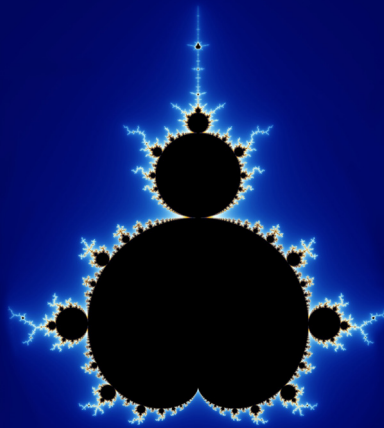


SCALES *of* CHAOS

The Dance of Art & Contemporary Science



The Curatorial Project

Spring 2020

Department of Art & Art History and Muscarelle Museum of Art

Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Scales of Chaos*, originally scheduled to be on view from April 17 to August 3, 2020 and has been tentatively rescheduled for September 23 through January 10, 2021, at the Muscarelle Museum of Art, William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, curated by Alejandro Algarra Gonzalez, Elizabeth Dowker, Caroline Katz, Elizabeth King, Laura Yuhua Luo, Charlie Parsons, Eleanor Pschirrer-West, Kristin Rheins, Yinuo Zhang, and Yilun Zhuang — students in *The Curatorial Project* (ARTH 331, Spring 2020), a course taught by Xin Conan-Wu, Associate Professor of Art History.

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Designed by the students.

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Front image caption: The Mandelbrot set (black) within a continuously colored environment.

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SCALES of CHAOS

The Dance of Art & Contemporary Science

Alejandro Algarra Gonzalez '21

Elizabeth Dowker '20

Caroline Katz '21

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At the Muscarelle Museum of Art, Melissa Parris and Laura Fogarty played a crucial role at every step of the curatorial process. Kevin Gilliam prepared the exhibition installation with expertise in gallery design, construction, and logistics. Lauren Greene assisted students in selecting works for the exhibition. Adriano Marinazzo photographed the process and handled the web components. Dr. Danielle Moretti-Langholtz shared her curatorial experience of Native American art. David Brashear brought the idea of “museum as a laboratory of learning” into realization, opening the institution for students’ hands-on curatorial practices.

In the Department of Art & Art History, Michael Draeger helped the class set up and work on an online 3-D virtual exhibition design platform in a tight time frame. Dr. Sibel Zandi-Sayek, Cathy Jacobs, and Pam Hawkes provided administrative support.

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Finally, we are grateful that this project has come to fruition amid the unprecedented chaos of a COVID-19 outbreak worldwide. After the university’s suspension of in-person instruction, the class continued to work collaboratively online until the end of the Spring 2020 semester, accomplishing all curatorial tasks before the installation, a tourable 3-D virtual exhibition and the production of the catalogue. The physical installation and opening of this exhibition took place in Fall 2020.

Dr. Xin Conan-Wu &
the class of *The Curatorial Project* (Spring 2020)

INTRODUCTION

Art and science explore one and the same world — each with its own tools and perspectives, and at its own pace. Art does not produce science, for lack of an articulated language; science does not produce art, because its results can only be presented through a rationalized language. Discerning these differences reveals a fascinating dance of art and science: in a whirl, art responds to science by rendering sensible a metaphor of its progress; in the next whirl, science reveals the unknown, while art may have already displayed an *intuition* of the discovery.

We are all familiar with scales: that of the human, the environment, the universe, and the microscopic. The first two have been explored by the arts since the Renaissance; the last two were clarified with the rise of modern science since the Age of Enlightenment. Entering the twentieth century, three new developments — the Theory of Relativity, Quantum Theory, and Chaos Theory — have revolutionized our view of the properties of nature, allowing us to explore order in the universe, indeterminacy at the infra-atomic scale, and the emergence of order out of indeterminacy at a new kind of scale, respectively. According to Chaos Theory, an imperceptible impact on a complex dynamic system can cause either orderly or disorderly behaviors and results, depending on the complexity. This has ushered in novel models of perceiving and engaging with the world.

Scales of Chaos presents fresh ways of reading art and of artworks that embody a sensible intuition of complex phenomena. The artworks in this exhibition are organized in two parts and five sections: *Order & Chaos*, *Revealing Emergence*, *Fractal Perception*, *Unfolding Nuance*, and *Irony in Art*.

PART I
ART & CHAOS THEORY

Opening our eyes, the world presents itself in all its clarity. However, complex systems, like the environment and economics, challenge the human will to order. In 1963, the mathematician and meteorologist Edward N. Lorenz stated “one flap of a sea gull’s wings would be enough to alter the course of the weather forever.” He echoed an artist, the author Ray D. Bradbury, whose 1952 science fiction short story about time travel, *A Sound of Thunder*, had imagined that the death of a butterfly could ripple through time and change the future.

Chaos Theory explains complex systems by delving into their underlying randomness and bringing to light hither to hidden patterns. Like scientists, artists have observed and responded to the dynamism of the myriad world. Many of them relied on visual practices to express an intuitive grasp of ideas that are explored and explained by science. The thirteenth-century Chinese handscroll *Nine Dragons*, for example, illustrates the ancient insight that order and chaos are paradoxically intertwined and are an integral part of each other. Acknowledgement of the intuition of the realm of complexity in visual arts increases our appreciation of the arts while making cutting-edge science accessible to a wider audience.



CHEN RONG Chinese
Nine Dragons, 1244 | Ink and color on paper | Overall size: 18 7/16 x 589 3/16 ins. (46.8 x 1496.5 cm) |
Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Francis Gardner Curtis Fund | 17.1697

ORDER & CHAOS

We take it for granted that the degradation of order into chaos is the common fate of humans, animals, plants, and the whole world. Specialists of Chaos Theory think otherwise and stress the complicated relationships between order and chaos as forces of equal and rival powers, not opposites but mutually embedding phenomena. Although it may seem counterintuitive, order and chaos are created in a reciprocal fashion. Order and chaos can coexist in the same site, masking and evolving into one another. Artists who entertain an intuition of such a dynamic balance — in human life or history, in cities or natural settings — represent order and chaos sometimes juxtaposed, sometimes in harmony. They create a complex art that purposefully descends from order into chaos and then points to a new order.

Alejandro Algarra Gonzalez '21

Eleanor Pschirrer-West '20

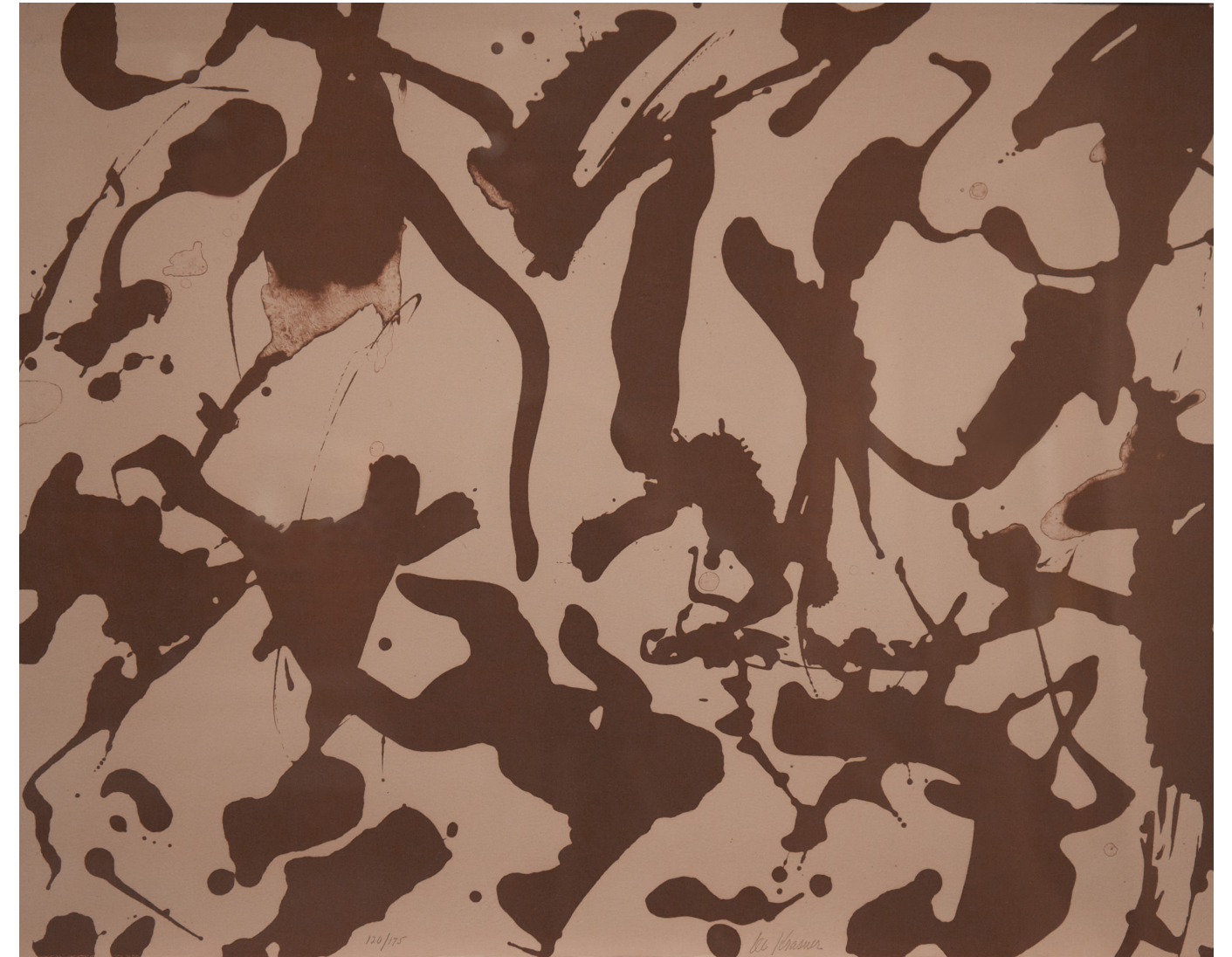


FRIEDENSREICH HUNDERTWASSER Austrian, 1928 – 2000

Green Power, 1972 | Silkscreen with metallic embossing and phosphorescent color | 33 x 25 1/8 ins. (83.8 x 63.8 cm) | © NAMIDA AG, Glarus, Switzerland | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Theodore and Diana Bodner | 2011.107

Stretching across the landscape, a huge building obfuscates the ancient city order symbolized by the colorful minaret. Instead, it displays the bureaucratic order of post-WWII urban planning in Austria, with strict divisions between people and nature. This “order” sends their lives into chaos. Fortunately, the loving power of the rain, symbolized by the green radiating face of Irina Maleeva, a beloved actress in Vienna, already inaugurates a new order, the natural order, turning the apartment building from bloody red at left to green all the way to the right.

Eleanor Pschirrer-West '20



LEE KRASNER American, 1908 – 1984

Composition from the *Peace Portfolio I*, 1960 | Lithograph | 20 7/8 x 25 13/16 ins. (53.1 x 65.7 cm) | © 2018 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of William and Sue Anne Bangel | 1991.209

Lee Krasner felt a deep grief as her life was thrown into chaos after the death of her husband, Jackson Pollock. Splashes of brown seem splattered, creating a feeling of ordeal. Careful scrutiny of the lithograph, however, reveals a falling woman and new shapes that arise from the tumultuous page. The carefully crafted chaos using similar tones of beige and brown and elongated hard-edged brushstrokes demonstrate how achieving a new painting style brings a new order into her life.

Alejandro Algarra Gonzalez '21



WILLIAM AUBREY WALMSLEY American, 1923 – 2003
Ding Dong Daddy Kiss and Tell, 1988 | Color lithograph, 12/14 | 25 7/8 x 20 3/4 ins. (65.7 x 52.8 cm)
 | © Mary Sacco | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Mary Sacco | 2010.053

From a distance, a self-depicted devil stares at the viewer. He is engulfed in a chaos of clustered colors and shapes that draws attention to the multiple eyes, horns, and two mouths. Only upon a closer look can the multicolor words at the bottom be distinguished: *I C Ding Dong Daddy Kiss and Tell / S S Self Portrait I have sinned against ART T T*. In the top-left corner, the large red and purple F and E are a reminder of the highest notes reached by Louis Armstrong when he played the lyrics “Ding Dong Daddy.” The blobs of color are the many notes of music. Scrutiny of the print reveals the order of a Jazz improvisation.

