

But really, my interest in painting lies in the fact of the painting. And I think that's why sometimes people find the big paintings uncomfortable. Because they, in fact, perceive the space, sense it, and at the same time are repelled by the aggression of the painting, of the pigment, of the fact of the picture, its size.

—Neil Welliver

In the early 1960s, Neil Welliver began visiting Maine where he painted large scale studies of nudes bathing in streams and ponds, as well as studies of his sons canoeing. The figures in his paintings were meant to be read as elements of nature and he sought to depict them in a way that made them one with the surrounding environment.

RECENT ACQUISITION

I think that Ingres' remark that 'I leave it to time to finish my paintings' is true in a very wide and profound way. I think it's true in many ways. For instance, the paint mellows actually and so it becomes more harmonious. If it's an oil painting, there's a certain flow. There's something psychological, too, which kind of works back toward the painting. Sometimes things that are awkward and out of place, you find out, are not so awkward. They have their place, and it is an integral thing and not a scattered thing.

—Fairfield Porter

Fairfield Porter created *Anne, Lizzie and Katie* at a time of hard-won acclaim. In the 1950s, after spending two decades teaching himself to paint, he executed a number of major works, including this one, and was beginning to make a name for himself. Also a poet and art critic, Porter was one of the most rigorously intellectual American artists of the twentieth century.

Born in Kansas, Aaron Douglas graduated from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 1922 and moved to New York City in 1925. He became a leader in the Harlem Renaissance after establishing himself as an illustrator for influential publications such as Alain Locke's *The New Negro* and James Weldon Johnson's collection of poems *God's Trombones*. In the painting *Window Cleaning*, Douglas offers a quiet, intimate scene of work in an urban dwelling. The canvas, like those of other artists working during the Great Depression, focuses attention on the work of an ordinary person, exploring and commemorating the routine patterns and events of everyday life.

I consider what popular culture defines as feminine beauty to be skewed and distorted. Making connections with the awkwardness as a female growing up, trying to define myself within a context of regional, social, and cultural beauty. Reflecting on my personal issue, the media and Hollywood. I am exploring that the social norms are abnormal.

Styled with hair from my personal experience, these figures are found wearing cornrow braids, unkept locks, pressed out curls and pigtails, creating a sense of familiarity, confusion, humor and tension.

— Shoshanna Weinberger in a 2013 interview with Clelia Coussonnet

RECENT ACQUISITION

JOYCE PENSATO

New York, NY 1941–New York, NY 2019

Mr. MotoMickey

Enamel on linen on board, 2006

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Olga N. Sheldon Acquisition Trust
U-6550.2016

The painting was based on a rubber Mickey Mouse head someone gave me—such an unhappy-looking guy—found in a garbage dump. It looked like something out of Edvard Munch, really deep and brooding.

—Joyce Pensato

Joyce Pensato used glossy enamel paint and the visual language of abstract expressionism to create quirky, chilling interpretations of familiar cartoon characters. Her subjects included Mickey Mouse, Lisa and Homer Simpson, and Donald Duck. Pensato's gestural approach to depicting such popular icons combined with the outsized scale of the works yields an uncompromising interpretation of the dark side lurking within consumer desire.

RECENT ACQUISITION

EDWARD HOPPER

Nyack, NY 1882–New York, NY 1967

Room in New York

Oil on canvas, 1932

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust

H-166.1936

Edward Hopper's depictions of the everyday lives of city dwellers capture the anonymity and isolation of modern urban living. Some of his most compelling pictures, including *Room in New York*, are of figures seen through windows, seemingly unaware of being watched. In many paintings made between 1926 and 1932, Hopper included a single figure or couples in compositions that curator Judith Barter has described as "[evoking] a hermetically sealed world of emotion."

Meal II

Oil on canvas, 2006

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Gift of Marjorie J. Woods in memory of Thomas C. Woods, Jr.

U-5485.2007

We need to remember where we come from; our history is with us and we carry it everywhere. My subjects are anonymous people—the ones who fight in the wars and provide food for us. They are not remembered for 'making history' as world leaders are, but to me they are the true makers of history.

—Hung Liu

Hung Liu grew up in China during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), an experience that had a lasting and profound effect on her artwork. *Meal II* presents us with a fragment of a memory conjured up from Liu's experiences in China during her twenties. The *Meal* series from which it comes is based on photographs Liu took of farming families she had befriended during the Cultural Revolution. Here, Liu has translated one of her documentary photos to canvas, creating a diaphanous veil of fluid paint that permits hazy access to her recollections of a scene of three figures preparing to eat.

ROBERT HENRI

Cincinnati, OH 1865–New York, NY 1929

Edith Dimock Glackens

Oil on canvas, 1902–1904

Nebraska Art Association

Gift of Alice Abel, Mr. and Mrs. Gene H. Tallman, the Abel Foundation, and Olga N. Sheldon

N-245.1970

Robert Henri painted Edith Dimock Glackens, a fellow artist and his friend, in a full-length portrait that shows off her sumptuous dress. Glackens, her husband William, and Henri were all active as painters in New York at a time when artists, influenced by William Merritt Chase, sought to style themselves as members of the aristocracy, and not as mere craftsmen.

