The power of the arts

We are pleased to present the 2019 Bank of America Art Conservation Project grant recipients. In reviewing the twenty-two projects highlighted within this booklet, we are reminded of the tremendous need for art conservation in cultural institutions across the globe. And we are honored and proud to help these institutions and others preserve their treasures for generations to come.

With this year’s selections, we will have provided funding for more than 170 projects in thirty-three countries, representing thousands of works across different art movements, media and time periods—and, importantly, cultures. All the works we help to conserve share one thing in common, however: They reflect the creativity, ingenuity and passion of people throughout the world over hundreds, even thousands, of years.

The Bank of America Art Conservation Project is one part of a comprehensive, steadfast program of support for cultural institutions that includes grants, exhibition support, program partnerships and loans of complete exhibitions from our collection, at no cost. In fact, each year we support more than 2000 nonprofit arts institutions. We are passionate about helping the arts thrive and having a positive impact on economies and societies around the world.

Simply put, at Bank of America, we believe in the power of the arts.

Sincerely,

Rena M. De Sisto
Global Executive for Arts & Culture and Women’s Programs
Bank of America

Brian Siegel
Manager, Arts & Culture Programs
Bank of America
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Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Georgia O’Keeffe (American, 1887–1986)

Spring

Oil on canvas

48¹/₄ × 84¹/₄ in (122.5 × 214 cm)

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum

Gift of The Burnett Foundation

Georgia O’Keeffe’s Spring is exemplary of the artist’s large-format paintings, stretching across six feet. Its composition is notable for bringing together her iconic flower, bone and landscape subjects—motifs evocative of her home in New Mexico, including the beloved Cerro Pedernal mesa. The painting’s completion date was personally significant to O’Keeffe, as it marked the second anniversary of the death of her husband, photographer Alfred Stieglitz. The subject matter of Spring represents a rebirth for O’Keeffe; widowhood freed her to move permanently from New York to New Mexico.

Spring received its first conservation treatment two years after its completion. Its considerable size had strained the paint on the canvas, resulting in visible distortions, and the painting suffered water damage a decade later. Consequently, O’Keeffe sent the work to her conservator for repair. Though these treatments were initially successful, travel, exhibition and time have compounded the early cracks and damage.

The museum’s conservation team has identified an action plan to stabilize cracks, repair separating layers and remove discolored varnishes to preserve this significant painting. In addition to treatment, the plan includes analytical tests and documentation that will yield critical information about the artist’s evolving studio techniques and materials, which informs conservation discussion for O’Keeffe works located in institutions around the globe. Once complete, Spring can again be exhibited at its home and will be available internationally.
Cambridge University Library, United Kingdom

Papers of Sir Isaac Newton

Sir Isaac Newton (English, 1642–1727)

A page from Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica, first edition, 1687, with annotations by the author

Cambridge University Library is assessing, stabilizing and digitizing its extensive collection of the papers of Sir Isaac Newton, including his Principia, "Waste Book," sketches, experiments, four volumes of lectures and several hundred pages of associated materials. These papers were recently inscribed on UNESCO's International Memory of the World Register.

Particularly significant are Newton's Waste Book—a notebook begun in 1664 that reveals the development of his method of calculus—and his personal copy of Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica, 1687. The copy of Principia is a unique first edition made specifically for Newton, interleaved with pages heavily edited directly in his hand as notes for the second edition. In this seminal three-part work, Newton lays out in mathematical terms his laws of motion and universal gravitation. This treatise changed the way the universe is viewed and helped to establish a new era in science.

Of the 250 to 400 copies of these volumes that were printed, about 159 survive.

Handling these papers poses many challenges and necessitates continual evaluation, conservation and the production of digital images to preserve the originals. Although periodic repairs and conservation treatments have been made over the years, the manuscripts will be assessed for further conservation needs. This project will protect the physical integrity of the collection while at the same time increasing access and making as much information as possible freely available online to researchers and the general public.

Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields

Hendrick Mattens (Flemish, active 1629–1670), after Raphael (Italian, 1483–1520)

The Miraculous Draught of Fishes, c. 1630

Wool tapestry
13’ 6” × 14’ 3” (412 × 496 cm)

Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, The Clowes Collection

Woven after an Italian High Renaissance tapestry design by Raphael, The Miraculous Draught of Fishes is one of the most important works in the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA) Collection. The cartoon (preliminary drawing), one of ten comprising a series known as the Acts of the Apostles, was commissioned in 1515 by Pope Leo X to create tapestries that would decorate the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican. The original tapestries are still displayed on occasion below Michelangelo’s monumental ceiling. The IMA’s tapestry is part of another set woven in the Brussels workshop of Hendrick Mattens about one hundred years later.

The tapestry has a rich history of exhibition both at the IMA’s Clowes Pavilion and at Butler University’s Clowes Memorial Hall. It was on display continuously for roughly fifty years between the two locations until 2011, when the work was deemed unexhibitable due to structural and aesthetic conditions. In order to preserve and better understand it, the IMA will conduct a full scientific analysis of its dyes and fibers before transporting it to Belgium for conservation by De Wit Royal Manufacturers of Tapestry. The IMA will then construct a custom display wall that can accommodate the work’s large size, and the museum will upgrade its gallery lighting of the textile to limit photodecomposition. Once conservation and gallery enhancements are complete, this magnificent work will return to a place of prominence in the IMA’s Clowes Pavilion.
Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Jacksonville, Florida

Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640)

The Lamentation of Christ, c. 1605
Oil on copper
11 × 9½ (28 × 24 cm)
Bequest of Ninah M. H. Cummer
Courtesy of the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens

The Lamentation of Christ is one of the most significant objects in the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens. It depicts the moment following Christ’s descent from the cross, when the Virgin Mary, surrounded by mourners, leans over the body of her dead son. This work has a prestigious provenance: It once belonged to Roman Cardinal Ascanio Colonna, a powerful man who employed the artist’s brother, Philip, as secretary and librarian.