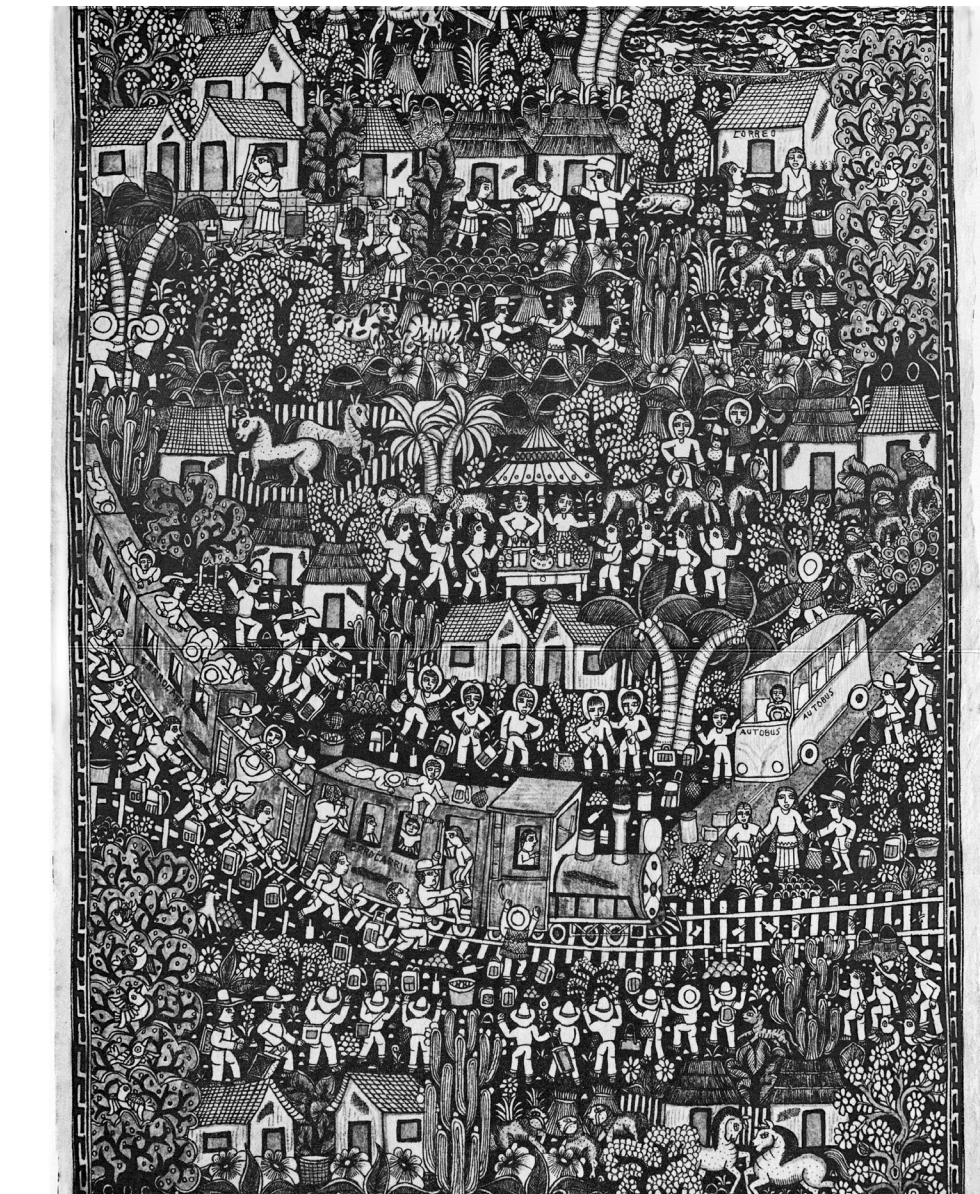
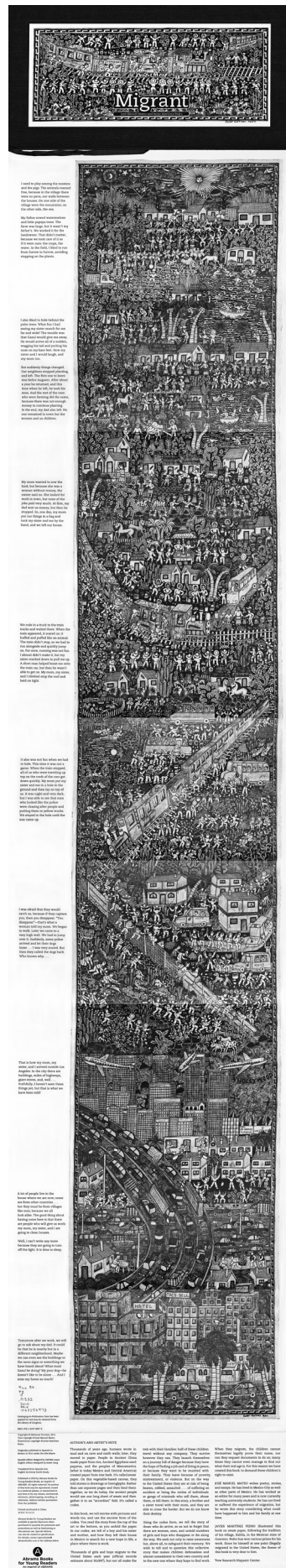
Alejandro Algarra Gonzalez '21



SUE JOHNSON American, born 1957
Armory Show from the *Up the Down Escalator: Dishing Duchamp* series, 2017 | HD metal print (dye sublimation) on aluminum | 17 7/8 x 31 7/8 ins. (45.5 x 81.0 cm) | © Sue Johnson | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of the Artist | 2017.090

In 1913, *Nude Descending a Staircase* by Marcel Duchamp was part of a movement that brought the US art world into the modern age with a shock that displaced the Victorian order of American life. The *Nude*, shown here arriving and walking around in a photograph of the Armory Show, thrust the image of women into the modern age. The force of modernism later propelled them into the age of domestic convenience (symbolized by the woman with a teapot for a body), subjecting them to the strictures of consumerism. Together, these different depictions of women show the way their bodies have been used as testing grounds for a modernist impulse that they had little agency over. The artist's appropriation of these forms suggests finally that agency and cultural production now is in the hands of female creators.

Eleanor Pschirrer-West '20



JAVIER MARTÍNEZ PEDRO (illustrator) Mexican, born 1963
JOSÉ MANUEL MATEO (author) Mexican, born 1970
The Migrant, 2014 | Illustrated children's book | 68 1/2 x 13 ins (174 x 33 cm)
 | Special Collections Research Center, William & Mary Libraries | Rare Book - Folio PZ73 .M322 2014

Reminiscent of early Mesoamerican codices, this foldout illustration accompanies José Manuel Mateo's fictional story of a migrant family's journey to the United States. The top third of the vertical scroll, a landscape composed of horizontal lines illustrates the rural order that the family has left behind. The center, crisscrossed by trains and fences, suggests the chaotic lives they go through. The bottom returns to a horizontal composition traversed by a curving motorway: the new order of urban mobility reached by the migrant family.

Eleanor Pschirrer-West '20

TRANSCRIPTION of *The Migrant*

I used to play among the roosters and the pigs. The animals roamed free, because in the village there were no pens, nor walls between the houses. On one side of the village were the mountains; on the other side, the sea.

My father sowed watermelons and little papaya trees. The farm was large, but it wasn't my father's. We worked it for the landowner. That didn't matter, because we took care of it as if it were ours: the crops, the water. In the field, I liked to run from furrow to furrow, avoiding stepping on the plants.

I also liked to hide behind the palm trees. What fun I had seeing my sister search for me far and wide! The trouble was that Gazul would give me away. He would arrive all of a sudden, wagging his tail and putting his nose on my bare feet. How my sister and I would laugh, and my mom too.

But suddenly things changed. Our neighbors stopped planting, and left. The first one to leave was Señor Augusto. After about a year he returned, and this time when he left, he took his sons. And the rest of the men who were farming did the same, because there was not enough money to continue planting. In the end, my dad also left. No one remained in town but the women and us children.

My mom wanted to sow the land, but because she was a woman without money, the owner said no. She looked for work in town, but none of the jobs paid very much. At first, my dad sent us money, but then he stopped. So, one day, my mom put our things in a bag and took my sister and me by the hand, and we left our house.

We rode in a truck to the train tracks and waited there. When the train appeared, it scared us; it huffed and puffed like an animal. The train didn't stop, so we had to run alongside and quickly jump on. For once, running was not fun. I almost didn't make it, but my sister reached down to pull me up. A short man helped boost me onto the train car, but then he wasn't able to get on. My mom, my sister, and I climbed atop the roof and held on tight.

It also was not fun when we had to hide. This time it was not a game. When the train stopped, all of us who were traveling up top on the roofs of the cars got down quickly. My mom put my sister and me in a hole in the ground and then lay on top of us. It was night and very dark, but I was able to see that men who looked like the police were chasing after people and putting them in yellow trucks. We stayed in the hole until the sun came up.

I was afraid that they would catch us, because if they capture you, then you disappear. "You disappear" — that's what a woman told my mom. We began to walk. Later we came to a very high wall. We had to jump over it. Suddenly, some police arrived and let their dogs loose... I was very scared. But then they called the dogs back. Who knows why...

That is how my mom, my sister, and I arrived outside Los Angeles. In the city, there are buildings, miles of highways, giant stores, and, well... truthfully, I haven't seen these things yet, but that is what we have been told!

A lot of people live in the house where we are now; some are from other countries... but they must be from villages like ours, because we all look alike. The good thing about having come here is that there are people who will give us work: my mom, my sister, and I are going to clean houses.

Well, I can't write any more because they are going to turn off the light. It is time to sleep.

Tomorrow after we work, we will go to ask about my dad. It could be that he is nearby but in a different neighborhood. Maybe we can even see the buildings or the neon signs or something we have heard about! What must Gazul be doing? My poor dog — he doesn't like to be alone... And I miss my home so much!



EUGENE BERMAN American, 1899–1972

Untitled from the *Flight* portfolio, 1967 | Color lithograph on Fabriano Paper, 91/250 | 25 11/16 x 19 11/16 ins. (65.2 x 50.1 cm) | © Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Acquired with funds from the Board of Visitors Muscarelle Museum of Art Endowment | 2012.049

The hero Aeneas is depicted on the bottom right carrying his father, Anchises, and leading his son, Ascanius, out of the burning city. Virgil's poem, *The Aeneid*, tells about the voyage of the hero Aeneas from Troy to Italy and how Ascanius founded the city of Alba, which laid the foundation to the Roman Empire. It conveys the lesson of Virgil that the ancient city order was doomed. Only from its fall into chaos could a new Roman order rise.

Alejandro Algarra Gonzalez '21

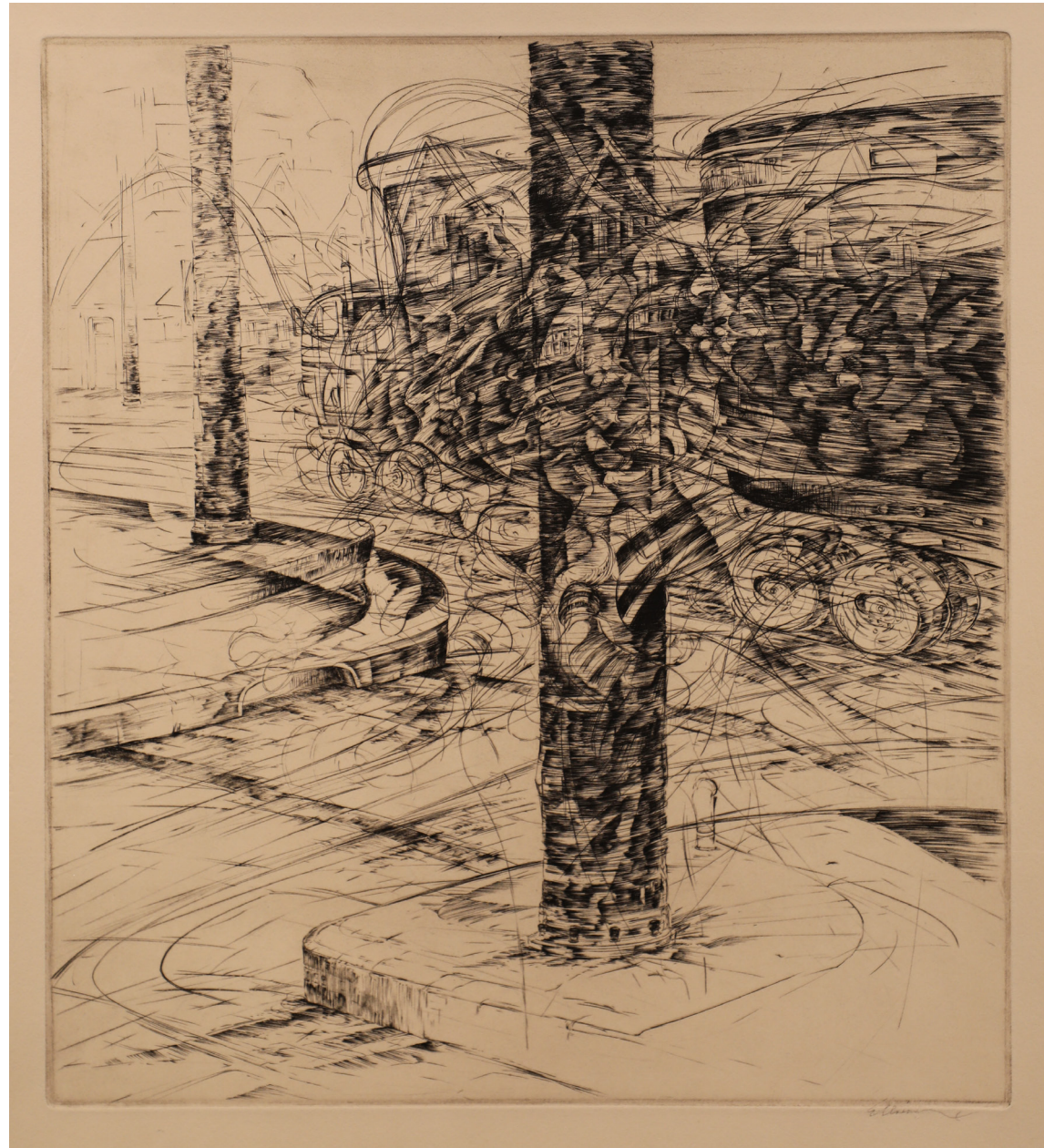


ICHIRO FUKUSHIMA Japanese, 1920–1975

Out to Sea, 1980 | Color woodblock print | 24 1/2 x 17 1/2 ins. (62.2 x 44.5 cm) | © Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Libertson | 2006.022

The fishermen depart from the orderly world by pushing out to sea. They are immediately confronted by a chaotic wave taller than their boat. Tumbling towards the beach beyond the immediate chaos, another darker wave is coming, revealing the rhythmic order of a storm at sea. The beach, the boat, the sea, and the sky are a deep dark. They underscore the order of a stormy night. The print depicts the journey from order on land to chaos from the start to the new order set by the ocean.