MARSDEN HARTLEY

Lewiston, ME 1877–Ellsworth, ME 1943

Young Worshipper of the Truth

Oil on panel, 1940

Nebraska Art Association
Nelle Cochrane Woods Memorial
N-348.1976

Saw a beautiful large picture of Lincoln last night in a book shop window ... face so full of courage and hope ... I am simply dead in love with that man.

—Marsden Hartley, writing to his niece in 1939

I have walked up and down the / valleys / of his astounding face ... I have scaled the sheer surface of his / dignities / watching the flaming horizon / with calm.

—From *American Ikon—Lincoln*, a poem by Marsden Hartley published in 1945

Between 1940 and 1942, Marsden Hartley painted three portraits of Abraham Lincoln, about whom he had also written poetry. Lincoln's facial features are recognizable in *Young Worshipper of the Truth*, yet his suit and tie are notably modern. Here, Hartley maintains the close-cropped, frontal, primitive style that characterized his portraits of other historic individuals. Lincoln held a special place in Hartley's mind as a public figure who represented honesty and strength of convictions, and this portrait aims to elevate the slain leader in collective memory.

Silkscreened above the words "vote for law & order" is a reproduction of a grainy video still of Los Angeles police officers beating Black motorist Rodney King at the conclusion of a high-speed chase on March 3, 1991. Four officers kicked and beat King for a reported fifteen minutes, as more than a dozen additional officers looked on. A bystander, George Holliday, captured nine minutes of King's beating on a camcorder, and the footage, from which the video still was taken, was broadcast globally.

On April 29, 1992, the four officers were acquitted of charges of excessive use of force. Mark Flood created *Vote for Law and Order (Orange on Aqua)* a few months later, as one of approximately fifty cardboard protest signs to be carried in demonstrations and marches organized against the 1992 Republican National Convention held in Houston in August. According to Flood, the silkscreened signs were "intended to disrupt the thinking of the viewer, rather than to instruct or inform." Presenting the recognizable image of King's beating with the call to vote for law and order "was clearly sarcasm," he states.

RECENT ACQUISITION

DAVID HEATH

Philadelphia, PA 1931–Toronto, Canada 2016

Portrait of Girl in Car: Margarita Perez

Gelatin silver print, 1964

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust

H-1024.1966

CAROL O'NEIL

birth and death unknown

Untitled, from the S.F.A.I. portfolio

Photograph, date unknown, printed 1983

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust

H-2615.16.1984

The two children seated on the hood of a car in Carol O'Neil's photo display emotions common to familial travel in the close quarters of an automobile—joy and exasperation. The anonymity of the picture is striking, making the drama between passengers even more relatable.

In David Heath's photograph, the subject, Margarita Perez, is more mature in age and in expression. Seen through a car window, her gaze is serious and reveals little about her or the journey she may be undertaking within the vehicle.

Heath describes his work as portraying the "interior landscapes" of the people he photographed. As people travel the physical landscape of their environment, their internal experiences are part of that journey as well. In both Heath's and O'Neil's photographs, we can see interior landscapes as diverse as the people who express them and the spaces through which they move.

THOMAS HART BENTON

Neosho, MO 1889–Kansas City, MO 1975

Lonesome Road

Tempera on Masonite, 1927

Nebraska Art Association

N-39.1935

I have a sort of inner conviction that for all the possible limitations of my mind and the disturbing effects of my processes, for all the contradicting struggles and failures I have gone through, I have come to something that is in the image of America and the American people of my time.

—Thomas Hart Benton

Thomas Hart Benton was a prominent figure in the early twentieth-century regionalist movement in the Midwest. He incorporated naturalism and folk aesthetics into his work, touring America to sketch and paint. In several commissioned works, Benton represented the full truth of what he saw, both the admirable and the shameful. For example, public murals painted in Indiana and Missouri featured all aspects of the states' histories, including enslavement and violence.

ALLAN D'ARCANGELO

Buffalo, NY 1930–New York, NY 1998

June Moon

Color screen print, 1969

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Thomas P. Coleman Memorial
U-2276.1976

I had things to say about us [Americans] and wanted to do this in the most direct way possible ... I looked for visual language that would be broadly communicable, direct and clear ...

—Allan D'Arcangelo

In his work, Allan D'Arcangelo draws from recognizable signs from highways, as remembered from childhood drives in his father's car as well as his own trip from New York City to Mexico City in an old bakery van. With the simple symbols of a white highway line and the recognizable Gulf Oil logo as a rising moon, D'Arcangelo taps into themes of environmentalism and isolation in *June Moon*.

A pioneer of 1970s *setup photography*, James Casebere constructs and photographs tabletop models that mimic aspects of reality. In 2000, inspired by neoclassical spaces and ornamental architectural details, he began to create replicas of Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home in Virginia. Casebere added a highly reflective resin to the meticulously crafted the rooms so that they would appear flooded when photographed. The resulting images are dark and haunting, devoid of objects such as brocade fabrics and marble busts that would make the space more identifiable. As Casebere explains, "It's about the re-evaluation of Jefferson, historically. ... We need to look beyond the myth of what Jefferson represents, and that's what the darkness you see is about. It's about the end of the myth. The end of the idealization of a founding father."

