

Intention in Acquisition

October 25, 2019

Coding Our Collection: The National Gallery of Art Datathon



Williams



MACALESTER

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

New College
THE HONORS COLLEGE of Florida

Sofie Netteberg

- B.A. with major in Statistics, concentration in Economic Development Studies, Class of 2020

Raven McKnight

- B.A. with major in Applied Mathematics & Statistics, minor in Creative Writing, Class of 2020

Paulina Valdivieso

- B.A. with concentrations in Computer Science and Public Policy, Class of 2020

Faith Benamy

- B.A. with major in Psychology, 2012
- M.S. with major in Data Science, Class of 2020



Acquisition History

This page shows how acquisitions have changed over time at the Gallery. We can explore acquisition by the gender or nationality of the artist, the type of object, or whether the object was purchased or donated. Scroll down to explore the data and see our key takeaways!

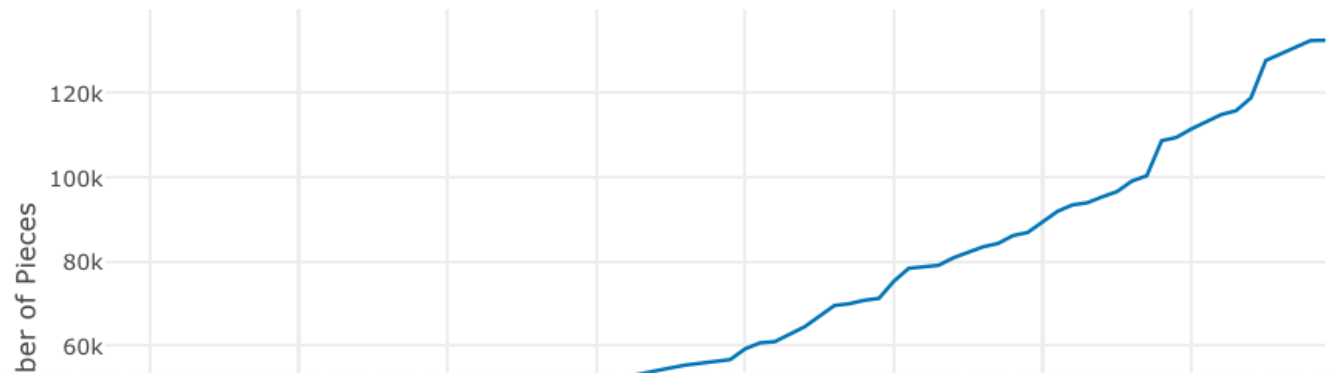
Make selections

Choose a view:

- Acquisitions by Year
- Cumulative Growth

Filter by:

