



**Post-War and Contemporary Art
Opening Jan. 31, 2015
Wall Text & Extended Labels**

**Huntington Gallery & Hallway
Post-War Art**

Andrea Fraser

American, born 1965

May I Help You?, 1991

Videotape transferred to DVD

Running time: 20 minutes

Gift of Andrea Miller-Keller, 1995.6.1

Set in a New York gallery exhibition of Allan McCollum's 100 Plaster Surrogates, Fraser's video *May I Help You?* presents numerous interpretations of the work. An actress performs the role of a gallery salesperson, varying her tone and body language to reflect her wideranging statements. Quotations from dealers and collectors, as well as individuals outside of the art world, humorously question the authority that artists, collectors, and art institutions claim over art interpretation. Fraser, as a young art student, assisted McCollum in the painting of two casting runs of his *Plaster Surrogates* in 1984 and 1985. Andrea Fraser was the featured artist of *Matrix 114* in 1991.

Allan McCollum

American, born 1944

Ten Surrogate Paintings, 1980–81

Acrylic on wood and museum board

Gift of Hadassah Brooks-Morgan, 2013.8.1

With traditional white mats and various colored frames, McCollum's series of "Surrogate Paintings" mimics the look of traditional artwork. However, as "standins" for paintings, these works present nothing more than empty black fields in the place of images. Each surrogate is unique in size and, upon close inspection, reveals the hand of the artist in the brushstrokes. And yet, by referring to them as surrogates with no identifiable imagery, the artist pokes fun at any attempt to find difference in their sameness.

Franz Kline

American, 1910–1962

Painting, 1952

Oil on canvas

Gift of Walter K. Gutman, 1959.250

Kline used commercial house paint from a gallon can and a standard broadbristle brush to create a composition full of energy and spontaneity. Although reminiscent of Asian calligraphy, the brashness and verve of the grandiose brushstrokes are uniquely American. Kline executed this painting over the summer of 1952, which he spent as a lecturer at Black Mountain College, the legendary experimental art school in the hills of North Carolina.

Adolph Gottlieb

American, 1903–1974

Under and Over, 1959

Oil on canvas

Gift of Susan Morse Hilles, 1961.5

Gottlieb's *Under and Over* is an exploration of relationships. While the slightly blurred, rich red sphere outlined in a bright, hazy white suggests a celestial object, such as a planet or sun, the thickly painted black mass below resembles terrain. Taken together, along with the brown background, they imply a strange and dramatic landscape.

Robert Motherwell
American, 1915–1991

The Blue Painting Lesson: A Study in Painterly Logic (#1–5), 1973

Acrylic and charcoal on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1995.4.1a-e

Motherwell had a long-standing interest in the color blue as a seasonal resident of the Provincetown art colony, an oceanside community. He began each canvas with a monochrome field of blue, then drew a minimal black-line shape, or “window,” from the top edge of each canvas. Working in a logical manner from left to right, he cancelled out part of the window image on each painting in an effort to arrive at the purest expression of his feelings.

Willem de Kooning

American, born The Netherlands, 1904–1997

Montauk 1, 1969

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1973.46

De Kooning’s broad brushstrokes of thickly applied paint, speckled with drips, evoke the physical action that took place in front of the canvas. The artist frequently portrayed women, and the vigorous smear of pink in the center of this painting suggests such a figure. The fleshy tones become another element in the network of swells and ridges that convey the fluid movement of the sand, sea, and hot sun at Montauk on the eastern tip of Long Island, NY. Many Abstract Expressionist painters, including de Kooning, had studios there. Willem de Kooning was the featured artist of matrix 15 in 1975–76.

Helen Frankenthaler

American, 1928–2011

Sea Picture with Black, 1959

Oil on canvas

Gift of Susan Morse Hilles, 1961.7

By spilling highly thinned oil pigments onto raw cotton duck canvas, Frankenthaler stained the fabric with color, introducing the transparent planes and layers of paint associated only with watercolor. In *Sea Picture with Black*, Frankenthaler evokes a sense of the ocean and surf through her choice of colors and lively composition.

Richard Anuszkiewicz

American, born 1930

Summer Sunset Reds, 1982

Acrylic on canvas

Given in honor of Millard H. Pryor, Jr. by a group of his friends, 1983.47

As an Op artist, Anuszkiewicz experimented with complementary colors (or opposing colors) such as red and green, which create optical illusions when combined. Here, the stripes of red and green in varying widths, punctuated by blues, create a sense of forward and backward movement. Moreover, the green activates the red, making it glow like a summer sunset, complete with surprising and shimmering colors.

