



THE FRALIN
MUSEUM OF ART

— AT THE —
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Writer's Eye 2016

Self-Guided Tour

Welcome to Writer's Eye 2016

We invite you to participate in *Writer's Eye 2016*, the 30th annual literary competition organized by The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia. Introduced by docents Carole Armstrong and Valerie Morris in 1986, this annual ekphrastic writing competition challenges writers of all ages to create original poetry and prose inspired by works of art. Over the past 30 years, it has become the Museum's flagship educational program.

What is ekphrasis?

Both visual art and creative writing are forms of expression that give voice to the human experience, and poets have used visual art as inspiration for centuries. The word ekphrasis is a direct transcription from the Greek *ek*, "out of," and *phrasis*, meaning "speech" or "expression," and originally applied to verbal description of the visual aspects of a real or imagined object or work of art. Homer's description of Achilles' shield in Book 18 of the *Iliad* is the earliest recorded example of ekphrastic writing. Over time the concept of ekphrasis evolved from simple description of an artwork to any poetic expression or narrative inspired by a work of art. Published in 1820, John Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn* is one of the most famous examples of ekphrastic writing. More recently, poet Jan Greenberg has talked about her belief in "the power of art to inspire language," and author and educator Georgia Heard calls language "the poet's paint." Thus, ekphrastic writing is an ancient tradition that continues to inspire writers today!

About the competition

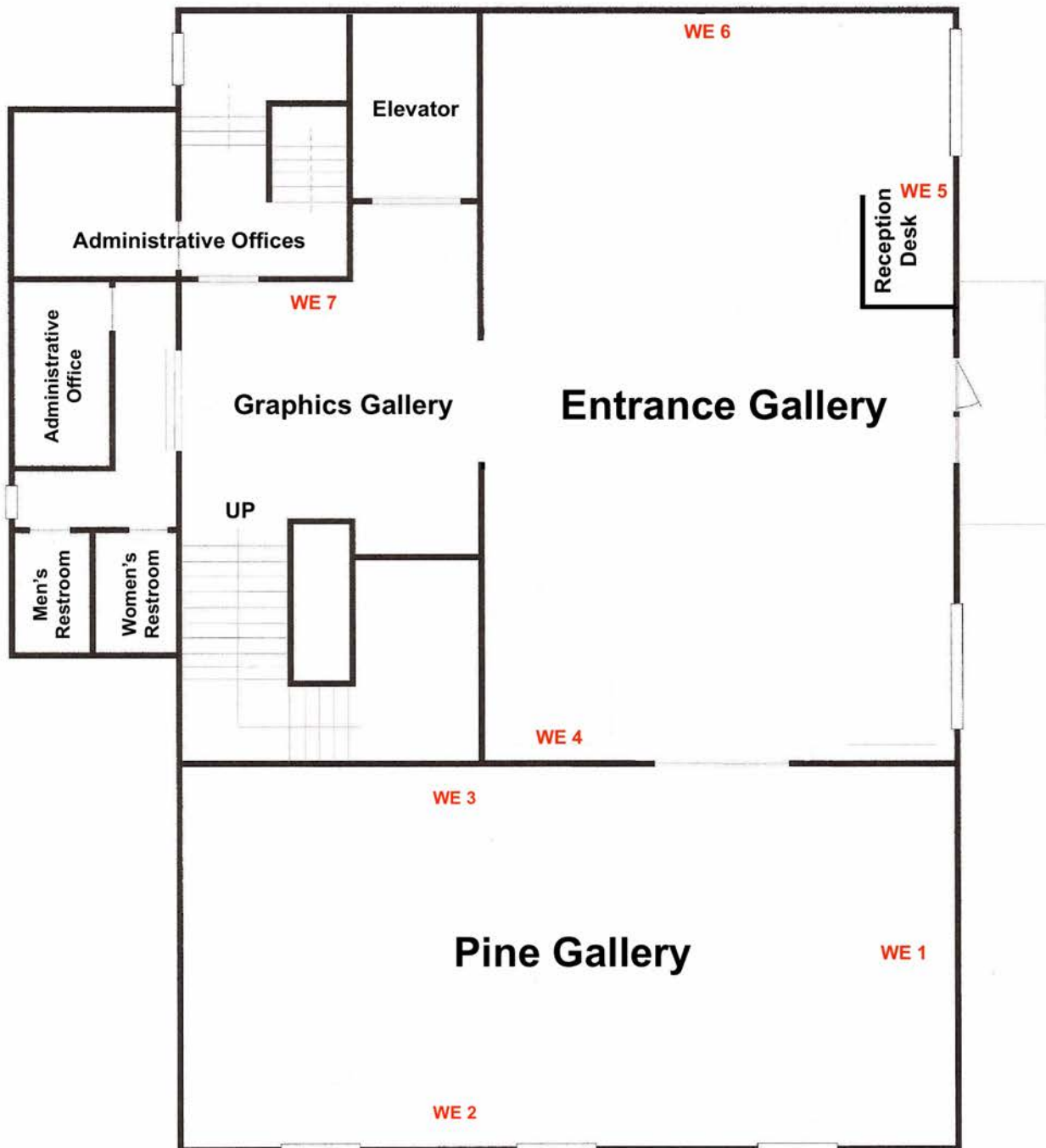
Compositions for *Writer's Eye 2016* can be submitted in the categories of Prose or Poetry, for grades 3–5, 6–8, 9–12, and University/Adult. Entries for grades 3-8 are judged anonymously by panels of local teachers and writing professionals. Each year two published writers from Virginia are invited to judge the high school and university/adult entries. This year the Distinguished Judge for Poetry is award-winning poet and editor, Lisa Russ Spaar, and the Distinguished Judge for Prose will be novelist and short story writer, Christopher Tilghman. Winners are honored at a ceremony in the spring, and first, second, and third-place winning entries are published in the annual *Writer's Eye* anthology. More information is available at: www.virginia.edu/artmuseum/edu.

