



Lyonel Feininger American, 1871–1956
Barfüsserkirche II (Church of the Minorites II) 1926
oil on canvas
42 3/4 x 36 5/8 x 2 1/2 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Gift of the T. B. Walker Foundation, Gilbert M. Walker Fund, 1943

Lyonel Feininger, *Barfüsserkirche II (Church of the Minorites II)*, 1926

An American artist of German descent, Lyonel Feininger studied music in Germany, then abandoned a promising career as a violinist to become an artist. Although he turned his concentration toward the visual arts, Feininger consistently created his work with a musician's sensitivity. Paintings, he once wrote, "have to sing, must enrapture, and must not stop at portraying an episode."

Although greatly influenced by the geometric aspects of Cubism, Feininger developed his own colorful and romantic version of this style. Conceptually, he wanted to achieve a spiritual synthesis of the natural and man-made world in his paintings by depicting such subjects as architecture and human forms as prismatically colored, interpenetrating planes. In *Barfüsserkirche II (Church of the Minorites II)*, Feininger created a pictorial communion of a church (kirche) and the German Franciscan monks (Barfüsser) who reside there by depicting a harmonious composition of repeated transparent colors, shapes, and lines.

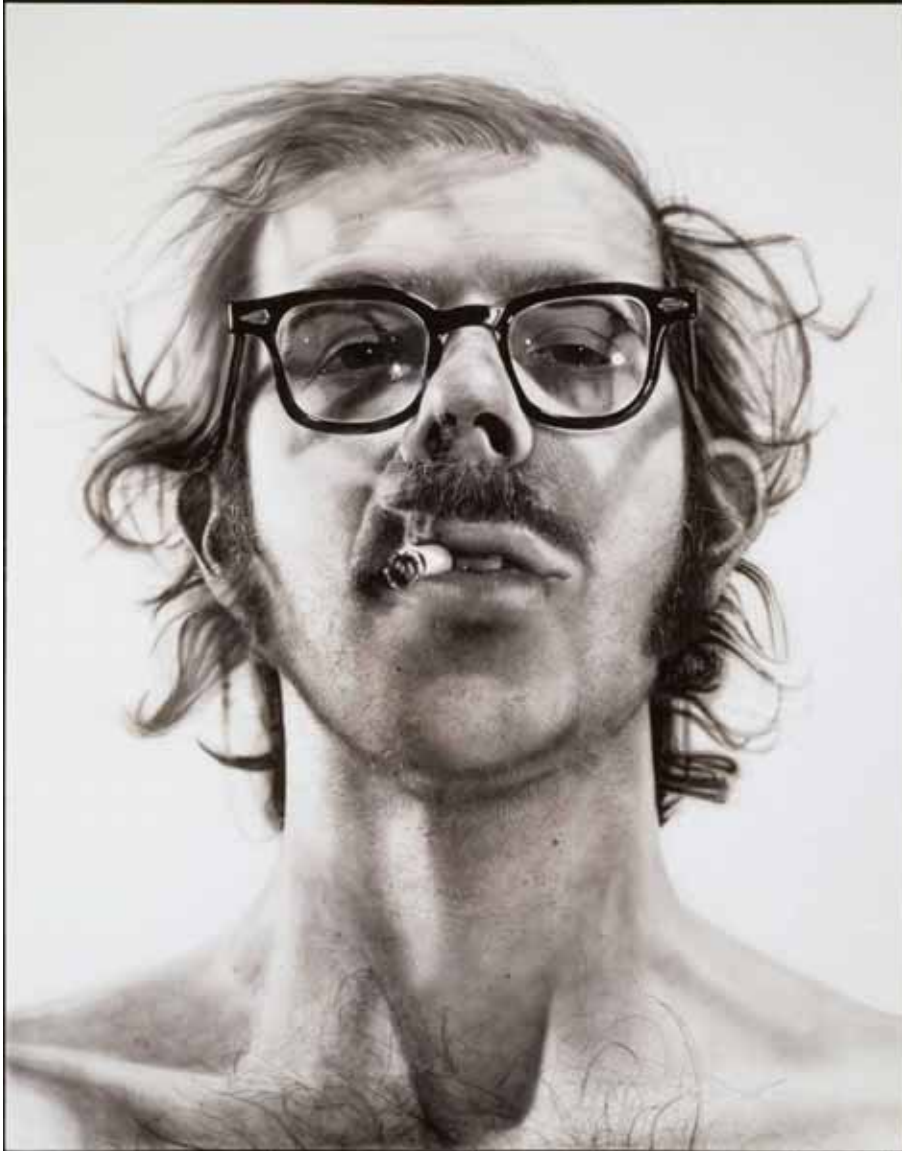


Kazuo Shiraga Japanese, b. 1924
Untitled 1959
oil on canvas
70 7/8 x 110 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1998

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.



Chuck Close American, b. 1940
Big Self-Portrait 1967–1968
acrylic on canvas
107 1/2 x 83 1/2 x 2 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Art Center Acquisition Fund, 1969

Chuck Close, *Big Self-Portrait* 1967–1968

"I am not trying to make facsimiles of photographs. Neither am I interested in the icon of the head as a total image. I don't want the viewer to see the whole head at once and assume that that's the most important aspect of my painting. I am not making Pop personality posters like the ones they sell in the Village. That's why I choose to do portraits of my friends—individuals that most people will not recognize. I don't want the viewer to recognize the head of Castro and think he has understood my work."

—Chuck Close, 1970

Big Self-Portrait was the first of Close's series of monumental head-and-shoulder portraits. After taking a picture of his subject, Close makes photographic prints that he uses to transfer the images to canvas. Using a technique devised by Renaissance masters and adapted by contemporary billboard painters, Close overlays a working print with a numbered and lettered grid, and then reproduces the image block by block.