PETER de LORY

born Orleans, MA 1948

Otto Piene's Sun Valley Neon Rainbow

Gelatin silver print, 1985

Sheldon Art Association

Gift of John and Daryl Lillie

S-1143.2017

Otto Piene was a founding member of ZERO (1957–1966), a group that explored new approaches to art making through use of light, motion, space, and time. In the late 1960s, Piene began creating what he termed sky art—grand, highly visible, kinetic, ephemeral, multisensorial, and process-oriented events in the air over public spaces. Each work required collaboration between artists, scientists, and engineers. Piene introduced sky art as a new area of research at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies, where he was a fellow from 1968 to 1971 and director from 1974 to 1993.

Peter de Lory is a photographer of landscapes, both physical and social.

He sees himself as a *romantic structuralist*, a term he coined to describe his formal, straightforward approach to photography which invites interpretation of the subject and its meaning.

To see video footage of *Sun Valley Neon Rainbow*, visit vimeo.com/17034782 or scan this QR code.



born Greeley, CO 1973

Tracing the Ever-Fragile Balance of Dreamless Silence: This Unruly Forest, These Imaginings, and the Final Exhalation

Mixografia® print on handmade paper and archival pigment print, 2019

Printed and published by Mixografia®, Los Angeles, CA
University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Olga N. Sheldon Acquisition Trust
U-6917.2020

Jacob Hashimoto creates art at the intersections of painting and sculpture, abstraction and landscape. He is known for large installations and intricately layered compositions that include hundreds of handmade bamboo-and-paper kites. In a 2019 artist talk, he described how he is drawn to the “pancultural” tensions inherent in a kite: “There are so many great things about it because on one hand it is a toy. On [the other] hand, it is an experiment that one can use to test [...] nature in a really primitive sense. It’s a joyful object that is also traditionally used for combat [in countries around the world].”

Tracing the Ever-Fragile Balance of Dreamless Silence... was made in collaboration with the Los Angeles-based printer and publisher Mixografia®, introducing a spontaneous approach to Hashimoto’s work. The printers transformed a preliminary model Hashimoto made using his signature kites and fishing wire, as well as worn surfaces and found objects taken from the workshop, into a singular print made from handmade paper and ink.

born Newark, NJ 1940

Long Vertical Falls #1, from the Long Vertical Falls series

Soap ground, spit bite, aquatint, etching on Somerset textured soft white paper, 1991

Printed and published by Crown Point Press, Berkeley, CA

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust

H-2970.1991

Pat Steir challenges us to reconsider some of our assumptions about artmaking. She sees printmaking and painting as being so closely connected that she develops ideas and images for paintings through printmaking and considers both to be finished works of art. To create her prints and paintings, Steir works in layers, allowing the movement of dripping ink and thrown paint to make the images. *Long Vertical Falls #1* combines multiple printmaking techniques, including soap ground, which creates white areas against dark backgrounds, and spit bite, which resembles watercolor.

MARTIN PURYEAR
born Washington, DC 1941

The Nightmare

Wood (Douglas fir, red cedar, pear, apple, cherry, ebony, redwood) painted black,
circa 2001–2002

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Olga N. Sheldon Acquisition Trust
U-5255.2003

I still work with my hands, in the belief that touch, or the way the material is manipulated, can influence the work, and that the physical making process itself can generate ideas, as well as bring them to fruition ... It's odd for a living artist to say this about his own work today, but my way of making art seems very traditional, at least in its methodology, and in the values that guide the result.

— Martin Puryear in a 2007 interview with David Levi Strauss
in the *Brooklyn Rail*

Martin Puryear does not carve his wooden sculptures from a block, but instead soaks, bends, weaves, and laminates wood using traditional craft practices to create ambitious, ambiguous works of art. *The Nightmare* has undeniable visual and emotional weight. On close view, however, details bring into question one's initial perception of the work as solid and exceedingly heavy. Tiny holes—the residual marks of staples that once held the form's thin surface to its underlying armature—disclose that the work is actually hollow and light.

HARRY BERTOIA

San Lorenzo, Italy 1915–Barto, PA 1978

Wheat

Stainless steel and brass, 1970

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Nebraska Art Association Collection
N-301.1972

I accidentally struck one rod when I wanted to bend it. The sound echoed in my mind for a very long time. Then it initiated a deliberate gesture in search of understanding what a group of wires could do—and that process is still going on.

—Harry Bertoia

After emigrating from Italy to America in the 1930s, Harry Bertoia would go on to have a successful career as a sculptor, printmaker, and furniture designer. From 1953 to 1978, he crafted more than fifty public sculptural commissions in the United States and abroad, including a memorial for the Marshall University football team and others who lost their lives in a plane crash on November 14, 1970.

Bertoia also designed a prominent line of furniture, including the 1950s diamond chair, seen below, for the company Knoll Associates.