Alejandro Algarra Gonzalez '21



PETER ELLOIAN American, born 1936
3 Poles, 1969 | Engraving | 24 1/4 x 20 3/8 ins. (61.6 x 51.7 cm) | © Peter Elloian | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Anonymous Gift | 2018.054

A recognizable scene of an 18-wheeler on a street emerges from the artist's dynamic combination of frenetic abstraction and static realism. Movement is contrasted with three vertical poles, forces that move in opposite directions but are reliant on the other for a sense of balance. The intimidating force of the vehicles' movement is barely held back by the poles on the side of the road, suggesting an uncontrolled energy. And the direction of the movement means that the trucks will pass by, leaving the street calm once again. The physicality of this print suggests the manner in which the artist balances chaos and order and how harmony is achieved in a pictorial sense when it couldn't be achieved in the world.

Eleanor Pschirrer-West '20



PETER ANGERMANN German, born 1945
Der Verkehr (The Traffic), 1990 | Color lithograph | 20 x 25 3/8 ins. (50.8 x 64.6 cm) | © Peter Angermann | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Maria Herman Lania Print Collection; Gift of Frederick and Lucy S. Herman | 1991.108

Commuters sitting side-by-side in buses and private cars represent the order of everyone's daily commute. However, as the traffic increases, a contrasting feeling of chaos builds up, underlined by bright red combined with subtle beige. The curved edge suggests that chaos can result from a planned process. The swirling queue of vehicles imposes a new order of city life captured by the urban spiral. It offers a vivid symbol of the succession of orderly commuters led into chaotic traffic, resulting in a new urban order.

Alejandro Algarra Gonzalez '21

REVEALING EMERGENCE

Works that seem to be chaotic may reveal an underlying order or form. Their exploration evokes discovery, which prompts further investigation. Order and meaningful clarity may emerge from scrutiny of the creation process of artworks that look obscure or chaotic at first sight. This patient exploration may reveal an emerging form. Furthermore, dedicated observation may also reveal an artist's deep intention hidden behind a bland veil, the meaning beyond appearances. Such art is more conceptual. Its formation may evince a state of mind or a sense of place or motion. These artworks challenge us into observing the emergence of a very simple order out of apparent chaos. They move us into a world of wonder beyond our initial taken-for-granted understanding.

Elizabeth Dowker '20

Caroline Katz '21



HASHIMOTO OKIEE Japanese, 1899 – 1993
Garden in Sunshine, 1965 | Color woodblock print, 16/80 | 25 3/4 x 21 1/4 ins. (65.4 x 53.6 cm) |
 © Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Libertson | 2006.035

Garden in Sunshine is broken into horizontal color fields, a wide yellow between two grey, overlaid with chaotic forms. It calls for scrutiny. A Japanese stone lantern on the right side offers a concrete vertical marker of space. To the left, dark curling lines suggest the roots of a tree, while its canopy projects greyish shadows over the sand illuminated by bright sunlight. This is a Japanese dry garden between the grey wooden floors of bordering galleries. From the chaotic lines, which cover contrasting fields of color, arises a sense of comfort in a sheltered garden.

Elizabeth Dowker '20



PABLO PICASSO Spanish, 1881 – 1973
Tête (Visage), 1963 | Linoleum print on Arches paper, Artist's proof | 29 1/2 x 24 1/2 ins. (74.8 x 62.3 cm) |
 © Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS) | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Purchase, the Ralph Lamberson Memorial Fund and Mrs. Ralph Lamberson | 2000.016

Titled in French as *Head (Face)*, this is a portrait of Picasso's wife, Jacqueline Roque. This unique piece deliberately achieves chaos by creating both a frontal and side profile perspective of the face. An eye, reminiscent of Horus', is seen frontally. To the left of the eye, the ridge of the nose is figured by a vertical line above two small nostrils seen from the front. Further left, another vertical line leads to the lips. It shows, in profile, a Greek nose revealing Jacqueline's antique beauty that Picasso celebrated. As we keep exploring, more facial features slowly emerge, inviting further scrutiny.

Caroline Katz '21



FUMIO KITAOKA Japanese, 1918 – 2007
Between the Trees, 1965 | Woodblock print | 24 1/2 x 18 1/2 ins (62.2 x 47 cm) | © Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Libertson | 2006.021

A narrow break between two dark planes affords a highly colored glimpse of town life. A figure in red catches our eye, pushing a cart that disappears behind the dark plane to the left. The tension between colors and forms draws us into the image. A grey twig hanging on the dark plane to the right suddenly shifts our attention to subtle grey marks that cover the two dark planes. Their presence reveals the bark structure of two living trees. Out of these chaotic marks emerge the form of natural life.

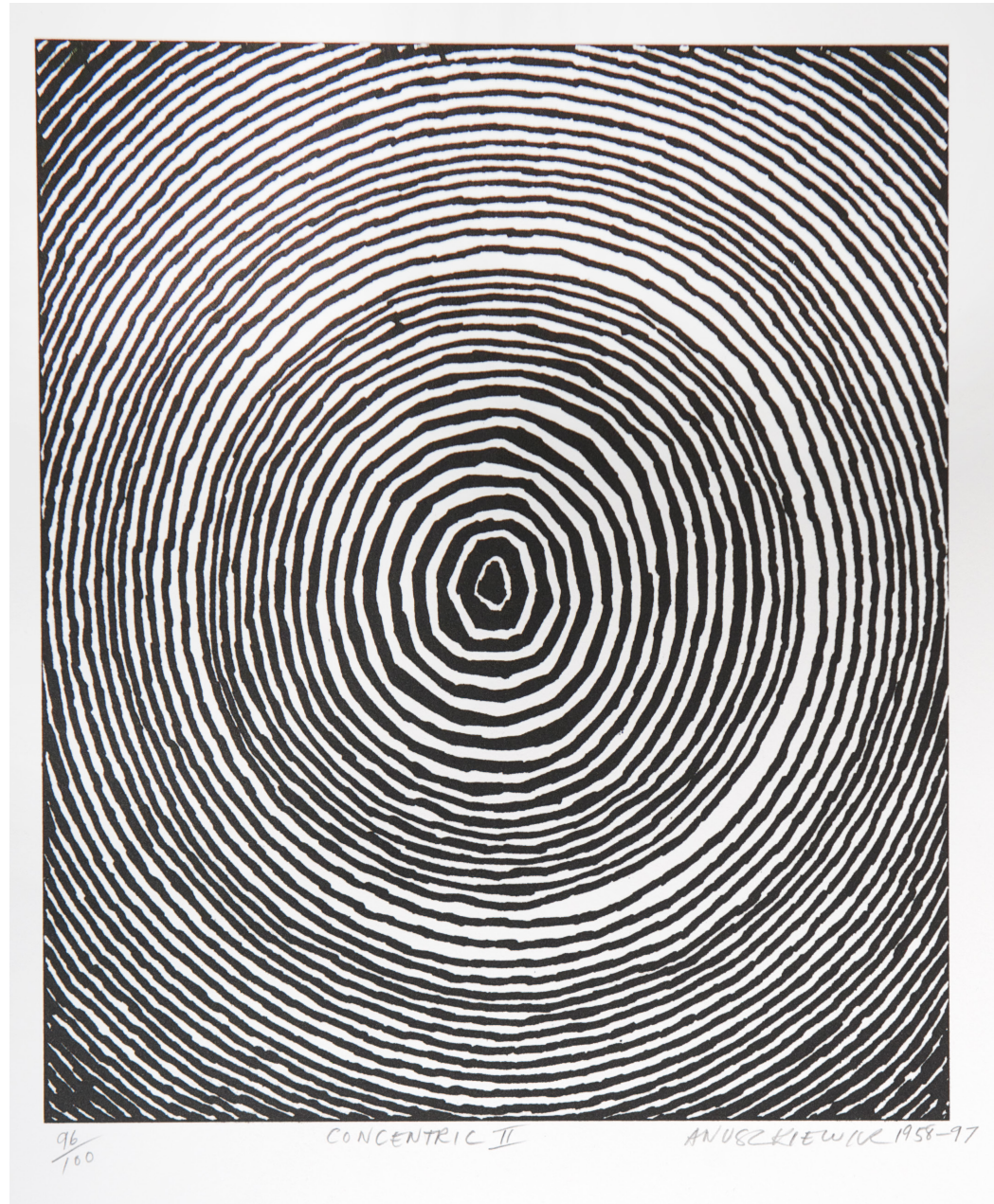
Elizabeth Dowker '20



HENDRICK GOLTZIUS Dutch, 1558 – 1617
The Adoration of the Shepherds, circa 1598 – 1600 | Engraving, state III/V | 8 1/2 x 6 5/16 ins. (21.7x 16.1 cm) | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Acquired with funds from the Board of Visitors Muscarelle Museum of Art Endowment | 2013.018

Joseph extends a candle over the Christ Child, illuminating him for the two shepherds on the left while Mary gazes on. Only sketched, the baby appears obscured by the network of lines surrounding him. The viewer is drawn to these characters, while they give their attention to the hardly visible child. This tension between the seen and unseen engulfs the viewer as we seek to understand what is present and what elements of the narrative retain obscurity. After the engraver posthumously published Goltzius' print, many later artists deliberately signed unfinished prints that allowed form to emerge out of absence.

Elizabeth Dowker '20



RICHARD ANUSZKIEWICZ American, born 1930 – 2020

Concentric II from the *American Abstract Artists 60th Anniversary Print Portfolio*, 1997 | Lithograph on Somerset Velvet paper, 96/100 | 12 3/4 x 9 3/4 ins. (32.5 x 24.8 cm) | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of the American Abstract Artists | 2011.052

As the title of this piece indicates, it shows a concentric arrangement of highly irregular oval lines, with each outer oval larger than the previous one. However, what at first appears to be a flat sheet of oval lines actually changes under further observation. Taking a step backward and focusing the gaze on the dark center, suddenly, a convex cone issuing from a large white oval pops up, while the surrounding exterior lines form a convex surface reaching up to the darker corners. *Concentric II* presents a fractal of dimension between two and three.

Caroline Katz '21



CHARLES WELLS American, 1935 – 2017

Mussorgsky, 1978 | Etching, ed. 41/77 | 23 7/8 x 20 5/8 ins. (60.7 x 52.4 cm) | © Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Christian Vinyard | 2013.026

Post-war artist Charles Wells often depicts humanity in the throes of struggle. This etching of the Russian composer Mussorgsky might have been inspired by a celebrated portrait by Ilya Repin a few days before Mussorgsky's death in a psychiatric ward. He suffered from mental problems aggravated by alcoholism, sending his mind into chaos. However, contrary to Repin's portrait that only shows the ravages of alcoholism, Charles Wells' portrait portrays a figure divided between decay and clear-eyed will. Here, the struggling genius emerges from the mask imposed by mental disorder.

Elizabeth Dowker '20



UN'ICHI HIRATSUKA Japanese, 1895 – 1997
Rock Creek in Spring Washington, D.C., 1968 | Woodblock print, 16/20 | 18 5/8 x 20 3/8 ins. (47.4 x 51.6 cm) | © Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Dr. Frances Feldman | 1987.195

This print with its repeating black shapes in the upper and lower borders and endless doodles in between appears disorderly and chaotic. A closer look reveals a stream running between rocky banks. The water lines as well as the rocks all look alike and yet are all different, creating a mesmerizing effect. Following the eddies swirling above the rocky creek bed, the gaze is sent into an endless quest for a resting point. Soon thereafter, these seemingly disordered lines create the aerial view of a peaceful creek in Washington, D.C.

