HOLLIS TAGGART GALLERIES
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Alfred H. Maurer (1868–1932)

Fauve Landscape, circa 1910–12
Oil on board, 21⅝ x 18 inches

Accompanying this painting is a letter dated January 15, 1951 from Dr. Albert Barnes to Dr. F. G. Harrison, Philadelphia:

> The painting, by Alfred Maurer, was derided when I found him in Paris in 1912. Today he is sitting on top of the world. My suggestion is that you look at this painting every day and, if you look to *see* what is in it, and find something new and worthwhile to you, you will find out what Dewey says education is.

Following a successful career as a figurative painter of Whistlerian and Realist works Alfred Maurer embraced the aesthetics of Fauvism while in France in the early years of the twentieth century. Far more than just another American dabbling in new and experimental modes of painting, Maurer successfully established himself as a Fauve of the first order. As early as 1906 he was already painting beguiling modernist works that distilled the vanguard spirit then sweeping Paris. By 1907 Maurer was exhibiting his radical modern landscapes in Parisian exhibitions. Two years later in 1909 his dazzling Fauve creations were featured in a landmark exhibition at Alfred Stieglitz's "291" New York gallery. This two person show presented Maurer's groundbreaking Fauve compositions to American audiences as well as the modernist work of fellow American John Marin. The Steiglitz presentation was a watershed moment for Maurer and for American modernism.

Maurer's immersion within the Fauve milieu can be traced back to the vanguard portraits, still lifes and landscapes he painted from 1906–14—works rendered in heightened chromatic intensity that shattered traditional spatial conventions. Drawing on the art of Cézanne, the Symbolists, van Gogh, Matisse along with other Post-Impressionists, Maurer began constructing his paintings in terms of color relations rather than modeling form in any traditional sense. He employed color in a wholly modern and expressive way in compositions that were anchored in reality, but were insistent on a subjective interpretation of nature. With its emancipation of academic space, compressed spatial dichotomies and enlivened brushwork, Maurer interpreted the landscape as a vital life force, quite literally channeling the spirit of Henri Bergson's *élan vital*—deftly capturing the rhythmic movement of the land, which he perceived as a living, breathing organism. He believed nature was only a springboard toward greater abstraction and certainly not a subject to be faithfully copied. As Willard Huntington Wright astutely noted later in Maurer's career (1916), "Maurer's one preoccupation is to beautify every square inch of the canvas on which he depicts his poeticized representations of the subject. I can imagine him using nature much as an engine uses a track, merely to hold him to recognizable creation. . . . To him nature is a motif, a simple motif like a subdued melody out of which a musician, by addition and development, constructs a sonata . . ."

The first Fauve landscapes Maurer exhibited were at the Paris Salon d'Automne in 1907, where according to Salon catalogue listings he showed six landscapes entitled *Paysage.* A great many of Maurer's early landscapes were executed in the Champagne region of France in such areas as Chezy-sur-Marne, Château Thierry, and Chalôns sur-Marne. He first visited these regions around 1902 and returned to them regularly throughout his time abroad, until forced to leave in 1914 as a result of wartime hostilities.

Fauve Landscape is indeed an iconic example of the artist's rare and important Fauve work and it is also noteworthy for having been owned by renowned Pennsylvania collector Dr. Albert Barnes. Between 1912 and 1914 Maurer worked closely with Barnes serving as his European artistic liaison, assisting him with many of his transatlantic purchases. Maurer managed the details of Barnes' business transactions, offered him aesthetic input and kept the collector apprised of developments in the Parisian art world. He visited artists' studios to scout out works for Barnes and attended private sales, public auctions and gallery exhibitions—keeping Barnes informed about the art market abroad. In the course of assembling his collection, which is primarily European, Barnes also purchased numerous works by Americans, including twenty-five paintings by Maurer that he acquired between 1912 and 1921. Over the years Barnes deaccessioned select works and gave others away to employees, as was his common practice. Today ten paintings by Maurer remain at the Barnes Foundation. These remaining works and those that have passed through the Barnes Collection over the years are indeed emblems of Barnes' support of Maurer's early modernist ventures.

