

Eclipse of the Sun Now

One hundred years ago, George Grosz painted *Eclipse of the Sun*, a scathing critique of fascism and one of the most significant artworks in the Heckscher Museum's collection. This exhibition explores the painting's enduring message alongside politically engaged art created over the last century. Born in Berlin in 1893, Grosz became a political artist in the aftermath of World War I. His *Eclipse of the Sun*, created in 1926, satirizes the corruption, violence, and apathy of the German government and society during this period. In the 1930s, when the Nazis labeled him a "degenerate" artist, Grosz fled to the United States. He and his family moved here, to Huntington, New York, in 1947. Following his death in 1959, the Heckscher Museum led a community fundraising campaign to purchase *Eclipse of the Sun*, ensuring that it would remain accessible to the public as a cornerstone of the collection.

This exhibition places *Eclipse of the Sun* and other art by Grosz in dialogue with work by leading artists of our time drawn from the collections of the Heckscher Museum and the Art Bridges Foundation. The artworks on view address interrelated themes including war, immigration, civil rights, mass media, and the environment. *Eclipse of the Sun Now* celebrates the power of art—to offer solace, to foster resistance, and to channel hope.

Curated by Karli Wurzelbacher, PhD, Chief Curator with
Meredith A. Brown, PhD, Consulting Curator of Contemporary Art



Hear from the artists, community members, and more on the Bloomberg Audio Guide.

This exhibition was made possible through a leadership gift from Andrea B. and Peter D. Klein. Additional support provided by Art Bridges Foundation.



Public support provided by the New York State Council on the Arts and the Town of Huntington, New York.

Thank you to the *Eclipse of the Sun* Centennial co-Chairs Mike Durney, Susan Van Scoy, and Rozita Shay, as well as its lead supporters Richard T. Cunniff, Jr., Robert and Priscilla Hughes, and Andrea B. and Peter D. Klein.

Liberation

In the 1930s, the Nazis denounced George Grosz as a “degenerate” artist and stripped him of his citizenship. Building a new life was difficult, yet he found personal, political, and creative freedom in America. These same opportunities were often denied to women and people of color. This gallery highlights the role of art in struggles for equality and civil rights spanning the 1960s to the present. Some of the artworks are beacons of hope and solidarity. Others challenge us to hold ourselves and our institutions accountable.



Jack Levine

American, 1915–2010

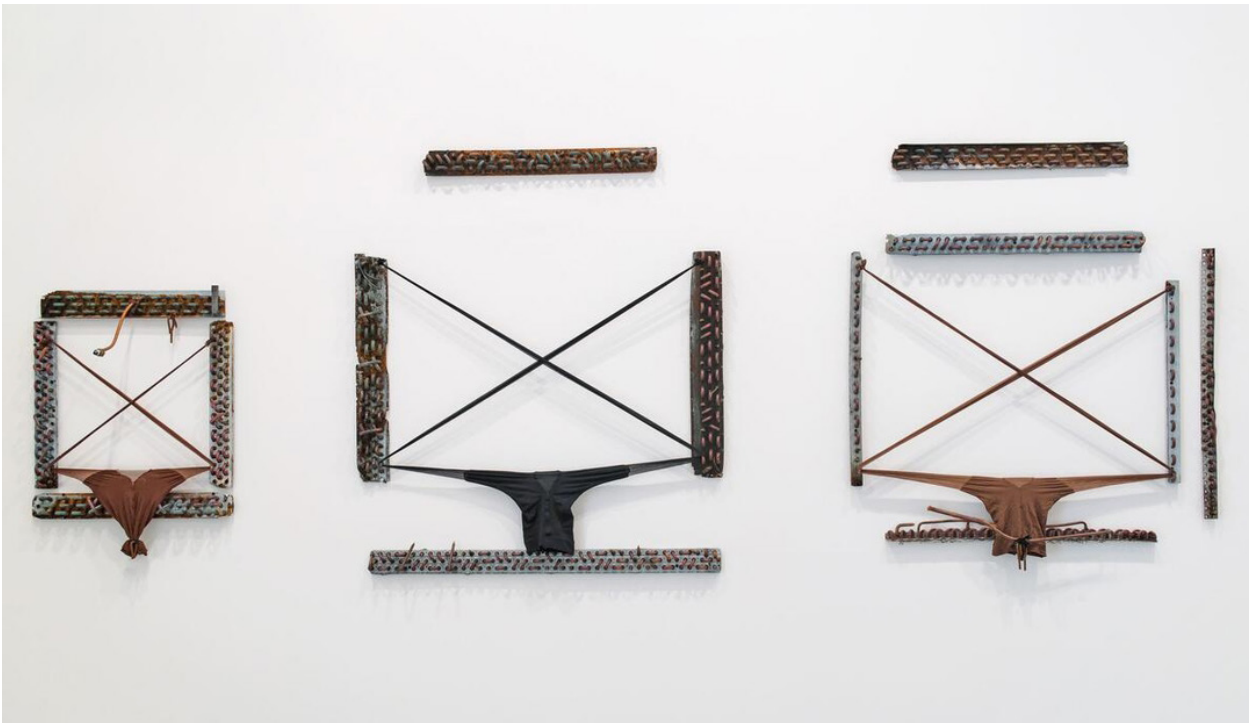
Witches' Sabbath

1963

Oil on canvas

Art Bridges

George Grosz directly inspired Jack Levine's biting social realism. Here, Levine skewers anti-communist sentiment within the US government. During the Cold War, Senator Joseph McCarthy (shown at center) and the House Un-American Activities Committee investigated citizens for their political beliefs. Levine himself, as well as Elizabeth Catlett, whose sculpture is on view nearby, were two of their thousands of targets. In *Witches' Sabbath*, grotesque officials are joined by apparitions of Klan members, a satanic goat, and "stool pigeons" symbolizing informers. Levine has left an empty place for us, the viewers of the painting, at the bottom of the table. Are we a part of this group, or are we the focus of their scrutiny?



Senga Nengudi

American, b. 1943

A.C.Q. - Cross Eyed; A.C.Q. - Cross Ban; A.C.Q. - Cross Waves

2016–17

Refrigerator parts and nylon pantyhose

Art Bridges

In *A.C.Q.* (“Air Conditioning Queen”), Senga Nengudi combines rigid machine parts with stretchy pantyhose to explore gender and ethnicity. The industrial metal objects exude masculinity, while the hosiery’s delicate elasticity ties intimately to the female body and to African American beauty standards—pantyhose have long been used for protection and styling in Black haircare. Nengudi repurposes secondhand stockings shaped and stretched by various bodies. They hold the “residual energy of what it means for a woman to wear these objects,” she explains. In this material tension, the works symbolize endurance and resilience.