About the selections

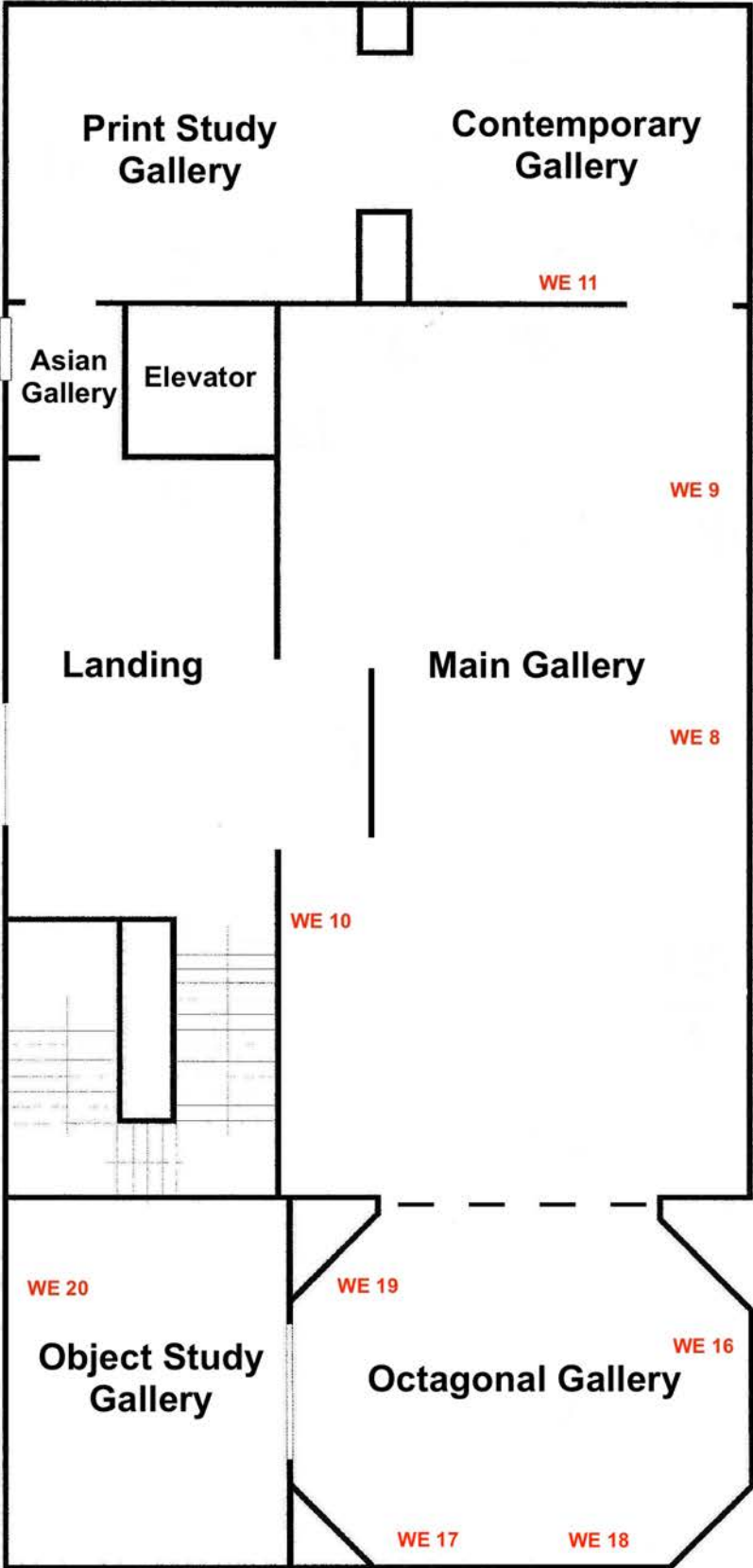
Art selections for *Writer's Eye 2016* have been drawn from four exhibitions: *Andy Warhol: Icons*, *The GREAT WAR: Printmakers of World War I from the VMFA*, *A Gift of Knowing: The Art of Dorothea Rockburne*, and *New Acquisitions: Photography*, as well as from the Museum's permanent collection.