- Artist Gender

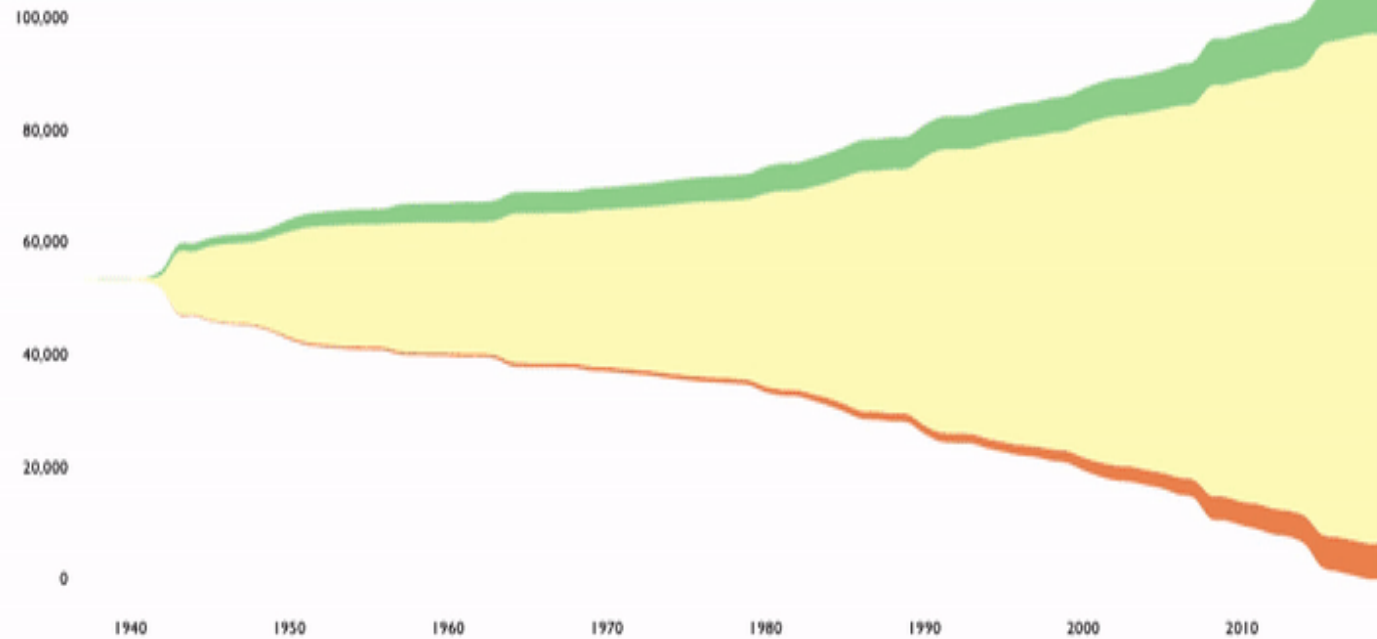


“Does limited storage and the size of our collection limit how much we now collect?”

- Mission Statement - 2. Collection
 - “The Gallery **limits its active art collecting to paintings, sculpture, and works of art on paper, from the late middle ages to the present, from Europe and the United States.** Trustee policy allows the Gallery to accept, in addition, other significant works of art in conjunction with major donations in the primary areas of the Gallery's collections.”
- The Gallery was gifted its first work in 1937
- The Gallery **does not deaccession** any works of art*
- Fewer than 20% of works coming into the museum were directly purchased, the vast majority instead come from donations

Growth of the collection across various categories

Size of Collection



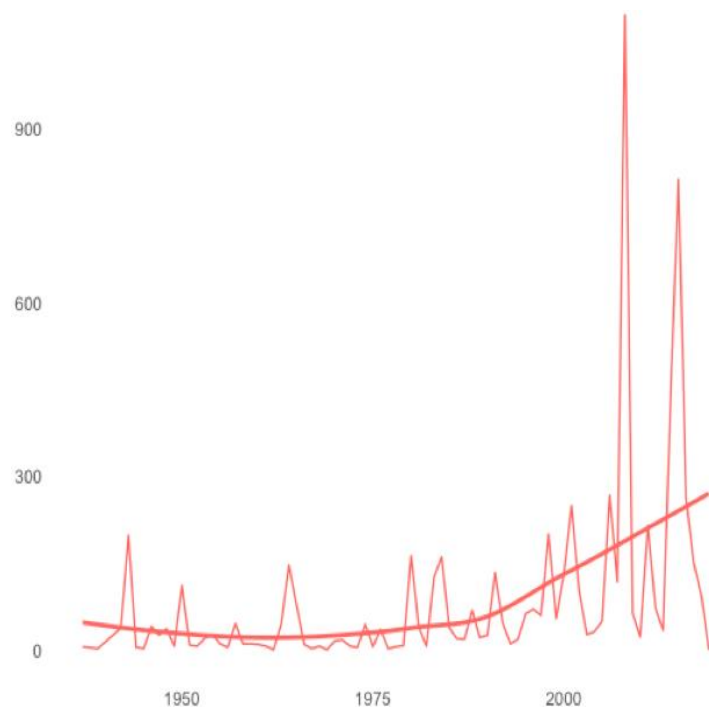
This plot shows the growth of the collection across various categories.

View by:

