

THE
BURLINGTON
MAGAZINE



Recent acquisitions (2013–20)
at the Cleveland Museum of Art

Recent acquisitions (2013–20) at the Cleveland Museum of Art

EIGHT YEARS HAVE passed since *The Burlington Magazine* last published a selection of works recently acquired by the Cleveland Museum of Art.¹ During that period, the museum has completed a comprehensive, \$320-million renovation and expansion project, designed by Rafael Viñoly, and important parts of its collection have been reinstalled. It also continued to augment its holdings, both through purchase – as it always has – and, increasingly, through gift. While the museum’s criteria for building the collection have not changed – quality, rarity and condition remain the guiding principles – and although its curators have sought to balance filling gaps with building upon strength, there have been shifts in emphasis, not all of which are due solely to the vagaries of the market.

The following selection, culled from a list that numbers in the hundreds, reflects the encyclopaedic breadth of the museum’s collection. Each curatorial department has made important acquisitions and the works here reproduced span almost two thousand years. The earliest is a pectoral created by the Calima people of Colombia; it belongs to a small group of Pre-Columbian gold objects that the museum acquired to expand its holdings of Andean metalwork. The acquisition of a rare Goryeo-dynasty Korean painting, a spectacular work by the eighteenth-century Chinese painter Yuan Yao and several Edo-period Nabeshima-type dishes enhance the museum’s celebrated representation of the arts of Asia. The gift and purchase in two tranches of nearly two hundred Mughal and Rajput paintings from the Catherine and Ralph Benkaim Collection marks a departure from the museum’s usual practice of acquiring individual works rather than collections, greatly elevating the status of its holdings of Indian painting.

Old-master paintings and sculpture are, with notable exceptions, more affordable than used to be the case, despite the rarity of truly great examples. This circumstance favoured the acquisition of a well-preserved late Mannerist altarpiece by Maso da San Friano, as it did the purchase of Dirck van Baburen’s *Violin player with a wine glass*, which added a comparatively bawdy picture to an otherwise representative selection of works by Dutch Caravaggisti. *St John the Baptist* by Jan Crocq rounds out the museum’s holdings of late-medieval sculpture from the court of Burgundy and Filippo Parodi’s virtuosic *Sleeping Christ Child* fills an

important gap, giving the museum a large-scale marble sculpture by an artist educated in the workshop of Gianlorenzo Bernini.

The Cleveland Museum of Art came relatively late to modern and contemporary art, and so its purchase of an important painting by Max Beckmann, *Perseus’s last duty*, was transformative. Two areas of particular focus have been the acquisition of works by African American and contemporary African artists. Norman Lewis’s *Alabama* is a masterpiece by one of the few African American painters associated with Abstract Expressionism, while Kara Walker’s monumental diptych *The Republic of New Afrika at a crossroads* was created during the artist’s residency at the American Academy in Rome. During the same period, the museum purchased a number of works by contemporary African sculptors, among them Hervé Youmbi’s *Totem 01/01-18 (Baga-Batcham-Alunga-Kota)*, which are juxtaposed with the historical works that were a source of inspiration to these younger artists.

As is the case at other institutions, the Cleveland Museum of Art will no doubt rely increasingly upon the generosity of private collectors as it navigates a market beset by scarcity and, in certain fields, steadily increasing prices. To this end, it recently established an International Council in order to introduce the museum to collectors from all over the world. Among its members are trustee Agnes Gund, who in 2017 presented the museum with several major works, including *Sea painting I* by Brice Marden. Also museum trustees and members of the council are Nancy F. and Joseph P. Keithley, whose 2020 gift and promised gift of about one hundred works from their collection – including Camille Pissarro’s *Fishmarket* and Georges Braque’s *The port of l’Estaque*, reproduced here – marks the largest single gift the institution has received in more than sixty years.

Finally, there are works whose appearance on the market offered an opportunity that the museum’s curators simply could not resist. The royal tent made for Muhammad Shah of Iran is a crowd-pleaser that meaningfully enriches its holdings of Islamic art. And Paul Fehér’s 1930 screen is an Art Deco masterpiece, manufactured in Cleveland by a local firm, Rose Iron Works.

WILLIAM M. GRISWOLD, DIRECTOR

¹ ‘Recent acquisitions (2005–11) at the Cleveland Museum of Art’, *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 154 (2012), pp.525–32.



1

1. *St John the Baptist*, attributed to Jan Crocq (active 1486–1510). c.1500. Tonnerre limestone, 163 by 59 by 40 cm.