We hope that this self-guided tour of this year's
Writer's Eye selections will inspire you to make your own contribution
to the longstanding tradition of ekphrastic writing!

Museum's First Floor



Museum's Second Floor





Sir Muirhead Bone

Scottish, 1876-1953

Building Ships: A Shipyard Seen from a Big Crane, from *The Great War: Britain's Efforts and Ideals*, ca. 1917

Lithograph, 20 3/8 x 15 3/8 in
(51.8 x 30 cm)

Courtesy of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts,
Richmond, Promised Gift of Frank Raysor,
L.4.2013.2. Photograph by David Stover,
© Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

1. **Muirhead Bone** (1876-1953) was appointed the first official War Artist of Great Britain in the midst of World War I. He was commissioned to make drawings for propaganda and historical record. Unlike other war artists who created large paintings in studios working from notes, Bone drew in a hand-held sketchbook that allowed him to capture images on location, as they appeared in life. Although this etching doesn't resemble typical war-time propaganda of the time, it still conveys the greatness and scale of the British naval forces through a bird's-eye view. By portraying this ship as a work in progress, the image acknowledges the hard work of the ongoing war effort while encouraging others to join in. The composition of this scene is framed so the viewer is looking at the scene from within the crane—allowing for a literal inside look that invites the audience to feel as if they too are a part of the war effort.

- What would it feel like to operate this crane?
- What sounds would you hear in this scene?
- Would there be different sounds down below than what you would hear up in the crane?
- Imagine the crane operator's thoughts about his work, or the people on the ground.



Kerr Eby

American, 1889-1946

Dawn, the 75's Follow Up, 1919

Drypoint printed in black ink
on wove paper, 11 1/16 x 15 in
(28.1 x 38.1 cm)

Courtesy of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts,
Richmond, Promised Gift of Frank Raysor,
L.4.2013.7. Photograph by David Stover,
© Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

2. **Kerr Eby** (1889-1946) enlisted in the American army during World War I, where he used his artistic talents to design military camouflage to disguise large weapons. Inspired by his own experiences, Eby's work reflects a horror and disillusionment he felt towards the violence he witnessed. He professed many anti-war sentiments throughout his life and hoped that his work could prevent future wars. His illustrations aimed to memorialize those "who gave their lives for an idea, the men who never came back." This image depicts the aftermath of a battle—the detritus of war and the uninviting weather add to the burden of the downtrodden soldiers, whose individual faces aren't visible.

- What adjectives or metaphors would you use to describe the weather in this image?
- If you were in this situation, how do you think you might feel about the war effort? What thoughts would you have?
- What do you think happened just before, or just after this moment?



William Strang

Scottish, 1859-1921

The Convalescent, 1915

Engraving and drypoint printed
in black ink on laid paper,
22 3/4 x 17 3/16 in (57.8 x 43.7 cm)

Courtesy of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts,
Richmond, Promised Gift of Frank Raysor,
L.14.2012.147. Photograph by David Stover,
© Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

3. By the time Britain entered World War I, **William Strang** (1859-1921) was considered too old for conscription into the army. However, since all four of his sons were sent to the front, Strang still felt a connection to the war. He shifted the focus of his work to highlight the horrors of war and its effect on the home front, capitalizing on the power of the image to make the abstract war real for the public. This engraving depicts a woman in mourning helping a wounded soldier in his recovery. The emphasis of the detailed texture of the woman presents a stark contrast to the ghostly effect of the thin lines used to render the soldier. The difference between the two figures speaks to the various ways that war affects everyone involved.