In this format the image becomes a mosaic of black, gray, and white visual information that the artist replicates by spraying a mixture of black acrylic paint and water onto the canvas with an airbrush. Specific features like the illusion of light reflecting off the hairs of his beard were achieved by scratching paint from the surface of the canvas with a razor blade.



Ellsworth Kelly American, b. 1923
Black Curve 1962
oil on canvas
42 1/8 x 34 5/8 x 1 1/16 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Edmond R. Ruben, 1995

Ellsworth Kelly, *Black Curve* 1962

"If you can turn off the mind and look at things only with your eyes, ultimately everything becomes abstract." —Ellsworth Kelly, 1992

Since very early in his career, Ellsworth Kelly's painting, prints, drawings, and sculptures have been uncompromisingly abstract. His simple compositions often consist merely of a few hard-edged shapes and pure color, bearing little apparent resemblance to the "real" world of modulated colors and irregular forms. Yet many of his works are directly related to forms from the real world. The shape of a roof against blue sky, the shadow cast by an open barn door, the folded plastic lid of a Styrofoam coffee cup—all have served as models for his works. Although it appears completely abstract, and even unemotional, Kelly's art is in fact dependent on his love of looking at what is in the world. According to the artist, "The things I'm interested in have always been there. The idea of a shadow of a natural object has always existed, like the shadow of the pyramids and the pyramids, or a rock and shadow; I'm not interested in the texture of the rock, or that it is a rock, but in the mass of it, and its shadow."



Charles Ray American, b. 1953

Unpainted Sculpture 1997

fiberglass, paint

60 x 78 x 171 in.

Collection Walker Art Center

Gift of Bruce and Martha Atwater, Ann and Barrie Birks, Dolly Fiterman, Erwin and Miriam Kelen, Larry Perlman and Linda Peterson Perlman, Harriet and Edson Spencer with additional funds from the T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1998

Charles Ray, *Unpainted Sculpture* 1997

“In contemporary art, surface is an expression of anxiety, and no one is as anxious about surface as I am.” —Charles Ray, 1998

Los Angeles–based artist Charles Ray has been altering notions of abstract sculpture since the early 1970s, often drawing from popular culture and the most basic aspects of human experience for source material. He has said of his past work that he was trying to “make something that was so abstract it became real and so real that it became abstract,” and his art tends to focus on such carefully calculated oppositions—between abstraction and representation, perceptions of the real and the ideal, sculptural form and the implication or residue of the event.