Elizabeth Catlett

American and Mexican, 1915–2012

Homage to My Young Black Sisters

1968

Red cedar

Art Bridges

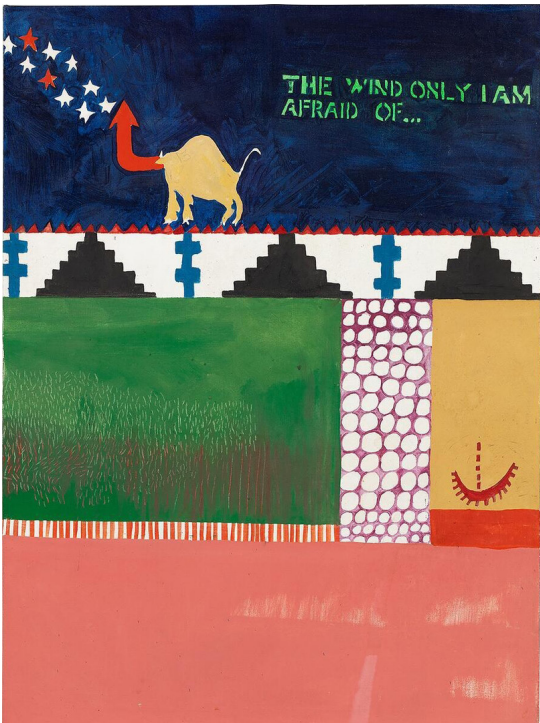
Elizabeth Catlett created this sculpture in Mexico, where she moved in 1946 to make prints at the People's Graphic Arts Workshop, a collective that promoted social justice. In 1962, the US declared her an “undesirable alien” because of her political activism. Barred from returning to America, she created *Homage to My Young Black Sisters* to express her solidarity with the Civil Rights and Feminist movements from afar. She said, “I have always wanted my art . . . to reflect us, to relate to us, to stimulate us, to make us aware of our potential. We have to create an art for liberation and for life.”



Hear Tiarra Inez Brown, Executive Director of the Huntington African American Museum, share her thoughts on this artwork and listen to a verbal description.



Art Bridges



Billy “War Soldier” Soza

Cahuilla/Soboba Luiseño/Apache, 1949–2014

The Wind Only I Am Afraid Of

1969

Oil on canvas

Art Bridges

Billy “War Soldier” Soza was a formative figure at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was also a Vietnam War veteran and a major activist in the American Indian Movement (AIM) during the 1960s and 1970s. Soza used art as advocacy for Indigenous communities across the US. *The Wind Only I Am Afraid Of* exemplifies his style, which blends varied brushstrokes, bold colors, text, and political iconography. He explained, “through my art I say what is inside of me and direct it at the U.S. Government.”



Watch a video about this painting and the artist’s political activism and listen to a verbal description of this work.

Art  Bridges



Sue Coe

American, b. England, 1951

The Assassination of Malcolm X

1985

Graphite, gouache, and collage on paper

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift from the Collection of Ninah and Michael Lynne, 2023.7

Sue Coe works at the juncture of art and social activism to expose injustices and abuses of power. In the mid-1980s, she produced an extended body of work on Malcolm X, dramatizing moments from the Black leader's life and assassination through her intense expressive style. This politically charged, socially conscious work functions as visual journalism: bearing witness to the assassination of a key Civil Rights figure and framing that violence within a critique of American racism and institutional power.



vanessa german

American, b. 1976

Oh when you're low, I'll be there to hold you tight to me

c. 2005–09

Mixed media

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of Heather Arnet and David Shumway, 2024.8

vanessa german is an artist, activist, and poet whose work is rooted in themes of identity, empowerment, and social justice. She finds inspiration in the history of African sculpture, including the spiritual lineage of Central African nkisi nkondi—guardian statues imbued with protective ritual power. Attesting to the reality of racial violence captured in the photograph at its heart, this sculpture channels anger, grief, commemoration, and healing.



Listen to a verbal description of this work.



Alison Saar

American, b. 1956

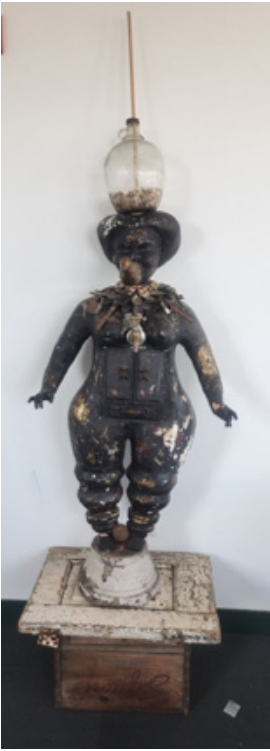
Reapers

2021

Linoleum cut on hand-dyed found sugar sacks

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, 2021.12

Alison Saar explores the resilience of Black womanhood in this reimagining of the character “Topsy” from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851–52). She shows multiple figures hiding in a cotton field awaiting a chance to fight for their freedom. They wield as weapons the tools associated with the crops cultivated by enslaved people in North and South America: sugarcane, tobacco, indigo, rice, and cotton. By printing the image on a found sugar sack dyed indigo blue, Saar further grounds this image in the history of slavery.



vanessa german

American, b. 1976

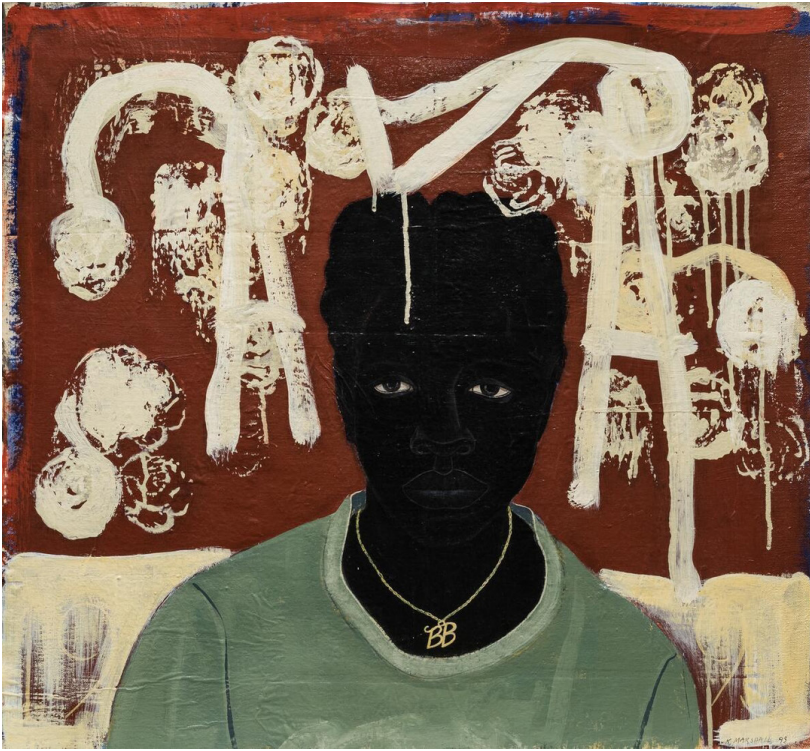
The Tioga Street Soul Queen, or Everything Old Is Made New Again and Again and Again

2010

Mixed media

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of the Women and Girls Foundation, Pittsburgh, PA, 2025.7

vanessa german describes herself as a “citizen artist.” Her visually striking and spiritually resonant artworks challenge oppression while celebrating Black identity, history, and collective resilience. The form of this sculpture, including the assembled metal components and the objects located within its center, references Central African nkisi nkondi—guardian statues imbued with protective ritual power. When creating this work from old and discarded material, german imagined installing it in an empty lot on Pittsburgh’s Tioga Street to serve as a symbol of transformation and a locus of community, protest, and ancestral connection. She has described her “power figures” as “active technologies of the soul that touch the vast history that exists in the spiral of our DNA.”



