

Willem de Kooning

Untitled III

1975

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

Though considered one of the most prominent artists associated with the post-World War II New York school of Abstract Expressionism, the Dutch-born artist Willem de Kooning (1904-1997) generally rejected the idea of strictly defined artistic movements.

With little interest in exploring aesthetic principles for their own sake, de Kooning used gestural forms and intense colors to express a myriad of emotions and conceptual ideas. He once stated,

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 idea.

De Kooning painted *Untitled III* with an all-over composition, in which bold strokes of color activate the entire picture plane. The artist was in his early 70s when this painting was completed. De Kooning remained an innovative and energetic artist until he ceased painting at age 84.

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Masahisa Fukase

Family (Kazoku)

1971-89

Set of 36 vintage silver prints

Private Collection

Operating a photographic studio in a rural town in northern Japan and later moving to Tokyo, Japanese photographer Masahisa Fukase (1934-2012) embraced the tradition of his family, who were photographers for three generations. *Family* or *Kazoku*, is a rare, commemorative book and photographic collection taken inside the family studio that was maintained across the generations. The series illustrates Fukase's desire to meticulously document details of his family members at every stage of development, and the images are arranged chronologically. The photographs include images of his second wife, Yōko Wanibe, who eventually left Fukase in 1976. After 1976, the artist substituted a rotating cast of nude models as stand-ins for Yōko in the family images. A sense of melancholy permeates the works of Fukase, who was plagued by alcoholism, which eventually led to his death. "I work and photograph while hoping to stop everything," he once said. "In that sense, my work may be some kind of revenge drama about living now."

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Maya Lin

Cloudline: Mt. Rose at 8,500ft

2014

Marble and reclaimed wood

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art
Museum purchase with funds provided by
the Collections Committee 2015 and funds
from deaccessioning

New York-based artist and architect Maya Lin engages the language of a cartographer to create works whose poetic amplification of natural forms blur the boundaries between science and art. *Cloudline: Mt. Rose at 8,500ft* is a marble topographic model of Mount Rose, the 10,776-foot peak which stands above the north shore of Lake Tahoe. Mount Rose is often considered a birthplace of climate studies, given Dr. James Church's work there in the early 1900s. Church was an early climate scientist and cofounder of the Nevada Museum of Art who pioneered the field of snow surveying on Mount Rose in 1906. The instruments he invented to measure the water content of snow are still used today and are critical to the scientific study of snow pack, water supply, and forecasting.

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Édouard Manet

Bouquet de Fleurs

1882

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

French artist Édouard Manet (1832-1883), a pivotal figure in the development of the painterly style known as Impressionism, once mused, “There are no lines in nature, only areas of color, one against another.” *Bouquet de Fleurs* (1882) is one of a series of sixteen floral still life paintings that Manet completed before his death. At age fifty-one, while suffering from prolonged illness, Manet found both reprieve and inspiration in the flowers he painted. *Bouquet de Fleurs* reflects Manet’s unique interpretation of nature, and employs loose brushwork and unblended dashes of color, both of which are characteristic of Impressionism.

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Joan Mitchell

Untitled

1960

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

Joan Mitchell

Untitled

1954

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

Though she spent most of her career in France, Chicago-born painter Joan Mitchell (1925-1992) was an important figure in American art. Known for her gestural brushwork, emotional use of form, and bold use of color, Mitchell's work is often associated with the style known as Abstract Expressionism. Her observations of nature, particularly her own impressions and interpretations of it, greatly informed her paintings. Though her compositions appear spontaneous in their creation, Mitchell practiced restraint in her work. "The freedom in my work is quite controlled. I don't close my eyes and hope for the best," she once stated.

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Guiseppe Penone

Propagazione

2006

Print ink and permanent ink on scroll

Private Collection

Guiseppe Penone

Albero di 3,50 metri

1985

Fir wood

Private Collection

Contemporary Italian artist Guiseppe Penone utilizes industrially-cut pieces of lumber as the basis for his sculptures. Penone was born in Garessio, Italy, and the forest close to his childhood home provided the inspiration for his *Albero (tree)* series, begun in 1969. The artist carves directly into the wood, tracing the natural path of knotholes to extract portions of wood and expose the organic shape of the tree within. Returning the tree to its natural state, Penone reveals processes and natural forms that are normally hidden beneath external layers. He relies on his artistic practice to communicate with the natural environment. The artist explained, “I match my breathing to that of the green world around me, I feel the flow of the tree around my hand placed against the trunk.” Penone’s work demonstrates that even in an increasingly industrialized society, sensitive and mindful treatment of natural materials remains achievable.

