stella's pinstripe pictures—by their monochromeness, by the way the stripes reiterated the shape of the canvas to produce repeating modules, and by the fact that Stella had made the canvases deeper than normal. They projected a full inch or more from the wall than most other paintings did. Nevertheless, a painted picture on the wall could still be imagined as illusion, an illusion of some object that really existed in three dimensions. If the point was to rid painting of illusion, it had to occupy real space.

About 1962 Judd, who had been painting up to that point, decided to abandon canvas for more objectlike surfaces he constructed first from wood or Masonite and later from painted metal, stainless steel, Plexiglas, and other hard, reflective materials. The critical debate about the nature of painting had led, perhaps ironically, to a renewed appreciation for sculpture.

"Three dimensions are real space," said Judd. "That gets rid of the problem of illusionism and of literal space, space in and around marks and colors—which is one of the most salient and objectionable relics of European art. The several limits of painting are no longer present. A work can be as powerful as it is thought to be. Actual space is intrinsically more powerful and specific than paint on a flat surface."

Stacked and cantilevered on the wall, the boxes in Untitled avoid what Judd held to be outmoded concerns of a fine-art tradition. By virtue of their systematic repetition, they avoid "composition," and by being machined objects, they avoid the "artist's mark." Nor did Judd use his stacked boxes to express either himself or some meaning. His task instead was an ordering of space in the way abstraction is an ordering of the surface. It is in this sense that minimalism has been described as "painting by other means."

Inscrutable forms

Tony Smith
American, 1912–1980
Moondog, conceived 1964,
fabricated 1998
Painted aluminum, 5.213 x
4.147 x 4.788 m (205 1/4 x
163 1/4 x 188 1/2 in.)
Gift of The Morris and
Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
SLIDE 22

The polygonal blocks Tony Smith used in his sculpture were influential on younger minimalist artists. He had been a painter and had studied architecture. For a while he was apprenticed to architect Frank Lloyd Wright, but by the late 1950s Smith had turned to sculpture, limiting himself to elemental forms.

Smith's aims were rather different from those of minimalist artists. "I am interested in the inscrutability, the mysteriousness of the thing," he said. By virtue of its title, for example, this work points—in nonminimal fashion—to referents outside itself. Moondog was the name of a blind singer who was a fixture on New York streets in the 1960s. Smith also said that when he named his sculpture he was thinking of the title of a painting by Joan Miró. And on other occasions, he noted the resemblance of Moondog to a Japanese lantern and human pelvis. These layered allusions give Smith's best work poetic dimension.

In 1966 Smith said his sculptures were "part of a continuous space grid. . . . voids are made up of the same components as the masses. In this sense [the sculptures] may be seen as interruptions in an otherwise unbroken flow of space. If you think of space as solid, they are voids in that space. While I hope they have form and presence, I don't think of them as being objects among other objects. I think of them as being isolated in their own environments."

Sol LeWitt

American, born 1928

Sol LeWitt during installation of *Wall Drawing No. 681 C* at the National Gallery of Art (photo by Rob Shelley, National Gallery of Art)

Sol LeWitt was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and he studied art at Syracuse University. After a tour of duty in the army from 1951 to 1952, he moved to New York, where he attended the Cartoonists and Illustrators School. For the next few years, LeWitt worked as a graphic designer, including a stint from 1955 to 1956 in the office of architect I.M. Pei. Until the early 1960s, LeWitt was primarily interested in painting. About 1962 he started applying wood frames to his canvases, and in 1964 he began constructing the freestanding boxlike frames he calls "structures."

Unhappy with sculpture that emphasized surface, he "decided to remove the skin altogether and reveal the structure." He was inspired, in part, by the time-sequence photographs of Eadward Muybridge that showed animals and men in motion. LeWitt wanted to explore similar kinds of predictable series. Based on systematic intervals and projections, his cube structures can be completed to infinity by the viewer, who extrapolates the "missing" parts from what is already there.

Superficially, LeWitt's structures seem to share the look of minimal art—multiples of impersonal grids finished in hard enamel (white or black)—but LeWitt specifically rejects the idea. His tongue-in-cheek comment was that he had to assume "minimal" was some code used by art critics to mean "small." Instead, since his structures are physical expressions of an idea, they are among the first pieces of conceptual art, and LeWitt, through his writings as well as his work, has been important in defining its theoretical foundations.

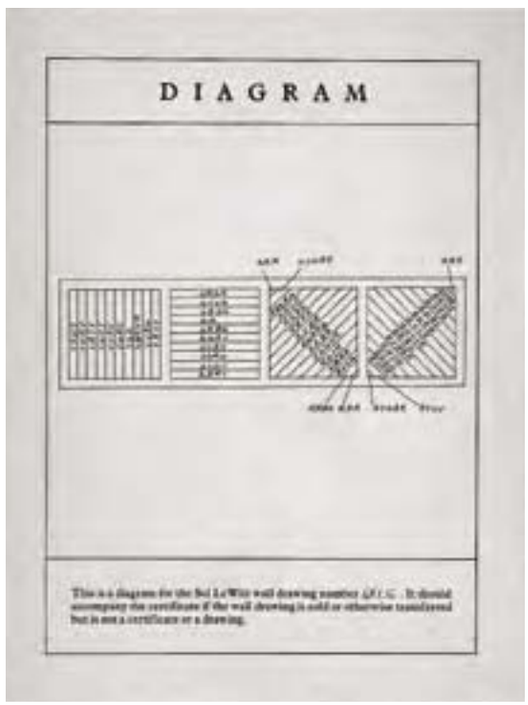
Sol LeWitt, *Floor Structure Black*, 1965, painted wood, 0.470 x 0.457 x 2.083 m ($18^1/_2$ x 18 x 82 in.), The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, Patrons' Permanent Fund and Gift of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel
SLIDE 23

The repeated shape—it seems almost self-replicating—becomes, LeWitt said, "deliberately uninteresting so that it may more easily become an intrinsic part of the entire work. . . . Using a simple form repeatedly narrows the field to the work and concentrates the intensity to the arrangement of the form. The arrangement becomes the end while the form becomes the means."

Sol LeWitt
Wall Drawing No. 681 C, 1993
Colored ink washes, image:
3.048 x 11.278 m (120 x 444 in.)
The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel
Collection, Gift of Dorothy Vogel
and Herbert Vogel, Trustees
SLIDE 24

In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive.

—Sol LeWitt, 1967



The diagram and certificate supplied by Sol LeWitt for *Wall Drawing No. 681 C*

An assistant paints Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing No. 681 C* in the National Gallery of Art (photo by Rob Shelley, National Gallery of Art)

In August 1993 LeWitt's Wall Drawing No. 681C was painted directly onto a wall in the East Building of the National Gallery of Art—but not by the artist. The actual painting was carried out entirely by assistants according to LeWitt's written instructions. This is the first installation of the work. It can be painted over with the neutral tones of the museum's exhibition spaces. It will continue to exist as a work of art even after the physical object is destroyed because the art exists in the form of an idea as set out in a certificate and instructions from the artist. It can be recreated indefinitely because it is both a thing and an idea.

The wall surface was carefully prepared according to LeWitt's specifications before his assistants arrived. The assistants then established the lines of the composition with graphite and masked off areas with tape. They applied washes of colored ink with a circular motion using cloths that had been soaked in the ink and wrung out. Each color band was built up with as many as four separate colors applied in three coats each—up to twelve separate applications in all. Water was applied between each coat. LeWitt instructed the assistants to make a few final adjustments, adding ink washes in certain areas. He then gave the work his approval, and a varnish was applied. The resulting colors are deep and subtly modulated.

LeWitt began to do wall paintings in 1967. Like his floor structures, their designs derive from a system. LeWitt explores the permutations possible within a set of parameters defined at the outset. He works through them systematically, but the result is far from dry or mechanical. Wall Drawing No. 681 C has surprising mystery, and its rich colors have sensual appeal.

A role for language

Joseph Kosuth
American, born 1945
Art as Idea: Nothing, 1968
Silver gelatin photographic print, 0.914 x 0.914 m (36 x 36 in.), The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection
SLIDE 25

All I make are models. The actual works of art are ideas....

—Joseph Kosuth, 1967

Ideas had never been absent from art, but for conceptual artists like Joseph Kosuth they overtook the object in importance. He was one of several artists who were influenced by the investigations of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ferdinand de Saussure, and other philosophers into the relationship of idea and language. Their work examined the linkage between a concept as we think it, the words we use to name it, and the symbols we assign to it—between reality, our mental image of it, and its representation (or, in the terms of semiotics, of signified, signifier, and sign). And so it is not surprising, perhaps, that language itself became a subject and even a medium for the artist to use.

Joseph Kosuth's reputation rests as much on his critical writings as on his production as an artist. In works like this one, the two converge. Nothing is from a series entitled Art as Idea. The works are all dictionary-type definitions produced as photo negatives, with white letters against a black background. Kosuth insisted that the ideas represented in the words, not the print, were the art. The word nothing itself challenges us to think about what we are seeing. Surely, the mere fact that we are looking means that we are looking at something. No-thingness involves viewers in a paradoxical way. They must construct the art object.

The object only exists in a certain place and for a certain time, as each viewer engages it. For some critics, like Michael Fried, this reliance on the viewer made art "theatrical"—and problematic. Fried had already recognized the theatricality in minimal art, not only in the movement into physical space of its object-forms but in the mental projections of a viewer called on to "complete" a logical sequence. If art did not exist immediately and as a whole, if it had duration, how was it to be distinguished from dance or theater? How could it remain universal? There was a new relationship being created between the artist and the art and between the audience and the art.

Conceptual artists increasingly abandoned the object. It was a mere residue of the real work, which was an artist's idea or activity. What they exhibited was, instead, documentation representing their ideas, often in the form of photographs, sketches, or written records.

Eva Hesse

American, 1936–1970

Eva Hesse (© The Estate of Eva Hesse, photo courtesy Robert Miller Gallery)

Eva Hesse was born in Hamburg, Germany. Her family fled Germany to escape Nazi persecution when she was three years old, going first to Amsterdam and settling finally in New York. She took classes at the Pratt Institute and Cooper Union in New York and attended graduate school at Yale. She considered herself a painter—she worked in an abstract expressionist vein—until 1965. Then, while living in Germany, she began translating two-dimensional drawings and washes into reliefs, using cord and rope to replace lines on paper.

When Hesse returned to New York, her work grew in scale, and she explored nontraditional materials such as latex and fiberglass, letting their intrinsic qualities play out in the finished work. Many of Hesse's pieces were made as collections of individual elements and related in that way to minimalism. Yet her work is embedded with a personal tactility absent from the machine aesthetic of minimal art. Although created largely with manufactured materials, her constructions have an organic quality, of change and life. Some of her forms make reference to the body, especially the female body, and her work remains of particular importance to later women artists. She died at age thirty-four of a brain tumor.

