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Mequitta Ahuja

American, born 1976

Tress IV, 2008

Waxy chalk on paper

Gift of funds from Sheila Morgan 2010.17

This self-portrait by Mequitta Ahuja is dominated by a great mass of tangled dreadlocks, rendered with such sensuous tactility that we understand its texture and physicality even though we cannot touch it. By contrast, her face—the usual focus of a self-portrait—is far less detailed, inverted, and unnaturally small. Ahuja has explained that, for African Americans, hair is a basic expression of one's self-identity. She said, "In response to the history of Black hair as a barometer of social and personal consciousness, I make the image of hair both corporeal and conceptual, giving it the psychic proportions hair has in the lives of Black people."

Web site: <http://www.bravinlee.com/ahuja.html>

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Ross Bleckner

American, born 1949

Before and After Being Young, 1987

Oil on canvas

Collection of Gordon Locksley and George T. Shea

Ross Bleckner regards his striped compositions as confrontational. He intentionally denies the optical transcendence of a pure abstraction, in this case by adding a central emblematic figure and delicate scrollwork borders. Overlaid with these decorative elements, the upright stripes provide a visual field embedded with emotional content. In merging the ornamental with the abstract in a commemorative context (indicated by the title), Bleckner creates a space in which meaning and sensation combine. When a viewer engages with such a work, he or she confronts the ability of abstract art to carry subjective meaning.

Web site: <http://www.rbleckner.com>

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Michaël Borremans

Belgian, born 1963

Oblivion, 2002

Oil on canvas

Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York

This mysterious painting appears to be a conventional, realistic portrait of a young man, but the image communicates almost nothing about the sitter. His face is completely obscured by a dark rectangle, and his hairstyle and clothing are nondescript, lacking any of the details that would place him in a particular time or place. No matter how many times our eyes return to the sitter's face, we cannot get past the empty black rectangle. This frustrating painting thwarts our ability to "see" the subject in any meaningful way, and ultimately questions our relationship with the truth as presented by images alone. By denying our ability to identify the subject, Borremans challenges our expectations of what a portrait should be.

Web site: <http://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/11>

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James Castle

American, 1899–1977

Untitled, no date

Found paper, twine, wood, string, soot, color of unknown origin

Private collection, Minneapolis

Self-taught artist James Castle created a vast body of work during his lifetime, using scavenged materials to create drawings, books, and constructions that evoke his daily life in a small farming community in Idaho. Born deaf, Castle never learned to speak, read, sign, or write. He rarely ventured far from his home, and his cardboard and paper constructions are made of detritus gleaned from nearby places, such as the local post office and general store. Working exclusively with discarded materials, Castle was able to transform the commonplace image of a chair into an object capable of revealing his unique worldview. For Castle, the things that surrounded him—furniture, household items, farming equipment—defined his reality. By assembling art that mirrored his modest surroundings, Castle not only offered a glimpse into a life that was largely insulated from society, but also demonstrated the method by which he organized his world.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1gfKO>

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Gego (Gertrud Goldschmidt)

Venezuelan, born 1912

Sphere No. 5, 1977

Steel wires with metal clasps, assembled

Courtesy Fundación Gego, Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Hovering between fixed and dynamic, calculated and random, Gego's art defies classification just as it defies gravity. Gego studied architecture and engineering in Germany until, faced with increasing hostility against Jews, she sought refuge in Venezuela in 1939. She lived there for the rest of her life, working in her distinct style at the intersection of several art movements.

The thinness of the steel wires composing *Sphere No. 5* lends the sculpture a surprising delicacy. The geometric arrangement of the wires, combined with the ephemeral quality of the piece, resembles the fine beauty of a spider web or a constellation of stars. While the piece appears to hover freely in the air, it is connected to the wall by light and shadow. The piece shifts and changes with the light conditions and the viewer's movements. This masterful use of line and space incorporates engineering into art and challenges the notion that sculpture must be solid.

