

MIRÓ

AND THE

UNITED STATES

MARCH 21–JULY 5, 2026

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS IMAGES

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WALL TEXT

EXHIBITION SUPPORT STATEMENT

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

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PHILLIPS

The Phillips Collection



Fundació Joan Miró

UPDATED RELEASE
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The Phillips Collection Presents *Miró and the United States*

Exploring the vibrant and reciprocal exchanges between Joan Miró and the burgeoning American art scene in a pivotal moment of 20th-century art.



WASHINGTON, DC—The Phillips Collection is pleased to present [*Miró and the United States*](#), a major traveling exhibition organized in collaboration with the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona. This groundbreaking exhibition recounts a little-known yet decisive period of transatlantic exchange between Joan Miró and American artists, revealing how the United States informed his artistic development and influenced post-war art on both sides of the Atlantic. For Miró, the United States represented more than just geography—it offered expansive horizons, new audiences, and the possibility of creative freedom. Assembling significant loans and notable first-time showings, the exhibition stages rare juxtapositions that foreground the generative impact of these cross-cultural encounters, revealing how Miró and his American contemporaries mutually influenced one another and advanced new artistic directions. **First shown at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona, the exhibition opens in Washington, DC, on March 21, 2026, and runs through July 5, 2026.**

While Miró's relationship with France and his native Spain is well-documented, *Miró and the United States* centers the US as a key point of contact in the artist's career. An established international figure

by the 1940s, Miró engaged in the US with new ideas, large-scale projects, public commissions, and an influential network of American artists, institutions, and collectors. His partnership with his longtime dealer Pierre Matisse, his seven visits to the United States between 1947 and 1968, and two retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1941 and 1959) all proved instrumental. Coming from a Spain devastated by the Franco dictatorship, the United States represented for Miró not only a creative frontier but also a landscape of hope, democracy, innovation, and endless possibilities.

“Presenting this exhibition in Washington, DC, underscores art’s role in fostering cross-cultural exchange and affirms the Phillips as a space where global conversations in modern art unfold,” says **Jonathan P. Binstock, Vradenburg Director & CEO of The Phillips Collection**. “At a moment when the geopolitics of culture are being reexamined, Miró’s transatlantic journey feels acutely relevant. His movement between Spain and the United States—from repression to optimism, from constraint to openness—speaks powerfully to the role of art as both a personal and political act. The Phillips Collection invites visitors to reflect on this history and to imagine broader horizons.”

The exhibition brings together approximately 75 works—paintings, sculptures, works on paper, films, and archival material—from American and European collections, including significant loans from the Fundació Joan Miró. Major works by more than 30 American artists whose paths intersected with Miró’s, among them Alexander Calder, Louise Bourgeois, Lee Krasner, Jackson Pollock, Helen Frankenthaler, Norman Lewis, and Adolph Gottlieb, represent two generations of Abstract Expressionists. Together, the artworks chart a dynamic period of artistic dialogue and experimentation.

Miró’s interactions with American artists spurred some of his most inventive work, from sculptural explorations informed by Calder and Bourgeois to gestural, energetic painting in conversation with Pollock and Abstract Expressionism. Creative exchanges with architect Josep Lluís Sert expanded Miró’s ambitions for murals, public art, and monumentality. Through repeated visits to the United States, Miró met artists in their studios, collaborated on prints and architectural projects, and closely followed exhibitions at galleries and museums, connections that transformed his practice and reverberated across post-war American art.

Highlights of Miró’s work include *Somersault* (1924) and *Person Throwing a Stone at a Bird* (1926), which helped launch his reputation in the US early in his career; the monumental *Mural Painting, 20 March 1961* (1961), on loan for the first time from Harvard Art Museum; and 22 pochoirs on paper from his *Constellations* series of 1959.

“*Miró and the United States* reframes Miró’s legacy by tracing the exchanges his work ignited with a rising generation of American artists—encounters that accelerated modern art on both sides of the Atlantic,” says **Elsa Smithgall, Chief Curator at The Phillips Collection** and curator of the museum’s presentation in collaboration with Marko Daniel, Matthew Gale, and Dolores Rodríguez Roig from the Fundació Joan Miró. “The exhibition is a glowing testament to the vitality of transnational exchange as a driver for experimentation in contemporary art. We invite audiences to rediscover a pioneering Catalan artist whose art of human feeling continues to resonate today.”

By tracing the fertile exchange between Miró and American artists, *Miró and the United States* deepens understanding of the artist's legacy and the transatlantic networks that defined the post-war era.

ARTISTS

William Baziotes	Grace Hartigan	Barnett Newman
Louise Bourgeois	Franz Kline	Isamu Noguchi
Alexander Calder	Lee Krasner	Alfonso Ossorio
Elaine de Kooning	Norman Lewis	Jackson Pollock
Willem de Kooning	Len Lye	Jeanne Reynal
Perle Fine	Alice Trumbull Mason	Mark Rothko
Sam Francis	Peter Miller	Rufino Tamayo
Herbert Ferber	Joan Mitchell	Sonja Sekula
Helen Frankenthaler	Joan Miró	Theodoros Stamos
Arshile Gorky	Robert Motherwell	Janet Sobel
Adolph Gottlieb	Louise Nevelson	Michael Corinne West

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

This exhibition is organized for The Phillips Collection by Elsa Smithgall, in collaboration with Marko Daniel, Matthew Gale, and Dolors Rodríguez Roig, at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona.

The Phillips Collection gratefully acknowledges Northern Trust as the Presenting Sponsor of *Miró and the United States* in Washington, DC.



Special thanks to the Estate of Toni A. Ritzenberg for lead support of this exhibition.

Essential support is provided by Martha R. Johnston, Dina and George Perry, and the Ednah Root Foundation.

Ednah Root Foundation

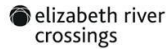
This exhibition is also made possible by The Kristina and William Catto Foundation, John and Gina Despres, Robert and Debra Drumheller, The Marion F. Goldin Charitable Fund, Paul W. Killian and Carole Goodson, Susan Lee and Stephen Saltzburg, and Reid Walker.

With thanks to the international tour sponsors of *Miró and the United States*.

Supported by



With the collaboration of



EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

The show is accompanied by a 296-page publication containing 260 illustrations, as well as new contributions from renowned scholars on the subject of Miró's artistic evolution.

IMAGES: Joan Miró in Carl Holty's studio, in front of the mural painting for the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, Photo: Arnold Newman © Arnold Newman / Getty Images; Joan Miró, *The Red Sun*, 1948, Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 × 28 3/4 in. (92 × 73 cm), The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Acquired 1951 © Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris 2026

IMAGE GALLERY

High-resolution press images are available upon request. Please contact lcantrell@phillipscollection.org.

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

Founded in 1921, The Phillips Collection is a welcoming home for all where the vision and spirit of artists thrive in intimate settings. As the first museum of modern art in the United States, the Phillips houses one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and modern art collections, and continues to grow its permanent collection with the work of important living artists. Its distinctive domestically scaled architecture combines three structures built over more than 125 years, among them the former home of the founders, Duncan and Marjorie Phillips. The Phillips's impact extends nationally and internationally through its diverse, scholarly exhibitions; award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; and renowned Phillips Music series. Popular and impactful programs include those focused on art and wellness, its festive monthly Phillips after 5 events, and intimate Living Room talks. Through authentic programs and partnerships at Phillips@THEARC, the museum's satellite location in Southeast DC, the Phillips extends its reach into Wards 7 and 8 and Prince George's County, Maryland. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

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PRESS IMAGES*Miró and the United States*March 21–July 5, 2026

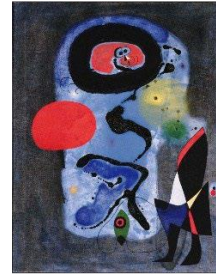
Joan Miró*The Red Sun*

1948

Oil on canvas

36 1/8 × 28 1/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1951

© Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York / ADAGP, Paris 2026**Joan Miró***Painting (Fratellini)*

1927

Oil and aqueous medium on canvas

51 1/4 × 38 1/4 in.

Philadelphia Museum of Art: A. E. Gallatin
Collection, 1952-16-1© Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York / ADAGP, Paris 2026**Joan Miró***Figure, Bird in the Night II*

1972

Oil on canvas

24 × 19 7/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a
private collection© Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York / ADAGP, Paris 2026**Joan Miró***Ciphers and Constellations in Love with a Woman
from the Constellations Series*

1959

22 pochoirs on paper after the gouaches

24 x 20 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

© Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York / ADAGP, Paris 2026

Page 2—Press Images: *Miró and the United States*

Joan Miró

Sketch for Mural for Cincinnati

1947

Gouache, pastel, ink, and graphite on paper
19 1/8 x 49 7/8 in.

Fundació Pilar I Joan Miró a Mallorca

© Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York / ADAGP, Paris 2026



Joan Miró in Carl Holty's studio, in front of the mural painting for the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, 1947

Photo: Arnold Newman © Arnold Newman / Getty Images.



Louise Bourgeois

Listening One

1947

Painted bronze

80 x 20 x 12 in.

Collection of The Easton Foundation

© 2026 The Easton Foundation / Licensed by
VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Helen Frankenthaler

Canyon

1965

Acrylic on canvas

44 x 52 in.

The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for
Acquisitions and funds given by Gifford Phillips,
2001

© 2026 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. /
Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Grace Hartigan

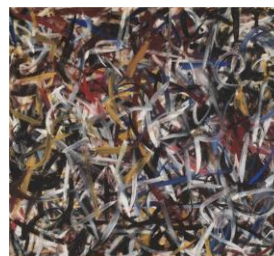
Six Square

1951

Oil on canvas

59 7/8 x 64 5/8 in.

Collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art
Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York.
Bequest of Agnes Rindge Claflin



Page 3—Press Images: *Miró and the United States*

Joan Miró, his wife Pilar Juncosa, and their daughter Maria Dolors, with Louise Bourgeois on the roof of the apartment of the filmmaker Richard de Rochemont, in New York, holding the canvas that Miró created for the Surrealism exhibition at the Galerie Maeght in Paris, 1947
© Successió Miró /Easton Foundation, 2026



Jackson Pollock

Eyes in the Heat

1946

Oil and enamel on canvas

54 x 43 in.

Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)

© 2026 The Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Adolph Gottlieb

Vigil

1948

Oil on canvas

36 1/8 x 48 in.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York;

Purchase 49.2

© 2026 Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Lee Krasner

untitled [Little Image Painting]

1947-48

Oil on canvas

22 x 16 in.

Munson Museum of Art, Utica, NY, Gift of Clare

Eddy Thaw

© 2026 The Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Perle Fine

Polyphonic

1945

Oil on canvas

38 x 44 in.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Estate of Karl Nierendorf, By purchase



© A.E. Artworks, LLC

Alexander Calder

Joan Miró

c. 1930

Wire

11 3/8 x 10 5/8 x 10 5/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

© 2026 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Joan Miró

Woman and Birds at Sunrise

1946

Oil on canvas

21 1/4 x 25 1/2 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

© Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris 2026



Louise Nevelson

Archaic Figure with a Star on Her Head

1949-50

Painted terracotta

21 1/2 x 5 3/8 x 3 in.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York;

Gift of Janet A. Grimes 2003.435

© 2026 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Joan Miró

His Majesty the King

1974

Acrylic on wood, bronze, and iron

100 3/8 x 14 1/2 x 16 3/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

© Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris 2026



Page 5—Press Images: *Miró and the United States*

Norman Lewis

Blending

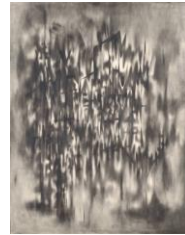
1951

Oil and ink on canvas

52 5/8 × 42 in.

Munson Museum of Art, Utica, NY

© Estate of Norman W. Lewis; Courtesy of
Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York



Janet Sobel

Illusion of Solidity

1945

Oil on canvas

43 × 27 in.