Eva Hesse, *Contingent*, 1969, cheesecloth, latex, and fiberglass, various sizes, National Gallery of Art, Canberra (© The Estate of Eva Hesse)

Hesse's latex-on-cheesecloth panel has the look of a living thing, of a translucent skin peeled away. Its softness and colors suggest impermanence and change. The folded, free-hanging shape seems provisional and indeterminate. While the hard surfaces of minimal sculptures seem to have

When Contingent was first exhibited, Hesse wrote the following statement:

Hanging.
Rubberized, loose, open cloth.
Fiberglass—reinforced plastic.

Began sometime in November-December 1968.
Worked.
Collapsed April 6, 1969. I have been very ill.
. . .
Resuming work on piece.
have one complete from back then.
Statement, October 15, 1969, out of hospital.
short stay this time.
third time.
. . .

MORATORIUM DAY
Piece is in many parts.
Each in itself is a complete statement,
together am not certain how it will be.
A fact. I cannot be certain yet.
Can be from illness, can be from honesty.
irregular edges, six to seven feet long.
textures coarse, rough changing.
see through, no see through, consistent,
inconsistent.
enclosed tightly by glass like encasement just
hanging there.
then more, other. Will they hang there in the
same way?
try a continuous flowing one.
try some random closely spaced.
try some distant far spaced.
they are tight and formal but very ethereal.
sensitive. fragile.
see through mostly.
not painting, not sculpture, it's there though.
I remember I wanted to get to non art,
non connotive [sic],
non anthropomorphic, non geometric,
non nothing.
everything, but of another kind, vision, soft.
from a total other reference point. Is it possible?
I have learned anything is possible. I know that.
that vision or concept will come through total
risk, freedom, discipline.
I will do it.

Eva Hesse
Test Piece for "Contingent," 1969
Latex over cheesecloth, 3.658 x
1.118 m (144 x 44 in.)
Gift of the Collectors Committee
SLIDE 26

Hesse was among the artists whose works were featured in Eccentric Abstractions, an exhibition organized by critic Lucy Lippard, who had seen several artists pull away from what she had described as the "dematerialization" of the object in minimal and conceptual art.

been stamped by fiat, in Hesse's work we sense process, chance, and freedom. It is as if she, the work, and the actions of nature have collaborated to create the form.

Test Piece is a panel Hesse used to test her materials and technique for Contingent, a larger, multipanel work. Hesse called Contingent a series of "hung paintings" and believed that it was neither sculpture nor painting. More than anything else, it is a collection of oppositions: hard and soft, repetition and difference, change and sameness. These qualities emerge from Hesse's nontraditional materials and her process of using them, which she described in an interview with Cindy Nesmer not long before her death.

E.H.: It was latex rubber over a cloth called ripple cloth which resembles another version of cheesecloth. It has a more interesting weave . . . and reinforced fiberglass—clear. Actually it is a casting. . . . And I believe they all have some kind of differences which was all right. I used them. They were supposed to fit. There were eight of them and they hang fairly regularly but there is great divergency from one to the next.
C.N.: They are serial but they are not serial?
E.H.: Right. They are geometric but they are not. They are the way they are and the way the material and the fiberglass worked out. Maybe a little self-conscious. . . . They are all different sizes and heights. . . . One was too long and I could have cut it off but I said, No.

Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, 1981, Cor-Ten steel, 12 ft. x 120 ft. x $2^1/_2$ in., installed Federal Plaza, New York, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C.; destroyed March 15, 1989

VIEWPOINT **PROCESS ART**

Hesse's works are sometimes identified as process art, one of the reactions to minimalism that appeared after the mid-1960s. Process art borrowed the repetitions of minimalism but replaced the exactness of the minimalist machine aesthetic with an organic, handmade quality. It allowed for mistakes and corrections, indeterminacy, and chance occurrence. Its materials were often nontraditional, many of them ephemeral and subject to variations through the action of time or weather. Once the idea and the materials were settled upon, the work of the artist was essentially complete. Their techniques, the materials' inherent qualities, and natural forces took care of the rest.

In 1966, the year of the Eccentric Abstractions exhibition, Richard Serra was studying in Italy, where arte povera shared many of the same goals as process art in the United States. When Serra returned to New York, he produced a number of works either by suspending rubber belts, by pouring molten lead, or by propping up metal pipes. By 1970 he was working with huge steel plates precariously balanced by gravity and their own weight. Their surfaces were patinated by the effects of moisture, corrosion, and rust. The size of these pieces alone forced them to be shown in public space rather than galleries.

Tilted Arc, a twelve-foot wall of Cor-Ten steel, was commissioned by the General Services Administration for the plaza in front of a federal court building in New York. When it was installed in 1981, it nearly bisected the plaza and became the subject of a bitter debate about public art. Many workers in the courthouse and nearby offices disliked the look of it and felt it prevented their access to the plaza. Moreover, they resented the fact that they had not been involved in its selection. After lengthy legal proceedings Tilted Arc was destroyed. It could not be erected elsewhere because it was made for just that one place. Serra's outdoor work has a specific site and specific context. He tries to reveal a site's "ideology" with his sculpture.

Richard Long

British, born 1945

Richard Long standing in front of his piece *Mud Works* (photo by Sahm Doherty/ Time Magazine)

Richard Long, *England* [formerly titled *Plucked Daisies, Durham Downs, Bristol*], 1968, silver gelatin photographic print mounted on Fome-Cor, 0.762 x 1.016 m (30 x 40 in.), The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection

Richard Long was born in Bristol, England. He studied art in Bristol and at the St. Martin's School of Art in London. Soon after he left St. Martin's in 1968, he became part of the emerging land-art movement.

Long's art includes walks he has taken through the countryside. He said in 1983, "I have taken the simple act of walking, which is common to everyone, ritualized it, and made art out of it.... The function of art is to invent new ways to deal with the world." Long has trekked in locales as distant as Lapland and the Himalayas. To mark his passage through these landscapes, he has undertaken a number of different activities. He has, for example, made lines in the soil by retracing his steps until their imprint remained. He has picked up stones as he went and dropped them at certain intervals. And he has plucked the heads from field daisies in arbitrary patterns. He documents his activities, his art, in photographs and written accounts.

My work is visible or invisible. It can be an object (to possess) or an idea carried out and equally shared by anyone who knows about it.

—Richard Long, 1980

In the 1970s Long began bringing his walks into museum settings in a more concrete way. He makes sculptures assembled from stones he has collected. In the 1980s he began making mud wall paintings as well. They are not landscapes. Rather, they make his action in a landscape visible.

Richard Long
Whitechapel Slate Circle, 1981
Slate, dimensions vary
Gift of the Collectors Committee
SLIDE 27

I like common materials, whatever is to hand, but especially stones. I like the idea that stones are what the world is made of.

—Richard Long

With works like Whitechapel Slate Circle, Richard Long translates his long walks through landscapes across the globe. Some critics have tried to see him as an heir to the tradition of English romantic landscape painting. But his is not a representation of the landscape. It is an evocation of Long's presence in it, a memory and record of his engagement.

Long's simple forms—circles, straight lines, spirals—echo his steps and his movements. Combined with his elemental materials, these forms suggest, for many viewers, the presence and powerful resonance of ancient monuments.

The slate stones, from an English quarry, are placed in an informal arrangement within a circle that is about fifteen feet in diameter. Each time Whitechapel Slate Circle is installed, the positions of individual elements vary. Not all stones are used each time—there are always some extras. The artist provided only a general sketch and brief written description of how the work was to look.

Long's work differs from most American land-art projects because of its minimal impact on the environment. Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty, which coiled fifteen hundred feet into the Great Salt Lake, is more typical of American land art. Over the years, as the water level has changed, the work has disappeared. But, it represented a major, if nonpermanent, modification of the landscape.

Long's lighter touch is both an ethical and aesthetic choice. He has said he uses the land "with respect and freedom. I use materials, ideas, movement and time to express a whole view of my art and the world. I hope to make images and ideas which resonate in the imagination, which mark the earth and the mind. . . . I like the idea of using the land without possessing it."

Diagram and instructions provided by Richard Long for *Whitechapel Slate Circle*

Robert Smithson, American, 1938–1973, *Spiral Jetty,* 1970, Estate of Robert Smithson (photo by Gianfranco Gorgoni, courtesy John Weber Gallery, New York)

VIEWPOINT **Land art**

When minimal artists started to insist on moving into the viewer's physical space with objects, the setting for their art—in time and place—assumed new prominence. Conceptual artists had, meanwhile, begun to question whether an object was needed at all. For them, it was merely a "residue" of the idea that was the true work, and its very existence contributed to the undesirable tendency to make art a commodity. Both process and performance art used time and a certain unpredictability as compositional elements. And in the late 1960s and early 1970s there was also growing awareness about the environment—the first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970. All of these impulses coincide in what is called land or earth art. It removed the fetish surrounding the art object and was subject to time and nature. In many cases it was time and nature.

Sam Gilliam

American, born 1933

Sam Gilliam (photo © Carol Harrison, courtesy Sam Gilliam)

Sam Gilliam was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, and grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, where he studied at the University of Louisville. In 1962 he moved to Washington, D.C., and began teaching high school. His early paintings, influenced by the German expressionists, were often broodingly expressive and dark. Once in Washington, however, his paintings became airier, more optimistic. In the early 1960s Gilliam, who traveled to New York to keep up with the art scene, was impressed by the work of Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko (see pages 16–19), particularly their uses of color and edge and their sensitivity to mood. At this point, though, Gilliam's own paintings were not yet abstract.

Gilliam took up a purely abstract style when he connected with artists of the so-called Washington Color School. About 1964 he adopted the Color School practice of staining unprimed canvas, letting the color bleed into the fabric so that the canvas was not so much painted as dyed. In 1966 Gilliam began to fold and manipulate the canvas while it was still wet. Pigments were pressed into new areas or blotted by contact with unpainted areas. In this way, chance and the artist's process became elements of design, altering the intensity and placement of the color.

In 1967 Gilliam left teaching to devote himself completely to work in the studio. His major breakthrough was to free the canvas from its rectangular support. Still using his staining technique, he gave both paint and surface a third dimension when he suspended the loosely folded and bunched lengths of fabric on the wall.

Gilliam continues to live and work in Washington, D.C. In the intervening years he has explored new possibilities of abstraction. In his most recent work he has incorporated computer images that are enlargements and details from his earlier paintings.