Image courtesy of the Harry Bertoia Foundation and Knoll
harrybertoia.org/about-bertoia-furniture/furniture-portfolio

JOHN MCCRACKEN

Berkeley, CA 1934–New York, NY 2011

Gray Plank

Polyester resin, fiberglass, and plywood, 1973

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust
H-3032.1994

I've always thought of crafting and technique as being simply how you manage to give form to your idea. For me the idea appears first in the mind as a mental image, then I try to physically make that the best I can; I search around for the stuff that will do it.

—John McCracken

In the 1960s and 1970s, artists including John McCracken sought to reduce sculpture to primary geometric forms such as the one seen here in *Grey Plank*. The work's sleek finish is owed to the artist's interest in car culture, which had a strong presence in Southern California where he worked. From those highly polished automobiles, McCracken gleaned both industrial materials and his own artistic aesthetic.

HANS KOTTER

born Mühldorf, Germany 1966

Colour Code

Laserchrome slide on plexiglas with LED in stainless steel light box with remote control, 2009

Sheldon Art Association

Gift of Gwen Callans and Biff Ruttenberg

S-1186.2021

There is hardly any other element that has such a lasting influence on life on our planet as light. Light bursts our imagination of time and space. It opens our eyes to the past and to spaces in our universe that elude our physiological perceptive capabilities. Without light, refraction and reflection, we lived in a colorless and therefore contourless world. Colors and shadows are phenomena that only become visible and perceptible through light.

—Hans Kotter

Hans Kotter's LED sculptures create dialogues between color, light, and the environments in which the works are placed, in order to shape viewer experience and perception. *Colour Code* is a part of a series by Kotter that features vertical light objects with various color combinations.

RECENT ACQUISITION

LESLEY DILL

born Bronxville, NY 1950

Voice

Wood, steel, acrylic, ink, Tyvek paper, and thread, 2002

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust
H-3101.2003

This upside-down figure with wooden legs, pouring out paper leaves with language, reflects my belief that if we were cut open, more than our organs would fall out—so would all of the language that we hold inside us. The words that reach the air in our lifetime are few compared to the unlipped and untongued words held inside. We can never speak enough to speak all the thoughts of our thinking mind.

—Lesley Dill in an interview with Ann Albritton, November 2020

Lesley Dill is one of the most prominent artists working at the intersection of language and fine art. Raised and educated in New England, Dill did not consider art as a career until her thirties, when she earned an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Literature, particularly poetry, has influenced her work since early in her career.

AMANDA ROSS-HO

born Chicago, IL 1975

Gone Tomorrow

Aluminum and steel plated in gold and brass, 2013

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Joell J. Brightfelt Art Acquisition Fund through the University of Nebraska Foundation
U-6950.2021

I always say that I cast a wide net in terms of what I allow into my field of vision, and from there I sort through the pieces looking for gems that contain something urgent or eternal. Usually, the things I eventually choose to elevate, amplify, or call attention to are things I have developed some form of intimacy with through one of these channels. The amplification is a ritual celebrating that intimacy. The procedure of recreating something with anatomical accuracy is a method that fosters cellular understanding of the form itself. For me this is a forensic approach like an autopsy or a dissection—a way to totally know but also celebrate a sustained relationship with something. But it's also romantic.

—Amanda Ross-Ho

In *Gone Tomorrow*, Amanda Ross-Ho has amplified a single earring far beyond the proportions of personal jewelry. At this scale, the viewer is given ample space and inspiration to think about all that Ross-Ho is presenting—the words themselves, the material, and new perspective on a familiar object.

RECENT ACQUISITION

LEONARDO DREW

born Tallahassee, FL 1961

Number 175T

Wood, paint, and screws, 2015

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust
H-3119.A-F.2015

Leonardo Drew's large-scale, wall-mounted sculptures and installations are built from everyday materials, including wood, paper, cotton, and iron, that he intentionally manipulates through oxidation, burning, and weathering. Drew's painted wood construction *Number 175T* invokes associations of both the natural and urban landscape: the central, white form resembles a tree or other organic matter while the tightly configured grid recalls a topographic map or urban plan.

Mel Chin often focuses on multidisciplinary concepts that connect aesthetics with social awareness. His work, which often involves collaboration, moves beyond singular classification or medium, instead encompassing the intersections of environment, science, and art.

This artwork relates to Chin's larger project *Revival Field* (1991) with USDA senior research agronomist Rufus Chaney. Chin and Chaney used green remediation technology to remove cadmium ash from heavily contaminated soil at Pigs Eye Landfill in St. Paul, Minnesota. Chin brings the project's environmental issues into the context of the gallery by encasing, in glass, organic and inorganic materials collected directly from the site of *Revival Field* (see below).

The plant specimen Chin has used here is a variety of *Thlaspi*. In *Revival Field*, these plants served as hyperaccumulators, effectively drawing the heavy metal cadmium from the contaminated soil to their stems and leaves through their roots. Here, Chin emphasizes the importance of the *Thlaspi* as a natural method of environmental restoration by placing their delicate leaves in the center of the work and their roots in the surrounding soil.

This label was written by members of the Sheldon Student Advisory Board who selected the work for acquisition by the museum.