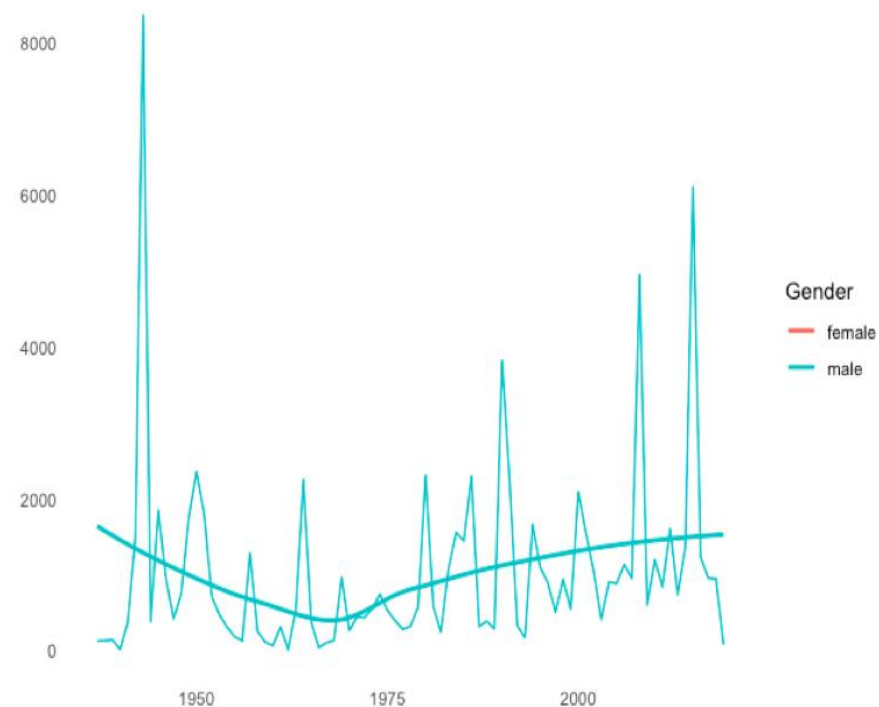
- Artist Gender
- Artist Nationality
- Department
- Object Classification
- Method of Acquisition

“Can we see a point where we begin to acquire more works by women artists?”