ASOM Collection



Michael Corinne West

Dagger of Light

1951

Oil, aluminum paint, and sand on canvas

55 × 35 in.

Courtesy of Arte Collectum



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CHECKLIST***Miró and the United States*****March 21–July 5, 2026****Joan Miró**

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Somersault

1924

Oil, graphite, charcoal, and tempera on canvas board
36 3/8 × 28 5/8 in.

Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Collection Société Anonyme

**Joan Miró**

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

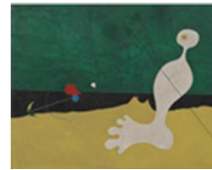
Person Throwing a Stone at a Bird

1926

Oil on canvas

29 × 36 1/4 in.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1937

**Joan Miró**

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Painting

1927

Tempera and oil on canvas

28 3/4 × 36 1/4 in.

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Pierre Matisse, in memory of Pierre Loeb, 1984

**Joan Miró**

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Painting (Fratellini)

1927

Oil and aqueous medium on canvas

51 1/4 × 38 1/4 in.

Philadelphia Museum of Art: A. E. Gallatin Collection, 1952-16-1



Page 2—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Alexander Calder

b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania–d. 1976, New York,
New York

Joan Miró

1930

Wire

11 1/2 × 10 5/8 × 10 5/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private
collection



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

Gouache

1937

Black ink, oil wash, and colored chalks on off-white
wove paper

19 1/8 × 25 1/4 in.

Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Mr. and
Mrs. Josep Lluís Sert



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

Self-Portrait

1937-60

Oil and pencil on canvas

57 3/8 × 38 1/2 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private
collection



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

Still Life with Old Shoe

1937

Oil on canvas

32 × 46 in.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of James
Thrall Soby, 1970



Page 3—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Peter Miller (Henrietta Meyers Miller)

b. 1913, Hanover Pennsylvania—d. 1996, Chester County, Pennsylvania

Ceremonial Objects

c.1940

Oil on canvas

20 × 24 in.

Gratz Gallery/Morton Contemporary



Isamu Noguchi

b. 1904, Los Angeles, California—d. 1988, New York, New York

Contoured Playground

1941

Bronze

2 3/4 × 26 1/4 × 26 1/4 in.

The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York



Alice Trumbull Mason

b. 1904, Litchfield, Connecticut—d. 1971, New York, New York

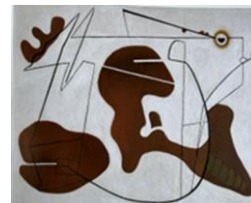
Brown Shapes White

1941

Oil on wood panel

27 1/8 × 34 7/8 × 2 in.

Philadelphia Museum of Art: A. E. Gallatin Collection, 1952-61-76



Arshile Gorky

b. 1904, Van Province, Ottoman Empire (now Turkey)—
d. 1948, Sherman, Connecticut

Garden in Sochi

c. 1943

Oil on canvas

31 × 39 in.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), 1969



Perle Fine

b. 1908, Boston, Massachusetts—d. 1988, East Hampton, New York

Polyphonic

1945

Oil on canvas

38 × 44 in.



Page 4—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Estate of
Karl Nierendorf, By purchase

Mark Rothko

b. 1903, Dvinsk, Russia—d. 1970, New York, New York

Untitled

1945

Oil and tempera on canvas

31 11/16 x 39 1/2 in.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark
Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986.43.75



Sonja Sekula

b. 1918, Lucerne, Switzerland—d. 1963, Zürich,
Switzerland

African Moonsun

1945

Oil on canvas

24 x 29 7/8 in.

Kunstmuseum Luzern



Janet Sobel

b. 1894, Dnipro, Ukraine—d. 1968, Plainfield, New
Jersey

Illusion of Solidity

1945

Oil on canvas

43 x 27 in.

ASOM Collection



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

Woman and Birds at Sunrise

1946

Oil on canvas

21 1/4 x 25 1/2 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private
collection



Page 5—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Robert Motherwell

b. 1915, Aberdeen, Washington—d. 1991, Provincetown, Massachusetts
Concept of Woman
1946
Crayon, watercolor, and black ink splatters on paper
82 x 69 in.
The Phillips Collection, Gift of Susan and Louis Stamberg, 2014



Barnett Newman

b. 1905, New York, New York—d. 1970, New York, New York
Pagan Void
1946
Oil on canvas
33 x 38 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Annalee Newman, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art, 1988.57.1



Jackson Pollock

b. 1912, Cody, Wyoming—d. 1956, East Hampton, New York
Eyes in the Heat
1946
Oil and enamel on canvas
54 x 43 in.
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)



Theodoros Stamos

b. 1922, New York, New York—d.1997, Yiannina, Greece
Untitled
1946
Oil on fiberboard
28 1/2 x 12 1/4 in.
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Betty Parsons



Rufino Tamayo

b. 1899, Oaxaca, Mexico—d. 1991, Mexico City, Mexico
Heavenly Bodies
1946
Oil with sand on canvas
34 x 41 3/4 in.



Page 6—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)

William Baziotés

b. 1912, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—d. 1963, New York, New York

Night Mirror

1947

Oil on canvas

48 1/2 × 59 7/8 in.

Collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd (Blanchette Hooker, class of 1931)



Louise Bourgeois

b. 1911, Paris, France—d. 2010, New York, New York

Listening One

1947

Painted bronze

80 × 20 × 12 in.

Collection of The Easton Foundation



Louise Bourgeois

b. 1911, Paris, France—d. 2010, New York, New York

Difficult Steering

1947

Engraving on paper

9 7/8 × 6 3/4 in.

Collection of The Easton Foundation, New York



Louise Bourgeois

b. 1911, Paris, France—d. 2010, New York, New York

Untitled

1947–49

Painted bronze and stainless steel

66 × 12 × 12 in.

Collection of The Easton Foundation, New York



Page 7—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Alexander Calder

b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania—d. 1976, New York, New York

Black Polygons

1947

Painted metal and wire

23 5/8 × 126 × 47 1/4 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection



Willem De Kooning

b. 1904, Rotterdam, Netherlands—d. 1997, East Hampton, New York

Zurich

1947

Oil and enamel on paper mounted on fiberboard

36 × 24 1/8 in.

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, The Joseph H. Hirshhorn Bequest, 1981



Lee Krasner

b. 1908, New York, New York—d. 1984, New York, New York

Untitled [Little Image Painting]

1947-48

Oil on canvas

22 × 16 in.

Munson Museum of Art, Utica, NY, Gift of Clare Eddy Thaw



Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick, New York

Joan Miró

1947

Shadowgraph

19 1/2 × 15 3/4 in.

Private Collection



Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick, New York

Joan Miró

1947

Shadowgraph



Page 8—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

19 1/2 × 15 3/4 in.
Private Collection

Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick,
New York

Joan Miró

1947

Shadowgraph

19 1/2 × 15 3/4 in.

Private Collection



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

The Diamond Smiles at Twilight

1947

Oil on canvas

38 1/4 × 51 1/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private
collection



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

Sketch for Mural for Cincinnati

1947

Gouache, pastel, ink, and graphite on paper

19 1/8 × 49 7/8 in.

Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró a Mallorca



Willem de Kooning

b. 1904, Rotterdam, Netherlands—d. 1997, East
Hampton, New York

Asheville

1948

Oil and enamel paint on cardboard

25 5/8 × 31 7/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1952



Adolph Gottlieb

b. 1903, New York, New York—d. 1974, New York, New
York

Vigil

1948

Oil on canvas



Page 9—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

36 1/8 × 48 in.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase
49.2

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

The Red Sun

1948

Oil on canvas

36 1/8 × 28 1/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1951



Alexander Calder

b. 1898, Lawton, Pennsylvania—d. 1976, New York, New
York

Untitled

1948

Painted sheet metal and wire

26 x 26 x 5 1/2 in.

The Phillips Collection, Gift from the estate of Katherine
S. Dreier, 1953



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

Woman

1949

Bronze

12 3/8 × 9 1/4 × 9 1/4 in.

Fundació Joan Miró



Louise Nevelson

b. 1899, Kiev, Russia (now Kyiv, Ukraine)—d. 1988, New
York, New York

Archaic Figure with a Star on Her Head

1949-50

Painted terracotta

21 1/2 × 5 3/8 × 3 in.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Gift of
Janet A. Grimes 2003.435



Page 10—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Alexander Calder

b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania—d. 1976, New York, New York

Red Polygons

1950

Painted sheet metal and wire

26 x 26 x 5 1/2 in.

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1951



Elaine de Kooning

b. 1918, New York, New York—d. 1989, Southampton, New York

Untitled

1950

Oil on paper on canvas

13 7/8 x 11 in.

FAMM Museum, Mougins, France / The Levett Collection



Grace Hartigan

b. 1922, Newark, New Jersey—d. 2008 Timonium, Maryland

Six Square

1951

Oil on canvas

59 7/8 x 64 5/8 in.

Collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, Bequest of Agnes Rindge Claflin



Norman Lewis

b. 1909, New York, New York—d. 1979, New York, New York

Blending

1951

Oil and ink on canvas

52 5/8 x 42 in.

Munson Museum of Art, Utica, NY



Jackson Pollock

b. 1912, Cody, Wyoming—d. 1956, East Hampton, New York

Number 14

1951

Oil on canvas

57 5/8 x 106 1/8 in.



Page 11—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Tate: Purchased with assistance from the American Fellows of the Tate Gallery Foundation 1988

Michael Corinne West

b. 1908, Columbus, Ohio—d. 1991, New York, New York

Dagger of Light

1951

Oil, aluminum paint and sand on canvas

55 × 35 in.

Courtesy of Arte Collectum



Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick, New York

Color Cry

1952

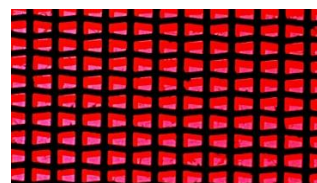
3 minutes, 16mm, color (Kodachrome), sound

Courtesy of the Len Lye Foundation

Digital version with the assistance of Park Road Post

Production from material preserved and made

available by Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision



Alfonso Ossorio

b. 1916, Manila, Philippines—d. 1990, New York City

Number 14, 1953

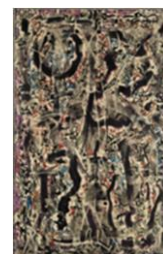
1953

Ink and wax on board

60 1/2 × 38 1/2 × 1 3/8 in.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase

55.8



Herbert Ferber

b. 1906, New York, New York—d. 1991, North Egremont, Massachusetts

The Sun, the Moon and the Stars II

1956

Brass

71 3/4 × 45 3/8 × 12 in.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Gift of the Howard and Jean Lipman Foundation, Inc. 65.74



Page 12—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Franz Kline

b. 1910, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania—d. 1962, New York, New York

Four Square

1956

Oil on canvas

78 3/8 x 50 3/4 in.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, 1971.87.12



Joan Mitchell

b. 1925, Chicago, Illinois—d. 1992, Paris, France

August, Rue Daguerre

1957

Oil on canvas

81 7/8 x 68 7/8 in.

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1958



Sam Francis

b. 1923, San Mateo, California—d. 1994, Santa Monica, California

Blue

1958

Oil on canvas

48 1/4 x 34 3/4 in.

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1958



Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick, New York

Free Radicals

1958 (revised 1979)

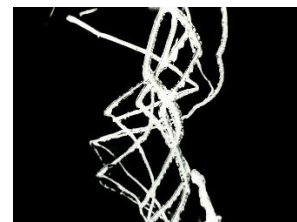
5 minutes, 16mm (originally 35mm), black and white, sound

Courtesy of the Len Lye Foundation

Digital version by Park Road Post Production and Weta

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Page 13—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Constellations

1959

22 pochoirs on paper after the gouaches

24 x 20 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Mural March 20, 1961

1961

Oil on canvas

45 x 144 in.

Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Josep Lluís Sert



Mark Rothko

b. 1903, Dvinsk, Russia–d. 1970, New York, New York

Untitled (Harvard Mural sketch)

1962

Oil, acrylic, and mixed media on canvas

69 1/8 x 56 1/8 in.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986.43.149



Alexander Calder

b. 1898, Lawton, Pennsylvania–d. 1976, New York, New York

Untitled (Twelve White Dots)

1965

Painted metal and wire

14 x 18 1/2 x 4 3/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection



Helen Frankenthaler

b. 1928, New York, New York–d. 2011, Darien, Connecticut

Canyon

1965

Acrylic on canvas

44 x 52 in.



Page 14—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions and funds given by Gifford Phillips, 2001

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

The First Spark of Day II

1966

Acrylic and oil on canvas

57 1/2 × 44 7/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Personage

1967

Painted bronze

63 × 25 × 4 3/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

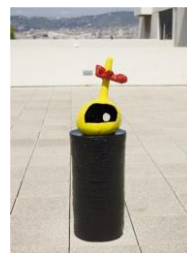
Her Majesty

1967

Painted bronze

42 1/2 × 14 × 13 3/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Head

1969

Bronze

21 3/4 × 11 3/4 × 4 1/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Jeanne Reynal

b. 1903, White Plains, New York—d. 1983, New York, New York

Two Rivers

1970

Cement and mosaic

111 × 11 × 5 1/2 in.



Page 15—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery, New York

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Personage and Bird

1970

Bronze

60 1/4 × 45 1/4 × 16 1/2 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Jeanne Reynal

b. 1903, White Plains, New York–d. 1983, New York, New York

The Pangolin

1971

Cement and mosaic

121 1/2 × 5 × 15 in.

Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery, New York



Jeanne Reynal

b. 1903, White Plains, New York–d. 1983, New York, New York

Untitled

1971

Mosaic tesserae, mother-of-pearl, Japanese shell, concrete, and steel

101 1/2 × 5 × 6 1/2 in.

Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery, New York



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Figure, Bird in the Night II

1972

Oil on canvas

24 × 19 7/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection



Page 16—Checklist: *Miró and the United States*

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

3 Hairs in the Night II

1972

Oil on canvas

24 × 19 7/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Figure, Bird in the Night III

1972

Oil on canvas

25 5/8 × 21 1/4 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Figures, Birds

1973

Acrylic and oil on canvas

78 3/4 × 78 3/4 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

His Majesty the King

1974

Acrylic on wood, bronze, and iron

100 3/8 × 14 1/2 × 16 3/8 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

His Highness the Prince

1974

Acrylic on wood and horn

80 1/2 × 7 1/2 × 23 1/4 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain–d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca,
Spain

Her Majesty the Queen

1974

Acrylic on wood and nails

82 5/8 × 4 3/4 × 5 1/4 in.

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona



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WALL TEXT***Miró and the United States*****March 21–July 5, 2026**

At the end of his life, Joan Miró maintained, “It was really American painting that inspired me.”

This exhibition traces the rich networks of exchange between the Catalan artist (1893-1983) and more than 30 American artists during the period between the 1940s and the 1960s, coinciding with the artist’s seven visits from Spain to the United States. By placing Miró’s art in dialogue with that of American artists, the exhibition seeks to explore the generative impact of their artistic conversations and how they each found in the other inspiring examples to fuel their own personal growth and development.

In the 1920s, as Miró was establishing himself as a leading abstract artist in Spain and France, he was introduced to American audiences through pioneering collectors Katherine S. Dreier and A. E. Gallatin. In 1926, Dreier included Miró in the landmark International Exhibition of Modern Art at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. At this show, visitors got their first glimpse of Miró’s dream-like pictures, including *Somersault*, on view in this gallery. Dreier captured the controversial nature of Miró’s early reception: “Miró is a remarkably gifted young Spaniard. Though one may not like his pictures, one cannot forget them.”

By the mid-1940s, Miró’s reputation in the US grew as his work became more widely seen in annual exhibitions at Pierre Matisse Gallery and critically examined in articles and interviews. In 1947, Miró arrived in New York for the first time. His eight-month stay to paint a large mural for the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati included seeing exhibitions, engaging in artistic collaborations, and visiting with his American contemporaries—among them two generations of Abstract Expressionists who were gaining international recognition for their bold experiments with color, gesture, and form. This exhibition explores how their fruitful interactions stimulated a breadth of innovative artistic expressions that indelibly shaped the course of 20th-century modern art on both sides of the Atlantic.

This exhibition is organized for The Phillips Collection by Elsa Smithgall, in collaboration with Marko Daniel, Matthew Gale, and Dolors Rodríguez Roig, at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona.

The Phillips Collection gratefully acknowledges Northern Trust as the Presenting Sponsor of *Miró and the United States* in Washington, DC.



Special thanks to the Estate of Toni A. Ritzenberg for lead support of this exhibition.

Essential support is provided by Martha R. Johnston, Dina and George Perry, and the Ednah Root Foundation.

Ednah Root Foundation

Page 2—Wall Text: *Miró and the United States*

This exhibition is also made possible by The Kristina and William Catto Foundation, John and Gina Despres, Robert and Debra Drumheller, The Marion F. Goldin Charitable Fund, Paul W. Killian and Carole Goodson, Susan Lee and Stephen Saltzburg, and Reid Walker.

Additional support is provided by Dr. Heather McPherson.

With thanks to the international tour sponsors of *Miró and the United States*.

Supported by



With the collaboration of



Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Personage and Bird, 1970

Bronze

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

This is a bronze cast that Miró scaled up ten times for his 55-foot steel and bronze sculpture *Personage and Birds*, commissioned for the plaza of the 75-story Texas Commerce Bank in Houston (now the JPMorgan Chase Tower) designed by architect I. M. Pei. The original assemblage was made from found objects: a slatted wooden triangular shape suggests the female torso, a gourd with two holes delineates eyes, and an armature assembled from dismantled chair legs suggests the wings and head of a bird. The woman reaches up toward her attendant bird who has taken flight into the sky—a metaphor for creation and the human quest for freedom.

Personage and Birds, the largest public monument Miró completed in the US, is painted red, yellow, blue, and green, adding to its uplifting presence within an otherwise austere urban space. “It was Miró’s mischievous aspect that appealed to me,” Pei said of his choice of Miró for this project, “His work is a celebration of life.”

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

His Majesty the King, 1974

Acrylic on wood, bronze, and iron

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

His Highness the Prince, 1974

Acrylic on wood and horn
Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Joan Miró
b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain
Her Majesty the Queen, 1974
Acrylic on wood and nails
Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Alexander Calder
b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania—d. 1976, New York, New York
Joan Miró, 1930
Wire
Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

Alexander Calder
b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania—d. 1976, New York, New York
Red Polygons, 1950
Painted sheet metal and wire
The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1951

Alexander Calder
b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania—d. 1976, New York, New York
Black Polygons, 1947
Painted metal and wire
Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

Since their first meeting in Paris in 1928, Calder and Miró became fast friends. Calder had introduced himself to the Catalan artist through a letter in broken French. At the time, he was fashioning his *Cirque Calder* and constructing wire portraits. Following their meeting, Calder paid homage to his new friend in the wire portrait shown nearby. Critics remarked on their artistic affinities, as one writer expressed: “Calder’s ‘mobiles’ are like living Miró abstractions.”

While living most of their lives an ocean apart, Miró and Calder nurtured their strong ties through a steady exchange of letters, visits, and artworks. Upon Miró’s arrival in the US in 1947, Calder personally welcomed the Miró family at the airport. During this trip, Calder gave Miró the mobile *Black Polygons* (on view in the stairwell oculus) in exchange for one of his paintings.

Louise Bourgeois
b. 1911, Paris, France—d. 2010, New York, New York
Listening One, 1947
Painted bronze
Collection of The Easton Foundation

Louise Bourgeois
b. 1911, Paris, France—d. 2010, New York, New York
Untitled, 1947–49

Painted bronze and stainless steel
Collection of The Easton Foundation, New York

French American artist Louise Bourgeois is well known today for her large-scale sculptures and installations inspired by her personal experiences. Yet her first foray into sculpture had a more modest beginning. Around 1946, Bourgeois began carving what would become a series of over 80 life-size wood sculptures on her apartment building's rooftop, surrounded by the skyline of New York. Called *Personages*, these works "functioned as figures, each given a personality by its shape and articulation, and responding to one another." Most of the works in the series are painted, often in a single color (largely black, white, or blue), and were later cast in small bronze editions.

The sculptures' formal and spatial relationships also carry psychological significance. Chiseled to a point and unable to stand without support, the vertical forms convey the sense of homesickness and disorientation Bourgeois experienced during her first years in New York. Some of the figures represent friends and family she left behind in France.

Bourgeois first encountered Miró's work in Paris in the 1930s. She recalled, "While attending the Ecole...I came to know Miró's works quite well. They were a wonderful aesthetic shock for me—a liberation." She met Miró 10 years later, during his eight-month visit to New York in 1947. The two frequented Atelier 17, the innovative print workshop run by Stanley William Hayter. Created 30 years after his encounter with Bourgeois, Miró's slender *Majesty* sculptures of the 1970s (on view in the stairwell) suggest formal affinities with Bourgeois's *Personages*.

Louise Bourgeois
b. 1911, Paris, France—d. 2010, New York, New York
***Difficult Steering*, 1947**
Engraving on paper
Collection of The Easton Foundation, New York

In addition to her sculptural works (shown nearby), Louise Bourgeois was a prolific printmaker. She created *Difficult Steering* at Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17 in Greenwich Village. There she worked alongside Miró while he was preparing prints for the *L'Antitête (The Anti-Head)* anthology for poet Tristan Tzara.

Atelier 17 was a bustling avant-garde print studio originally established in Paris but later moved to New York during WWII. Hayter fostered a lively atmosphere where experimentation and collaboration were not only encouraged but, in many ways, required for membership. He would have encouraged artists to cut holes or make deep indentations into copper plates with an engraving tool called a scorper, as Bourgeois did here. This technique resulted in inkless areas of bright white paper that would be embossed via the pressure of the press. The workshop brought Miró into contact with many budding American artists such as Bourgeois, Jackson Pollock, Alice Trumbull Mason, and Perle Fine.

Alexander Calder
b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania—d. 1976, New York, New York
***Untitled*, 1948**
Painted sheet metal and wire
The Phillips Collection, Gift from the estate of Katherine S. Dreier, 1953

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Painting (Fratellini), 1927

Oil and aqueous medium on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art: A. E. Gallatin Collection, 1952-16-1

In *Painting (Fratellini)* Miró's graceful lines and multi-colored forms suspended within an open blue field evoke the made-up faces and acrobatic feats of the renowned Fratellini clowns, whom Miró encountered at the Médrano Circus—a favorite meeting place for Surrealists in Europe. When Albert E. Gallatin acquired the work for his Gallery of Living Art, critic Henry McBride celebrated the bold purchase in the *New York Sun*: "It will be mentally accessible, I fear, only to those who lean readily toward the mystical."

McBride, Gallatin's close friend and advisor, was among the first American critics to champion Miró in the 1920s. Gallatin's acquisition of *Painting (Fratellini)* anticipated the increasingly abstract direction of his collecting, and of American modernism, in the coming decade.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Somersault, 1924

Oil, graphite, charcoal, and tempera on canvas board

Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Collection Société Anonyme

Somersault bears hallmarks of Miró's art of the 1920s with its calligraphic shorthand of signs floating within a vast color field. In it, Miró conjures a dream world where a mustachioed stick figure is spiraling out of control from a fall off a horse. Alongside the opaque symbols, Miró's insertion of expressions "AH!!" and "HoO!"—perhaps from the unseated rider himself—adds a witty nod to Surrealism's literary origins.

