ALUMNI COLLECT
TWENTIETH-CENTURY MASTERPIECES FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF BARUCH COLLEGE ALUMNI
ALUMNI COLLECT: TWENTIETH-CENTURY MASTERPIECES FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF BARUCH COLLEGE ALUMNI

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SANDRA KRASIK, CURATOR

SIDNEY MISHKIN GALLERY
BARUCH COLLEGE
BARUCH COLLEGE/CUNY, 135 EAST 22 STREET, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Sidney Mishkin Gallery is proud to celebrate the distinguished collections of Baruch College alumni. The exhibition Alumni Collect: Twentieth Century Masterpieces from the Collections of Baruch College Alumni is a testament to the development of modern and postmodern art in the twentieth century.

It is not surprising that many of the graduates of Baruch's School of Business have become the CEOs of major corporations, but the fact that they are also significant art collectors is a testament to the success of the College's efforts to integrate its business and liberal arts programs. With vision and leadership, Baruch President Matthew Goldstein has encouraged the growth of cultural programs at the College, further integrating its curricula.

I would like to thank all of the individual and corporate collectors who made this exhibition possible with their generous loans. I am grateful to Vice President for College Advancement Erica S. Frederick for her help in organizing the exhibition. Her support and the support of The Baruch College Fund were essential for this exhibition. And it is always a pleasure to express my appreciation to Provost Lols Cronholm for her continuing support of the Mishkin Gallery programs.

The cooperation of the following corporate representatives and curators should also be acknowledged: Arthur Goldberg, Neuberger & Berman; Matthew Armstrong, PaineWebber Group, Inc.; and Gerry Marmon of Republic National Bank. Daniell Commell, Mishkin Gallery curatorial assistant, has also provided help with this exhibition.

Sandra Kraskin, Director
Sidney Mishkin Gallery

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A NEW SPIRIT OF COLLECTING BEGINS WITH THE ARMORY SHOW

On February 17, 1913, at the Sixty-ninth Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue and 25th Street—near the future site of the urban campus of Baruch College—the International Exhibition of Modern Art dramatically introduced a broad range of modern art to the American public. Better known as the Armory Show, this exhibition was organized by American artists as a protest against traditional styles of art and a revolt against the hegemony of the National Academy of Design. A few individual collectors, demonstrating courage and discrimination, responded to the challenge of this revolt by forming the early collections of modern art in America.

Although the exhibition's curators, artists Walt Kuhn and Arthur B. Davies, selected European and American art representing a wide variety of artistic styles (even including some work from the nineteenth century), they featured the most advanced modern movements: cubism, fauvism, and...
and expressionism. Voicing his hopes for the exhibition, Kuhn wrote to expatriate painter and critic Walter Pach his contact in Paris, on December 1912. "We want this old show of ours to mark the starting point of the new spirit in art, at least as far as America is concerned. I feel it will show its effect even further and make the big wheel turn over in both hemispheres.

This "new spirit" was most evident in the bold distortions of color and form created by the European modernists. Marcel Duchamp's cubist painting "Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2," 1912, shocked viewers at the Armory Show and became the target of much derision. Duchamp used a series of geometric planes to suggest the body of a woman and repeated her form to indicate motion down a staircase. Titled to provoke viewers with its promise of a nude figure, Duchamp's painting instead presented a fragmented, abstract image of a human form. Art critics joked about Duchamp's painting and mocked much of the modern art at the Armory Show making the exhibition a succès de scandale. President Theodore Roosevelt compared Duchamp's painting to a Navajo blanket, and other sarcastic descriptions of it included "an explosion in a shingle factory" and "Ellis Island art." These examples of cubism—that he purchased the first of the paintings purchased from the exhibition, indicating that some art collectors recognized that modernism was an important artistic development. These collectors, many of whom would form major American collections, included John Quinn, Arthur Jerome Eddy, Walter Arensberg, Albert L. Gallatin, Eilleen R. Blau, Katherine Dreier, and Albert Barnes. To a great extent, the Armory Show marked a new spirit of collecting contemporary art in America.