Kenneth Noland

American, 1924–2010

Stack, 1965

Acrylic on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, 1979.220

Noland boldly rotated this square canvas forty-five degrees and applied vibrant bands of color that simultaneously follow and thrust against the margins of the picture plane. By turning the canvas, he created a fresh format on which to stain evenly-spaced stripes of acrylic paint in a V-shaped pattern. While remaining within the limited confines of a square ground, the pattern activates the canvas. Noland also applied a dot of blue paint at the upper right to enliven an otherwise rigid composition.

Bridget Riley**English, born 1931****Shuttle 11, 1964****Emulsion on panel****The Alexander A. Goldfarb Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund and The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1994.5.1**

Almost dizzying in effect, Riley's Shuttle 11 challenges the viewer's perception in this Op Art painting (short for "optical art"). She carefully constructs compositions of repeating lines, with slight variations that suggest movement. The rounded shape of the panel heightens the illusion of a repeated ripple moving in waves across the surface and swelling in the center.

Victor Vasarely**French, born Hungary, 1908 –1997****Ixion, 1956****Oil on canvas****Gift of Susan Morse Hilles, 1992.13**

Victor Vasarely, often considered the first Op artist, began exploring visual perception in his art in the mid-1950s. Ixion, with its limited black and white palette and its bipartite graph structure, typifies these early works. Varying between a black grid on a white ground and a white grid on a black ground, the surface alternately pushes towards the viewer and pulls away. With no real unifying directional thrust, the overall surface appears to pulse within a fairly shallow depth.

Josef Albers**American, born Germany, 1888 –1976****Homage to the Square: Yellow Echo, 1957****Oil on composition board****Gift of Susan Morse Hilles, 1962.11**

Like the different qualities of light emanating from the sun and a light bulb, the vibrancy of the center yellow square leaves the outer yellow square dull by comparison. Such visual effects were central to Albers's series "Homage to the Square," created between 1950 and 1975.

Anni Albers**American, born Germany, 1899–1994****In Orbit, 1957****Wool****Bequest of Nina H. Stanley, 1990.58**

Albers, the groundbreaking textile artist, believed that any material could become fine art. To her, in weaving the wool threads carefully to create an image, the texture of the wool is the aesthetic point. The variations in the checkered pattern, suggesting two circles and a cross shape, enliven the surface and provide inspiration for the title.

Ellsworth Kelly**American, born 1923****Red Orange (Maya), 1959****Oil on canvas****Gift of Susan Morse Hilles, 1992.11**

Kelly seeks "quietness"—which to him means harmony and balance—in all his paintings. Here, squeezed onto the vertical canvas, two tomato red circles pulsate on the warm, orange ground. Neither color recedes into the background. The color combination recalls the red stone of a Latin American landscape, providing the inspiration for the title. Ellsworth Kelly was the featured artist of Matrix 1 in 1975.

John McLaughlin**American, 1898 –1976****#17, 1965****Oil on canvas****Gift of Mr. Herrick Jackson, 1976.105**

McLaughlin took inspiration from Piet Mondrian's abstract compositions (pictured below). Replacing Mondrian's use of black and white, primary colors, and grid format with a bright yellow square set evenly within white and sky blue framing elements, McLaughlin creates a perceptual space that advances and recedes by turns.

John McLaughlin
American, 1898–1976

#5, 1967

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs. Roy Wilkerson Hanna, 1968.90

McLaughlin drains away all reference to visual reality in this black and white abstract painting. The white rectangle in the center creates an optical void in which the viewer may enter a contemplative state.

Alexander Calder

American, 1898–1976

Sumac No. 11, mid-20th century

Painted metal

The Philip L. Goodwin Collection, Gift of James L. Goodwin, Henry Sage Goodwin, and Richmond L. Brown, 1958.746

Poised above the viewer, floating delicately in intricate balance, Calder's Sumac No. 11 is a kinetic sculpture that responds to air movement in the gallery space. The simplified organic forms evoke leaves, or perhaps the sumac shrub's red fruits, which grow in clusters. Calder, who is known as the inventor of the mobile, delighted in the apparent physical lightness of the metal elements in their dispersal across space.

Paul Feeley

American, 1910–1966

Hector, 1962

Oil on canvas

Gift of Jane and Tony Smith, 1967.17

Set within a serene ground of thinly painted blue, Feeley's twin red figures undulate in this controlled, symmetrical composition. A faint, light outline contains and enlivens them, almost appearing to shimmer. Hector, named for the Trojan hero of Homer's epic poem The Iliad, exemplifies the artist's interest in ancient Greek culture, apparent in the repeated vertical figures whose simplified, curvilinear forms recall Cycladic idols.

