

Drawing the Blanton

Forty Works from the Permanent Collection

BLANTON MUSEUM ART

Blanton School and Teacher Programs is pleased to provide a teaching resource for ***Drawing the Blanton: Forty Works from the Permanent Collection***. The objects chosen for this guide were carefully selected to represent a variety of time periods, art genres, styles, media, subjects, and artists. Even more, we thought students would find them interesting for discussion and inspiring as springboards to their own artmaking.

Organization

This guide is organized to provide educators of all grade levels and subjects maximum flexibility. A List of Works at the beginning of the document provides an overview of works and dates. Then, individual works of art are presented with a combination of the following components:

- Thumbnail image
- Object label information (linked to the Blanton Collections website that provides more information AND an image that can be expanded on-screen for classroom projection)
- About the artist and artwork
- Discussion / Questions
- High resolution image (for providing photocopied class copies)

Teaching with Art

Much like teaching with a historical document or literary text, using works of art as a primary source promotes visual literacy skills, critical thinking, vocabulary, social and emotional learning, interpretation and analysis skills. It also deepens students' cultural understanding and awareness of the world around them. Discussion about works of art opens opportunities for students to express divergent opinions and assists language development as students formulate opinions and can debate or construct ideas in a safe and supportive environment.

When looking at a work of art with your students, we recommend the following process:

- Ask students to observe the object silently for about 30 seconds (or longer).
- Once everyone has had a chance to look, start talking. The easiest way to get the conversation going is to ask students to start listing off things they notice.
- Consider using the questioning technique from Visual Thinking Strategies:
 - What's going on in this work?
 - What do you see that makes you say that?
 - What more can we find?
- You will notice a point in the conversation when things start to shift toward interpretation. Students might start trying to describe a feeling they get when looking at the work of art, or they might begin describing a narrative that they think is happening. As students relate the work of art to their own lives, they will synthesize their learning and make connections – an instructional goal shared by teachers in all content areas!

Do your students need to know who created the work and when it was made? Only if they ask. Do they need to know the historical context? Yes, if it is relevant to the conversation and pertinent to your learning goals. This might seem counterintuitive, but when teaching with art objects, our goal as your partner in art education is to engage your students in becoming visually literate and critical thinkers (and makers, when making).

Get Creative!

Looking carefully at a work of art and trying to emulate the artist's sense of line, movement, or style can be very instructive. Our hope is that students will create art that is directly *inspired by and related to* the objects from the permanent collection, but also that *they put their personal stamp on whatever they make*.

Do your students want more variety or are they looking for something specific not found in this document? The Blanton has over 25,000 works of art in its collections. Digital images for most of these are available on the museum's [website](#).

Share with us!

If you're coming for a visit to the museum, bring student work along and share it with us in person. Or, email photos of finished student work to education@blantonmuseum.org. Be sure to include student names, grade (or age), and the name of the school they attend. Student work may be posted on various Blanton media sites. *We can't wait to see what everyone creates!*

Want more information about Blanton school and teacher programs?

Visit blantonmuseum.org/k12programs.

Feedback, comments, curiosities, and ideas are always welcome.

List of Works

1 **Attributed to the Workshop of the Darius Painter**

Red-Figure Apulian Plate, 340-320 BCE

1 ¹³/₁₆ × 8 ¹⁵/₁₆ in.

Terracotta



2 **Anonymous**

*Black-figure Neck Amphora of Panathenaic Shape (Oil Container),
circa 540 BCE*

10 ¹³/₁₆ in.

Terracotta



3 **Mequitta Ahuja (b. 1976)**

Parade, 2007

96 x 160 in.

Enamel on canvas, two panels



4 **Anne Allen (1749-1808)**

*Fantastic Flowers with Trilobe Blossoms and Teardrop-Shaped
Leaves, 1775-1800*

10 ¹/₄ x 9 ¹/₄ in.

Color etching

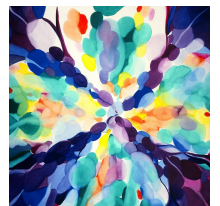


5 **Alice Baber (1928-1982)**

Lavender High, 1968

75 ¹/₂ x 75 ¹/₂ in.

Oil on canvas

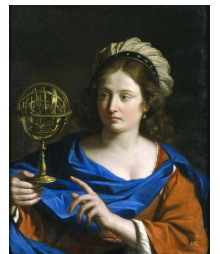


6 **Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri) (1591-1666)**

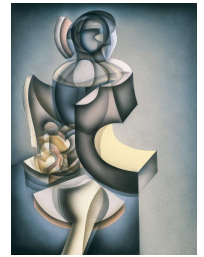
Personification of Astrology, 1650-1655

31 ⁷/₈ x 25 ¹³/₁₆ x 2 ¹/₄ in.

Oil on canvas



- 7 **Arnold Belkin** (1930-1992)
Estudio de anatomía annual #2 (Annual Anatomy Study #2), 1972
40 ¼ x 30 1/16 in.
Acrylic on canvas



- 8 **Thomas Hart Benton** (1889-1975)
Romance, 1931-1932
45 ¼ x 33 ¼ in.
Egg tempera, gesso, and oil varnish glazes on board



- 9 **Jerry Bywaters** (1906-1989)
Oil Field Girls, 1940
29 5/8 x 24 ½ in.
Oil on board



- 10 **Luca Cambiaso** (1527-1585)
Esther and Ahasuerus, circa 1569
38 ¾ x 34 15/16 in.
Oil on canvas



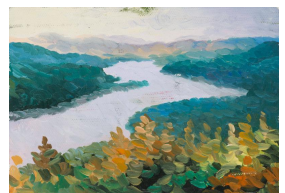
- 11 **Elizabeth Catlett** (1915-2012)
American Women Unite (Unidad de la Mujer Americana), 1963
9 ½ x 12 ¾ in.
Color woodcut



- 12 **Sam Z. Coronado** (1946-2013)
Pan Dulce (Sweet Bread), 1988
24 x 36 in.
Screenprint



- 13 **Cynthia Daignault** (b. 1978)
The mysterious arrival of an unusual letter, 2015-2016
5 x 7 in.
Oil on linen mounted on cardstock



14 **Lafayette Maynard Dixon** (1875-1946)

Desert Ranges, 1940

25 ¹/₈ x 30 ¹/₁₆ in.

Oil on canvas

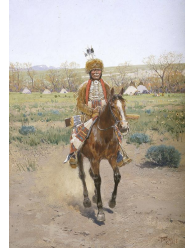


15 **Henry F. Farny** (1847-1916)

Sioux Indian, 1898

6 ¹/₄ x 7 ³/₁₆ in.

Gouache and watercolor, enhanced with gum arabic glaze on blue wove paper



16 **Raquel Forner** (1902-1988)

Astronauta y testigos, televisados (Astronaut and Witnesses, Televised), 1971

51 x 63 ⁵/₁₆ in.

Oil on canvas



17 **Carmen Lomas Garza** (b. 1948)

Ofrenda para Antonio Lomas (Offering for Antonio Lomas), 1995

59 x 97 ¹/₂ in.

Laser cut steel, 20-gauge, powder coated



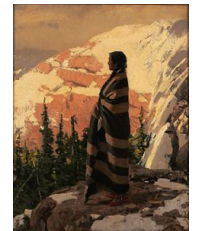
18 **William Gilbert Gaul** (1855-1919)

The Land of the Free

circa 1900

29 ³/₈ x 23 ¹/₂ in.

Oil on canvas



19 **Thomas Glassford** (b. 1963)

Siphonophora, 2016

501 x 192 x 130 in.

Rebar, polyurethane foam, base coat cement, and paint

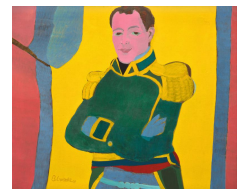


20 **Beatriz González** (b. 1938)

Apuntes para la historia extensa, continuación (Notes for an Extensive History, Continuation), 1968

39 ¹/₂ x 47 ¹/₄ in.

Oil on canvas



- 21 **Arshile Gorky** (1904-1948)
Composition with Vegetables, circa 1928
 28 ¹/₁₆ x 36 ¹/₁₆ in.
 Oil on canvas



- 22 **Desiderio Hernández Xochitiotzín** (1922-2007)
Adoration of the Magi, 1951
 14 ⁹/₁₆ x 10 ¹³/₁₆ in.
 Linocut



- 23 **Hans Hofmann** (1880-1966)
Elysium, 1960
 84 ¹/₄ x 50 ¹/₄ in.
 Oil on canvas



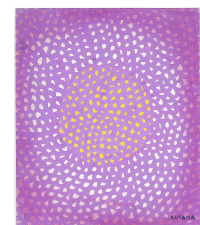
- 24 **Shara Hughes** (b. 1981)
You're Highly Evolved and Beautiful, 1991
 68 x 60 in.
 Oil and acrylic on canvas



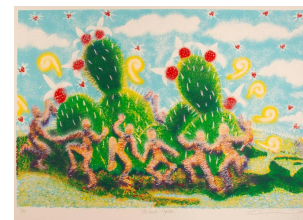
- 25 **Yasuo Kuniyoshi** (1893-1953)
Waitresses from the Sparhawk, 1924-1925
 29 ⁷/₁₆ x 41 ⁹/₁₆ in.
 Oil on canvas



- 26 **Yayoi Kusama** (b. 1929)
Nets (K.L.M.), 1957
 15 ¹/₄ x 12 ¹³/₁₆ in.
 Pastel and aqueous tempera



- 27 **Iào Limón** (b. 1952)
Bailando Together, 1987
 16 x 23 ¹/₈ in.
 Screenprint



- 28 **Stanton Macdonald-Wright** (1890-1973)
Ishikawa wa kuwarari inazuma sarari kana (Stony River rippling, lightning flickering), 1965-66
21 x 18 in.
Color woodcut



- 29 **Fletcher Martin** (1904-1979)
Down for the Count, 1936-1937
29 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 47 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Oil on Canvas



- 30 **Isabel Martinez** (b. 1958)
Woman of Color, 1997
26 x 37 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.
Screenprint



- 31 **Arie Pettway** (1905-1993)
Sixteen-block "Pine Burr" variation, circa 1980
83 x 71 in.
Cotton and cotton blend polyester double-knit



- 32 **Rogelio Polesello** (1939-2014)
Óxido (Oxide), 1970
63 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 63 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.
Acrylic on canvas



- 33 **Giovanni di Marco, called Giovanni dal Ponte** (1385-1437)
Madonna and Child with Angels, 1410s
34 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Tempera and tooled gold leaf on panel



34 **Mattia Preti** (1613-1699)

Holy Family, circa 1653

29 ¼ x 25 in.