Without the sanction of art critics, the support of these courageous collectors was essential for the development of modern art in America. Providing encouragement to budding American modernists, collectors created opportunities for these artists to study the work of the most avant-garde European masters, and some of their collections would later form the basis for American museums.
Photographed in 1918 by Charles Sheeler, the Arensberg apartment featured the work of some of the most avant-garde artists of the period. Preserving the "controversy" of the Armory Show, Marcel Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2 hung prominently in the Arensberg's apartment along with paintings by such artists as Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Henri Matisse, and Francis Picabia.

**SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME**

Throughout the 1920s, when exhibitions of modern art were rare, expanding private collections provided opportunities for an emerging generation of American artists to study modern art. In 1920 Katherine Dreier, with the help of Marcel Duchamp, established the Société Anonyme: Museum of Modern Art at 19 East 47th Street. Both Dreier and Duchamp had exhibited in the Armory Show, and with the Société Anonyme they continued some of the spirit that earlier exhibitions had generated. They included other American artists—Marsden Hartley, Walter Pach, Joseph Stella, and William Zorach—who had exhibited in the Armory Show. In 1926 the Société Anonyme sponsored an international exhibition of modern art at the Brooklyn Museum. Recalling the Armory Show, this compendium of modernism repeated for younger artists the chance to see a wide range of work by Pablo Picasso and many other European modernists. With public lectures and rotating exhibitions, the Société Anonyme remained an important showcase for modernism in New York City until 1941, when it was moved to Yale University.

**GALLATIN'S GALLERY OF LIVING ART**

Another study center for modern art was formed when collector Albert Gallatin opened his Gallery of Living Art in a New York University building on Washington Square in 1927. This gallery provided the first opportunity for artists in New York to view a collection of modern painting and sculpture on a regular basis without the interruption of constantly changing exhibitions. Defying the art critics, Gallatin became an early supporter of abstract art. He built his collection and organized exhibitions with many examples of European as well as American modernism. His gallery endorsed abstract art and provided a neighborhood museum for the avant-garde artists who lived in Greenwich Village throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. William de Kooning remembered visiting the Gallery of Living Art frequently: "I went so many times. I remember a Mondrian. and also the French artist Hélio. When I met Gorky he used to go there often. It was so easy to walk in and walk out again. no charge. It was so nice."

When the gallery closed in 1943, the collection was donated to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

In 1929, two years after Gallatin opened his gallery the Museum of Modern Art was founded. Located at 10 West 54th Street in a building owned by Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, the museum originated with Mrs. Rockefeller's personal collection in addition to the collection of Lillie P. Bliss. The museum's first director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., featured significant modern European art with an extensive program of exhibitions and acquisitions. These exhibitions presented a panorama of modernism, beginning with important late-nineteenth-century artists and documenting the development of modern movements in the twentieth century. Cubism and Abstract Art, a landmark show held at the museum in 1936, presented an historical survey of modern art. In his preface to the exhibition catalog, Barr emphasized that "it is conceived in a retrospective—not in a controversial spirit," clearly differentiating this scholarly study from the comedy of media coverage depicting cubism at the Armory Show.

Barr carefully explained and categorized the various abstract movements, beginning with impressionism. "The pictorial conquest of the external visual world had been completed and refined many times and in different ways during the previous half millennium," he noted in his catalog introduction. "The more adventurous and original artists had grown bored with painting facts. By a common and powerful impulse they were driven to abandon the imitation of natural appearance . . . ."

As a survey of European modernism, Cubism and Abstract Art was applauded by American abstract artists. They came frequently to study the European masters. Yet, they were disturbed by the exclusion of American abstract artists from this landmark exhibition.
Unlike Gallatin, who had created an international context for modernism by organizing exhibitions that included American abstract artists and by purchasing their work for his own collection, most museum directors and curators considered European modernism the only legitimate abstract art. They believed that American abstract art had been a development of the 1920s and was no longer an important style in the 1930s. The Museum of Modern Art was a glaring source of stimulation for many of the abstract artists in New York City. Rather than supporting the emerging avant-garde art produced by young American abstract artists, the museum mounted exhibitions that reflected an obvious bias toward European abstraction. The exclusion of American artists from Cubism and Abstract Art clearly marked the museum community's rejection of American abstraction.

THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

The Whitney Museum of American Art, which opened in 1931, did little of significance to support American abstraction. Although the Whitney Museum featured only American art and included a few abstract artists in its permanent collection, its major exhibitions during the thirties reflected an overwhelming endorsement of American realists. Founded by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, who was a sculptor as well as a collector, the Whitney Museum of American Art evolved from the Whitney Studio Club, a program she had established in 1918 to sponsor exhibitions and provide financial support for young artists. Numbering more than 500 works of art in 1931, Mrs. Whitney's personal collection formed the basis of the Whitney Museum collection when that museum opened at 12 West Eighth Street. Although Mrs. Whitney had been a financial supporter of the Armory Show of 1913, she collected more conservative American artists and therefore the museum did not provide the international focus that could be seen nearby at the Société Anonyme or the Gallery of Living Art or uptown at the Museum of Modern Art.

ART CRITICS CONDEMN ABSTRACT ART

The program of the Whitney Museum of American Art during the 1930s, with its emphasis on conservative figurative art, put into even clearer perspective the prophetic vision of early collectors like Gallatin and Dreier, who continued to support both European and American abstract art despite ongoing retrograde attacks from art critics.

One of the most biting critics of abstract art was Edward Alden Jewell, art critic for the New York Times. A critic for the Times since 1928, Jewell became its senior art critic in 1936. Because of the prestige and influence of the New York Times and because of the broad audience he reached, Jewell's reviews carried enormous weight. Originally a novelist, Jewell preferred traditional figurative painting styles. He also favored American scene painters, regionalists, and social realists. Jewell expressed his general frustration with all abstract art in his review of the Museum of Modern Art exhibition Cubism and Abstract Art:

But lest the readers of the foregoing operation—be it going by hard-to-understand abstractions as presented to us in terms of color and form and plastic terms—be so uniquely at fault when failure comes our efforts! Not, I am inclined to think that the artists themselves should be asked to shoulder their just share of the blame. These who ought to see through fogs of light, have walked in darkness; those in such a fog as would keep any sensitive person on the ground.

In a review of that same exhibition for the New York World-Telegram, critic Emily Genauer dismissed abstract art as "decorative" and, therefore, insignificant. She described the abstract work of the European modernists with a mocking tone:

...Picabia and Moholy-Nagy's assorted compositions, which appear to be no more than meaningless patches of cardboard glued to, or ooze something of, Malerich's 'White on White,' which is the reduction of abstraction into which all such preciosity must lead, or who may be just a grand joke on the part of the painter: it is a big sheet of coverage painting white, with a square of ivory-white painted on top of this. That all this is 'There isn't any room. And that's all, there's nothing to do here. All these deductions will be in vain, that there is abstraction and cubism in art, too.'

Cubism, which had been decried by critics of the Armory Show in 1913, continued to evoke sarcastic comments more than two decades later at the Museum of Modern Art.

AMERICAN ABSTRACT ARTISTS ORGANIZE TO DEFEND ABSTRACT ART

Plagued by critical opposition to abstract art and lack of support even from American museums and galleries, American artists banded together in early 1936 to form an organization, the American Abstract Artists (AAA), to promote and defend American abstract art. The first exhibition
of the American Abstract Artists featured the work of 39 painters and sculptors at the Squibb Building at 745 Fifth Avenue in April 1937. Work by artists Ilya Bolotowsky, Charles Shaw, and George L. K. Morris was exhibited with the paintings and sculpture of the other founding members of the group Charles Shaw’s Plastic Polygon, 1937, from the collection of Judith-Ann Corrente and Willem Kooyker, was, in fact, included in this historic exhibition.

In his review of the first AAA exhibition, Edward Alden Jewell established the negative tone that expressed his attitude toward abstract art and would characterize nearly all of his writings on the group’s exhibitions:

Into the wide open spaces in the thirty-third floor of the Squibb Building, thirty-nine American "abstract artists" have ventured, each of them bringing examples of his own special ingenuity, each arguing in some degree his endorsement as a raconteur of tales from over yonder on the Rive Gauche that have begun to assume, by this time, a sly patina of age. What they have put on display at the Squibb makes a colorful, an often resounding mass demonstration of decorative design.

In this passage, Jewell articulated two criticisms that were frequently leveled against these American artists. By referring to abstract artists as "raconteurs of tales from over yonder on the Rive Gauche," he accused the Americans of imitating the styles of the European avant-garde, exemplified by the Parisian "Left Bank," and he again dismissed abstraction as "decorative design."