Ralph Humphrey

American, 1932–1990

Black, 1958

Oil on canvas

Gift of Jane and Tony Smith, 1967.19

The color black dominates Humphrey's canvas, providing the work with its title. Closer examination reveals additional colors on the textured surface, including dark red and brown. These layers of color give the painting a physical and nuanced presence. Humphrey was Mark Rothko's assistant.

Theodoros Stamos

American, 1922–1997

Untitled, 1958

Oil on canvas

Gift of Jane and Tony Smith, 1967.20

Heavy brushstrokes enliven this abstract canvas dominated by white. Stamos believed that white suggested the infinite. By pairing white with rich orange-red passages, he created a balance between ethereality and the sensual density of color.

Tony Smith

American, 1912–1980

New Piece, 1966

Wood with lacquer

Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc., 2014.11.1

Smith's New Piece looks like a cube that has been stretched or pulled sideways. Although the work is solid and well balanced, its distorted form makes it feel precarious.

Barnett Newman
American, 1905–1970
Onement II, 1948
Oil on canvas

Gift of Jane and Tony Smith, 1967.14

Consisting of a single, textured, red vertical line bisecting a smooth, red ground, Newman's Onement II reduces his visual language to a single "zip," as he referred to the line. Like a zipper that runs down a coat, the line both divides and holds together the two sides of the composition. The work's modest scale, portrait orientation, and zip abstractly imply a human figure. Nonetheless, the work's title refers to the painting's self-sufficiency as an image.

Tony Smith
American, 1912–1980
Spitball, 1961
Marble

Gift of the Estate of Marcus Bassevitch, 1993.82

The humble spitball: paper scraps chewed and wetly folded before being launched across the classroom. Smith's marble sculpture maintains the vestiges of its first manifestation as a folded, paper maquette, or model. Surprisingly, this spitball is made of marble, cut down from a tetrahedron, a pyramid with a square base.

Jackson Pollock
American, 1912–1956
Number 9, 1949
Oil on canvas

Gift of Jane and Tony Smith, 1967.15

Pollock dripped, threw, flicked, and splashed various colors of paint onto this canvas to create a dense composition of textural color. The thick skeins of paint, looping around the canvas, are a palpable trail of Pollock's process, conveying a sense of urgency and psychological drama as the viewer's eye follows the path of the artist's hand.

Clyfford Still
American, 1904–1980
Number 5, 1951
Oil on canvas

Gift of Jane and Tony Smith, 1967.18

Still used abstract form and expressive brushwork to communicate universal themes about the inner psyche and human condition. Small splatters of red, black, and white appear to dance gracefully across the vibrant yellow canvas, balanced by the pale pink at the bottom right. Still leaves evidence of his palette knife and a thickly laden brush, adding texture and drama to the abstract composition.

Mark Rothko
American, born Latvia, 1903–1970
Untitled, 1949
Oil on canvas

Gift of Jane and Tony Smith, 1967.16

As an Abstract Expressionist, Rothko evoked emotion through his use of brushstroke and color. The weave of the canvas is visible through the thin wash of red paint, giving the painting an ethereal quality. The sky blue and spring green passages could suggest the peace, hope, and quiet joy of a warm spring day after a cold, gray winter.

**Susan Morse Hilles Gallery
Contemporary Art**

Sam Durant

American, born 1961

Like, man, I'm tired of waiting, 2002

Aluminum, Plexiglas, lightbulbs

The James L. Goodwin Fund, 2002.26.8

Civil rights march, Wash. DC, 1963, 2002

Pencil on paper

The James L. Goodwin Fund, 2002.26.6

Using cheap, commercial lightboxes, Durant recreates handwritten, civil rights protest signs, sourced from 1960s media photographs. In Civil rights march, Wash. DC, 1963, Durant honors the spirit of the handwritten sign in his handmade drawing. In the lightbox, he enlarges the scale to that of a commercial advertising sign. Freed from its narrative context in the photograph, the lighted sign is open to new interpretations. Sam Durant was the featured artist of Matrix 147 in 2002.

Jenny Holzer

American, born 1950

Untitled, from the "Survival"

series, 1983

Cast aluminum

The National Endowment for the Arts Museum Purchase Program with matching funds bequeathed by Roscoe Nelson Gray in memory of Roscoe Nelson Dalton Gray and Rene Gabrielle Gray, 1991.21

Language is Holzer's primary medium, through which she investigates issues of power, authority, and tradition. In Untitled, from the "Survival" series, she employs the form of the commemorative plaque, which is traditionally used to acknowledge and honor historically significant people and places. In a typically ironic twist, her text encourages the public to act, to challenge government authority.