For *Unpainted Sculpture*, Ray began with the purchase of a Pontiac Grand Am (circa 1991) from a salvage auction—a place where one can buy automobiles that have been involved in accidents. The artist then completely dismantled the wrecked car and cast it piece by piece in fiberglass. In a typically painstaking process, he rebuilt it as one would a model hobby kit. Thought of another way, Ray made the original car disappear in order to create its aura. The sculpture took two years to complete.

Ray chose as his model a form made by pure chance, created by speed and impact, by the collision of form, material, space, and time. As with modernist sculpture, the piece has a sense of “volume” about it, in fact, it weighs more than the original car from which it is molded. The color—like the body-shop primer normally found underneath the high-gloss finish—lends the work a disinterested quality, a flatness and silence, despite the drama of the event that produced the original wreck.



John Currin American, b. 1962
Park City Grill 2000
oil on canvas
38 1/16 x 30 x 1 7/16 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Justin Smith Purchase Fund, 2000

John Currin, *Park City Grill* 2000

John Currin's strangely disquieting paintings are depictions of contemporary people, rendered in a style characterized by distortion and elongation that is evocative of the painters of northern Renaissance, early Mannerism, and 20th-century modernism, including Grünewald, Parmigianino, and Picasso. However, the artist turns occasionally to advertising, fashion magazine spreads, kitsch portraiture found in thrift stores, and soft-porn magazines for inspiration. He has also used his own facial features and those of his wife, sculptor Rachel Feinstein, in his portraits. *Park City Grill* is provocative yet ambiguous, ironic yet dangerously inviting. The artist argues that the best art is ultimately beyond psychology and interpretation. Currin has spoken of visual clichés as a form of recurring truth, and considers that aspect of his work to be an end in itself.



Alberto Giacometti Swiss, 1901–1966
Buste de Diego (Bust of Diego) circa 1954
bronze
15 1/6 x 13 1/8 x 7 5/16 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Gift of the T. B. Walker Foundation, 1957

Alberto Giacometti, *Buste de Diego (Bust of Diego)* circa 1954

“Art interests me very much, but truth interests me infinitely more.” —Alberto Giacometti

Born into a family of artists, Alberto Giacometti began his study of drawing, painting, and sculpting at a young age. His father, a well-known painter, sent him to study in Geneva, Italy, and then Paris, where after several years he left the academy to explore nontraditional ideas and forms. He was drawn to the Surrealist experimentation with the human subconscious as expression of art. Influenced by these ideas, Giacometti began working from memory and imagination rather than copying from nature. By this time, sculpture had emerged as his main artistic passion, although he never stopped drawing and made a name for himself as a superior draftsman.

Buste de Diego (Bust of Diego) is a portrait of the artist's brother, who remained Giacometti's main model, studio assistant, and close friend throughout his artistic career. This bust of Diego demonstrates Giacometti's interest in distorting the scale of the human figure—the narrow head sits on a spindly neck attached to the massive broad shoulders that weigh the sculpture down. This elongated figure standing alone in the space evokes an atmosphere of isolation or loneliness, a feeling common in Giacometti's sculptures, which have been interpreted as symbols of human spiritual alienation.



Donald Judd American, 1928–1994
untitled 1969/1982
anodized aluminum
10 boxes; 6 x 27 x 24 in. each
Collection Walker Art Center
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edmond R. Ruben, 1981

Donald Judd, *untitled* 1969/1982

"Abstract art has its own integrity not someone else's 'integrations' with something else. Any combining mixing, adding, diluting, exploiting, vulgarizing, popularizing abstract art deprives art of its essence and depraves the artist's artistic consciousness. Art is free, but it is not a free-for-all." —Donald Judd, 1965

One of the foremost practitioners of Minimal Art, Donald Judd is best known for his sleek, boxlike constructions made of industrial materials such as aluminum, plywood, sheet metal, and plexiglass. Through these works, he sought to create a depersonalized art in which the exploration of space, scale, and materials served as an end, rather than as a metaphor for human experience. Emphatically concerned with pure forms, Judd's works become statements about proportion and rhythm as well as three-dimensional space. His stacked boxes seem to come directly out of the wall rather than projecting from a backing surface. This creates the impression that the artwork shares the observer's space instead of being set apart like a sculpture on a pedestal.