Caroline Katz '21



NISSAN ENGEL Israeli/French, born 1931
Centaur and horsemen | Color lithograph, Artist's proof | 19 x 25 ins. (48.3 x 63.4 cm) | © Nissan Engel | Gift of the artist | 1973.341

The numerous overlapping horsemen create an immediate sense of chaos as if they were rushing to an impending battle. However, the red centaur against a red sun, who leads the charge, invites closer examination. It is the Greek centaur Chiron that Engel has represented with the main stars of the constellation Centaurus. Contrary to all other centaurs known to be aggressive, Chiron was not only very skilled, but also the wise teacher of the Greek hero Achilles. It brings moral order in a scene that, at first sight, seems violently chaotic.

Caroline Katz '21



KAREL APPEL Dutch, 1921–2006

Luminous Cat from the *Cats* portfolio, 1978 | Color lithograph on Arches paper, 86/125 | 25 x 32 11/16 ins. (63.5 x 83.1 cm) | © Karel Appel Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Richard E. Sikorski, W&M Class of 1968 | 1979.044 A

At first, the abstract figure of a yellow cat is seen landing on its forepaws as it jumps forward against the high-contrast background. However, the artist's large brushstrokes create a colorful chaos out of a disarrayed figure. Further scrutiny leads to an alternative way of seeing the cat. The discovery of its two blue eyes and mouth yields a sense of mobility as if it were turning towards us. Then, as the presence of the right eye is more vivid, the head seems to turn away. Out of the chaos of color emerges the liveliness of the luminous cat.

Caroline Katz '21

PART II

SCALES OF PERCEPTION & IMAGINATION



The notion of the Butterfly Effect has fostered advancement in many domains of science, including a renewed attention to never-ending irregular patterns known as fractals, a subset of a Euclidean space. Today, a growing number of contemporary scientists think that nature is made of elementary “fractal forms” that engender a different geometry. Generated through successive iterations of a simple basic element, complex systems in nature tend to preserve the structure of their details at finer and finer dimensions. They exhibit self-similarity; that is, similar patterns at increasingly small scales — also known as unfolding symmetry. Such fractals evoke a deep recognition in the mind, something akin to that afforded by the convoluted and interwoven designs on the decorative backing of a Bronze Age Celtic mirror excavated in Desborough, UK.

Figurative — and even more, abstract — arts have often manifested an intuition of the fractal geometry of nature. However, understanding the fractal scale requires abandoning established conventional concepts altogether. It demands that we re-examine our relationship with regular and irregular stimuli around us. To appreciate this aspect of art we must pursue new modes of perception and imagination.

FRACTAL PERCEPTION

Some phenomena, like a Freudian slip of the tongue or a visual pun by the artist M.C. Escher, present a baffling complexity. Fractal dimension can be thought of as a measure of that complexity. Humans can make sense of it, since perception is also a complex and natural phenomenon. A thread of wool appears one-dimensional when seen in your hand and two-dimensional when knit into a scarf. Neither one- nor two-dimensional, it displays a fractal dimension measured by a number between one and two. One does not normally perceive it because one does not see the same wool thread in both states at the same time. Here, we shall discover how contemplating some works of art reveals the human capacity to perceive fractal dimensions not only in abstract but also in figurative art.

Kristin Rheins '21

Yinuo Zhang '22



HANS HOFMANN American, 1880 – 1966
Color Poem No. 1, 1950 | Oil on canvas | 30 x 38 ins. (76.2 x 96.5 cm) | © Estate of Hans Hofmann / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Bequest of Doris Piper Lamberson | 2003.003

Hans Hofmann was a German-born American painter whose teaching had a pronounced impact on Abstract Expressionism. On a dark blue and green background with some flecks of vermillion, an irregular stretch of canvas detaches itself. It is sparingly covered with bright washes of light yellow and blue and darker red and green. On close examination, red and yellow pop up, while blue and green recede. And yet, as a whole, the picture appears perfectly flat. It yields a fractal perception of color depth that Hofmann pursued to create, in his words, “a flatness that is the highest expression of life.”

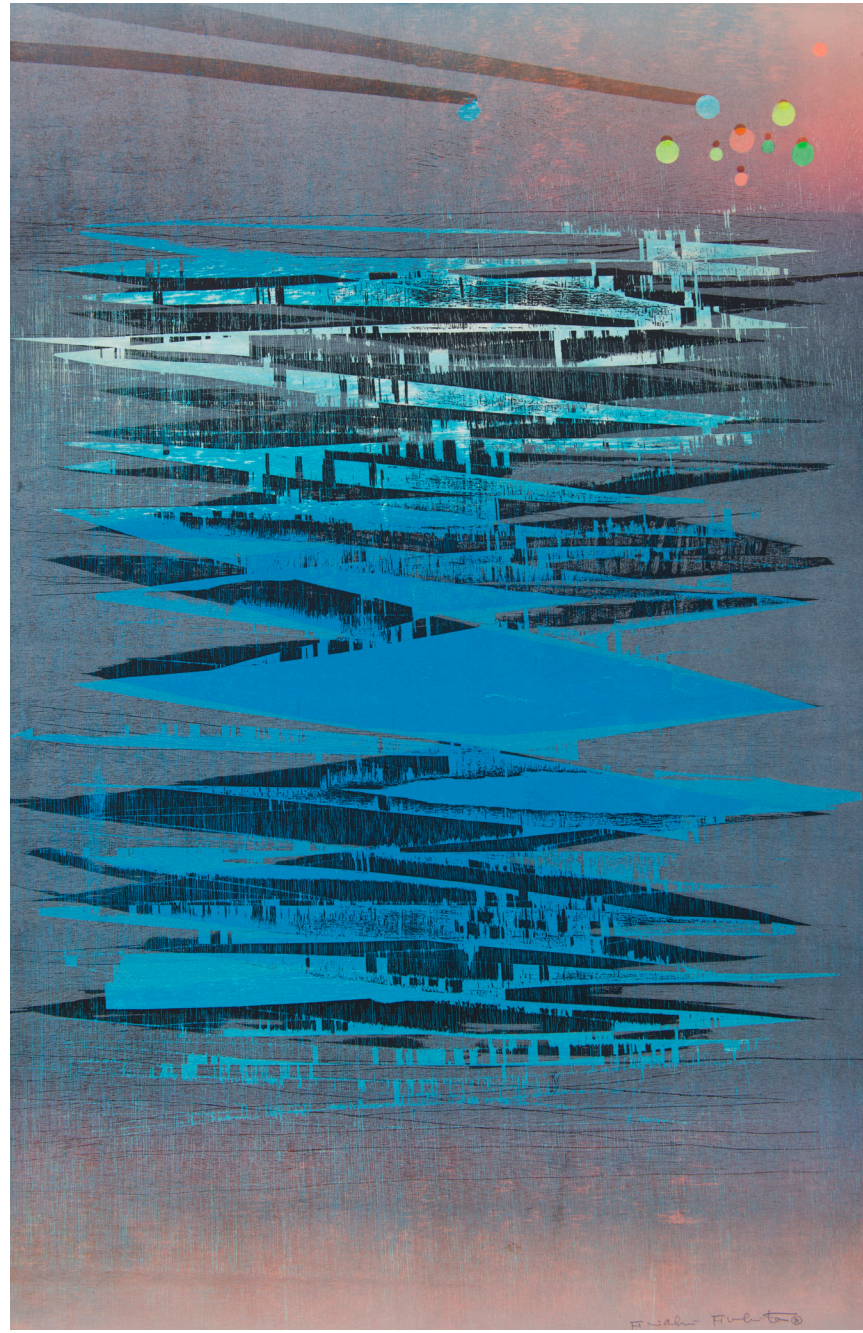
Kristin Rheins '21



ROBERT BIRMELIN American, born 1933
Handshake from a Stranger, 1985 | Acrylic on canvas | 18 1/8 x 24 ins. (46 x 61 cm) | © Robert Birmelin | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Jayne W. Barnard | 2012.122

Robert Birmelin is best-known for his New York City scenes that place his viewers into unfamiliar settings. None of the figures in the painting are recognizable, and all look like they wonder where to go, generating a sense of panic and urgency. Amidst this blurry background, the clarity of the stranger’s hand is both comforting and confrontational. It makes us perceive the intention behind this gesture as a fractal between welcoming and threatening.

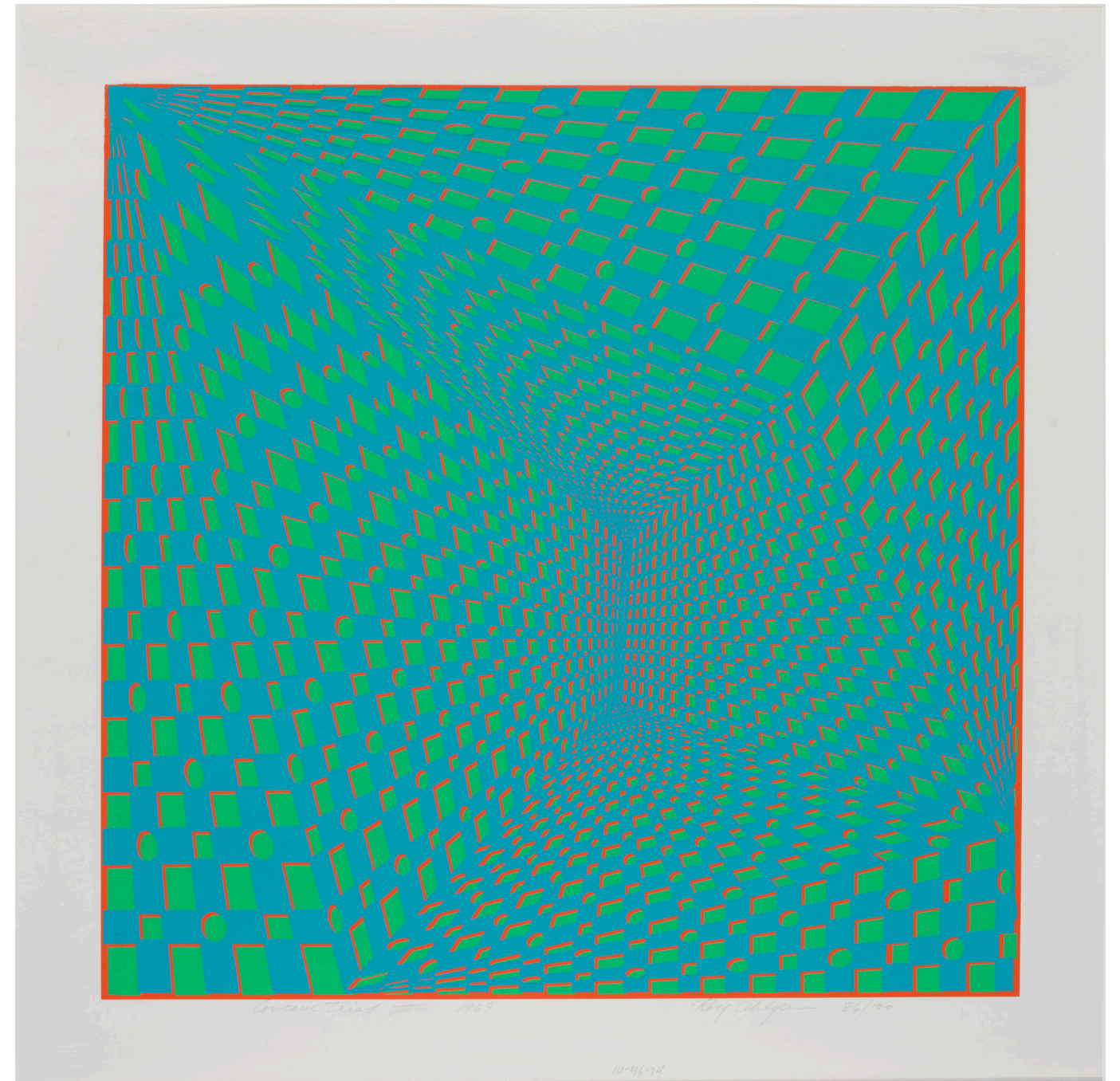
Kristin Rheins '21



FUMIAKI FUKITA Japanese, born 1926
Ryuhyo: Floating Ice, 1970 | Woodblock print, 32/50 | 37 1/2 x 25 ins. (95.4 x 63.6 cm) | © Artist or Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Libertson | 2006.041

Fragmented blue unfolds toward us, fading away into light blue-green and mild pink at both ends. The clear-cut dark lines, however, introduce two ambiguities in this image. First, they give a sense of depth, contrasting with the colors grey, blue, and pink that flatten the pictorial space. Second, they look like either ice shadows or driftwood over the ice sheet. Thus, this image appears as either immaterial or material, in a flat or a receding pictorial space. It affords beholders an unusual experience of fractal perception of matter in space.

Yinuo Zhang '22



ROY B. AHLGREN American, 1927–2011
Concave Triad III, 1969 | Serigraph, 86/100 | 20 1/8 x 20 5/16 ins. (51.1 x 51.7 cm) | © 2000 Roy B. Ahlgren | Muscarelle Museum of Art Purchase | 1973.022

Flat nets with a rectangular mesh are seamlessly wound into an irregular solid. It slants downwards in a composition that leads the eye to a dark blue center. When the gaze moves away from this center, it looks as if the nets would extend back into infinity. As we further explore these unusual forms, circles appear to swirl down to the right towards the center and move back up to the left, suggesting a fleeting sense of motion. This is a fractal perception between stasis and motion.