Kara Walker

American, born 1969

Wall Sampler 1, 2013

Cut paper on latex paint on wall

The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, 2013.23.1

Walker employs the traditional practice of silhouette portraits to explore exchanges of power, specifically those based in racial and sexual violence. Carefully composed and executed, the hand-cut silhouettes demonstrate her mastery of the craft, while also tempering the difficult dramas depicted. The characters, costumes, and scenes evoke the antebellum American South, confronting troubling periods in American history and the fantasies and abuses that continue into the present day.

Andy Warhol

American, 1928 –1987

Triple Silver Disaster, 1963

Silkscreen ink and enamel on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1974.1

Triple Silver Disaster features the same photographic image of an electric chair silkscreened three times on a silver-gray ground. The artist introduced this image at the moment in history when New York State carried out its final death sentence before outlawing capital punishment. A desolate and haunting symbol of public execution, the empty chair sits in stark isolation in an empty chamber. A sign posted over the door to the right demands "silence" in the face of the greatest silence of all. Andy Warhol was the featured artist of Matrix 50 in 1979.

Hank Willis Thomas

American, born 1976

Basketball and Chain, 2003

Digital C-print

Gift of Jean Crutchfield & Robert Hobbs in honor of Susan Talbott, 2014.14.1

Thomas appropriates and manipulates the slick advertising photography of Nike, with its dramatic lighting and graphically strong imagery, to question the role of the media in shaping African American identity. Here, the ankle of the soaring black youth is tethered to a basketball like a ball and chain. The ironic commentary situates consumerism and stereotypes as forms of enslavement.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres**American, born Cuba, 1957–1996****Untitled (Perfect Lovers), 1987– 90****Two black-framed clocks****Gift of the Norton Family Foundation, 1996.9.1a,b**

Gonzalez-Torres employed two ordinary office clocks — coupled, synchronized, and run by batteries — as a metaphor for two people linked by love and desire. These clocks are also a poignant reminder of the passage of time and the transience of life. This conceptual sculpture embodies the universal fear of losing a loved one or being left behind, acknowledged when the batteries of one clock inevitably “run down” before those of the other. As with much of his work, this piece constitutes a quiet commentary on the AIDS crisis in America.

Andy Warhol**American 1928 –1987****Early Colored Jackie, 1964****Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas****The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, The James L. Goodwin Fund, Purchased through the Gift of Henry and Walter Keney, and Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, 1994.17.1**

Warhol’s silkscreen, based on an early, official White House portrait of First Lady Jackie Kennedy, dates to the year after her husband’s assassination. The bright colors suggest a nostalgia for the Camelot years, as Kennedy’s term in office came to be known. Warhol was always enamored with glamour and style, and his portrait emphasizes these qualities. Andy Warhol was the featured artist of Matrix 50 in 1979.

Tom Wesselmann**American, 1931–2004****Great American Nude #69,1965****Oil on canvas****Gift of Susan Morse Hilles, 1974.3**

Best known for the Great American Nude — a series of nearly one hundred portraits of female nudes —Wesselmann was a central figure of the Pop Art movement. Interested in the way images function in our media-dominated culture, his version of the nude focuses on the sexual side of commercial advertising in a somewhat vulgarized representation of the classical art subject. Arbitrarily cut off on three sides, his female image is not realistic, reduced to blond hair, pink flesh, red nipples, and full lips.

Robert Rauschenberg**American, 1925–2008****Retroactive I, 1964****Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas****Gift of Susan Morse Hilles, 1964.30**

President John F. Kennedy, an astronaut, and oranges. Rauschenberg’s painting from 1964 features many recognizable images taken from popular magazines like LIFE and National Geographic. Layered together in varying scales and held together by thick brushstrokes and drips, the found images reflect the contemporary life and media imagery that interested Pop artists. Conceived before the President’s assassination and finished months after, the painting retains its powerful reading as the embodiment of a national tragedy.

Richard Artschwager**American, 1923–2013****Exclamation Point, 1980****Wood and paint****The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1991.20**

Traditional painting represents three-dimensional space on a two dimensional plane. Artschwager irreverently turns that convention inside out with his three-dimensional sculpture of a punctuation mark. As if to underscore his playful act, he chose an exclamation point as his subject. Richard Artschwager was the featured artist of Matrix 82 in 1984–85.