Sam Gilliam
Relative, 1969
Acrylic on canvas, suspended (installed) canvas:
3.048 x 4.115 m (120 x 162 in.)
Anonymous Gift
SLIDE 28

The history of Western art is filled with beautifully painted drapery—shot silks, rich velvets, fictive tapestries. Gilliam reinvents the notion: instead of being beautifully painted drapery, Relative is drapery that is both beautiful and painted.

The airiness of Relative defies its true size and weight. It extends over thirteen feet on the wall. If unfolded, it would be closer to forty-four feet long. Gilliam used a rich range of colors—rose and turquoise splashed with accents of brilliant orange. He poured the paint on the flat unprimed canvas or applied it more thinly, allowing it to seep into and stain it. The paint does not sit on the canvas. Canvas and color merge to become one.

While the fabric was still wet, Gilliam folded and bunched it, tying it at points to create cowls of cloth. Suspended on the wall, its rhythmic folds exist in three dimensions. Their graceful curves temper the chaotic "messiness" of the paint, giving the whole piece a lightness and even lyrical quality.

Gilliam's technique of staining the canvas was pioneered by Helen Frankenthaler. It was also used by artists of the Washington Color School, including Morris Louis. Louis' thin colors appear to billow out toward the viewer. One of the advantages of the technique, as far as Louis was concerned, was that color could flow into color. He did not paint with line, even in the way Pollock had, but flooded his pigments into the fabric or rubbed them away. He often manipulated the canvas instead of the paint, tilting and tipping it to let the pigments run. In this way, drawing and brushwork were eliminated—painterliness was gone. This is what prompted Clement Greenberg's use of the term postpainterly abstraction.

Morris Louis, American, 1912–1962, *Beth Chaf*, 1959, acrylic on canvas, 3.531 x 2.603 m (139 x 102 1/2 in.), Gift (Partial and Promised) of Gisela and Dennis Alter
SLIDE 29

Susan Rothenberg

American, born 1945

Susan Rothenberg, *Boneman*, 1986, mezzotint on wood-veneer paper, sheet: 0.763 x 0.513 m (30 x 20 3/16 in.), Gift of Gemini G.E.L. and the Artist, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art
SLIDE 31

Susan Rothenberg was born in Buffalo, New York. She began studying art at an early age in museum classes and later studied sculpture at Cornell University. She was briefly enrolled in other schools, including the Corcoran School and George Washington University in Washington, D.C., but her experiences as part of a community of artists after she moved to New York in 1969 were probably of greater influence on her work. She assisted Nancy Graves in making multimedia sculpture and performed in a number of happenings and performance pieces. In these years, while she was discovering her own unique style, minimal and conceptual art were dominant forces, and process art was attracting interest. Recognizable imagery was virtually taboo.

With her 1974 painting of a horse, Rothenberg became one of the first artists of her generation to return to recognizable images. Since that time her repertoire of subjects has expanded and her work has become more atmospheric.

Critics comment

Critic Hilton Kramer praised the formal qualities in Rothenberg's work. (This was something that worried her initially, she recalled.) He suggested that describing her work as "consisting of horses would be literally correct, but somehow misleading. For it is the quality of the painting that is so impressive—the authority with which a highly simplified image is transformed into a pictorial experience of great sensitivity, even grandeur."

Richard Marshall, the curator of the New Image exhibition, stressed the abstract qualities of the works being exhibited—their arbitrary scale and color—and their connection to minimal art. Rothenberg's horse, he pointed out, is abbreviated and removed from any context, running without explanation. The new images, he wrote, "fluctuate between abstract and real. They clearly represent things that are recognizable and familiar, yet they are presented as isolated and removed. . . ." The images, however recognizable, are ambiguous. They are not necessarily the main point at all.

Susan Rothenberg
Butterfly, 1976
Acrylic on canvas, 1.765 x 2.108 m
(69 1/2 x 83 in.)
Gift of Perry R. and Nancy Lee Bass
SLIDE 30
AND COLOR REPRODUCTION

In 1978 New Image Painting opened at the Whitney Museum in New York. The exhibition revealed that a number of artists had started using recognizable imagery again. Among the works shown were Susan Rothenberg's enigmatic horses.

In 1974 Rothenberg was drawing on a scrap of canvas when, as if by instinct, the image of a horse began to emerge. There were other objects as well, but she focused on the horse, enlarging it, letting it take up the entire field. She decided it was a subject she wanted to pursue, although she realized at the time that it was "right out of the ballpark in terms of the New York art scene."

For six years she made the horse her only subject, initially using the animal's complete form, as in Butterfly, and then reducing it to disembodied legs and heads. They were always painted starkly over a dense web of background color overlaid with Xs and diagonal bars.

Despite her fear that her new work was "out of the ballpark," it fit easily within the process art she had been making earlier. This is indicated, for example, by her descriptions of how her images started and developed according to conditions of the canvas, the paper, the center lines, the position of tears, and so on. Rothenberg was also still very much concerned with formal problems. She combined a recognizable image with abstraction. The blunt geometry of the X keeps the background flat. Downplaying the figure in favor of the formal, Rothenberg noted in the New Image catalogue, "The geometries in the painting—the center line and other divisions—are the main fascinators. They were there before the horse. . . . First I do the lines and then the horse may have to push, stretch, and modify its contours to suit the ordered space; the space, in turn, may have to shift to accommodate a leg or split a head, until a balance is achieved. . . . The lines and bars are intended to flatten and clarify what is happening with the image."

Rothenberg has been asked the obvious question, Why horses? "The horse was a vehicle for me . . . ," she explained. "I think it was a surrogate for dealing with a human being, but at the same time it was neutral enough and I had no emotional relationship to horses, so it really was a powerful object that divided asymmetrically but seemed to present a sold symmetrical presence. I needed something alive, I guess. I couldn't use an object. . . . The horse was just a quiet image. I was able to stick to the philosophy of the day—keeping the painting flat and anti-illusionist—but I also got to use this big, soft, heavy, strong, powerful form."

Rothenberg continued painting horses until about 1980, when she turned to the human figure. The figures, not preconceived, are arrived at intuitively, developing out of the web of expressive marks in the background. In Boneman (see page 59) the background appears like a force field, an electrified space in which the enigmatic human seems to coalesce.

Ambiguity and spectral lighting invest all Rothenberg's work with mystery and link her, though perhaps only tenuously, with the neo-expressionists of the 1980s (see page 71). In 1982 she wrote that when asked if she was an expressionist, she typically answered, "I suppose so . . . I guess. I'm a semi-expressionist in terms of the visuals and surface. . . . I'm interested in essences too, which minimalism was certainly about, taking things from the particular rather than the general."

Telling stories again

Philip Guston
American, 1913–1980
Painter's Table, 1973
Oil on canvas, 1.962 x 2.286 m
(77 1/4 x 90 in.)
Gift (Partial and Promised)
of Mr. and Mrs. Donald M.
Blinken in memory of Maurice
H. Blinken and in Honor
of the 50th Anniversary
of the National Gallery of Art
SLIDE 32

Philip Guston's late works were a key inspiration for the new image and neo-expressionist painters of the 1970s and 1980s. In 1928 he had been expelled from a Los Angeles high school with his friend Jackson Pollock (see page 12). After following Pollock to New York in the 1950s, Guston became one of the most poetic of the abstract expressionist painters, producing soft latticelike webs of color. The paintings he made during the last decade of his life—he died in 1980—could hardly seem more different. "I got sick and tired of all that purity," he said. "Wanted to tell stories."

Guston put people and things back in his pictures, inventing ominous narratives with hooded figures of Ku Klux Klansmen. He had been haunted by the KKK since he was a child, he said, and sometimes the hooded figure is the artist himself. In Painter's Table, the chain-smoking Guston is represented by a full ashtray. Guston's table is filled with disconnected objects that nevertheless relate to his life: his own eye on a canvas, a shade and lightbulb that invoke his persistent insomnia.

Guston's use of reds and pinks with heavy outlines of black is deliberately crude and cartoonish. Seeing these pictures in their first exhibition in 1969, the artist's admirers were bewildered, and some even felt betrayed. Many thought Guston was giving in to the popularity of pop. But his own vision was much darker. Guston had reached the point, he said, where he viewed abstract expressionism as "an escape from the true feelings we have, from the 'raw' primitive feelings about the world—and us in it." His painting, at once grotesque and tender, playful and pessimistic, exposes the incongruities in society and in art.

Chuck Close

American, born 1940

Chuck Close at work on *Elizabeth*, 1989 (photo by Bill Jacobson, courtesy PaceWildenstein)

Chuck Close was born in Monroe, Washington. He attended the University of Washington before going on to graduate school at Yale. In 1967 he moved to New York.

Close's early painting, influenced by Jackson Pollock, was abstract expressionist in style. In 1967, in a radical departure, Close started to paint highly realistic black-and-white images based on photographs. He used a grid system to enlarge the image and transfer it to canvas. The first of these realistic paintings, twenty-one feet long, was of a nude woman. Nudes, however, had "hot spots" for the viewer that worked against the allover response Close was looking for. He decided to concentrate on tightly compressed frontal faces in extreme close up.

Close painted his first "heads" with an airbrush. He applied pigment so sparingly that no more than tablespoon or so would be used for the whole work, which was typically more than fifty square feet. He had been influenced by the theoretical approaches of minimal art: to work within a system, serially and mechanically. The artist's mark—a literal hallmark of abstract expressionism—was applied more than a million times per canvas but was reduced, in each instance, to a faint trace.

Close-up faces continue to be Close's only subject, but he has explored various techniques and different media over the years. In the early 1970s he worked in color, making separate passes to apply touches of the three colors—cyan, magenta, and yellow—that are used in color printing. Close has also used a variety of printing techniques, and even torn bits of paper, always producing an image that is startlingly "real."

Chuck Close, *Study for Keith*, 1970, transparent plastic sheet with ink and black grease pencil annotations, adhered by masking tape with graphite annotations to two silver gelatin photographic prints, adhered by masking tape to paperboard with air brush paint marks overall, 0.559 x 0.432 m (22 x 17 in.), The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection

Close began to use a more mosaic-like grid in the 1980s. In 1988 a collapsed blood vessel in his spine left him partially paralyzed. Since then Close has been confined to a wheelchair and paints with a brush strapped to his wrist. His most recent paintings, like the one of Elizabeth Murray (see page 77) above, are composed of amoeba-like lozenges of brilliant color, each of which can be seen as a miniature painting in itself. These small color studies test the limit of what is required for us to perceive an image before it dissolves into pure pattern.

Chuck Close
Fanny/Fingerpainting, 1985
Oil on canvas, 2.591 x 2.134 x 0.063 m
(102 x 84 x $2^1/_2$ in.)
Gift of Lila Acheson Wallace
SLIDE 33
AND COLOR REPRODUCTION

This is my wife's grandmother Fanny. She died just two weeks ago. She was amazing. She was the only one of ten brothers and sisters to survive the Holocaust. She was a very modest person, very kind, very patient.