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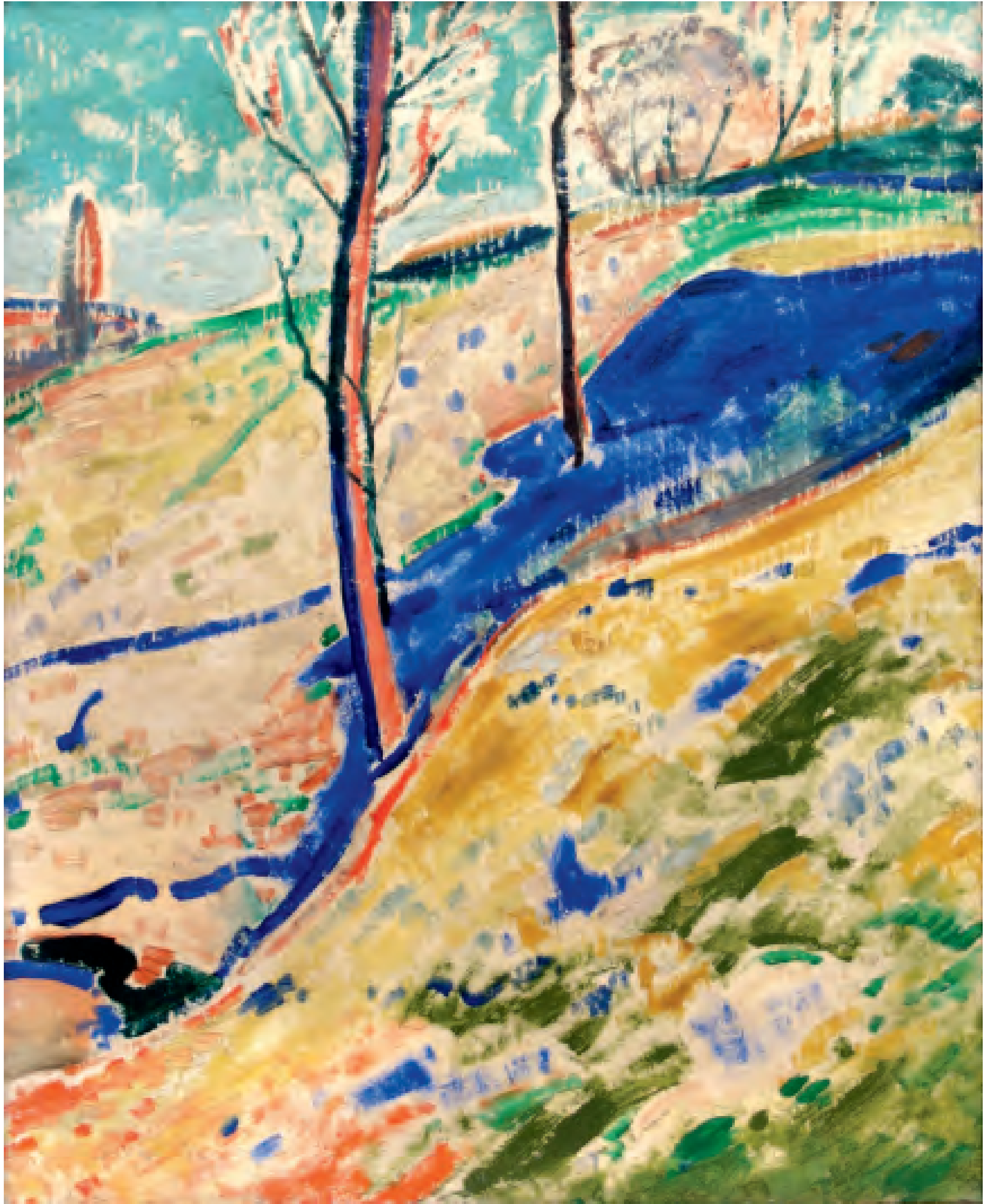

Manierre Dawson (1887–1969)

Configuration, 1914
Oil on canvas, 61 x 79 inches
Signed and dated lower right: "M. Dawson '14"

The year 1914 proved to be a pivotal one, both professionally and personally, for Manierre Dawson. Arthur B. Davies and Walter Pach, organizers of the Armory Show the previous year, invited Dawson to participate in an exhibition of the artists they considered most important to contemporary modern art. That show, "The Fourteen," opened at the Montross Gallery in New York and traveled to Detroit, Cincinnati, and Baltimore. The same spring, Dawson had two paintings included in an exhibition at the Milwaukee Art Center.

Dawson felt particularly productive and driven to work during this period. As he described in his journal, "I am convinced that there is something great urging the necessity of producing paintings. So I keep on doing."[1] In this context, Dawson's work from the early 1910's demonstrates the artist's continued exploration of his highly personal Cubist idiom. As a general rule, Dawson did not attach great importance to the titles of his artworks; as he wrote in 1913, "I have little liking for my titles. They are only for identification and go in my record book for that purpose." So while these pieces often suggest a figural composition, the emphasis is on form and spatial relationships rather than explicit reference.

The figures of *Configuration*, a large canvas of 1914, are prime examples of Dawson's unique style of abstraction. The combination of traditional modeling and geometric abstraction in this canvas is not unlike Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, painted in 1907 but not shown in public until over a decade later. As with most developments in Europe, Dawson would not have had access to this work either in person or in reproduction. His innovative style continually defies expectations as his work parallels breakthroughs in modernism made far from his Chicago home.

The solidity of the work makes sense in light of Dawson's training as an architect, where the skill of the draftsman requires the legible translation of three-dimensional buildings into two-dimensional plans. Dawson had also shown a keen interest in Old Master painting during this period. *Configuration* recalls the figural compositions of Poussin and Reubens, whom Dawson had admired in the European museums. He had a deeply felt connection with art history, as evidenced in his journal entry of spring 1911: "Time and again I have had the thought that all artists in all times past and present are trying to do the same thing, to make a picture and make it right."[2]

Dawson's experimental nature and revolutionary style established him as a pioneer of the modernist movement. He was one of the first Americans to paint in a non-objective manner, preceding Arthur Dove by two years. His first abstract paintings were produced in 1910, and he soon developed his own variation of Cubism.

Dawson's father encouraged him to study architecture, a more lucrative trade than the visual arts. Upon graduation from the Armour Institute of Technology in 1909, Dawson began his career as an engineer and architectural draftsman at the distinguished firm of Holabird and Roche, painting extensively in his spare time.

Dawson embarked on a whirlwind European tour in the summer of 1910, visiting England, France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland. In Siena he met the famous portraitist John Singer Sargent, who was staying in the same pensione, and who was bewildered but intrigued by Dawson's work. Dawson's most significant encounters, however, took place in Paris. There he met the dealer Ambrose Vollard and also paid a call on Gertrude Stein, who purchased the first painting he ever sold.

Upon his return, Dawson painted furiously and turned from abstraction toward the portrayal of the human figure as a result of his European experience. After his European tour, Dawson abandoned non-objectivity and tried to assimilate the Old Masters as well as the avant-garde into his scope. For the next two years he experimented with a variety of styles. On his return to Chicago, Dawson painted energetically, producing abstracted figure paintings. He executed tightly integrated still lifes and fragmented pieces in earth tones showing the human body in motion, paralleling the work of Marcel Duchamp and the Italian Futurists Often based on old master compositions, these were rendered in a highly personal style of cubism, no doubt influenced by the paintings by Picasso that Dawson had seen in the apartment of Gertrude Stein. When the Armory Show came to Chicago in 1913, its organizer, Walter Pach, was so impressed by Dawson's paintings that he included one of them in the show.