Kristin Rheins '21

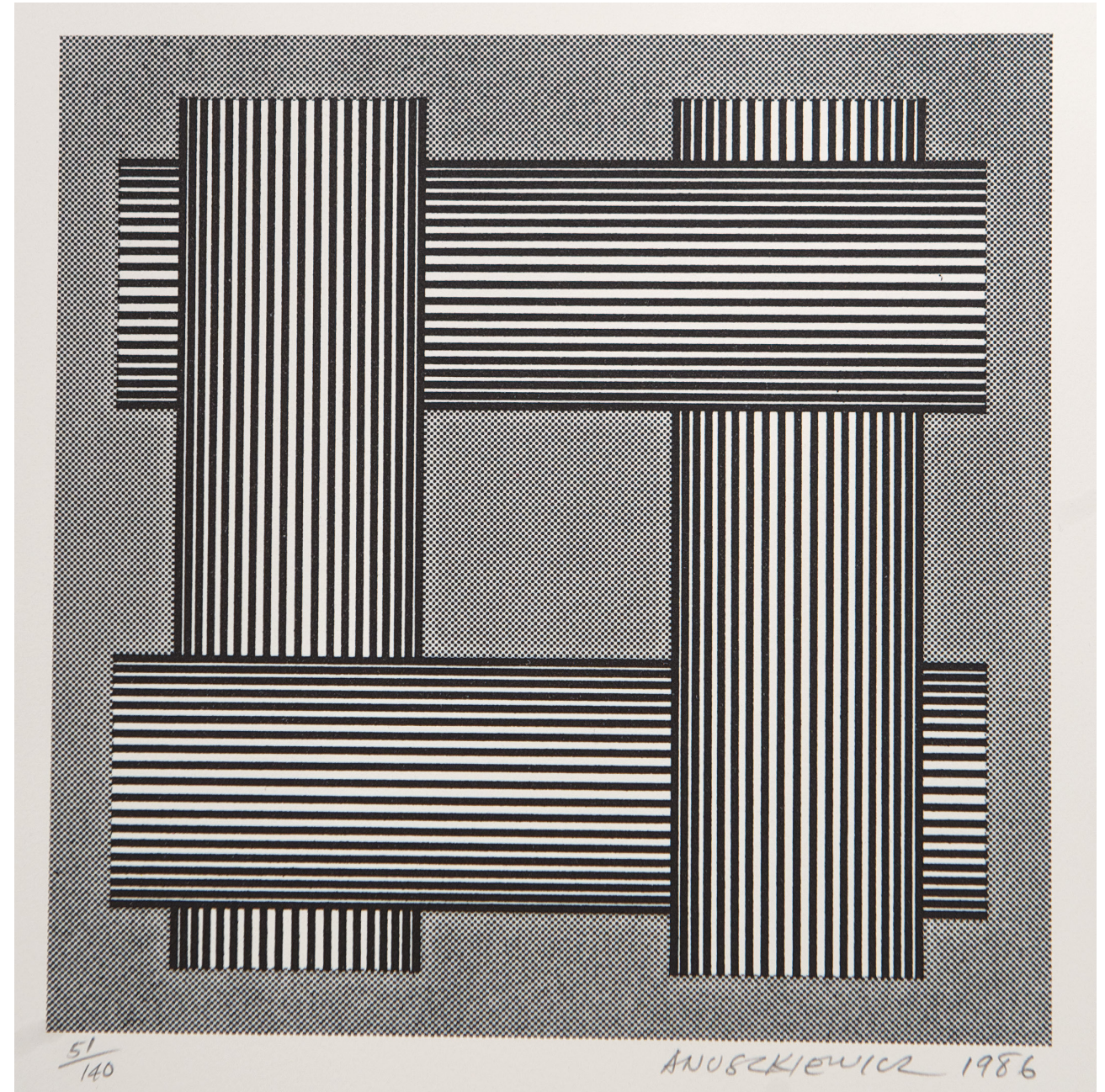


NASSOS DAPHNIS American, 1914–2010

PL-1-87 from the *American Abstract Artists 50th Anniversary Print Portfolio*, 1987 | Lithograph on vellum, 51/140 | 12 3/4 x 9 3/4 ins. (32.4 x 24.8 cm) | © Nassos Daphnis / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of the American Abstract Artists | 1995.099

From a distance, this lithograph suggests the perspective image of a hole receding in the background, thus destroying the picture plane. From close-up, a slight disorder in the drafting of circles makes this visual illusion difficult to sustain. Instead, the image looks like irregular ripples on the flat surface of a pond. And the gaze is prompted to follow the dents appearing in the imperfect circles. Yet this quest itself is denied by the widening white circles moving away from the center where the three-dimensional perspective re-appears. It triggers the perception of a fractal scale between two and three dimensions.

Yinuo Zhang '22



RICHARD ANUSKIEWICZ American, 1930–2020

Transl'umina Graphic from the *American Abstract Artists 50th Anniversary Print Portfolio*, 1986 | Lithograph on vellum, 51/140 | 12 3/4 x 9 3/4 ins. (32.4 x 24.8 cm) | © Richard Anuszkiewicz / Artists Rights Society (ARS) | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of the American Abstract Artists | 1995.094

Four grey sashes woven together leave a square in the center between them. Each sash is covered with thin white, grey, and black stripes that give rise to an odd sense of presence. From a distance they look almost flat. On a closer look, they either appear like a flat ribbon or a half cylinder depending on the circulation of the gaze. Moving closer or pulling further away from the piece triggers another question: Are they revolving or still? Neither flat nor round, neither still nor moving, these shapes offer a fractal scale of the perception of presence.

Yinuo Zhang '22



HANANIAH HARARI American, 1912–2000
Man with Things, 1959 | Oil on canvas | 30 x 40 ins. (76.2 x 101.6 cm) | © Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Jayne W. Barnard | 2012.125

Walls and furniture are covered with paintings and other things. Among them, a figure stands apart. It lacks a proper frame to be a portrait, and if it is a man, he looks very tall and must be closer to us than the things in the room. Yet his image merges with the images far from us on the walls. They appear as much part of him as he looks part of them. This is a portrait of a fractal between humanity and painterly thingness: an artist's self-portrait.

Kristin Rheins '21



EBRAHIM EHRARI Iranian/German, born 1938
Opening | Etching, 151/300 | 23 1/2 x 16 1/2 ins. (59.7 x 41.9 cm) | © Ebrahim Ehrari | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Frederick and Lucy S. Herman | 1986.007

The perspective that defines the space of the room and opening is false. It demands further exploration of the image. At first, we recognize a sea monster painted on a flat canvas. Yet, this is a paradoxical canvas: It looks flat when you focus on it and warped when looked at within the frame of the egress. With the multiple layers of sea and paper that curls against the right side of the opening, it is neither plane nor three-dimensional: the curls' self-similarity evokes a fractal scale of representation between realism and surrealism.

Yinuo Zhang '22

UNFOLDING NUANCE

The words, forms, and objects that structure our understanding of the world cannot express all the nuances that we experience. Most subtle nuances are the shades of perception, feeling, or meaning beyond words that make us respond to fractal scales. To express delicate shades of meaning, feeling, or value, some artists introduce in their work one or multiple self-similar forms that create visual tension within their composition. They constitute a visual counterpart to the fractal scale of nuance. Their nuances span all emotions between anxiety and love, and all situations under the heavens. These visual metaphors result in a poetic feeling beyond words and lead the viewers into a deeper dialogue with the artist.

*Nuance offers not a substantive destination but a murmuring:
“errantry does not align – it produces iridescence: what results
is the nuance.”*

– Wayne Koestenbaum, cultural critic and poet

Laura Yuhua Luo '22

Charlie Parsons '21

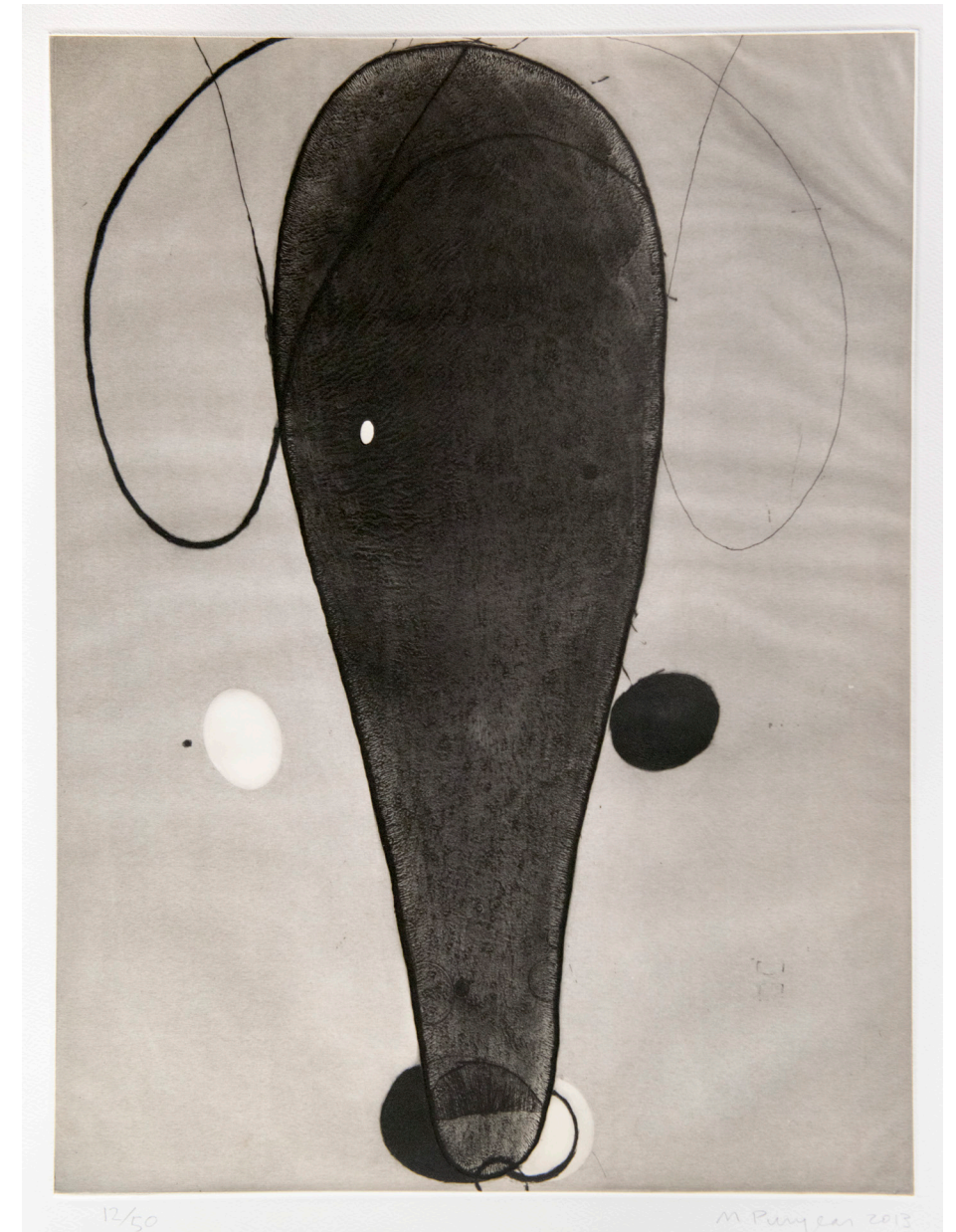


ZAO WOU-KI Chinese/French, 1921–2013

Composition 115, 1957 | Three color lithograph | 12 3/8 x 9 5/8 ins. (31.5 x 24.5 cm) | © Estate of Zao Wou-Ki | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Christian Vinyard | 2019.011

The self-similarities of white calligrams (evocative of sinograms), blue calligrams (evocative of the mythical animals and birds that inspired ancient Chinese writing), and also of the more elusive black calligrams create an internal tension as the gaze jumps back and forth between them. This exploration reveals another self-similarity between pale signs, hardly visible within the dark background, and the short-patterned lines at the edges. The calligrams seem to float in a primordial emptiness as if blown by a light wind. It yields an unspeakable sense of the ancient harmony of men and nature.