Accessions of works by women over time



Accessions of works by men over time

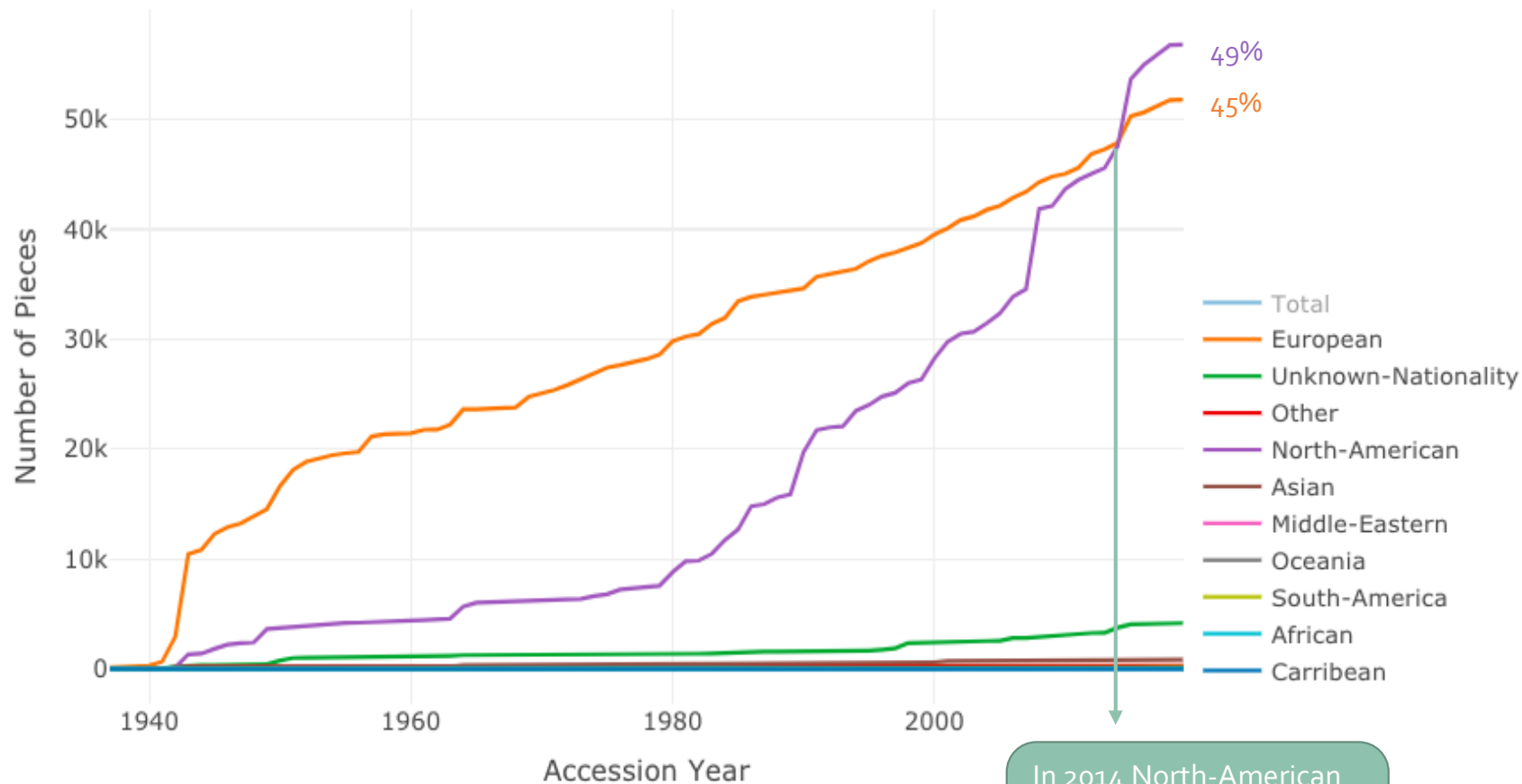


Source: National Gallery of Art Internal Collection, excludes Index of American Design

*A matching algorithm was run using a gender API (<https://gender-api.com/>) as a reference to redefine unknown artists as male or female; Unknown artists are corporations, couples, anonymous artists, and named artists with which the matching algorithm did not have 95% confidence to redefine as male or female

“When did we start collecting significant amounts of American art?”

Proportion of works of art by artist nationality



In 2014 North-American passes European as the most represented nationality

“How has the collection grown across different media over time?”