- Imagine what the children are thinking or saying in this scene.
- The artist has shown the woman in much detail, while the man is a line drawing. What could be the underlying meaning of the artist's different treatment of the figures?
- Imagine a conversation between the man and the woman in this picture.



Larry Poons

American, b. 1937

Untitled 77-A-9, 1977

Acrylic on canvas,
103 x 48 in (261.6 x 121.9 cm)

Museum Purchase, 1977.21
Art © Larry Poons /Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

4. **Larry Poons** is an American painter who was born in Ogibuko, Japan in 1937. Early in his career he created "Op art" paintings of circles and dots, which were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York when he was just 28. Op art was a 1960s painting style in which optical effects achieved by manipulation and repetition of geometric forms were dominant over other aesthetic considerations. Later Poons moved towards abstraction, and this work was part of a series of action paintings involving large quantities of paint thrown and splashed at the canvas. Poons originally studied as a musician, and his gestural, emotional and improvisational paintings evoke and rhythm and underlying musicality.

- Describe the mood evoked by this painting.
- Describe the actions that Poons used to create this painting.
- What could the vertical dripping paint represent, and what does it remind you of?



Robert Strini

American, b. 1942

Comet, 1991

Plywood covered with modeling paste and chestnut bark,
58 x 24 x 22 in (147.3 x 61 x 55.9 cm)

Gift of Michael T. and Sylvia Gage
by exchange with the artist, 2015.9
© Robert Strini

5. **Robert Strini** (born 1942) is a Charlottesville sculptor who believes that art needs to have mystery and passion. This piece, *Comet*, seems to exist outside the laws of gravity—each piece is invisibly supported, and seems suspended in space. Strini named the piece after an icy planetary body that—while massive compared to our normal, Earthly surroundings—is miniscule compared to the planetary bodies in the Solar System and the Universe as a whole. There is also a connection between the Moon-like sphere whose orbit would influence tides, and the driftwood, turned from strong tree to fragile bark by those same tides.

- What does this sculpture remind you of?
- What other objects could its parts represent?
- Does the sculpture look like a small model of something really big, or a big model of something really small?
- If this sculpture were in motion, how would it move?



Robert Reed

American, 1938-2014

San Romano, Jefferson Red Devil, 1980-1981

Aqua-Tec on canvas,
72 x 144 in (182.9 x 365.8 cm)

Museum Purchase with the FUNd, 1989.36a-b
© Estate of Robert Reed

6. **Robert Reed** (1938-2014) was born in Charlottesville, Virginia, and graduated in 1958 from Morgan State College, one of the oldest historically black colleges in the United States. Reed attended segregated schools in Charlottesville, and narrowly escaped the closing of public schools in resistance to integration in 1958-59, known as Massive Resistance. The painting's title makes reference to Reed's time at Jefferson High School—now the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center—and its school team, the Red Devils. The school colors, red and black, interplay in a colorful composition of circles, diagonals, and grids, inspired by 15th century paintings of the battle of San Romano, also referenced in the title. Reed earned a BFA and an MA from Yale University and went on to become a beloved and influential professor there for nearly 50 years. He remains the only African-American ever tenured by the Yale Department of Art.

- Describe the layers of shapes in this composition.
- Does this painting seem vibrant and cheerful to you or and chaotic? And what do you see that informs your answer?
- What stories does this work inspire?



Richard Bosman

American, b. 1944

Lightning, 1989

Lithograph,

46 1/2 x 31 in (118.1 x 78.7 cm)

Museum purchase, 1991.7.2

© Richard Bosman

7. **Richard Bosman** was born 1944 in Madras, India, and moved to Australia when he was 12. He trained as an artist in London, New York and Maine. His father was chief officer of an oil tanker, and a merchant marine. Possibly as a result of this early maritime experience, much of Bosman's work depicts storm-tossed seas, shipwrecks, and people in conflict with nature, and with each other. Bosman's work is described as New Expressionism, a return to figurative imagery in art combined with an interest in making contact with viewers and engaging their emotions. Many of Bosman's prints feature images of nature in sequence: the night sky, seascapes, dramatic weather. In *Lightning*, the four stacked images, like frames on a film roll, lend the work a narrative quality.