Laura Yuhua Luo '22



MARTIN PURYEAR

American, born 1941

Diallo, 2013

Soft ground etching, flat bite and aquatint, with drypoint on white wove paper, 12/50

34 3/4 x 27 3/4 ins. (88.4 x 70.5 cm)

© Paulson Fontaine Press

Muscarelle Museum of Art

Acquired with funds from the

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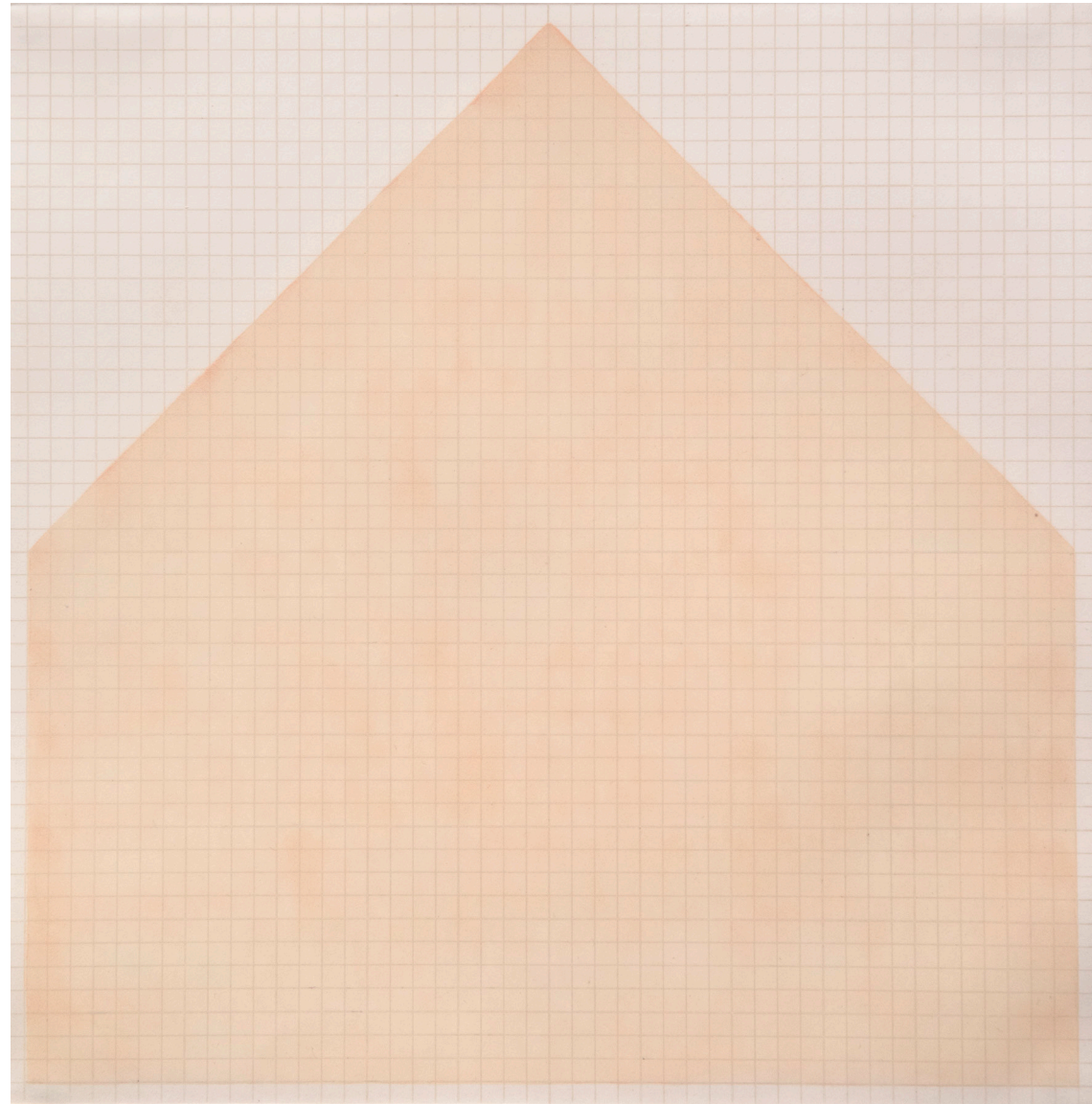
Museum of Art Endowment

2015.010

Martin Puryear studied traditional woodworking in West Africa before returning to the United States to study art at Yale during the height of minimalist abstraction. Here, "Diallo" — a surname of West African origin, roughly translating to "bold" — embodies nuance in the subtle variations of its repetition of lines and colors and its mediation of public and private identity, of abstract and representational artwork.

At first, Puryear's intentionally ambiguous shapes read as pure abstraction, but after close looking, they open themselves to a multiplicity of associations. Curved lines can read as a vessel or an animal. The central oval shape recalls the slender masks worn by the Fang people of Gabon, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea. Fang masks were originally used for religious masquerades, civic duties, and social events. The mask suggests a presence between the wearer and the world around them and new ways of looking.

Charlie Parsons '21



JENNIFER BARTLETT American, born 1941

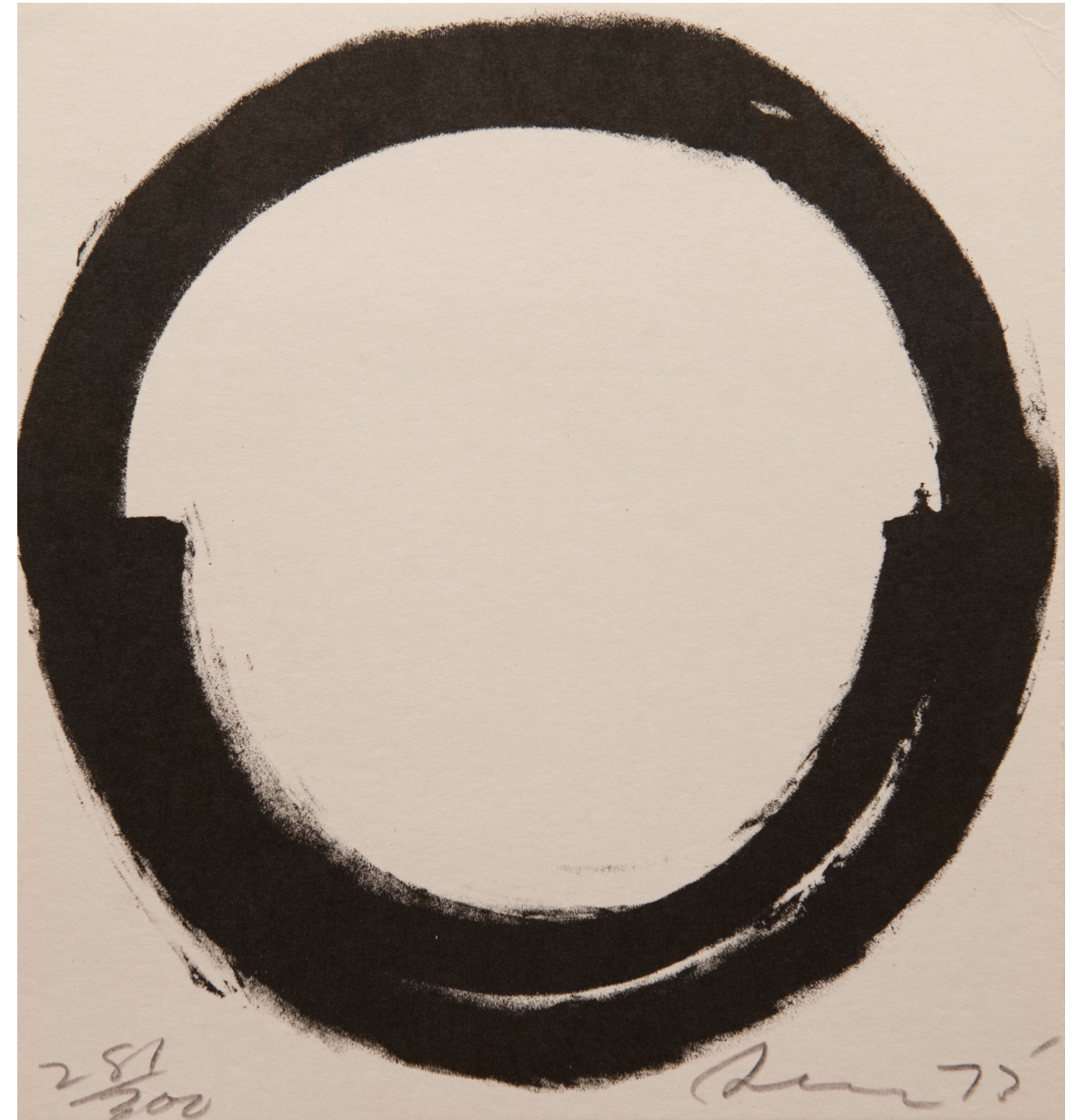
Untitled part of the suite *From Rhapsody*, 1987 | Sugar lift, aquatint, and spit bite over a photo etching on BFK Rives paper | 12 1/16 x 11 15/16 ins. (30.7 x 30.4 cm) | © Jennifer Bartlett | Purchase, The Jean Outland Chrysler Memorial Endowment Fund | 1994.188A

I always wanted to make paintings that have a sense of tranquility and stillness in them.

– Jennifer Bartlett

As exemplified in *Untitled*, Bartlett has made consistent use of the grid structure and the house motif throughout her career. Here, the artist uses a variety of printing techniques to produce a thin and precise grid, giving the print the effect of an industrially created object, while the thin skein of uneven beige carries the delicate touch of the artist's hand. The house shape — both universal and domestic, abstract and representational — doesn't evenly meet the grid it conforms to. The house shape subtly denies its rigid structure. Its uneven fill blurs rationality and irrationality, creating a feeling beyond words.

Charlie Parsons '21

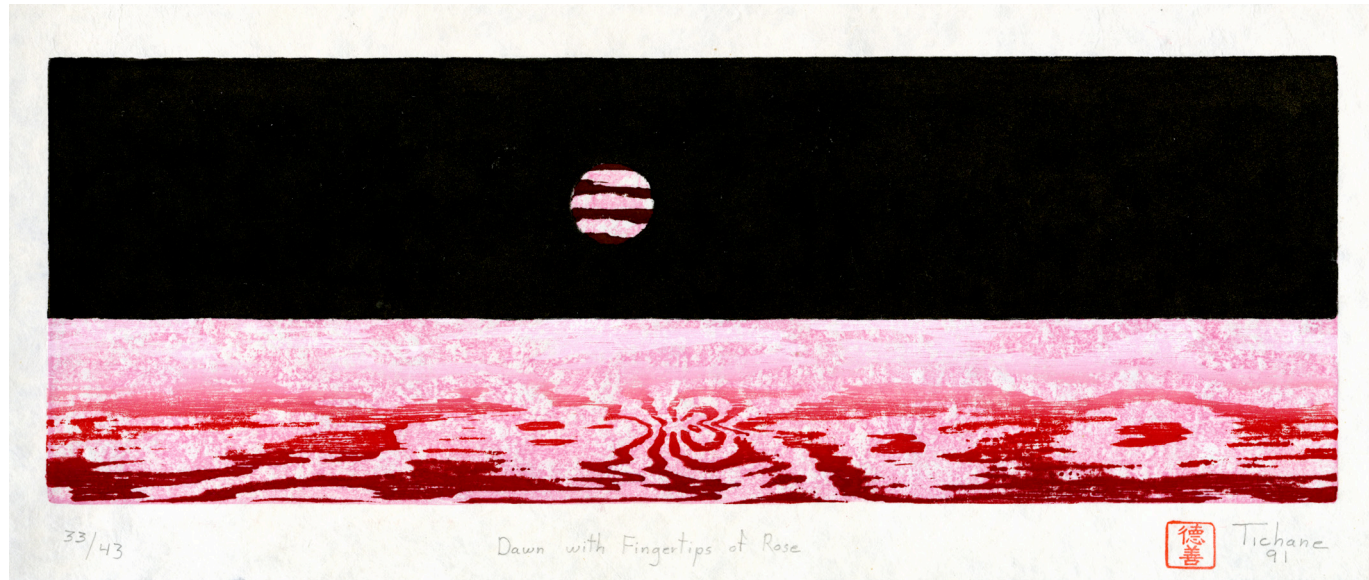


RICHARD SERRA American, born 1939

Untitled from the *Works by Artists in the New York Collection for Stockholm* portfolio, 1973 | Lithograph, 281/300 | 9 11/16 x 9 1/8 ins. (24.5 x 23.2 cm) | © Richard Serra / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Purchase, The Jean Outland Chrysler Memorial Fund | 1988.074

Serra pays great attention to materiality and forms in his work. "I really responded to the strength and simplicity and abstraction of the work," he once said. This work has great resemblance to Serra's monumental sculptures that are usually steel arcs, spirals, and ellipses. The circle, created with bold and coarse brushstrokes, encompasses the picture plane with great physicality. Some repetitive strokes overlap while some barely touch each other, creating tension within the circle and rhythm. These brushstrokes are self-similar in the way that they all contribute to the action of painting a circle, yet they are also nuanced in the way that they lead the viewers to debate where the circle begins and ends and whether the circle is complete or not.

Laura Yuhua Luo '22



ROBIN TICHANE American, 1948–2005
Dawn with Fingertips of Rose, 1991 | Woodblock print and watercolor ink on Japanese hand-made paper | 7 1/2 x 18 ins. (19.2 x 45.7 cm) | © Artist's Estate | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of the Artist | 1996.042

This is the first print of a series dedicated to the emotional life of an AIDS patient, Yankee Pilgrim. Compared to Homer's Odysseus, the pilgrim embarks under the light of the goddess, Dawn with Fingertips of Rose. This image builds upon both the similarity between blood and the color of the sea at sunrise, and the unsettling contrast between the dark sky and the rising sun. It paints a fractal of the imagination between bloody death and rosy hope. The rosy sun and sea lead us further to wonder whether the sun is a reflection of the sea or if the sea is an extension of the sun.

