Promoting cultural sustainability

We are pleased to present the 2023 Bank of America Art Conservation Project grant recipients. This marks our twelfth year providing grants for the preservation and conservation of the world’s cultural treasures. In reviewing the 23 projects highlighted within this booklet, we are reminded that art and objects of cultural heritage are extremely vulnerable to time and that the conservation of these works allows society at large to be inspired by the rich diversity of the human experience. We support this work because we believe in preserving this shared history for future generations.

With this year’s selections, we will have provided funding for 237 projects in forty countries, representing thousands of works across different art movements, media and time periods—and, most important, cultures. However, all the works we help to conserve share one thing in common: 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 just one part of a comprehensive, steadfast program of support for cultural institutions. We believe that investments in arts and culture help to build communities and have a positive impact on the lives of our clients and employees. We support a wide range of local and global nonprofit organizations with funding and programming to drive engagement, promote cultural sustainability and make the arts more accessible and inclusive in the communities we serve. It is part of how we deliver Responsible Growth.

Brian Siegel
Global Arts, Culture & Heritage Executive
Bank of America
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The Arab Image Foundation has more than 500,000 negatives, prints, glass plates, albums, film rolls and objects related to the Middle East and North Africa, and the Arab diaspora. These have been gradually assembled over the last 25 years by artists and researchers, as well as through donations. One significant collection is that of Studio Photo Jack, which photographer Agop Kouyoumjian founded in 1945 in Tripoli, North Lebanon. The studio operated until 1997 and amassed a collection of 98 handmade albums, each containing negative sheet films, amounting to more than 30,000 photographs. It is a showcase of the studio’s indexing practices.

Following the Beirut port disaster in August 2020, this has become one of the Arab Image Foundation’s collections most urgently in need of conservation. The fragile albums will be digitized as well as preserved, to highlight the physical characteristics unique to Kouyoumjian’s work. This reflects the foundation’s attempt to find a balance between best practices in preventive conservation while preserving both the images and practice of the photographer. Kouyoumjian crafted these albums to index his medium-format negatives using print tests for the front and back cover and lower-quality paper to layer the negatives, along with nails, screws, pieces of tin and rope for binding.

This project will allow a wide audience to appreciate the precise work of photographer Agop Kouyoumjian—all while learning about the rich history of the inhabitants of Tripoli, from post-independence through the country’s modernization and civil war.
The Armenian Museum of America has the largest collection of Armenian artifacts in the United States. Among them is an extremely rare collection of 21 handwritten and hand-illuminated manuscripts, of which approximately ten are on display in the museum’s galleries at any given time. One example is this small hymnal, or sharaknots in Armenian, which contains hymns to be chanted and performed on feast days. Attributed to the prolific artist Karapet of Berkri, the illumination depicts the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. All these manuscripts will be preserved so that they can be viewed by the public and studied in perpetuity without risk of further damage incurred by handling. This will allow visitors to view the art and culture of the past, and to see it in the context of the present.

By the medieval period, Armenians had a rich literary society. Since then, many manuscripts and illuminations have been looted or destroyed, a process that intensified during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Preservation has taken on a renewed importance, as Armenia’s cultural heritage remains at risk.

The conservation of these rare and beautiful books will be completed by an expert from the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, which is the largest and most significant Armenian library and archive in the world. The manuscripts require restoration and preservation due to worn edges, light damage and dust. They need protection from elements that could compromise their fragile state, as well as preservation for the future.
Louise Nevelson, born Leah Berliawsky, is one of the most important American sculptors of the twentieth century. Like many women artists of her generation, Nevelson achieved recognition later in her career—she was 42 before she had her first solo show, an exhibition of sculptures in New York’s prestigious Nierendorf Gallery in 1941. Over the following decades, she became a pioneering artist, recognized for large-scale installations, an unusual achievement for women of her generation. Shadow Chord was created in 1969, at the height of Nevelson’s career, and is a stunning example of her famous all-black wooden assemblages. Sixty-one unique boxes made from discarded dowels, prefabricated moldings and cut wood give this installation the imposing presence of a cityscape, one that changes the viewer’s perception of light and space. Since its acquisition in 2001, this has been a highlight of the Boca Raton Museum of Art’s collection.