In 1926, *Somersault* was one of two paintings by the artist included in the *Société Anonyme's International Exhibition of Modern Art* presented at the Brooklyn Museum, the largest and most significant display of modern art in the US since the Armory Show a decade earlier. This presentation marked Miró's American debut, where his work initially confounded American critics but became an inspiring touchpoint for Abstract Expressionists, among them Norman Lewis, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko. The title, *Le Renversement* in French, which translates variously as overturning or toppling, foretells the radical change Miró's bold works prompted in the US.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Person Throwing a Stone at a Bird, 1926

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1937

Person Throwing a Stone at a Bird depicts a human figure transformed into a cyclone with a single yellow eye and a massive foot. When asked years later about his delight in painting feet "realistically,

Page 6—Wall Text: *Miró and the United States*

outrageously enlarged, or distorted” Miró explained, “Isn’t it the foot that allows man to make contact with the earth? And there’s irony in it, too. We talk about putting our foot in our mouth.”

This painting baffled American audiences when shown in Miró’s first museum retrospective in the United States in 1941. Because Miró was still not widely known in America, the exhibition was a double-feature with his compatriot Salvador Dalí, dramatically contrasting two strains of Surrealism: Dalí’s “hand-painted dream photographs” and Miró’s “complete spontaneity of technique.”

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Painting, 1927

Tempera and oil on canvas

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Pierre Matisse, in memory of Pierre Loeb, 1984

MURAL FOR THE TERRACE PLAZA HOTEL, CINCINNATI, OHIO

In 1946, Miró was commissioned to decorate the wall of a restaurant at the new Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio—the most modern hotel in the country at the time, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Miró traveled to Cincinnati to see the construction site: a cantilevered rooftop restaurant with a circular dining room made of glass and steel and floor-to-ceiling windows offering panoramic views.

Miró worked on the mural in New York in a studio on East 119th Street that he rented from artist Carl Holty, where Holty, William Baziotis, and Romare Bearden glimpsed the work in progress. Baziotis later recalled Miró “unveiling the mural in his studio, watching for the reaction of onlookers.”

Taking inspiration from the Cincinnati skyline, Miró submerged his rhythmic forms within a soft cerulean blue. As Holty observed, to begin Miró “rubbed and scuffed the [blue] paint into the cloth.” Then “like a ballet dancer,” with “his charcoal affixed to a long light wand, he often drew above his head with long sweeping movements of his arm without directly looking at what he was doing.” In this work, Miró achieved his ambition of moving beyond easel painting, translating his lyrical abstract language to a mesmerizing 30-by-8-foot mural.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Sketch for Mural for Cincinnati, 1947

Gouache, pastel, ink, and graphite on paper

Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró a Mallorca

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Mural for the Terrace Plaza Hotel, Cincinnati, 1947

Facsimile after oil painting scaled down from 102 × 368 1/4 in.

Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of Thomas Emery’s Sons, Inc.

© Cincinnati Art Museum / Bridgeman Images

Page 7—Wall Text: *Miró and the United States*

Real estate developer Thomas Emery's Sons, Inc. commissioned Miró, Alexander Calder, and Saul Steinberg to create artworks for the hotel. When the hotel was sold in 1956, the art was gifted to the Cincinnati Art Museum.

EARLY EXCHANGES: 1936-44

In 1936, the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented *Fantastic Art Dada and Surrealism*, the groundbreaking exhibition that introduced Surrealism to the United States. The show included 15 works by Miró. Although affiliated with its members, Miró insisted on his independence from the literary and artistic movement, while sharing with them an interest in freeing art from realistic representation. In 1941, James Johnson Sweeney organized Miró's first major museum retrospective at MoMA, the artist's largest showing in the US of more than 50 paintings and 22 works on paper (including *Somersault* and *Painting (Fratellini)*, on view in the previous gallery).

Many artists, among them Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock, visited the exhibition and took home a copy of the catalogue. The exhibition's success was a turning point in illuminating Miró's development and elevating his standing in the United States. Sweeney's insightful essay positioned Miró as a consummate "poet-painter" who creates from intuition rather than reason, guided by, in Miró's words, a "burning passion." Thanks to the 1941 retrospective, a younger generation of American artists found in Miró a liberating example of how to translate intangible feelings into a personal language of abstraction.

Miró's *Still Life with Old Shoe* (seen in this gallery) garnered special attention in the 1941 retrospective. His powerful image in response to the 1937 Spanish Civil War connected with audiences during the darkest hour of World War II. The reverberations can be felt in Arshile Gorky's *Garden of Sochi* (also in this gallery). Throughout the war, when Miró was unable to send new works, his dealer Pierre Matisse persisted in displaying earlier works by Miró in annual exhibitions at his New York gallery.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Gouache, 1937

Black ink, oil wash, and colored chalks on off-white wove paper

Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Josep Lluís Sert

Isamu Noguchi

b. 1904, Los Angeles, California—d. 1988, New York, New York

Contoured Playground, 1941

Bronze

The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

"When the adult would imagine like a child he must project himself into seeing the world as a totally new experience. I like to think of playgrounds as a primer of shapes and functions: simple, mysterious, and evocative."—Isamu Noguchi

Isamu Noguchi was a celebrated Japanese American sculptor and designer who drew inspiration from the Surrealist movement. In 1941, he submitted this model to the New York Parks Department: a design for a playground in Central Park. The undulating mounds and recessed hollows vividly translate the organic forms he admired in the art of Miró, Arshile Gorky, and the Surrealists into three dimensions.

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Noguchi conceived the playground as a “sculptural landscape” devoid of equipment, with the ground itself serving as spaces for sliding, running, hiding, and exploring.

Much like Miró, Noguchi was interested in exploring how art could shape and mold urban architecture and landscape. Although *Contoured Playground* was not realized, it anticipated the artist’s later works, such as United Nations Playground (1952) and Gardens for UNESCO (1956-58), which paralleled Miró’s venture into large-scale public artworks.

Perle Fine

b. 1908, Boston, Massachusetts—d. 1988, East Hampton, New York

***Polyphonic*, 1945**

Oil on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Estate of Karl Nierendorf, By purchase

“My paintings . . . deal with an art of evocation and suggestion. I arrive at a certain simplicity by cutting away all the non-essential elements . . . to qualify the forms and render a purer deeper emotion.”—
Perle Fine

The daughter of Russian émigrés, Perle Fine moved from Boston to New York in 1929, and by the late 1940s, following several solo gallery exhibitions, she became a recognized figure in Abstract Expressionist circles. Together with her lifelong friend Lee Krasner, Fine trained under Hans Hofmann, a devotee of Miró. Fine’s art was sought-after by pioneering collectors of the day, including Peggy Guggenheim, Frank Crowninshield, and Alfred Barr.

Although she sought to distance herself from the Surrealists as she developed her mature abstract, geometric style, critics felt the strong influence of Miró in the floating biomorphic forms and fluid lines of Fine’s works of the early 1940s, such as *Polyphonic*, a painting featured in her first solo exhibition at Willard Gallery in New York.

Sonja Sekula

b. 1918, Lucerne, Switzerland—d. 1963, Zürich, Switzerland

***African Moonsun*, 1945**

Oil on canvas

Kunstmuseum Luzern

While living in New York, Sonja Sekula was friendly with both the young New York painters (such as Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock) as well as the European exiles (such as André Breton and Roberto Matta).

In the evocative *African Moonsun*, Sekula drew upon her interest in Native American and African visual cultures. The title refers to concepts often referred to as binary opposites: woman (moon) and man (sun). The presence of fine lines etched into the dark colored surface reveals Sekula’s use of *sgraffito*, a process of scratching through a surface to reveal an underlying layer of contrasting color, commonly used by Southwestern Pueblo Indigenous artists to inscribe decorative elements into their pottery. The organic shapes are locked together in a dense arrangement suggestive of trees, figures, birds, flowers, stars, and moons. Sekula’s “all-over” approach is reminiscent of Miró’s *Constellations* from the early

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1940s (on view in the next gallery) and reflected in the emerging abstractions of Pollock, Lee Krasner, Janet Sobel, Adolph Gottlieb, and others.

Arshile Gorky

b. 1904, Van Province, Ottoman Empire (now Turkey)—d. 1948, Sherman, Connecticut

***Garden in Sochi*, c. 1943**

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), 1969

After settling in New York in 1924, Armenian American artist Arshile Gorky became an influential figure in Surrealist and Abstract Expressionist art circles. In 1938, Gorky began a breakthrough series known as *Garden in Sochi* in which he conveyed his “loving memories” of the “Garden of Wish and Fulfillment” that his father cultivated in their home in Khorkom (modern-day Turkey). Throughout the series, Gorky experimented with free-floating delicate lines and brightly colored biomorphic forms that drew upon the example of Miró.

This oil from the series is strikingly reminiscent of Miró’s *Still Life with Old Shoe* (shown nearby), a painting Gorky had admired in Miró’s 1941 MoMA retrospective. Reimagined against a luminous white background, Gorky’s painting transforms elements of Miró’s composition into his personal symbolic language, replacing the shoe with Armenian slippers his father wore and the gin bottle with his mother’s butter-churn.

During Miró’s 1947 visit to the US, Gorky hosted a dinner in the artist’s honor. Miró reportedly admired Gorky’s work, calling him the “only American who understood the Miró idiom without being a copyist.”

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

***Still Life with Old Shoe*, 1937**

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of James Thrall Soby, 1970

Miró’s still-life depicts mundane objects in clashing dissonant colors on a black table against an ominous sky. Rounded contours create a circular rhythm throughout, from the large shoe at far right to the blackened bread, tall gin bottle wrapped in fraying paper, and the grotesque fork piercing an apple. The eerie drama oscillates between observable reality and expressive abstraction. Created while Miró lived in exile in Paris during the Spanish Civil War, the painting conveys his anguish around the fate of his home country. The rupture propelled Miró to “plunge” himself into a new investigation of “the reality of things” and paint from life for the first time in many years. “I was painting my Guernica,” he later reflected, referencing Picasso’s influential anti-war painting.

Miró sent the painting to his dealer Pierre Matisse’s New York gallery in the late 1930s, where it was purchased by artist Peter (Henriette) Miller and later appeared in Miró’s 1941 MoMA retrospective. Its acidic palette and dark mood—a radical break from the whimsical, vibrantly hued works of the 1920s—startled some while inspiring others, such as Arshile Gorky (see his work nearby).

Alice Trumbull Mason

b. 1904, Litchfield, Connecticut–d. 1971, New York, New York

Brown Shapes White, 1941

Oil on wood panel

Philadelphia Museum of Art: A. E. Gallatin Collection, 1952-61-76

A painter, poet, and activist who came from a family of artists, Alice Trumbull Mason created her first non-representational art as early as the late 1920s, after studying with Arshile Gorky, saying, “He really opened my eyes to abstract painting.” In 1936, Mason co-founded the seminal American Abstract Artists group with Josef Albers, Ilya Bolotowsky, and others to promote abstract art through exhibitions and publications.

In this lyrical composition painted against an open white field, Mason combines gestural line drawing on top of three strongly delineated organic brown forms. Painted the same year as Miró’s first solo museum exhibition in the US, the painting has visual affinities with Miró’s art while showing her increasing move toward a purely non-objective Mondrian-inspired “architectural abstract art.” After Mason’s first solo show at A. E. Gallatin’s Museum of Living Art in 1942, Gallatin added this work to his growing collection, in which she found a place alongside Miró.

During Miró’s stay in New York in 1947, Miró had a studio next door to Mason’s and would regularly host visitors while working on his Cincinnati mural.