This important painting will undergo conservation treatment, removing layers of varnish and overpaint that mar the painting’s surface in order to restore its original visual impact. Additionally, structural repairs to its hand-carved frame will allow the work to be displayed in the round, providing visitors with the opportunity to see the Colonna family seal and other eighteenth-century provenance information on the verso (the back).

The process will be documented using videography and photography to capture the full conservation effort, creating an educational tool to explain techniques used during treatment and to demonstrate the importance of conservation. After preservation, the painting will be installed in the permanent collection galleries along with didactic conservation material. With treatment, this painting will remain a centerpiece in the museum’s collection and a valued example of Rubens’ genius that can be shared with viewers around the globe.

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Juan Gris (José Victoriano González-Pérez) (Spanish, 1887–1927)

Portrait de Madame Josette Gris (Portrait of Madame Josette Gris), 1916
Oil on board
45⁵/₈ × 28³/₄ (116 × 73 cm)

In Portrait of Madame Josette Gris, Juan Gris makes a foray into Synthetic Cubism—a style of Cubism that is more colorful than its earlier analytic form. An important example of the evolution of Cubism, the painting is a significant work in the Museo Reina Sofía’s collection, regularly on view. Both conceptually and formally, this portrait could easily be the result of a cross between the combined influences of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and Paul Cézanne, both of whom Gris mentioned as inspirations in his work.

The painting is marred by uneven surfaces, repainting and a yellowish accumulation of varnish. Conservators will study the work in depth and devise a plan to partially remove a former restoration and help to return the painting as close as possible to its original appearance.

First, a documentary and scientific study will be carried out with various methods of physicochemical analysis (a study of the relations between a system’s physical properties and composition). The painting will also be analyzed with gigapixel imaging, using visible, grazing, ultraviolet and infrared light. Conservation treatment will continue with the cleaning of the different layers that cover the work, and the frame will then be reinforced and repaired. The project will conclude with a comprehensive report that will help to ensure its preservation well into the future and provide insight into improved conservation techniques.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Six French marble sculptures

The National Gallery of Art’s East Sculpture Hall features a display of marble sculptures by some of the greatest French sculptors of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Visitors walk among statues created for the salons, gardens and tombs of the monarchs of France and their courtiers, from the Renaissance to the Second Empire. Flanking the entrance to a serene garden court with a fountain from Versailles are two sculptures from the eighteenth century. These are from the eighteenth century. These are Poetry and Music, c. 1774/1778, and Painting and Sculpture, 1774/1778, represented as lively, life-sized pairs of young children, by the sought-after eighteenth-century masters Clodion (Claude Michel) (French, 1738–1814) and Jean-Pierre-Antoine Tassaert (Flemish, 1727–1788).

These two works, along with four additional full-scale figural marbles, are to be conserved as part of the project. Disfiguring surface grime, due to the accumulation of oils from handling and of dirt and dust from public display, and deteriorated restorations distract viewers from the masterful carving and the natural beauty of the marble. The sculptures also suffer from broken or missing parts and loss of detail.

All six works will be carefully cleaned and conserved in full view of the public, creating a unique opportunity for visitors to connect with the conservation process and engage in new conversations through observation, real-time video displays and regular gallery talks. The project will expose millions of visitors to the ethics, philosophies and techniques of conservation while dramatically improving the longevity of these outstanding works.

Constitutional Court Trust, Johannesburg

Marlene Dumas (South African, b. 1953)

Marlene Dumas’ The Benefit of the Doubt, a suite of three tapestries, is one of the most important and valuable pieces in the Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC), not only because it is the work of the internationally acclaimed South African born and trained Dutch artist, but also because it embodies the intent of the CCAC—expressing questions of justice through art. Donated by the Dutch government in 2001, The Benefit of the Doubt is a replica of a 1998 Dumas work that graces the Palace of Justice in Den Bosch, the Netherlands.

Each panel of the triptych depicts three massive, solemn human faces, cropped tight, with little to reveal their origins or status. Dumas’ decision to portray three figures in the work is significant. As she explains, “One is alone, two is a couple and three is politics.”

During an early phase of the project, conservators realized the need for an improved hanging system to preserve this substantial work. The triptych comprises three machine-made rugs, with woolen pile hooked through machine woven hessian (a strong, coarse jute or sisal fabric) affixed with synthetic glue. These fiber works are quite large, spanning nearly one hundred feet in width, and heavy, with a combined weight of approximately 620 pounds. Given the significant size and weight of the tapestries—and the fact that the triptych will be installed well above head height in the public gallery—it is important that a robust, preservation-appropriate hanging system be designed for its permanent display.
High Museum of Art, Atlanta

Ten assemblages by Thornton Dial, Sr. (American, 1928–2016)

Right:
Surviving the Frost, 2007
Industrial plastic, straw, metal, fabric, wire, nails and enamel on canvas on wood
105 × 74 × 11” (266.7 × 188 × 28 cm)

Far right:
Struggling Tiger Know His Way Out, 1991
Enamel house paint, braided rug, tin, industrial sealing compound and plywood on canvas mounted on wood
65½ × 88 × 9½” (166.4 cm × 223.5 cm × 8.9 cm)

In 2017, the High Museum of Art received the most significant collection of works by the renowned Alabama artist Thornton Dial, Sr., ever transferred by the Souls Grown Deep Foundation, a community partnership dedicated to improving the quality of life in communities that gave rise to the art made by African American artists of the South. Increasingly regarded as one of the most important artists to emerge from the South in the second half of the twentieth century, Dial created hundreds of large-scale assemblages (three-dimensional collages) from a wide array of media, including an eclectic assortment of found objects.