Influenced by Marcel Duchamp’s sculptures made from found materials, Nevelson aimed to reinvigorate found objects with a spiritual life. During her long career, subject matter in her work ranged from her personal feelings about uprooted childhood, culture and war, to nature’s divinity.

Nevelson was also quite eloquent about the importance of the color black in her work, even describing herself as the “Architect of Shadow.” For the artist, black wasn’t a negation of color, but an acceptance because it encompasses all colors. Recognizing its importance in Nevelson’s body of work, the Boca Raton Museum of Art has established a conservation plan to restore the vitality of Shadow Chord’s matte black. The aim of the project is to restore the uniformity of the color and recover paint and material losses to consolidate layers and prevent future damage. The work will then retain its prominent place in the museum’s permanent collection.
Constitutional Court Trust, Johannesburg

The African Art Centre, with seven South African artists: Hlengiwe Dube, Leonie Malherbe, Ntombi Agnes Mbatha, Thobani Mbatha, Greta Nkosi, Sphindile Nkosi and Zibuyisile Pretty Zulu

South African Flag, 2006
Plastic beads, twill and filocheen thread on faso cotton fabric
244 by 98.5 in. (620 by 250 cm)
Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC). Courtesy of the Constitutional Court Trust.

This project entails the conservation treatment and reinstallation of the beaded and embroidered textile artwork of the South African Flag, which is permanently installed in the Constitutional Court of South Africa in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. It is the creation of a women-led group of contemporary South African artists—Hlengiwe Dube, Leonie Malherbe, Ntombi Agnes Mbatha, Thobani Mbatha, Greta Nkosi, Sphindile Nkosi and Zibuyisile Pretty Zulu—affiliated with the African Art Centre in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

Using traditional Zulu beadwork, they painstakingly created individual half-meter panels that were then joined together to form a single (then new) national flag of South Africa. As such, this artistic process and the resulting artwork speak of unity through collective effort, a commitment to collaboration that is central to constitutionalism in South Africa. The flag, with its wavelike shape and vibrant colors, stands in contrast to the more muted colors in the courtroom.

Based on a recent condition assessment, the artwork has become extremely dusty over time and, given its size and hanging height, requires careful cleaning. Parts of the beaded textile also need to be repaired and reattached by hand. The hanging system for this monumental work must be expanded and reinforced, as the work has started to sag, resulting in creases, which places strain on the fabric and stitching. Once treatment has been completed, the flag will be reinstalled in the Constitutional Court and will continue to be a symbol of South African unity.
Hampton University Museum, Hampton, Virginia
Dr. John T. Biggers (American, 1924–2001)
Twenty-nine works on paper

Founded in 1868, the Hampton University Museum is the oldest African American museum in the United States. Representing diverse cultures, the museum’s collection includes African, Asian/Pacific Islander and Indigenous objects. Hampton became the first institution in the country to establish a collection of African American fine art, with the 1894 acquisition of Henry Ossawa Tanner’s renowned painting The Banjo Lesson, 1893.

The collection of American art has since grown to more than 2,700 works, including 93 by the prolific painter, sculptor and noted muralist Dr. John T. Biggers. With one of the largest Biggers collections in the country, Hampton University Museum has seventeen paintings, two murals, 33 prints, 35 drawings and nine sculptures, some of which are on permanent display throughout the museum and campus.

Dr. Maya Angelou, a friend and colleague of Biggers, noted that “his pen and pencil and brush take us without faltering into the individual personal work where each of us lives privately.”