CONSTELLATIONS

Their sudden dazzling light served to avert the tearing wind; these are our own constellations.—André Breton, 1959

Between 1940 and 1941, Miró created a series of 23 small gouache and oil paintings on paper, later known as *Constellations*. Miró began the series during his sojourn in Varengeville, France. Following the German invasion, he fled, harboring the first ten *Constellations* in his satchel. After settling in Palma de Mallorca with his wife and daughter, Miró painted the next ten works, before completing the final three at the family’s farm in Montroig, Spain. In them, Miró found “liberation” from the tragedy around him. The artist built up each mesmerizing composition with an intricate web of sinuous lines and multi-colored forms inspired by the night sky, reflections in the water, and music.

The groundbreaking series, first shown in 1945 at Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York, was a huge success—all 22 pieces sold. “Opinion is unanimous,” wrote Matisse to Miró, “the public finds your exhibition very impressive.” So too did artists, with Lee Krasner likening each one to “a little miracle.” Over the next decade, inspired by Miró’s expansive, de-centered compositions, Krasner, Janet Sobel, Jackson Pollock, Grace Hartigan, and other Abstract Expressionist painters created dynamic “all-over” compositions of their own. The *Constellations* helped pave the way for the excitement that greeted Miró two years later when he would make his first visit to the US.

In 1959, concurrent with his second retrospective at MoMA, Miró worked with his dealer on the production and exhibition of a limited-edition portfolio of pochoir (hand-stenciled) prints of the *Constellations*, a complete set of which fills this gallery.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Constellations

1959

22 pochoirs on paper after the gouaches

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Sunrise

The Escape Ladder

People at Night Guided by the Phosphorescent Tracks of Snails

Women on the Beach

Woman with Blond Armpit Combing Her Hair by the Light of the Stars

Morning Star

Wounded Figure

Women and Birds

Woman in the Night

Acrobatic Dancers

The Nightingale's Song at Midnight and Morning Rain

On the 13th the Ladder Brushed the Firmament

The Poetess

Awakening in the Early Morning

Towards the Rainbow

Women Encircled by the Flight of a Bird

Women at the Edge of a Lake Made Iridescent by the Passage of a Swan

The Migratory Bird

Ciphers and Constellations in Love with a Woman

The Beautiful Bird Revealing the Unknown to a Pair of Lovers

The Pink Dusk Caresses the Sex of Women and Birds

The Passage of the Divine Bird

POST-WWII EXCHANGES: 1947-68

In February 1947, Miró and his family were greeted by their dear friend Alexander Calder at the airport in New York, the start of an eight-month stay. While he worked on a mural for the Terrace Plaza Hotel, Miró also enjoyed making prints with Stanley William Hayter at his Atelier 17, an experimental workshop formerly based in Paris.

A magnet for artists across generations, Atelier 17 brought Miró into close contact with a cadre of young American painters, including William Baziotés, Louise Bourgeois, Perle Fine, Alice Trumbull Mason, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko, as well as major practitioners of Surrealism Roberto Matta, Max Ernst, and Yves Tanguy. When asked at the time, “Do you think America will influence you?” Miró responded, “Yes, very much so,” noting that he was particularly inspired by the “enthusiasm and freshness” of American painting.

Over the next decade, Miró continued to strengthen his contact with the latest directions in American art by attending exhibitions in the US and Europe. He said of Pollock’s Paris exhibition in 1952: “It showed me the liberties we can take . . . it freed me.” In 1959, Miró reconnected with American artists during his third trip to the United States, where he attended his second major retrospective at MoMA.

Miró told his friend, architect Josep Lluís Sert, that the visit had an “enormous impact” on him. The feeling was mutual; in the words of critic Hilton Kramer, no postwar artist of the New York School had escaped “Miró’s spell.”

Miró’s response to his encounters with the grand scale and unbridled energy of American painting proved transformative to the expressive freedom of his late work of the 1960s, during which he made four visits to the US. The two-way artistic exchange is a tribute to the ways in which art transcends cultural boundaries.

Michael Corinne West

b. 1908, Columbus, Ohio—d. 1991, New York, New York

***Dagger of Light*, 1951**

Oil, aluminum paint and sand on canvas

Courtesy of Arte Collectum

Michael Corinne West was a major contributing force in the Abstract Expressionist movement in New York. West’s early studies with Hans Hofmann introduced her to European modernism—particularly his love of Miró. In the 1940s, on the advice of Arshile Gorky, she began to go by Michael in an effort to counter the sexist, male dominated art world.

Dagger of Light comes from a decisive moment in West’s career when she began to paint strong gestural abstractions that departed from her Cubist-inspired work of the 1940s. On top of its thick encrusted surface, the artist applied a spray of silvery pigment that obfuscates the umber, reds, and blues of the form beneath. These so-called “blast compositions” demonstrate West’s shared interest with Miró in mixing sand and other materials with paint to create more varied, tactile surfaces.

In 1948, West married the influential photographer and critic Francis Lee, who had interviewed Miró the previous year. West likely encountered Miró through Lee and saw his work on regular display in exhibitions in New York.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

***Woman and Birds at Sunrise*, 1946**

Oil on canvas

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

Rufino Tamayo

b. 1899, Oaxaca, Mexico—d. 1991, Mexico City, Mexico

***Heavenly Bodies*, 1946**

Oil with sand on canvas

Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)

“My painting is perfectly realist . . . and happily is not descriptive and will never be because I believe the artist is a creator....it does not present itself to the spectator already digested by way of a subject. Instead it is intimately kept, giving the spectator the opportunity to make their own interpretation.” — Rufino Tamayo

While living in New York between 1937 and 1949, Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo became associated with the Abstract Expressionists, and exhibited frequently alongside Jackson Pollock, Adolph Gottlieb, and Mark Rothko—artists who searched for their unique personal artistic language that drew upon precedents in European modernism and Native American art.

Tamayo likely saw Miró's *Constellations* during its 1945 debut at Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York. Traces of them may be felt in *Heavenly Bodies'* bright star-studded blue sky, where zig-zagging beams of white light suggest the pattern of a constellation. As in other celestial paintings from 1946-47, Tamayo references existential connections between man and the universe with his inclusion, at far right, of a figure's head with his mouth agape.

Tamayo met Miró in New York in 1947, and they reconnected two years later when Tamayo moved to Paris.

Alfonso Ossorio

b. 1916, Manila, Philippines—d. 1990, New York City

Number 14, 1953, 1953

Ink and wax on board

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase 55.8

"There is very little inactive, empty space in the world. . . The world is an intensely interlocked, densely active cell, super-cell, if you want to call it that."—Alfonso Ossorio

In 1950, Alfonso Ossorio's work achieved a breakthrough with his experimental wax-resist process. While living in his birth country of the Philippines to execute a mural commission, Ossorio developed and refined his intensive *sgraffito* technique of applying wax, black ink, and watercolor in intricate overlapping patterns. By scratching the surface, the artist exposed intermingled veils of color.

Number 14, 1953 epitomizes the artist's dynamic, free-flowing practice that drew inspiration from the radical experiments of his close friends and Long Island neighbors, Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner. As a devoted collector and patron, Ossorio played an influential role in organizing, with Michel Tapié, Pollock's solo exhibition in 1952 at Studio Facchetti in Paris, where his latest black and white pictures captivated Miró's attention.

Janet Sobel

b. 1894, Dnipro, Ukraine—d. 1968, Plainfield, New Jersey

Illusion of Solidity, 1945

Oil on canvas

ASOM Collection

In the mid-1940s, Janet Sobel had a meteoric rise to fame following her debut in a solo show at Puma Gallery in New York, inclusion in Peggy Guggenheim's group exhibition *The Women at Art of This Century*, and subsequent solo show at Guggenheim's gallery in 1946. These exhibitions garnered Sobel critical acclaim for her innovative "all-over" abstractions brimming with swirling lines extending from corner to corner, making her "one of America's most talked-about Surrealist painters." In his book *Modern Art Looks Ahead* (1947), dealer Fernando Puma placed Sobel as a celebrated "newcomer" in the group of "automatic Surrealists," including Miró and Paul Klee.

Illusion of Solidity exemplifies Sobel's delicate mark-marking in which she dripped enamel onto canvas with glass pipettes from her husband's jewelry business. In 1947, she moved with her family from Brooklyn to a farmhouse in New Jersey. Despite continuing to paint, Sobel faded into obscurity, only to be acknowledged a decade later by Clement Greenberg as the forerunner to Jackson Pollock's drip paintings.

Adolph Gottlieb

b. 1903, New York, New York—d. 1974, New York, New York

***Vigil*, 1948**

Oil on canvas

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase 49.2

Vigil is one of a series of pictographs Adolph Gottlieb invented in the 1940s in which he filled irregular, grid-like structures with universal symbols drawn from his abiding interest in African and Native American art. In *Vigil*, recurring concentric “eyes” emanate from the hollows of the dark compartments.

Gottlieb, like Miró, assimilated the Surrealist method of automatic writing as he developed his pictographs through free association. A few years earlier, gallerist Howard Putzel implied the growing ties between the two in his exhibition *A Problem for Critics*, where works by Adolph Gottlieb, Lee Krasner, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Rufino Tamayo, and others appeared opposite their “forerunners”—Miró, Jean Arp, and Pablo Picasso.

Jackson Pollock

b. 1912, Cody, Wyoming—d. 1956, East Hampton, New York

***Eyes in the Heat*, 1946**

Oil and enamel on canvas

Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)

Willem de Kooning

b. 1904, Rotterdam, Netherlands—d. 1997, East Hampton, New York

***Asheville*, 1948**

Oil and enamel paint on cardboard

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1952

Asheville takes its name from the North Carolina town near Black Mountain College, an experimental school where de Kooning taught in the summer of 1948 alongside Josef Albers, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, and others. Through a combination of spontaneity and control, de Kooning labored over months on what his wife, artist Elaine de Kooning, later referred to as his “embattled painting” from which he would scrape down excess paint each day only to build it back up the next.

Synthesizing the mix of ideas stirring in New York, *Asheville* blends the sinuous lines of automatic drawing with fragmented Cubist space and fantastical bestial-like bodily fragments in an “all-over” rhythmic composition.

Museum founder Duncan Phillips included *Asheville* in his 1952 exhibition *Painters of Expressionist Abstractions* at The Phillips Collection. It was in conversation with works by Robert Motherwell, Jackson

Pollock, Alfonso Ossorio, Theodoros Stamos, and Miró's *The Red Sun* (on view nearby), positioning Miró as a kindred spirit with the Americans.

Louise Nevelson

b. 1899, Kiev, Russia (now Kyiv, Ukraine)—d. 1988, New York, New York

Archaic Figure with a Star on Her Head, 1949-50

Painted terracotta

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Gift of Janet A. Grimes 2003.435

Throughout her prodigious career, Louise Nevelson worked across several media, from collage, drawing, prints, and sculptures, ultimately gaining critical acclaim as one of the foremost American sculptors of the 20th century. In the 1940s, after traveling to Europe to study with Hans Hofmann, Nevelson began making wood sculptures from salvaged materials, as seen in *Archaic Figure with a Star on Her Head*. Of this period in her work, Nevelson later recalled, "It was almost like you were breathing the air of Surrealism."

Archaic Figure with a Star on Her Head combines the intuitive playfulness she enjoyed in Surrealism with the formalist structure of Cubism. Its lyrical line and mystical form recall Miró's *Constellations* shown in New York just a few years earlier. By 1958, Nevelson's own stardom soared, as she, alongside Miró, introduced a greater monumentality to her work in large-scale, steel public sculptures.

Lee Krasner

b. 1908, New York, New York—d. 1984, New York, New York

Untitled [Little Image Painting], 1947-48

Oil on canvas

Munson Museum of Art, Utica, NY, Gift of Clare Eddy Thaw

Lee Krasner was a major force in the Abstract Expressionist movement and one of the few women of its first generation. Although often eclipsed by her husband, Jackson Pollock, whose work she tirelessly promoted, Krasner later earned recognition for the breadth of her inventions, encompassing paintings, collage, large-scale murals, and mosaics.