Oil on canvas



35 **Alice Rahon** (1904-1987)

Luciérnagos (Fireflies), 1946

13 7/8 x 38 13/16 in.

Oil and sand on canvas



36 **Emilio Sánchez** (1921-1999)

Casita al mar (Little House by the Sea), 1974

22 1/8 x 29 1/2 in.

Color lithograph

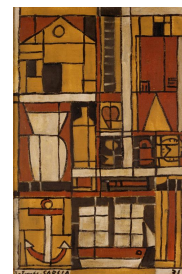


37 **Joaquín Torres-García** (1874-1949)

Constructif en rouge et ocre (Construction in Red and Ochre), 1931

34 1/16 x 23 3/16 in.

Oil on linen canvas

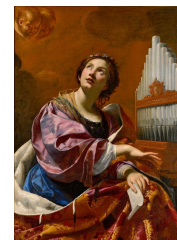


38 **Simon Vouet** (1590-1649)

Saint Cecilia, circa 1626

52 13/16 x 38 11/16 in.

Oil on canvas



39 **Charles White** (1918-1979)

Love Letter III, 1977

30 x 22 ¼ in.

Color crayon and spray paint lithograph printed in four colors and screenprint with gradated inking

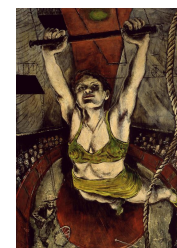


40 **Karl Zerbe** (1903-1972)

Woman on Trapeze, 1946

53 1/8 x 37 3/8 in.

Oil and encaustic on canvas





Attributed to the workshop of the Darius Painter

Red-Figure Apulian Plate

340-320 BCE

1¹³/₁₆ × 8¹⁵/₁₆ in.

Terracotta

About the Artwork

Octopus, flatfish, squid, and shellfish, native to the Mediterranean Sea, decorate this plate. The depression in the center may have been meant to hold sauce or juices from cooked fish. Fish was an important part of upper-class dining in this period, as can be seen in the work of the contemporary Sicilian writer Archestratus, who celebrated the pleasures of seafood.

Discussion / Questions

- What foods native to Texas would you choose to decorate a plate?
- Why do you think the artist made the plate almost 2" thick?





Anonymous

[Black-figure Neck Amphora of Panathenaic Shape \(Oil Container\)](#)

circa 540 BCE

10 ¹³/₁₆ in.

Terracotta

About the Artwork

This vase is a miniature version of the much larger vases of oil given as prizes at the Panathenaic Festival, a music and athletic contest in Athens. This side shows Athena, patron goddess of Athens, standing in a fighting pose with a spear and round shield. She is flanked by two owls perched upon Doric columns.

Discussion / Questions

- Athena is the goddess of wisdom, courage, law and justice, war, arts, and crafts. What do you see on this vessel that indicates that she represents these things?
- This vessel (and the oil it contained) is a miniature version of a prize for a music and athletic contest. Why do you think someone made a miniature version?





Mequitta Ahuja

(b. 1976)

Parade

2007

96 x 160 in.

Enamel on canvas, two panels

About the Artist and Artwork

Ahuja's work explores her own identity. Her process of self-documentation begins with photographs. Using a remote shutter control, she performs privately for the camera. Then, through a series of sketches and preparatory drawings, she introduces inventive, often fantastical elements into the resulting images. The artist refers to her heavily manipulated self-portraits as "automythography" – representing both who she is and who she imagines herself to be. She paid particular attention to her hair because she is interested in the role that hair has played and continues to play in the lives of Black people.

Discussion / Questions

- If you chose, like Ahuja, to paint yourself on one canvas, what would you paint on the other canvas?
- What do you think the dripping lines on the left and the sparks in the center might mean or represent?





Anne Allen
(1749-1808)

Fantastic Flowers with Trilobe Blossoms and Teardrop-Shaped Leaves

1775-1800

10 ¼ x 9 ¼ in.

Color etching

About the Artist and Artwork

This is one of a series of works based on the designs of Anne Allen's husband, fellow artist Jean Pillment. Allen created a "series of notebooks of ideal flowers for the use of draftsmen and painters." This guide for artists and craftsmen served as inspiration for others to use both real and imagined flowers in interior design for home furnishings and décor of the late 1700s .

Discussion / Questions

- The artist has titled her flowers in this etching "fantastic," meaning they are from a fantasy or her own imagination. Why do you think she chose to label them this way?
- Think about decorations in your classroom or home – rugs, plates, art on the walls, even your clothing. Do you notice any themes or common images?





Alice Baber
(1928-1982)

[Lavender High](#)

1968

75 ½ x 75 ½ in.

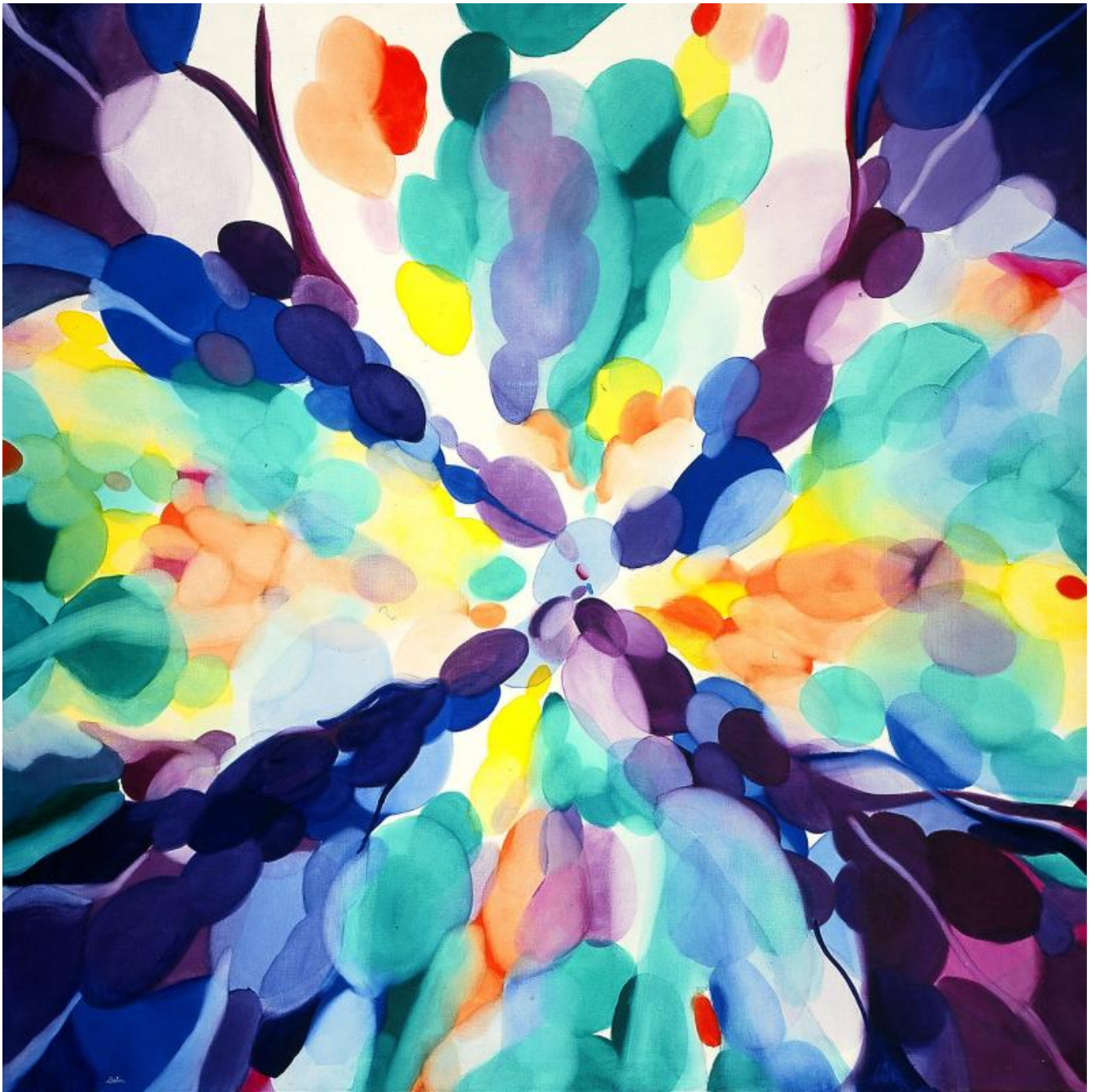
Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Alice Baber specialized in paintings of ovals, circles, and free forms that explored vibrant colors as she worked to capture light and movement. To support other women artists and bring attention to their work, she organized multiple exhibitions, including one at the University of Texas in Austin in 1972.

Discussion / Questions

- What does this image remind you of? Have you ever seen something like this before?
- The artist has chosen to highlight the color lavender in her title of this painting, *Lavender High*. Which color would you choose to name this painting after?
- What is a way that you can help draw attention to someone who is doing good work?





Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri)
(1591-1666)

Personification of Astrology

circa 1650-1655

31 ⁷/₈ x 25 ¹³/₁₆ x 2 ¹/₄ in.

Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Personification is when we think of a person or animal as representing a quality, concept, or thing. In Guercino's case, he created a portrait of what he imagines "astrology" might look like. Astrology is the study of the movement and position of celestial bodies – planets, suns, stars in the sky. Guercino has the figure looking at a sphere with Earth at its center (instead of Earth and other planets revolving around the sun). The metal rings represent the equator, tropics, arctic and Antarctic circles, all revolving on an axis.