- The print is entitled *Lightning*. Does the print remind you of anything else found in nature?
- Describe the sounds, smells, or feelings you would have if you were present during this lightning strike.
- The artist Richard Bosman created images in sequence. What changes occur in the transition between images? What stays the same?



Attributed to Piero della Francesca

Italian, 1416/17-1492

Saint Apollonia, ca. 1455/1460

Tempera on poplar panel,

15 1/4 x 11 in (38.8 x 28 cm)

Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington,

Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1952.5.19

8. **Piero della Francesca** (1416/17-1492) originally painted this panel as part of the *Sant'Agostino* polyptych for the convent of monks of St. Augustine in Borgo, Sansepolcro. According to the *Golden Legend*, Saint Apollonia was a virgin martyr who was attacked by anti-Christian men who shattered or pulled her teeth. This painting was part of a larger altarpiece in a chapel, used in worship by the monks of St. Augustine. The composition is that of a traditional byzantine icon, in which the martyr is seen with her attributes—the identifying features that help viewers to recognize her. Piero della Francesca is known for the way he represents the solidity of his figures and for the shading he used to represent the folds of her clothing.

- How would our view of Apollonia change if she had been shown with a different background—in a room or in a landscape?
- Describe Saint Apollonia's expression, and how the painting would be different if she were laughing or crying.
- Who are some modern figures who might be honored as St. Apollonia is honored here?
- Is there anything in your life that you feel strongly enough about to endure persecution?



Andy Warhol

American, 1928-1987

Rupert Jasen Smith, American 1953-1989 (printer)
Sandro Botticelli, Florentine 1444/1445-1510
(associated)

Details of Renaissance Paintings:
Sandro Botticelli, Birth of Venus, 1482,
1984

Screen print on Arches Aquarelle (Cold
Pressed) paper, 32 x 44 in (81.3 x 11.8 cm)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh: Founding
Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation
for the Visual Arts, Inc., 1998.1.2473.3 © 2016 The
Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.
/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

9. **Andy Warhol** (1928-1987) was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After attending Carnegie Mellon University, Warhol moved to New York City to work as a commercial illustrator, and began painting in the late 1950s. In the early 1960s, Warhol created the Campbell's soup cans, Coca-Cola bottles, and Brillo soap pad boxes for which he first became well known, and also began to make silk-screened portraits of celebrities. By the 1980s Warhol had become a pop-culture celebrity in his own right, and his silk-screened portraits were sought after by celebrities and socialites. In this print, Warhol appropriates Sandro Botticelli's Renaissance masterpiece, *Birth of Venus, 1482*, and recasts her in vibrant, almost cartoonish color. In doing so, Warhol updates the Renaissance icon of ideal classical beauty, and turns her into a 20th century "Warhol."

- How has Warhol's cropping of Venus' original surroundings changed her?
- The original Venus was a symbol of ideal beauty, virginity, and eroticism. Has Warhol's re-packaging changed our perception of her?
- What might Venus be thinking as she considers how people have looked at her or portrayed her over the centuries?



Andy Warhol

American, 1928-1987

Reigning Queens (Royal Edition)
(Queen Ntombi), 1985

Screen print and diamond dust on
Lenox Museum Board,
39 3/8 x 31 1/2 in (100 x 80 cm)

Courtesy of Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips
Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. Extra, out of the edition,
designated for research and educational purposes only, gift of
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., 2014.23
© 2016 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.
/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

10. Continuing his interest in celebrity, **Andy Warhol** created the *Reigning Queens* series based on official or media photographs of the world's reigning female monarchs at that time. In this series, Warhol uses his classic Pop art style to remove the queens from their typical royal setting and reimagine them in the flamboyance of 1980s culture. Several of the prints contain diamond dust applied to the wet ink. Here, Warhol depicts Queen Ntombi Twala of Swaziland, who has ruled as spiritual leader of Swaziland since the mid-1980s alongside her son, who is the administrative leader of the country. Following his death in 1987, Swaziland honored Warhol by producing a postage stamp with his image of their queen.

- Queen Ntombi is the queen of Swaziland, a small country in Africa. In what ways does she appear regal?
- What kind of responsibilities do you think this woman has as a queen?
- Do you think Queen Ntombi likes this image of herself? Why, or why not?