Purchase from the J.H. Wade Fund, 2017.54.

Likely made for the Sainte-Chapelle of Dijon, the private chapel of the Dukes of Burgundy, this sculpture is attributed to Jan Crocq, sculptor at the court of René II, Duke of Lorraine (reg. 1473–1508) in Nancy, renowned for his refined treatment of surfaces and whose extensive work can be reconstructed mainly through stylistic comparisons.

2. *Holy Family with the Mystic Marriage of St Catherine*, by Tommaso d'Antonio Manzuoli, called Maso da San Friano (1531–71). c.1560. Oil on panel, 148 by 103 cm.

Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 2019.168.

Highly fluent in the visual vocabulary of the legendary Florentine painters of the previous generation, Maso da San Friano was adept at combining Mannerist proportion and elegance with High Renaissance balance and tonal clarity.



2

3. *Violin player with a wine glass*, by Dirck van Baburen (c.1595–1624). 1623. Oil on canvas, 80.4 by 67.1 cm.

Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 2018.25.

This musician's loose, colourful dress marks him as a figure at the edges of society, unbound by behavioural norms – associations enhanced by his bold gaze, unshaven face and cheeky grin, complete with broken tooth.

4. *Sleeping Christ Child*, by Filippo Parodi (1630–1702). c.1675. Marble, 63 by 102 by 42 cm.

Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 2018.257.

Filippo Parodi used varying degrees of polish to differentiate surface textures: Christ's body is burnished to a soft gleam while his hair and the straw are more roughly carved, absorbing rather than reflecting the light.



Cleveland Museum of Art

5. *Pair of candlestands (torchères)*, by Thomas Chippendale (1718–79). c.1773. Gilt wood and gesso, each 154 by 56 by 51 cm.

John L. Severance Fund, 2018.203.

Commissioned for the saloon at Broomfield Hall, Hertfordshire, from Thomas Chippendale in 1773, these exceptional candlestands exemplify the grandest evocation of Roman-inspired Neo-classical decoration that emerged in English design during the second half of the eighteenth century.

6. *Convolvulus and metamorphosis of the convolvulus hawk moth*, by Maria Sibylla Merian (active 1647–1717). c.1670–83. Watercolour with touches of opaque watercolour over indications in black chalk on vellum, 29 by 37.2 cm.

John L. Severance Fund, 2019.9.

One of seventeen Dutch Golden Age drawings acquired by the CMA in 2019, Maria Sibylla Merian's meticulous rendering of a hawk moth and its metamorphic stages relates to a composition published in her second so-called *Caterpillar Book* (1683).



5



6



7. *Screen*, designed by Paul Fehér (1898–1990), made by Rose Iron Works (est. 1904). 1930. Wrought iron and brass, silver and gold plating and cotton velveteen, 156.2 by 156.2 cm.

Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 2020.216.

© Rose Iron Works Collections, LLC.

With its Viennese-inspired decoration, highly stylised and abstracted natural forms, and central figure reminiscent of the celebrated jazz singer Josephine Baker, this monumental screen reflects the classic motifs of Art Deco design and the technical prowess of its Cleveland manufacturer, Rose Iron Works.

8. *Fishmarket*, by Camille Pissarro (1830–1903). 1902. Oil on canvas, 66 by 81.3 cm.

Nancy F. and Joseph P. Keithley Collection Gift, 2020.113.

This impressive view of a bustling fish market belongs to a series of paintings Camille Pissarro made during the summer of 1902 depicting the harbour at Dieppe, as seen from his hotel room and enlivened with vibrant colour and masterfully varied brushwork.





9

9. *The port of l'Estaque, the pier*, by Georges Braque (1882–1963). 1906. Oil on canvas, 60 by 73.3 cm.
Nancy F. and Joseph P. Keithley Collection Gift, 2020.104.
© Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.
Elated by the dazzling colour and light of the Mediterranean coast, Georges Braque painted this remarkable view of the harbor at L'Estaque, one of the finest works of his Fauve period, during his first trip to the South.

10. *Birth of a child (Geburt eines Kindes)*, by Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980). 1914. Tempera and charcoal on paper, 49.4 by 56 cm.

Purchase from the J.H. Wade Fund, 2017.102.
© Fondation Oskar Kokoschka / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ProLitteris, Zürich.