—Chuck Close, 1995

Chuck Close, *Fanny/Fingerpainting* (detail)
SLIDE 34

Since the mid-1960s Chuck Close has concentrated on one thing: dramatically compressed close-up images of faces. Fanny, like all of his heads—Close avoids calling them portraits—began with a photograph, which he transferred to a huge canvas. Fanny is eight and one-half feet tall and nearly as wide. Its highly realistic image is formed completely by Close's own whorled fingerprints. He pressed his fingers first on a pigment-soaked pad and then on the canvas, applying different pressure to achieve subtle modulations of light and dark.

This is a more sympathetic image than most of Close's paintings done at the same time, which typically trap their subjects with ID-photo stares. Fanny seems to float with an ethereal softness. Here, Close's fingerprints have been likened to the touch of a blind man who "sees" by feeling, by caressing the contours of a face he knows and even loves. This softness comes about, in part, because in fingerprint works like this one Close loosened the rigid grid he had used earlier. Still, Fanny, like all of Close's work, consists of information that is reassembled in the mind from its discrete units.

Despite its convincing "reality," Close resists description of his work as either portraiture or photorealism. His interest was not verisimilitude but a systematic exploration of materials and process. Of the airbrush pictures, Close said, "I wanted to make pieces in which each square inch was physically exactly the same.... I wanted a stupid, inarticulate, uninteresting mark, that in and of itself could not be more interesting than the last mark or more beautiful than the next.... It was about the imposition of rigorous, self-imposed limitations that seemed to open doors." His investigations combine the concerns of abstract expressionism with those of minimal, conceptual, and process art, straddling abstraction and figuration.

VIEWPOINT **Realism in the late twentieth century**

Audiences were shocked by Close's heads—their huge scale and unremitting focus on every pore and blemish. After a solo exhibition in 1971, New York Times critic Hilton Kramer complained acerbically about their hyperrealism, even calling Close "a particularly gruesome practitioner" of photorealism. For many years, realism had been seen as the opposite of "modern" art. It was despised as a sterile rehash of obsolete conventions with no new ideas to offer.

Realists were scorned for their slavish fidelity to nature, for adding nothing and taking nothing away. But as art historian Linda Nochlin pointed out in a 1973 essay, "that was the point.... To ask why realist art continues to be considered inferior to nonrealist art is really to raise questions of a far more general nature: Is the universal more valuable than the particular? Is the permanent better than the transient? Is the generalized superior to the detailed? Or more recently: Why is the flat better than the three-dimensional? Why is truth to the nature of the material more important than truth to nature or experience? Why are the demands of the medium more pressing than the demands of visual accuracy? Why is purity better than impurity?"

As Philip Guston had noted already in 1958, "I do not see why the loss of faith in the known image and symbol in our time should be celebrated as a freedom. It is a loss from which we suffer, and this pathos motivates modern painting and poetry at its heart."

Martin Puryear

American, born 1941

Martin Puryear in his studio, Chicago, 1987 (photo by Ron Bailey, courtesy Martin Puryear)

Martin Puryear was born and raised in Washington, D.C., the oldest child in a large family. Beginning in 1958, he studied art and aesthetics at Catholic University. After graduating, he went to Sierra Leone as a Peace Corps volunteer and taught biology, English, and French. Impressed by local craft traditions, he studied woodworking techniques. Puryear had an interest in handwork and had even made the guitar that he took with him to Africa. At the time, however, he still thought of himself primarily as a printmaker.

After leaving the Peace Corps, Puryear attended the Swedish Royal Academy from 1967 to 1968. In Scandinavia he continued his exploration of craft by working with a noted furniture maker. His growing appreciation for the tools, materials, and processes of woodworking led him eventually to set aside printmaking in favor of three-dimensional works. Toward the end of his stay in Europe, Puryear was impressed by the simplified forms of sculptors Tony Smith and minimalist artist Donald Judd (see pages 44–45), whose works he saw exhibited in Venice.

When he returned to the United States, Puryear entered graduate school at Yale. He subsequently taught at Fisk University in Nashville and at the University of Maryland. His first exhibited works were minimal stackings of wood, but about 1972 his new style began to emerge. Puryear puts the skills and material of craft to work in making complex art. His forms have become more biomorphic, sometimes almost whimsical yet possessed of a certain gravity.

> The strongest work for me embodies contradiction, which allows for emotional tension and the ability to contain opposed ideas.
>
> —Martin Puryear

Lever No. 3, like much of Puryear's sculpture, is elegant and abstract, yet rooted in a utilitarian object. Puryear's works evoke multiple associations. In the sweeping, organic forms of Lever No. 3, we can imagine an animal with a long graceful "neck" and slightly awkward "body" (Nellie the Loch Ness monster perhaps?). Maybe we sense a plant tendril reaching out, the planed curves of a wooden dinghy, or an object of some ancient ritual whose purpose is no longer known to us but whose presence we still feel. It is beautiful—and surprising.

Part of the mystery in Puryear's objects derives from his materials and his treatment of them. He began making sculpture when galleries and museums were showing minimalist constructions made of machined metal. Puryear, by contrast, committed himself to organic materials and, equally, to the discipline of craft. While minimalist sculptors sent their work to metal fabricators for production, Puryear made his by hand, using the skills of wheelwright, cooper, shipwright, and cabinetmaker. He combines the craft traditions of modern Western society with those he has studied from non-Western cultures, including Africa and Japan.

Lever No. 3 is made of laminated strips of ponderosa pine that have been carved and painted. Its surface bears the marks of the artist's craft. "I was never interested in making cool, distilled, pure objects," he said. "Although idea and form are ulti-

Martin Puryear
Lever No. 3, 1989
Carved and painted wood,
2.146 x 4.115 x 0.330 m
($84^1/_2$ x 162 x 13 in.)
Gift of the Collectors Committee
SLIDE 35
AND COLOR REPRODUCTION

Louise Bourgeois

American, born 1911

Louise Bourgeois (Lenore Seroka Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

Louise Bourgeois was born in Paris, where her family had a small tapestry repair business. She studied philosophy and mathematics, especially geometry, at the Sorbonne, and she took art classes at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the Académie Julian, and elsewhere. Bourgeois' early works, primarily paintings and prints, were influenced by cubism. She remained in France until she married an American and moved to New York in 1938. Once in New York she continued studying at the Art Students League and began exhibiting her work.

Bourgeois was greatly influenced by the surrealist artists then living in New York. The emphasis of surrealism on the unconscious encouraged her to ground her art in the complex, emotional fabric of her personal life. Bourgeois points to her childhood as the psychological wellspring of her art, especially the unresolved conflicts in her relationship with her father, a volatile and demanding man who carried on an affair with the children's English nanny.

Bourgeois began making sculptures in the late 1940s, showing them for the first time in 1949. She was not satisfied, she said with the "level of reality" of painting. She wanted to convey her symbolic meaning as directly, as concretely, as possible. "I could express much deeper things in three dimensions," she said.

Over her long and inventive career, Bourgeois has worked in a wide range of styles and media, including wood, plaster, latex, bronze, and marble. Her imagery is more symbolic than abstract, and in the 1960s, it became more overtly sexual. In the two succeeding decades she produced a number of environmental and architectural pieces, many of which explore feminist themes. Now in her eighties, Bourgeois continues to explore psychologically complex motivations.

Louise Bourgeois
Spider, 1996/1998
Bronze with silver nitrate patina,
2.819 x 8.331 x 7.925 m
(111 x 328 x 312 in.)
Gift of The Morris and
Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
SLIDE 37

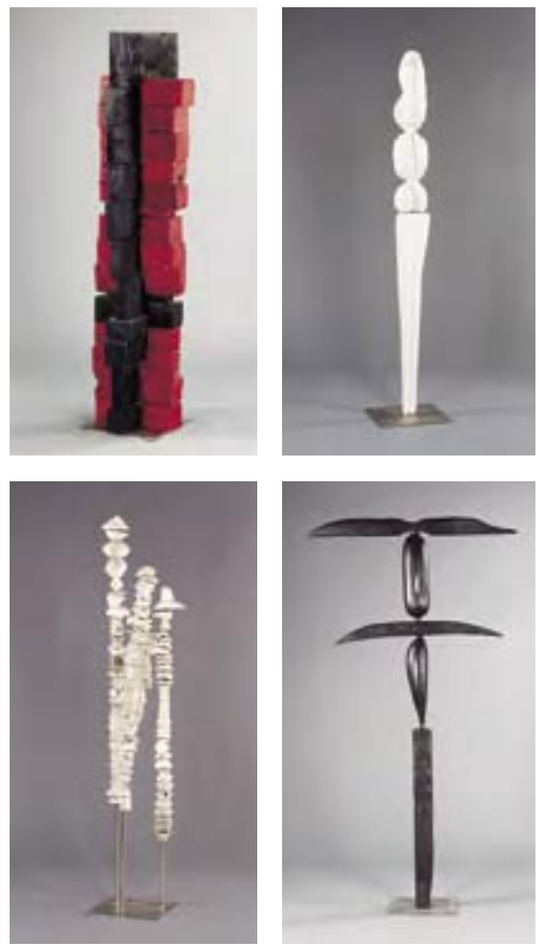
The spider is my mother, the both of them victims of their fragility and size, the daintiness of lace like that of a web.

—Louise Bourgeois

Since, for many of us, the spider prompts fear and repulsion, we might be tempted to think that Bourgeois chose it as an image of her mother out of anger or resentment. But instead she views the spider as a maternal figure, nurturing and protective of its young. It is fragile and vulnerable yet enduring. Because Bourgeois' mother, who died when the artist was twenty-one, had run the family's tapestry repair business, her comparison to the web-spinning arachnid is more appropriate than might first appear. Images of spiders are seen in Bourgeois' earliest prints and drawings, and so this "thread" is also a connection to her past and to memory. In 1994 the artist began making a number of spider pieces. She showed them in 1997 in an exhibition titled Ode à ma mère (Ode to my mother). This spider, newly acquired by the National Gallery of Art for an outdoor sculpture garden that opened in spring 1999, measures more than ten feet high and twenty-four feet across. Its long legs create a delicate bowerlike space.

It is Bourgeois' role as a daughter, not as a mother herself, that she explores. She looks to childhood experience and childhood anguish. The polarities of her mother's love and father's betrayal have shaped her work for six decades. "The subject of pain is the business I am in. To give meaning and shape to frustration and suffering," she said.