Discussion / Questions

- What details in the painting help indicate who the figure might be, or what she might be thinking about?
- If the artist knew that the earth revolves around the sun (Copernicus' theory was confirmed by Galileo in the early 1600s), why do you think he might have chosen to portray Earth as the center of the universe?
- What quality, concept, or thing would you like to "personify" in an artwork?





Arnold Belkin
(1930-1992)

Estudio de anatomía annual #2 (Annual Anatomy Study #2)

1972

40 ¼ x 30 1/16 in.

Acrylic on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Arnold Belkin was born and grew up in Canada but became interested in the history and culture of Mexico, where he moved and became a citizen. He was initially inspired by the work of Mexican muralists (especially Diego Rivera) and their focus on issues of social justice and power, and he eventually painted 28 major public murals in Mexico and North America.

This work is an example of an abstracted human figure painting that he created in the 1970s.

Discussion / Questions

- What does this painting make you think of?
- "Anatomy" refers to the study of bodies. What human forms can you identify in this painting?
- What is something you think deserves to be studied every year?





Thomas Hart Benton
(1889-1975)

Romance

1931-1932

45 ¼ x 33 ¼ in.

Egg tempera, gesso, and oil varnish glazes on board

About the Artwork and Artist

A painter and muralist celebrated for his regional scenes of daily life in the southern, mid-western, and western United States, Thomas Hart Benton was committed to portraying images of progress and satisfaction in the American heartland. This work shows a young couple on a relaxed evening stroll. Benton saw his art as a way to draw attention to social and political injustice. His nostalgic and uplifting scenes of hard work, self-reliance, and individualism helped make him popular after World War I in the United States.

Discussion / Questions

- Invite students to put themselves “in” this painting, exploring what they would experience with all five of their senses. What do they see, smell, feel, hear, taste?
- Where is this couple is going? Why are his shoes off? How long have they known each other? What do you see that makes you think so?





Jerry Bywaters
(1906-1989)

[Oil Field Girls](#)

1940

29 ⁵/₈ x 24 ¹/₂ in.

Oil on board

About the Artist and Artwork

Bywaters uses darker colors to describe the bleak and thinly-populated west Texas landscape. With its economically depressed views, the town (if it can be called that) is clearly not attracting people to live there. By contrast, the women waiting for a ride out of town are vivid and forceful, more colorful and hopeful of escaping the town.

Discussion / Questions

- Have you ever seen the oil fields in east Texas? What were they like?
- Why do you think the two women want to leave the oil field? Where do you think they are going?
- Would you want to live there? Why or why not?



JERRY BYWATERS



Luca Cambiaso
(1527-1585)

Esther and Ahasuerus

circa 1569
38 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 34 $\frac{13}{16}$ in.
Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

The Bible tells the story of Esther, the heroine who risked her life to save her entire community. Esther's husband, the Persian king Ahasuerus, had consented to the genocide of the Jewish people in his land. He did not know that Esther, the wife he chose because of her beauty, was Jewish. Though she was terrified, Esther put her own life at risk twice: first by visiting the king without being summoned (a crime punishable by death); and second by revealing her Jewish heritage and faith to him.

Here, Cambiaso pictures the dramatic moment when Esther addressed the king, not knowing whether she would live or die. In the end, her bravery was rewarded when the king listened to her appeal. Although the king did not stop the genocide, Esther negotiated for the Jews to have the right to defend themselves.

Discussion / Questions

- What do you notice about the body language of the different figures? What emotions do you perceive?
- Knowing the story of Esther, does anything surprise you about how the artist portrays the scene?
- What does being courageous look and feel like? Can you think of a time when you were brave?





Elizabeth Catlett
(1915-2012)

[American Women Unite \(Unidad de la Mujer Americana\)](#)

1963

9 ½ x 12 ¾ in.

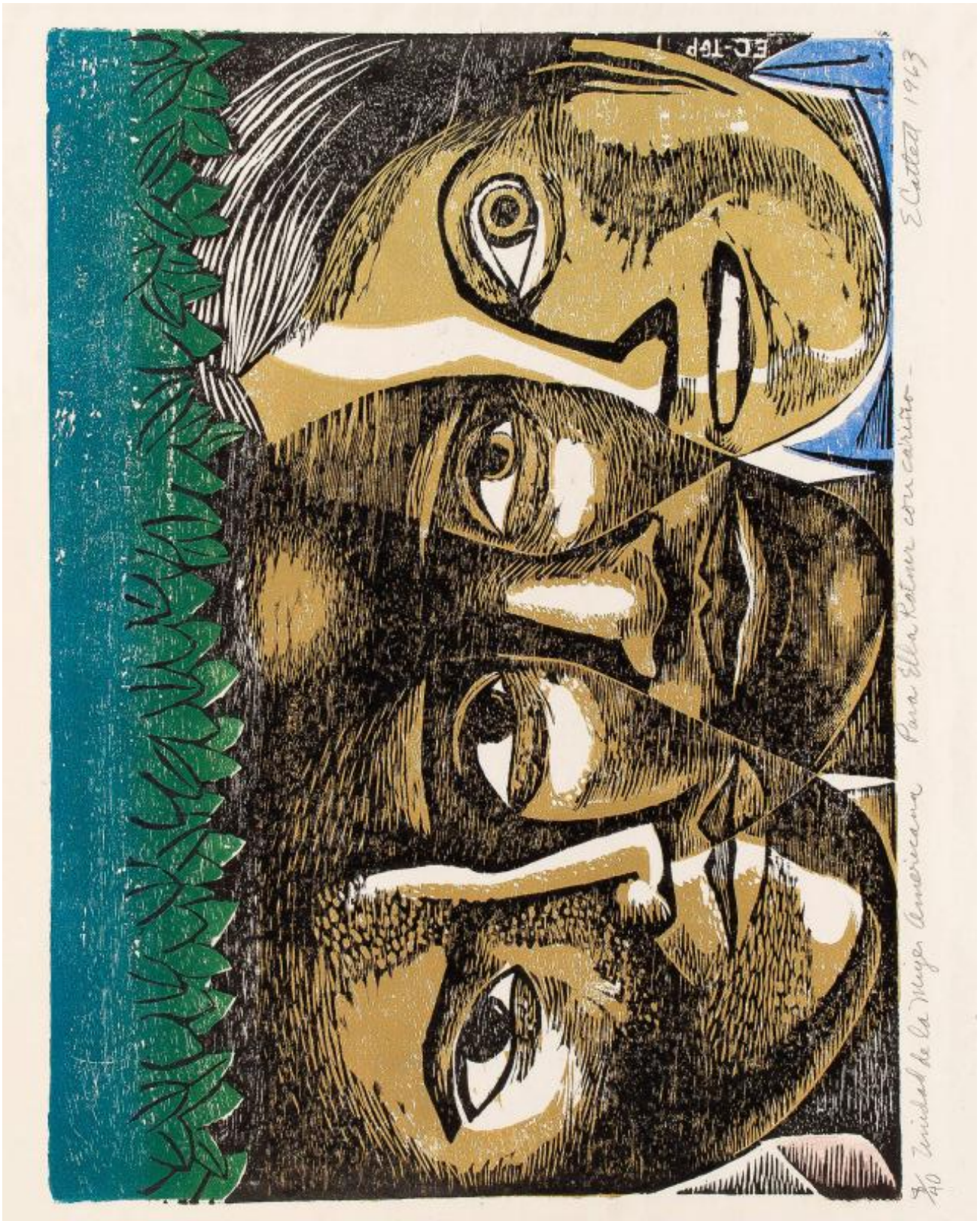
Color woodcut

About the Artist and Artwork

Over the course of her 75-year career, African-American sculptor and printmaker Elizabeth Catlett devoted herself to creating art that addresses issues of race and gender. With her husband, artist Charles White (whose work can also be found at the Blanton), she travelled to Mexico and became active in an art organization whose goal was to serve the people by creating art that reflected the social reality of the times.

Discussion / Questions

- Which “American women” do you think the artist was speaking to? What do you notice about the women?
- Why do you think the artist wanted to encourage women to unite (in the 1960s, or even now)?
- If you were to create a work of art that reflected what’s happening today, what issue would you focus on?





Sam Z. Coronado
(1946-2013)

Pan Dulce (Sweet Bread)

1988

24 x 36 in.

Screenprint

About the Artist and Artwork

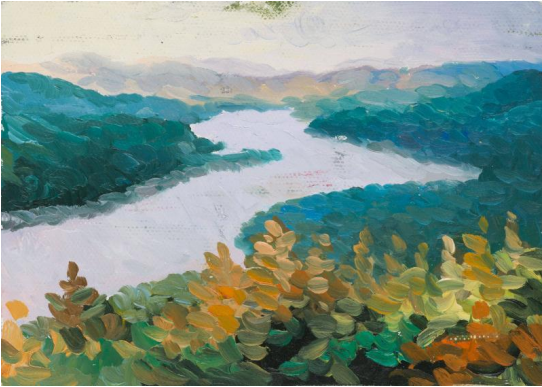
Sam Coronado illustrates the importance of cultural memory in this homage to Mexican sweet breads, whose inventive shapes are instantly recognizable. In this print, two *conchas* (named after their shell-like exterior) and a cup of coffee are placed on tables and cast long morning shadows. Typically served during breakfast, *pan dulce* comes from a century-long practice of pastry-making in Mexico, adapted from European techniques. Mexican American-owned *panaderías* in the United States cater to the community by offering the same treats found in Mexico.

Coronado was a leading figure in the Austin art communities, including as a co-founder of the Mexic-Arte Museum.

Discussion / Questions

- Do you have a favorite food from a family tradition?
- How do the bright colors in this artwork make you feel? Can you imagine if you might feel differently if the artist had chosen to use mainly pale colors?





Cynthia Daignault

(b. 1978)

[*The mysterious arrival of an unusual letter*](#)

2015-2016

5 x 7 in.

Oil on linen mounted on cardstock

About the Artist and Artwork

During a three-month road trip through the United States in 2015, Cynthia Daignault made 180 landscape paintings on postcards. The artist described the project as “one part field notes, journal, diary, and mail art.” Daignault made every painting on site and added type-written messages on the back of each postcard after returning to her New York studio, drawing from a journal kept during her trip. The paintings depict American rivers, from the Rio Grande to the Susquehanna. The painted postcards reflect the appeal of plein air landscape painting (painting outdoors), the allure of open road, a love of nature, and the intimacy of journal and letter writing.