1. Manierre Dawson, quoted in Randy J. Ploog, "The First American Abstractionist: Manierre Dawson and His Sources," in *Manierre Dawson: American Pioneer of Abstract Art* (New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries, 1999), pp 75–76.
2. Ibid., p 76.

Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968)

Nu descendant un escalier, 1937
Pochoir colored collotype with postage stamp
13¾ x 7⅞ inches

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Marcel Duchamp to twentieth-century art. From the early cubist work to the playful Dada period, the found-object "readymades" to the clever wordplay and even the late enigmatic environment of *Étant donnés;* almost every aspect of his oeuvre has been taken up by the vanguards of the later half of the century.

Duchamp's explosive entrée into the annals of American art came in 1913 with his now iconic masterpiece *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*. A virtual revolution in form and structure, this radical image confounded and infuriated critics and viewers when it was presented in the 1913 Armory Show in New York. This exhibition, organized by the artists Walt Kuhn, Walter Pach and Arthur B. Davies, is credited with having introduced many American artists and the general American public to key aspects of European modernism, much of which was then unfamiliar. The exhibitition featured some of the most important masterpieces of twenthieth century art including Duchamp's large canvas which was a beacon for publicity. It was immortalized in cartoons decrying it as an "explosion in a shingle factory" and it was parodied in countless ways; one such instance transformed it into a New York subway scene under the title "the rude descending a staircase."

This divisive canvas, reproduced here as a collotype in 1937, represents a "remarkable aggregation of avant-garde concerns: the birth of cinema; the Cubists' fracturing of form; the Futurists' depiction of movement; the chromophotography of Etienne-Jules Marey, Eadweard Muybridge, and Thomas Eakins; and the redefinitions of time and space by scientists and philosophers."[1] The rhythmic repetition of the abstract figure produces a sense of movement and flux unseen in earlier art. In a later interview, Duchamp elaborated on his sources for *Nude Descending a Staircase*:

> In 1912 . . . the idea of describing the movement of a nude coming downstairs while still retaining static visual means to do this, particularly interested me. The fact that I had seen chronophotographs of fencers in action and horse galloping (what we today call stroboscopic photography) gave me the idea for the Nude. It doesn't mean that I copied these photographs. The Futurists were also interested in somewhat the same idea, though I was never a Futurist. And of course the motion picture with its cinematic techniques was developing then too. The whole idea of movement, of speed, was in the air.[2]

The collotype method used in this print, the provenance of which can be traced back to Duchamp and his dealer Julien Levy, is a dichromate-based photographic process in which a light-sensitive film of gelatin provides the printing surface. To produce a subtle image such as this one, colors are carefully layered on top of the original plate and modified by the application of chemicals and then the hand application of a watercolor wash. Many hours of work would have been required preparing the negatives before any printing could be done, and each plate produces only a limited number of prints.[3] The collotype process yields an extremely fine image and was the preferred printing method of Alfred Stieglitz. Collotypes were also popular as postcards, and Duchamp here has teasingly added a postage stamp with his own signature over the stamp mimicking official postal markings.

1. Ann Temkin, from *Philadelphia Museum of Art: Handbook of the Collections* (1995), p. 307.
2. Katherine Kuh, Marcel Duchamp, interview broadcast on the BBC program 'Monitor', 29 March 1961, published in Katherine Kuh (ed.), *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen,* Harper & Row, New York 1962, pp. 81–93
3. "Collotype & Pochoir," UC Santa Cruz Univerity Library, http://library.ucsc.edu/speccoll/collotype-pochoir

NU DESCENDANT UN ESCALIER

Theodoros Stamos (1922–1997)

The Lamp Lighter, 1945
Oil on masonite, 24 x 30 inches
Signed and dated lower left: "T. Stamos NYC '45"

Theodoros Stamos was dedicated to experimentation and exploration throughout his career. As one of "The Irascibles," the core group of fifteen New York School painters publicized by Nina Leen's photograph in a 1951 issue of *Life* magazine, Stamos rose to prominence for his biomorphic paintings of the 1940s and later achieved recognition for his color-field panels.

The 1940s were a remarkable decade for Stamos, as the young artist received considerable publicity and financial gain during this period. Legendary gallerist Betty Parsons, an early champion of the Abstract Expressionists, began to exhibit his work and in 1943, when the artist was just twenty-two, he received his first solo exhibition at her gallery, the Wakefield Gallery. In 1945, he also signed on with Samuel Kootz, the influential dealer who was on the Museum of Modern Art advisory board at the time. Only a few years later, the Modern purchased Stamos's 1946 painting *Sounds in the Rock* for its collection, and the collector Edward Root began what would become a private collection of over thirty Stamos paintings.

Painted during this time of tremendous success, *The Lamp Lighter* reveals all the hallmarks of Stamos' early style, along with a subtle geometry reminiscent of the work of Paul Klee. Exhibiting biomorphic shapes and vestigial references to the outside world, works from this period evoke what Barnett Newman referred to in Stamos's art as "communion with nature." Newman elaborated; "The work of Theodoros Stamos, subtle and sensuous as it is, reveals an attitude toward nature that is closer to true communion. His ideographs capture the moment of totemic affinity with the rock and the mushroom, the crayfish and the seaweed. He redefines the pastoral experience as one of participation with the inner life of the natural phenomenon."[1]

In *The Lamp Lighter*, the semi-organic shapes intimate this inner exploration of the natural world and hint at both the "terror and mystery" (as Newman describes it) hidden in our experiences of nature. As is the case with many works from this period, the title offers viewers a "way in" to viewing the painting; what had been a divided canvas of abstract space assumes the convention of a landscape, wherein an abstracted figure brings light to darkened lamps. It is this relationship—between abstract space and local place—to which Stamos returns in many of canvases over his long career.