"I was mad for Miró," Krasner later said of the Catalan artist's significant influence on her early development, adding Miró to the roster of major figures, including Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Piet Mondrian, whom she cited as inspirations.

Krasner went with Pollock to Miró's 1941 retrospective at MoMA, taking home a catalogue. Four years later, she visited Pierre Matisse Gallery to see Miró's much-talked-about *Constellations*. Their creation, as she told her friend artist George Mercer, was nothing short of "a little miracle." The following year, Krasner had a breakthrough of her own with a new body of work she called her *Little Image* or *Hieroglyph* paintings. In them, Krasner reimagined the lyrical lines and floating forms of Miró's *Constellations* into her own "all-over" compositions layered with short strokes and thick dabs of paint, often applied directly from the tube.

Theodoros Stamos

b. 1922, New York, New York—d.1997, Yiannina, Greece

Untitled, 1946

Oil on fiberboard

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Betty Parsons

During the 1940s, a growing circle of first generation Abstract Expressionists, including Theodoros Stamos, William Baziotes, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman, followed the example of Miró, Paul Klee, and others in inventing a biomorphic language rooted in nature, mythology, and ancient art forms. For Stamos, nature offered an infinite source of renewal following the annihilation of World War II.

Untitled is among the works Stamos made that reveal his captivation with aquatic life. A blue sea creature squirms below a large turquoise orb with peering “eyes.” The roughhewn surface gives the painting an archaic quality.

Miró would have had the opportunity to see examples of Stamos’s work in a number of exhibitions, including the Paris venue of *The New American Painting as Shown in Eight European Countries* in 1959.

William Baziotes

b. 1912, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—d. 1963, New York, New York

***Night Mirror*, 1947**

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd (Blanchette Hooker, class of 1931)

“To me a mirror is something mysterious, it is evocative of strangeness and other worldliness.”—William Baziotes

Several years after moving to New York in 1933, William Baziotes met Roberto Matta and soon became part of the Chilean émigré’s weekly gatherings where he mentored his American counterparts, including Robert Motherwell, Lee Krasner, and Jackson Pollock, on the art of automatic writing.

The luminous *Night Mirror* is representative of Baziotes’s mature style in which he assimilated Surrealist form and line with Cubist structure. Its softly interlocking shapes—at left, a tall, mummified figure; at center, a “torso” with two round cellular-like forms; and at right, an embryo—convey ideas of growth and evolution that were central to the artist’s practice and to automatism in general.

Miró would have seen *Night Mirror* on multiple occasions. The painting was featured in *Possibilities* magazine (in which an interview with Miró also appeared) and displayed in the artist’s 1947 solo show at the Kootz Gallery and the 1952 MoMA exhibition *15 Americans*.

Norman Lewis

b. 1909, New York, New York—d. 1979, New York, New York

***Blending*, 1951**

Oil and ink on canvas

Munson Museum of Art, Utica, NY

“Just as dissonance in music can be beautiful, certain arrangements in color have the same effect. The picture in Utica is a black picture . . . I wanted to see if I could get out of black the suggestion of other nuances of color, using it in such a way as to arouse other colors.”—Norman Lewis

After his early years working in a social realist style, by the late 1940s, Norman Lewis developed his unique language of abstraction featuring layered compositions that counterpose intricate rhythmic lines and organic shapes with the interiority of empty spaces—what he called “visual poetry.” Possibly referring to a line in Waldo Emerson’s poem *Nature*, Lewis’s evocative painting *Blending* explores the interplay of dark and light. The hazy white backlighting may reference the blinding light of the atomic explosion; much like Miró, Lewis expressed the horrors of WWII through his art.

In 1947, Lewis met Miró in New York through his compatriot Joseph Lluís Sert; a decade later, Lewis paid Miró a visit during his travels in Europe.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

***Head*, 1969**

Bronze

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Barnett Newman

b. 1905, New York, New York—d. 1970, New York, New York

***Pagan Void*, 1946**

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Annalee Newman, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art, 1988.57.1

“In his will to set down the . . . mystery of life and death, it can be said that the artist like a true creator is delving into chaos.... for the Creator in creating the world began with the same material—for the artist tried to wrest truth from the void.”—Barnett Newman

In the early 1940s, Barnett Newman decided to pursue a career as an artist after having established himself as an influential writer and spokesperson for the American artistic avant-garde. In his search to find his own subjective pictorial language, Newman found inspiration in the two artists he considered “the most original of the abstract European painters”: Miró and Piet Mondrian.

Seeing Miró’s exhibition of *Constellations* in 1945, Newman declared, “Miró is the pioneer in a new field that will change the face of art for many years to come.” One year later, Newman’s debt to Miró is evident in *Pagan Void*, in which a looming black orb combines with biomorphic shapes and layered gestural marks. By the 1950s, Newman had his breakthrough to what would become his signature “zip” paintings of vertical bands of color on monochromatic fields.

Herbert Ferber

b. 1906, New York, New York—d. 1991, North Egremont, Massachusetts

***The Sun, the Moon and the Stars II*, 1956**

Brass

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Gift of the Howard and Jean Lipman Foundation, Inc. 65.74

Herbert Ferber was a leading sculptor who explored innovative ideas on the three-dimensional possibilities of Abstract Expressionism in the 1940s and 50s. Through his association with gallerists Betty Parsons and Samuel Kootz, Ferber became closely associated with painters William Baziotes, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Adolph Gottlieb, and Robert Motherwell. In his series of wall-mounted sculptures conceived in the 1950s, Ferber sought to liberate sculptural forms from their traditional display on a base. While interconnected forms “touch” one another as they spread across the geometric structure, Ferber allows the edge of the parts to break free from the “frame,” pushing out into the space beyond.

In 1947, Miró saw works by Ferber in the *15 Americans* exhibition at MoMA, which also included recent works by Baziotes, Pollock, and Rothko. Although he did not consider himself a Surrealist, Ferber acknowledged it as “a fruitful source,” and *The Sun, the Moon and the Stars II* bears striking affinities with Miró’s “all-over” *Constellations* of the 1940s, underlying the two artists’ shared interest in an abstract language of celestial signs.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

The Red Sun, 1948

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1951

Over a filmy blue field, Miró contrasts several favorite motifs—red orbs and “personages”—one with a bowed head at far right and one commingled with the red sun above. The bold, tarry black drips across the central axis were created by beating the oil medium to form air pockets that burst, leaving in their wake a hollow, cratered texture.

Miró painted *The Red Sun* in 1948. Just a few months earlier, he reported excitedly to his dealer, “I am in the midst of work after this stay in America, which I loved so much and which gave me new strength and energy.” Encouraged by the encounter, Miró completed 15 canvases in just nine months. *The Red Sun* was among them, its thick impasto and experimental handling revealing the influence of his American contemporaries.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Woman, 1949

Bronze

Fundació Joan Miró

The rounded form of *Woman* symbolizes fertility, life, and hope—central themes for Miró that appear throughout his painting and sculpture. *Woman* was one of several small-scale bronzes Miró introduced into his practice in the 1940s and transformed by the 1960s into large-scale public monuments.

Artists Robert Motherwell and Helen Frankenthaler, both devoted admirers of Miró, acquired an edition of this work for their personal collection and displayed it in their New York home alongside works by Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning. “I like everything about Miró,” Motherwell wrote in 1959. “For me, [his work] is the most moving and beautiful now being made in Europe.”

Peter Miller (Henrietta Meyers Miller)

b. 1913, Hanover Pennsylvania—d. 1996, Chester County, Pennsylvania

Ceremonial Objects, c.1940

Oil on canvas

Gratz Gallery/Morton Contemporary

Henrietta Meyers Miller, who adopted the *nom d'artiste* “Peter” after her marriage in 1930, was a Surrealist artist working between New York, Pennsylvania, and New Mexico. During her frequent European travels in the 1930s, she met Miró, whose art had a lasting influence on her work. In 1938, Miller and her husband acquired Miró’s *Still Life with Old Shoe* (on view nearby).

In works such as *Ceremonial Objects*, Miller developed a personal language of pictographic signs inspired by her longstanding engagement with Indigenous peoples and their art while living in New Mexico. The geometric forms emerge through thin veils of color that are suspended within an atmospheric, expansive color field.

In response to her solo exhibition at Julien Levy Gallery in 1944, critics noted affinities between Miller and Miró. Robert Goldwater observed, “Miller has absorbed some of the shapes of Miró... [and] she has employed a number of the symbols of Indian sand and rock painting... more and more she has merged the two . . . put[ting] them in an atmosphere of earthen colors, coppers, greys, and browns where they exist oblivious of a world of gravity.”

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Personage, 1967

Painted bronze

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Her Majesty, 1967

Painted bronze

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Franz Kline

b. 1910, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania—d. 1962, New York, New York

Four Square, 1956

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, 1971.87.12

“It just seems as though there are forms in some experience of your life that have an excitement for you.”—Franz Kline

Franz Kline stands apart in many ways from the prevailing tendencies of the American Abstract Expressionist group. He had no interest in the subjective and metaphysical language of Surrealism that attracted his compatriots. Instead, his work explored the essence of form through architectonic structures that exploited the expressive tension of black and white. In the 1950s, when many of the

avant-garde artists were experimenting with a reductive monochromatic palette, Kline's paintings, according to one critic, "made the loudest, most desperate shriek," one that was hugely influential on his fellow artists.

In 1950, at the Kootz Gallery in New York, Kline's black-and-white paintings appeared in a group exhibition with, among others, Miró, Piet Mondrian, Pablo Picasso, William Baziot, Willem de Kooning, and Robert Motherwell. By the end of the decade, Kline's seminal paintings earned him a place in MoMA's international touring exhibition, *The New American Painting*, the New York opening of which Miró attended during his visit to the US in 1959.

Elaine de Kooning

b. 1918, New York, New York—d. 1989, Southampton, New York

***Untitled*, 1950**

Oil on paper on canvas

FAMM Museum, Mougins, France / The Levett Collection

"My whole approach to painting, whether it's abstract painting or portraits, is that I place a value on ideas that are difficult to put into words."—Elaine de Kooning

Painter and critic Elaine de Kooning was one of the few women artists, together with Perle Fine, who were part of the Eighth Street Club, a meeting place where leading Abstract Expressionists discussed art and writing. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, she began developing a lyrical abstract language of rich color and interlocking curvilinear shapes. In *Untitled*, the artist built up a subtle surface of nondescript irregular forms floating within a shimmering yellow field.

Elaine de Kooning knew Miró through her extensive writing for *ArtNews*, frequently connecting his painting to innovative developments in abstract art of her American colleagues.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

***The First Spark of Day II*, 1966**

Acrylic and oil on canvas

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Joan Mitchell

b. 1925, Chicago, Illinois—d. 1992, Paris, France

***August, Rue Daguerre*, 1957**

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1958

Joan Mitchell first came to New York in 1947, quickly distinguishing herself within the second generation of Abstract Expressionists, including Grace Hartigan, Helen Frankenthaler, Sam Francis, and others, with her poetic, exuberant color abstractions.

From 1955 to 1959, Mitchell split her time between New York and Paris, where she regularly attended Miró's exhibitions at the Galerie Maeght. *August, Rue Daguerre* is among the works Mitchell painted

during a stay in Paris. Despite the reference to a street in its title, Mitchell did not seek to record a specific place, but rather “the feeling that comes from landscape.”

August, Rue Daguerre shows Mitchell’s rhythmical activation of the canvas, where syncopated strokes of deep reds, blues, and browns rise and fall against a soaring white ground. Like Miró, Mitchell’s method developed from a combination of improvisation and deliberate control. She applied thick white paint over some surfaces to rework the canvas, while allowing the paint to drip, splatter, and pool in other areas.