Kerry James Marshall

American, b. 1955

Lost Boys: AKA BB

1993

Acrylic and collage on canvas mounted on board

Art Bridges

This artwork is part of Kerry James Marshall's *Lost Boys* series of reverent portraits of young Black men. Referencing the band of boys in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, Marshall reframes Neverland as America. Rather than a magical place where the boys' imaginations keep them young forever, in American Neverland, Black boys are denied the opportunity to grow up because of systemic racism, incarceration, violence, and death. Marshall depicts the figure facing forward, much like ancient Egyptian funerary portraits or Orthodox Christian icons, imbuing the work with a sense of loss and veneration. He has explained that the deep black color of the skin is meant to evoke "the simultaneity of presence and absence."



Philip Guston

American, b. Canada, 1913–1980

Cigar

1969

Oil on canvas

Art Bridges

After a period of creating apolitical abstract paintings, Philip Guston returned to figuration in part as a response to the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movement. *Cigar* features a cartoonish figure based on Ku Klux Klan members he encountered while growing up as the child of Jewish immigrants in Southern California. He subverted the terror the KKK spread by rendering them in a style borrowed from comic books. Exploring the idea that every human has the potential for evil, he said, “I perceive myself as being behind the hood.” This self-reflection prompts viewers to question our own capacity for hate and complicity.



Watch a video of the artist working, learn about his life and career, and listen to a verbal description of this work.



Art Bridges

Art Survives

In 1926, before he escaped Nazi Germany to live in exile in the United States, George Grosz painted *Eclipse of the Sun* to protest the rise of fascism and economic, political, and moral corruption. This gallery brings together artworks that also reflect—and attempt to repair—a world fragmented by political upheaval. Shaped by experiences of immigration and migration, the artists included here bear witness to violence and racism while embracing the capacity of art to encourage resilience and offer solace.



George Grosz

American, b. Germany, 1893–1959

Eclipse of the Sun

1926

Oil on canvas

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, 1968.1

George Grosz's *Eclipse of the Sun* criticizes the corruption, violence, and apathy of the government and society more broadly during the tumultuous period following Germany's defeat in World War I. Conceived on the scale of a traditional history painting, the composition gathers mindless bureaucrats around a bloated caricature of the decorated general Paul von Hindenburg (who would later name Adolf Hitler chancellor in 1933). A wealthy industrialist toting weapons whispers in his ear, while a donkey symbolizing the German people wears blinders of ignorance. Grosz depicts a dollar sign blocking the sun, a symbol of life, nature, and enlightenment. To further convey the dizzying instability of the period, he shows the figures teetering between a burning landscape above and a skeleton and an imprisoned youth below.



Hear more about the meanings of this painting and how the museum acquired it in 1968 and listen to a verbal description.



Cannupa Hanska Luger

Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara/Lakota, b. 1979

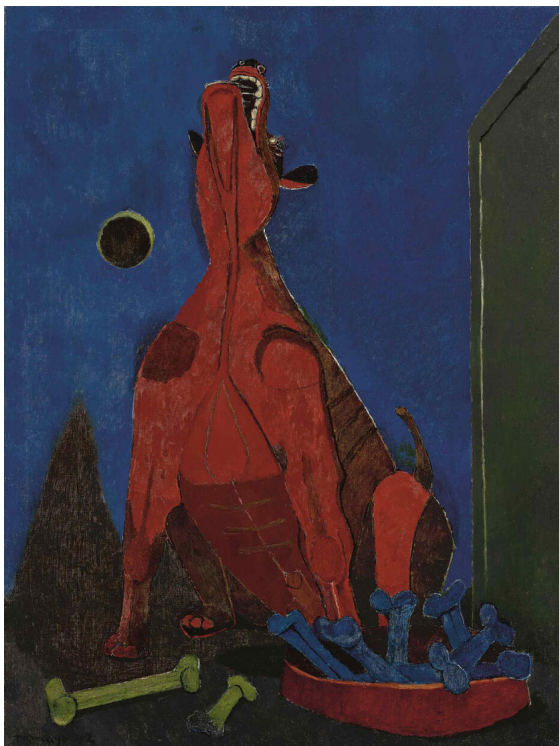
Corruption

2021

Ceramic and mixed media

Art Bridges

Like George Grosz's *Eclipse of the Sun*, this sculpture addresses corruption. It belongs to Cannupa Hanska Luger's "New Myth" series representing the body parts of monstrous figures. Luger describes these creatures as embodiments of "the monstrosity of the oppressive systems which we have been forced to function within." Each figure in the series personifies societal harms that disproportionately impact Indigenous communities. Importantly, Luger portrays the imagined monsters as beheaded, broken, and defeated, underscoring his belief that we all possess the agency to confront and slay present-day demons.



Rufino Tamayo

Mexican, 1899–1991

Perro aullando a la luna [Dog Howling at the Moon]

1942

Oil on canvas

Art Bridges

Rufino Tamayo believed that “the artist is an antenna. . . . Art is fundamentally a message, a means of communication.” In this painting, he transmits the anguish of World War II. As in George Grosz’s *Eclipse of the Sun*, Tamayo’s composition features a celestial body, bones, the color red, and a claustrophobic sense of space. Conveying primal fear and mourning, the howling dog references Pablo Picasso’s antiwar painting *Guernica* (1937) and Mesoamerican funerary statuettes that served as guides to the underworld.



Watch a video exploring the imagery in this painting and the artist’s influences and listen to a verbal description.



Art Bridges



Eldzier Cortor

American, 1916–2015

Southern Souvenir No. II

c. 1948

Oil on board mounted on masonite on wood strainer

Art Bridges

Eldzier Cortor moved from Virginia to Chicago as part of the Great Migration, in which an estimated 1.6 million African Americans left the segregated South between 1910 and 1940. The imagery in this painting implies the racial violence, including lynching, that they were fleeing. Dismembered Black female bodies appear amidst torn wallpaper, newspapers from Birmingham and Charleston, a dead tree, and a crumbling brick facade. Without depicting a specific event, *Southern Souvenir No. II* exposes the physical, psychological, and societal tolls of racism.



Joe Overstreet

American, 1933–2019

Boxes

1970

Acrylic on constructed canvas with metal grommets and cotton rope
Art Bridges

Joe Overstreet described his artwork as “tent-like,” both precarious and protective. Rather than making a painting meant to hang flat on a wall, he engineered an unstretched canvas that can be tethered to the ceiling and floor in different configurations. He connected this form to the experience of being Black in the US, saying, “I was making nomadic art. . . . We had survived with our art by rolling it up and moving it all over. . . . I felt like a nomad myself, with all the insensitivity in America.”



Jacob Lawrence

American, 1917–2000

Builders (Stained Glass Window)

2000

Silkscreen on paper

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Promised Gift of Andrea B. and Peter D. Klein

Jacob Lawrence was a self-described “child of the Great Migration.” Although raised in Harlem, the mass movement of African Americans including his parents from the rural South to Northern industrialized cities profoundly shaped his life and art. Blending figurative and abstract styles, bold colors and contrasting forms, Lawrence imbued *Builders* with a visual dynamism that represents his belief in the dignity of work. Evoking both artistic creation and social struggle, the theme of building, for Lawrence, was a symbol of “the human capacity to build, to not tear down.”