Milton Avery had an enormous impact on the young artist, and *The Lamp Lighter* reveals Stamos's appreciation of Avery's pared-down compositions and use of flat areas of color. Milton and Sally Avery's home served as a gathering place for a number of artists, including Stamos, who was the youngest of the crew who frequented the Averys' abode. The artist himself acknowledges Arthur Dove and Avery as the two most formidable influences on his work. He praised Avery, exclaiming, "[He's] the opposite of what is supposed to be a typical American attitude in that he approaches nature as a subject rather than an object. One does not manipulate a subject, one *meets* it."[2] The same could be said of Stamos, who painted abstract canvases that evoked grand subjects of nature, myth, and personal significance.

To support himself in the early years of his career, Stamos worked in a frame shop on 18th street, from 1941–48, which offered exposure to the art of Paul Klee and Arshile Gorky in addition to well-known contemporary artists practicing in Manhattan. Although his work from the forties bears a striking resemblance to the biomorphism of Gorky or of Joan Miró, Stamos emphasized his admiration for the early American abstractions of Dove whom he saw as a "spiritual father."

The artist's biographical roots in both ancient Greece and modern Manhattan inevitably influenced his work, which often evokes a modern investigation of ancient ideas surrounding cycles of birth, death, and growth—both biological and spiritual. In a 1947 article in *Tiger's Eye,* Stamos explained: "I am concerned with the Ancestral Image which is a journey through the shells and webbed entanglements of the phenomenon. The end of such a journey is the impulse of remembrance and the picture created is the embodiment of the Ancestral World that exists on the horizon of mind and coast."[3] Through the materials of painting, Stamos aimed to capture vivid, momentary sensations.

1. Cited in Lisa Mintz Messinger, *Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1992), 138.
2. Ralph Pomeroy, *Stamos* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), 17.
3. Theodoros Stamos, "Artists Statement," *Tiger's Eye* (1947), quoted in Lisa M. Messinger, "Twentieth Century Art," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Autumn, 1991), 63.

Mark di Suvero (B. 1933)

Untitled, 1968
Steel, 49 x 32½ x 25¼ inches

Acclaimed for large-scale sculpture that combines aspects of Abstract Expressionism, assemblage, and Constructivism, di Suvero employs welded steel, combinations of metal and wood, and forms that are cantilevered, suspended, twisted and shaped so that they appear to balance or float in space. Many of his large-scale early sculptures such as *Hankchampion*, 1960 (Whitney Museum of American Art) feature wood found on the street including chairs, beams, and ladders. The smaller ones often utilize scraps of wood, metal, and pieces of chain. In his early works di Suvero articulated many of the principles of his later style such as an "open form system of cantilevered balances, jutting diagonals, suggestion of strain and tension implicit in thrust-counter-thrust movements, and dynamic, restless elements that stretched out, reached into, and grabbed space . . ."[1]

In *Untitled*, strips of steel, some scored into thin ribbons extend into and wrap around space. Despite the heavy inflexibility of its nature, the artist makes the curved and molded pieces of metal appear almost as malleable and as light as paper. The thin, spring-like segments appear suspended in space and miraculously supported by the single vertical post. In his play with materials and their relationship to different types of forms—for example the heavier beams versus the thin strips of steel—di Suvero delights in construction and craftsmanship. In this respect, despite his use of industrial materials, his work differs from Minimalist sculptures by artists such as Robert Morris or Donald Judd, who removed the artist's hand from their industrial productions.

Di Suvero's approach toward his materials was solidified early in his career as a result of tragic accident, which happened just a few months before his first show at Green Gallery in October 1960. While out on a job delivering lumber, di Suvero loaded the wood on top of an elevator cab, as it was too large to fit inside. When the elevator failed to stop, he was pinned and crushed. He managed to survive, but his doctors did not believe he would be able to walk or sculpt again. Although he spent two years in a wheelchair, amazingly he continued to create sculpture and regained his mobility. During the years following the accident he executed a number of small sculptures. As James K. Monte notes: "confined to a wheelchair, di Suvero began and completed an extraordinary group of small sculptures. He used the traditional welder's equipment—oxygen and acetylene tanks, cutting and welding torches. The steel used in these pieces was often thick and unwieldy . . . di Suvero formed these pieces in his lap, an asbestos apron covering the lower half of his body."[2] Despite the trauma of the accident, di Suvero managed to maintain a close relationship with industrial materials. After struggling to walk again he emerged from the experience with renewed confidence. Now experienced with welding, di Suvero again began to focus again on large-scale sculptures. Evoking all the elements of a freight elevator, works such as *Untitled* consist of weighty pieces of steel and large I- beams balanced, suspended, and held together with cables.

Di Suvero's monumental early sculptures constructed from thick, discarded wooden beams or pieces of metal evoked the wide, bold brushwork of Abstract Expressionist painters such as Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline. Di Suvero himself commented, "my sculpture is painting in three dimensions."[3] Scholars have, likewise, found the same energy and excitement expressed by the gesture painters in his dynamic and avant-garde works.