Discussion / Questions

- What is one of your favorite outdoor locations? Why?
- Have you ever written or received a postcard from someone? What image was on it? How did it make you feel to send/receive it?





Lafayette Maynard Dixon
(1875-1946)

Desert Ranges

1940

25 ¹/₈ x 30 ¹/₁₆ in.

Oil on canvas

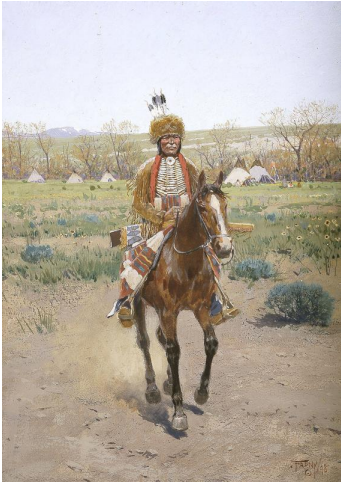
About the Artist and Artwork

Although Maynard Dixon was based in San Francisco for 40 years, the Southwest captured his artistic imagination. Together with his wife, famed Depression-era photographer Dorothea Lange, he made numerous trips to Arizona and New Mexico, spending months living on a Hopi reservation. His art was greatly influenced by his passionate engagement with Hopi culture and its notion of constant time without beginning, middle, or end. He was drawn to what he described as “the poetry and pathos of life of western people seen amidst the grandeur, sternness, and loneliness of their country.” Dixon’s canvases are silent and without motion, freezing time in a western landscape.

Discussion / Questions

- Have you seen a landscape that looks like this? Where and when?
- Does this land look “grand” (magnificent and large), “stern” (severe and extreme), and “lonely” (without people) to you?
- When you look at this painting, what music do you hear? What does the weather feel like? Is it hot, cool, breezy? How does the air smell?





Henry F. Farney

(1847-1916)

Sioux Indian

1898

6 ¼ x 7 ³/₁₆ in.

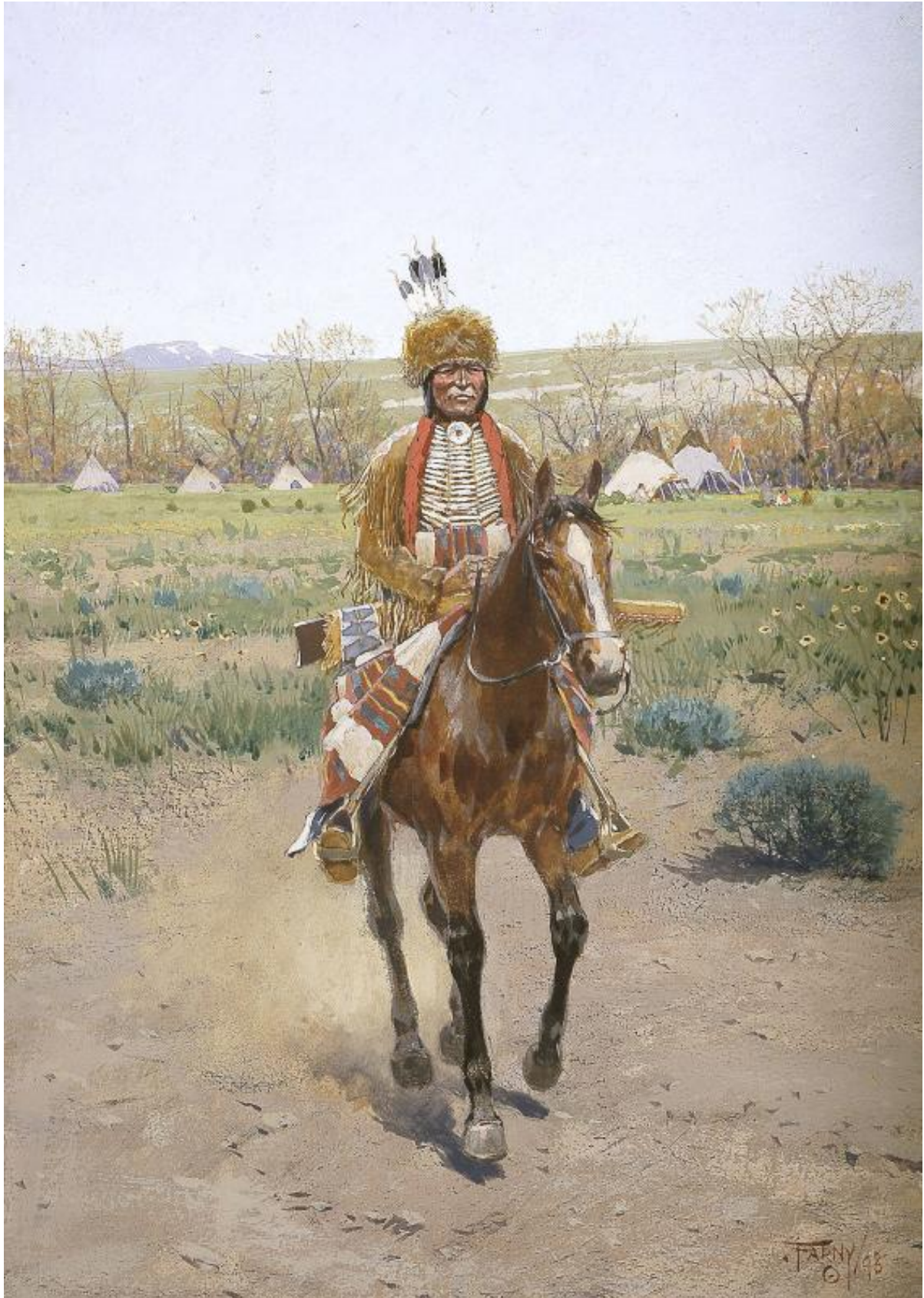
Gouache and watercolor, enhanced with gum arabic glaze on blue wove paper

About the Artist and Artwork

Henry Farney visited the American West several times, including near Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota. The term "Sioux" references the Lakota and Dakota Nations who call this region their home. In 1898 when Farney painted this work, men from these tribes would have only dressed in full regalia (decorative clothing worn at formal occasions) for special ceremonies, not for every day.

Discussion / Questions

- Look closely at the things this person is carrying with him and what he is wearing. Where do you think he might be going?
- What time of year do you think this is? What do you see that makes you say that?
- This work is that of a white man who was part of a society that would, through westward expansion, threaten the traditions and cultures of Indigenous Americans. What do you imagine members of the Lakota and Dakota tribes might want to include in a painting of their people?





Raquel Forner
(1902-1988)

Astronauta y testigos, televisados (Astronaut and Witnesses, Televised)

1971

51 x 63 ⁵/₁₆ in.

Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Raquel Forner was fascinated by the idea of space exploration, and was inspired by the Moon projects led by NASA and the Soviet Space Program in the 1950s and 60s. This painting was made during the Apollo missions that landed on the Moon, and at the time of the tragic death of a Soviet crew returning from orbiting the Soviet space station. This work explored how these stories played out on television, yet her figures, forms, and colors create an imaginary world. Forner's spacecraft becomes a mythical creature – part lion, part computer – that carries astronauts and fellow travelers into an unknown future in outer space.

Discussion / Questions

- What figures do you notice? What do you think the colors might represent?
- Why do you think Forner included the description "televised" in the title of this work?
- How do you imagine an encounter with a space creature?





Carmen Lomas Garza
(b. 1948)

[*Ofrenda para Antonio Lomas \(Offering for Antonio Lomas\)*](#)

1995
59 x 97 ½ in.

Laser cut steel, 20-gauge, powder coated

About the Artist and Artwork

Since the early 1970s, Carmen Lomas Garza has created snapshots of Mexican-American life that challenge negative representations of her community that are often disseminated by the media. The artist explained her objective as follows:

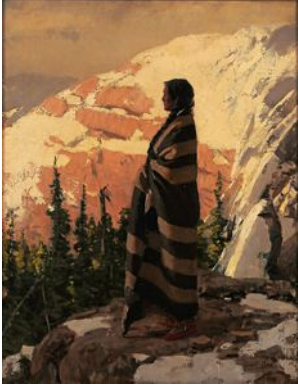
To create works of art that instill pride in our Mexican-American cultural and historical contributions to American society. The Chicano movement inspired me to concentrate on our everyday lives based on my memories and experiences in South Texas. I saw the need for art that would elicit recognition and appreciation among Mexican-Americans and at the same time serve as a source of education for others not familiar with our culture.

This work, made of metal, recreates the flatness of *papel picado*, the traditional Mexican cut paper banners used as Day of the Dead decorations. She created this work as part of a traditional Día de los Muertos altar honoring her grandfather's memory.

Discussion / Questions

- Do you know anyone who takes care of a garden or plants? What kinds of things do they have to do?
- Who would you honor in your family for the hard work they do?





William Gilbert Gaul
(1855-1919)

The Land of the Free

circa 1900

29 ³/₈ x 23 ¹/₂ in.