Mel Chin, ***Revival Field***. Plants and industrial fencing placed at Pig's Eye hazardous waste landfill in St. Paul, MN, 1991; approximately 60 x 60 x 9 feet.
art21.org/read/mel-chin-revival-field/

ALEXANDER CALDER

Lawnton, PA 1898–New York, NY 1976

Sumac II

Sheet metal, wire, and paint, 1952

Nebraska Art Association

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick S. Seacrest

N-529.1979

Art is too static to reflect our world of movement.

I begin with the smallest and work up. Once I know the balance point for this first pair of disks, I anchor it by a hook to another arm, where it acts as one end of another pair of scales, and so on up. It's a kind of ascending scale of weights and counterweights.

—Alexander Calder on his method of constructing mobiles

Alexander Calder is best known for his kinetic sculptures—mobiles—and monumental public sculptures. There are three sculptures by Calder in Sheldon's collection.

The mobile shown here, *Sumac II*, is part of a body of work that revolutionized sculpture. Instead of placing the works on pedestals or the floor, Calder suspended them from the ceiling, enabling them to gently sway in response to moving air. For Calder, red was a compelling color. He used the word *sumac*, Arabic for *red*, in the titles of several sculptures and famously said in a 1962 interview, "I love red so much that I almost want to paint everything red."

Richard Diebenkorn

41 Etchings Drypoints

Throughout his career, Richard Diebenkorn created both abstract and figurative compositions. Between 1963 and 1965, he produced a series of more than one hundred drypoint etchings of domestic interiors, portraits of his wife, still lifes, nudes, and San Francisco Bay Area landscapes. He selected forty-one of the etchings to be printed and published by Crown Point Press, founded and run by renowned printmaker Kathan Brown in Berkeley, California. The complete portfolio is on view in this gallery.

The 41 Etchings Drypoints Portfolio provides an insightful commentary on a lesser-known aspect of the artist's oeuvre. While clearly related to his figurative paintings of this period, these etchings, Diebenkorn's first serious effort of printmaking, stand on their own as eloquent, robust works of art.

— George W. Neubert
Director of Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 1984–2000

Exhibition support is provided by Donna Woods and Jon Hinrichs.

NORMAN LEWIS

New York, NY 1909–New York, NY 1979

Star Gazers

Ink, oil, and pastel on paper, 1962

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Robert E. Schweser and Fern Beardsley Schweser Acquisition Fund through
the University of Nebraska Foundation

U-5477.2006

In the 1930s, Norman Lewis was part of the 306 group, a collective of Black artists, musicians, and writers—including Romare Bearden, Ralph Ellison, Jacob Lawrence, and Augusta Savage—who would gather at Charles Alston's studio, 306 West 141st Street in Harlem. While Lewis's earliest works were primarily figurative, by the 1950s, he had abandoned realistic depiction in favor of increasingly abstract compositions. Here, his 1962 work *Star Gazers* evokes both stars and the act of looking into the night sky; eyes emerge and dissolve into a dense, complex blend of blues, greens, and purples that appears as black as outer space.

ANDREW WYETH

Chadds Ford, PA 1917–Chadds Ford, PA 2009

Spring Beauty

Drybrush watercolor on paper, 1943

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust
H-247.1944

This is important for the development of my way of seeing reality. I used pencil and Higgins ink to make the silver-grey of the bark, for the texture of that bark was fascinating to me. Here, I'm slowly changing. I'm seeing things in a clearer way.

— Andrew Wyeth on the painting *Spring Beauty*

Throughout his seventy-five-year artistic career, Andrew Wyeth worked almost exclusively in the rural towns of Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and South Cushing, Maine. He would often go for walks through the fields and woods near his Chadds Ford studio, where he found that the landscape captured a particular mood. On one such outing, he found the inspiration for *Spring Beauty* in the first bloom of the season, sprouting from the mud and leaves at the roots of a birch tree.

“Spring Beauty”... does reveal Wyeth’s most obsessive concern for seeing everything in a subject, the infinitesimal as well as the generality. The subject, superficially suggested by the picture’s title, is more than a white flower pushing through the dead accumulation of the season past. It is, I think, a metaphor for the artist’s hope that spirit wins out even against overwhelming odds.

— Norman Geske, Director of the University of Nebraska Art Galleries, 1953–1963; Director of Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 1963–1983

MARC CHAGALL

Vitebsk, Belarus 1887–Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France 1985

Over the Town

Gouache on board, 1914

Nebraska Art Association

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick S. Seacrest

N-516.1979

I suddenly felt as if we were taking off. You too were poised on one leg, as if the little room could no longer contain you. You soar up to the ceiling. Your head turned down to me and turned mine up to you ... We flew over fields of flowers, shuttered houses, roofs, yards, churches.

—Bella Rosenfeld on her elation at Marc Chagall's marriage proposal

Marc Chagall was an early modernist painter connected to several major artistic movements, such as cubism and symbolism. In 1909, Chagall met Bella Rosenfeld, who soon became his muse and, in 1915, his wife. The floating figures in *Over the Town* and many of his other works may serve as a metaphor for freedom, as Jewish people in Russia, including Chagall, could not leave their villages without approval. Portraying figures levitating high above towns and their confinement served as an escape from reality for Chagall. As a result of anti-Semitic violence, he and his family were forced to relocate from Russia to Paris during the Russian Revolution and, eventually, to the United States during World War II.