Kenji Nakahashi

Japanese, 1947–2017

The White House

1984

Chromogenic color print

Memory

1985

Gelatin silver print

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Anonymous gifts in memory of Kenji Nakahashi, 2022.1.30, 2022.1.19

Kenji Nakahashi began creating experimental photographs soon after he moved from Japan to New York City in 1973. He often arranged or altered found objects to produce images open to a range of interpretations. In these two works, he addresses ideas including power and erasure. In *The White House*, he cropped and partially effaced the back of a twenty-dollar bill. In *Memory*, he cropped and repeated one page of a picture album belonging to his friend Saye (Fusaye) Ikeda, a California-born writer and activist. During World War II, the US Government incarcerated her and more than ten thousand other Japanese Americans at the Gila River internment camp in Arizona.



Kenji Nakahashi

Japanese, 1947–2017

Memory

1985

Gelatin silver print

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Anonymous gifts in memory of Kenji Nakahashi 2022.1.19

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Sheida Soleimani

Iranian-American, b. 1990

Deltang

2024

Archival pigment print

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase with funds provided by Rozita Shay, 2026.3.1

In her most recent photographic series, Sheida Soleimani excavates her parents' personal history as pro-democracy activists forced to flee Iran after the 1979 revolution. She reconstructs their lives through fragmentary memories, archival imagery, and symbolic objects. Part documentation, part invention, these composite images create a new space where personal and political histories coincide. *Deltang* is a rare work that pictures her mother's face. Partially visible in a car's detached side mirror, Soleimani's "mâmân" appears in a lush landscape, protected from the scorpions patrolling the coarse pink sand. Translated literally as "tight" or "narrow hearted," *deltang* (دل‌تنگ) is the Farsi word for the pain of separation, or homesickness.



Hear the artist speak about her work and listen to a verbal description of this work.



Sheida Soleimani

Iranian-American, b. 1990

Khoy

2021

Archival pigment print

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, 2026.3.2

In her most recent photographic series, Sheida Soleimani excavates her parents' personal history as pro-democracy activists forced to flee Iran after the 1979 revolution. She reconstructs their lives through fragmentary memories, archival imagery, and symbolic objects. Part documentation, part invention, these composite images create a new space where personal and political histories coincide. In *Khoy*, her mother's arm emerges from a blurred photograph of the prison where she was once detained. The bird she cradles, which was nursed back to health by the artist and her mother, calls to mind the perils of migration. "When I began conceiving this series," Soleimani explains, "I started thinking about lineages of care, about caretaking as inheritance."



Hear the artist speak about her work and listen to a verbal description of this work.



Alice Rahon

Mexican, b. France, 1904–1987

La Conjuración de las Antilopas

1943

Oil on canvas

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. Alexander Liberman,
1980.8.10

Conserved in 2020 through the Adopt a Work of Art Program with
funds donated by Judith Bernhang

Alice Rahon believed that painting held magical, restorative power; she once described art as “a key to the invisible.” Before leaving Europe in 1939, just before the outbreak of World War II, she was an active member of the Surrealist group of artists and writers in Paris. She created this painting during the war, while living in Mexico, where she became a citizen in 1946. The imagery reflects her fascination with prehistoric cave art and petroglyphs. Constructed of white dots, the ethereal human and animal figures are set against a background evocative of the subconscious, the night sky, or deep time. Meandering black paths suggest movement, perhaps referring to her own immigration history.



Hear the artist speak about her work and listen to a verbal description of this work.



Henry Koerner

American, b. Austria, 1915–1991

The Pigeons

1948–49

Oil on board

Art Bridges

Henry Koerner fled to the US in 1938 following Hitler's takeover of Austria. He returned to war-torn Europe after World War II and learned that the Nazi regime had murdered his parents and brother in the Holocaust. One year later, he painted this dystopian scene. At the top, a figure chips away the stone veneer of the brick steps, which lead nowhere. The civic building we might expect to see, as pictured on the sandwich board at lower right, has disappeared. Emphasizing the ability of art to express what cannot be verbalized, Koerner said, "The most inner secrets you do not give away in words. If you could, you wouldn't have to paint."



Jacques Lipchitz

American, b. Lithuania, 1891–1973

Untitled from Flight

1965, published 1971

Lithograph

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. Michael Sherman,
2002.9.16

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Media Manipulation

George Grosz published his artwork in newspapers and magazines to ensure that his political message reached a wide audience. At the same time, he criticized society's mindless consumption of mass media. In *Eclipse of the Sun*, a donkey representing the public blindly ingests the papers set before it. The artworks in this gallery treat the media as both subject matter and raw material, experimenting with creative ways of engaging the viewer while prompting us to think critically about the information we receive.



George Grosz

American, b. Germany, 1893–1959

Ecce Homo

1923

Portfolio of offset lithographs and color lithographs

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of Charlotte Koons in honor of Chester R. Koons, aka 'Silver Bear,' George Grosz, and Stanley Twardowicz, 2014.9

This book reproduces 100 of George Grosz's early drawings and watercolors. Satirizing the collapse of society after World War I, he used crude angular lines and garish colors to depict injured veterans, desperate sex workers, grotesque officials, and the complacent middle class. In hopes of reaching a wide audience, Grosz's publisher printed approximately 10,000 copies of *Ecce Homo*. In 1923, the government confiscated some of the book's original drawings and put Grosz on trial for circulating obscene material. In the 1930s, copies of *Ecce Homo* were destroyed in Nazi book burnings.

Selected images from this portfolio are reproduced on the wall nearby and are available via the QR code.



See more drawings from this portfolio.



George Grosz

American, b. Germany, 1893–1959

Untitled (Man and Woman)

c. 1920s

Oil on paperboard, mounted on canvas

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of Ms. Vera Lazuk, 1987.4.2

George Grosz's unflattering portrayal of an upper-class couple is typical of his paintings from this period, when he associated with Germany's Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity) artists. The group aimed to present an unvarnished image of a society devastated by economic inequality and political unrest. Grosz said, "I try to recreate my world as realistically as possible. . . . The more of a nightmare it is, the more I must recreate it in an understandable way."

In this exhibition, the painting hangs on top of reproductions from the nearby book *Ecce Homo*, in which Grosz employed a different style to express the same critique in drawings and watercolors.



George Grosz

American, b. Germany, 1893–1959

Executioner

c. 1958

Collage on paper

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of Eva Ingersoll Gatling, 1997.19.1

These two collages are part of George Grosz's final body of work, which he created while living here in Huntington, New York. Remixing imagery culled from the popular press, he skewered America's post-World War II consumer culture and extended his career-long critique of economic inequality. In the *Executioner*, he created a chilling image through the juxtaposition of just two elements. In *Moveable Feast*, the scrambled imagery includes a smiling chef presiding over a stomach-turning spread of food and drink dotted with eyes and mouths.