Oil on canvas

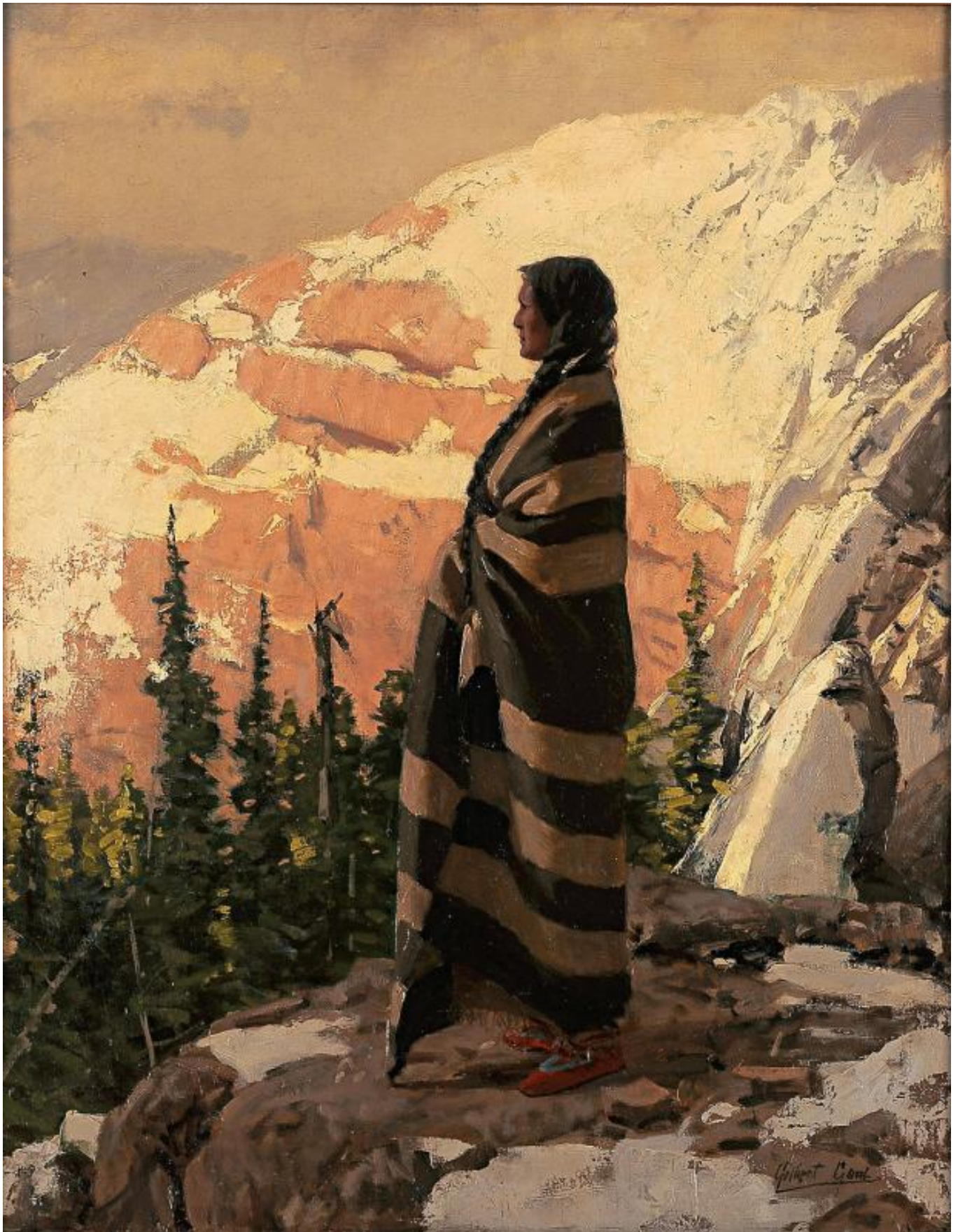
About the Artist and Artwork

The painting depicts an Indigenous woman alone in a mountain valley, wrapped in what appears to be a Navajo (Diné) blanket. The work's title borrows from the lyrics of "The Star-Spangled Banner," used by the US military during this time before it became the national anthem in 1931. Gaul may have set this twilight scene at its "last gleaming" to evoke the destruction done by US forces against Native American communities at the turn of the century.

Gaul first visited the West in 1876 and returned numerous times, often producing photographs and drawings of people and landscapes. Those sketches were used to produce larger paintings when Gaul returned to his home in Tennessee.

Discussion / Questions

- What do you think the woman is thinking about?
- Where do you go when you want to be alone?
- Why might the artist have chosen the title "The Land of the Free" for this painting?
- If this were painted by an Indigenous woman, what else might she have included as the setting?





Thomas Glassford
(b. 1963)

Siphonophora

2016

501 x 192 x 130 in.

Rebar, polyurethane foam, base coat cement, and paint

About the Artist and Artwork

Thomas Glassford's sculptures and large-scale installations explore the intersections of art, design, architecture, community, and the natural world. *Siphonophora* is inspired by the giant ocean creatures of the same name that appear to be single organisms, but actually are interdependent communities of different animals, each with different functions that allow the organism to flourish. For this work, individual concrete and plaster sculptures based on forms found in nature have been painted white and strung together, merging into one enormous floating colony. The work serves as a metaphor for our interdependence with the natural world and with each other.

Discussion / Questions

- What different communities are you part of? What role do you play in each?
- What does it mean to “belong” to a community? What does it *feel* like to belong (or *not* to belong)?





Beatriz González
(b. 1938)

[*Apuntes para la historia extensa, continuación \(Notes for an Extensive History, Continuation\)*](#)

1968
39 ½ x 47 ¼ in.
Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Pop Art is well-known for its use of bright colors, the depiction of everyday objects, and its reliance on expressive figuration (based on a real person or thing). In much of her work, Beatriz González explores the unavoidable visual deterioration that occurs when images are copied and recopied multiple times, including those of artistic masterpieces, historical figures, and ordinary people featured in the media. Her awareness of Pop Art led her to use iconic national images, in this case an image of Simón Bolívar, who led several South American countries in gaining their independence from the Spanish empire in the 1810s-20s. However, works like this often challenged the idea of the heroic role that historical figures play in popular culture.

Discussion / Questions

- What happens when you take a picture of a picture of a picture of a picture?
- How do you read the body language and facial expressions of the figure?





Arshile Gorky
(1904-1948)

[Composition with Vegetables](#)

circa 1928

28¹/₁₆ x 36¹/₁₆ in.

Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Arshile Gorky was an Armenian refugee who arrived in the United States in 1920 at the age of sixteen. He was deeply fascinated with the various modern art movements of the 1920s, and drew inspiration from famous artists who were making bold and daring choices in their artwork. In *Composition with Vegetables*, Gorky has chosen to create a still life, a work of art that shows everyday objects like food, flowers, or household items. Often, objects in a still life can act as symbols, representing concepts and ideas that might be important to the artist. Here, the various fruits and vegetables might remind us of prosperity, growth, or community.

Discussion / Questions

- What ideas or concepts do the objects in this painting symbolize for you?
- What would you choose to include in a still life setting if you were to paint one?





Desiderio Hernández Xochitiotzín
(1922-2007)

Adoration of the Magi

1951

14 ⁹/₁₆ x 10 ¹³/₁₆ in.

Linocut

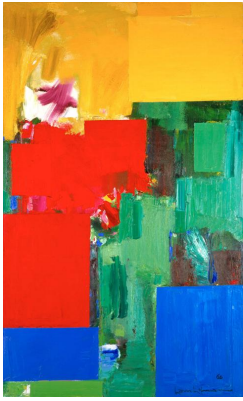
About the Artist and Artwork

Mexican artist Hernández Xochitiotzín is best known for his large murals in Tlaxcala, Mexico. He was a writer, architect, teacher, art restoration expert, and illustrator. He spent most of his career painting the history and culture of his home state. In his early years, he created various drawings and prints, like this one of the Three Wise Men visiting Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

Discussion / Questions

- How does this compare to other examples you've seen of the Christmas story (or nativity)?
- How does the absence of color affect what you notice?
- Think about a family gathering you've had recently. Who was there?





Hans Hofmann
(1880-1966)

Elysium

1960

84 ¼ x 50 ¼ in.

Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

German immigrant Hans Hofmann founded art schools in the mid-1930s in New York and Provincetown, Massachusetts, and quickly became the most influential art teacher of his generation. Hofmann used a grid-based structure to create order in his bright opposing colors and rich, impastoed surfaces, where the paint is applied thickly enough to stand out from the surface of the canvas. His best paintings, like *Elysium*, created when he was eighty years old, achieve harmony within intensity, and embody both tension and balance.

Discussion / Questions

- What shapes do you see when you look closely at this work?
- How might this work feel different if it were painted in all cool colors?





Shara Hughes
(b. 1981)

You're Highly Evolved and Beautiful

1991

68 x 60 in.

Oil and acrylic on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Although this first appears to be a painting of flowers, Shara Hughes often begins her landscapes by making aimless marks on a blank canvas, without any preconceived idea of what the final result will be. Curator Mia Locks has described Hughes's process as painting "backwards" into her landscapes, finding representation by experimenting with abstraction.

Discussion / Questions

- What do you think about the title of this work?
- Do you think it might be more challenging or easier to "work backwards" – starting with random lines and finding images?





Yasuo Kuniyoshi
(1893-1953)

[Waitresses from the Sparhawk](#)

1924-1925

29 ⁷/₁₆ X 41 ⁹/₁₆ in.

Oil on canvas

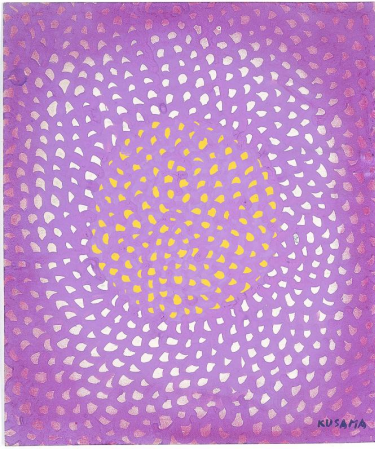
About the Artist and Artwork

Kuniyoshi combines stylized figures and abstracted landscape forms in this quirky and mysterious work. Set in a popular resort in Ogunquit, Maine, where the artist spent his summers for many years, this work presents a seemingly delightful vignette about female friendship —except for that dark and threatening sky.

Discussion / Questions

- What does the dark sky make you imagine might be happening?
- Where do you think the two women are walking away from, or towards?
- What do their facial expressions suggest about how they are feeling?





Yayoi Kusama

(b. 1929)

[Nets \(K.L.M.\)](#)

1957

15 ¼ x 12 ¹³/₁₆ in.