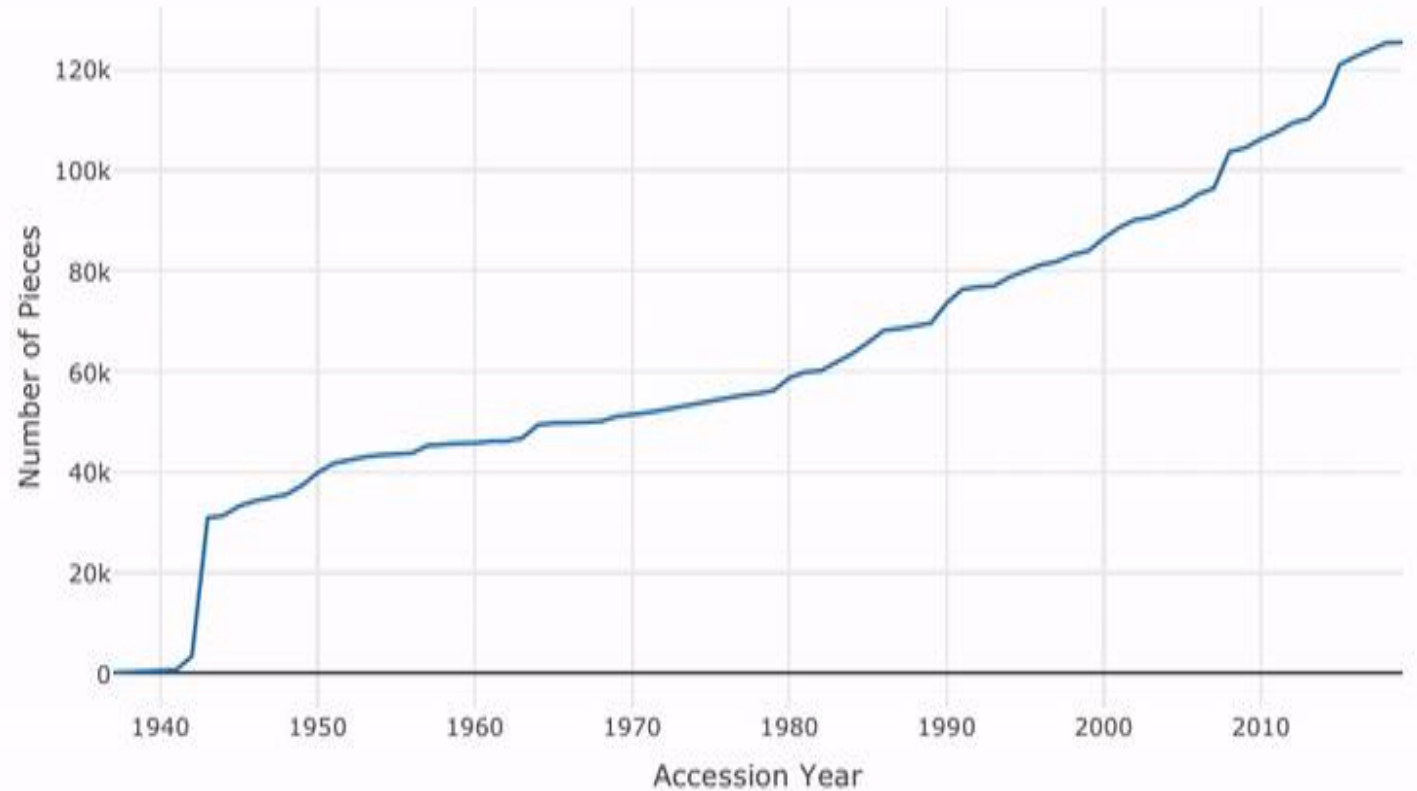
Make selections

Choose a view:

- Acquisitions by Year
- Cumulative Growth

Filter by:

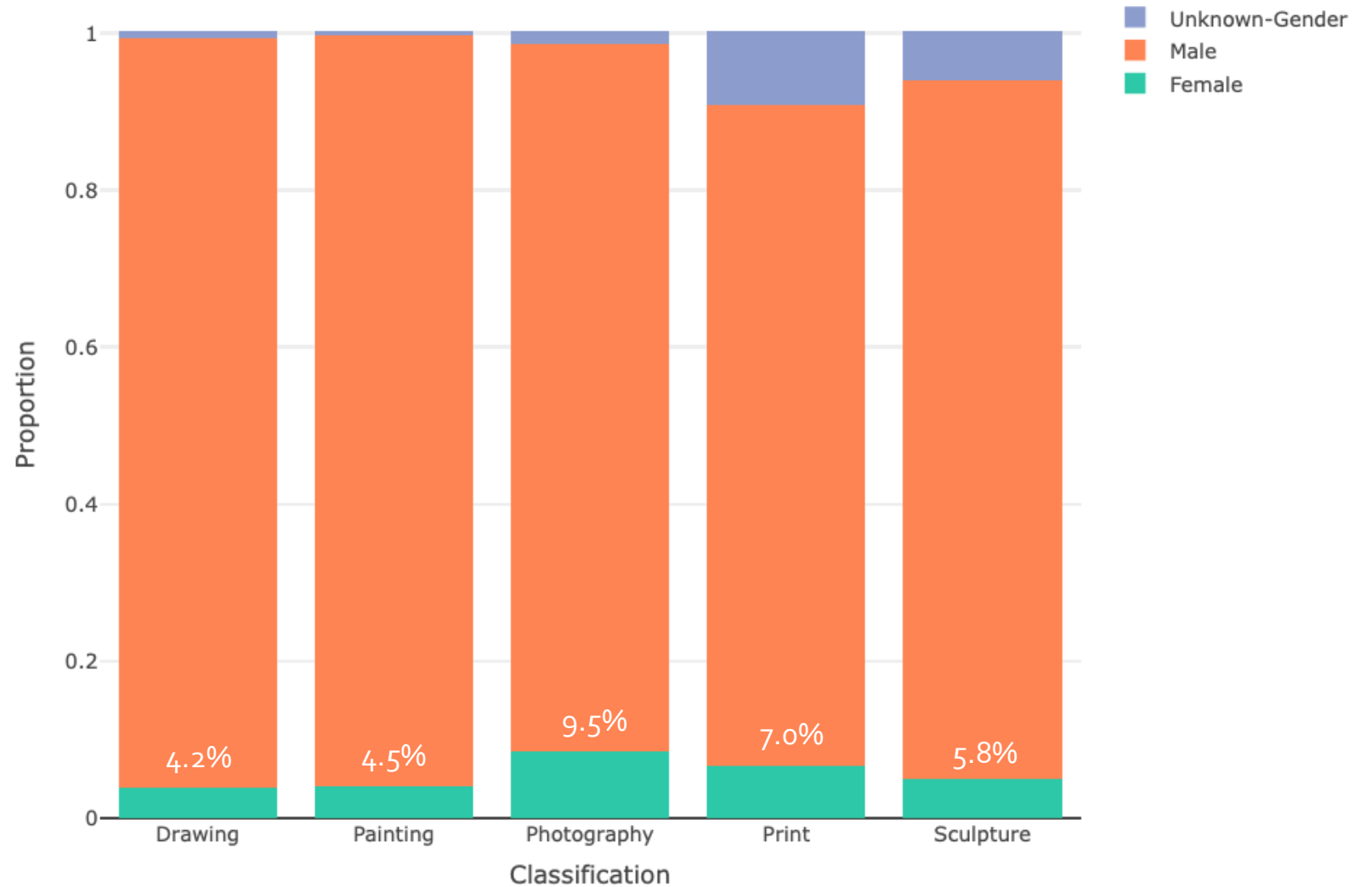
- Artist Gender
- Artist Nationality
- Object Classification
- Method of Acquisition
- Exclude Index of American Design