Painted just months before he left for the Russian front, Oskar Kokoschka's searing portrayal of a birthing woman in distress is a preparatory design for an unexecuted mural programme at the Gräbschener Cemetery complex (now known as Grabiszyński Cemetery) in Breslau (Wrocław).



10

11



12



11. *Perseus's last duty*, by Max Beckmann (1884–1950). 1949. Oil on canvas, 89.4 by 142 cm.

Gift of Mrs Henry White Cannon by exchange, 2013.7.

© Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Although centred on the horrific image of Perseus cutting off Medusa's head while standing in a pool of blood, this large painting also includes dark, enigmatic symbols and the mass slaughter of other figures, most likely referring to the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust.

12. *Alabama*, by Norman Lewis (1909–79). 1960.

Oil on canvas, 122.6 by 184.5 cm.

John L. Severance Fund, 2017.1.

© Estate of Norman W. Lewis; Courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York.

With *Alabama*, African American artist Norman Lewis sought to wed his interest in Abstract Expressionism with the civil rights movement, and the painting's composition of white forms jostling amid inky darkness ominously evokes imagery of night-time Ku Klux Klan gatherings.

13



14



15

13. *Julia Jackson*, by Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–79). 1867. Albumen print from wet collodion negative, 26.4 by 20.8 cm.

Purchase from the J.H. Wade Fund, 2015.15.

This boldly modern portrait of Julia Margaret Cameron's beloved niece mirrors the self-examination and anxiety of this young woman weeks before her wedding.

14. *Richard Avedon, New York*, by Irving Penn (1917–2009). 1985. Gelatin silver print, 25.7 by 19.7 cm.

Gift from the Collection of Mark Schwartz + Bettina Katz, 2020.30.

© *The Irving Penn Foundation.*

This group of images of the portrait photographer Richard Avedon looking through a camera lens, taken by his long-time colleague and rival Irving Penn, is one of forty-eight contact sheets by Penn donated to the museum in 2020 from the collection of Mark Schwartz and Bettina Katz.

15. *The Republic of New Afrika at a crossroads*, by Kara Walker (b. 1969). 2016. Raw pigment and watercolour medium, graphite, and (paper) collage on paper, 287 by 532.1 by 8.3 cm.

Purchase from the J.H. Wade Fund, 2016.54.a–b.

© *Kara Walker.*

Invoking a Black separatist movement of 1969 in its title, this monumental two-panel drawing integrates figuration and gestural abstraction in its bold, tumultuous composition.

16. *Sea painting I*, by Brice Marden (b. 1938). 1973–74. Oil and wax on canvas, 182.8 by 137.2 cm.

Gift of Agnes Gund given in honor of the Cleveland Museum of Art's Centennial, 2017.127.

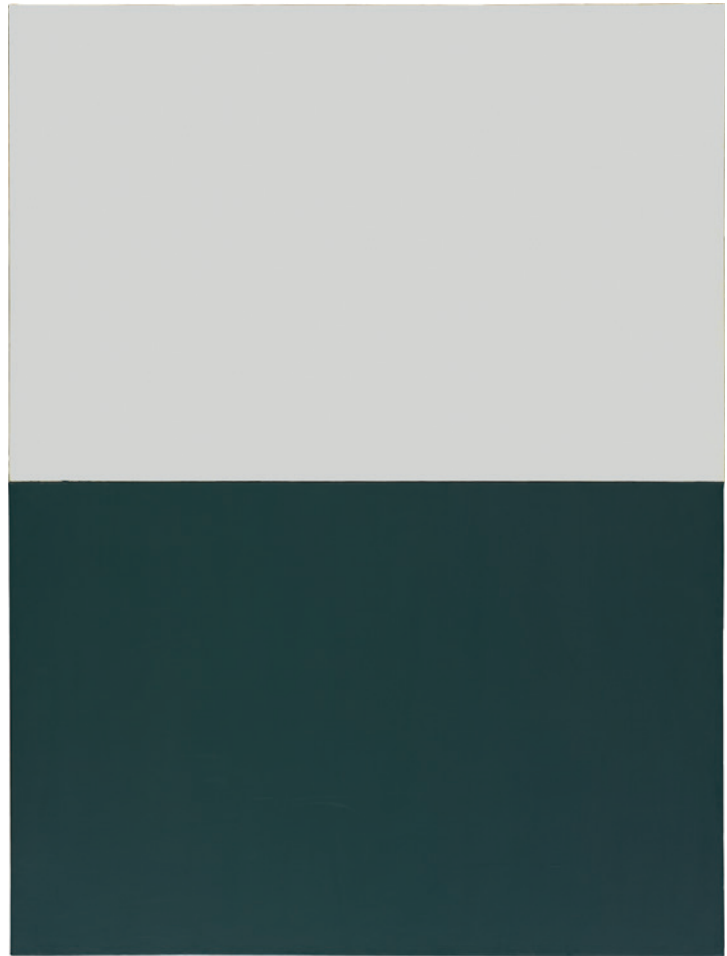
© *Brice Marden / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.*

In this two-panel painting, the artist combines the reductionist tendencies of Minimalism with references to a landscape and a distant view of the horizon.