Web site: <http://www.fundaciongego.com>

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Raymond Hains

French, 1926–2005

Sans titre (Untitled), 1960

Torn posters on canvas

Collection of Gordon Locksley and George T. Shea

Raymond Hains's collages are composed of layered posters torn from walls and signboards found in urban public spaces in France. His process was simple but radical; he simply removed large sections of advertisements and announcements from city walls and mounted them on canvas or aluminum, presenting them as readymades. The natural deterioration of the posters gives *Untitled* a used and worn look, drawing attention to the history trapped between the layers of paper. At the same time, this artifact of consumer and popular culture also functions as an engaging abstract composition of text, color, and texture.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1i9mq>

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Damien Hirst

British, born 1965

Trust, 2003

Cellulose paint on bronze with coins and mirrored stainless steel

Collection of Gordon Locksley and George T. Shea

Trust is based on the sentimental, freestanding charity collection boxes that were a common sight on British streets during the 1960s and 1970s. The boxes, which featured a picture of a little girl wearing a leg brace, were donation collectors for those with cerebral palsy. In Hirst's updated version, the little girl's charity box has been broken into with a crowbar and coins are scattered at her feet. Has Hirst altered the original object in order to draw attention to the injustice of contemporary society, in which the poor and disabled must fend for themselves? Or, by replacing the name of the charity on the tin with his own iconic dots, is Hirst making a statement about how easy it can be to manipulate the art market? The artist's own popularity makes this an ironic interpretation.

Web site: <http://www.damienhirst.com>

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David Hockney

British, born 1937

Woldgate Lane to Burton Agnes, 2007

Oil on two canvases

Courtesy of the artist and L.A. Louver, Venice, CA

During the 2000s, drawn by the memory of a landscape from his youth, David Hockney traveled from his home in Los Angeles to East Yorkshire, England, to make a series of paintings of Woldgate Woods. He worked outdoors, directly from nature, in the nineteenth-century tradition of British *plein air* painters such as John Constable and J. M. W. Turner. In this view of Woldgate Lane, Hockney used two canvases in order to make an easily portable, large-scale work that conveyed the landscape's scope as he experienced it. Blades of grass, individually rendered in vibrant green brushstrokes, provide points of focus in the foreground, while softer patches of color recede into the distance. While Hockney accurately captured the vistas of the East Yorkshire countryside, he also directs the viewer's focus, creating a space where the expansive becomes intimate.

Web site: <http://hockneypictures.com>

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Claes Oldenburg

American, born 1929

Fagend Study, 1976

Painted bronze

Collection of Miles and Shirley Fiterman

Claes Oldenburg became so fascinated with cigarette butts during a trip to London in 1966 that he began to collect them. He thought they resembled the columns found in the city's architecture and was inspired to create colossal sculptures in their likeness. The title of this piece reflects the vernacular of London's West End, where an observer asked him, "What are you doing collecting fag ends?"

Oversized and cartoonishly painted, Oldenburg's fag end is playful rather than abject. Although an actual cigarette butt is small and soft—both smokable and crushable—Oldenburg's large bronze object is fixed and impossible to manipulate. In *Fagend Study*, as in his other sculptures depicting common objects, Oldenburg has transformed the disposable quotidian into the permanent and monumental, simply by manipulating scale and material.