MARY CASSATT

Allegheny, PA 1844–Paris, France 1926

Mary Say Lawrence

Pastel on paper, 1898

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Gift of Mary Riepma Ross

U-3087.1979

O how wild I am to get to work, my fingers farely itch & my eyes water to see a fine picture again.

—Mary Cassatt, c. 1871

Pennsylvania native Mary Cassatt's artistic exposure and career flourished when she traveled to Paris, where she formed a friendship with fellow impressionist Edgar Degas. Working primarily in pastels, Cassatt considered herself a figure painter and received many commissions for portraits, which were characterized by a high degree of finish in the face and the omission of details such as fabric patterns and the sitter's surroundings. This portrait of Mary Say Lawrence, daughter of devoted patron Cyrus J. Lawrence, was made during a trip to New York in the winter of 1898. The work is one of many that helped solidify Cassatt's art and portraiture career in America.

WAYNE THIEBAUD
Mesa, AZ 1920–Sacramento, CA 2021

Cupcake

Acrylic on canvas, 1961

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Gift of Olga N. Sheldon
U-3387:1982

Wayne Thiebaud, whose painting *Salads, Sandwiches, and Desserts* (shown below) has been a visitor favorite since Sheldon's first exhibition in 1963, died December 25, 2021, at his home in Sacramento. He was 101 years old.

In 2013, art historian and author Christin Mamiya wrote about *Salads, Sandwiches, and Desserts* for a catalogue commemorating the museum's 50th anniversary and Sheldon Art Association's 125th. Her words there are equally descriptive of *Cupcake*:

In addition to what he depicts, the power of Thiebaud's paintings derives from his fluid application of pigment. The thick, impastoed paint often mimics the frosting and other sweet substances he is representing. ... That facility with oil paint, coupled with the appeal of his imagery, make Thiebaud much more than just a pieman, and his paintings will surely continue to tempt viewers for years to come.

— Christin Mamiya, *Painting from the Collection of the Sheldon Museum of Art*, University of Nebraska Press, 2013



WAYNE THIEBAUD
Mesa, AZ 1920–Sacramento, CA 2021
Salads, Sandwiches, and Desserts
Oil on canvas, 1962
Nebraska Art Association
Thomas C. Woods Memorial
N-138:1962

ROBERT MOTHERWELL

Aberdeen, WA 1915–Provincetown, MA 1991

Crystal and Earth Yellow

Oil and gravel on canvas, 1946

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Olga N. Sheldon Acquisition Trust
U-6963.2021

Painting is a medium in which the mind can actualize itself; it is a medium of thought, thus painting, like music, tends to become its own content.

—Robert Motherwell

Robert Motherwell was the youngest of the abstract expressionists. He began painting in earnest in 1941 after studying philosophy and art history. During this time he became acquainted with the surrealist painters, who championed a process of psychic automatism—spontaneous drawing or writing that flowed without edit from an artist's unconscious. Motherwell ultimately developed his own approach to automatism. *Crystal and Earth Yellow*, painted in 1946, is an early example of his passion for experimentation and discovery. An action painting rooted in figuration, the work shows hues and paint application that Motherwell would employ the remainder of his career.

NEW ACQUISITION

RICHARD POUSETTE-DART
St. Paul, MN 1916–New York, NY 1992

Garden No. 2

Oil on panel, date unknown

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Howard S. Wilson Memorial
U-285.1969

*Circles are/whatever you make them/all or nothing/they are living signs
of flowers or spirit/they are signs of heaven/rising & falling suns & moons/
the centre of the earth and universe/God['s] eye ... they tremble in my
transcendental landscape.*

—Richard Pousette-Dart, Notebook B-89, 1965

Richard Pousette-Dart played a pivotal role in the genesis of abstract expressionism and the New York School in America's postwar years. Devoutly spiritual, he developed a contemplative yet expressive style influenced by Native American art and textiles. In many of his most meditative works, Pousette-Dart deployed heavy application of oil or acrylic in small, short brushstrokes to emphasize luminosity within the paintings.

DAVID C. DRISKELL
Eatonton, GA 1931–Hyattsville, MD 2020

Summer Heat Mountain

Egg tempera on paper, 1980

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Olga N. Sheldon Acquisition Trust
U-6952.2021

It's almost like I am praying my way along when I work. It's a free-flowing presence that's not always bound by convention and laws. Of course, it's always informed by what I've done and seen in the past, but I want it to be spiritual. I know the physical part of it—skill and technique—but there's something beyond that. Everybody's sensibility is so different. That's what gives us our individuality.

—David Driskell from an interview with Daniel Kany in *Portland Monthly*, 2017

David Driskell was an artist, art historian, professor, and curator renowned for establishing African-American art as a field of study essential to understanding the history of art in the United States. Over the course of his seven-decade career, Driskell curated more than thirty-five exhibitions; taught at Fisk and Howard Universities, the University of Maryland, and the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture; and was a fierce advocate for young artists.