Bourgeois' work is strongly communicative of her psychological motivations. Her powerful forms have been likened to exorcisms that grip the viewer with anxiety. They have the interior force of amulets or ritual objects.



Louise Bourgeois, above: *Mortise*, 1950, painted wood, 1.524 x 0.457 x 0.381 m (60 x 18 x 15 in.), Gift of the Collectors Committee; *Spring*, 1949, balsa wood, 1.537 m ($60^1/_2$ in.), Gift of the Collectors Committee; below: *Untitled*, 1952, painted wood and plaster, 1.619 m ($63^3/_4$ in.), Gift of the Collectors Committee; *The Winged Figure*, 1948, cast 1991, bronze, 1.791 x 0.953 x 0.305 m ($70^1/_2$ x $37^1/_2$ x 12 in.), Gift of Louise Bourgeois

SLIDE 36

These four sculptures were made between 1949 and 1952 as Bourgeois was just turning to sculpture. Referring to them as "personages," she prefers to see them grouped. They become real presences inhabiting the same space as the viewer. The personages are abstract and often also organic. *Spring* appears like a form budding with new life, *Untitled* like fossilized vertebrae, and *The Winged Figure* like some mythical creature.

Anselm Kiefer

German, born 1945

Anselm Kiefer was born in Donaueschingen, Germany, and studied law in Freiburg from 1965 to 1966 before turning to art. In 1970 he moved to Düsseldorf, where he became a student of the controversial and charismatic Joseph Beuys at the Kunstakademie. Beuys had abandoned painting in favor of performance and installations, and in 1969 Kiefer had produced performances in which he was photographed in several European cities in a Nazi-style salute—a shocking, even illegal, act. Like Beuys, Kiefer wanted to confront the Nazi past and to look at the historical processes in German culture, myth, and history that made it possible.

In 1971 Kiefer began a series of huge landscapes. He followed it in 1973 with a series of wooden interiors resonant of ancient Teutonic traditions and their use in Nazi propaganda. After a trip to Israel in 1984, Kiefer turned to themes from the Old Testament. His images and his materials—straw, mud, lead, ashes, and blood—are equally symbolic.

Kiefer has also made sculpture, including massive lead books stacked on shelves. Weighing as much as several thousand pounds, they have the literal weight of history. He has, in addition, made three-dimensional works incorporating airplanes, using flying as another way to approach the themes he wishes to explore.

Anselm Kiefer, *Angel of History*, 1989, lead, glass, and poppies, 4.001 x 5.004 x 2.000 m ($157\frac{1}{2}$ x 197 x $78\frac{3}{4}$ in.), Eugene L. and Marie-Louise Garbáty Fund

VIEWPOINT **Neo-expressionism**

About 1980 in Germany and Italy and somewhat later in the United States, a number of mostly young artists turned away from the impersonal restraint and coolness of minimalism and conceptual art. Their new works featured charged images of emotion-laden—often taboo—subjects and were painted in highly expressive ways. As critic Kay Larson noted, "Artists are desperate to reconnect with feeling. . . . There is a compulsion to make contact—whether with materials, or with the heroic possibilities of painting, or with the myth of the artist-creator, dormant during twenty-odd years of irony and intellectual distance in art." These artists are generally called neo-expressionists. It is a broad label, however, and many artists to whom it is applied dislike it. They do not consider themselves to be part of any specific movement.

Anselm Kiefer
Zim Zum, 1990
Acrylic, emulsion, crayon, shellac, ashes, and canvas on lead, 3.803 x 5.601 m ($149^{3}/_{4}$ x $220^{1}/_{2}$ in.)
Gift of the Collectors Committee
SLIDE 38
AND COLOR REPRODUCTION

In Kiefer's paintings, heavy with lead, earth, and ashes, the drama and tragedy of history have physical presence.

Zim Zum is some eighteen feet long and weighs close to one thousand pounds. It is constructed of interlocking lead sheets that have been textured and corroded. Over them Kiefer applied acrylic paint, ashes, and other materials. At the bottom he affixed a separate landscape painting on a tattered canvas. These materials evoke a range of symbolic meanings, from the scorched earth of war and apocalypse to the regenerative promise of the land. Lead, the stuff of medieval alchemy's quest for gold is, in our own time, a shield against the hazards of radiation and nuclear destruction. It is malleable yet enduring.

The title Zim Zum, scrawled in childish script across the top of the work, refers to the concept of tsimstum, described in the mystical and esoteric interpretation of Judaic scripture, the Kabala. Tsimstum is a divine contraction of God, likened to a breath. It made possible the emanation that was the instant creation of the universe, but it also admitted the possibility of evil. Kiefer, whose picture incorporates both land and sky, investigates not only the relationship between earth and spirit but the coexistence of good and evil.

Kiefer's works attempt to confront the nature of evil and, specifically, the evil of the Holocaust, whose memory he invokes through his materials and pictorial references to German architecture and the German heath and woodland. In the smaller inset landscape, which resembles those he painted in the early 1980s, a lake and vast plain recede sharply into the distance, meeting the horizon and receiving a reflection of its light. If Kiefer's whole landscape is the field of history, this smaller one is touched by beauty and a force outside of time.

Critics comment

The expressive force of Kiefer's work and the abiding horror and pain of the Holocaust are so overpowering that many critics have been driven to probe—in sometimes painful ways—the artist's relationship to his subject and its implication for audiences, especially German ones.

Some critics, including Donald Kuspit writing in 1983, have suggested that works like Kiefer's can have redemptive and transformative power: "The new German painters perform an extraordinary service for the German people. They lay to rest the ghosts—profound as only the monstrous can be—of German style, culture, and history, so that the people can be authentically new. They are collectively given the mythical opportunity to create a fresh identity. . . . They can be freed of a past identity by artistically reliving it."

Others question, or even fear, the recycling of German nationalistic myths and images—the evocation of the charged landscape of the German heath in Zim Zum, for example. And they question whether, in any case, art can offer such hope for atonement or peace.

Sigmar Polke

German, born 1941

Sigmar Polke, *Bunnies*, 1966, acrylic on linen, $58^{3}/_{4}$ x $39^{1}/_{8}$ in., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Joseph H. Hirshhorn Purchase Fund, 1995

Sigmar Polke was born in what became East Germany. In 1953 he moved to the west with his family. After apprenticing as a painter of stained glass, he entered the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf in 1961 and became a student of Joseph Beuys. In 1963 Polke and two fellow students launched what they called capitalist realism in response to pop art in the United States. Polke's contributions used isolated depictions of sausages and other foods. Shortly afterward, he began to use photographic images, often from newspapers, overlaid with a large-scale pattern of printer's Benday dots, in a sense combining the techniques of Rauschenberg and Warhol with that of Lichtenstein (see pages 20, 30, and 26). The dots so abstracted the images that they become almost unrecognizable up close. These paintings upend the relationship between an artist's subjective treatment and objective source, between copy and original. Polke's pictures are unique paintings of photographs. In other works, he seems to suggest control by forces outside.

In 1973 Polke began a series he called Original and Forgery. Prompted by the theft of a Rembrandt, the series included photographs of older, often stolen, works, mirror fragments, written commentary, and collage elements. It was a vehicle for Polke to reevaluate concepts about originality and authorship, copy and imitation, and even vandalism and appropriation.

In the 1980s Polke produced large works in which he used resins, chemicals, minerals, and other materials that reacted with each other and with the atmosphere to produce various colors and effects that changed over time. These "alchemical" paintings recast the artist into a new role as witness to the creation of his art, not simply its maker. In them, art becomes a mysterious process of transformation.

Sigmar Polke, *Höhere Wesen befahlen (Higher Powers Command),* 1969, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

Polke has worked in a number of different styles—so much so that he has been called a "slippery character" and even a "merry Prankster." By refusing to establish a single style, he uses painting as a means to investigate painting. By refusing to adopt a look, he suggests that the look of art may not be its primary characteristic, that perhaps there is no single essence but many.

Sigmar Polke
Hope is: Wanting to Pull Clouds, 1992
Polyester resin and acrylic on canvas,
3.000 x 5.004 m (118 1/8 x 197 in.)
Gift of the Collectors Committee
SLIDE 39

Polke, using a light touch laced with irony and wit, has been said to "use painting to deconstruct painting."

Image not available.

Glücksbuch woodcut, 16th century, from W. Fraenger, *Altdeutsches Bilderbuch* (Leipzig, 1930), pl. 67

Polke's image of a boy roping two clouds is copied from a sixteenth-century German woodcut. It appears in the so-called Glücksbuch, a book of epigrams, or sayings, illustrated by the Master of Petrarch (possibly Hans Weiditz II of Augsburg). "Hope is a long rope, with which many pull themselves toward Death," the epigram that the woodcut illustrates, is a reminder of man's ultimately futile struggle against fate. But Polke's painting is not about this saying. His appropriation of the image has given it a new context and a whole new set of possible meanings. In an epigram-like question Polke himself used to introduce an essay, the issue is raised: "Does meaning generate relationships or do relationships generate meaning?"

Polke's and our relationship to this image are not that of its original audience. First, Polke chose to reproduce only parts of his source, which few of us would specifically recognize in any case. He omitted, for example, the god of winds, who blows storm gusts to thwart the (literally) fiery passion of the youth's desire, which is also not part of Polke's picture. Instead, Polke seems to suggest a romantic wish to harness and even change the world. This notion is centuries removed from the sixteenth-century youth. For viewers today, Polke's youth is more likely to evoke the ideas of German idealist philosophers, who saw all reality as a creation of the mind or spirit.

Polke's picture, unlike the original image, simply looks buoyant. Its shimmery lightness is insubstantial, almost dreamy. Moreover, it seems fugitive, always changing with our angle of sight. The background was stitched together from lengths of commercially printed fabric and attached to a stretcher. Polke treated the surface with a polyester resin that made it somewhat transparent. In places the resin has collected to form shiny spatters and pools. Once the resin had hardened he poured paint onto the back of the work, tilting it to let the pigments flow into various shapes. Only then did he return to the front and paint the image.

Cindy Sherman, Untitled Film Still, 1978, black-and-white photograph, 8 x 10 in. (courtesy Cindy Sherman and Metro Pictures, New York)

Cindy Sherman photographs herself in what look like scenes from well-known movies. These fictional stills are so convincing that many viewers feel they can identify the movie a particular scene comes from. Sherman's work places the responsibility for "scripting" with the viewer.

