

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?



Deborah Butterfield American, b. 1949
Woodrow 1988
bronze
99 x 105 x 74 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Gift of Harriet and Edson W. Spencer, 1988

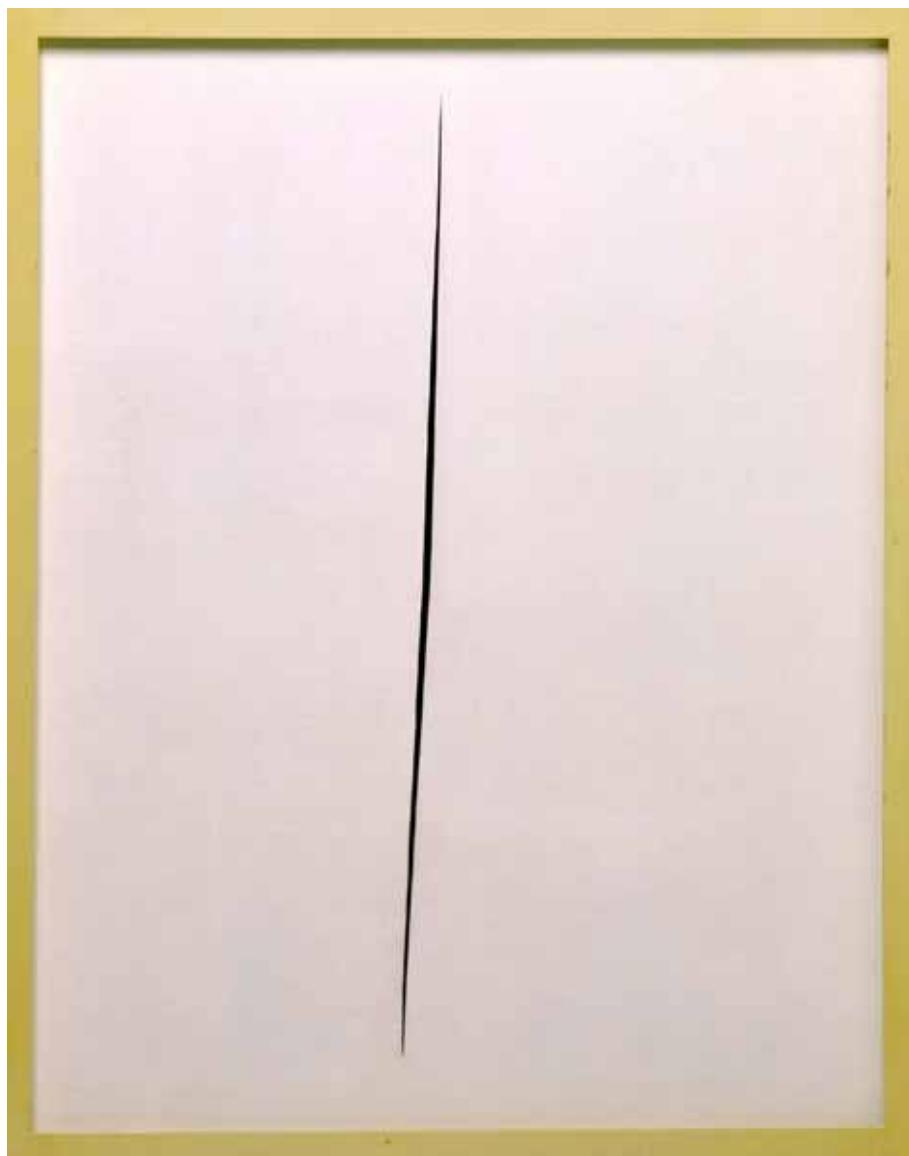
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Deborah Butterfield, *Woodrow* 1988

"In the 1970s I made horses out of real mud and sticks. They were, in part, meant to reflect how much a horse is part of his environment—I combined the figure and the ground." —Deborah Butterfield

Deborah Butterfield's remarkable interpretations of horses are constructed from such materials as crushed metal, wire, mud, straw, and fragments of wood. The sculptor has several horses of her own on a ranch in Montana, where she studies their movements and form carefully. Butterfield's sculptures are portraits of individual animals. For *Woodrow*, the artist took a selection of sticks, tree branches, and bark that she cast in bronze, then assembled and welded the pieces together into the form of a horse. Even though Butterfield's sculpture is made of many fragments, its spare and elegant structure is very lifelike. *Woodrow* blends easily with the natural setting of the Garden because the artist patinated (colored) the bronze branches and twigs, making them look like natural wood.

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?