Twenty-nine of Biggers’ works on paper will receive conservation treatment, rehousing and digital documentation, which will allow for more accessibility through research, exhibition and publication. The museum plans to include some of the never-before-exhibited works in an exhibition to commemorate Biggers’ 100th birthday in September 2024, with additional plans to develop a traveling exhibition.

© Estate of John T. Biggers

Far left: Middle Passage, 1949
Conté crayon on paper
21.9 by 19.1 in. (55.6 by 48.6 cm)

Below: Hampton Centennial Seal, 1966
Graphite on paper
35.3 by 27 in. (89.5 × 68.6 cm)
The Hawai‘i State Archives has had the kuleana (responsibility) of preserving Hawai‘i’s history since 1905. A topic of increasing public interest is the Hawaiian Kingdom and its rulers who were overthrown in 1893. To honor their past and reacquaint the People of Hawai‘i with their heritage, the Hawai‘i State Archives is conserving significant portraits of three of its revered sovereigns.

The famous William Cogswell portrait created in 1892 of Mō‘ī Wahine (Queen) Lili‘uokalani—Hawai‘i’s last reigning monarch—will have its frame restored. Conservators will repair extensive termite damage, strengthen the frame for long-term display and regild sections of the frame that have deteriorated.

The 1840s portraits of Mō‘ī (King) Kamehameha III and his wife Mō‘ī Wahine (Queen) Kalama will have a century of neglect addressed through the removal of heavily yellowed varnish and darkened overpaint, followed by a fill and texture of paint losses that can occur during the removal process. Once restored, these paintings will counteract contemporary representations created by artists who Europeanized their subjects. These works will return to public display and present a more accurate visual representation of these important Hawaiians.
The Heard Museum, dedicated to the advancement of American Indian art, will restore a totem pole carved by Nisga’a First Nations sculptor Norman Tait in 1977. A gift from British Columbia to the City of Phoenix, the Friendship Totem was entrusted to the Heard, where Tait completed carving the work in one of the museum’s galleries. The word totem comes from the Algonquian word odoodem, meaning “his kinship group.” This totem represents Tait’s family kinship, featuring an eagle, the symbol of his clan; a beaver, one of his clan’s crests; and a human figure representing membership in his clan.

The Northwest Indigenous peoples’ centuries-old tradition of creating totems was nearly extinct by the end of the twentieth century. Federal governments attempted to force Indigenous peoples to assimilate, burning totems and banning potlatches, or ceremonies to raise the totems, which were central to Indigenous culture. The Friendship Totem can be seen as a symbol not only of friendship between cities and nations, but also of the survival and resilience of Native American cultures—with Norman Tait credited for the revival of Nisga’a totem carving.

Deinstalled after more than twenty years of display, the totem was too large to be stored indoors at the museum. Despite measures to protect it from the elements, infestations and time, the totem requires restoration before being exhibited outdoors at the Heard. Norman Tait’s brother, Alver, and daughter, Valerie, will be invited to attend the raising ceremony as will representatives of his clan from British Columbia. Once in place, the totem will welcome the Heard’s visitors as one of the first works they see.
Hong Kong Palace Museum
Collection of 946 gold and silver objects

In 2022, the Hong Kong Palace Museum received a donation of 946 ancient gold and silver works as its foundational collection from Betty Lo and Kenneth Chu, important collectors of Chinese metalwork. Spanning 3,000 years, the museum’s new collection consists of objects from China and other parts of Asia. From magnificent accessories for the nobility to exquisite horse and chariot ornaments, this important collection demonstrates superb metalworking artisanship as well as cultural exchanges among various communities and regions.

The museum will provide long-term and critical conservation support of its inaugural gold and silver collection, which includes urgent treatment for more than ten ancient masterpieces in gold and silver to be prominently displayed in a major exhibition in 2023. Moreover, much-needed museum-grade housing will be created for 946 fragile gold and silver objects.