George Grosz

American, b. Germany, 1893–1959

Moveable Feast

c. 1958

Collage on paper

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase: Heckscher Trust Fund, 1977.2

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Andreas Rentsch

Swiss and American, b. 1963

Entangled with Justice

2007

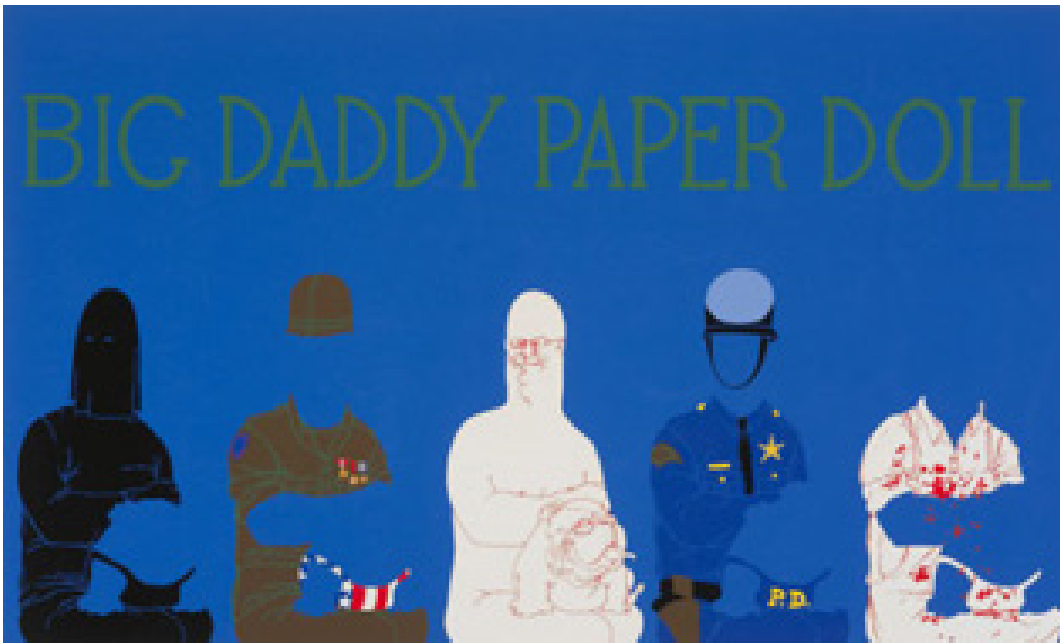
Unique Polaroid Type 55 negative

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase: Eva Gatling Fund, 2009.2.2

Andreas Rentsch, who grew up in a prison compound where his father was the warden, explores the connections of fate, geography, and politics through photography. He began his *Entangled with Justice* project in response to the 2004 publication of images documenting the torture of Iraqis detained by the US at Abu Ghraib prison. The series addresses the betrayal of justice and photography's role in truth-telling. Using discontinued Polaroid Type 55 film, Rentsch reconceived the prison photographs in his studio, leaving the lens open as he posed in positions of victims and torturers. He then let the photographs develop over weeks, months, even years, allowing chemical reactions to randomly alter the images.



Hear the artist speak about this work and listen to a verbal description.



May Stevens

American, 1924–2019

Big Daddy Paper Doll

1971

Serigraph on paper

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Sol Orlinsky, 1979.10.31

Working during the Vietnam War and the feminist art movement, May Stevens used the imagery of paper dolls to mock male-dominated society. The caricature of the nude white man in the center is based on her father. Stevens surrounded him with different outfits that the viewer can imagine dressing him up in: an executioner, a soldier, a policeman, and a butcher. These are many of the same archetypes that George Grosz often satirized. In Stevens's print, she uses humor to strip these flat patriarchal symbols of their power.



Cindy Sherman

American, b. 1954

Untitled Film Still #21

Gelatin silver prints

Art Bridges

Raised here in Huntington, NY, Cindy Sherman studied art at SUNY Buffalo from 1972 to 1976, during the rise of the Women's Movement. She created her renowned *Untitled Film Stills* series (1977–1980) amid Second Wave feminism's critique of the representation of women in mass media. In these images, she disguises herself as female archetypes drawn from 1950s and '60s film and advertising. By performing these familiar roles, Sherman reveals the constructed nature of femininity and the media's influence, prompting viewers to question their own assumptions about identity, gender, and authenticity.

Art  Bridges



Cindy Sherman

American, b. 1954

Untitled Film Still #2

1977

Gelatin silver prints

Art Bridges

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Art  Bridges



Cindy Sherman

American, b. 1954

Untitled Film Still #20

1979

Gelatin silver prints

Art Bridges

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Art  Bridges



Cindy Sherman

American, b. 1954

Untitled Film Still #13

1978

Gelatin silver prints

Art Bridges

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Art  Bridges



Cindy Sherman

American, b. 1954

Untitled Film Still #4

1977

Gelatin silver prints

Art Bridges

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Art  Bridges



Nam June Paik

American, b. Korea, 1932–2006

Internet Dweller: efpn.two.cvaph 1994

Vintage tv sets with light fixtures

Art Bridges

Created at the dawn of the internet age, Nam Jun Paik's video sculpture questions the relation between humans and ever-changing technology. The figure has vintage televisions for its eyes and mouth and an old-fashioned candlestick telephone for a nose. Addressing the "tyranny of TV," he said, "one must . . . know technology very well in order to be able to overcome it." The phrase "internet dweller" in the artwork's title predicts our contemporary digital and social media era, evoking the extent to which we live online.



Romare Bearden

American, 1911–1988

Memories from the series Ritual Bayou

c. 1972

Color photo-lithographs mounted on finished plywood

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gifts of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel S.

Mandel, 1978.9.5

Romare Bearden pieced together scenes of African American life from scraps of paper, photographs, and magazines. Imbuing images of family, nature, and everyday life with a sense of ritual, he rooted his work in memories from a childhood split between the rural South and his home in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. In the 1930s, Bearden took classes at the Art Students League with George Grosz, who made him the class monitor so that he could earn free tuition. Bearden later remembered that Grosz taught him how to "really observe," a skill he employed to dismantle stereotypes and create new representations of multifaceted Black identity.



Romare Bearden

American, 1911–1988

Byzantine Frieze from the series Ritual Bayou

c. 1972

Color photo-lithographs mounted on finished plywood

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gifts of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel S.

Mandel, 1978.9.2

Romare Bearden pieced together scenes of African American life from scraps of paper, photographs, and magazines. Imbuing images of family, nature, and everyday life with a sense of ritual, he rooted his work in memories from a childhood split between the rural South and his home in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. In the 1930s, Bearden took classes at the Art Students League with George Grosz, who made him the class monitor so that he could earn free tuition. Bearden later remembered that Grosz taught him how to "really observe," a skill he employed to dismantle stereotypes and create new representations of multifaceted Black identity.



Romare Bearden

American, 1911–1988

Mississippi Monday from the series Ritual Bayou

c. 1972

Color photo-lithographs mounted on finished plywood

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gifts of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel S.

Mandel, 1978.9.3

Romare Bearden pieced together scenes of African American life from scraps of paper, photographs, and magazines. Imbuing images of family, nature, and everyday life with a sense of ritual, he rooted his work in memories from a childhood split between the rural South and his home in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. In the 1930s, Bearden took classes at the Art Students League with George Grosz, who made him the class monitor so that he could earn free tuition. Bearden later remembered that Grosz taught him how to "really observe," a skill he employed to dismantle stereotypes and create new representations of multifaceted Black identity.