Laura Yuhua Luo '22

KIKI SMITH
 American, born 1954
Untitled
(for David Wojnarowicz)

from the 1989 portfolio, 2000
 Etching with aquatint, spit bite, and sugar lift on Hahnemühle paper
 24 3/16 x 20 1/8 ins. (61.4 x 51 cm)
 © Kiki Smith
 Acquired with funds from the Board of Visitors Muscarelle Museum of Art Endowment
 2012.085

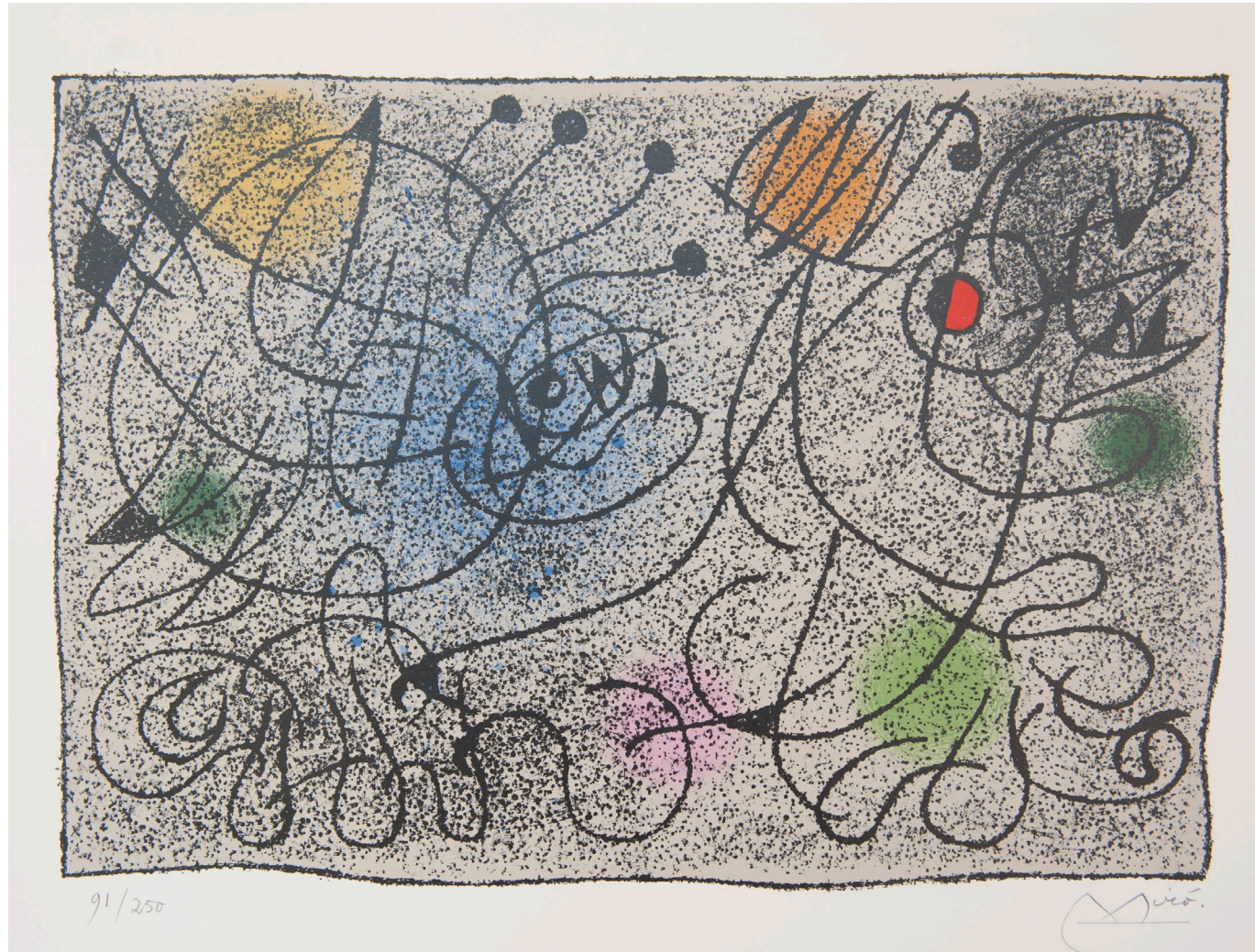


At first I just made representations of animals but then it mixed with fairytales and this intersection between humans and animals, our identity in relationship to animals.

– Kiki Smith

Exploring ephemerality and mortality, Smith dedicated this print to her late friend, artist and AIDS activist David Wojnarowicz. It plays upon similarities and differences. The body and the legs of the black widow spider at the bottom respectively echo the heads and the curls of the arms of the two octopuses above. Smith is the black widow of Wojnarowicz and his partner, the two male octopuses mating beak-to-beak, with two arms touching to the left of their heads. Two left legs of the spider echo their gesture. This black widow and these octopuses are males, doomed to die after mating, one and the same. Here, Smith shares a female identity as a widow and a male as an octopus, a fractal of gender identity.

Charlie Parsons '21



JOAN MIRÓ Spanish, 1893–1983

Untitled from the *Flight* portfolio, 1966 | Color lithograph on Arches paper | 19 3/4 x 25 3/4 ins. (50.1 x 65.3 cm) | © Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Acquired with funds from the Board of Visitors Muscarelle Museum of Art Endowment | 2012.057

Here, the uneven and scribble-like lines illustrate a bird with a monster's face, and a screaming human face connected to toes or fingers create a sense of impending evil. These qualities create a sense of a mindset between fear and hatred, a fractal emotion without a name. A pioneer in Surrealist automatic drawing, the artist explores the fine line between subconscious drawing, where the hand is allowed to move "freely" on the paper, as opposed to composing with rational control. Miró uses color and lines in a symbolic, instead of a representational, fashion.

Laura Yuhua Luo '22



JACOB LAWRENCE American, 1917–2000

The Swearing In from the *Inaugural Impressions* portfolio, 1977 | Color screenprint, ed. 14/100 | 20 x 29 5/8 ins. (50.8 x 75.9 cm) | © The Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Acquired with funds from the Board of Visitors Muscarelle Museum of Art Endowment | 2019.006

In 1977, the White House invited Lawrence to commemorate the inauguration of President Carter. Surprisingly, he does not focus on the ceremony, but on the public. The composition is striking. Tree trunks and branches, clouds, attitudes of the attendants, faces, and hand gestures all present self-similarities establishing the strong identity of each group. On the other hand, colors highlight the multiplicity of characters in the crowd, while it also establishes links between some people and the trees, the sky and the clouds. The crowd appears united in its differences, and multiple in its unity, a fractal mood.

Charlie Parsons '21

IRONY IN ART

Fractal perception allows us to experience nuance between the intuitive dimensions of space. Irony displays an explicit meaning that is bluntly contradicted by an underlying tone. It makes us smile with pleasure. It is irony, a fractal between reason and absurdity. Contrary to nuance, which hones subtleties, it sets in motion a fractal imagination that delights in self-contradictions. In the visual arts, both nuance and irony call upon self-similarities and tension — however, they do so differently. Most often, irony in art presents an image that is contradicted by similar images in another context, such as artistic taste, social conventions and mores, which may be forgotten as the time passes. Please enjoy seeing them come alive again in this section. The artworks selected here entertain the indeterminacy of relationships between text and image, form and representation, illusion and reality, and challenge our ways of looking and thinking.

Elizabeth King '20

Yilun Zhuang '20

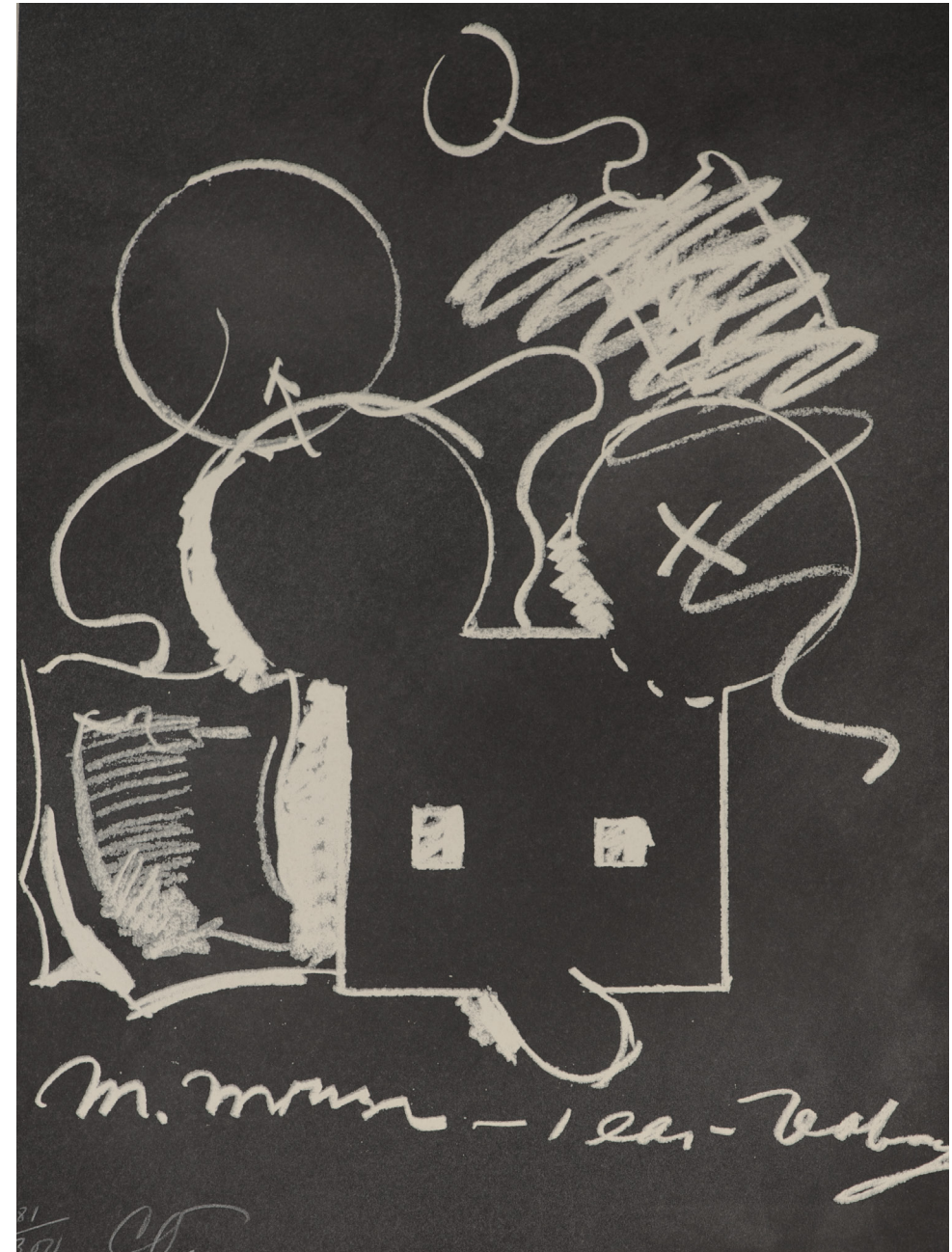


JOHN CAGE American, 1912–1992

10 Stones 2, 1989 | Spit bite, aquatint, and sugar lift on smoked paper, 6/20 | 23 x 18 5/16 ins. (58.4 x 46.6 cm) | © John Cage Trust | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Purchase, Museum Acquisition Fund | 1989.150

The title, *10 Stones 2*, tempts us to count the stones, as if it were a figurative print. Cage has produced 170 drawings of the 15 stones of the Ryōan-ji Zen garden, placing at random one stone after the other on the paper and tracing its contour with a pencil. He intended this erasure of artistic intentionality to bring the mystical nature of Zen emptiness to the viewer's mind. Here, the garden's emptiness is compounded by the cloud of smoke hovering above it. As in a psychological test, its fuzziness invites projecting one's fancies. The ironic title implies that there are no stones; art is only in our mind.

Yilun Zhuang '20



CLAES THURE OLDENBURG American, born 1929

M. Mouse - 1 Ear - Teabag from the *Works by Artists in the New York Collection* portfolio, 1973 | Silkscreen, 281/300 | 12 1/16 x 9 1/16 ins. (30.6 x 23.1 cm) | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Purchase, The Jean Outland Chrysler Memorial Fund | 1988.066

The title reads "M(ickey) Mouse less 1 ear equals Tea Bag." It belongs to a *Blackboard* series of works that imitated or featured a school blackboard. The left ear of the square-faced Mickey Mouse has been scratched out in such a way that it looks like the tea bags to its left and its right. The resemblance of the tea bags and the maimed face of Mickey ironically demonstrates the truth value of the title's equation, while the imitation of geometry on a blackboard derides school teaching.