The High Museum will conduct a full assessment of ten of the most significant Dial works in its collection using analytical and imaging techniques that will capture the components that make up each work and create a baseline understanding of how Dial’s fabrication practices have fared over time. All the works selected for this project require immediate treatment, including stabilization of paint layers and arresting the corrosion of metal components. Once structural analysis and material tests have been completed, additional treatment needs will be assessed.

Not only will the project facilitate the preservation of Dial’s most important assemblages, but it will also provide the basis for important scholarship on his materials and methods and establish protocols for the conservation of his work, extending to the entire array of self-taught artists working in nontraditional, mixed media.
Jeong Seon, also known as Gyeomjae, worked during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). Though artists of that era were typically regarded as mid- or lower-class workers, Gyeomjae was born into a scholar-gentry family and served high-ranking government officials. During the late Joseon dynasty, Korea was recovering from two great wars with Japan and China. Shedding the influence of China, Korea established a unique culture, which Gyeomjae’s works characterize vividly.

Eight Panels of Flower and Animal Painting is a rare series by the artist. Known mainly for his landscapes, Gyeomjae created these eight lyrical paintings in his later years. In these works, Gyeomjae depicted subjects found in ordinary life, such as plants, insects, cats, frogs and roosters, and his mature brushstroke technique and elaborate method of mixing pigments are evident.

These paintings remain unmounted and, as such, are unfinished, structurally and aesthetically. Additionally, there is severe insect damage, and silk is missing from many areas. Conservation treatment will begin with surface cleaning and consolidation. Then, the linings and previous repairs will be removed, and conservators will produce a silk substrate that is as close as possible to the original fabric. Although the paintings are now separate works, scholars believe they originally comprised an album or possibly a small folding screen. Consultation with specialists will help to determine the appropriate mounting style, so that these charming paintings will be displayed as the artist originally intended.

The Museo de Arte Moderno is conserving two monumental sculptures in its Sculpture Garden: The Serpent of El Eco, by Mathias Goeritz, and Ovi, by Hersúa. After standing in the open air for many years and suffering from exposure to the elements, these iconic sculptures were in danger of loss, and the need for conservation treatment was urgent. Conservators have determined the sculptures’ original manufacturing techniques and selected optimal materials to carry out the work.

The Serpent of El Eco and Ovi reflect an abstract aesthetic stemming from the late 1960s. Today, this pair of works is part of the collective memory of Mexico. Conservation of these two sculptures is part of a larger initiative to promote the protection and conservation of Mexico’s artistic heritage, as well as to help establish the museum as one of Mexico’s important cultural, educational and artistic institutions.
Massacre at Chios, which records the killing of 20,000 Greeks by Turks on the island of Chios, is a perfect example of Eugène Delacroix’s progressive maturation in style. The tragedy captured his interest, and he felt it was important for him to document it. He painted it on his own—it was not commissioned. Delacroix’s depiction of suffering caused some controversy among critics because the artist focused only on the disaster and its victims, and the canvas was devoid of depictions of glory or victory that were customary in history paintings. Today, the work is recognized as a masterpiece with a universal message.

Delacroix painted Massacre at Chios from January to August 1824, an oil on canvas consisting of three vertical panels sewn together and prepared in advance with a clear sizing. The painting was acquired by the French government in autumn 1824 and held at the Musée des artistes vivants (precursor to the Musée de Luxembourg, which resides at the same site), since 1874, it has been at the Musée du Louvre. During World War II, the painting was relocated for four years in an effort to avoid having it taken by the Nazis.

Prior to the war, minimal alterations were carried out to the painting. However, in 1949, the back of the canvas was restored, including the repair of a large tear at the bottom and a patchwork of reinforcement cloth at the back of the entire work. The basic format has not been changed. Although the pictorial layer has received only negligible interventions, it suffered from varnish removal in 1854, as well as subsequent additional layers and reapplications of varnish up until 1985. Today, the varnish is extremely oxidized, and its yellowed appearance severely alters the color of the composition.