Source: National Gallery of Art Internal Collection, excludes Index of American Design

*Works classified as Technical Material not included; Media Art works assigned to Photography, Portfolio and Volume assigned to Print, Decorative Art assigned to Sculpture

Proportion of works by gender in the entire collection and by media type



What are the differences between purchases, donations, and highlights? Can we see intentionality in recent acquisitions?

ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHTS



The Gallery is constantly building its collections through gift and purchase. A number of important works recently acquired are featured here.



Henri Matisse
Open Window, Collioure
1905
Painting



Arshile Gorky
The Artist and His Mother
c. 1926-c. 1942
Painting



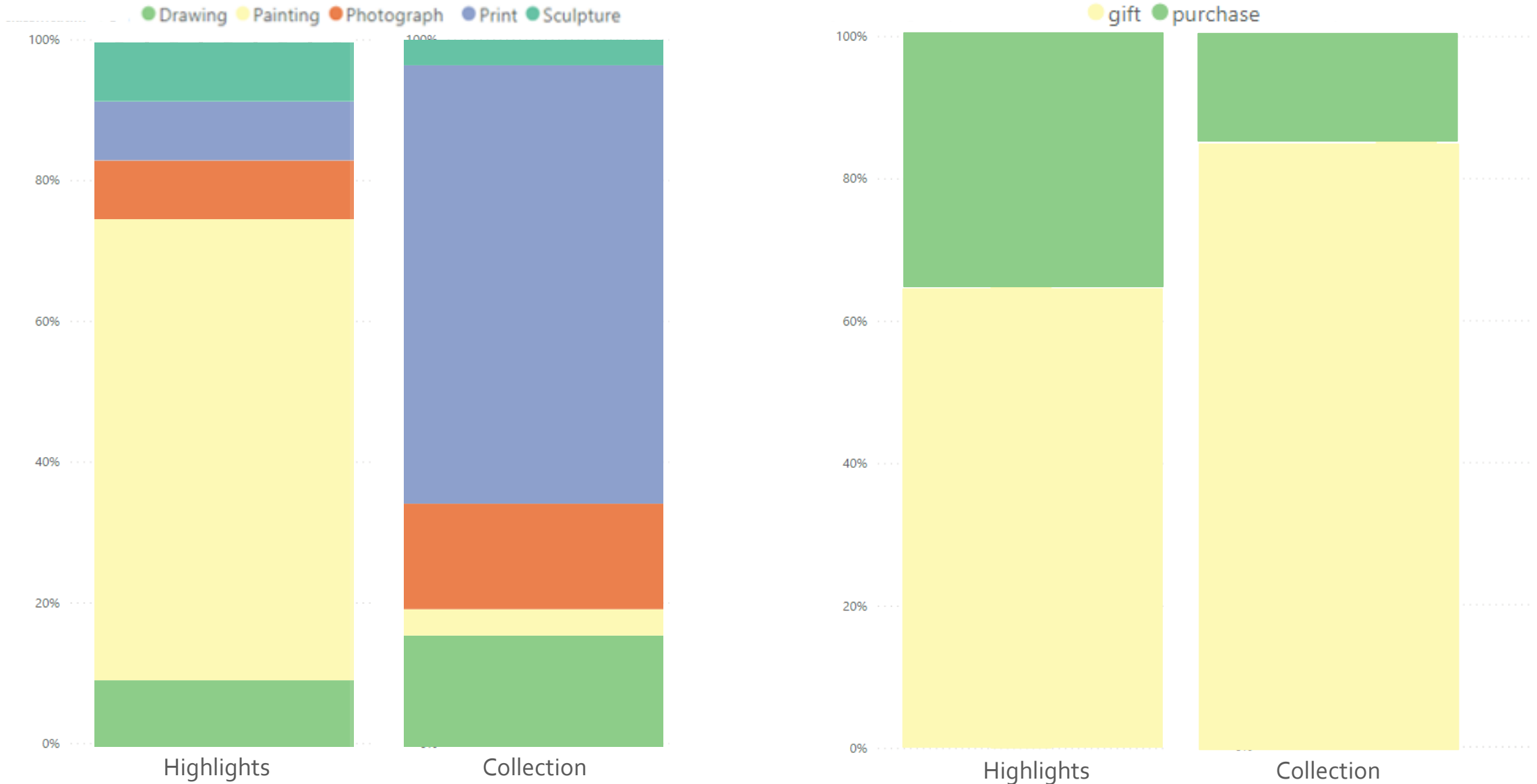
Alexander Calder
Vertical Constellation with Bomb
1943
Sculpture