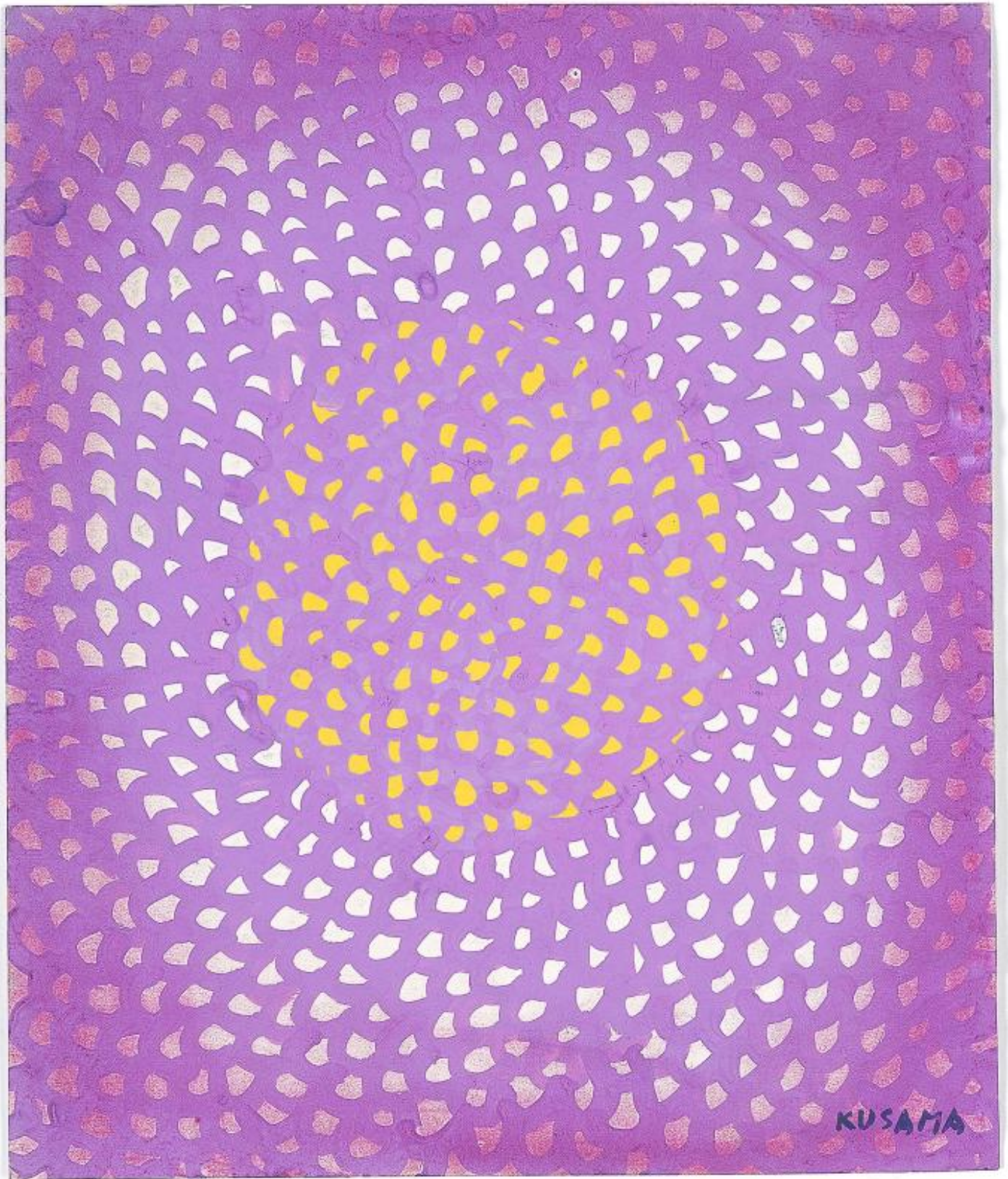
Pastel and aqueous tempera

About the Artist and Artwork

As a child in Japan, Kusama experienced hallucinations that consisted of dots, and she has been obsessed with polka dots ever since. One of the most innovative and rule-breaking artists of the 20th century, she has created paintings, soft sculptures, installations (large artworks designed for specific locations), fashion, and film that feature repeated dots and shapes. She claims that the repetitive nature of her art helps to calm her mind and fears, and she believes that dots have a unique role in helping us understand ourselves: "Polka dots can't stay alone. When we obliterate nature and our bodies with polka dots we become part of the unity of our environments . . . Two and three and more polka dots become movement. Our earth is only one polka dot among the million stars in the cosmos," she said.

Discussion / Questions

- What is an activity that you do that helps you feel calm?
- How might you react differently to the work if it featured squares instead of dot-like shapes?





lèo Limón

(b. 1952)

Bailando Together

1987

16 x 23 ¹/₈ in.

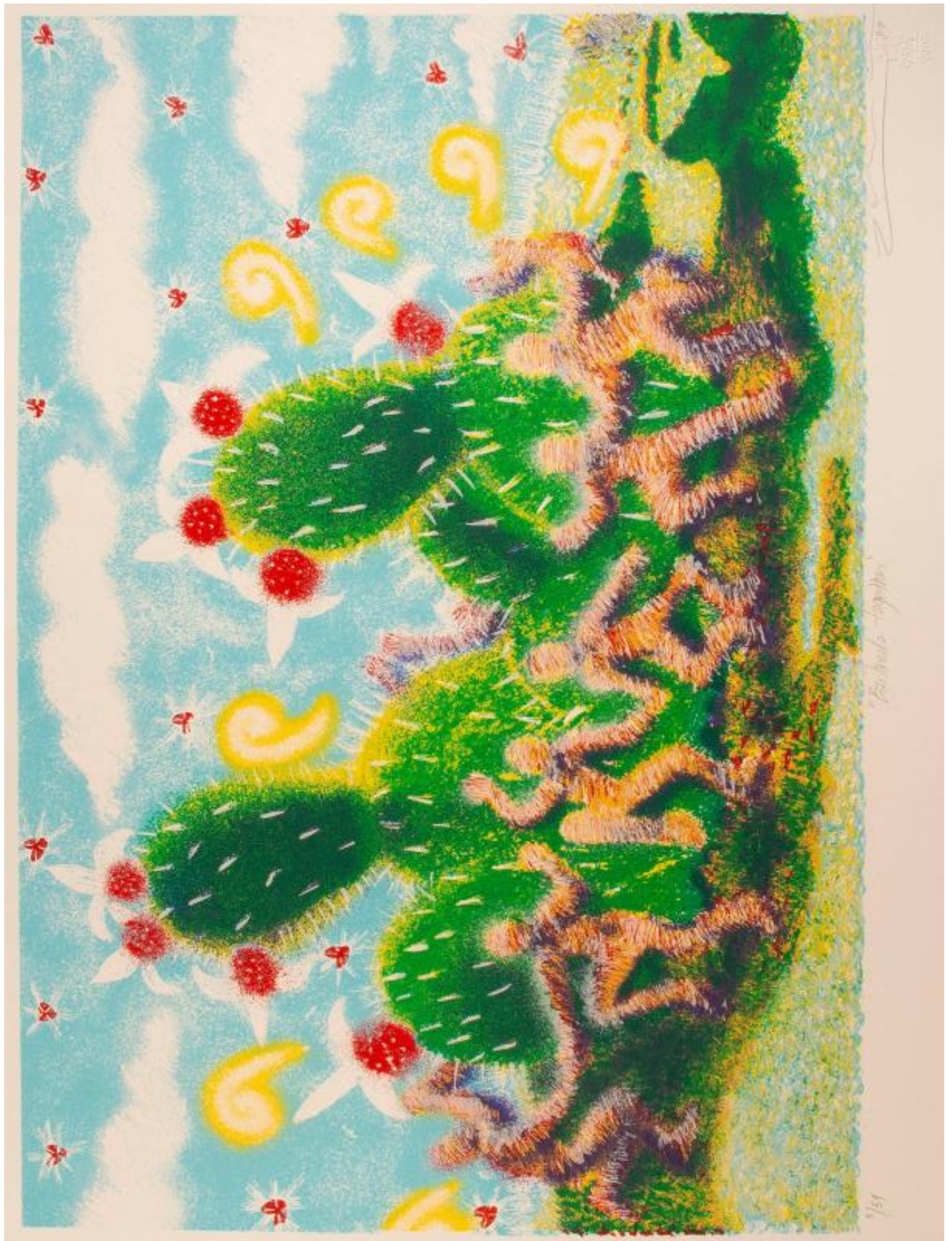
Screenprint

About the Artist and Artwork

lèo Limón is widely recognized for his murals and prints that celebrate the culture and traditions of the Chicano community in East Los Angeles. A community activist who has worked as a youth advocate with thousands of at-risk youth, he has used his art to intervene in the gang violence of Los Angeles.

Discussion / Questions

- Why do you think Limón chose to have the figures dancing around a prickly pear cactus?
- What do you think the red and yellow shapes in the sky might represent?
- How do you think art might be able to help young people?





Stanton Macdonald-Wright
(1890-1973)

Ishikawa wa kuwarari inazuma sarari kana (Stony River rippling, lightning flickering)

1965-66

21 x 18 in.

Color woodcut

About the Artist and Artwork

Macdonald-Wright is best known for his work in “synchrony” where he compared painting colors to music, believing that an artist could use colors in a painting to create harmony just as a composer uses notes to create a symphony. After World War II he became interested in Japanese art and culture, which is evident in his series of woodcuts of various landscapes.

Discussion / Questions

- What techniques does the artist use to represent water?
- How does this lightning storm compare to ones you might have seen?
- What colors, shapes, or other elements appear to be “in harmony” in this artwork?





Fletcher Martin
(1904-1979)

Down for the Count

1936-1937

29 ³/₄ x 47 ¹/₂ in.

Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Fletcher Martin painted this smoky social realist boxing scene to symbolize the condition in which African Americans lived during the Great Depression. Like many artists in the 1930s, Martin drew parallels between European fascism and racism in America. Martin's works often feature men in conflict or experiencing trauma. Here, the artist used linear perspective not only to create dramatic depth, but also to clearly demonstrate that these men are not on a level playing field.

Discussion / Questions

- What do you think just happened? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What do you think might happen next?





Isabel Martinez
(b. 1958)

Woman of Color

1997

26 x 37⁵/₈ in.

Screenprint

About the Artist and Artwork

When Isabel Martinez moved to the United States from Mexico, she did not speak English. She worked many jobs before she attended college to learn English and took art classes, and eventually got a higher degree that led her to teach art at the elementary level. She says her goal is to highlight indigenous cultures in her art, celebrating the colors and traditions of her home community in Mexico.