Lucio Fontana Italian, 1899–1968
Concetto Spaziale—Attesa
(*Spatial Concept—Expectation*) 1964–1965
tempera on canvas, lacquered wood
57 1/2 x 45 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1998

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Lucio Fontana, *Concetto Spaziale—Attesa*
(*Spatial Concept—Expectation*) 1964–1965

Lucio Fontana, an Italian artist who lived and worked in Argentina, was one of the first avant-garde artists to understand art as gesture or performance. His first solo exhibition at an American museum was held at the Walker in 1966, where a critic wrote in the Minneapolis Star that "Fontana gives his works a feeling of space by breaking the surface with perforations, punctures, 'nervous' slits, 'quiet and dramatic' slashes, or 'fluttery' holes." The technique, which Fontana named Spazialismo, was conceived in 1949 when he punctured a thinly painted monochromatic canvas with a knife, exploding the definition—or at least the conventional space—of art. This act challenged the entire history of Western easel painting and led him to the understanding that painting was no longer about illusion contained within the dimensions of a canvas but a complex blend of form, color, architectural space, gesture, and light.

Fontana was completely committed to abstraction, publishing in 1946 his famous "White Manifesto," which expanded on ideas from another Italian movement, Futurism, about the role of science and technology in new art forms. In this manifesto he wrote about "the free development of color and form in real space to create an art that would transcend the area of the canvas to become an integral part of architecture."

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?



Rebecca Horn German, b. 1944
The Little Painting School Performs a Waterfall 1988
metal rods, aluminum, sable brushes,
electric motor, acrylic on canvas
228 x 143 x 95 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1989

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?

Rebecca Horn, *The Little Painting School Performs a Waterfall* 1988

"The machine is a substitute for eternal life, because it lasts forever." —Rebecca Horn, 1993

With major works in film, video, performance, sculpture, and installation, Rebecca Horn is creating a new medium where many actions and processes intersect. The core theme in her varied works is the human body and its relationship to machines and nature. Her work in performance art started with the blending of sculpture and performance through the use of wearable machines such as finger and arm extensions, full body-sized feathered wings, and a face mask covered with sharpened pencils for drawing. Many of her works take the form of kinetic machines that perform simple repetitive actions with the assistance of electric motors.

Horn creates a machine to mimic the human act of painting in *The Little Painting School Performs a Waterfall*. Thirteen feet above the floor on a gallery wall, three fan-shaped paint brushes mounted on flexible metal arms slowly flutter down into cups filled with blue and green acrylic paint. After a few seconds of immersion they snap backward, spattering paint onto the wall, the ceiling, the floor, and onto canvases projected from the wall below. The brushes immediately resume their descent, and the cycle is repeated until each canvas is covered in paint. This kinetic work encourages reflection on our modern day estrangement from nature, as the waterfall presented is not real, and the "school" that painted it is three mechanical brushes rather than the hand of an artist. No physical trace of a human being or nature can be found.

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?



Gabriel Orozco Mexican, b. 1962
Piedra que cede (Yielding Stone) 1992
plasticine, debris
14 1/2 x 15 1/2 x 16 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1996

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?

Gabriel Orozco, *Piedra que cede (Yielding Stone)* 1992

Gabriel Orozco believes that “very simple gestures and actions” can transform any experience, even the most mundane, into a work of art. These actions often result in objects that either cease to exist or change over time. In this way, Orozco challenges the accepted definitions of art and artistic practices. The vast majority of his work, which varies broadly in media, results from slight interventions in or interactions with his immediate environment, whether a supermarket, a beach, the streets of a rural village, or an urban landscape.

To make *Piedra que cede (Yielding Stone)*, Orozco shaped nearly 150 pounds of plasticine (equal approximately to his own body weight) into a ball and pushed it through the streets of New York City. In the process, dirt and detritus were embedded in the surface of this malleable material. Orozco references many art-making traditions in this work: the recycling of ordinary materials, exploration of art spaces beyond the gallery or museum, and the engagement of the artist’s own body in performance art.

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Nam June Paik Korean-American, b. 1932

TV Cello 1971

video tubes, TV chassis, plexiglass boxes, electronics, wiring, wood base, fan, stool, photograph