Conservators will deliver scholarly papers to their peers, locally and internationally, and give talks to the public to raise their awareness of conservation—an underdeveloped but growing area of interest in Hong Kong.
The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is conserving a major sculpture, Chris Burden’s *Urban Light*. One of the most prominent works of art at the museum, *Urban Light* has been visited by millions of people from around the world since its installation.

Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, *Urban Light* has been unofficially adopted by Los Angeles as a symbol of the city and is one of the most popular artworks in the world. Composed of 202 historic streetlamps dating from the 1920s and 1930s originally spread throughout Southern California, the large-scale sculpture has become ubiquitous as the face of LACMA and a point of pride for many Angelenos.

Conservators will apply protective paint layers that have been extensively tested on all the streetlamps, ensuring that substances such as lipstick, permanent marker and dye can be easily cleaned from their surfaces. These coats of robust, high-performance gloss paint will be applied to *Urban Light* to enhance and further extend the life of the artwork.

As part of this conservation effort, the museum’s intent is to increase the durability of *Urban Light* to allow for expanded and sustained engagement. Traditionally, standard museum practice is to create distance between the artwork and the viewer for the safety of the art. With this interactive work of public art, LACMA has been disrupting the standard by inviting the community to sit, to touch and embrace the work, thus creating a playful and unique experience.
Louis Armstrong, a legendary founding figure in American jazz, and his wife, the former Lucille Wilson, a dancer, lived in a modest house in the working-class neighborhood of Corona, Queens, New York, for nearly thirty years. Their residence is now a National and New York Historic Landmark, and a museum. Two portraits of the Armstrongs hang on the walls of the historic home’s living room.

Samuel Countee’s portrait of Lucille Armstrong aids in telling the story of a Black woman artist who bought a home with her own money in the 1940s and shared it with her husband. Lucille Wilson was a member of the chorus line at New York’s Cotton Club, where she would eventually meet Armstrong. The Louis Armstrong portrait was created by the prominent African American artist Calvin Bailey and is based on a famous photograph taken by Anton Bruehl for a 1935 issue of Vanity Fair.

The portraits and frames will be cleaned for extended viability. Dust accumulation, as well as localized wear and abrasion, will be removed from the surfaces of the frames and canvases. After treatment, both portraits will be displayed in the living room as featured archival objects and the basis of storytelling for the guided tour that thousands of visitors take each year.
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth
Clyfford Still (American, 1904–1980)

PH-225, 1956
Oil on canvas
Unframed: 115 by 104.8 by 1.5 in. (292.1 by 266.1 by 3.8 cm)
Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Museum purchase, The Benjamin J. Tillar Memorial Trust

Clyfford Still’s PH-225, 1956, is an influential work of American abstract art created after World War II, and an important work in the collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. An example of his later painting style, PH-225 displays Still’s ability to give pigment textural, gestural and psychological meaning. The surfaces of his paintings are unique among the Abstract Expressionists, his works having an earthy texture while also displaying a particular kind of light.

Constructed with a combination of palette knives and brushes, the surfaces are complex and multilayered. In PH-225, a black, craggy area is combined with areas of yellow, ocher, red, orange and white. The vertical brushstrokes seen in the saturated colors create a sense of spaciousness. In the painting, Still divides the two sides of his aesthetic—his sense of the power of extreme light and dark and the radical psychological extremes they evoke. The conservation efforts for this painting will address cracking, dents, abrasions, accretions (the buildup of impurities on the paint surface) and other issues. Once conservators complete treatment, PH-225 will be returned to permanent display.
Le Paradis Fantastique, an iconic group of outdoor kinetic sculptures by Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely, is one of the landmarks of Moderna Museet. The artwork consists of fifteen monumental sculptures, nine of which are Niki de Saint Phalle’s multicolored, rotund female figures, set against six of Jean Tinguely’s black, jagged, rattling machines. Le Paradis Fantastique is described by the artists as a love duel between the figures and the machines.