Conservation treatment will mainly affect the pictorial layer, removing the surface layers of varnish as well as reworking later repainting not done by Delacroix, before light retouching and refinishing. The goal is to return the painting to a state that reflects the closest balance of color and contrast envisioned by the artist, while respecting irreversible variations incurred by the passage of time.
Le Centre d’Art, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
A selection of paintings rescued from the 2010 earthquake

Philomé Obin (Haitian, 1891–1986)
Notre Promenade. Peters, Obin et Chenet allant au Carrefour (Our Walk. Peters, Obin and Chenet Going to the Crossroads), n.d.
Oil on chipboard
18” × 22½” (45.7 × 57 cm)
Collection of Le Centre d’Art

Le Centre d’Art, a public nongovernmental institution, has served as Haiti’s premier center for the visual arts for 75 years. Le Centre d’Art was long located in a 1914 wooden gingerbread-style building that collapsed during the January 2010 earthquake. The Smithsonian Haitian Cultural Recovery Project worked with Japanese engineering troops to pull hundreds of pieces of art out from under tons of rubble. Now in a revitalization phase, Le Centre d’Art is conserving its collection, from works that are in extremely poor condition and require major preservation work to those that are in fair condition and require basic cleaning. Many of the works to be conserved are paintings by important Haitian artists, including Antonio Joseph (1921–2016), Franck Louissaint (b. 1949), Gesner Armand (1936–2008) and Philomé Obin (1891–1986). Joseph was the first student and registered member of Le Centre d’Art at its opening in 1944, and today, the museum houses 344 of his works, which are critical to its collection. Louissaint, known for his photorealistic paintings, has been central to the museum’s reconstruction and is also a principal conservator. Armand was one of the most promising artists of his generation and is known for his mastery of color, while Obin was one of the most renowned painters in Haiti. Several works by these artists require thorough cleaning, stabilization of structural weakness, and repair of canvas damage and paint loss.

Conservation treatment for the museum’s collection will be carried out at Le Centre d’Art’s storage facility and in the Cultural Conservation Center at Quisqueya University. The Smithsonian will provide conservators to consult on the project and work with the Haitian conservator, relying on the expertise of members of the scientific board of Le Centre d’Art. Once conservation of the collection is complete, the works will be proudly displayed in the museum’s new home in an iconic building in the center of Port-au-Prince.

Bank of America is the sole corporate partner of the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, which has provided funding to help in Haiti’s ongoing cultural recovery.

Gesner Armand (Haitian, 1936–2008)
Untitled, n.d.
Oil on canvas
51” × 75” (129.5 × 190.5 cm)
Collection of Le Centre d’Art
Seattle Art Museum

Alexander Calder (American, 1898–1976)

The Eagle, 1971
Painted steel
38’ 9” × 32’ 6” × 32’ 6” (1181 × 991 × 991 cm)
Estimated weight: six tons
Located at Seattle Art Museum Olympic Sculpture Park

The Eagle, in its iconic Alexander Calder red, welcomes visitors to the Seattle Art Museum’s Olympic Sculpture Park. With the Olympic Mountains in the background facing west and the Space Needle facing northeast, the sculpture connects seamlessly with the natural beauty of the nine-acre park. When it was installed in 2003, it immediately became a highlight of Seattle’s skyline.

Calder garnered international acclaim for his two distinctive genres of sculpture: mobiles, or sculptures that move; and stabiles, which are stationary. The Eagle, created when Calder was already recognized as one of the world’s greatest sculptors, falls into the latter group and reveals his distinctive combination of pragmatism and poetry.

Conservation treatment will restore the work to the artist’s original intention. While The Eagle has been repainted several times with the silicone alkyd paint Calder originally used, the paint is not durable and fades to chalky pink within a few years. The museum will utilize recent developments in paint technology and research on painted outdoor sculpture in order to identify the optimal priming and paint systems, appropriate conservation treatment and the ideal application method, taking into consideration the saline marine environment of the shorefront park. Conservation will be carefully documented and will protect and preserve the sculpture for many years.
Thomas Hart Benton was one of the master storytellers in art. He dramatized American narratives from history, folklore, literature and his contemporary scene. In Bootleggers, he shifted from retelling American history to depicting the conflicts he witnessed in New York’s streets and national newspapers during Prohibition. Benton wrote that Bootleggers “represents my first shift into a muralistic style which aimed at ‘containing’ the life of my time, ‘the American life’ I should say.”

Reynolda House Museum of American Art (RHMAA) acquired the painting in 1971. Since that time, Bootleggers has been frequently requested for national touring exhibitions, including three exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. However, its condition currently prevents further travel. The issue of primary concern for its long-term preservation is the aging varnish layer—over time, the synthetic coating has chemically linked with paint layers, requiring ever-stronger solvents during treatment; and at a deeper level, the painting is compromised by separation or lifting of paint from the canvas and layers of paint from one another.

In order to mitigate risk to the underlying paint film, conservators have determined that the varnish should be removed as soon as possible and replaced with a readily reversible coating. This process will also allow for consolidation of the paint layer and the correction of cupping (concave distortions in the surface).

Upon completion of treatment, Bootleggers will be installed in Reynolda’s historic house, where it will be available for the benefit of educational institutions and the general public, as well as for future exhibitions at Reynolda and museums around the world.
After the devastation of Hurricane María in 2017, the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR) led the effort to rescue the historic and cultural heritage of Puerto Rico. The museum became the repository for the collections of other museums and cultural institutions on the island, providing a safe environment for their works of art and other assets. Dozens of these institutions did not have the resources or ability to keep their collections safe from temperature and humidity, and some of the buildings were lost.

The Rescue of our National Graphic Arts Heritage project, which is part of the museum’s ongoing recovery work, will focus on the preservation and conservation of 370 works on paper by renowned Puerto Rican artists such as Julio Rosado del Valle (1922–2008), Eli Barreto (b. 1945), Samuel Sánchez (1929–2014) and Cuban-born Rolando López Dirube (1928–1997). Ninety-three percent of the MAPR collection is composed of works on paper, and many of these works are in an advanced state of deterioration and could be lost if not treated promptly.

