The Phillips Collection

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The Phillips Collection Presents *Beauford Delaney: So Much Love and Beauty*



Major traveling exhibition explores the artist's radiant use of color and the love, friendships, and creative communities that nourished him.

WASHINGTON, DC—The Phillips Collection presents ***Beauford Delaney: So Much Love and Beauty***, a major traveling exhibition celebrating the vision and legacy of American artist Beauford Delaney (1901–1979). Featuring over 60 works, the exhibition follows Delaney's journey from 1940s New York City through 1960s Paris, tracing his evolution from expressive cityscapes and portraits to expansive abstraction. Premiering at The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, from February 27 through May 23, 2027, the exhibition will travel to the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, TN (July 8–October 3, 2027); the Cincinnati Art Museum in Cincinnati, OH (November 5, 2027–February 6, 2028); and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, MA (March 6–May 29, 2028).

So Much Love and Beauty explores Delaney's engagement with Greenwich Village's bohemian life, his immersion in Paris's international expatriate communities, and his exuberant use of color. Love—in his art and in his relationships with fellow artists, writers, and friends—sustained the artist and carried his legacy forward.

"Duncan Phillips championed American modernists truly invested in the expressive power of color, and Beauford Delaney belongs squarely in that tradition. His color glows, his portraits breathe, and his conviction that love is a creative force feels more necessary than ever," says **Vradenburg Director and**

CEO Jonathan P. Binstock. "The Phillips is proud to organize this national tour and to introduce Delaney to wider audiences as one of the most innovative and consequential American painters of the twentieth century."

Delaney's friendships and artistic exchanges were central to his practice and his understanding of love as a source of shared connection and humanity. "Love drove Delaney. He was a lover of art, jazz, and people. He forged deep relationships that influenced his work and provided support," says **Adrienne L. Childs, Senior Consulting Curator at The Phillips Collection**. "For Delaney, love was nourishment and transcendence. His glowing colors and vast forms give visual expression to these ideas and feelings."

Delaney's career intersected with defining developments in transatlantic modernism, including the Harlem Renaissance, European Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, as well as abstract movements in postwar Paris. In Greenwich Village, he engaged with modernist circles around Alfred Stieglitz and artists including John Marin, Arthur Dove, and Stuart Davis, artists featured prominently in the Phillips's collection. Also influenced by painters such as Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet, Delaney developed a distinctive approach to color and form. After moving to Paris in 1953, his work moved increasingly toward abstraction. Portraiture remained central to his practice, as he conveyed his sitters' individuality with the same sensitivity to color and feeling that animated his abstract paintings.

Delaney's lifelong friendship with writer and activist James Baldwin was particularly significant. In 1964, Baldwin wrote an introduction to Delaney's first retrospective at Galerie Lambert in Paris, describing the artist as a "lover." As Baldwin wrote, "I do know that great art can only be created out of love, and that no greater lover has ever held a brush." Delaney's own writings similarly describe love as a glowing, boundless consciousness, expressed in paintings through radiant color, expansive compositions, and a sense of openness.

The exhibition unfolds across four thematic sections: "'Mad With Color': Painting the Village" explores Delaney's early engagements with modernism in Greenwich Village; "A Greater Freedom: Paris Abstraction" examines his move toward abstraction in Paris; "Up All Night: The Color Red" considers the expressive force of red in his work; and "Yellow: Light and Love" explores his use of yellow in relation to light, love, and consciousness. Delaney's paintings appear alongside archival materials and a dozen works by artists who inspired him, including Claude Monet and Stuart Davis, as well as friends and contemporaries such as Lawrence Calcagno, Sam Francis, and Ed Clark.

A highlight is *Portrait of a Young Man (Peter Eyre)* (c. 1960), a recent acquisition by The Phillips Collection. The portrait depicts Peter Eyre, an American-born British actor and friend of James Baldwin. Aglow with color, its sensitive rendering reveals the interplay between portraiture and abstraction in Delaney's work. Presented alongside portraits of Baldwin and other sitters, it reveals how Delaney translated personal connections into artistic expression.

Despite his accomplishments, Delaney struggled financially, especially as his mental health deteriorated in his later years, and he died in Paris in 1979. Over time, friends and family have helped preserve his work and sustain his legacy. *Beauford Delaney: So Much Love and Beauty* reflects on one of the most important and endearing artists of the twentieth century who was propelled and sustained by the power of love and the pursuit of beauty.

VENUE DATES
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Frist Art Museum, Nashville, TN: July 8–October 3, 2027
Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH: November 5, 2027–February 6, 2028
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA: March 6–May 29, 2028

EXHIBITION SUPPORT
The exhibition is organized by The Phillips Collection.

Curated by Adrienne L. Childs, Senior Consulting Curator, The Phillips Collection.

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EXHIBITION CATALOGUE
The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated volume of the same title, published by Rizzoli Electa and edited by Adrienne L. Childs, Senior Consulting Curator at The Phillips Collection. The publication features four newly commissioned interpretive essays by Childs, the exhibition curator; Mary Campbell, Associate Professor of American Art History at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Levi Prombaum, Postdoctoral Art History Fellow at Hebrew University, Jerusalem; and James Smalls, Professor of Visual Arts, Art History and Museum Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The volume includes a foreword by Jonathan P. Binstock, Vradenburg Director and CEO of The Phillips Collection, and a preface by Richard J. Powell, Distinguished John Spencer Bassett Professor of Art and Art History at Duke University. Poems by Cid Corman, Arlene Keizer, and Jack Micheline pay homage to Delaney as both a visual poet and a muse.

IMAGE GALLERY:
High-resolution press images are available upon request. Please contact Lauryn Cantrell, lcantrell@phillipscollection.org.

IMAGES: Beauford Delaney, *Moving Sunlight*, 1965, Oil on canvas, 25 3/4 x 21 1/2 in., Knoxville Museum of Art, 2018 Beauford Delaney purchase © Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley, Esquire, Court Appointed Administrator, Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York,

NY; Beauford Delaney in his 53 rue Vercingétorix studio, Paris, 1962, Beauford Delaney Papers, MS-3967, Betsey B. Creekmore Special Collections and University Archives, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Courtesy of the Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley, Esquire, Court Appointed Administrator, Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY; Beauford Delaney, *James Baldwin*, c. 1945–50, Oil on canvas board, 24 x 18 in. Collection of halley k harrisburg and Michael Rosenfeld, New York © Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley, Esquire, Court Appointed Administrator, Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY.

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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