Throughout his career di Suvero exhibited prolifically both in the U.S. and abroad, and created numerous public and outdoor installations. His solo and group exhibitions have included shows at the Museum of Modern Art, the Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, New York, the LACMA, Los Angeles, the Jewish Museum, New York, Documenta IV, Kassel, Germany, and Jardin de Tuilleries, Paris, France among many others. In 1975, the Whitney Museum of American Art presented a retrospective of his work. In addition, his many public sculptures include the Los Angeles, a monument *Tower of Peace*, 1966, which protested the Vietnam War, and his more recent *Joie de Vivre*, 1998 for Zuccotti Park, in lower Manhattan. Di Suvero's sculptures can also be seen in public collections including for the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C., the Baltimore Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, and the Storm King Art Center in Mountainville, New York. The artist currently lives and works in New York. In 2005, he was awarded the Heinz Award for Arts and Humanities.

1. Barbara Rose, "On Mark di Suvero: Sculpture outside Walls," *Art Journal* vol. 35 no.2 (Winter, 1975–1976), 121.
2. James K. Monte, *Mark di Suvero* (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1975), 13.
3. Ibid, 12.

Conrad Marca-Relli (1913–2000)

Battle Detail, 1979
Mixed media collage on canvas, 48 x 56 inches
Signed lower right: "MARCA-RELLI"

Conrad Marca-Relli's *Battle Detail* is a particularly bold work from this artist's oeuvre. Marca-Relli is primarily known for collages in a neutral palette, not straying far from the linen's natural color. Here, however, in a transitional style that would come to fruition in the early 1980s, Marca-Relli painted several of his cloth pieces a bright, undiluted red, yellow, or black, hues whose intensity reflects the work's title, *Battle Detail*. These passages are generally flat in color, but the work has a great sense of depth overall, due largely in part to the attention the artist paid to the cloth elements' edges, which are at times outlined with paint, and elsewhere allowed to be framed by the supporting canvas. Indeed, this is a very layered work, finished with several meandering lines of black and dark brown paint, a small nod to his roots in Abstract Expressionist oil painting. *Battle Detail* is an aesthetically enticing work, whose combination of bold and neutral colors push and pull the eye as it travels across the composition.

Marca-Relli, a member of the New York School's first generation, was a pioneer of Abstract Expressionism. He is most celebrated for his large-scale collages, composed of pieces of canvas or natural linen overpainted with gestural brushstrokes. In 1967, William Agee, then curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, praised Marca-Relli's work, claiming that his "achievement has been to raise collage to a scale and complexity equal to that of monumental painting."[1]

Born on June 5, 1913, to Italian immigrant parents, Marca-Relli was a primarily self-taught artist and an inveterate traveler who bridged the American and European art worlds. He spent much of his childhood moving back and forth between the United States and Europe; his father was a news commentator and a journalist whose assignments required frequent travel. When he was thirteen, Marca-Relli and his parents permanently settled in New York, where he began his first formal artistic training. With the encouragement of his father, he took night classes at a private art school, and after finishing high school in 1930 he studied at Cooper Union for a year before establishing his own studio in Greenwich Village. During the Depression, Marca-Relli, like many American artists, supported himself by working for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), first as a teacher and then with the easel and mural painting divisions of the Federal Art Project. At this time, he came into contact with progressive artists, including Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, and John Graham, who exposed him to modernist artistic trends.

After serving in the army during World War II, Marca-Relli returned to New York and to painting. Initially, he depicted cityscapes and carnival scenes in a Surrealist style, influenced by the work of Giorgio de Chirico, Henri Rousseau, and Juan Miro, before turning to a more abstract style in the early 1950s. On a trip to Mexico in 1952, Marca-Relli radically altered his artistic practice in response to his surroundings. A probably apocryphal story claims that a lack of paint stimulated his initial experimentation with collage at this time; however, his own account states that he turned to this pictorial technique to solve a variety of technical problems related to his interest in capturing the effects of sunlight on adobe buildings in Mexico. The juxtaposition of light-colored canvas pieces allowed him to demarcate the edges of his forms and give a sense of depth in a largely white-on-white picture, and the collage process enabled him to work quickly and change his creation constantly since he did not have to wait for the paint to dry. He initially used collage for both architectural themes and a series of single figure images inspired by de Kooning's depictions of women. As he mastered this technique, he made more complex and dynamic pictures with multiple figures and abstract works with veiled references to architectural and landscape elements. In the early 1960s, while retaining his interest in abstract forms, he began to work with new materials, including metals and synthetic plastics.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Marca-Relli was actively involved in the avant-garde art world in Greenwich Village. He helped to found the "Eighth Street Club," an artists' group whose members included de Kooning, Kline, and Jack Tworkov, and he assisted the art dealer Leo Castelli in the organization of the first "Ninth Street Show," arguably the first comprehensive display of Abstract Expressionist work. At this time, he achieved much success, and his paintings entered the collections of the Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. In 1953, he purchased a house near that of Jackson Pollock in The Springs, East Hampton, an area that was developing into an artists' colony. Three years later, Marca-Relli identified Pollock's body for the police after his fatal car accident. This experience moved him to paint *The Death of Jackson Pollock* in that same year.