Duane Hanson
American, 1925–1996
Sunbather, 1971

Polyester resin and fiberglass, polychromed in oil, mixed media, with accessories

National Endowment for the Arts Purchase Program with matching funds bequeathed by Roscoe Nelson Gray in memory of Rene Gabrielle Gray and Roscoe Nelson Dalton Gray, 1977.7

Although Hanson's works are very popular with the public because of their lifelike qualities, the artist himself was less interested in deceiving our eyes than in engaging our hearts and minds in the quiet despair of aimless workers, bloated consumers, and neglected senior citizens. The Sunbather lies surrounded by the detritus of consumer culture — junk food and celebrity gossip magazines — revealing the forces that have made her what she is. Funds donated by the Collectors' Council of the Wadsworth Atheneum made possible the 1993 conservation of Sunbather. Duane Hanson was the featured artist of Matrix 40 in 1978.

Alex Katz
American, born 1927
Margie, 1971

Oil on aluminum

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1970.122

The Wadsworth Atheneum's Board of Trustees commissioned this cutout in honor of Margarie Ellis, who had worked as the registrar at the museum for more than fifty years. (She retired in 1973). Katz is known for his paintings in which he uses line and color to flatten form. His cutouts are neither painting nor sculpture, but both. The figures are always just a little smaller than life-size, and he heightens his characterizations through subtle exaggerations.

Carl Andre
American, born 1935
The Maze and Snares of Minimalism, 1993
Painted wood

Gift of L. Julian Pretto, 1996.12.3

In 1993, Andre spotted these nine discarded wood forms while walking down a street in New York's SoHo late one night with his friend, the art dealer L. Julian Pretto (1944–1995). The artist was immediately inspired by the modular units and subsequently composed this piece and gave it to Pretto. A few years later, Andre stated, "My idea of a perfect sculptural process would be to find a set of identical elements, discover their most just combination, and give the resulting work to someone I loved, all in the span of one hour."

Robert Ryman
American, born 1930
Winsor, 1966

Oil on canvas

Gift of Donald Droll, 1967.138

Ryman questions the tradition of what a painting can be. For more than four decades, he has explored this idea by reducing his palette to variations of the color white and limiting his works to the form of a square. His stripped-down paintings align him with minimalism, while his interest in brushwork relates him to Abstract Expressionism. The title Winsor, used in a series of works by the artist, refers to Winsor-Newton, the brand name of his oil paint.

Richard Tuttle
American, born 1941
Formal Narration, 1973/2013
Wood and paint

Gift of the artist, in the name of Trinity College Class of 1963, 2013.25.1a-r

Initially striking a whimsical tone, Tuttle created Formal Narration through a deep understanding of the immense power held in small objects and everyday materials. Positioned on the floor along the essential wall, the work straddles the line between painting and sculpture, not one or the other, but both. Nearly every block — basically cut from common 2 x 4s — was hand-painted with a simple graphic pattern of two colors. Placed in a configuration determined by the artist, the long, jagged row of blocks stretches across the floor like words in a sentence telling a story. Richard Tuttle was the featured artist of Matrix 10 in 1975.

Martin Puryear

American, born 1941

Kiruna, 1982

Paint and gesso on pine

The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, The African American Art Purchase Fund, and the Alexander A. Goldfarb Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund, 2009.3.1

Kiruna, from Puryear's signature "Ring" series (1978–1985) of wall-mounted circular sculptures, is constructed of strips of pine that the artist bent, glued, and shaved into shape. In a holdover from his artistic beginnings as a painter, Puryear applied color to the sculpture. The various colors reflect the plumage of a bird native to Lapland in northern Sweden, where the regional capital is Kiruna. The bird is brightly colored in the summer (note the color at the top of the sculpture) and camouflaged white in winter.

Mark di Suvero

American, born China, 1933

For Giacometti, 1962

Wood and steel

Gift of an Anonymous donor, 1962.278

For Giacometti is one of di Suvero's early sculptures, consisting of wood and steel. The latter material makes up his monumental sculpture in the form of I-beams. Like the mature work, this long construction sits low to the ground and appears to balance between the end elements, which rise up and tilt outward in the space. The overall composition, with its strong horizontal and vertical forms, recalls Alberto Giacometti's cityscape sculptures.

George Segal

American, 1924–2000

Man in Doorway, 1992

Plaster, wood, metal, cardboard, carpeting, paint, and light fixtures

Gift of The George and Helen Segal Foundation, 2013.12.1

Although the title, Man in Doorway, is intentionally generic, the subject is Miles Forst (1923–2006), an artist friend of Segal's who appears in several of his works. An installation in black, the aged figure steps through an open door, behind which a small, cluttered room reveals shelf upon shelf of boxes stacked floor to ceiling. According to the artist's daughter Rena Segal and cousin Susan Kutliroff, Forst lived in a space quite like this — an impossibly small and cluttered apartment piled high with belongings.