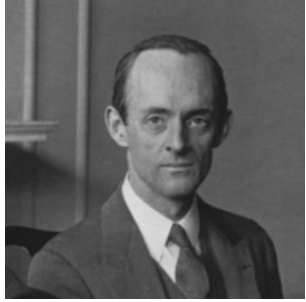
Jackson Pollock
Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)
1950
Painting

- The Gallery has selected 75 highlight pieces on its website
- Our group considers how these pieces compare to the average mix in their collection
 - Example: 63% of highlighted pieces are paintings, though paintings make up just 3% of the collection

Comparison of highlighted pieces to the entire collection by media and acquisition types



Media types acquired by The Gallery's five directors, including both purchased and donated works



David E. Finley Jr.

John Walker

J. Carter Brown

Earl A. Powell III

Kaywin Feldman

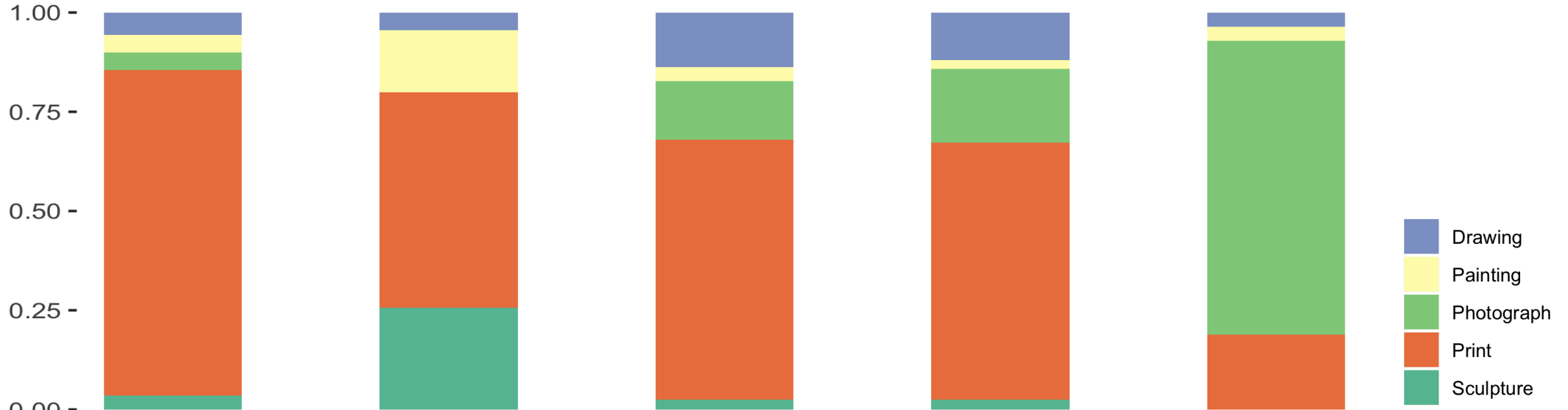
• 1938 - 1956 (18 years)

• 1956 - 1968 (12 years)

• 1968 - 1993 (25 years)

• 1993 - 2019 (26 years)

• 2019 (1 year)



Source: National Gallery of Art Internal Collection, excludes Index of American Design

Questions?

- Sofie Netteberg, B.A. Williams College '20
- Raven McKnight, B.A. Macalester College '20
- Paulina Valdivieso, B.A. Bennington College '20
- Faith Benamy, M.S. New College Florida '20