WORLD WAR II CREATES AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT FOR MODERN ART

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 had a dramatic impact on American art. As political imperatives focused attention on international events, the New York art world was transformed by the influx of artists forced to escape Hitler’s Europe. Approximately 700 artists and 380 architects arrived in the U.S. between 1933 and 1944. The presence of many prominent European abstract artists arriving in the U.S. established a new context for American artists.
created an international community, the formation of which bolstered the confidence of American abstract artists and made it more difficult for critics to dismiss their work. Although the American Abstract Artists group had been formed to unite "American" abstractionists and to promote "American" abstract art, philosophically the group had no problem with including the exiled European artists when they arrived in the United States. Several of the founding members had been immigrants to America as recently as the 1920s, including Ilya Bolotowsky, Giorgio Cavallon, and Bram Lassaw. Other AAA members, although born in America, had developed close ties with Europe. Alfred Galatin, with Jean Hélon as a guide, had been visiting the studios of Picasso, Braque, Léger, Arp, Mattisse, Matisse, and Mondrian since the early 1930s and had been purchasing work directly from these artists. George L. K. Morris had accompanied Guggenheim on some of these studio visits, and Harry Holtzman had helped to bring Mondrian to the United States in 1940. Exemplifying the international split and openness of the American abstract artists, Morris's essay for the 1939 AAA yearbook stated his hope that "some day the field can be broadened so as to transcend nationalistic barriers." The Museum of Non-Objective Painting

As exiled European artists continued to gather in New York, a new museum dedicated to abstract art opened to the American public. Formed with the collection of Solomon R. Guggenheim, the Museum of Non-Objective Painting opened at 24 East 54th Street in 1939, a full decade after the Museum of Modern Art. The Museum of Non-Objective Painting actively "transcended nationalistic barriers" with an exhibition program that included non-objective painting by American as well as European artists. Directed by the Baroness Hilla Rebay, the museum was financially supported by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and later renamed the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Mr. Guggenheim had collected "old masters" until 1926, when he met the young German artist Baroness Hilla Rebay von Ehrenwiesen whom he commissioned to paint his portrait. With her enthusiasm for modern art, she converted Mr. Guggenheim and changed the direction of his collection. Becoming a champion of avant-garde art, particularly the work of the expressionist painter Wassily Kandinsky, Mr. Guggenheim expanded his collection. Billing the walls of his suite at the Plaza Hotel, when the museum opened, it was strictly devoted to non-objective painting, which Rebay explained "represents no object or subject known to us on earth." The first formal exhibition of work by American non-objective artists opened January 3, 1940, and featured I Rice Pereira, Balcomb Greene, and Gernett Greene, all members of the AAA. Rebay continued to support young avant-garde Americans with exhibitions and financial support for their work. During the 1940s she also employed artists as museum guards, maintenance personnel, secretaries, and lecturers. It is interesting to note that some of the early experiments with automatic drawing in the early 1940s, which would culminate with the American Abstract Expressionist movement and establish New York as the international art center after World War II, began in the basement of the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. According to artist Gerson Kamrowski, several artists who were employed at the museum melted the baroness's worn-out phonograph records and used the resulting dark lacquer to drip onto paper.

Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century

However, it was Peggy Guggenheim, Solomon Guggenheim's niece, who would be the most important catalyst for the development of abstract art during the 1940s. Peggy Guggenheim fled to America in 1941, shortly after the German occupation of Paris, bringing her collection of modern art to New York City. In 1942 she established Art of This Century, a gallery that became an important site for the exhibition and promotion of European and American abstract art. Guggenheim created a café-like environment at her gallery which quickly became a meeting place for artists and a center for avant-garde activities and exhibitions. Facilitating contact with European émigré artists, especially André Breton, André Masson, and the other surrealists, the gallery provided an environment that accelerated assimilation, modification, and adaptation of surrealist theories by numerous young American artists.
At the opening of the gallery, which featured her collection, Peggy Guggenheim wore one earring by American abstract artist Alexander Calder and one by surrealist Yves Tanguy to symbolize her impartiality with respect to both movements. In 1943 several AAA members were included in Exhibition of College at her gallery: Elsa Bouloutsky, Ad Reinhardt, and George L. K. Morris, among others exhibited along with well-known Europeans, including Marcel Duchamp. That same year, she gave Jackson Pollock his first one-person exhibition. She also gave him a year's contract, which provided a monthly stipend, enabling this promising young artist—who would later become one of America's most famous painters—to quit his job as a custodian at the Museum of Non Objective Painting.