Cindy Sherman

American, born 1954

Untitled #112, 1982

Color-coupler print

Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1986.13

Known for photographing herself in various guises, Sherman explores stereotypes of femininity and female representation found in popular culture. Untitled #112 is among the first images in which she portrays a more masculine or androgynous character. This gender ambiguity, coupled with the figure's emergence from a dark background, evokes an unsettling impression. Sherman typically manipulates her appearance to encourage a critical examination of gender, sexual identity, and stereotypes. Cindy Sherman was the featured artist of Matrix 88 in 1986.

Douglas Gordon

Scottish, born 1966

Untitled (Blind), 1998

Aluminum Venetian blind with motor

Gift of Christophe and Anne-Gaelle Van de Weghe, 2014.3.1a,b

Untitled (Blind) was inspired by Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho (1960) and Gordon's own appropriated variation of the classic film, the widely acclaimed video work 24 Hour Psycho (1993). Venetian blinds feature prominently in the film, a cinematic trope of voyeurism, peeping, and secret and untoward activities. A kinetic sculpture with sound, Untitled (Blind) features a motor that automatically opens and closes the blinds to allow for brief glimpses through the window from both inside and outside the gallery.

Ana Mendieta**American, born Cuba, 1948–1985****Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints), 1972****Color photographs****Contemporary Art Purchase Fund, 1998.12.3a-f**

Mendieta's photographs document the manipulation of her body with a pane of glass. Pressed against various body parts, flattening, sometimes twisting her body, the photographs critique the aesthetic manipulation of women's bodies by the fashion and beauty industries. And some images suggest violence in the obvious force she exerts on the glass. Her self-directed acts make a powerful statement about the unattainable expectations of fashion and beauty. It is, consequently, women who abuse their own bodies.

Kiki Smith**American, born Germany, 1954****Daisy Chain, 1992****Steel and cast bronze****The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, 2012.6.1**

One hundred feet of steel chain connects a dismembered woman's head and limbs. These rough bronze elements are attached like charms to a bracelet. The innocuous title of Daisy Chain — a floral garland associated with youth and innocence — also contradicts the heavy mass heaped on the floor like a dead body. At the time of its creation, rape and domestic violence dominated the news media, subjects fearlessly addressed in the work of feminist artist Smith.

Lorna Simpson**American, born 1960****Bits and Pieces, 1989****Silver prints with plastic plaques****Purchased through a gift of H. Hilliard Smith, 1989.20**

Simpson pairs close-up photographs of a woman's neck and shoulders with seemingly random words printed on plastic plaques. Tenuous connections between the words and images could exist, as in the textural differences of the surfaces of skin and carpet. However, such comparisons are unnerving as they imply violence. In the absence of a traditional narrative, the contradictory plaques at the bottom confound, simultaneously directing to remember and to forget. Lorna Simpson was the featured artist of Matrix 107 in 1989.

Mark Manders**Dutch, born 1968****Composition with Yellow Vertical, 2010****Wood, painted epoxy, iron, and necklace****Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 2011.1.1**

With the closed eyes, floating hair, and a hovering rectangular element, the bust construction of this sculpture suggests a dreamlike vision. Manders is also interested in Renaissance painting. Here you can see a reference to Sandro Botticelli's iconic Birth of Venus, in which Venus's hair is similarly blown sideways. Composition with Yellow Vertical includes both found materials (like the gold chain and wood plank) and fabricated parts. Manders manipulated and painted epoxy to look like clay.

Bob Thompson**American, 1937–1966****Garden of Music, 1960****Oil on canvas****The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1987.4**

Complete with lollipop trees, primitively drawn figures, and expressive color, Garden of Music pays homage to the jazz musicians who Thompson knew, admired, and regularly enjoyed while painting. The musicians in the middle of the painting are (from left to right) Ornette Coleman (sax), Don Cherry (trumpet), John Coltrane (sax), Sonny Rollins (sax), Ed Blackwell (seated with drum), and Charles Haden (bass). He also includes his standard self-portrait, the figure in the broad-brimmed hat in the lower right corner of the composition. Bob Thompson was the featured artist of Matrix 90 in 1986.