Andy Warhol
 American, 1928-1987
Cowboys and Indians: Mother and Child,
 1986

Screen print on Lenox Museum Board,
 36 x 36 in (91.4 x 91.4 cm)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh: Founding
 Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation
 for the Visual Arts, Inc., 1998.1.2494.11
 © 2016 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual
 Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

11. **Andy Warhol** was enthralled by American popular culture, including American brands, American celebrities, and stories of the American West. Warhol's series, *Cowboys and Indians*, reconfigures famous images associated with the American West in Warhol's classic Pop Art style. Even to those not familiar with the specifics of the history of these Native Americans, the images Warhol selected to silkscreen are ones that Americans could easily identify as being representative of "American Indians." However, Warhol romanticizes his subjects to make a point—to illustrate how society perceives the American West. Warhol considers the public's perception of the West to be highly romanticized and largely ahistorical. In this piece, he presents two stereotyped American Indian characters—the mother and the child—in garish colors on a white background, and removed from their situation, as types rather than individuals.

- Does this work portray any universal emotions or experiences?
- Do you think that this image shows reality, or a romanticized version of life?
- Do you see any parallels between Warhol's *Mother and Child*, and depictions of the Virgin Mary and Christ?



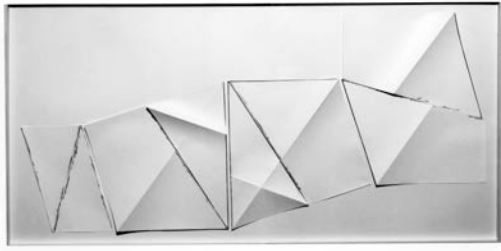
Ann Gale
 American, b. 1966
Rachel, 2007

Oil on canvas,
 58 x 46 in (147.3 x 116.8 cm)

Courtesy of Dolby Chadwick Gallery, GALA-039
 © 2016 Ann Gale

12. **Ann Gale** (born 1966) is a contemporary figurative painter whose assertive brushstrokes render her figures in rough patches of color, creating images that suggest detail through the overlay of various textures and colors. Gale's work resembles the Impressionists in the way she juxtaposes abstract patches of contrasting color to create images. Before she commences painting, Gale spends several hours getting to know the models that she paints. In doing this, she develops a more intimate and emotional portrayal of the individuals she paints. Gale spends several months, and even up to two years, completing each portrait, and aims for emotional intensity rather than representation of reality.

- Who do you think this woman is?
- Describe the emotions or thoughts you imagine her to have.
- What might have happened before this moment, and what might happen next?



Dorothea Rockburne

American, b. 1932

Conservation Class #9, 1973

Strathmore 2-ply paper and graphite,
mounted on gessoed Masonite,
28 x 69 in (71.1 x 175.3 cm)

Courtesy of the Studio of Dorothea Rockburne,
DR 0711© 2016 Dorothea Rockburne/Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York

13. **Dorothea Rockburne** (born 1932) was influenced by her studies with mathematician Max Dehn while she was at Black Mountain College in Asheville, NC. Dehn taught Rockburne math, with an emphasis on forms found in nature, and spurred her interest in the fields of astronomy and topology—a branch of math related to geometry that studies the dimensionality of objects. *Conservation Class #9* is part of the *Conservation* series, which consists of ten two-sided drawings on a 30- by 40-inch plain sheets of white Strathmore paper, each folded in a different way. In this work, the paper is roughly folded to create a kite-like cascade of triangles. Describing paper as an active material, Rockburne says that she “came to realize that a piece of paper is a metaphysical object. You write on it, you draw on it, you fold it.” With its repetitions of folds, this piece emphasizes the presence of its creator and stresses the role of process in Rockburne’s art.

- What does this sculpture remind you of?
- Does the fact that Rockburne based this piece on mathematical principles influence the way that you think about it?
- If you were assigned to make a large paper sculpture, what would you be thinking as you made it?



Dorothea Rockburne

American, b. 1932

Prime Partition Three, 2006-2007

Windsor Newton watercolor on
Dura-Lar® stretched over canvas,
40 x 30 in (101.6 x 76.2 cm)

Courtesy of the Studio of Dorothea Rockburne,
DR 1755 © 2016 Dorothea Rockburne /Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York

14. In this work, **Dorothea Rockburne** sought to “make concrete objects from the vision of space [she] was seeing in her head... and perceive and construct a spatial geometry for the 21st century.” *Prime Partition Three* is meant to be a concrete, visual representation of the deeply conceptual ideas of mathematics, astronomy and topology, which so interested Rockburne. Here, she intends the circular curves—reminiscent of planetary and astronomical movements—to be in transition from one to four imagined dimensions. Therefore, the translucent-transparent layers can be seen as a sort of multi-dimensional overlay. Rockburne explained, “In simple terms, topology can be described as a way of thinking about the space in our universe as one continuous surface with gravitational indentations that we call stars and planets.”