The project will commence with the recruiting of a paper conservator who will give specialized, urgent care to these works. Conservation treatment will include the removal and replacement of hinges and adhesives; surface cleaning; washing and reduction of stains; repair of supporting structures; reintegration of color; and replacing damaged materials. After conservation is complete, these works of art will become part of a new MAPR permanent exhibition, Puerto Rico Plural.
The Triumph of Washington is a recent acquisition of the Oklahoma City Museum of Art. This monumental mural, which has not been exhibited publicly since the first United States president’s bicentennial celebration in 1932, is an important addition to the museum’s renowned collection of Works Progress Administration (WPA) art.

The mural suffers from areas of insecure paint, scratches, dust, creases, minor canvas loss and small tears. As part of the conservation work, it will be gently brushed to eliminate surface dust, and planar distortions will be removed using moisture and weights. Areas of insecure paint will be consolidated, and the tears along the edges will be repaired. The mural will also be lined using linen strips in preparation for stretching on a new custom-made stretcher. After stretching, losses to the paint layer will be filled and inpainted. Finally, varnish will be applied to areas that were treated.

The objective is to deliver a stable, fully exhibitable work. Once conserved, The Triumph of Washington will serve as the centerpiece for a major new exhibition, *Renewing the American Spirit: The Art of the Great Depression*, which will explore the physical and social landscape of the U.S. during the Great Depression, as well as art’s role in relief efforts and the formation of a new national identity. Completion of this project will contribute greatly to the local Oklahoma City community and to the cultural heritage of the United States.
Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence

Two eighteenth-century palampore textiles

The Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) Museum will work with its partners to conserve two rare and important textiles—one made in India and the other possibly French, made in the Indian style—produced for the European market in the eighteenth century. Printed cotton hangings, or palampores, are named after the Hindi word palang-pos, which means bedspread, or coverlet. These densely patterned textiles were coveted trade goods, especially desired by fashionable Europeans who proudly displayed them on walls and as bed canopies.

The first palampore to receive treatment dates to the early eighteenth century and embodies a “Tree of Life” design, a signature of the palampore genre, with flowers and small birds on a natural colored background. The second palampore dates to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The Tree of Life motif is also evident in this piece, with a peacock nestled in its branches and surrounded by a border of urns, antelope, hunters and floral garlands.

Because textiles in general are quite delicate, and printed cotton palampores even more so, they can be on view only for limited amounts of time, at most for six-month rotations. The current condition of these palampores inhibits their handling or display, but conservation treatment will dramatically slow their degradation. Moreover, conservators will have the opportunity to explore the provenance of the textile created around 1775. Upon completion of the project, the two palampores will be available for display for many years to come.

Casa del Teatro, Buenos Aires

Two murals by Benito Quinquela Martín (Argentine, 1890–1977)

Benito Quinquela Martín was an Argentine painter, engraver and muralist, recognized in 1953 by Time magazine as “Argentina’s most famous artist” and known as the nation’s port painter-par-excellence. Quinquela painted 75 indoor and outdoor murals, mainly in Buenos Aires, and donated several of his murals to philanthropic institutions, including the Casa del Teatro. Founded in 1938 by opera singer Regina Pacini as a hostel for retired artists, the Casa del Teatro is designated today as an Argentine National Historical Monument.

The two murals being conserved—In Full Swing and Unloading Coal—have never received conservation treatment. They are located on either side of the entrance hall of the 400-seat Teatro Regina, which is still in operation, on the Casa del Teatro’s second floor. Both painted in 1928, the murals have been subject to deterioration over time, such as cracked paint, and one of the works has been perforated.

Conservation will begin with a photographic review followed by consolidation and stabilizing of the pictorial layer, as well as replenishment and leveling of the preparatory layer. In Full Swing will be treated with a cloth graft over a damaged area, and both paintings will undergo color reintegration. The paintings’ bronze plates and frames will also be cleaned. When conservation is completed, Quinquela’s admirers will be able to appreciate the newly conserved works well into the future.
Andy Warhol executed the *Marilyn Diptych* shortly after Marilyn Monroe died tragically on August 5, 1962. Between then and the end of the year, he made at least twenty-three paintings of the screen icon using silkscreen technique, all based on the same photograph, a 20th Century Fox still taken by Gene Kornman for the film *Niagara*, 1953. The diptych in Tate’s collection consists of two canvas paintings, the left in color and the right in black and white, each with twenty-five images in five rows. It is the largest of Warhol’s early paintings of Monroe and usually regarded as the culmination of the series.

Years of display, handling and loans to other institutions have taken their toll on the delicate surface of this iconic work. Although the paint and ground layers appear structurally sound, the surface is vulnerable. There are also minor abrasions and dark scuffmarks toward the perimeters of each canvas, including a long line of abrasion across a face at the right of the monochrome canvas. Surface dirt is ingrained and particularly noticeable around the edges, where there are fingerprints from handling.

The objective of the project is the removal of dirt accumulation across the diptych’s surface. Treatment will begin with thorough photographic documentation as well as X-radiography and infrared analysis. After a technical study, the surface will be cleaned (perhaps with the use of state-of-the-art nanogels), and surface distortions reduced or retouched where appropriate. Upon completion of conservation treatment, including cleaning of the original wood batten frame, one of Tate’s most popular paintings will again be on display.
American Museum of Natural History, New York

Twenty masks and headdresses from the Northwest Coast

Nuu-chah-nulth mask with wolf headdress, acquired 1898
Wood, string and metal
35 × 20 (89 × 51 cm)

The American Museum of Natural History is conserving twenty masks and headdresses that were collected during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida, Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka’wakw and Nuxalk First Nations communities in Alaska and British Columbia. The project is an integral part of the museum’s multi-year effort to reinterpret its historic Northwest Coast Hall in an unprecedented collaboration with First Nations partners. Depending upon the community, these ceremonial masks and headdresses were worn during rituals and represented spirits or supernatural beings in human or animal form.