1. William C. Agee, *Marca-Relli* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1967), 9.

Helen Frankenthaler (1928–2011)

Good Luck Orange, 1969
Acrylic on canvas, 49½ x 29 inches

Over a career that spans six decades, Frankenthaler's art has received great critical acclaim, and has been noted for its painterly virtuosity and celebration of experimentation. As the artist herself described: "I am an artist of paint, making discoveries." Perhaps even more important than the artist's technical innovations is her unique sense of "place." She invites the viewer into pictures that are themselves environments—places where she has been, places she has dreamed of, and abstract places of personal and artistic interests. Writing in response to a 1975 exhibition of the artist's work at André Emmerich Gallery, the art critic Hilton Kramer praised her ability to conjure novel viewing experiences: "The paintings of Helen Frankenthaler occupy a distinctive place in the recent history of American abstract painting. . . . We feel ourselves in the presence of imaginary landscapes—landscapes distilled into chromatic essence."[1]

In the mid- to late-1960s Frankenthaler's style moved toward formal simplicity and compositional restraint, leaving behind the more gestural, expressionistic work of the 1950s. Elderfield characterizes these pictures as "unequivocally abstract, and yet they represent in their geometry the refined and distilled essence of earlier kinetic, imagist drawing."[2] Frankenthaler experimented in several canvases, *Good Luck Orange* included, with leaving an "irregularly framed interior space."[3] Frankenthaler achieves a new clarity in the work of this period through the reduction of formal elements and the use of blank canvas as centerpiece.

In this way, the canvas becomes a field to be divided rather than an arena for action, as with the more gestural aspect of Abstract Expressionism. Bare canvas frequently serves as a compositional element, creating a blank area that draws attention to its surrounding chromatic fields. Art historian Barbara Rose appreciates the "grave monumentality" in these works from the mid-late 1960s.[4] Paintings from this period often express a relationship to nature. The structured spaces of her canvases generate the sense of asymmetrical balance found in nature, and her suggestive titles encourage our free associations.

Frankenthaler's careful design partly derives from her use of Cubist compositional devices, such as the blocking out space with counterbalancing elements (a point E.A. Carmean, Jr., the Director of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, emphasizes in his monograph on the artist). The artist herself explains the look of these paintings as the result of dialogue between color shapes and drawing; she describes "well ordered collisions . . . where shape and drawing become one."[5]
In this painterly approach, she stands out among her contemporaries, creating a unique body of work that lies in between the gestural abstraction of Jackson Pollock and the restrained Color Field approach of Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and Mark Rothko.

Good Luck Orange was painted in the year of Frankenthaler's large retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art. This exhibition was nothing short of a revelation for many, and irreversibly solidified Frankenthaler's reputation as an important and innovative artist.

The luminosity of Frankenthaler's paintings derives from her unusual "soak stain" method, which launched the style of painting in the 1960s that would become known as Color Field. This staining created a heightened tension between image and abstraction. The weave of the raw canvas was visible within the painted forms, and, at the same time, the visibility of the canvas beneath the painted surface negated the sense of illusion and depth. In this way, Frankenthaler's innovative device called attention to both the material and the nature of the medium. The technique also generated a new range of liquid-like atmospheric effects reminiscent of the watercolors of John Marin.

1. Hilton Kramer, "Art: Lyric Vein in Frankenthaler's Paintings," *The New York Times*, 15 November 1975, 21.
2. John Elderfield, *Frankenthaler* (New York: Abrams, 1989), 203.
3. Ibid., 202.
4. Barbara Rose, *Helen Frankenthaler* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), 98.
5. Quoted in E.A. Carmean, Jr., *Helen Frankenthaler: A Paintings Retrospective* (New York: Abrams; Fort Worth, Texas: Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 1989), 7.

Helen Frankenthaler (1928–2011)

Sneaky Pete, 1978
Acrylic on canvas, 59¼ x 106¼ inches
Signed upper left

The best-known pioneer of stain painting, Helen Frankenthaler created translucent, vibrant, fluid and color-saturated canvases that established her as a leader within the New York School in the early 1950s. Much admired by the taste-making critic Clement Greenberg, Frankenthaler's experimentation with pouring and soaking her paint onto unprimed canvas would influence the work of Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis, who famously called her "a bridge between Pollock and what was possible."[1] Frankenthaler enjoyed a long and productive career and in 1969 received a retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art. As scholar John Elderfield has noted, this exhibition prompted the artist's reflection on her own work as well as commentary from the critics. Hilton Kramer concluded that while Frankenthaler made a great contribution to abstract painting with the staining technique, " the real interest of her works lies elsewhere . . . in the quality of its expression rather than the technical means by which that expression is realized."[2]

The mid-1970s was a particularly fruitful period for Frankenthaler. Her major solo traveling exhibition organized by the Corcoran opened in 1975, and she showed at the Guggenheim Museum and the Jacksonville Art Museum in 1975 and 1977, respectively. In 1976, Frankenthaler designed a commissioned poster for the Fort Worth Art Museum and taught at Harvard University and at Radcliffe College. That same year, she accepted honorary degrees from Yale University and Bard College.

In March 1976, Frankenthaler traveled to Arizona to give a lecture at the Phoenix Art Museum. The southwestern landscape inspired her to explore terracotta colors in her work and influenced complex compositions with atmospheric qualities. The earth-toned palette and carefully layered forms of *Sneaky Pete*, overlaid with gestural tracings of grey, gold, and pink, suggest that this painting may be part of the group—which also includes *Natural Answer (*1976, Art Gallery of Ontario)—influenced by that trip.

Sneaky Pete reintroduces passages of impasto in the small spots of deep chestnut at right and white at center top. This technique was prevalent in Frankenthaler's early Abstract Expressionist work but absent from her practice for many years after the advent of her signature soak-stain technique. Even the thicker impasto, however, gently bleeds into the unprimed canvas at its edges, resulting in that sensual mixing of color distinctive of Frankenthaler's work. "Up close," observed Thomas B. Hess of her work, "you can see how [pigments] have been meshed and folded, one into the other, for unnamable hues—strange bicolors, like the green-orange iridescence of a scarab's wing or the indigo-yellow of certain plums."[3]

Like several of the exponents of Abstract Expressionism, she was concerned with the forms and energies latent in nature. She often characterized herself as more interested in the drawing of color than color itself, for in her draughtsman-like approach and "well ordered collisions" of paint and drawing, she generated motion in her compositions. In this painterly approach, she stands out among her contemporaries, creating a unique body of work that lies in between the gestural abstraction of Jackson Pollock and the restrained Color Field approach of Louis, Noland, and Mark Rothko.