NEW ACQUISITION

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

Sun Prairie, WI 1887–Santa Fe, NM 1986

Red Splashes with Line

Watercolor on paper, 1978

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Gift of an anonymous donor

U-4424.1991

Even if I could put down accurately certain things that I saw and enjoyed it would not give the observer the kind of feeling the object gave me—I had to create an equivalent for what I felt about what I was looking at—not copy it.

—Georgia O'Keeffe on abstraction, 1937

Known primarily for her large, finely rendered paintings of flowers, Georgia O'Keeffe experimented with many media. When working in watercolor, the artist did not limit her exploration to one form of expression, creating both abstract compositions, such as *Red Splashes with Line*, and figural ones, *Blue Nude (Leah)*, also in Sheldon's collection and shown below.



GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

Sun Prairie, WI 1887–Santa Fe, NM 1986

Blue Nude (Leah)

Watercolor on paper, 1918

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Gift of an anonymous donor

U-4423.1991

RICHARD DEMPSEY

Ogden, UT 1909–Washington, DC 1987

People in Rain - Jamaica

Watercolor on paper, 1983

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Joell J. Brightfelt Art Acquisition Fund through the University of Nebraska Foundation
U-5743.2012

Line, composition and color—these are your tools. How you utilize them in your works is the key. So much depends on what the artist sees and what he feels about the things he comes in contact with in life. A lot of things you do from your imagination, visualized in the subconscious.

—Richard Dempsey in a Washington Post profile, 1986

Richard Dempsey was a prolific painter and an early adherent of abstract expressionism. After studying at the California School of Arts and Crafts, Dempsey moved to Washington, DC, to work as an engineering draftsman for the United States government. There, he also furthered his studies at Howard University. His palette and use of texture in paintings were influenced by frequent trips to Jamaica and Haiti.

LOIS DODD

born Montclair, NJ 1927

Open Door, Pink and Green

Oil on linen, 1982

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Robert E. Schweser and Fern Beardsley Schweser Acquisition Fund

through the University of Nebraska Foundation

U-6951.2021

I'm not looking for details or surface description that's for sure. But I am looking for the light, how it hits volumes. I am looking for the light and the color.

In the process of composing her paintings, Lois Dodd also looks for strange, distinctive shapes.

Sometimes I see things like that, then go back, but because the light has changed it's literally gone. It depends on the light and a lot of wandering around.

Guided by the fluctuations of natural light, Lois Dodd works in thin layers of paint to let the luminous quality of the canvas come through. In *Open Door, Pink and Green*, the viewer looks outside from within at long shadows and vibrant greenery. This work demonstrates Dodd's characteristic attention to close detail within a landscape and the inherent beauty of daily scenes.

NEW ACQUISITION

MARSDEN HARTLEY

Eatonton, GA 1931–Hyattsville, MD 2020

Painting Number One, 1913

Oil on canvas, 1913

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust

H-39.1971

In 1912 Marsden Hartley went to Paris and formed a friendship with American writer Gertrude Stein, whose home was a gathering space for leading writers and artists of the period. She likely introduced him to Wassily Kandinsky's influential text *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, one of several inspirations that prompted Hartley to explore abstraction as a means of representing internal or spiritual concerns. Between 1913 and 1915, Hartley produced a group of canvases, including *Painting Number One*, that were fully expressionist in style. Here, the abstracted forms are layered vertically upward, effused with light and suggesting a cathedral.

ROMARE BEARDEN

Charlotte, NC 1911–New York, NY 1988

The Train

Color aquatint, etching, and photo engraving, 1974

Sheldon Art Association

Gift of anonymous donor

S-863.2009

It is not my aim to paint the Negro in America in terms of propaganda ... [but] the life of my people as I know it, passionately and dispassionately as Breughel. My intention is to reveal through pictorial complexities the life I know.

—Romare Bearden

Romare Bearden grew up in the intellectual and artistic hub of 1920s Harlem, where his parents hosted luminaries such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Aaron Douglas, whose painting *Window Cleaning* is on view upstairs in *Figurative Painting from the Collection*. This print by Bearden speaks to the vibrant cultural world in which he was immersed and demonstrates his attention to the aesthetics and people around him. Collaged, flat figures and a simplified color palette characterize his work of the 1970s.

ISAMU NOGUCHI

Los Angeles, CA 1904–New York, NY 1988

Song of the Bird

Marble and granite, 1953–58

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Bequests of Frances Sheldon and Adams Bromley Sheldon