Web site: <http://www.oldenburgvanbruggen.com>

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Robert Polidori

Canadian, born 1951

**Señora Faxas Residence, No. 1, Miramar,
Havana, Cuba, 1997**

Chromogenic print (Fuji Crystal Archive)

The William Hood Dunwoody Fund and gift of funds from Betsy Weyerhaeuser, the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Fund, and Brian and Julia Morrison Palmer 2003.208.1

In documenting the decaying structures and interior spaces of Havana, Robert Polidori seeks to expose the traces of memory that exist just beneath the surfaces of buildings, streets, and living spaces. Using a large-format camera to produce richly detailed, vibrantly colored photographs, Polidori focuses on the elements of a room that hint at memory and meaning. Before Fidel Castro took control of the city and seized private property in the 1950s, Havana enjoyed an economic boom that resulted in the construction of numerous palatial mansions. The once-grand architecture that filled the city is now crumbling, and mansions like this one are left to display the stains of history that have collected under decades of political and social unrest.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1gfOH>

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Richard Pousette-Dart

American, 1916–92

Summer Sung Orange Down, 1985–89

Acrylic on linen

Private collection, Minneapolis

Summer Sung Orange Down is an exquisite example of Richard Pousette-Dart's late style: tactile, vibrant, and abstract. Colors and forms melt together on the canvas into a field of movement and luminosity, and the entire composition shimmers like a heat wave, hovering between complete abstraction and symbolic representation. Although Pousette-Dart started out as an Abstract Expressionist, by the 1980s he had begun to paint pointillist compositions such as this one, in which he explored the visual sublime and the harmony of complementary colors. "I strive to express the spiritual nature of the universe," he explained. "Painting for me is a dynamic balance and wholeness of life; it is mysterious and transcending, yet solid and real."

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1gfQk>

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James Rosenquist

American, born 1933

For Henry G. (Subject: Spaghetti), c. 1964

Oil on canvas

Collection of Miles and Shirley Fiterman

This painting depicts a food many of us know and love, but the image seems revolting rather than appetizing. Unrestricted by bowls or plates, the giant noodles ooze off the edges of the canvas, twisting around one another like worms. James Rosenquist, who began his career in Minneapolis as a billboard painter, took as his subjects familiar consumer products such as food and cars. Here he uses the giant scale, garish colors, and commercial content found in roadside advertisements to represent America's extravagant postwar material culture, or what the artist called our "economy of surplus." Rosenquist painted this visceral image for Henry Geldzahler, curator of American art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1960 to 1977 and an enthusiastic supporter of Rosenquist and the other Pop artists.

Web site: <http://www.jimrosenquist-artist.com>

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Sebastião Salgado

Brazilian, born 1944

People of Kenya Walking for Polio Vaccinations, Rumbek District, Southern Sudan, 2001

Gelatin silver print

Private collection, Minneapolis

In 2001, photographer and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Sebastião Salgado began documenting the World Health Organization's Global Polio Eradication Initiative. His photographs offer a firsthand account of the effects of this crippling disease and the WHO's effort to immunize every child under age five. In this photo, taken in a remote cattle-herding area in southern Sudan, ghostly figures emerge from the remote landscape as they walk toward an arriving team of polio vaccinators. In documenting the crisis, Salgado gives a human perspective to a disease that has been eradicated in industrialized countries.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1gf58>

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Jim Dine

American, born 1935

Window Brain, 1959

Mixed media

Collection of Miles and Shirley Fiterman

In 1958 the young painter Jim Dine moved from his native Ohio to New York to pursue a career as an artist. He made *Window Brain* during his first year in the city, using a folding card table as his canvas, adding paint, scraps of wood, rags, and a warped wooden dowel. The work's energy and sense of spontaneity link it to the action paintings of Abstract Expressionism, but *Window Brain* is a hybrid of painting and sculpture, and thus closer in spirit to the often-anarchistic "Happenings" and mixed-media experiments of Dine's contemporaries, Claes Oldenburg, George Segal, Red Grooms, and Allan Kaprow.