From 1958 to 1971, Frankenthaler was married to fellow artist Robert Motherwell, and the two maintained studios in New York and Provincetown. She also traveled extensively, often with Clement Greenberg, and loosely derived inspiration from the places she visited for the color palettes or moods of her paintings. Italy, France, Nova Scotia, Majorca, Barcelona, Germany, the Netherlands, Arizona, and Provincetown all proved inspirational to the artist. During her travels, she visited renowned art museums, studying old masters, and later she created paintings inspired by artists' works in these collections, ranging from Titian, Rembrandt, and Goya to Manet, Matisse, and even the Japanese artist Hiroshige. Her paintings have also drawn comparisons to J.M.W. Turner's exquisite meditations on mid-winter sunsets and Frederic Edwin Church's *Cotopaxi*.[4]

1. Quoted in Karen Wilkin, *Frankenthaler at Eighty: Six Decades*. (New York: Knoedler & Company, 2008), 8.
2. Hilton Kramer cited in John Elderfield, *Frankenthaler* (New York: Abrams, 1989), 213.
3. Cited in John Elderfield, *Frankenthaler* (New York: Abrams, 1989), 304.
4. Most notably to Church by E.C. Goossen in "Helen Frankenthaler: Notes on Some Recent Paintings," *Bennington Review* (April 1978): 46, and to Turner by Michael McKinnon, comp., *The History of Western Art,* sec. 31: Art of the '70s (London: Visual Publications International, 1982).

Theodoros Stamos (1922–1997)

Infinity Field-Torino Series, 1989
Acrylic on canvas, 66 x 50 inches
Signed on verso

Theorodos Stamos is heralded as one of the few abstract painters who bridged the New York School's first and second generations.[1] Like his New York School contemporaries, in particular his close friends Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko, Stamos continuously explored the workings of artistic form through color. In reviewing the painter's 1970 exhibition at André Emmerich Gallery, Peter Schjeldahl wrote, "Stamos has always been committed to effects achieved directly with color, texture and abstract composition, letting the dynamics of paint-on-canvas carry the freight of his feelings, which makes him an Abstract Expressionist, if anyone is."[2]

In his last series of works, which he executed from 1971 until his death 1997, Stamos turned toward his heritage for inspiration. All of the paintings produced during this period were part of his Infinity Field series, a complex meditation on nature, humanity, and history begun on the Greek island of Lefkada, where Stamos resided part-time from 1970 onward. Stamos's father was born in Lefkada, and thus the isle assumed a cherished position for the artist as a place of refuge and lore.

In the *Infinity Field* works, Stamos explored his interest in mythology and Eastern philosophy. An island in the Ionian Sea, Lefkada conjured themes drawn from Greek civilization and myth as well as his own personal history. As Hans Dichand described the "dark paintings" of the eighties: "clouds seem to have amassed in front of the sun; no doubt they are the shadows of the mythical underworld of classical Greece, ever present since its archaic beginnings."[3]

Infinity Field-Torino Series, 1989 exhibits the jagged horizontal line, color fields, and mystical, archaic imagery characteristic of the series. Despite their abstract compositions, scholar Ralph Pomeroy refers to these works as "landscapes," because the horizontal lines impress upon the mind the idea of a horizon, a notion to which the series title—*Infinity Fields*—nods."[4] In this canvas, and in other paintings of the *Torino* series, the silhouettes of supernatural beasts appear in abstract, painterly outlines. In *Infinity Field-Torino Series* Stamos represents the creature with a hulking torso that drips down the canvas as if painted in blood. However, the subject of the painting is both mystical and religious. The title of the work, the sparse figural delineation, and the dripping red paint reference the shroud of Turin. According to scholar Orsalia Partheni, after traveling to Jerusalem in 1983, Stamos began "to think of Turin, Italy where Christ's shroud was allegedly found. These specific journeys, and the paintings produced thereafter, *Infinity Field Jerusalem* series and *Infinity Field-Torino* series, establish an even greater specificity of symbolism in his work. There are allusions to fire and blood and the use of graphic elements that recall ancient scripts."[5] The figure, an amalgamation of human and beast, simultaneously evokes the human-headed monsters of Rothko's early work *Antigone*, 1947. Like Rothko, Stamos divides his composition into horizontal bands while incorporating mythical figurative imagery.

Stamos was an active player in the New York avant-garde during the early years of Abstract Expressionism. His work first caught the eye of noted dealer Betty Parsons, who organized his first solo exhibition at her Wakefield Gallery and Bookstore in 1943, when the artist was just twenty-one. Other commercial and critical success followed, and from 1943 to 1947, Stamos received three one-man shows and participated in several important group exhibitions, including the Whitney Museum's annual and the important early show of Abstract Expressionist painting, "The Ideographic Picture," which was curated by Barnett Newman at Betty Parsons Gallery. Stamos established lasting friendships with both Newman and Rothko, who shared with the younger artist an interest in primitive and mythological imagery.

1. *Theodoros Stamos, Selections 1959–1986,* exh. cat. (Naples, Fl.: Metcalfe Klopfer Gallery, 1999), 8.
2. Ralph Pomeroy, *Stamos* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), 14.
3. Hans Dichand, "A Visit to Lefkada" in *Theodoros Stamos: "The Dark Paintings"* (Zurich: Turske and Turske, 1985), 9.
4. Cited in Pomeroy, *Stamos,* 51.
5. Orsalia Partheni, "Chronology," in Anna Kafetsi ed., *Theodoros Stamos 1922–1997: A Retrospective* (Athens, Greece: National Gallery and Alexandros Soutzos Museum, 1997), 480.