Alexander Calder

b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania–d. 1976, New York, New York

***Untitled (Twelve White Dots)*, c. 1941**

Painted metal and wire

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

Willem De Kooning

b. 1904, Rotterdam, Netherlands–d. 1997, East Hampton, New York

***Zurich*, 1947**

Oil and enamel on paper mounted on fiberboard

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, The Joseph H.

Hirshhorn Bequest, 1981

Mark Rothko

b. 1903, Dvinsk, Russia–d. 1970, New York, New York

***Untitled*, 1945**

Oil and tempera on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986.43.75

“I think of my pictures as dramas; the shapes in the pictures are the performers. . . . They begin as an unknown adventure in an unknown space.” —Mark Rothko

In the 1940s, Mark Rothko’s paintings took a new turn, drawing on the example of Miró as well as the Surrealist painters Salvador Dalí, Giorgio de Chirico, and Max Ernst. He began to incorporate aquatic, biomorphic forms floating within translucent layers of tempera and oil. Works such as *Untitled*, with its horizontal bands of luminous color, anticipate Rothko’s breakthrough classic abstractions of the 1950s. Like Miró, Rothko centered his work in the “material reality of the world,” and a concern with art as a universal expression of human feeling.

In 1947, Rothko joined Miró and his American cohorts at the experimental print workshop Atelier 17. That year, *Untitled* appeared with a statement by Rothko in an issue of *Possibilities* together with an interview by Miró. In what would be his last public statement in 1958, Rothko declared, “The world was never the same after Picasso or Miró. Theirs was a view of the world which transformed our vision of things.”

Grace Hartigan

b. 1922, Newark, New Jersey–d. 2008, Timonium, Maryland

***Six Square*, 1951**

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, Bequest of Agnes Rindge Claflin

“I would like every form to exist on many levels and to have a highly developed personal, formal, and metaphorical vocabulary. The only artists that have done that satisfactorily, in my mind, have been Miró and [Arshile] Gorky.”—Grace Hartigan

Six Square was featured in the 1951 groundbreaking artist-organized *Ninth Street Show*, the first exhibition to bring critical international attention to a burgeoning group of Abstract Expressionists, including Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell, and Jackson Pollock. *Six Square* is a densely layered “all-over” composition filled with swirling marks and charged gestures. While working on it, Hartigan wrote in her journal, “I’d like to achieve something like the quality of somber richness that Miró had in the great maroon and black pictures.”

In 1959, Hartigan was the youngest artist and the only woman represented in MoMA’s international traveling exhibition *The New American Painting*, a showcase of the latest work by the Abstract Expressionists. Miró attended the exhibition’s opening in New York.

Jeanne Reynal

b. 1903, White Plains, New York—d. 1983, New York, New York

***Two Rivers*, 1970**

Cement and mosaic

Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery, New York

Jeanne Reynal

b. 1903, White Plains, New York—d. 1983, New York, New York

***The Pangolin*, 1971**

Cement and mosaic

Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery, New York

Jeanne Reynal

b. 1903, White Plains, New York—d. 1983, New York, New York

***Untitled*, 1971**

Mosaic tesserae, mother-of-pearl, Japanese shell, concrete, and steel

Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery, New York

Jeanne Reynal is known for her contemporary reinvention of the mosaic medium. Following a trip to Sicily and Siena in 1922 where she saw mosaics in medieval and Byzantine cathedrals, she apprenticed as a mosaicist from 1930-38 in Paris. In the 1940s, Reynal adopted the Surrealist approach of working freely from intuition. She spread cement mortar gesturally across a steel or aluminum armature, then dripped and scattered hand-cut tesserae, tapping them into place with a leather hammer.

While living between California and New York in the 1940s, Reynal developed close friendships with Arshile Gorky, Elaine and Willem de Kooning, and Isamu Noguchi. It was through Gorky that Reynal met Miró at a dinner party during his 1947 stay in New York. Not long after, Miró encountered Reynal’s mosaics in the Surrealist group exhibition *Bloodflames* at Hugo Gallery. From the 1950s through the end

of her career, Reynal created monumental free-standing works and wall murals that showed her interest in capturing art's "essential texture and luminosity," aspects she shared with Miró's parallel explorations with found objects and other materials.

Jackson Pollock

b. 1912, Cody, Wyoming—d. 1956, East Hampton, New York

Number 14, 1951

Oil on canvas

Tate: Purchased with assistance from the American Fellows of the Tate Gallery Foundation 1988

In 1951, after developing his bold "action paintings" characterized by dripping, smearing, and flinging paint, Jackson Pollock abruptly shifted direction. Working with a reductive monochromatic palette, he reintroduced figurative elements in 28 works that became known as his "black pourings."

In *Number 14*, Pollock poured watered down black enamel onto a roll of unprimed canvas, leaving large areas of beige cotton exposed. Interlocking ghostlike figures and eyes at the top corners emerge within an apocalyptic space, emphasizing the powerful force of Pollock's graphic line. These distinct works were Pollock's last before his untimely death.

Miró's discovery of Pollock's black pourings in his solo exhibition at Studio Facchetti in 1952 was revelatory: "They showed me a direction I wanted to take but which up to then had remained at the stage of an unfulfilled desire. When I saw those paintings, I said to myself, 'You can do it, too.'"

Sam Francis

b. 1923, San Mateo, California—d. 1994, Santa Monica, California

Blue, 1958

Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 1958

"My painting spreads across the surface in configurations that embodied internal states of being." — Sam Francis

In 1943, Sam Francis took up watercolor while recovering from a spinal injury during flight training. Francis enjoyed hospital visits from David Park, professor at the California School of Fine Arts, who came with inspiration—works by Miró, Paul Klee, and Pablo Picasso.

Francis spent the 1950s as an expatriate in France, and by 1956, *Time* magazine hailed him the "hottest American painter in Paris." Two years later, after returning from a year traveling in Asia, Francis painted his enveloping *Blue*. The painting embodies his deepening expressive language of calligraphic line, color, light, shadow, and open space. Francis's transparent, layered color reflects his engagement with Mark Rothko and Arshile Gorky—and his early exposure to Miró.

In 1964, Sam Francis was on Miró's mind when he scribbled the note (on view in the case nearby): "Jars of various colors thrown vertically onto a white surface (like Sam Francis)."

Mark Rothko

b. 1903, Dvinsk, Russia—d. 1970, New York, New York

Untitled (Harvard Mural sketch), 1962

Oil, acrylic, and mixed media on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986.43.149

Helen Frankenthaler

b. 1928, New York, New York—d. 2011, Darien, Connecticut

Canyon, 1965

Acrylic on canvas

The Phillips Collection, The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions and funds given by Gifford Phillips, 2001

In 1952, Helen Frankenthaler burst onto the scene with her groundbreaking stain paintings made by pouring thinned oil paint on raw, unprimed canvases on the floor. In *Canyon*, pools of crimson and orange paint float against an emerald ground, creating transparent veils of color that read as simultaneously flat and three-dimensional.

Frankenthaler and her husband, artist Robert Motherwell, acquired works by Miró for their collection, and Frankenthaler hung reproductions of his art in her studio. Miró's influence (and that of Henri Matisse) helped Frankenthaler break from Cubist structures in the 1950s. When she adopted acrylic in the 1960s—its sharper edges encouraging more defined shapes—Miró again offered a touchstone for her biomorphic forms and precisely modulated surfaces. The exchange went both ways—in the 1960s, when Miró revisited his open color grounds of the 1920s, he was encouraged by the color field paintings of Frankenthaler as well as of Mark Rothko.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Mural March 20, 1961, 1961

Oil on canvas

Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Josep Lluís Sert

Miró created this work—with its curving biomorphic forms recalling his *Constellations*—for his close friend and noted Spanish-born architect Josep Lluís Sert, who displayed it in his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Miró made the painting in gratitude for Sert's help designing and constructing his new studio in Mallorca. Completed in 1956, Miró's studio fulfilled the artist's lifelong dream to have a space large enough to create monumental works.

The two fellow Catalans met in the early 1930s, and they maintained close contact throughout their lives despite their geographic separation. Sert emigrated from Barcelona to the United States in 1939, where he established a distinguished career as dean of Harvard's graduate school of design from 1953 to 1969. Their collaborations continued over the decades, including the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence and the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona, reflecting their commitment to unifying architecture, fine arts, and the urban landscape.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Figures, Birds, 1973

Acrylic and oil on canvas

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

Spattered with smudges and drips, *Figures, Birds* demonstrates the gestural energy Miró embraced after his final trip to the US in 1968. The wide black strokes interrupt the field of white, evoking figures or the energetic movements of birds. The work's scale and fluid movement are hallmarks of the work of such American counterparts as Jackson Pollock, Joan Mitchell, and Grace Hartigan. "New York," Miró said, "helped me take stock of myself. I had to adapt myself to modernity."

Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick, New York

Joan Miró, 1947

Shadowgraph

Private Collection

Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick, New York

Joan Miró, 1947

Shadowgraph

Private Collection

Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick, New York

Joan Miró, 1947

Shadowgraph

Private Collection

Len Lye was a New Zealand-born experimental photographer and filmmaker. In 1944 he relocated to the US, where he invented a body of work known as "shadowgraphs," a form of cameraless photography, popularized in the 1920s by Man Ray, in which unique images are made through direct exposure onto photosensitive paper.

These two shadowgraphs of Miró are from Lye's series of over 40 portraits of friends, acquaintances, and artists. Lye asked his sitters to lay in a dark room on a sheet of chemically treated paper onto which he "exposed" their image by turning on the light.

Lye made the shadowgraphs of Miró in 1947 at his New York apartment. He liked to incorporate some feature with which to identify his subject. In Miró's case, the artist posed with cut-outs from etchings (seen above his head) he was working on at the Atelier 17—illustrations to accompany poet Tristan Tzara's reprint of the anthology *L'Antitête (The Anti-Head)*. The shadowgraphs remained with Miró until his death.

[ON THE MONITOR]

Len Lye

b. 1901, Christchurch, New Zealand—d. 1980, Warwick, New York

Color Cry, 1952

3 minutes, 16mm, color (Kodachrome), sound

Courtesy of the Len Lye Foundation

Digital version with the assistance of Park RoadPost Production from material preserved and made available by Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision

Free Radicals, 1958 (revised 1979)

5 minutes, 16mm (originally 35mm), black and white, sound

Courtesy of the Len Lye Foundation

Digital version by Park Road Post Production and Weta Digital Ltd from material preserved and made available by Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision

A long-time admirer of Miró, Len Lye was among the most innovative artists and filmmakers who had connections with both Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism. *Color Cry* and *Free Radicals* are two of his “direct films” from the 1950s made without the use of a camera.

Color Cry—set to blues artist Sonny Terry’s “Fox Hunt”—is one of the artist’s first experimental films realized after the artist moved to New York in 1944. Drawing on the shadowgraph method of his still photographs from 1947 (on view nearby), Lye placed patterned fabric, ribbon, and metal stencils directly on film and exposed the light-sensitive paper.

Free Radicals is one of Lye’s greatest cinematic achievements. He worked by scratching meticulously into black film, leaving behind bursts of white zig-zagging shapes. The movement of his own body was central to his method: “I wriggled my whole body to get a compressed feeling into my shoulders—trying to get a pent-up feeling of precision into the fingers, and with a sudden jump I pulled the needle through the celluloid and completed my design.” Lye set the visual sequences of *Free Radicals* to a field recording of music by the African Bagirmi tribe. His dynamic kinetic films—seen as a form of “direct painting on film”—reflected the experimental spirit of Miró and other artists he encountered in New York.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

***Self-Portrait*, 1937-60**

Oil and pencil on canvas

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

In this painting Miró reworked a self-portrait from the 1930s. His revisions continued until 1960 when he ordered a copy to be made and added his final gestures of graffiti-like scribbles within the dark contours of his abstract form.