Window Brain rarely has been exhibited since Dine's first New York show, held in 1959 at the artist-run Judson Gallery. After the show Dine discarded or destroyed most of the works he had exhibited; *Window Brain* is one of the few to survive.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1gIpV>

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Jimmie Durham

American, born 1940

I want to Bee Mice Elf, 1985–2006

Bone, wood, metal, mirror, paint, seashell

Collection of Peter, Annie, and Connor Remes

Issues of Native American identity and authenticity are central to Jimmie Durham's work. In *I Want 2 Bee Mice Elf*, he has incorporated several items typically associated with Native American art—an animal skull, a tree branch, and a seashell. But the resulting totem-like structure is hardly traditional. The side-mirror and reflectors are bits of modern refuse that situate the work firmly in the present. The placard nailed to the sculpture informs us that Durham rejects stereotypes about Native Americans; he will be himself. Despite addressing ideas relevant to his heritage, Durham refuses the category "Indian artist." He asserts, "I am Cherokee but my work is simply contemporary art, and for me it is vital that my work be seen as contemporary art without any qualifiers or labels."

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1gIQb>

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William Kentridge

South African, born 1955

Sleeper Red, 1997

Etching, soft ground, aquatint, and drypoint in red and black ink

Gift of funds from John E. Andrus III, the Ronald F. Kinney Foundation, Diane and David Lilly, David Moore, the Phillips Foundation, the Paul C. Johnson, Jr., Fund, the Plautz Family Endowment, the James and Maureen Duffey Endowment for Prints and Drawings, and the C. Curtis Dunnavan Fund 2009.69

South African artist William Kentridge is internationally known for his politically focused prints, drawings, films, and performances. Much of his work explores social responsibility, a subject inspired by his witness to the violence and hatred that are the legacy of South African apartheid. The figure in *Sleeper Red* is modeled after the artist's own body, but this work is not intended as a self-portrait. Rather, Kentridge represents the archetypical white South African who, by birthright, has benefited from the former political system. The blood-red background suggests that danger and bloodshed are all around him, yet the man remains asleep—a symbol of all those who fail to stir in spite of the human suffering that surrounds them.

Web site: <http://williamkentridge.net>

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Yayoi Kusama

Japanese, born 1929

Untitled, 1967

Oil on canvas

Courtesy Barbara Mathes Gallery, New York

Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's work is widely diverse in theory and practice, including painting, drawing, sculpture, assemblage, performance, video, and installation. At one point, she ventured into the fashion world with her own clothing line. During the decade she lived in New York—1958 to 1968—she was especially known for her exuberant abstract paintings, which used a signature motif known as an “infinity net”—interlocking shapes painted with netlike patterns.

In *Untitled*, Kusama added her characteristic polka dots over the infinity nets, creating yet another dimension. This work was made shortly before she returned to Japan to seek treatment for the hallucinations and obsessive thoughts that had troubled her since childhood. Kusama has often said making art is the way she manages her obsessions.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1l8mv>

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Yue Minjun

Chinese, born 1962

Contemporary Terra Cotta Warrior No. 10

2007

Bronze

Courtesy Max Protetch Gallery, New York

In 1974, a small group of Chinese farmers digging a well uncovered the mausoleum of the Chinese emperor Qin Shi Huang (259–210 B.C.). The massive pit contained more than 8,000 life-sized terra-cotta sculptures of warriors, war chariots, and horses, created to protect the massive gravesite. The title of this work alludes to these ancient sculptures, but it neither depicts a warrior nor is made of terra-cotta. Instead, it merges Yue's grinning self-portrait with the archetypical tomb guardian figure, whose leering face and aggressive posture were meant to frighten away evil spirits. As in many works in the Cynical Realist style, *Contemporary Terra Cotta Warrior No. 10* uses hollow expressions as a subtle, yet critical, response to the numbing conformity of life in communist China.

Web site: <http://www.yueminjun.com>

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Roxy Paine

American, born 1966

PMU #1, 2001

Acrylic canvas on wood

Collection of Peter, Annie, and Connor Remes

PMU #1 appears to be a straightforward abstract painting, with carefully applied strata of dripped paint layers marking it as handmade. But it was, in fact, produced by a machine: Roxy Paine's "PMU," or Painting Manufacture Unit, which features a paint-spraying nozzle that reproduces patterns Paine has drawn onto a computerized tablet. The nozzle travels across the surface of each canvas eighty to two hundred times, and each piece takes several days to complete. This slow pace—along with the inherent randomness of dripping paint—contradicts our expectation that the products of mechanical production are rapidly produced and identical.