VIEWPOINT **Appropriation**

Poststructuralist thinkers in the late 1960s and 1970s suggested that what had been understood as structures underlying culture and society—things like language and art—are conventions instead. Rather than natural fact, each of these is a mere overlay, only one of many that are possible and susceptible to multiple interpretations. The multiple meanings in a "text"—whether it is a custom or a work of literature or art—can be deconstructed by analyzing underlying assumptions. Any one meaning is as valid as another. The understanding of a work of art is no longer a writerly process (issuing from the artist who makes it) but a readerly one (dependent on the viewer who sees and interprets it). As French philosopher Roland Barthes had it, "The birth of the Reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author." Meaning is not to be found in the work or its creator's intention but only in its interpretation.

This concept has freed works of art from their original contexts, their original meanings. They are now available to be used in new ways, to be appropriated. Some appropriation artists so nearly capture the style of their sources that it is difficult to see any difference. But seeing difference is not the issue. Things that look alike are not necessarily alike at all. We understand Polke's woodcut youth in an entirely different way from its original audience—if only because we are aware that we are not its original audience and so are obligated to consider new sets of questions when we look at it.

Elizabeth Murray

American, born 1940

Elizabeth Murray during proofing session at Gemini G.E.L., March 1993 (© Sidney Felsen, 1993, courtesy Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, California)

Elizabeth Murray was born in Chicago, where she studied at the Art Institute before going to graduate school in fine arts at Mills College in California. She moved to New York in 1967, a time when minimal and conceptual art were at their height and painting was considered to be outmoded, if not dead. She decided to pursue a more deeply personal style and identity. Murray's work evokes human characteristics, personalities, or pure emotions through an abstract interaction of shape and color. Since 1976 she has become best known for canvases that she fractures and reunites as interlocking units of a single whole. They create a play between the painted image and the object itself.

Much of Murray's imagery is considered "female," relying on the female body or such stand-ins as domestic vessels. Her concerns with the themes of conflict and conflict resolution are also frequently associated with women's art. It would be easy for Murray's work to be trapped in a women's-art box. Instead, her inventiveness and power have helped destroy some of its clichés.

Soft and undulating with a trumpet-shaped spout, Careless Love (page 78) projects several inches from the wall. Pink and fleshy, it seems to pulsate with life, organic and womblike. Murray says the image metamorphosed from that of a cup, a symbol she calls "extremely female." It has appeared often in her work since the early 1980s. The dark blue interior spaces of Careless Love are glimpsed in a square cutout, and through the various openings, a long reddish-pink coil weaves in and out like an umbilical cord. Murray sees the cup as a male symbol too: "[T]he winner of an athletic event gets a cup." Her work is meticulously constructed with a vertical fracture and pieced together again like a puzzle—like the two complementary halves of male and female.

The title comes from music—"Careless Love," a jazz piece by Ben Webster that Murray was listening to as she worked on the painting. It underscores the painting's personal meaning for the artist. "Interiority, what was going on emotionally for myself," she said, "is what I paint.... I try to objectify it with the images." Her forms do not simply embrace male and female, but suggest entrapment and estrangement as well. The two halves of Careless Love come together and simultaneously threaten to pull apart. They reflect her concerns about conflict and resolving shattered parts. "All my work is involved with conflict," Murray says, "trying to make something disparate whole."

Murray has noted that her art attempts to perpetuate a sense of order and beauty, but she invites many interpretations. The order and beauty she is after is something that will be made by each individual. "I can only know what I knew when I was doing [a work]. When my experience with it is done, it keeps getting remade and finished and that is what people do when they are looking...."

Elizabeth Murray
Careless Love, 1995–1996
Oil on shaped canvas,
2.705 x 2.527 x 0.686 m
(106 1/2 x 99 1/2 x 27 in.)
The Aaron I. Fleischman Fund
SLIDE 40

Murray called this piece Labyrinth when she first made it, and its original color scheme conveyed a mood she described as a "tortured place." In one "thrilling moment" she saw it in an entirely different way, and it came alive.

Teaching activities

Teaching Activities

A: Advanced
I: Intermediate
E: Elementary

Discussion activities

Show slides of Fanny/Fingerpainting, Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist), and Hope is: Wanting to Pull Clouds (slides 33, 1, and 39). Ask students to arrange them in chronological order. Compare their order with the actual dating of the works and use the results as the platform for discussion. How close have they come to guessing correctly? On what basis did they decide the order? Did the results surprise them or not? Do they think works from earlier centuries would be easier to sort in this way?
A/I

In the 1960s customs agents in Canada seized Andy Warhol's Brillo Boxes (see page 32), insisting that it was subject to the normal duties applied to the cleaning product. They refused, that is, to recognize it as a work of art. Divide the class into two teams, one assigned to each side of this dispute. They should prepare their arguments as if they were making oral presentations at a customs hearing, justifying the position that Brillo Boxes either is or is not art. The two teams may want to research statements made at the time. Alternatively, this activity can be an individual assignment in which the students write newspaper editorials expressing their views on the matter. (Robert Rauschenberg's Cardbird Door [slide 5] can be used in classroom discussion of this issue.)
A/I

Controversy has surrounded public funding of art thought to be obscene or offensive—the furor caused over the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe is only one example. Another well-publicized dispute involved the placement of a work. People working in and near the federal courthouse in New York objected to the size and look of Richard Serra's Tilted Arc (see page 52) and to the way it changed their use of a public plaza by dividing it in two. And, most important for some of the protesters, they felt this work was an unwanted intrusion, something that had been imposed on them without their consultation. Have students research this controversy, which was well documented in newspaper and online sources. Then suggest the following scenario or a similar one. A wealthy alumna has donated $1.2 million for a work of art to be installed, either indoors or outside, at her alma mater—your school. Have the students draw up a plan to decide how these issues will be resolved. Who will select the work? Will outside experts be included? What will determine who an expert is? What different constituencies within the school and local community should be involved? How will decisions be publicized, and to what extent will they be subject to veto or revision by the parties?
A

Devise a time-capsule project for your school. The capsule will preserve various kinds of objects to be revealed seventy-five years in the future. In connection with this project, have the students visit a local art museum and make predictions about five works of art they think will still be on view at that future date. Have them write down their predictions and the reasons for their choices in a letter addressed to the students who will open the capsule. (If a museum collection is not locally available, this activity can be done with books and catalogues.)
A/I/E

Have students consider Andy Warhol's career and his statement that "in the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes." Why do they think so many of Warhol's subjects were celebrities (including Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, among others)? Who would Warhol be painting if he were still alive today? Ask students to compare Warhol's portrait of Marilyn Monroe with Let us Now Praise Famous Men (slides 12 and 13) and discuss whether the artist had different intentions in the two works. Students might also compare photographs from the James Agee-Walker Evans book (see page 32).
A

Ellsworth Kelly's White Curve VIII (slide 17) is not a picture that many students naturally linger over. At first glance, it seems as if there is little to see. Devise strategies that compel students to look more closely and with more thought. You can, for example, offer the following list of words and ask students to select the one (or another they supply) that best describes what Kelly is concerned about in the painting:

Balance	Gesture
Edge	Weight
Depth	Pressure
Surface	Anonymity
Shape	Personality
Tension	Black
Flatness	White
Movement	Space
Stillness	
Emotion	

A/I/E

Richard Long's Whitechapel Slate Circle (slide 27) is installed on the floor and is composed of quarry stones—not a traditional fine-art medium. Have students discuss the implications of his use of materials. Because these stones are in a museum, it is easy to see them, even initially, as art. What if students instead came across these same stones in this same arrangement in another setting? What would they think then? Have the students describe what they think their reactions might be.
A/I

Jackson Pollock did not originally assign the title Lavender Mist to his painting (slide 1). He had called it simply Number 1, 1950. Critic Clement Greenberg suggested Lavender Mist because of the painting's "subtle, delicate, pastel-tinted surface." Have students think about what is added by the titles of various works in the packet. (Alternatively, students could discuss what they think about a work before knowing what the title is and then talk about how their reactions differed once the title was revealed.) Do they find a title helps them look at a painting, or does it limit their thinking? Does it make a difference if the work is representational or not? If they were artists, how would they feel if someone else later titled their works?
A/I/E

Art activities

Have students create a work of art that "appropriates" art from a published source. The appropriated work does not have to be a visual image. It could be a sampled passage from a music recording. In an accompanying "museum label" or "liner note"—whichever is appropriate—students must explain why they chose to appropriate the particular work and how it relates to the own new work. Music sampling has caused legal difficulties for some young recording artists. This activity could be expanded to include an investigation of these issues.

A/I

Have students devise a proposal for a land-art project at your school. It could be as simple as an arrangement of stones, a ditch, or a pile of earth. If possible install the project and record the changes brought about by weather and time during the course of the year. These changes can be documented with photographs and diary entries. The land-art project can be coordinated with natural science curricula. Robert Smithson (see page 55) related his artworks to the second law of thermodynamics and the concept of entropy.

A/I/E

Philip Guston's Painter's Table (slide 32) is as much a self-portrait as it is a still life. Have students devise similar self-portraits using objects that reveal or symbolize aspects of their own lives. The self-portraits can be produced as drawings, paintings, collages, photographs, or performances involving the objects.

A/I/E

After dividing the class into five groups, have students create five front pages for an imaginary newspaper that appears once a decade (one page for the 1950s, the 1960s, and so one). The news stories and images should reflect what they feel are the most significant events, and the typography and design should reflect the different tastes of each decade.

A/I

Arrange a field trip to a gallery to see contemporary art in your area. If possible have the class speak with artists, dealers, and an art critic for the local newspaper.

A/I

Chance elements in the music of composer John Cage and others had an important influence on several artists, including Robert Rauschenberg. Have the class compose its own chance musical work. Have available dice in several colors so that each student can have a unique color/number combination. Students sit in a circle, and each is "assigned" a particular sound—a note played on an instrument, a hand clap (or several), a birdlike whistle—to be played when his or her number is rolled on the dice by the student who is the "composer." The composer can control the tempo and introduce pauses to vary the sound. Does the work they compose in this way seem more like some of the works illustrated in this packet than others? Why or why not?

A/I/E

Have students investigate the relationship between materials and methods for one of the artists listed below. They should consider how the intrinsic qualities of the materials or technique contributed not only to the way the finished work looks but also to what the artist is communicating. Then have the students create a work of their own using their selected artist's materials.