Nick Cave**American, born 1959****Soundsuit, 2009****Found crocheted and hooked rugs, knitted yarn, and metal armature****African American Art Purchase Fund, 2009.6.1**

Cave uses found objects to create his sculptural soundsuits, so named for their audio component when in action. Here he has sewn together found rugs to make an object that is also a performance art costume. A former dancer with the modern Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, he often coordinates multiple soundsuit performances for his gallery and museum exhibitions. This body of work is truly multidisciplinary, combining his interests in dance, fashion, sculpture, and textiles. The vibrantly colored, boldly patterned rugs suggest a modern abstract painting, and, in motion, the sculpture is much like an action painting.

Vanessa German**American, born 1976****Tar Baby on Pig with “N,” 2011****Tar, found objects, nails, spark plugs, fabric, silver bird, hand-wrought beads, porcelain figure, beads, old jewelry, and cloth****Gift of Linda Cheverton Wick, 2014.10.13**

German’s heavily encrusted Tar Baby takes its name from the fictional character of a doll made of tar and turpentine meant to entrap Br’er Rabbit in Joel Chandler Harris’s Uncle Remus stories (published in 1881) based on African American folktales. Made of tar and found objects from her Pittsburgh neighborhood of Homewood, the doll serves as a talisman, a powerful magical object. Covered in a thick layer of beads and nails (evocative of armor), and topped by a mirror, it deflects the negative attention to its skin color that the large red letter “N” powerfully announces.

Pepón Osorio**American, born Puerto Rico, 1955****En la barbería, no se llora (No crying allowed in the barbershop), 1994****Mixed media****Purchased through a gift from Southern New England Telephone in recognition of the vitality of Connecticut’s Puerto Rican community, and through the Alexander A. Goldfarb Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund, 1994.37.1**

In 1994, Osorio transformed a vacant store on Park Street in Hartford into an installation of a traditional Latino barber shop. The project was organized by Real Art Ways. For Osorio, the world of the barbería represents an institutionalized version of Latino machismo. A boy’s first barber-shop haircut is a rite of manhood, and crying represents a failure. The experience was personal for Osorio; he cried during his first haircut, when the inexperienced barber tore at his kinky hair.

Dawoud Bey**American, born 1953****Keisha, 1996****Polacolor ER prints**

Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, and The Alexander A. Goldfarb Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund, 1997.5.1 Working with a large-format Polaroid camera at the Wadsworth Atheneum in July 1996, Bey photographed fourteen Hartford-area students in the series “Hartford Portraits ‘96.” The artist has said, “I am mindful that portraiture has been a way for a select group of people — the gentrified class — to perpetuate their images. . . . I like to bring the same attention to ordinary people, and people of color. I particularly like to give this kind of attention to black people, as a people whose images have been stereotyped and ridiculed extensively in this country.” Dawoud Bey was the featured artist of Matrix 132 in 1997.

Ahmed Alsoudani**American, born Iraq, 1975****Untitled, 2012****Acrylic and charcoal on canvas****The Ella Gallup Sumner and****Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 2012.21.1**

Alsoudani’s Untitled depicts the chaotic aftermath of a car bombing, with bloodied flesh and severed limbs lying alongside the cold, jagged metal of the car. Alsoudani commingles shocking realism with colorful, cartoonlike imagery to temper the horrors of war and conflict in his native country. The charcoal passages, with haunting visages, perhaps of the dead, contrast with the vivid intensity of the horror. Ahmed Alsoudani was the featured artist of Matrix 165 in 2012–13.

Charles LeDray
American, born 1960
Untitled /Tower, 2001
Human bone

The Cartin Collection. Partial and Promised Gift to the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT, 2001.16.1
LeDray piles tiny reproductions of various items — chairs, tables, chests of drawers, and even a ladder and a wheelbarrow — carefully in a “tower.” The sculptor’s scale conjures visions of dollhouses, and the careful stack suggests the work of a child attempting to balance these objects. However, the artist’s material is human bone, which undermines such domestic visions of play and infuses the sculpture with a creeping sense of horror.

Romare Bearden
American, 1911–1988
She-ba, 1970

Collage on paper, cloth, and synthetic polymer paint on composition board
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1971.12

Bearden celebrates the reign of the Queen of Sheba and her country Ethiopia as among the great African civilizations of the past. This striking portrait of the regal queen was constructed from bright colored paper, black-and-white photostats, and magazine clippings. She-ba exemplifies his signature work: complex collages rooted in African art and African American folk culture. Romare Bearden was the featured artist of Matrix 7 in 1975.