Paine's process also undermines a persistent conviction that machine-made items are not art. Each painting created by the PMU is unique, resembling a different geological landscape. This dislodgment of established perceptions is central to Paine's work, which explores the complex relationship between the organic and the industrial.

Web site: <http://www.jamescohan.com/artists/roxy-paine>

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Sebastião Salgado

Brazilian, born 1944

Tanzania, 1994/2003

Gelatin silver print

Private collection, Minneapolis

As part of his "migrations" project, which chronicles the forced displacement of people from their homes, Salgado traveled to Tanzania to record this image of a Rwandan refugee camp. Following the systematic massacre by extremists of Rwanda's minority Tutsi and moderate Hutu ethnic groups, scores of people flooded the surrounding countries to escape the genocide. In the Benako camp in Tanzania, hundreds of thousands of refugees sought shelter under makeshift tents. Sadly, the violence and chaos continued in the camps because both victims and perpetrators sought to take advantage of humanitarian aid. In this image, the ominous clouds just overhead suggest the turbulent conditions that plagued these refugee camps.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1gK1R>

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Jennifer Steinkamp

American, born 1958

Hurdy Gurdy Man (Chrysanthemums), 2006

Video installation

Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York

In this computer-animated projection, Jennifer Steinkamp has set a traditional still-life subject into motion. A group of delicate, pastel-hued chrysanthemums seems to bob and sway to the Donovan song for which the piece is named. Their movement is mesmerizing, but also vaguely unsettling; despite the still air in the gallery, Steinkamp's fantasy garden is in constant, repetitive motion. The contrast between the naturalistic appearance of the blossoms and the artificiality of their movement is an example of the disorienting experiences we construct for ourselves in our digitized world. Like Steinkamp's other video installations, *Hurdy Gurdy Man* explores ideas of motion and perception, testing our responses to forms that are simultaneously familiar and impossible.

Web site: <http://jsteinkamp.com>

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JoAnn Verburg

American, born 1950

Still Life with Jim, 1991

Three chromogenic prints

Courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York

Still Life with Jim, an image of the artist's husband taking an afternoon nap, is a precisely composed, contemporary version of a *vanitas*—a still-life painting meant to remind viewers of the impermanence of life. Vanitas images were a popular genre in European painting of the seventeenth century, and often included such symbols as fruits or vegetables at the peak of ripeness and references to the passage of time, such as an hourglass or clock. Verburg's image includes both, as well as a sleeping figure and a newspaper—a more contemporary allusion to the ephemeral nature of life.

Web site: <http://www.pacemacgill.com/joannverburg.html>

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Ilya Kabakov

American, born Russia, 1933

**Svetlana Lvovna Solus: Whose Cup Is This?
Jakov Michailovich Sekh: Anna Petrovna's
1996**

Metal object, oil on plywood

Courtesy Ilya and Emilia Kabakov

Throughout most of his work, Ilya Kabakov weaves bleak memories of his experiences growing up in war-torn Soviet Russia. This painting features a mundane cooking utensil against an impersonal field of color, accompanied by texts in the upper left and right corners. The cup and dialogue mimic life in a communal apartment—low-income housing run by the Soviet government. Families were given just one room in the unit and instructed to share the kitchen and bathroom spaces with other tenants. Kabakov contrasts the meager belongings of Anna Petrovna with the unremitting noise of chatter, evoking a deprived, claustrophobic environment. In this work and other poetic installations, Kabakov suggests the stagnant and oppressive air of not only the communal apartments, but also the entire Soviet Union.

Web site: <http://www.ilya-emilia-kabakov.com>

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