Jackson Pollock
Mark Rothko
Robert Rauschenberg
Roy Lichtenstein
Sam Gilliam
A/I

Have the class play a kind of charades in which each student acts out one of the works illustrated in the packet. Instead of simply using the "first word, sounds like" method, they should attempt to convey the look of the work or the meaning or emotion they associate with it. This activity could be introduced by discussion of what mood is created by different works.
E

Research/writing activities

Most of the works discussed in this packet were produced by Americans. Pop art seems quintessentially American, but in fact the first artists to experiment with pop styles were English. Select five works and have students research what European artists were producing during the same years. They should be prepared to show reproductions of their comparisons for discussion by the entire class.
A

Have students select one work of music and one work of literature that were created within five years of one work of art in the packet. In addition to being contemporaneous, the three works of art, music, and literature should be related on some level—in their structure, method of composition, or perhaps only in the student's subjective view
of them. Have the students present their three works to the class, explaining in what ways their selections are similar or different in terms of mood, motivation, approach, and so on. To enhance the discussion, you may want to limit the number of artworks to only a few options so that several students present different musical or literary works relating to the same work of art. In a related activity, students could be asked to create their own work of literature or music to accompany the artwork they chose.
A/I

Several of the artists discussed in this packet attended Black Mountain College in western North Carolina, and a number of well-known artists, musicians, dancers, and writers were teachers there. Others attended graduate school at Yale. For a class project, have students research various local or national art schools, creating a notebook that will be a resource for the entire school (it could be kept in the classroom or guidance office). Students should decide what information they would want to know—for example, number of students, facilities, whether there is a gallery or museum, and so on.
A

For many artists, their materials, working methods, and intended meanings are inextricably bound. Anselm Kiefer (see page 71), for example, has devoted much of his work to themes in German history, exploring myths of national identity and the Holocaust. Ask students to investigate and report on Kiefer's materials, emphasizing their properties and associations over time. Because some of Kiefer's materials have particular significance in German history, have students conduct their research along with a study of Germany's land, natural resources, and political history. Materials to consider include:

Lead
Coal
Straw
Wood (forests)
Glass
Sand
Ashes
Soil (land)
A/I

Anselm Kiefer has been both praised (by American critics) and reproached (by some German critics) for his use of German icons and themes as vehicles for Vergangentheitsbewältigung, or "coming to terms with the past." Have students continue their exploration of materials by asking them to identify a set of materials that would reflect some dark chapter in American history—for example, the treatment of American Indians by European settlers, slavery, or the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.
A

Works of art are sometimes narrative, and some can even inspire storytelling in viewers. Have students write a story that explains what is happening in Roy Lichtenstein's Look Mickey (slide 9). They should include events both before and after the scene Lichtenstein painted. With younger students, this activity can be done as a classroom storytelling exercise.
E

Glossary

Abstract expressionism describes a number of individual styles used by painters (see Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Willem de Kooning, pages 12–19) in the 1950s and 1960s, especially in the United States. Employing mostly nonrepresentational imagery, they aimed to convey their emotions and to recreate them for the viewer directly through color and form. Some artists, particularly Rothko and Newman, also invoked a range of other meanings that embraced myth and religious themes. Also called the New York School.

Action painting describes the work of **abstract expressionists** who used techniques such as drip painting and gestural brushstrokes that reflect the physical activity of painting itself. In action painting the work and the process of painting merge. Critic Harold Rosenberg coined the term.

Appropriation is a strategy used by some **postmodern** artists, including Sigmar Polke (see page 74), to create a new work of art by recycling an existing image, often an existing art image, from another time, context, or medium. This "taking" by the artist flouts the **modernist** tradition of originality and the uniqueness of the art object. The roots of appropriation lie in the early twentieth century with the **readymades** of Marcel Duchamp and in the 1960s with the use of everyday objects in **pop art.** It is informed by the critical dialogue surrounding **deconstruction.**

Arte povera was an Italian movement related to **process art** in the United States. As defined in 1970 by Italian critic Germano Celant, "arte povera expresses an approach to art which is basically anti-commercial, precarious, banal, and anti-formal, concerned primarily with the physical properties of the medium and the mutuality of the materials." These artists used unconventional materials, many of them ephemeral, and produced hybrid works that defy categorization as painting, sculpture, or even **performance.**

Automatic imagery and **automatic writing** were techniques used by the surrealists to access the unconscious by suspending the conscious mind's control over their actions.

Black Mountain College was a progressive and innovative school in Black Mountain, North Carolina, that operated from 1933 to 1956. Art was at the core of its curriculum. The faculty included such figures as artists Josef Albers, Willem de Kooning, and Robert Motherwell, dancer Merce Cunningham, composer John Cage, and architects Buckminster Fuller and Walter Gropius.

Color field (1) distinguishes the primarily chromatic effects of **abstract expressionist** painters such as Mark Rothko (see page 16) from those of the abstract expressionist **action painters** such as Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock (see pages 12–15); (2) describes the allover flat color of **postpainterly** abstractionists such as Ellsworth Kelly (see page 37). In this regard it is more specifically used to identify the stained-painting techniques of Helen Frankenthaler and members of the Washington Color School, including Morris Louis (see page 58).

Conceptual art suggests that the artist's original idea—his conception—is the true work of art. The art object is incidental. The idea might be presented to the public in many ways not previously regarded as art per se. Conceptual artists, working primarily in the 1960s and 1970s, include Joseph Kosuth and Sol LeWitt (see pages 46–49).

Constructivism is a term most often applied to the styles developed in Russia at the turn of the century that sought to reflect revolutionary ideals. Instead of achieving form by modeling or carving a single unit, constructivist sculptors assembled parts to make a whole.

Dada means "hobbyhorse" in French. The term was chosen, in large part for its playfulness, by a group of artists in Europe in the early part of the twentieth century to express their anti-art purpose. They emphasized irrationality and impermanence. Their disregard for the elevated status of the art object is reflected in Marcel Duchamp's exhibition of **readymades** (see page 22).

Deconstruction is a tool of interpretation, most closely associated with French philosopher Jacques Derrida, to uncover multiple meanings in a work of art or literature or in a societal construct. It suggests that meaning is not fixed or "located" in the object and that no one meaning is "privileged" over any other. Derrida himself suggested that deconstruction might be described as a suspicion of one question: "What is the essence of?"

Earth art arose in the 1960s, when several artists moved art outside galleries and museums and into the environment. Earth artists might build mammoth works using industrial earthmoving equipment or, like Richard Long (see page 53), simply rearrange elements found naturally outdoors or record their actions in the landscape. Also called land art.

Gesture painting is another term for **action painting.**

Happenings were a hybrid art, primarily of the 1960s, that combined visual art with performance or theater, often involving the spectator directly. They sought spontaneity and valued transience. Artists closely associated with happenings in the United States include Claes Oldenburg and Robert Rauschenberg (see pages 33 and 20). See also **performance art.**

Hard-edge painting distinguishes the work of younger abstractionists like Ellsworth Kelly (see page 37), whose paintings were strictly geometrical and planar, from the preceding generation of **abstract expressionists.** See also **postpainterly abstraction.**

Land art is another term for **earth art.**

Minimal art describes works of extremely reductive forms produced in the middle and late 1960s by artists such as Donald Judd (see page 44), who eschewed the emotional effects and subjectivity of **abstract expressionism.** Minimal art is austere in terms of form, color, and materials and is often made by impersonal mechanical means. Sometimes called primary structure or ABC art.

Modernism, among other common uses, generally defines a set of artistic goals pursued by artists from the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century that depend primarily on the formal vocabulary of painting (line, color, surface, shape) and on the inherent qualities of the medium—for example, "flatness" in painting. Modernism also emphasizes the originality of the artist and uniqueness of the work.

Neo-expressionism is a term used for widely disparate works, most on canvas and from the 1980s, that emphasized emotive qualities and helped restore figural imagery, which had largely been eliminated in minimalism and conceptual art. It can be seen as an expansion of trends begun in **new image painting.** Neo-expressionism was recognized first in the works of Italian and German artists, including Anselm Kiefer (see page 71), and slightly later in the United States in the works of several young painters. Most of these artists do not like the term.

New image painting describes the work of artists in the late 1970s who first returned to a more representational style that included figures and other recognizable objects. New image works, like those of Susan Rothenberg (see page 59), typically focus on a single motif in an expressionist ground.

New York School is another term for **abstract expressionist** painters.

Performance art is a loose term that describes various types of dance, theater, mime, music, video, and multimedia performances related to the earlier **happenings.** In the late 1960s and 1970s, its most influential practitioner was German artist Joseph Beuys, a controversial and charismatic figure. He wanted to produce what he called social sculpture: "Sculpture as an evolutionary process; everyone is an artist."

Photorealism is a hyperrealistic style that seeks to replicate exactly the detailed content and momentary composition of photographs.

Pop art describes the work of artists, primarily in the 1960s, who used popular culture and the materials of mass media. Although some of the earliest of these artists, notably Richard Hamilton, were English, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Claes Oldenburg (see pages 26–33) made pop a particularly American phenomenon. Its questioning of **modernist** assumptions about originality and authorship paved the way for many of the ideas seized upon by artists in the 1980s and 1990s.

Postminimalism describes a number of highly diverse styles, including **process, land,** and **conceptual art,** that emanated loosely from **minimalism.** While often retaining elements associated with minimalism, such as geometric forms and serial presentations, postminimalists turned away from minimalism's machine aesthetic. Postminimal production embraced an expanded range of materials and activity. Photography, figurative elements, and illusionistic reference to landscape were self-consciously integrated with such conventional systems as grids to underscore the abstract quality of representation. The radical expansion of forms in postminimalism generally reflected the social and political climate of the late 1960s.

Postmodernism describes a diversity of styles and critical approaches that originated in reaction to **modernism.** The term was first applied to architecture—for example, Robert Venturi's goal of adding "richness" and "messy vitality" to the "purity" of severe modern architecture ("Less is a bore," he said). The term was applied to **neo-expressionist** painters, but since the 1980s it has been more closely linked to eclectic works informed by **deconstruction.**

Postpainterly abstraction is a term coined by critic Clement Greenberg to describe the work of painters who rejected action painting's dramatic gesture and illusion of depth. These artists avoided distinctions between the fore- and background. By extending their colors over all or most of the canvas, or opening the center to "white space," they emphasized the painting's flatness. Encompasses **hard-edge abstraction.**

Poststructuralism relies on the writings of mainly French thinkers, including Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, that have opened works of art to various interpretations by calling into question such notions as the intentionality of the artist and the unity of a work of art. This view suggests that different interpretations are all equally valid, freed as they are from the concept of author. See also **deconstruction.**

Process art replaced the rigidity and stability of **minimal art** with impermanence and change. The perishability of materials, which sometimes included ice, earth, or food, and their susceptibility to the effects of weather and other natural forces, are part of the process artist's "palette." Process-art works become a metaphor for the life processes that go into their creation. Eva Hesse and Richard Serra (see pages 50–52) are usually called process artists. Elements of process can also be detected in such disparate artists as Chuck Close, Sam Gilliam, and Martin Puryear (see pages 63, 56, and 66). Sometimes called anti-form art.

Readymade is a term used for the everyday objects that Marcel Duchamp presented as art.

Semiotics is the theory and analysis of signs and their significations.