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Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Portrait d'Edmond Maitre (Le Liseur)

1871

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

French artist Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), along with Claude Monet, was a leader in the development of the artistic style known as Impressionism. In contrast to the landscapes and nature-inspired work of Monet, Renoir's paintings often portray scenes of middle class life and leisure in 19th-century Paris, such as that depicted in *Portrait d'Edmond Maitre (Le Liseur)*. Though he maintained an interest in the optical perception of both light and color throughout his career, the brushwork of Renoir changed over the course of his life. The early works of Renoir are typical of Impressionism, with loose and spontaneous brushwork and compositional arrangements. As he began to study art from the Italian Renaissance, however, Renoir began to favor more structure in his brushwork and compositional format.

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Mark Rothko

Untitled (Yellow on Orange) no. 579

1957

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

Born Marcus Rothkowitz in Russia, Mark Rothko (1903-1970) and his family emigrated to the United States when the artist was a young child. His Russian-Jewish heritage and his early life experiences would profoundly influence his work throughout his life. Rather than the gestural slashes and drips of color favored by Abstract Expressionist painters, Rothko developed a style referred to as Color Field painting. The style was named for its characteristic fields of color, visible in paintings such as *Untitled (Yellow on Orange) no. 579*.

Rothko's early work demonstrated the influence by Expressionism and Surrealism, but his artistic style evolved to become increasingly abstracted with a compositional emphasis on the experience and perception of physical space. To create a perception of floating expanses of color, Rothko employed pigment as a means to communicate emotions—ranging from haunting to exuberant. As he once stated, "If you are only moved by color relationships, you are missing the point. I am interested in expressing the big emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom."

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Ian Ruhter

Home

2017

Ambrotype

Courtesy of Ian Ruhter / Silver & Light

With the advent of digital photography and technology, Lake Tahoe-based contemporary artist Ian Ruhter felt a disconnect between himself and his subjects and yearned for a greater connection to physical objects. To remedy this, Ruhter turned to an historic photographic process from the 19th century: wet-plate collodion printing. This photographic process involves coating glass plates with special chemicals to capture an image on photographic paper. Collodion prints were typically small in scale, but Ruhter hoped to expand the size and potential of the medium.

Rather than use a traditional format camera, Ruhter transformed an abandoned house into a gigantic camera. By placing an oversized lens on the front of the house, images of the outside world were projected into it. The process breathed new life into the abandoned house, metaphorically converting it back into a home. This image of the tree depicts the view from the living room.

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Vincent van Gogh

La Moisson en Provence

1888

Watercolor, gouache, charcoal, reed and quill pen and brown ink on off-white wove paper laid down on mill board

Private Collection

Self-taught Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) began living in Paris in 1886, where he became acquainted with the compositions of Impressionist painters. Inspired by the characteristically loose and shortened brushstrokes of the Impressionists, van Gogh began to evolve his own work, becoming increasingly loose and employing an emboldened use of color. Van Gogh utilized a technique known as impasto (Italian for paste) that involved applying thick, undiluted paint to the canvas, resulting in visible brush strokes or marks. *La Moisson en Provence* (*The Harvest in Provence*) depicts a favored subject of the artist, who often painted landscapes and rural scenes of peasant life, while living in southern France.

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Andy Warhol

Sidney Janis

1967

Silkscreen on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art
Gift of Robert and Karen Rishwain

Notoriously provocative and innovative, the work of Pop artist Andy Warhol (1928-1987) has achieved iconic status. Using printmaking techniques to combine images from popular culture, Warhol's work is accessible, yet powerfully complex, blurring the lines between what is deemed high and low art.

The piece *Sidney Janis* depicts the prominent businessman and art collector who first opened the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York during the 1940s. A favorite among artists of the avant-garde, the gallery featured works by artists such as Piet Mondrian, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, and later Pop artists, including Warhol himself.

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Hannah Wilke

Mountain Creek

1974

Kneaded eraser sculptures on postcard
and painted board

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art
Gift of Marsie, Emanuelle, Damon and Andrew
Scharlatt; Hannah Wilke Collection & Archive,
Los Angeles; In Honor of Joanna Frueh

Known for being both controversial and innovative, Hannah Wilke (1940-1993) was an American artist and feminist who worked in drawing, sculpture, assemblage, photography, performance, and installation. Her work often includes conceptual references to female forms, using non-traditional materials such as erasers or chewing gum. In *Mountain Creek*, Wilke overlays an image of a train with her iconic eraser forms that allude to female genitalia. The piece suggests that America's landscapes have long been altered by expansionist, and largely masculine endeavors—with little regard for the fragility of the natural environment or the implications of such industrial progress.

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Wayne Thiebaud

Cake Rows

1962

Oil on canvas

Private Collection