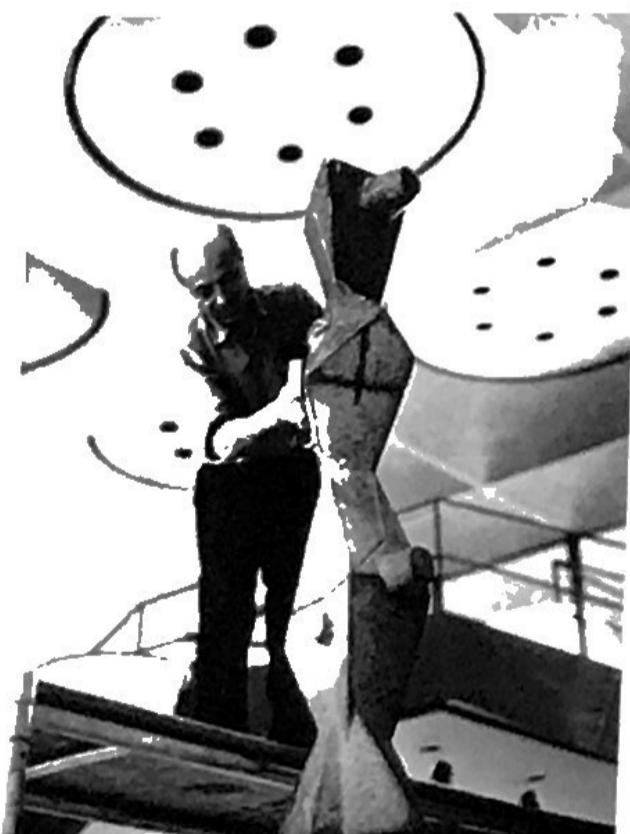
U-345.1961

I can imagine no building more suitable for this piece of my work.

—Isamu Noguchi, on the installation *Song of the Bird* at Sheldon

Isamu Noguchi's *Song of the Bird* was one of three sculptures installed in the Great Hall in honor of siblings A. Bromley Sheldon and Francis Sheldon when the museum, then the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, opened in 1963. The other sculptures were Jacques Lipschitz's *Bather*, 1923–25, and Constantin Brancusi's *Princess X*, 1922.

In early 1963, Noguchi visited Lincoln to personally assemble *Song of the Bird* in Sheldon's Great Hall.



LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Paris, France 1911–New York, NY 2010

Observer

Painted bronze, 1947–1949, cast 1987

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Olga N. Sheldon Acquisition Trust
U-4087.1988

Standing on two impossibly small feet with a wide-brimmed hat perched horizontally on its ovoid head, *Observer* is an early work by Louise Bourgeois, one of the most important artists of the twentieth century. The tall and slender human-like sculpture was originally made from pieces of found wood and was later cast in bronze. With great care taken to preserve the organic material's texture, the work was ultimately painted white. The construction of *Observer*, and similar figures Bourgeois termed *Personages*, was a way for her to work through homesickness for Paris and the people she left behind when she moved to New York City in 1938, shortly before the start of World War II.

The image below shows Bourgeois working on a sculpture from this time period.



Louise Bourgeois Archive at the Museum of Modern Art,
New York
moma.org/s/lb/curated_lb/about/biography.html

Gift of Michael and Tanya Hare
U-5710.2012

In early 2008, Paul Octavious started the series *Same Hill, Different Day*, of which this photograph is a part. Over the course of eight years he documented Cricket Hill in Chicago, capturing the changing clusters of people, activities, and seasons. The gently curved hill, which overlooks Montrose Harbor, was built in 1948 with dirt from a nearby construction site. Octavious sees it as “everyone’s perfect hill.”

BETTY HAHN
born Chicago, IL 1940

Road and Rainbow
Gum bichromate print, colored thread, 1971

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust
H-1586.1972

While Betty Hahn's art centers on photography, she challenges conventional ideas of the medium by incorporating techniques such as lithography, painting and, as in this work, colorful embroidery.

ROBERT INDIANA

New Castle, IN 1928–Vinalhaven, ME 2018

The Triumph of Tira

Oil on canvas, 1960–1961

Nebraska Art Association

Nelle Cochrane Woods Memorial

N-174.1964

Robert Indiana's paintings are known for potent inclusion of iconographic signs and symbols. With a palette limited to four brightly contrasting colors, *The Triumph of Tira* is a striking example of Indiana's early work. It is a symbolic portrait of Mae West, star of the 1933 movie *I'm No Angel*, in which she plays Tira, a small-town lion tamer who evades a wrongful charge and ultimately finds success in New York City. The stenciled words—*law, cat, men*, and *sex*—refer to Tira's victory over the lions, police, and other men who cross her path as she strives to achieve the American dream.

VIJA CELMINS
born Riga, Latvia 1938

Untitled (Galaxy), from the Untitled portfolio

Lithograph, 1975

Published by Cirrus Editions, Hollywood, CA
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust
H-2939.1990

Vija Celmins considers the surfaces of her works to be abstractions. She is interested in their physical presence and the way in which the viewer's mind expands the image beyond the boundaries of the framed object on the wall.

MARK STEINMETZ
born New York, NY 1961

From Angel City West (boy with halo skywriting)

Gelatin silver print, 1983–1984, printed 2016

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Olga N. Sheldon Acquisition Trust
U-6665.2017

BERENICE ABBOTT
Springfield, OH 1898–Monson, ME 1991

St. Mark's Church with Skywriting

Gelatin silver print, 1937

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Allocation of the US Government, Federal Art Project of
the Works Progress Administration
U-1858.1943

These photographs capture the ephemeral smoke of skywriting. Whereas Mark Steinmetz relies on ambiguity and chance events in his practice, Berenice Abbott was deliberate. She asserted, "The capturing of the vanishing instant cannot be hurried." Abbott often used a small camera to take photographic "sketches" and later returned to the scene with a larger camera to take what she considered to be the "real" photograph.