Miró often revisited pictures long after their original conception. He explained to curator James Johnson Sweeney: “What is most interesting to me today is the material I am working with. It supplies the shock which suggests the form ... I always work on several canvases at once. I start a canvas without thought of what it may become. I put it aside after the first fire has abated. I may not look at it again for months. Then I take it out and work at it coldly like an artisan, guided strictly by rules of composition.”

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

***The Diamond Smiles at Twilight*, 1947**

Oil on canvas

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

Robert Motherwell

b. 1915, Aberdeen, Washington—d. 1991, Provincetown, Massachusetts

Concept of Woman, 1946

Crayon, watercolor, and black ink splatters on paper

The Phillips Collection, Gift of Susan and Louis Stamberg, 2014

“When Miró has a satisfactory ground, he ‘doodles’ on it with his incomparable grace and sureness, and then the picture finds its own identity and meaning in the actual act of being made.”—Robert Motherwell

Active as a painter, editor, and writer from the 1940s, Robert Motherwell was a major champion of Miró’s work in America. He advanced the scholarship on Miró, publishing a translation of his 1947 interview with Francis Lee in *Possibilities*, the journal he co-edited (shown in a case in the final gallery), and writing an article titled “The Significance of Miró” in *ArtNews* in 1959.

The roughly drawn blue lines and ink splatters in *Concept of Woman* show Motherwell’s embrace of the Surrealist method of automatism he likened to a form of “doodling,” citing two of its finest practitioners, Paul Klee and Miró.

In 1945, Motherwell visited Miró’s exhibition at Pierre Matisse Gallery, which featured the *Constellations* as well as the *Barcelona* series, from which Motherwell acquired a lithograph. Two years later, Motherwell met Miró in New York, where they joined their peers in applying the “doodling” method to printmaking at Hayter’s Atelier 17.

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Figure, Bird in the Night III, 1972

Oil on canvas

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

3 Hairs in the Night II, 1972

Oil on canvas

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

Joan Miró

b. 1893, Barcelona, Spain—d. 1983, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Figure, Bird in the Night II, 1972

Oil on canvas

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, On loan from a private collection

[IN THE CASE, LEFT TO RIGHT]

**“Cottons in Town”, Vogue, April 1, 1945. Fashion shoot at the Pierre Matisse Gallery during the exhibition Joan Miró: Ceramics 1944, Tempera Paintings 1940–1941, Lithographs 1944
Facsimile**

**Leaflet of the exhibition Joan Miró: Ceramics 1944, Tempera Paintings 1940-1941, Lithographs 1944 at the Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, 1945
Printed paper, Chinese ink, watercolor and graphite pencil (Facsimile)
Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona**

In February 1945, Miró debuted his *Constellations* series at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York. Matisse reported to Miró of its “marvelous effect” on the Americans in a letter sent along with this exhibition brochure signed by Alexander Calder, André Breton, Max Ernst, Ramona Longás, Josep Lluís Sert, and Laura and James Johnson Sweeney, among others.

**Joan Miró
List of things to do and see in New York, c. 1961
(Facsimile)
Successió Miró Archive**

In preparation for his 1961 visit to the US, Miró made a “bucket list” for his fourth excursion to the United States, which included visits to Betty Parsons Gallery, Kootz Gallery, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Greenwich Village.

**Robert Motherwell; Harold Rosenberg; Pierre Chareau; John Cage
Possibilities 1, winter 1947-48 (Facsimile)
Courtesy of Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, and Matthew Gale**

The influential avant-garde magazine *Problems of Contemporary Art: Possibilities* was published in the winter of 1947 and was meant to serve as a platform for the emerging Abstract Expressionist movement. It included statements by Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, William Baziotés, and an interview with Miró where he admired the “energy and vitality of American painters.”

**Louise Bourgeois
“Native Talent” Published in *ArtForum International*, January 1994
The Phillips Collection**

**Society note about Miró in “The Lyons Den,”
New York Post, December 5, 1961 (Facsimile)
Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró a Mallorca**

During Miró’s 1961 visit to the US, he was taken to the Peppermint Lounge where he experienced The Twist dance craze for the first time. Miró reported to the *New York Post* that the highlight of his stay was his visit to the New York Stock Exchange where he was greeted with the tickertape reading “Welcome Miró.”

**Joan Miró and Pilar Juncosa in New York, 1947
Photograph (Facsimile)**

Private Collection

**Article from the collection of Helen Frankenthaler and Robert Motherwell
Vogue, January 15, 1964 (Facsimile)
Courtesy of Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona**

Robert Motherwell and Helen Frankenthaler's collection included Miró's sculpture *Woman* (on view in the exhibition), a 12th dynasty Egyptian headrest, a Baga mask from Africa, and a 17th-century Madras temple carving, as well as works by Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, David Smith, Edgar Degas, Auguste Rodin, and Henri Matisse.

**Joan Miró
Note, 1964
(Facsimile)
Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona**

Miró writes, "Various colors vertically thrown onto white surface (like Sam Francis)."

EXHIBITION SUPPORT STATEMENT

Miró and the United States

March 21–July 5, 2026

Northern Trust is honored to support this extraordinary exhibition celebrating the visionary work of Joan Miró, one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, and the transformative exchanges he had with a young generation of American abstract painters. Miro's imagination, bold use of color, and groundbreaking approach to form continue to inspire audiences around the world.

At Northern Trust we believe in the power of art to spark curiosity, ignite creativity, and foster a deeper understanding of our shared human experience. The exhibition highlights the artist's achievements in the United States, where collaboration with his contemporaries resulted in a mutually enriching creative vitality in the international vanguard art circles. Miro's collaborative approach is a value that resonates deeply with our own. As a leading financial institution, our mission is to be our clients' most trusted financial partner. We understand that achieving this goal requires more than just providing financial services; it necessitates a commitment to interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration. By working closely with outside advisors, we help our clients realize the full potential of their wealth, offering tailored solutions that address their unique needs and aspirations.

Our investment in the arts is an extension of this collaborative ethos. Giving back to the communities where we live and work has been an important part of Northern Trust since our founding in 1889. Over the last decade, Northern Trust has donated over \$240 million to charitable causes worldwide—approximately \$85 million of which has been designated to arts and cultural institutions, exhibitions, and education. We recognize the vital importance of art creation and the celebration of artistic achievement.

We are proud to continue our commitment here in Washington, DC, as the presenting sponsor of *Miró and the United States* at The Phillips Collection. We are honored to join The Phillips Collection and the Fundació Joan Miró in bringing this exhibition to life and offering visitors an opportunity to engage with the legacy of an artist whose work transcends time, culture, and convention.

Tami Conetta
President, Greater Washington, DC
Northern Trust Wealth Management



PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Miró and the United States

March 21–July 5, 2026

The information below was updated March 2026 and is subject to change.

Please visit PhillipsCollection.org/events for the most up-to-date programming information.

PROGRAMS

[Keynote Conversation: Miró, Calder, and Modern Art](#)

[March 19, 2026, 6–8:30 pm](#)

Marking the opening of [Miró and the United States](#), this historic evening features a conversation between art historian Joan Punyet Miró, grandson of Joan Miró, and Alexander S.C. Rower, grandson of Alexander Calder, moderated by The Phillips Collection's Chief Curator, Elsa Smithgall. Together, they will explore the relationship between Miró and Calder, their lasting influence on one another, and the enduring legacy of their work in shaping modern art. This event takes place during Third Thursdays—explore the galleries with free admission from 5–8 pm. *Free, reservation required.*

[Phillips after 5: Miró by Night](#)

[April 2, 2026, 5–8:30 pm](#)

Celebrate the night, the art, and the magic of Miró under the moon with music, art activities, drinks, and more. *\$20, free for members, reservation required.*

[Film Screening: Around and About Miró](#)

[April 16, 2026, 6:30 pm](#)

Join us for a rare screening of Thomas Bouchard's *Around and About Miró* (1955). This film, from the *Harvard Film Archive*, offers an intimate look at Joan Miró, tracing the ideas and influences that shaped his work. Through archival footage, it situates Miró within the artistic world surrounding him. This event takes place during Third Thursdays—explore the galleries with free admission from 5–8 pm. *Free, registration required.*

[Living Room: The Black Surrealist Movement with Dr. Tiffany Barber](#)

[April 24, 2026, 12–1 pm](#)

Dr. Tiffany Barber, scholar, curator, and leading voice on contemporary art and Black surrealism, talks about her research on the New Black Surrealist movement. *Free, registration required.*

[Panel Discussion: Miró and the United States](#)

[May 21, 2026, 6:30 pm](#)

Join us for a panel discussion on artistic exchange, artistic influence, and historical context surrounding Joan Miró's work. Featuring Katy Rogers, President & CEO, Dedalus Foundation, and Dolors Rodríguez Roig, Curator, Fundació Joan Miró, with Elsa Smithgall, Chief Curator, The Phillips Collection. This event takes place during Third Thursdays—explore the galleries with free admission from 5–8 pm. *Free, reservation required.*

[Living Room: Miró and Poetry with Paul Jaskunas](#)

[May 29, 2026, 12–1 pm](#)

Poetry helped shape Miro’s paintings. Author and poet Paul Jaskunas discusses the dynamic relationship between poetry and painting, and the ways they inspire each other. *Free, reservation required.*

[The Phillips Plays: Abstract Collage](#)

[June 13, 2026, 12–1 pm](#)

Explore the colors, lines, and shapes of [Miró and the United States](#). Imagine if you could travel inside these artworks! What or whom might you find there? We’ll take a closer look at the work of Joan Miró and his American contemporaries and create abstract collages. In addition to exploring art materials and methods in the studio, families may enjoy the carpeted, creative-play area with blocks, books, toys, and games. *Included with general admission; free for members.*

Spotlight Talks

Thursday–Sunday, 1 pm

A Phillips Educator leads a 15-20-minute Spotlight Talk on one work of art from the exhibition. *Included with general admission; free for members.*

Phillips Music

Join us for livestreams of concerts inspired by the exhibition.

April 19, 4 pm: [Miró String Quartet](#)

April 26, 4 pm: [Flamenco Vivo presents TABLAO](#)

May 10, 4 pm: [Brooklyn Rider](#)

Free, reservation required.

Member Exclusives: Tours and Member Mornings with Curators

Virtual: April 7, 9:30 am

In-Person: June 9, 9:30 am

Free, reservation required.

See the exhibition during **Phillips after 5** with music, art-making, drinks, and more (June 4, July 2, 5–8:30 pm; \$20, free for members) and **Third Thursdays** (March 19, April 16, May 21, June 18, 5–8 pm; free admission).

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

The information below was updated in March 2026 and is subject to change.

[Juried Invitational](#)

August 1–September 20, 2026

Honoring its long-standing dedication to the exhibiting, acquiring, and supporting the work of living artists in the Washington, DC, area, The Phillips Collection is proud to present a juried invitational exhibition highlighting the work of artists living and working in the region. The exhibition invites submissions of recent works across all visual arts media, including drawing, printmaking, painting, mixed media, photography, sculpture, and video.

This exhibition is organized by The Phillips Collection.

[Avery, Gottlieb & Rothko: By the Sea](#)

October 24, 2026–January 24, 2027

This exhibition will tell the story of the lifelong friendship between three towering figures in American art: Milton Avery (1885–1965), Adolph Gottlieb (1903–1974), and Mark Rothko (1903–1970), and highlight the inspiration they derived from summers in Gloucester, Massachusetts, on Cape Ann. Through approximately 75 paintings, drawings, prints, and watercolors from the 1920s to the 1960s, this exhibition will reflect for the first time the artistic exchange between these three artists, the experiences they shared, and the support they provided to each other. Many works in this exhibition have never been on public view.

This exhibition is organized by the Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, Massachusetts, in partnership with The Phillips Collection.

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