All selected masks and headdresses will require new documentation, extensive cleaning, structural stabilization, and repair or replacement of materials. Deterioration caused by insects and fungi has seriously compromised the structure of some of the carvings, rendering the wood nearly hollow beneath the surface. Some of the masks are missing important structural elements that require fabrication, while others are missing key components, rendering the designs incomplete. Restoring these objects to their original beauty, and displaying them with updated interpretations, will reintroduce the artistry and cultural practices of Northwest Coast peoples to a wide global audience when the Hall reopens in early 2021.

Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky

Sarcophagus, Roman, third century C.E.
Marble
22¹/₈ × 76½ × 21½ (56.2 × 194.3 × 54.8 cm)
Bequest from the Preston Pope Satterwhite Collection

This third-century Roman sarcophagus, the most significant sculpture in the Speed Art Museum’s antiquities collection, is also one of the museum’s most important holdings. Created for a high-ranking Roman military official who died in Britain, it features complex iconography related to the afterlife. Relatively few Romano-British funerary monuments survive, and this sarcophagus provides insight into the adoption of the Roman memorial tradition in the outlying provinces.

The sarcophagus suffers from old, discolored, ill-matched and poorly executed repairs, and the result is visually distracting. There are also areas of unrepaired losses, abrasions and staining, and the work is shrouded by a thick layer of grime. Together, these condition issues detract from the viewer’s experience and impede the reading and interpretation of the iconography. The figure of Psyche is missing her signature butterfly wings, and Tellus is missing her cornucopia. Another significant loss is Psyche’s facial caress of Cupid, which is obscured by the loss of Psyche’s arm.

Conservation treatment will include surface cleaning using mechanical and solvent-based methods. Disfiguring old repairs will be replaced or better incorporated, while areas of loss will be filled and inpainted to integrate them with the sculpture. The final stage of inpainting will be conducted on-site in the galleries as part of a Conservator-in-Residence program to educate visitors about the conservation process. After conservation, the sarcophagus will be reinstalled as the centerpiece of the Ancient Art gallery.
The oldest painting in the Museum of Modern Art’s permanent collection—Paul Cézanne’s *The Bather*—has a long history of treatment both before and after its acquisition in 1934. Cézanne stored this painting rolled in his studio, causing damages to the canvas and paint layer. After his death, *The Bather* was lined with a new canvas attached to the back of the original, and it was then mounted to a stretcher and finally varnished.

MoMA’s team of conservators, alongside conservation scientists, scholars and curators, studied the painting using a variety of imaging techniques, including ultraviolet radiation, infrared reflectography, raking light, visible light and X-radiography. Samples of the varnish layer were also taken and analyzed. Despite the detailed investigations, the work remains difficult to fully understand. For example, it is thought that Cézanne used a canvas with an earlier composition, believed to be a landscape full of vegetation with the backdrop of a mountain. This earlier composition is somewhat still visible as he integrated it into his final composition.

Conservators cleaned the airborne grime embedded in the varnish and then removed the discolored varnish and mismatched restoration paint beneath. To complete the conservation treatment, small losses and marks created when the painting was rolled in his studio were inpainted to match Cézanne’s palette. Critically, the painting was left unvarnished, as Cézanne originally intended.
The Starry Night, one of the most iconic paintings in the canon of works by Vincent van Gogh, has been on continuous view at The Museum of Modern Art for the last decade. The painted surface is in good condition, and the topography of brushwork is virtually how van Gogh left it. Before the painting entered the collection in 1941, a supplemental canvas was glued to the back using a recipe called the “Dutch Method,” which consisted of a wax and a natural resin formulation that helped reduce the paint layer’s exposure to strain, as the canvas would otherwise slacken and tighten from fluctuations in humidity. However, wax-resin treatments can alter the optical appearance of the painted surface and drive additional treatments; any cracks or porous paint layers will wick the adhesive onto the surface to alter the gloss. The Starry Night had also been varnished at one point, most likely after the second canvas was glued to the back.

In the 1980s, MoMA painting conservators made successful efforts to remove or reduce these varnishes to establish a surface gloss closer to van Gogh’s intent.

While the museum was closed briefly in 2019 to complete a building expansion, staff members were presented with a rare opportunity to review MoMA’s most popular painting. The work was unframed, allowing them to characterize the pigments and medium more fully using X-ray fluorescence (XRF) and Fourier-transform infrared (FTIR) micro-spectroscopy. The surface was studied under high magnification, and light surface dirt was removed; the recto and verso were captured with sophisticated imaging techniques; and a new frame was created. The painting is now ready to go back on view with supplemental information that will inform future scholarship.
Previous Selections
2010–2018

Abbey Theatre, Dublin
Four portraits by John Butler Yeats (Irish, 1839–1922)

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York
Jean Mitchell (American, 1925–1992)
Two paintings

Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, Mexico City
Forty-one murals

Arab Image Foundation, Beirut
Latif al Ani and Hashem el Madani photography collections

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
William Charles Piguenit (Australian, 1836–1914)
The Flood in the Darling, 1890, 1895