Discussion / Questions

- How do the colors used in this piece make you feel?
- What do you think the artist meant by using the phrase “woman of color?”
- If you were to celebrate something from your family tradition or community, what would you paint?





Arie Pettway
(1905-1993)

Sixteen-block "Pine Burr" variation

circa 1980

83 x 71 in.

Cotton and cotton blend polyester double-knit

About the Artist and Artwork

Arie Pettway was approximately 70 years old when she made this vibrant quilt. The sixteen-square grid structure includes fabrics of every kind – salvaged work clothes and dresses, cotton sacks and fabric samples. Gee's Bend (a rural town in Alabama) quilts are known for their bold colors and geometric patterns and for the improvisation that each artist brings to her designs. While today only about seven hundred people live there, Gee's Bend hosted hundreds of Black women who learned to quilt from relatives in a tradition passed down through generations of women since the mid-nineteenth century. Pettway, like many inhabitants of this community, is a descendent of slaves; her surname Pettway comes from the white plantation owner who once lived there.

Discussion / Questions

- What would it be like to create something with no instructions or pattern to follow?
- What shapes and colors capture your attention most?





Rogelio Polesello
(1939-2014)

Óxido (Oxide)

1970

63 ⁵/₈ x 63 ⁵/₈ in.

Acrylic on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Argentine artist Rogelio Polesello explored geometry and bold colors in his works, playing with rhythms and perception of movement. This style of art is called “op art” (optical art) because it uses optical illusions.

Discussion / Questions

- Follow the lines. Can you see if, where, and how they connect?
- How would you create such perfectly-shaped lines?
- What would happen if you mixed two of the colors in this painting? What new color could they create?
- An oxide is a chemical compound that contains at least one oxygen atom and one other element. How can you imagine that connects to the title of this work? What title would *you* give this work?





Giovanni di Marco, called Giovanni dal Ponte
(1385-1437)

Madonna and Child with Angels

1410s

34 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Tempera and tooled gold leaf on wood

About the Artwork

The devout Catholics for whom this painting was intended in the Middle Ages would have recognized this presentation of Mary as the Queen of Heaven. She wears an elaborate crown, in addition to the disc-like halo, and hovering angels honor Mary and the baby Jesus by holding an ornate cloth behind them. Jesus looks out at the viewer and raises his right hand in a gesture of blessing. In his left hand, he holds a finch that refers to a legend about Christ's crucifixion that this bird removed a thorn from Jesus's crown and was marked by a drop of blood.

Discussion / Questions

- What symbols do you recognize?
- What symbols do we see around our classroom? In our school? In our daily lives?
- This work of art has a lot of gold leaf. Why do you think artists used this material in religious painting?





Mattia Preti
(1613-1699)

Holy Family

circa 1653
29 ¼ x 25 in.
Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Holy Family shows a tender moment shortly after the infant Christ was born. The painting captures new parents Mary and Joseph looking over the infant, with Mary holding him close in her arms. Joseph's hands cross his chest, with his brow raised, as if in awe of the moment, or possibly bowing before his son. Mary, face aglow and robes slightly loose, gazes at her sleeping son in calm adoration.

Discussion / Questions

- What ideas about family does this painting bring to mind?
- What is the focus of this painting? How can you tell?
- What details do you notice about Joseph and Mary?





Alice Rahon
(1904-1987)

Luciérnagas (Fireflies)

1946

13 ⁷/₈ x 38 ¹³/₁₆ in.

Oil and sand on canvas

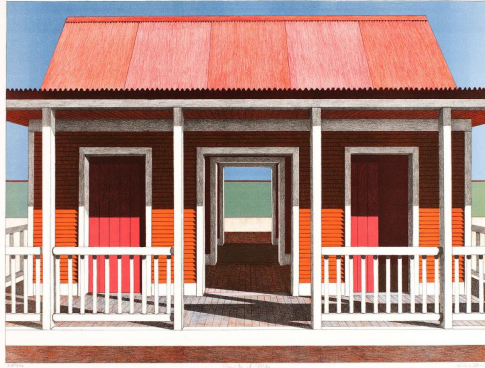
About the Artist and Artwork

Alice Rahon was a French/Mexican poet who wrote often about scenes and landscapes from her childhood. Although she traveled frequently throughout her life, she moved to Mexico permanently in 1939. She was inspired by the Mexican landscape to begin painting. She often sprinkled her painted canvases with sand, scratched irregular and twisting lines, and sometimes added dried leaves, ropes, or feathers. Her blending of painting, drawing, and scratching linear figures allowed her to honor prehistoric cave painters, whom she admired for their ability to help viewers use their imaginations to see spirits and forms.

Discussion / Questions

- The artist has titled this work *Luciérnagas*, or “fireflies.” Why do you think she might have chosen this title?
- Have you ever seen a firefly? Where were you, and what time of year was it? What do you remember about seeing one (or several)?
- Think of something from nature that you would like to depict in your own work of art. What colors or materials would you use?





Emilio Sánchez
(1921-1999)

[Casita al mar \(Little House by the Sea\)](#)

1974

22 1/8 x 29 1/2 in.

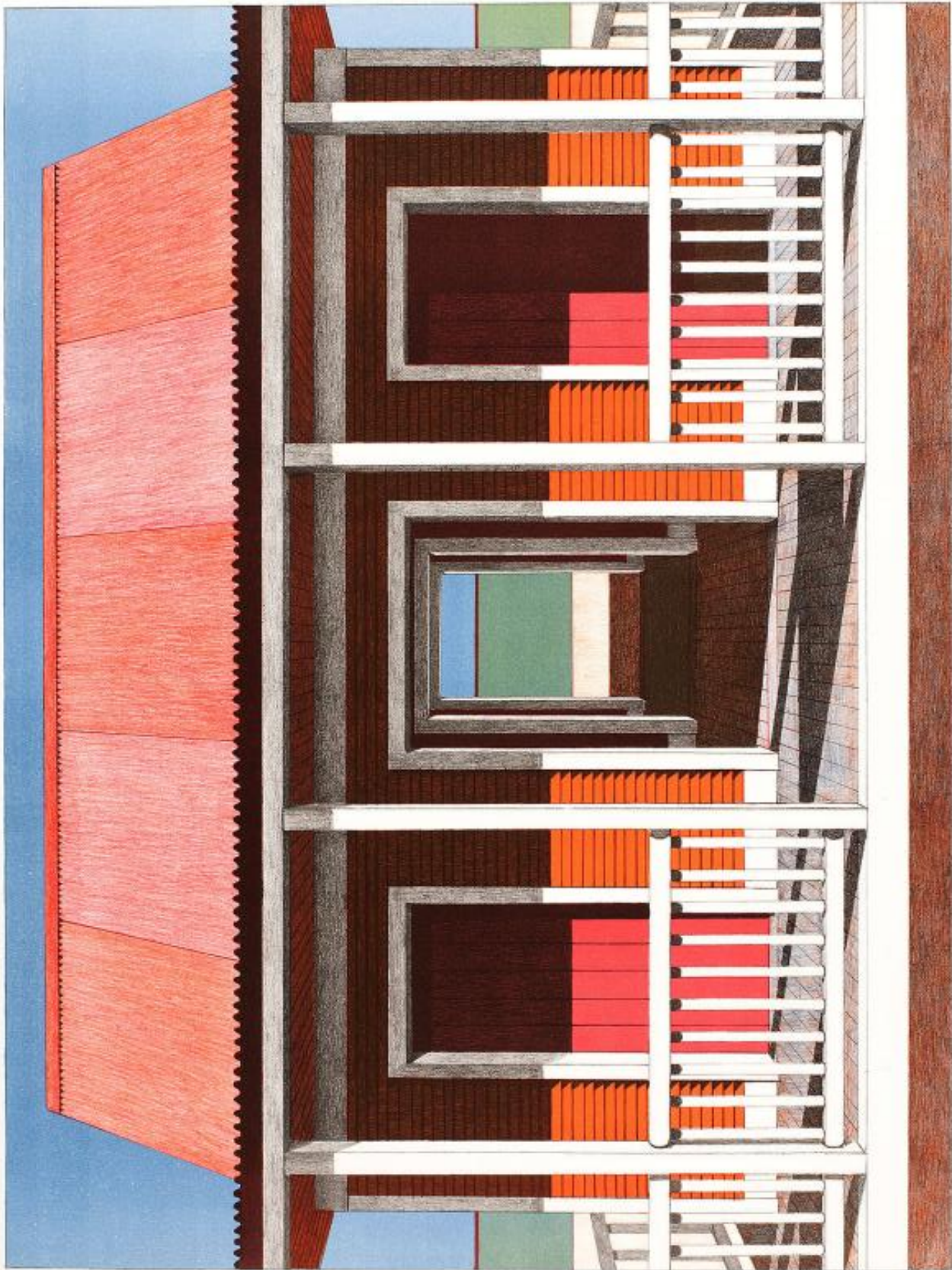
Color lithograph

About the Artist and Artwork

Emilio Sánchez was a Cuban American artist who was fascinated by the Cuban architecture of his childhood. He painted several series of houses in which he manipulated color and shadow to create geometric *casitas* (little houses).

Discussion / Questions

- Have you ever seen a house that looks like this? When and where did you see it?
- If you could create a drawing or painting of your dream house, what would it look like?
- What do you think is behind the house, through the open door?





Joaquín Torres-García
(1874-1949)

[Constructif en rouge et ocre \(Construction in Red and Ochre\)](#)

1931

34 ¹/₁₆ x 23 ³/₁₆ in.