17. *Pectoral*, made by the Calima people, Colombia, Yotoco period. AD 1–800. Gold, hammered, 22.7 by 28.5 by 2.9 cm.

Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2015.2.

One of twelve pre-Columbian gold objects purchased in 2015, this flamboyant pectoral, embellished with an unidentified human face, was worn by an ancient cacique along with enormous ear and nose ornaments like those shown on the pectoral itself.



16



17

18



18. *The fourth king of hell*, made during the Goryeo dynasty, Korea. Late 1300s. Hanging scroll: ink, colour and gold ink on silk, 136.2 by 58.9 cm.

Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund and museum purchase from various donors by exchange and partial gift of the Honorable Joseph P. Carroll and Roberta Carroll, MD, 2019.224.

In this composition, the king who governs the fourth hell sits behind a desk staring mercilessly at the sinners suffering in a giant cauldron filled with boiling oil as they are repeatedly pierced by a beastly guard's burning spear.

19. *Nur Jahan holding a portrait of Emperor Jahangir*, made at the Mughal court, Northern India. c.1627. Gum tempera and gold on paper, 30 by 22.1 cm.

Gift in honour of Madeline Neves Clapp; Gift of Mrs Henry White Cannon by exchange; Bequest of Louise T. Cooper; Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund; From the Catherine and Ralph Benkaim Collection, 2013.325.

Seventy-three Mughal and Deccan works acquired in 2013, and 121 Rajput and Pahari works acquired in 2018, all from the prestigious collection of Catherine Glynn Benkaim and Ralph Benkaim, relate the history of Indian court painting from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.

19



20. *Road to Shu*, by Yuan Yao (active mid-1700s). 1743. Hanging scroll: ink and colour on silk, 266 by 275 cm.

John L. Severance Fund, 2019.167.

One of the most monumental and successful landscape compositions by Yuan Yao, *Road to Shu* characterises paintings from the Yuan studios, produced primarily to embellish the spacious residences of the legendary wealthy salt merchants of eighteenth-century Yangzhou.

21. *Royal tent made for Muhammad Shah (reg.1834-48)*, made during the Qajar period, Rasht, Iran. 1834-48. Interior: wool (plain weave, inlaid work); silk (embroidery, chain stitch); and tape (leather); exterior: cotton; wool (plain weave); rope; and iron ring, 360 by 400 cm.

Purchase from the J.H. Wade Fund, 2014.388.

At Islamic courts, tents were symbols of royal authority and wealth – pitched for imperial ceremonies, travel, and military campaigns and given as diplomatic gifts. This spectacular ceremonial tent is embroidered with the name of its owner and offers a rare insight into the sophisticated culture of a royal Islamic dynasty in Iran during the 1830s and 1840s.

20



21





22

22. Dish with ginkgo leaves, made during the Edo period, Japan. Late 1600s–early 1700s. Porcelain with underglaze blue (Hizen ware, Nabeshima type), diameter 20 cm.

Purchase from the J.H. Wade Fund, 2017.61.

The Nabeshima clan had top ceramicists produce dishes as tributes for national leadership and as gifts for regional rulers.

23. *Totem 01/01–18 (Baga-Batcham-Alunga-Kota)*, by Hervé Youmbi (b. 1973). 2018. Wood, glass beads, thread, glue and silicone adhesive, 188 by 53 by 38 cm.

Purchase from the Karl B. Goldfield Trust, 2018.5.

This towering contemporary sculpture by Douala-based Hervé Youmbi combines four canonical West and Central African mask and sculptural forms, arranged in reference to the cycle of life; it presents subversive arguments around issues of classification and commodification that underpin African arts in the market and in museums.



23

THE
BURLINGTON
MAGAZINE

Reprinted from the January 2021 issue of *The Burlington Magazine*

www.burlington.org.uk