The Art Institute of Chicago
El Greco (Domenikos Theotokópoulos) (Spanish, b. Crete, 1541–1614)
The Assumption of the Virgin, 1577/79

Art Museum of the Chinese University of Hong Kong
Lui Shou-kwan (Lü Shoukun) (Chinese, 1919–1975)
Thirty paintings

Associazione Amici di Brera e dei Musei Milanesi, Milan
Antonio Canova (Italian, 1757–1822)
Portrait of Duke Wolfgang Wilhelm, Count Palatine of Neuburg, c. 1827/32

Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, Charlotte
Five tapestries by twentieth-century artists

The Bass, Miami Beach
Sandro Botticelli (Alessandro di Mariano di Filippo Filipepi) (Italian, 1444/45–1510)
Codex Trivulzianus (Codice Trivulziano), c. 1487–1490

Bode-Museum (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst), Berlin
Three Renaissance sculptures

British Museum, London
Mural painting of the Buddha Amitābha, 585 C.E. (Sui dynasty)

Brooklyn Museum, New York
Six Assyrian palace reliefs

The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia
Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906)
Les Grandes baigneuses (The Large Bathers), 1895–1906

Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum
Fourteen stone sculptures

Biblioteca Trivulziana, Castello Sforzesco, Milan
Leonardo da ser Piero da Vinci (Italian, 1452–1519)
Codex Trivulzianus (Codice Trivulziano), c. 1487–1490

Bode-Museum (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst), Berlin
Three Renaissance sculptures

British Museum, London
Mural painting of the Buddha Amitābha, 585 C.E. (Sui dynasty)

Bunker Hill Museum, Boston
The Indian King, c. 1825

Bullock Texas State History Museum, Austin
Elías E. Myers (American, 1832–1909)
The Original Texas State Capital Goddess of Liberty, 1888

Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, California
Richard Diebenkorn (American, 1922–1993)
Window, 1967

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit
John Thomas Biggers, Ph.D. (American, 1924–2001)
The Mandolin Player, c. 1940s

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum, Mumbai
Anvar-i Suhayli, c. 1575

Cleveland Museum of Art
Krishna Lifting Mount Govardhan (Cambodian, c. 650 C.E.)
Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio
Fifty European Old Master prints, 1497–1813

The Courtauld Gallery, London
Sandro Botticelli (Italian, 1444/45–1510) and studio
The Holy Trinity with Saints Mary Magdalen and John the Baptist (The Trinity Altarpiece), 1491–1494

Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640)
Con Staying Abl, 1608–1609

Cracker Art Museum, Sacramento
Five paintings by Wayne Thiebaud

The Dali Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida
Salvador Dalí (Spanish, 1904–1989)

Dallas Museum of Art
Three medieval tapestries

Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington
Three medieval tapestries

Denver Art Museum
Cristóbal de Villalpando (Mexican, c. 1649–1714)

Denver Museum of Nature & Science
Richard W. Miller (American, b. 1932)

Detroit Institute of Arts
Thirteen mural cartoons

Dulwich Picture Gallery, London
Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (Spanish, 1617–1682)
Three paintings

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
Morris Louis (American, 1912–1962)
No. 17, 1961

Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Twelve-panel Coromandel lacquer screen, Qing dynasty

The Frick Pittsburgh
Three medieval tapestries

Galleria Borghese, Rome
Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) (Italian, 1483–1520)
Deposizione di Cristo (The Deposition), 1507

Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston
Hemmert de Beaulieu Dening Johnston (American, b. Ireland, 1674–1729)
Two paintings

The Glass House, New Canaan, Connecticut
Philip Johnson (American, 1906–2005)
The Glass House, completed in 1949

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London
Dante Gabriel Rossetti (British, 1828–1882)
La Ghirlandata (The Garlanded Woman), 1873

Hamit Beecher Stover Center, Hartford, Connecticut
Four paintings in original frames

Heard Museum, Phoenix
Eight sculptures by American Indian artists

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.
Two works by Robert Rauschenberg

Hudson River Park Trust, New York
Allan Wieder (American, b. 1949)
Ellen Wieder (American, b. 1949)
Two Too Large Tables, 2006

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California
California Thomas Gainsborough (British, 1727–1788)
The Blue Boy, 1770

Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage, Erbil
Nimrud ivories, ninth–seventh century B.C.E.

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston
The Farnese Sacrophagus Roman, Severan period

Istanbul Archaeological Museums
Conservation and restoration of 548 artifacts from excavations on the Asian side of Istanbul Late Roman and Byzantine periods (fourth–fifteenth centuries)

James A. Michener Art Museum, Doylestown, Pennsylvania
Henriette Wyeth (American, 1907–1997)
Fantasy, c. 1923

Johannesburg Art Gallery
Ten paintings by Gerard Sekoto (South African, 1913–1993)

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth
Claude Monet (French, 1840–1926)
Weeping Willow, 1918–1919

Kunsthalle Zurich
Ferdinand Hodler (Swiss, 1853–1918)
Die Wahlheir (The Truth) (First Version), 1902

Auguste Rodin (French, 1840–1917)
Jean d’Aire. Nude study for Le bourgeois de Calais (The Burghers of Calais), 1886

Kunstmuseum Historisches, Vienna
Triath (Tiziano Vecellio) (Italian, c. 1488–1576)
Ecce Homo, 1543

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles
Simon Rodia (American, b. Italy, 1879–1965)
Watts Towers of Simon Rodia, 1921–1954

Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey
Joy of the Waters, 1920

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Valentin de Boulogne (French, 1591–1632)
Abraham Sacrificing Isaac, 1630–1631

Musée des Beaux-Arts Jules Chéret, Nice
Jacopo Canucci Pontormo (Italian, 1494–1557)
Road to Calvary, 1523–1525

Musée d’Orsay, Paris
Gustave Courtet. French, 1819–1877
L’Atelier du peintre. Allégorie récitant déterminant une phase de sept années de ma vie artistique et morale (The Painter’s Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life), 1854/55

Musée national Picasso-Paris
Pablo Ruiz Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973)
Femmes à leur toilette (Women at Their Toilet), 1937–1938

Musée de l’Art du Banc de la République, Bogotá
Noël León (Colombian, 1907–1978)
Ten paintings

Musée de l’Art du Lac (MALA), Peru
Ppacas mantle, 100 B.C.E.–100 C.E.

Musée du Palais de Belloa, Mexico City
Seventeen murals

Musée Diego Rivera Anahuacalli, Mexico City
Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886–1957)
Part of the collection of Frida Kahlo

Musée Frida Kahlo, Mexico City
Photographs from the personal collection of Frida Kahlo

Musée National d’Art Antropología, Mexico City
Thirteen pieces of Mesoamerican sculpture, 1400 B.C.E.–1520 C.E.
Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853–1890)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

contemporary art

Ten works of modern and contemporary art, 1944

Alejandro García Caturla

The Eternal Presence

An Homage to the Artistic Expression of the North and of the South on this Continent (Pan American Union), 1940

Seattle Art Museum

Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–1956)

Scenes in and around the Capitol Two folding screens

Japanese, Edo period, second half of the seventeenth century

Shanghai Museum

Ceramics from Qinglongshan, Tang Dynasty (618–907) and Song Dynasty (960–1279)

Jian (water vessel), dragon pattern, c. early sixth – fifth century B.C.E.

Society of Antiquaries of London

Foundation 1707, Royal Charter, 1751

Two copies of Magna Carta

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Two paintings by Georges Braque (French, 1882–1963)

Édouard Manet (French, 1832–1883)

Woman in Evening Dress (Femme en robe de soirée), 1877–1880

Pablo Ruiz Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973)

Woman Ironing (La repasseuse), 1904

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)

Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886–1957)

The Marriage of the Artistic Expression of the North and of the South on this Continent (Pan American Union), 1940

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Pablo Ruiz Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973)

Woman Ironing (La repasseuse), 1904
Städel Museum, Frankfurt
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner
(German, 1880–1938)
Scene in a Forest (Moritzburg Ponds) (recto) and Nude in the Studio (verso), c. 1910

The Master of Flémalle
(Netherlandish, c. 1375–1444 Tournai)
The Bad Thief to the Left of Christ
(interior, fragment of an altarpiece-wing painted on both sides), c. 1430
Saint John the Baptist (exterior, fragment of an altarpiece-wing painted on both sides), c. 1430

Tokyo National Museum
Attributed to Chen Rong
(Chinese, c. 1200–1266)
Five Dragons
Southern Song Dynasty, thirteenth century, China

Kanō Eitoku (Japanese, 1543–1590)
Hinoki-zu (Cypress Tree)
Eight-fold screen, Azuchi-Momoyama period (sixteenth century)

Haniwa (terracotta tomb figure),
Warrior in keiko armor
Kofun period, sixth century C.E.

The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg
Vigilius Eriksen (Danish, 1722–1783)
Three portraits

Venedig, Berlin, and Paris
Marc Chagall
(French, b. Belarus, 1887–1985)
Five paintings

The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York
Twenty-one works by Romare Bearden and other African American artists

Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest
Agnolo Tori di Cosimo di Mariano, called Bronzino (Italian, 1503–1572)
Venus, Cupid and Envy, c. 1550

The State Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg
Vigilius Eriksen (Danish, 1722–1783)
Three portraits

Tate Modern, London
Three paintings by Amedeo Modigliani

Tel Aviv Museum of Art
Marc Chagall
(French, b. Belarus, 1887–1985)
Five paintings

The University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts
Uemura Shōen (Japanese, 1875–1949)
Jo-no-Mai (Dance Performed in a Noh Play), 1936

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
146 photographs by African American artists from the Kamoinge Workshop
Highlights from VMFA’s Ludwig and Rosy Fischer Collection: Sixty works on paper by German Expressionists

The Wallace Collection, London
Giovanni Antonio Canal (Canaletto) (Italian, 1697–1768)
Two paintings

Westminster Abbey, London
Cosmati Pavement, 1268
Portrait of Richard II Enthroned in Coronation Robes, c. 1398
Catherine of Aragon, early sixteenth century
Liber Regalis, c. 1382
Silk Embroidery Panels for Regalia Table and Royal Boxes, 1953
James II Coronation Music composed by Henry Purcell, 1685
Mary II Coronation Chair, 1689
Portrait of Elizabeth I, 1594
Wren Model, c. 1720
Chaucer’s Lease, 1399

Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg
Ndebele (South African)
Isiphephetu (beaded aprons), c. 1950s–1980s

Image opposite the 2019 Selections listing:
Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640)
The Lamentation of Christ, c. 1605
Oil on panel
This detail shows the Colonna family seal and other eighteenth-century provenance information on the verso of the work.

Cover image:
Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853–1890)
The Starry Night, Saint Rémy, June 1889 (detail)
Oil on canvas