Julian Schnabel (B. 1951)

Malabaristas, 1993
Oil, gesso, cardboard on drop cloth
81 x 71 inches

One of the most potent artistic personalities to emerge from the heady 1980s, Julian Schnabel's art, and life, is generally oversized in some way: much of his work is large in stature, as in his famous "plate paintings;" much of his life is grand and beautiful, exemplified by his opulent Venetian palazzo in New York's West Village; and even his collage pieces are imbued with a compositional energy that seems barely contained. Schnabel was a major figure in the American Neo-Expressionist movement of the 1970s and 1980s, which developed a brash, emotional, and often violent style in reaction to the overly intellectual purity of conceptual and minimalist art.

Early visits to the Brooklyn Museum were formative for the young, Brooklyn-born Schnabel. At fifteen he moved with his family to Brownsville, Texas, a rapidly growing port city that profited greatly from free trade with Mexico. Schnabel himself made frequent trips across the border, fostering a lifelong interest in travel and multiculturalism. He eventually studied art at the University of Houston and then in the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art, whose notable alumni also include Roberta Smith, Jenny Holzer, and Félix González-Torrez.

Schnabel traveled extensively throughout Europe in the 1970s. His travels would be highly influential to his practice, and as he encountered different cultures he often incorporated elements he found interesting into his work. When asked about the effect of travel on his art, Schnabel replied that "there's an ethnographic appearance to certain kinds of marks, certain kinds of materials, things that are in common or common in these different places in the world, that carry cultural, religious, political implications . . . they carry the very loaded resonance of this simultaneity of time that informs our understanding of our own existence."[1] The work of Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi was especially inspiring. Gaudi's heavily encrusted architectural surfaces would influence Schnabel's "plate paintings" of the 1980s, in which a field of broken ceramic plates fixed on canvas serves as the ground for the painting.

Several important collectors acquired Schnabel's work from his first show at Mary Boone Gallery in 1979, including Patick Lannan, Bruno Bischofberger, and Charles Saatchi.[2] From that show forward his career rose almost meteorically. Along with the vast plate paintings, Schnabel used other nonconventional supports for his work, including wax, velvet, wood, and pieces of found tarpaulin, and often utilized found objects in his compositions.

Of his decision to work with plates, Schnabel has said that their appeal came from "their reflective quality and also the fact that they were things that we're familiar with, that we eat off of, that we use, that we would recognize. At the same time, because of their familiarity, it was obvious that I was making something that was a real thing, it wasn't a representation of something, and there was something concrete about that."[3]

The concreteness of Schnabel's plates is also found in his later collages, which are anchored by real-world, found objects. A torn and flattened cardboard box from an Italian poultry company sits at the center of *Malabaristas*, a characteristically large collage from 1993. The eggs this box may have carried could have been the tools of the titular *malabaristas* (jugglers), and serves as a solid, geometric anchor for the graffiti-like text above it. This text and the other markings exemplify Schnabel's signature expressionist hand, and this combination of rough brushwork and collaged elements creates a highly evocative surface. The edges of the tarpaulin ground barely seem to contain the compositional energy, as both text and brushstrokes extend beyond the edges of the picture plane.

Schnabel is also a highly successful director, whose films include *Basquiat* (1996), *Before Night Falls* (2000), and *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007), which won the Palm D'Or and earned him the prize for best director at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival, the Golden Globe for best director, and a nomination for an Academy Award.

Interest in Schnabel's work has risen sharply over the last several years as critical distance allows the work to be seen anew. His 2011 retrospective at the Museo Correr in Venice was very well received, and he has recently been celebrated by several smaller shows at the East Village gallery Oko, Creative Time, and the Brant Foundation Study Center, and is planning a forthcoming show at Gagosian Gallery.

Schnabel lives and works in New York, where he continues to pursue projects in film and the visual arts.

1. Quoted in PACE press release.
2. Brown, Mick. "Julian Schnabel: Larging It". London: *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 January 2008.
3. Quoted in Miller, Michael H. "The Resurrection of Julian Schnabel." New York: *Gallerist.com,* 26 March 2013.

Upcoming Exhibition

Allan D'Arcangelo
Pop and Beyond: Works from the Sixties

May 1st through May 29th
Exhibition reception on Thursday, May 8th

Like his Pop Art contemporaries, Allan D'Arcangelo found inspiration in the everyday and in mass culture. The artist incorporated commercial packaging, popular personalities, and advertising logos into his compositions. However, it was American highways, road signs, and the visual language of the country's modern terrain that particularly inspired the artist. His crisp compositions are infused with iconic symbols familiar to any traveler and his simplified perspectival landscapes put the viewer squarely in the driver's seat. As his oeuvre developed, he added overlapping barriers to the scenes, both painted and superimposed with actual objects that obscured the hard-edged vistas. These works, which are referred to as "Barriers" ultimately, led to his "Constellation" series that further refined the images into abstraction. The exhibition will present approximately twenty representative examples of these various styles dating from 1962 to 1970.

The show is accompanied by a catalogue which includes an inspired essay by art historian, Eileen Costello. Dr. Costello is the Editor and Project Director of *The Catalogue Raisonné of the Drawings of Jasper Johns;* an Adjunct Professor, Hunter College; and Primary Researcher for the *Ad Reinhardt Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings and Works on Paper*. She is also working on the *Brice Marden Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings and Works on Paper*. Her in-depth research and fresh perspective on D'Archangelo's work will most definitely add to the scholarship on this artist.

Opposite:
Proposition #3, 1966
Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

Below:
The Bride, 1962
Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 54 inches

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