Elizabeth King '20



RALPH H. GIBSON American, born 1939
Antiquities Dealer, Rome 1984 from the *Artifacts* portfolio, 1984 | Silver gelatin print | 14 x 11 ins. (35.5 x 27.7 cm) | © Ralph Gibson | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew G. Gerry | 1985.129

In this photograph of an antiquities dealer, a cloth is lifted to reveal darkness where a face should be. However, the elegant clothing with buttoned knit sweater, collar points, and a tie, as well as the left hand lifting the cloth and the right hand holding the glasses, reveal the image of a self-conscious dealer who makes a display of his artistic leanings as a form of professional advertisement. There is unmistakable irony in denying a face to a man who makes his appearance a token of his public persona.

Elizabeth King '20



WILLIAM HOGARTH English, 1697–1764
William Hogarth Painting the Comic Muse, 1764 | Engraving and etching, state VII | 215/16 x 16 7/8 ins. (54.2 x 42.9 cm) | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Donald Miles Nelson | 1991.103

This image shows the painter as a dignified figure at the easel, painting a comic muse instead of the serious tragic muse of history. Hogarth portrays himself caught in the dilemma of a man claiming to be an artist who deserves academic recognition because he subverts canonical art in his works. Self-similarity between the satirist painter's self-portrait and the object of his criticism displays William Hogarth's sense of humor.

Elizabeth King '20



WILLIAM HOGARTH English, 1697–1764
The Enraged Musician, 1741 | Engraving and etching, state III | 19 1/8 x 22 2/3 ins. (48.6 x 57.8 cm) |
 Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Donald Miles Nelson | 1991.101

This print depicts a violinist driven to distraction by the chaos outside his window in a witty indictment of the street populace. In the center, though, a tall young milkmaid, balancing a pail of milk on her head, looks directly at the viewer. She depicts the only natural musician in the scene, singing her inner music untroubled by others. The violinist has restricted himself to studying scores, removing himself from nature. Ironically, by covering his ears this musician has made himself deaf to the true music of nature.

Elizabeth King '20



ROY LICHTENSTEIN American, 1923–1997
Untitled from the *Works by the Artists in the New York Collection for Stockholm* portfolio, 1973 | Silkscreen,
 281/300 | 12 1/16 x 9 1/16 ins. (30.7 x 23.0 cm) | © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein | Muscarelle Museum of Art |
 Purchase, The Jean Outland Chrysler Memorial Fund | 1988.064

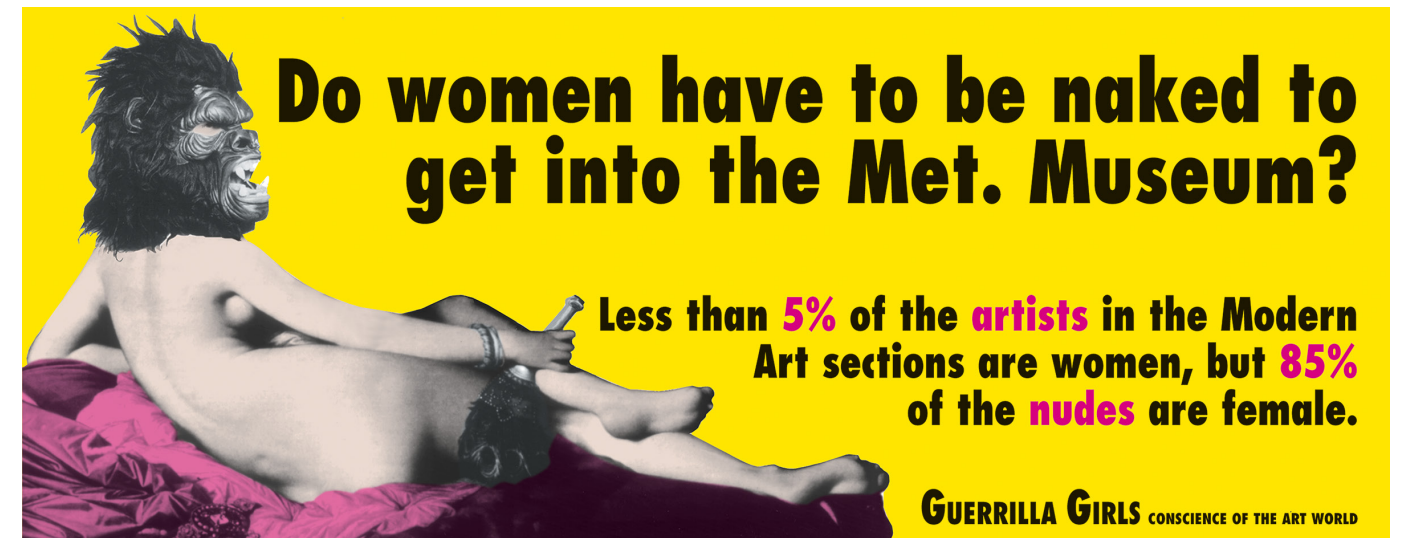
Here, Lichtenstein appropriates the American Army "I Want You" WWI recruitment poster. He reduces the original poster to a fist with a pointing finger coming out from a neon red background. The hand in the image is in a comic book style, and the red in the background is commonly used in commercials at the time. By transplanting a political image into a light-hearted, carefree pop culture context, Lichtenstein mocks the deconstruction of meaning in consumption culture.

Yilun Zhuang '20



MEL RAMOS American, 1935 – 2018
Touché Boucher, 1974 | Color collotype, 13/200 | 20 1/16 x 26 7/16 ins. (51.1 x 67.3 cm) | © Estate of Mel Ramos / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Gift of Sarah Schuster | 1995.150

This is a Pop art image making a *Playboy* Playmate into art — with a twist. In 1752, François Boucher's portrait of a 13-year-old girl exposed the claim to ideality of the great nudes of Renaissance painting, like Titian's *Venus of Urbino* of 1538. His obscene parody, under the elusive title *The Resting Girl*, exposed the erotic nature of the aristocratic gaze on female nude painting. Mel Ramos, following in detail Boucher's obscenity in a photo-realist painting of a young adult beachgoer, piles up historical ridicule upon *Playboy's* popular claim to present its male readers with artworks.



GUERRILLA GIRLS American, active since 1985
Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? from the *Portfolio Compleat 1985 – 2012*, 1989 | Offset lithograph on poster stock, ed. 33/50 | 11 x 28 1/8 ins. (28.0 x 71.4 cm) | © Guerrilla Girls and courtesy of guerrillagirls.com | Muscarelle Museum of Art | Acquired with funds from the Board of Visitors Muscarelle Museum of Art Endowment | 2017.121,24

The Guerrilla Girls, a group of feminist activist artists, added their signature gorilla mask on a neo-classical nude, *La Grande Odalisque* of 1814, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. They borrowed the pose, contrasting the sensuous body set against dark drapery by Ingres with a black-and-white gorilla-faced body set against a purple and yellow background. And adding further contrast, they inscribed it in the manner of political ads. The fiery growl, in an ironic twist of the *Grande Odalisque's* glamour, announces the enrollment among the Guerrilla Girls of an icon at the Louvres Museum in an attack against the Metropolitan Museum.

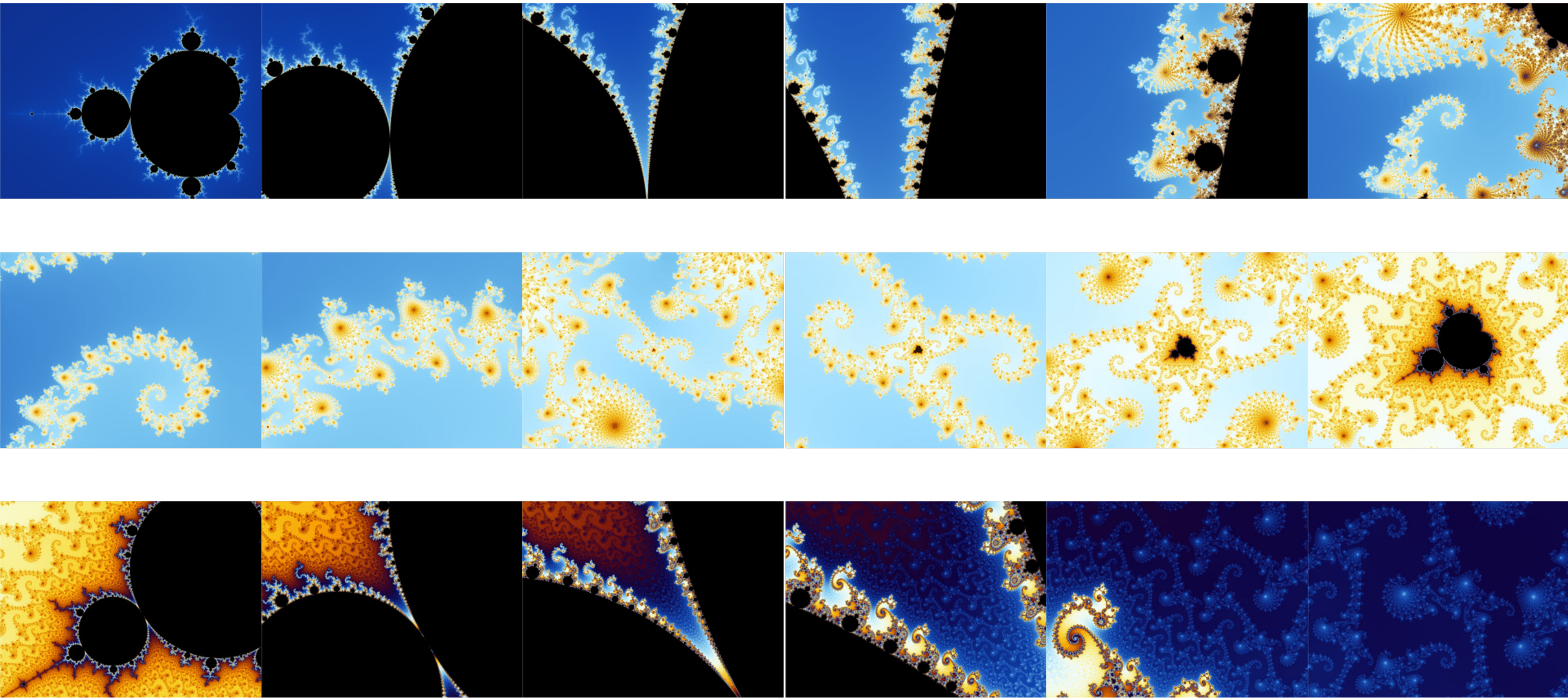
CODA

Nature is ever at work building and pulling down, creating and destroying, keeping everything whirling and flowing, allowing no rest but in rhythmical motion, chasing everything in endless song out of one beautiful form into another.

– John Muir (1901)

ANSEL ADAMS | American, 1902 — 1984 | **Trees, Illilouette Ridge, Yosemite**, 1942 | Gelatin silver print | 13 3/16 x 10 1/4 ins. (33.5 x 26.1 cm) | © The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust





A selection of computer-generated number landscape from the image gallery of a Mandelbrot set zoom sequence following its progressive iterations into infinity.

In the dance of art & contemporary science,

both produce their own images, however completely different.

GLOSSARY

CHAOS—In ancient myths, it is the state that precedes existence; in Chaos Theory, the state of a dynamic system when it reaches indeterminacy; in art, any form of visual disorder, blankness or darkness that precludes making sense of the artwork.

COMPLEXITY—A general attribute of dynamic systems that rely on feedback besides cause-and-effect relationships. Multiple levels of complexity can be observed in nature and in artworks.

EMERGENCE—The process of an underlying form or significance coming to light. In Chaos Theory, it is the development of a new order out of chaos; in the visual arts, the progressive discovery of a visible order from behind the veil of chaos imposed by first impressions.

FRACTAL—A geometrical form engendered through successive iterations of a simple pattern going to infinity. When compared to elementary geometry, fractal geometry provides better descriptions of natural phenomena, the brain, and human perception.

IRONY—Usually, a source of psychological tension between an explicit meaning and its implicit contradiction that is amusing; in the fractal perception of art, a type of amusing nuance constructed by self-similar forms that sets into motion a visual tension between an explicit meaning and its implicit contradiction.

NUANCE—Subtle shades of perception, feeling, or meaning beyond words that make us respond to an artwork that challenges our taken-for-granted categories of understanding. Nuances result from the tension between self-similarities and differences in an artwork's composition, color, or brushwork.

ORDER—In ancient myths, it is the manifestation of a metaphysical will; in science, the manifestation of unadulterated laws of cause-and-effect; in the visual arts, a culturally defined sense of meaningfulness emanating from the composition or forms in the artwork.

SCALE—A measure of the complexity of a system. When natural phenomena or artworks challenge our taken-for-granted categories of understanding, such as the dimensions of space, it measures the level of complexity of human perception. It is relative to the observer's point of view.

SELF-SIMILARITY—The result of the repetition of detail in the descending steps of creation of a fractal figure. It is not similitude but unpredictable resemblance that affords viewers a sense of familiarity and unknown, such as the self-similarity created by the branching pattern of a river and its tributaries.

TENSION—In the psychology of art, a viewer's mental experience of a force linking separate forms in an artwork; in the fractal perception of art, a force linking a set of self-similar forms (a fractal) and separate elements of the composition, eventually other sets of self-similar forms.



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693