dimensions variable

Formerly the collection of Otto Piene and Elizabeth Goldring, Massachusetts

Collection Walker Art Center

T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1992

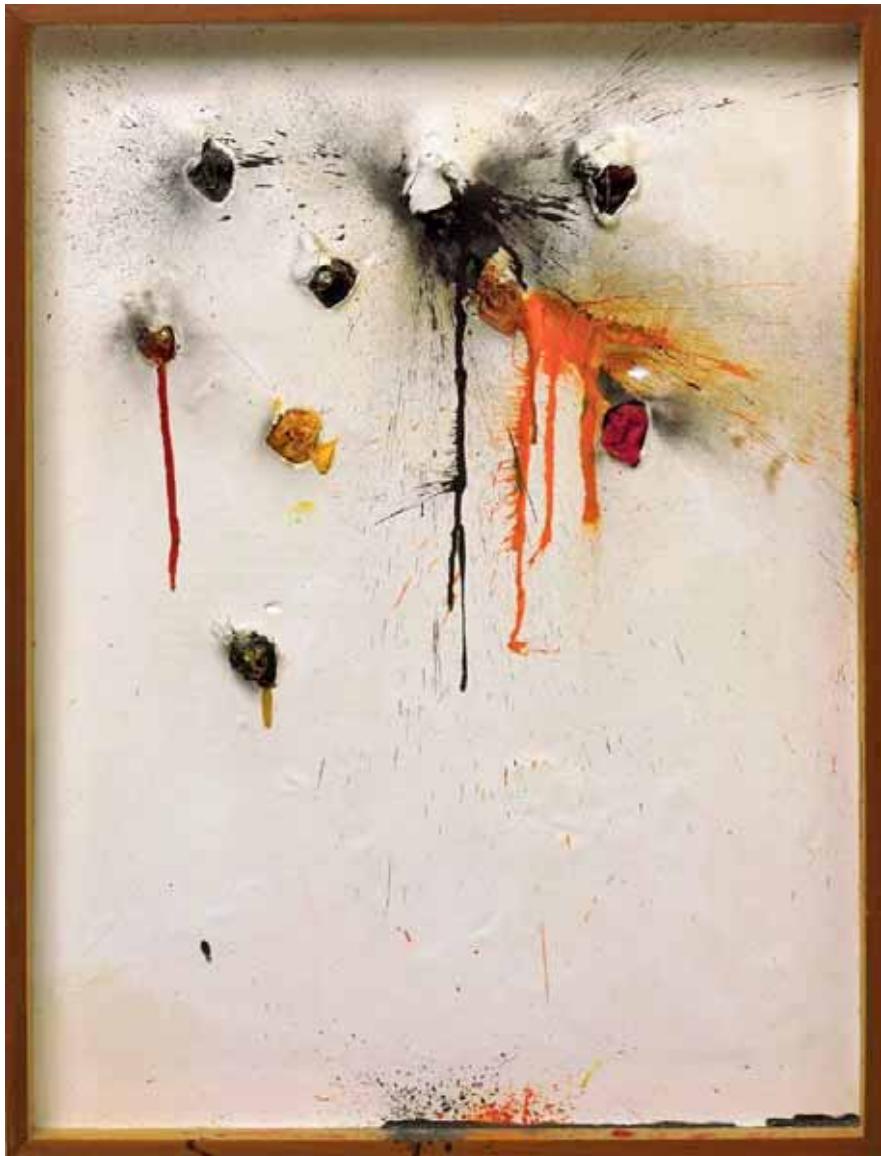
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Nam June Paik, *TV Cello* 1971

"[*TV Cello* is] the first real innovation in cello design since 1600." —Charlotte Moorman

Since the early 1960s, Nam June Paik has explored the potential of television as an art object and an expressive medium. *TV Cello* is one of several objects Paik designed to be used by the late avant-garde cellist Charlotte Moorman (1933–1991). The three televisions in this work originally displayed three images: a direct feed of the immediate performance, a video collage of other cellists, and an intercepted broadcast television feed. As Moorman played this one-stringed cello with a regulation bow, she also created a series of electronic sounds, transforming the television into a musical instrument. When *TV Cello* was acquired by the Walker Art Center in 1992, Paik created new video images for the piece by combining existing footage of Moorman with excerpts from his video work *Global Groove* (1973).

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?



Niki de Saint Phalle French, 1930–2002
Untitled from Edition Mat 64 1964
plaster, paint, plastic, wood
28 3/8 x 21 5/16 x 2 13/16 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Nash, 1966

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?

Niki de Saint Phalle, *Untitled from Edition Mat 64* 1964

Niki de Saint Phalle was part of a movement in Europe called Nouveau Réalisme (New Realism) that included artists Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, and others. The Nouveaux Réalistes favored the grittiness of everyday life over the elegant simplicity of 1950s abstraction. In 1960, they signed a manifesto calling for "new approaches to the perception of the real."

That same year, inspired by a child's dart game, de Saint Phalle invented a provocative technique for creating her paintings. She attached bags of paint to the canvases and shot them with a .22 caliber rifle. The impact of the bullets released the paint, which splattered and ripped across the surface in unpredictable ways. She used this method to create numerous works during the 1960s, often before an audience of invited guests who were encouraged to take part in the shooting.

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?



George Segal American, 1924–2000

The Diner 1964–1966

plaster, wood, chrome, laminated plastic, Masonite, fluorescent lamp, glass, paper
93 3/4 x 144 1/4 x 96 in.