In addition to Jackson Pollock, Peggy Guggenheim also exhibited Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, William Baziotes, and Clyfford Still, all of whom would become noted Abstract Expressionist painters. Her support of these American artists helped to validate their work and launch their careers.

The success of American modernism

The international vision of Hilla Rebay and Peggy Guggenheim and their support of many American as well as European artists during the 1940s provided validation for American modernism. With the growing enthusiasm of a few art critics and art dealers, American modernists finally gained the recognition that they had previously found only with courageous collectors. The extent of Peggy Guggenheim's influence was demonstrated by the shift in attitude at the Museum of Modern Art when Alfred H. Barr, Jr. recommended the purchase of Jackson Pollock's abstract expressionist painting The She-Wolf in 1944. The inclusion of Pollock's work in the museum's permanent collection signaled an official acceptance of American abstract art.

In the years after World War II, the vision of early collectors was confirmed by the success of modernism in America. Abstract expressionist artists Jackson Pollock, Arshile Gorky, and William de Kooning were even chosen by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to represent American art in 1950 at the U.S. Pavilion in Venice at the XXV Biennale. By mid-century, the New York School of abstract expressionists had supplanted the School of Paris modernists and New York City dominated the world of art.
Joan Miró
Untitled, 1934
Gouache and chalk on black paper, 25 3/4 x 17 3/4" (64.5 x 45.3 cm)
Collection of Bernard Laterman and Frances Liger Laterman.
Henri Matisse

*Woman Seated, 1942*
Pastel and charcoal on paper, 20 1/4 x 30". Collection of Russell and Janice Banks.

Willem de Kooning

*Untitled, 1950*
Kenneth Noland

Max Ernst

High Easter, 1960-61
Mother and Daughter, 1959
on canvas, Bronze, 18 x
Collection of Bank
Collection of Baruch College
Courtesy of Dov C. Schlein of Sidney Mishkin, 1991

Max Ernst

High Easter, 1960-61
Acrylic on canvas, 54.3 x 54.3
Collection of Repsol National Bank
Courtesy of One L. Zeitlin
Henry Moore
Mother and Child (working model), 1980
Bronze, 21 1/4 x 17 3/4 x 12" edition: 4/6
Collection of George and Mildred Weissman
Sigmar Polke


Maine Glow (Orange), 1990

Gouache on paper, 39 1/4 x 27 1/2".
Neuberger & Berman Collection.
Lent by Larry Aldin.

Wolf Kahn


Low Glow (Shangri), 1990

Oil on canvas, 39 x 53 1/2".
Collection of Marvin and Laura Spear.
Man Ray
Untitled, 1943
Watercolor on paper, 24 3/4 x 19".
Collection of Baruch College.

William de Kooning
Untitled, 1950
Pencil and charcoal on paper, 19 x 24".
Collection of PeterWebber Group, Inc.
Courtesy of Donald B. Mannon.

Max Ernst
Untitled, 1991
Embossed intaglio, ed. 6/9.
Collection of Carl Spielvogel and Frances Iger Laterman.

Marsden Hartley
Mount Katahdin, Snow Storm, 1942
Serigraph, 27 1/2 x 38".
Collection of George and Mildred Weissman.

Henry Moore
Mother and Child (working model), 1990
Bronze, 28 x 31 x 15 1/2".
Collection of George and Mildred Weissman.

Joel Shapiro
Untitled, 1991
Oil and wood, 13 x 17 x 14".
Collection of Bernard Laterman and Frances Iger Laterman.

James Rosenquist
Untitled, 1960
Oil on canvas, 30 x 22 x 14 1/2".
Collection of George and Mildred Weissman.

Elizabeth Murray
Untitled, 1992
Oil and mixed media on leather mattress, 74 x 77 x 4 1/2".
Collection of Larry and Joan Zuckin.

For more information on dimensions, please refer to the document.