Romare Bearden

American, 1911–1988

Carolina Interior from the series Ritual Bayou

c. 1972

Color photo-lithographs mounted on finished plywood

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gifts of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel S. Mandel, 1978.9.4

Romare Bearden pieced together scenes of African American life from scraps of paper, photographs, and magazines. Imbuing images of family, nature, and everyday life with a sense of ritual, he rooted his work in memories from a childhood split between the rural South and his home in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. In the 1930s, Bearden took classes at the Art Students League with George Grosz, who made him the class monitor so that he could earn free tuition. Bearden later remembered that Grosz taught him how to “really observe,” a skill he employed to dismantle stereotypes and create new representations of multifaceted Black identity.



Mickalene Thomas

American, b. 1971

Portrait of Maya #10

2024

UV pigment print with four metallic silkscreen glitter and shimmer layers, a CMYK silkscreen central panel and matte varnish seal

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchases, 2025.1.2

“I believe images do change the world,” says Mickalene Thomas, known for her vibrant layered paintings and installations that reframe art history through a queer Black feminist lens. Whether depicting beautiful women with confident expressions, striking domestic interiors, or lush landscapes, her work blends advertising imagery, pop culture influences, and elements of craft, particularly decoupage and glitter. Thomas uses her art to celebrate female agency and to create new narratives about Black women and Black spaces.



Mickalene Thomas

American, b. 1971

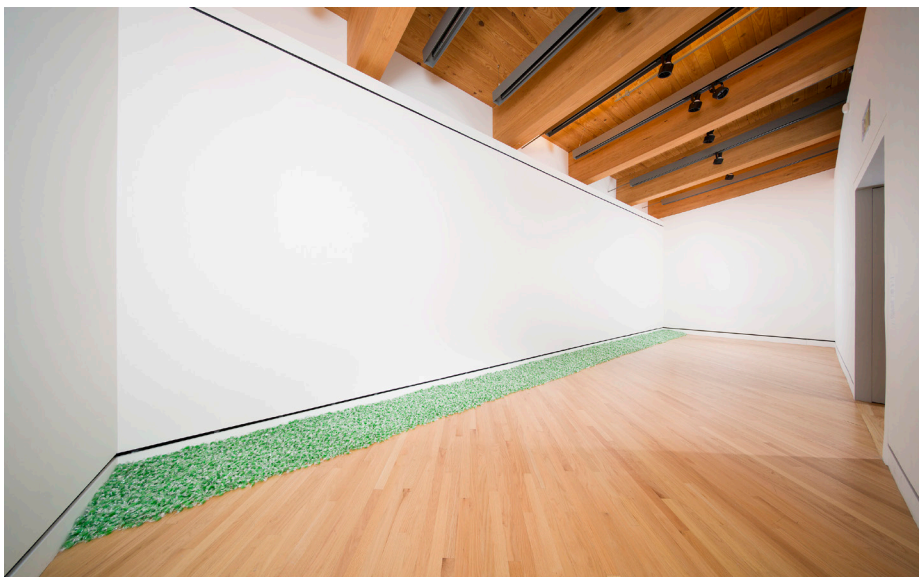
Interior: Red Couch and Landscape

2024

UV pigment print with two silkscreen metallic shimmer and glitter layers, two satin and gloss detail layers and a matte varnish silkscreen seal

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchases, 2025.1.1

“I believe images do change the world,” says Mickalene Thomas, known for her vibrant layered paintings and installations that reframe art history through a queer Black feminist lens. Whether depicting beautiful women with confident expressions, striking domestic interiors, or lush landscapes, her work blends advertising imagery, pop culture influences, and elements of craft, particularly decoupage and glitter. Thomas uses her art to celebrate female agency and to create new narratives about Black women and Black spaces.



Felix Gonzalez-Torres

American, b. Cuba, 1957–1996

“Untitled” (L.A.)

1991

Green candies individually wrapped in cellophane, endless supply

Jointly owned by Art Bridges and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

You are invited to take and eat a candy.

(Ingredient information available at desk).

Felix Gonzalez-Torres worked with everyday materials—candy, lightbulbs, paper—turning them into open-ended vehicles for meaning. This work, *“Untitled” (L.A.)*, is one of his “candy spill” installations. Visitors are invited to take and eat a piece, gradually depleting the artwork, which will be periodically replenished by museum staff. This participatory structure asks viewers to become active producers of the artwork’s meaning rather than passive recipients, drawing attention to the ways we consume and understand information. Created the year his romantic partner Ross Laycock died of an AIDS-related illness, the artwork’s cycle of loss and renewal is often seen as a meditation on mortality and continuance. However, Gonzalez-Torres resisted imposing a fixed interpretation, preferring his art to remain available for all to experience in a personal way.



Watch a video about the meanings of this interactive installation and listen to a verbal description of this work.



Hank Willis Thomas

American, b. 1976

Pitch Blackness / Off Whiteness

2009

Neon sign

Art Bridges

Conceptual artist Hank Willis Thomas considers the ways in which vision and language inform our society. *Pitch Blackness / Off Whiteness* is a meditation on themes of identity, perspective, commodity culture, and media. With the artist's characteristic pointedness and dark humor, the sign blinks in changing combinations of words, transforming the common adjectives "off-white" and "pitch-black" into the nouns "whiteness" and "blackness." Thomas challenges viewers to think critically about the construction of language and how it shapes our perceptions of race and society.

Life Source

George Grosz's *Eclipse of the Sun* depicts a landscape of fire and smoke, suggesting the ecological devastation of war and signaling the ruin of society. A dollar sign blocks the light of the sun, a symbol of nature and life. The artworks in this gallery also speak to the relation of ecology, politics, and the economy. They highlight how land and water shape identity and hold history, encouraging us to live in harmony within the global ecosystem that has the power to sustain or destroy us.



George Grosz

American, b. Germany, 1893–1959

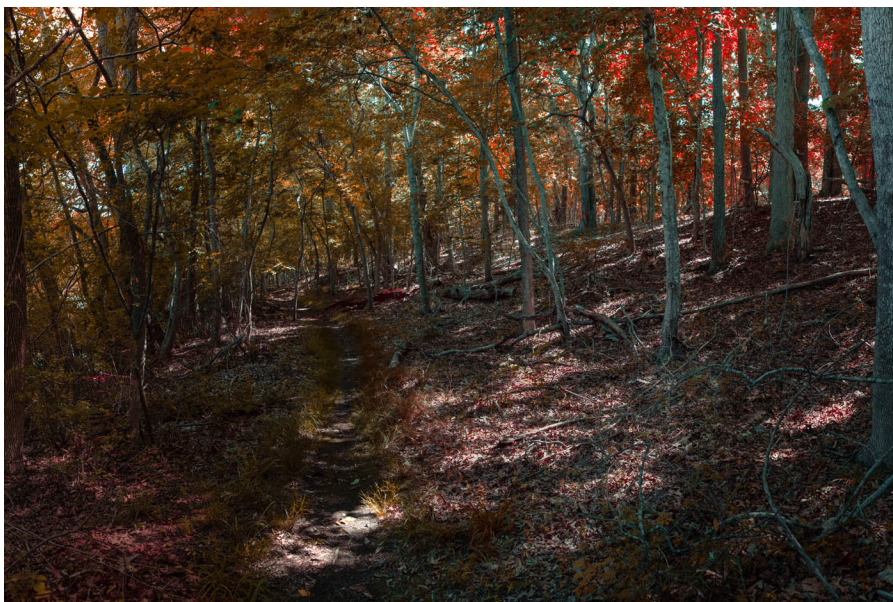
I Was Always Present

1942

Oil on canvas, mounted on panel

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of Eva Ingersoll Gatling, 1997.19.7

George Grosz created this image of an apocalyptic horseman wreathed in flames during World War II when he was living near the Long Island Sound in Douglaston, Queens. He spoke of sensing the winds of war from across the Atlantic: “Walking by the Sound . . . it often seemed to me that I saw a faraway shine of ghastly fires and a feeling of utter horror crept up in me.” When this painting appeared in *Life* magazine, Grosz explained that the title refers to “hatred and greed.”