Collection Walker Art Center

Gift of the T. B. Walker Foundation, 1966

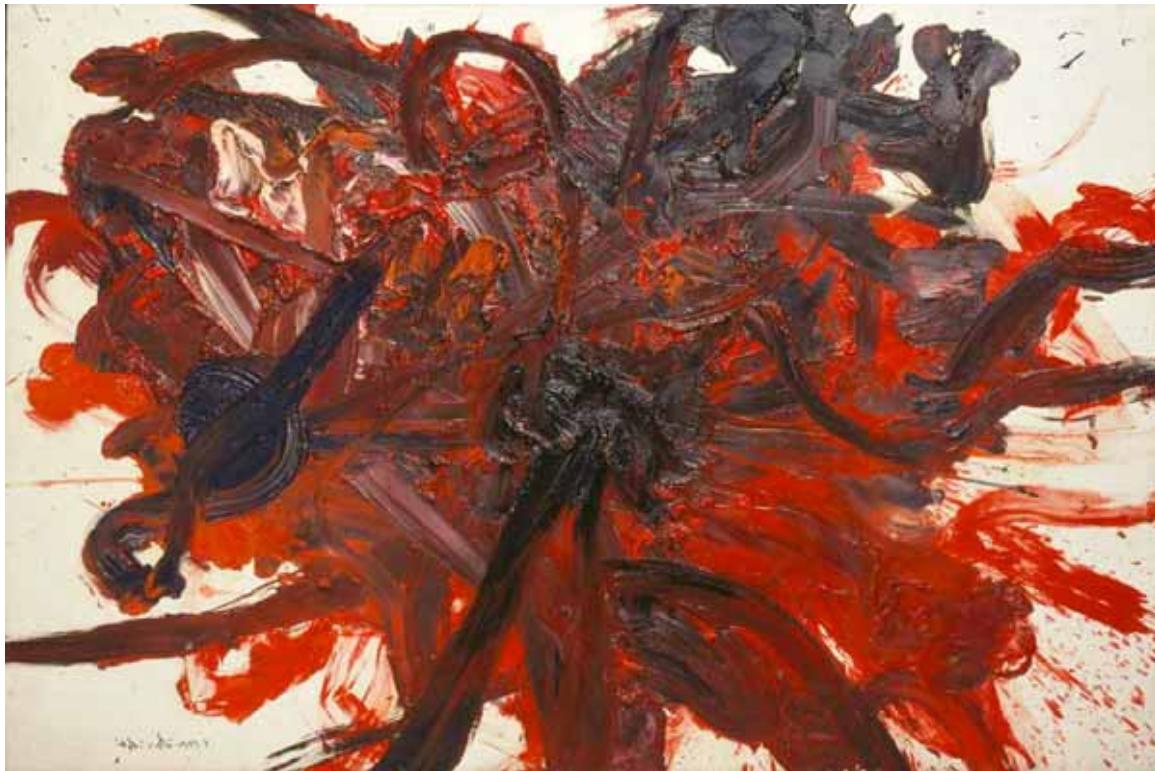
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George Segal, *The Diner* 1964–1966

George Segal is known for his sculptures of people placed in different scenes. His works include figures in a gas station, an elevator, standing in front of a mirror, and in this case, sitting at a diner counter. The artist called these types of artworks “situation sculptures.” To make the figures, Segal wrapped bandages soaked in plaster around the bodies of his friends or models. When the bandages had dried and hardened, he carefully cut them off and reassembled the cast of the body. Then he combined these human figures with found objects to create different scenes.

The Diner is a life-size sculpture that shows two people at a counter—a customer and a server. The found objects Segal included came from a diner in New Jersey that had closed. The artist was also inspired by his memories of stopping at this type of restaurant during his late-night drives home to New Jersey after visiting art galleries in New York City.

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?



Kazuo Shiraga Japanese, b. 1924

Untitled 1959

oil on canvas

70 7/8 x 110 in.

Collection Walker Art Center

T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1998

Is Art An Object or Is It A Process?

Kazuo Shiraga, *Untitled* 1959

Kazuo Shiraga is a member of the avant-garde movement in Japan known as the Gutai Art Association. Established in the summer of 1954, the group sought to create a new art "never known until now." Gutai, which means "embodiment," has similarities to the Action Painting of New York in the 1950s, but is uniquely influenced by its own time and place—postwar Japan. Coming out of that country's surrender in World War II, Gutai practitioners desired an art free of social criticism or political implication. Their artistic process combined action and performance with painting. Unlike Happenings in Europe and America, Gutai events were meant to result in the creation of sculptures and paintings.

During the first Gutai exhibition in 1955, Shiraga dove into a pile of mud and wrestled, kicked, and thrashed the clay mound to create an artwork sculpted by physical action. In this painting, Shiraga used his body as a tool—this time a large paint brush. Swinging from a hanging rope, he used his bare feet to apply paint onto a canvas on the floor. The finished work depicts his random spins, swirls, and slips.