Surrealism seeks to access and express the unconscious mind through dreamlike images, **automatic writing,** startling juxtapositions, and other techniques. Surrealism, as André Breton wrote in the first surrealist manifest, rested "on the belief in the higher reality of certain neglected forms of association, in the omnipotence of dreams, in the disinterested play of thought."

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For information about recent artists and movements, catalogues published in conjunction with exhibitions are good sources. They also contain extensive references.

Online and new media resources

Many museums and galleries post information on their Web sites about current exhibitions. Exhibition brochures, virtual tours, and extended descriptions are often available.

Recommended Web sites
National Gallery of Art: www.nga.gov
Andy Warhol Museum: www.warhol.org
Museum of Modern Art: www.moma.org
DIA Arts Center: www.diacenter.org

Images of twentieth-century art in the National Gallery of Art and information about the works are provided on the CD-ROM National Gallery of Art, Washington (available for purchase in the Gallery Shops) and on the videodiscs American Art and European Art (available for free loan from the Department of Education Resources, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565).

Video interviews

The Gallery's Department of Education Resources lends videos of interviews with artists. At current writing (1999), interviews with the following artists are available (those with an asterisk are discussed in this packet):

David Hockney
Roy Lichtenstein*
Scott Burton
Pat Steir
Robert Rauschenberg*
Jim Dine
Nancy Graves
Helen Frankenthaler
Claes Oldenburg* and Coosje van Bruggen
Wayne Thiebaud

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		1950	1960
Abstract Expressionism	Jackson Pollock	• Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)	
	Willem de Kooning	• Study for Woman Number One	
	Mark Rothko	• Untitled	
	Barnett Newman	• Yellow Painting	
	David Smith		• Voltri VII • Cubi XXVI
	Robert Rauschenberg		
	Jasper Johns		
Pop Art	Roy Lichtenstein		• Look Mickey • Brushstroke
Pop Art	Andy Warhol		• A Boy for Meg • Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (Rauschenberg Family) • Green Marilyn
Pop Art	Claes Oldenburg		• Glass Case with Pies (Assorted Pies in a Case)
Postpainterly Abstraction	Ellsworth Kelly		
Postpainterly Abstraction	Morris Louis	• Beth Chaf	
Postpainterly Abstraction	Ad Reinhardt		• Black Painting No. 34
Postpainterly Abstraction	Frank Stella		
	Tony Smith		• Moondog
Postminimalism, Conceptual Art	Sol Lewitt		• Floor Structure Black
Postminimalism, Conceptual Art	Joseph Kosuth		
Postminimalism, Process Art	Sam Gilliam		
Postminimalism, Process Art	Eva Hesse		
Postminimalism, Land Art	Richard Long		
Postminimalism, New Image	Susan Rothenberg		
Postminimalism	Philip Guston		
Postminimalism	Chuck Close		
Postminimalism	Martin Puryear		
Postminimalism	Louise Bourgeois	• Mortise	
Postminimalism, Neo-Expressionism	Anselm Kiefer		
Postminimalism	Sigmar Polke		
Postminimalism	Elizabeth Murray		

1970 1980 1990

• Cardbird Door • Copperhead Grande/ROCI CHILE

• Flags I • Perilous Night

• White Curve VIII • Untitled

• Chyrow II • Jarama II

• Wall Drawing No. 681C

• Art as Idea: Nothing

• Relative

• Test Piece for “Contingent”

• Whitechapel Slate Circle

• Butterfly • Boneman

• Painter’s Table

• Fanny/Fingerpainting

• Lever No. 3

• Spider

• Zim Zum

• Hope is: Wanting to Pull Clouds

• Careless Love

List of slides

1
Jackson Pollock, Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist), 1950, oil, enamel, and aluminum on canvas, 2.210 x 2.997 m (87 x 118 in.), Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

2
Willem de Kooning, Study for Woman Number One, 1952, pastel, crayon, and graphite, 0.229 x 0.285 m (9 x $11^{1}/_{4}$ in.), Andrew W. Mellon Fund

3
Mark Rothko, Untitled, 1953, oil on canvas, 1.951 x 1.723 m ($76^{3}/_{4}$ x $67^{3}/_{4}$ in.), Gift of the Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.

4
Barnett Newman, Yellow Painting, 1949, oil on canvas, 1.71 x 1.33 m ($67^{1}/_{2}$ x $52^{3}/_{8}$ in.), Gift of Annalee Newman

5
Robert Rauschenberg, Cardbird Door, published 1971, cardboard, paper, tape, wood, metal, offset lithography, and screenprint, 2.032 x 0.762 x 0.279 m (80 x 30 x 11 in.), Gift of Gemini G.E.L.

6
Robert Rauschenberg, Copperhead Grande/ROCI CHILE, 1985, acrylic and tarnishes on copper, 2.286 x 3.658 m (90 x 144 in.), Gift of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

7
Jasper Johns, Flags I, 1973, screenprint on J. B. Green paper, sheet: 0.699 x 0.900 m ($27^{1}/_{2}$ x $35^{7}/_{16}$ in.), Robert and Jane Myerhoff Collection

8
Jasper Johns, Perilous Night, 1982, encaustic on canvas with objects, 1.705 x 2.442 x 0.159 m ($67^{1}/_{8}$ x $96^{1}/_{8}$ x $6^{1}/_{4}$ in.), Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection

9
Roy Lichtenstein, Look Mickey, 1961, oil on canvas, 1.219 x 1.753 m (48 x 69 in.), Dorothy and Roy Lichtenstein, Gift of the Artist, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

10
Roy Lichtenstein, Brushstroke, 1965, color screenprint on heavy, white wove paper, image: 0.564 x 0.724 m ($22^{3}/_{16}$ x $28^{1}/_{2}$ in.), Gift of Roy and Dorothy Lichtenstein

11
Andy Warhol, A Boy for Meg, 1962, oil on canvas, 1.829 x 1.321 m (72 x 52 in.), Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine

12
Andy Warhol, Green Marilyn, 1962, silkscreen on synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 0.508 x 0.406 m (20 x 16 in.), Gift of William C. Seitz and Irma S. Seitz, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

13
Andy Warhol, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (Rauschenberg Family), 1963, silkscreen on canvas, 2.082 x 2.082 m (82 x 82 in.), Gift (Partial and Promised) of Mr. and Mrs. William Howard Adams

14
Claes Oldenburg, Glass Case with Pies (Assorted Pies in a Case), 1962, burlap soaked in plaster, painted with enamel, with pie tins, in glass and metal case, 0.476 x 0.311 x 0.276 m ($18^{3}/_{4}$ x $12^{1}/_{4}$ x $10^{7}/_{8}$ in.), Gift of Leo Castelli, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

15
David Smith, Voltri VII, 1962, iron, 2.158 x 3.116 x 1.105 m (85 x 122 x $43^{1}/_{2}$ in.), Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

16
David Smith, Cubi XXVI, 1965, steel, 3.034 x 3.834 x 0.656 m ($119^{1}/_{2}$ x 151 x $25^{7}/_{8}$ in.), Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

17
Ellsworth Kelly, White Curve VIII, 1976, oil on canvas, 2.440 x 1.954 m ($96^{1}/_{16}$ x $76^{15}/_{16}$ in.), Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Helman

18
Ellsworth Kelly, Untitled, 1988, bronze, 3.035 x 0.622 x 0.025 m ($119^{1}/_{2}$ x $24^{1}/_{4}$ x 1 in.), Gift of the Artist, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

19
Ad Reinhardt, Black Painting No. 34, 1964, oil on canvas, 1.530 x 1.526 m ($60^{1}/_{4}$ x $60^{1}/_{8}$ in.), Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine

20
Frank Stella, Chyrow II, 1972, mixed media, 2.845 x 2.540 m (112 x 100 in.), Gift of the Collectors Committee

21
Frank Stella, Jarama II, 1982, mixed media on etched magnesium, 3.199 x 2.539 x 0.628 m (126 x 100 x $24^{3}/_{4}$ in.), Gift of Lila Acheson Wallace

22
Tony Smith, Moondog, conceived 1964, fabricated 1998, painted aluminum, 5.213 x 4.147 x 4.788 m ($205^{1}/_{4}$ x $163^{1}/_{4}$ x $188^{1}/_{2}$ in.), Gift of The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation

23
Sol LeWitt, Floor Structure Black, 1965, painted wood, 0.470 x 0.457 x 2.083 m ($18^{1}/_{2}$ x 18 x 82 in.), The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, Patrons' Permanent Fund and Gift of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel

24
Sol LeWitt, Wall Drawing No. 681 C, 1993, colored ink washes, image: 3.048 x 11.278 m (120 x 444 in.), The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection, Gift of Dorothy Vogel and Herbert Vogel, Trustees

25
Joseph Kosuth, Art as Idea: Nothing, 1968, silver gelatin photographic print, 0.914 x 0.914 (36 x 36 in.), The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection

26
Eva Hesse, Test Piece for "Contingent," 1969, latex over cheesecloth, 3.658 x 1.118 m (144 x 44 in.), Gift of the Collectors Committee

27
Richard Long, Whitechapel Slate Circle, 1981, slate, dimensions vary, Gift of the Collectors Committee

28
Sam Gilliam, Relative, 1969, acrylic on canvas, suspended (installed) canvas: 3.048 x 4.115 m (120 x 162 in.), Anonymous Gift

29
Morris Louis, Beth Chaf, 1959, acrylic on canvas, 3.531 x 2.603 m (139 x $102^{1}/_{2}$ in.), Gift (Partial and Promised) of Gisela and Dennis Alter

30
Susan Rothenberg, Butterfly, 1976, acrylic on canvas, 1.765 x 2.108 m ($69^{1}/_{2}$ x 83 in.), Gift of Perry R. and Nancy Lee Bass

31
Susan Rothenberg, Boneman, 1986, mezzotint on wood-veneer paper, sheet: 0.763 x 0.513 m (30 x $20^{3}/_{16}$ in.), Gift of Gemini G.E.L. and the Artist, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

32
Philip Guston, Painter's Table, 1973, oil on canvas, 1.962 x 2.286 m ($77^{1}/_{4}$ x 90 in.), Gift (Partial and Promised) of Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. Blinken in memory of Maurice H. Blinken and in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

33
Chuck Close, Fanny/Fingerpainting, 1985, oil on canvas, 2.591 x 2.134 x 0.063 m (102 x 84 x $2^{1}/_{2}$ in.), Gift of Lila Acheson Wallace

34
Chuck Close, Fanny/Fingerpainting (detail)

35
Martin Puryear, Lever No. 3, 1989, carved and painted wood, 2.146 x 4.115 x 0.330 m ($84^{1}/_{2}$ x 162 x 13 in.), Gift of the Collectors Committee