Jeremy Dennis

American, b. 1990

Weeckatuck, from GELI (Gift Edition Long Island)

2016

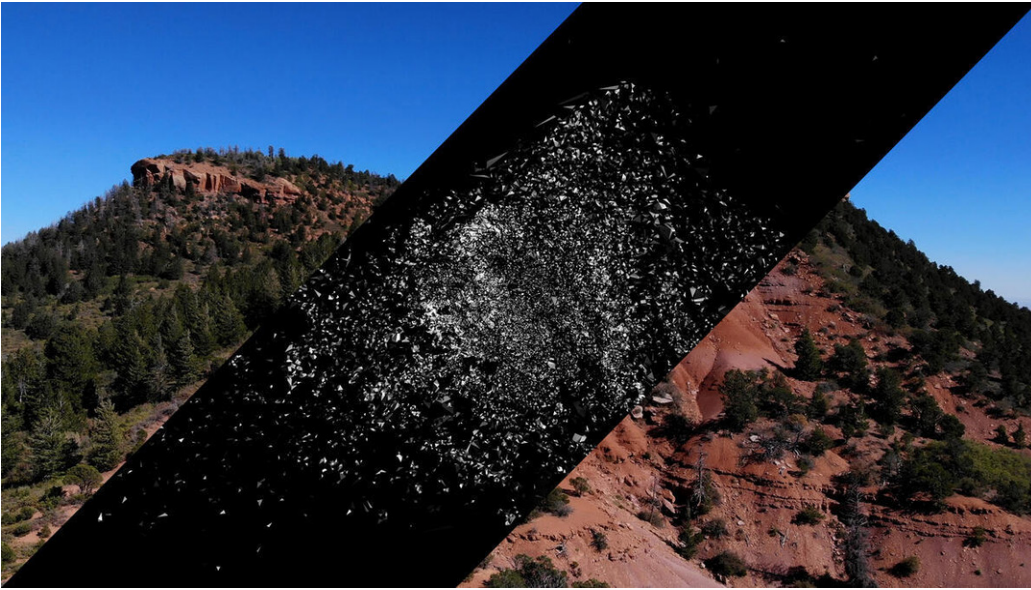
Archival inkjet print

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of the Artists and Ignivomous Inc.,
2022.6.12

Weeckatuck refers to the community of Indigenous people who hunted, fished, and farmed around Trout Pond on Long Island's South Fork. The photograph is part of Jeremy Dennis's project "On This Site," which consists of more than two hundred images of culturally significant Indigenous places across Long Island. Dennis explains, "Art isn't just a form of expression, but a form of survival and preservation, especially for Indigenous communities. Through art, we preserve our histories, challenge misconceptions, and reclaim our narratives."



Hear from the artist and listen to a verbal description.



Rick Silva

American, b. Brazil, 1977

Western Fronts: Cascade Siskiyou, Gold Butte, Grand Staircase-Escalante, and Bears Ears

2018

Video, 18 minutes, 32 seconds

Art Bridges

Integrating art and technology, Rick Silva's work poses questions about politics and place. *Western Fronts* uses aerial footage and other imagery of four national monuments in Oregon, California, Nevada, and Utah—areas home to Indigenous sites—to draw attention to the value that the US government places on industry and capital rather than on the natural world and people it displaces. Silva created this work in response to a 2017 executive order that stripped the national monuments' protected status and prioritized drilling and mining. By mapping the landscapes, then superimposing digital animation onto them, Silva challenges the ideal of the "American West" and calls attention to what he describes as a "near-future dystopia of computer-vision aided resource extraction."



Allora & Calzadilla

American, b. 1974; Cuban, b. 1971

Solar Catastrophe

2016

Broken solar cells on canvas

Art Bridges

Based in Puerto Rico, artist duo Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla use mixed media to explore climate change and sustainable energy. In *Solar Catastrophe*, shards of broken solar panels are arranged into an irregular grid, critiquing the contradictions of Puerto Rico's power grid: an island with abundant sun and potential for clean energy, yet dependent on a privatized, unreliable electrical system. For the artists, solar power becomes a symbol of both technological promise and political complexity, shaped, like human society, by competing interests and vulnerabilities. The fractured panels suggest a future for renewable energy that is as uncertain as it is necessary.



Adam Straus

American, b. 1956

Man and Fjord on Newspaper and Shopping Lists

2018

Oil on newspaper and shopping lists adhered to paper

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Gift of the Artist, 2022.2.2

Adam Straus rendered this dramatic glacial landscape on top of scrawled grocery lists and fragments of *The New York Times*, suggesting that issues including the climate crisis are inextricable from both our daily lives and broader history. The imagery and text contrasts the mundane with the catastrophic. Straus has said that his work expresses “interpretations of a disrupted world, politically, environmentally, and socially, but at the same time my desire to paint away the bad news.”



Ana Mendieta

American, b. Cuba, 1948–1985

Fundamento de Palo Monte: Silueta Series (Gunpowder Works)

1980

Super-8mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, color, silent, 5 minutes, 56 seconds

Art Bridges

In 1961, at age 12, Ana Mendieta fled Havana for the US as part of Operation Pedro Pan, a covert effort that helped over 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban children escape Fidel Castro's Cuba. She spent the following years in orphanages and foster homes in Iowa. This trauma fueled the exploration of land, displacement, and healing in her work: "I was attracted to nature because I didn't have a land, a Motherland." For this film, she shaped her silhouette in the dirt, filled it with gunpowder, set it alight, and recorded the smoke until only an ash-filled outline remained—an embodiment of destruction and rebirth, presence and absence. The title references Palo Monte Mayombe, an Afro-Cuban religion Mendieta drew on throughout her work as a source of ancestry and belonging.



Ana Mendieta

American, b. Cuba, 1948–1985

Untitled: Silueta Series

1979

Color photograph

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase: Town of
Huntington Art Acquisition Fund, 2025.3.1

Ana Mendieta explored land, displacement, and healing in her art. She explained, “I had to go to the source of life, to mother earth.” Between 1973 and 1980, she created the *Silueta* series—over 200 works in which she photographed or filmed her body in nature or fashioned its shape in the landscape using ephemeral materials like mud, sand, and algae. She viewed the series as “an ongoing dialogue” with nature, a ritual to “reestablish the bonds that unite me to the universe.”