- What is happening in this picture, and what will happen next?
- If this image were in a movie, what sounds would accompany it?
- Describe the mood of this painting. How has the artist created this mood?



Dorothea Rockburne

American, b. 1932

Arcane Egyptian Astronomy, 2011-2015

Lascaux Aquacryl paint, rolled copper, gold leaf on Arches 300 lb cold pressed paper, 30 1/2 x 22 3/4 x 2 in (77.5 x 57.8 x 5.1 cm)

Courtesy of the Studio of Dorothea Rockburne, DR 1898 © 2016 Dorothea Rockburne/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

15. Like **Dorothea Rockburne's** earlier work, this painting responds to complex mathematical and astronomical ideas. Yet, Rockburne is also endeavoring to create visual work that stands on its own, rather than leaning on its mathematical foundations. The composition is broken up by navy and gold figure eights that divide the piece into the distinct parts representing the Golden Ratio, a mathematical equation found in art and nature. Likewise, this work also ties into Rockburne's lifelong interest in the depiction and use of light in ancient Egyptian art. In this painting, Rockburne uses the concept of distributed light rather than focused light, giving the impression of the work being lit from within. Rockburne seems to be painting the cosmos, exploring both geometrically and visually what happens to stardust after neutron stars explode.

- Do aspects of this picture remind you of space, and if so, how?
- Are the shapes and colors in this place still, or are they moving? Describe their motion.
- Describe the sounds that accompany this image, or if it is silent, describe the silence.



O. Winston Link

American, 1914-2001

Hotshot Eastbound at Iaeger, West Virginia, 1956, reprinted 1997

Gelatin silver print, 16 x 20 in (40.6 x 50.8 cm)

Gift of Cheryl and Robert Zider, 2015.3.4 © O. Winston Link Image Courtesy of the O. Winston Link Museum

16. **O. Winston Link** (1914-2001) was interested in trains, and began photographing them at an early age. He trained as a civil engineer, and later turned to commercial newspaper, fashion and advertising photography to support himself and fund his personal photographic projects. Link photographed during the era of “the great American car.” When travel shifted from trains to private automobiles, communities built around their location on the railroad were left isolated and disconnected. In 1955, Link embraced the task of documenting the last five years of the Norfolk & Western steam railway, and created more than 2400 photographs of trains and the towns they passed through. Today the O. Winston Link Museum operates in Roanoke, Virginia, housed in an old Norfolk & Western railway station and dedicated to Link's train photography.

- What is happening in this image, and what would you hear and feel?
- Do the people in this scene seem distracted by the train? Describe why or why not.
- How many modes of transportation are in this scene, and in what ways, good and bad, have they impacted the world?



Danny Lyon

American, b. 1942

Demonstrators at the “all white” swimming pool in Cairo, Illinois, 1962 from the *Civil Rights Portfolio 1962-1964*, 1962

Gelatin silver print, printed in 2010, 11 x 14 in (27.9 x 35.6 cm)

Museum purchase with support from the Curriculum Support Fund, McIntire Department of Art, and Vice Provost for the Arts, 2015.4.1
© Danny Lyon/Licensed by Magnum Photos, New York

17. **Danny Lyon** (born 1942) was the first staff photographer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He travelled throughout the south, documenting many important events during the civil rights movement. Lyon’s photographic style is described as “New Journalism,” meaning the photographer is a participant in the documented event. This image shows local youth protesting at a segregated swimming pool in Cairo, Illinois. The young woman in the middle of the shot stares directly into the camera, engaging the viewer as a part of the protest. Although this was a small-scale demonstration in comparison to other civil rights era protests, it caused a lot of pushback in a community that continued to practice segregation despite its location in Illinois, perceived by many as a Northern state.

- Imagine yourself as any one of the people in this image. How would you tell your story?
- Imagine you are a spectator to this protest. What are you thinking?
- How is this image similar or different from other images of protests that you have seen?
- Do you think non-violent protests can create social change?