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

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.



Stanton Macdonald-Wright American, 1890–1973

Synchromy in Green and Orange 1916

oil on canvas

34 1/8 x 30 1/8 in.

Collection Walker Art Center

Gift of the T. B. Walker Foundation, Hudson D. Walker Collection, 1953

Stanton Macdonald-Wright, *Synchromy in Green and Orange* 1916

"[Synchromy] is to color what symphony is to sound, it means everything is done with color." —Stanton Macdonald-Wright

Stanton Macdonald-Wright moved to Paris in 1906 during the formative years of Cubism. Though Cubism was the strongest influence on his style of painting, he opposed its linear and monochromatic tendencies. As a result, Macdonald-Wright and Morgan Russell (another American artist living in Paris) developed a theory of painting they called Synchromism. Their goal was to make color the subject of their paintings in the same way that musical tone is the subject of symphonic compositions. They also incorporated ideas from the latest scientific theories of color "behavior." In this work, orange, green, and purple—the three secondaries on the color wheel—form a "dominant chord" that produces, according to Synchromist theory, a feeling of harmony in the viewer.



Georgia O'Keeffe American, 1887–1986
Lake George Barns 1926
oil on canvas
21 3/16 x 32 1/16 x 1 15/16 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Gift of the T. B. Walker Foundation, 1954

Georgia O'Keeffe, *Lake George Barns* 1926

"There was a fine old barn at the Lake George farmhouse. You could see it from the kitchen window or from the window of Stieglitz's little sitting room. With much effort I painted a picture of the front part of the barn. . . after that I painted the side where all the paint was gone with the south wind. It was weathered grey—with one broken pane in the small window." —Georgia O'Keeffe

One of the first generation of American modern painters, Georgia O'Keeffe is noted both for her intensely hued renderings of flowers and for the Southwestern landscapes painted later in her life. In the early years of her career, O'Keeffe was inspired by the cityscapes of Manhattan and the rural environment of Lake George, New York, where she spent part of each year with her husband, photographer Alfred Stieglitz. This painting is one of many she made of a weathered barn on the Stieglitz family estate. The barn's austere, geometric forms are unusual when compared to the voluptuous flowers she was painting at the same time, but the characteristic sensuality of her work comes through in the soft light and the palette of moody grays and greens.



John Sloan American, 1871–1951
South Beach Bathers 1907–1908
oil on canvas
31 13/16 x 36 x 1 1/4 in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Gift of the T. B. Walker Foundation, Gilbert M. Walker Fund, 1948

John Sloan, *South Beach Bathers* 1907–1908

“This Staten Island resort had few visitors compared to Coney Island, and gave better opportunity for observation of individual behavior.” —John Sloan

Along with fellow members of the early 20th-century group of American painters known as the Ashcan School, John Sloan was interested in the life of New York’s streets and gathering spots. These artists sought to present themes that depicted their surroundings, such as the creation of an urban ethnic culture in New York’s immigrant neighborhoods, the glaring contrasts between wealth and poverty, the glitter of show business, the bustle of city streets, and the ferment over the proper roles of men and women.

Sloan first visited South Beach, an amusement park on Staten Island that attracted primarily working-class clientele, on June 23, 1907. Like many of his New York-themed works, his depiction of South Beach suggests a story that begins when one person looks at another. In *South Beach Bathers* a woman adjusting her hat is eyed appreciatively from the side and behind by men lounging on the sand. Women play several roles at once in Sloan’s art: beyond being objects of desire, they record the new independence of modern New Yorkers, while also presenting a variation on old ideals of beauty in art.