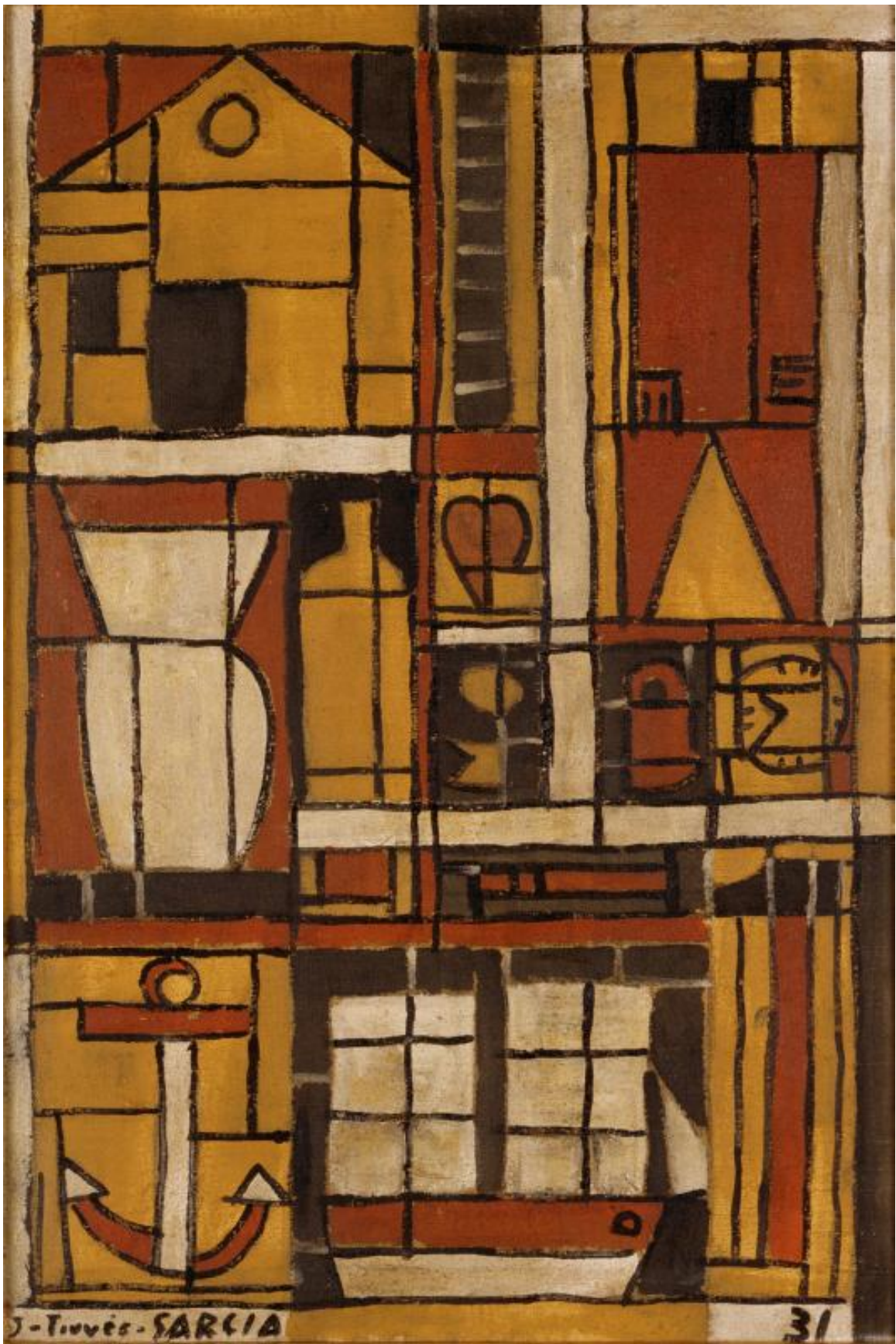
Oil on linen canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Joaquín Torres-García characteristically organized his works using an underlying grid containing universal archetypes, or images and symbols that are easily recognizable. The figure, temple, heart, clock, hammer, bottle, and vessel with its anchor symbolize different aspects of human existence, ranging from the natural, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

Discussion / Questions

- Which symbol is easiest to recognize? Which takes more time to see?
- What kind of story do you think this painting might be telling?





Simon Vouet
(1590-1649)

Saint Cecilia

circa 1626

52 ¹³/₁₆ x 38 ¹¹/₁₆ in.

Oil on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Cecilia, the patron saint of music and musicians, sits in front of a small organ. Clothed in a lush silk dress, she gracefully turns to the two cherubs that appear to her. Cecilia was a Christian martyr who lived in third-century Rome. On her wedding night, she converted her groom Valerian to the Christian faith, and he then guided his brother to adopt Christianity. Their beliefs were soon discovered by the authorities, which led to their martyrdom. Cecilia has been represented with a musical instrument since the 14th century, although she has no proven connection to any particular instrument.

Discussion / Questions

- What do you think is happening in the painting? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Even if you do not play a musical instrument, what instrument would you like to be associated with? Why?





Charles White
(1918-1979)

Love Letter III

1977

30 x 22 ¼ in.

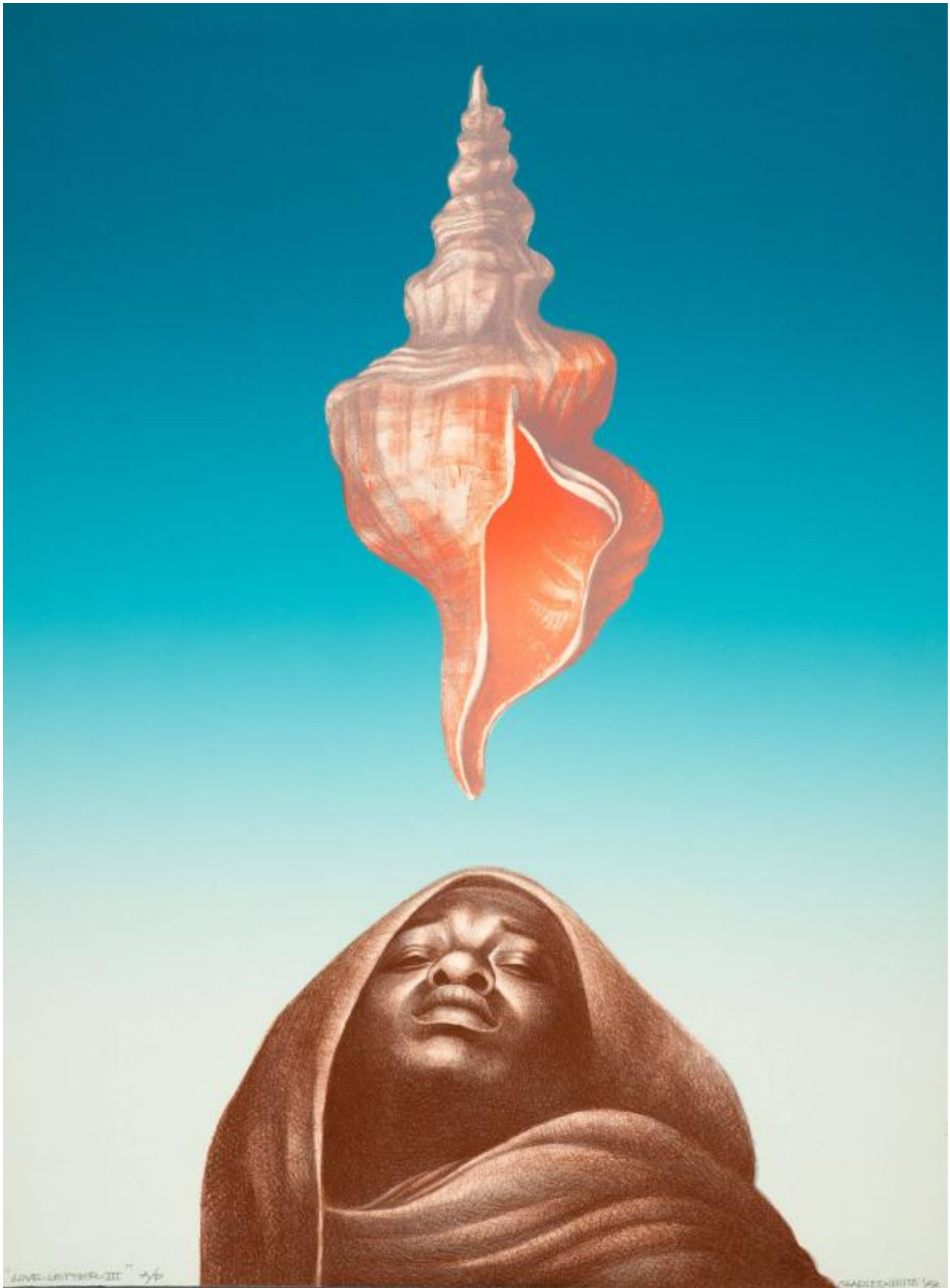
Color crayon and spray paint lithograph printed in four colors and screenprint with gradated inking

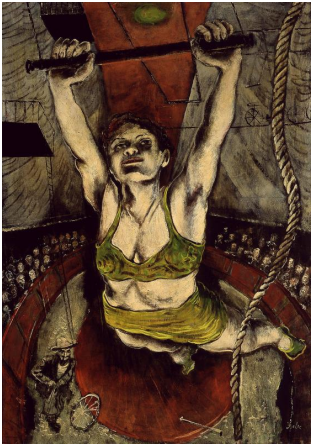
About the Artist and Artwork

Charles White was a Black artist known for depicting African American subjects in paintings, drawings, lithographs, and murals. He often used the conch motif to represent femininity, life giving, and creativity, which, paired with the female figure, makes the image a kind of double celebration of womanhood. The figure in this work also appeared in a painting he created the year before, and he again used the conch in a new painting the following year.

Discussion / Questions

- What does this work make you wonder?
- What is an object or symbol that makes you think of celebration?





Karl Zerbe
(1903-1972)

[Woman on Trapeze](#)

1946

53 ¹/₈ x 37 ³/₈ in.

Oil and encaustic on canvas

About the Artist and Artwork

Inspired by Zerbe's brief travels with the Barnum and Bailey Circus in 1945, *Woman on Trapeze* raises several questions. The intrepid trapeze artist stares beyond the viewer from a bird's-eye perspective high above the crowd below—so where are we? And why is the young woman's expression so self-contained while her muscular body practically crashes into the viewer's own? The strong contrasts of light and dark give the scene an unreal, even threatening, tone. Although normally a site of family entertainment, this painting presents the circus as an unsettling mystery.

Discussion / Questions

- What does the trapeze artist's facial expression suggest she might be thinking?
- How do the artist's color choices affect your assumptions about this circus?

