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THE PHILLIPS PRESENTS *TEN AMERICANS: AFTER PAUL KLEE*

Spring Exhibition the First to Explore Paul Klee's Impact on Mid-20th-Century American Art



WASHINGTON—Together with the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland, The Phillips Collection is proud to present *Ten Americans: After Paul Klee*. The first exhibition to explore the seminal role of Swiss-born artist Paul Klee in the development of mid-20th-century American art, the exhibition includes more than 60 works from collections in the United States and Switzerland. *Ten Americans: After Paul Klee* is on view February 3 through May 6, 2018.

Shedding new light on important figures in American Abstract Expressionist and Color Field painting, *Ten Americans* reveals the broader context of global cultural exchanges between the United States and Europe in the decades after World War II. The exhibition is the first to feature works by Klee in dialogue with William Bazotes, Gene Davis, Adolph Gottlieb, Norman Lewis, Robert Motherwell, Kenneth Noland, Jackson Pollock, Theodoros Stamos, Mark Tobey, and Bradley Walker Tomlin. These artists either acknowledged the importance of Klee's work to their own artistic development or learned of his artistic approach through other figures.

"In assembling a fine collection of 13 works by Klee between 1930 and 1953, Duncan Phillips played a pivotal role in bringing Klee to the attention of American artists and audiences," said **Phillips Director Dorothy Kosinski**. "This groundbreaking exhibition, co-organized with the Zentrum Paul Klee, offers visitors fresh insight into Klee's profound significance on a young generation of postwar abstract artists in America."

PAUL KLEE AND AMERICA

A successful artist and inspirational teacher in Germany, the Swiss-born artist Paul Klee (1879–1940) first found acclaim at the Bauhaus and later at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art. In 1933, the Nazis labeled him a "degenerate" artist due to the avant-garde nature of his work. Klee and his wife, Lily, left Düsseldorf for his hometown of Bern, Switzerland, where they remained until his death in 1940. There, Klee created a prolific body of mature work.

Although he never traveled to the United States, Klee's art crossed the Atlantic in great numbers and was quickly and enthusiastically embraced by a group of emerging American abstract painters. The freedom of Klee's non-didactic, stylistically open-ended work—whether abstract or figurative, tied to universals of experience or to the banal encounters of everyday life—provided an inspiring example that helped stimulate exciting new directions in postwar American art.

PAUL KLEE AND THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

Museum founder Duncan Phillips became a stalwart champion of Klee's work in the United States. Between 1930 and 1953, he assembled 13 of Klee's finest works in oil and watercolor spanning the artist's career—a unit that remains a cornerstone of the museum's collection. Phillips placed Klee's work on nearly continuous view after 1948 in what came to be known as "the Klee room" at the Phillips, a space that became an abiding source of inspiration for the generation of American painters working during midcentury, such as Gene Davis, Kenneth Noland, and Mark Tobey.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Inspired by *Ten Americans: After Paul Klee*, the Phillips presents workshops, performances, and more. More information at PhillipsCollection.org/events

IMAGE GALLERY

High-resolution press images for *Ten Americans: After Paul Klee* are available via [Dropbox](#).

CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by a scholarly catalogue, published by The Phillips Collection and Zentrum Paul Klee in association with Prestel, featuring color plates and essays by the curatorial team and outside scholars Katy Siegel, Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Endowed Chair in Modern American Art, Stony Brook University, and Elke Seibert, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the German Center for the History of Art (DFK) in Paris.

SPONSORS

Ten Americans: After Paul Klee is co-organized by The Phillips Collection and the Zentrum Paul Klee.

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ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of Modern art, is one of the world's most distinguished collections of Impressionist and Modern American and European art. Stressing the continuity between art of the past and present, it offers a strikingly original and experimental approach to Modern art by combining works of different nationalities and periods in displays that change frequently. The setting is similarly unconventional, featuring small rooms, a domestic scale, and a personal atmosphere. Artists represented in the collection include Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Edgar Degas, Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Claude Monet, Honoré Daumier, Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur Dove, Mark Rothko, Milton Avery, Jacob Lawrence, and Richard Diebenkorn, among others. The permanent collection has grown to include more than 1,000 photographs, many by American photographers Berenice Abbott, Esther Bubley, and Bruce Davidson, and works by contemporary artists such as Anselm Kiefer, Wolfgang Laib, Whitfield Lovell, and Leo Villareal. The Phillips Collection regularly organizes acclaimed special exhibitions, many of which travel internationally. The Phillips also produces award-winning education programs for K–12 teachers and students, as well as for adults. The University of Maryland Center for Art and Knowledge at The Phillips Collection is the museum's nexus for academic work, scholarly exchange, and interdisciplinary collaborations. Since 1941, the museum has hosted Sunday Concerts in its wood-paneled Music Room. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

ABOUT THE ZENTRUM PAUL KLEE

The **Zentrum Paul Klee**, designed by world famous architect Renzo Piano opened its doors in 2005. Zentrum Paul Klee has the largest and most significant collection worldwide of paintings, watercolors, and drawings by Klee and is the leading repository of archival and biographical material from all the periods of the artist's life. A principal task of the museum is to ensure that the artistic, pedagogic, and theoretical work of Klee, as well as its importance within the cultural and social context, is scientifically developed. By organizing exhibitions that raise topical questions, present new scholarly interpretations, and embrace innovative forms of communication, Zentrum Paul Klee aims to bring Klee's artistic legacy into the present.

LEFT IMAGE: Paul Klee, *Young Moe*, 1938. Colored paste on newspaper on burlap, 20 7/8 x 27 5/8 in. The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1948

RIGHT IMAGE: Kenneth Noland, *In the Garden*, 1952. Oil on hardboard, 19 1/2 x 30 in. The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1952 Art © Estate of Kenneth Noland/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

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