Danny Lyon

American, b. 1942

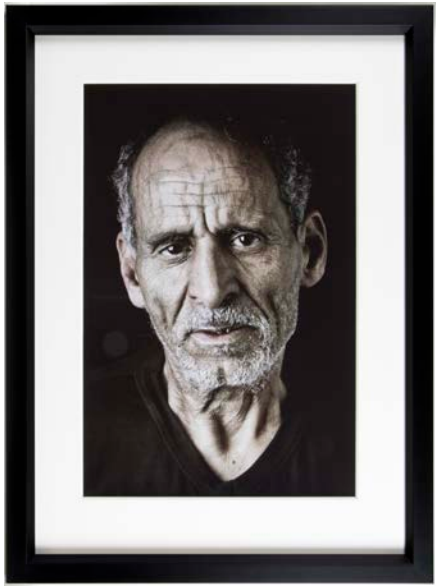
James Forman, the SNCC executive secretary works the crowd at the Danville mass meeting. An hour later, he is stopped and searched by police holding shotguns and automatic weapons, Danville, Virginia, June 1963 from the *Civil Rights Portfolio 1962-1964*, 1963

Gelatin silver print, printed in 2010, 11 x 14 in (27.9 x 35.6 cm)

Museum purchase with support from the Curriculum Support Fund, McIntire Department of Art, and Vice Provost for the Arts, 2015.4.12
© Danny Lyon/Licensed by Magnum Photos, New York

18. Here, **Danny Lyon** captures a portrait of James Forman— executive director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) from 1961 until 1966— during a lecture on African-American history in Danville, Virginia. At the time of this photograph, the Danville Christian Progressive Association (DCPA) had been leading protests for two weeks. Three days before this photograph was taken, a protest by 65 people led to 48 demonstrators requiring medical attention and 50 of the protestors being arrested. By August 28—the day of the March on Washington—over 600 protestors had been arrested in Danville. The DCPA was exhausted by this point, and no real change was made in Danville until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965.

- What do you think James Foreman is saying at the moment of this picture?
- Imagine you are present at this rally. How would you feel, and what thoughts would you have?
- This image presents a stark contrast with the aggressive search Foreman underwent following this speech. How does this knowledge change your perception of the photograph?



Shirin Neshat

Iranian, b. 1957

Sayed from Our House is on Fire series, 2013

Digital pigment print,
26 x 17 1/2 in (66 x 44.5 cm)

Gift of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 2016.1.2
© Shirin Neshat

19. Born in Iran in 1957, **Shirin Neshat's** experience of exile after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 inspires her exploration of the “dichotomy between religion, politics, violence, and feminism” in the Arab world. This image is a part of a series of portraits featuring various people reflecting on the aftermath of the failed revolution in Egypt during the Arab Spring. Neshat instructed her subjects to sit in front of the camera while they shared their stories of loss. On top of this photograph, Neshat inscribed excerpts of a Persian poem inspired by the Iranian revolution. The calligraphy itself is unreadable as it is blended into the wrinkles and folds of the man's skin, becoming an essential part of the subject. The man makes direct eye contact with the viewer, challenging them to confront the struggles and emotional toll of political and social upheaval.

- Without knowing who this man is and where he is from, what can you tell about him?
- Imagine the stories this man is telling.
- Why do you think the artist included text in this work? What could it represent?
- If this were your portrait, what words would you apply over your image?



Unknown Artist

Colima, Mexico

Dog Effigy, 200 BCE-300 CE

Redware ceramic with red and black
fire-clouding on cream slip paint,
8 7/16 x 13 3/4 x 6 1/8 in
(21.5 x 35 x 15.5 cm)

Gift of Mr. Eric M. Heiner, 1980.76.2

20. This dog effigy vessel was created about 2000 years ago by an artist in the Colima culture, as a funerary object to be placed in a tomb with a deceased person. The dog is made of earthenware clay, fired to a high temperature so it resembles soft stone. Dogs were indigenous to the ancient Americas, and served as companions, hunting partners, underworld guides, and even sources of food throughout Mesoamerica. Ceramic portrayals of dogs are particularly numerous in tombs in West Mexico, placed along with human pottery figures and dishes of food for the journey after death. Most funerary dogs are depicted as plump and docile. As tomb offerings, these fattened versions may have symbolized food for the deceased person's arduous underworld voyage.

- Describe the personality and demeanor of this dog.
- If you had a choice of an animal to accompany you into the afterlife, what animal would you choose?
- Imagine yourself as the artist creating this dog. What would your thoughts be as you sculpted it?