Romuald Hazoumè
Beninese, born 1962
Agbota, 2011
Plastic and steel

The James L. Goodwin Fund, 2014.5.1

Hazoumè’s Agbota (or “ram’s head mask”) addresses both local social codes and global political issues. Consisting of a recycled gasoline jerrican, a container symbolizing the black market trade of dirty gasoline that Benin relies on, along with iron wire and plastic hair, the mask comprises the detritus of consumer culture to make an ironic point. The artist transforms the imported waste container and returns it to its Western origins in his nation’s signature art form, the African mask.

James Nares
American, born England, 1953
STREET, 2011
High definition video with sound
Running time: 61 minutes

Purchased through the gift of Charles A. Goodwin, 2012.14.1

Largely undetected by his subjects, Nares filmed STREET in Manhattan over a single week in September 2011 on a Phantom Flex camera from the back of an SUV. The camera, often used to film sports, usually remains stationary and records subjects moving very fast. STREET reverses this — the camera moves quickly while the subjects remain relatively still. A mesmerizing cruise through the city, this voyeuristic, slow motion video is explained by the artist simply: “I wanted the film to be about people. All it needed were magical moments, and there are enough of those happening every moment of every day.”

Rotunda

Christian Marclay
Swiss and American, born 1955
Telephones, 1995
Videotape transferred to DVD
Running time: 7:30 minutes

The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, 2014.2.1

Telephones features 130 video clips from Hollywood films that include the telephone, comprising an elaborate video collage. The “narrative” builds over the course of 7 1/2 minutes — dialing, greeting, conversing, goodbyes, and hangups. Marclay highlights the continuity of cinematic tropes by splicing old and new films into the story, including now-obsolete telephone booths, rotary dials, and push-button technology. With a touch of humor, at moments the disparate clips in the video begin to talk to each other.

Colt 2 Mezzanine

Sol LeWitt

American, 1928–2007

Hanging Structure, 1987

Wood and paint

Gift of Coosje van Bruggen and Claes Oldenburg, 2004.5.1a

Hanging Structure relates most closely to LeWitt's series of Incomplete Open Cubes, one of which is shown in this gallery.

Throughout the 1980s, LeWitt concentrated on richly detailed structures composed of innumerable small open cubes. Hanging Structure is an upside-down tower, a three dimensional x-ray of a skyscraper that descends from the ceiling like a stalactite in cube form. Sol LeWitt was the featured artist of Matrix 3, 6, and 143 in 1975 and 2001.

Sol LeWitt

American, 1928–2007

Incomplete Open Cube 6 /19, 1974

Painted aluminum

The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, and partial gift of Carol and Sol LeWitt, 2001.8.206

LeWitt first "opened" his three dimensional cubic forms in 1964, revealing their skeletal structure of equal square modules. The resulting open grid became a central element of his formal vocabulary and would eventually lead to his exploration of the incomplete open cube in all its possible variations. Each incomplete cube structure employs a distinct number of elements necessary to read the structure as a cube. Sol LeWitt was the featured artist of Matrix 3, 6, and 143 in 1975 and 2001.

Sol LeWitt

American, 1928–2007

Complex Form, 1988

Painted wood

Gift of Sol and Carol LeWitt given in memory of Nellie and Bella LeWitt, 1989.22

In this altered cube form, LeWitt has expanded the cube format, depressing the top plane and stretching the side. The resulting geometrical figure expands his earlier methodical exposition of cube permutations, like Incomplete Open Cube seen in this gallery, to a richer variety of forms. Sol LeWitt was the featured artist of Matrix 3, 6, and 143 in 1975 and 2001.

Sol LeWitt

American, 1928–2007

Wall Drawing #352, 1980

Acrylic and crayon on wall surface

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1981.4

Wall Drawing #352 was originally proposed for the rebuilt Hartford Civic Center (now the XL Center) in 1980. After a public outcry over the fact that LeWitt would not actually make the drawing, but would only provide the instructions to make the drawing (as is typical for Conceptual Art), he quietly withdrew the submission. In a show of support for the artist, the Wadsworth acquired the work, the first of five wall drawings to be acquired for the collection. Sol LeWitt was the featured artist of Matrix 3, 6, and 143 in 1975 and 2001.

Tara Donovan

American, born 1969

Untitled (Toothpicks), 2004

Wood

Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 2009.10.1

Untitled (Toothpicks) is central to Donovan's mode of creation and, thus, a seminal work. In the mid-1990s she knocked over a box of toothpicks and discovered their inherent interlocking properties. This serendipitous occurrence launched her unique approach to art making. Evoking the Minimalist cube, this toothpick cube is based on the physical properties of a single accumulated material. No glue or adhesive holds the cube together. Rather, the commonplace material of the toothpick, configured en masse, transcends its individual materiality to become something completely new.