Ana Mendieta

American, b. Cuba, 1948–1985

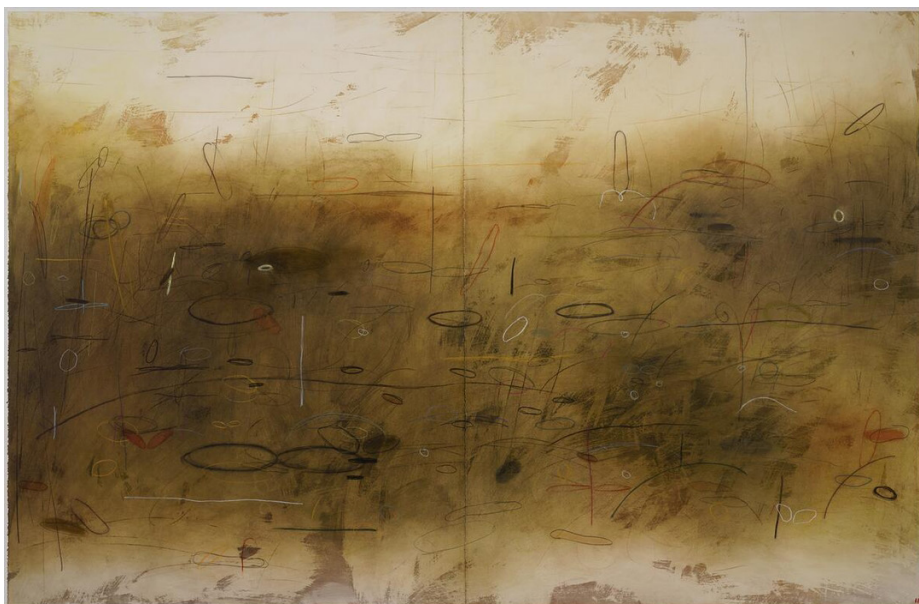
Untitled

1983

Color photograph

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase: Town of
Huntington Art Acquisition Fund, 2025.3.2

Ana Mendieta explored land, displacement, and healing in her art. She explained, “I had to go to the source of life, to mother earth.” She created this work nearby, at Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. Drawing on the iconography of prehistoric and pre-Columbian art, she incised two patterned bodily forms into an eroding beach cliff on the Long Island Sound and then photographed them. The two figures she carved feel ancient, as if they had been present for centuries. Their eventual disappearance, however, was inherent to Mendieta’s exploration of ephemerality.



Emmi Whitehorse

Navajo, b. 1957

Untitled (Rushing Water Series)

2000

Oil and chalk on paper mounted to canvas

Art Bridges

Emmi Whitehorse's meditative, atmospheric paintings are rooted in an Indigenous and feminist worldview that venerates the interconnectedness of nature. Her distinct visual language emerges from "the vastness of northern New Mexico, with the light of the sky above and the dark of the Earth below." Her work reflects the Navajo concept of *Hózhó*, "a harmonious balance of beauty, nature, humanity, and the whole universe," insisting on the stewardship and preservation of the environment. "What we do to the land comes back to us," she explains.



Howardena Pindell

American, b. 1943

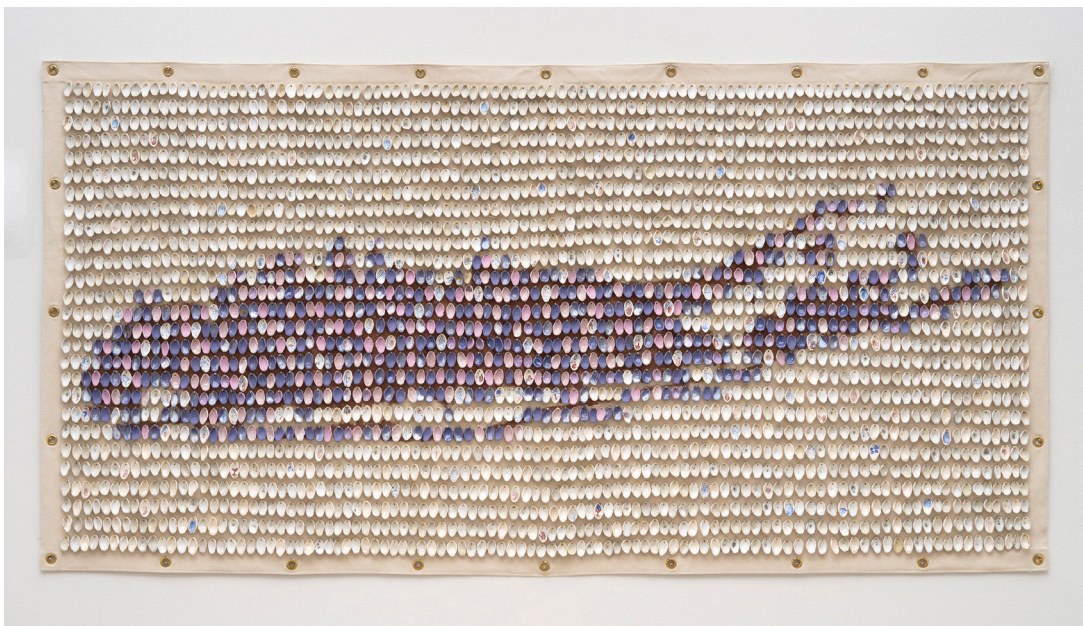
Relationships (Kandinsky #1)

1996

Mixed media

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, 1999.10

Howardena Pindell's artwork addresses war and ecological destruction while calling for peace and embodying cross-cultural exchange. It depicts a landscape of blue sea and sky polluted by smoke from the burning of Kuwait's oil fields during the Gulf War. Yet words including "joy" and "happiness" radiate across the canvas in different languages. Pindell's composition also brings together different visual languages. Colorful shapes and diagonal black lines suggest the art of European modernist Wassily Kandinsky, while the three-dimensional figure studded with nails references African sculpture.



Courtney M. Leonard

Shinnecock, b. 1980

CONTACT 2,023...

2023

Canvas, ceramic, brass, and artificial sinew

The Heckscher Museum of Art, Museum Purchase with Partial Funding from the Town of Huntington Art Acquisition Fund, 2023.1

With thousands of shell-like porcelain thumbprints, Courtney M. Leonard maps a personal, cultural, and ecological history of Long Island. She draws upon multiple decorative arts traditions to highlight the ongoing histories of contact between Indigenous people and European colonizers. The artwork's purple and cream colors reference the quahog and whelk shells that the Shinnecock have long used to make wampum beads, while the blue and white patterns echo delftware pottery that the Dutch and English imported to Long Island.



Listen to Michele Leonard, an elder with the Shinnecock Indian Nation, speak about the political activism in this work. Hear a verbal description, and more.



Evelyn Beatrice Longman (American, 1874–1954)

Youth Eternal, 1920

Marble, with bronze water spout

The Heckscher Museum of Art

August Heckscher Collection

Bronze frog and plaque conserved in 2021 in memory of artist and friend Norine E. Lyons from Bob, Karolyn, Andrea and Emily Harwood.

1959.352

This fountain was perhaps the first work to officially enter The Heckscher Museum of Art's collection, this fountain was commissioned by August and Anna Heckscher to serve as a focal point of the Museum, which opened in 1920. Longman, the prominent artist they hired, based the three figures on the Heckschers' grandchildren. The sculpture reflects the Heckschers' intersecting interests in art, nature, and the well-being of children.



Watch an "Art in a Minute" video about this work of art and listen to a verbal description.