The paint layer on Niki de Saint Phalle’s figures had been reapplied in 1997 by conservators according to guidelines from the artist and are in a satisfactory state of conservation today. However, the harsh climate conditions, combined with continuous operation since the artwork became part of the collection in 1971, has led to wear and general degradation of Tinguely’s machines, several of them being too degraded to be put in motion. Conservators will strive to bring the machines as close as possible to their original state. In addition to extensive documentation and archival research, the project will rely on innovative conservation approaches and treatments—including the use of 3D scanning and 3D printing to create custom-made mechanical parts, along with the development of a suitable lubrication system. Their objective is to find a balance between preserving the original materials and displaying the original operation of the machines. Work will be conducted in collaboration with a range of international experts as needed for specific parts of the project.

After the project is completed, Le Paradis Fantastique will regain its position, close to the museum entrance, where it will offer visitors a significantly improved sensory experience, more in line with the artists’ original vision.
Musée d’Art Moderne de Paris
Sonia Delaunay (French, b. Odesa (now Ukraine), 1885–1979)

Rhythm, decoration for the Salon des Tuileries, 1938
Oil on canvas
211 by 234.3 in. (536 by 595 cm)

This painting is part of a large set of abstract monumental decorations commissioned to Sonia Delaunay, Robert Delaunay, Albert Gleizes and Jacques Villon for the 1938 Salon des Tuileries, an annual art exhibition in Paris. As part of the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles association, these artists intended to reconcile art and life by making works that echoed the industrial, economic and scientific advances of the twentieth century. These large-scale commissions fulfilled their aspiration to share their artistic experiments with wide audiences.

Sonia and Robert Delaunay were part of the bustling arts scene in early-twentieth-century Paris. They are the co-founders of Orphism, a Parisian offshoot of Cubism, which sought to unify color and sensation. Though they began with recognizable subjects, they worked to deconstruct their paintings to the point of pure abstraction, with saturated color and no recognizable objects in their work.

Sonia Delaunay’s Rhythm is part of this lifelong exploration of color contrast and its dynamic effects. Thanks to the interplay of curves and counter-curves along a vertical axis, her bright and vivid colors seem to be set in motion while conveying the energy of modern life. Over the years, Delaunays’ Rhythm has become among the museum’s most emblematic works, remaining almost permanently on view.

The painting presents some condition issues. The canvas is very fragile and, because of the tension exerted by the current wooden stretcher, some areas risk breakage. Moreover, the current system makes any internal relocation or potential loans hazardous, and the work requires reinforcement on the reverse of the canvas. Several conservators will work on the painting in situ in the museum’s galleries. A special flooring and suspension bridge will be built, along with a new floating aluminum stretcher, which would distribute the tension more evenly across all parts of the canvas. This project will allow for further display of the work and prevent the risk of breakage as it currently stands.
Pintura anecdótica is one of the most important paintings by celebrated Colombian artist Luis Caballero. Born in Bogotá, Caballero began his study of art in Colombia and then continued in Paris in the 1960s, where he was exposed to the work of Willem de Kooning and Francis Bacon. After a brief return to his homeland, he decided to stay in Paris, where he felt more liberated. He is known for his erotic and often violent masculine figures.

This monumental triptych entered the collection of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (MAMBO) in 1974. Despite the institution’s efforts to provide the best maintenance and care, water pipes burst in the 1980s and flooded the room in which the painting was stored. The work suffered water stains, warping in its supports, and mold growth over the surface and back of the painting.

The painting’s restoration process will begin with some preliminary research about the artist’s techniques and then systematic analysis to reveal and identify the materials and technologies Caballero used. This process will help conservators determine the best working methodology to apply, including visual examination, nondestructive analysis and microscopic analysis. The work will also have its frame replaced and undergo deep cleaning for stains, as well as flattening and retouching.
Museo Nacional de Historia, Castillo de Chapultepec, Mexico City
Four historical paintings

Josep (José) Cusachs y Cusachs
(Spanish, b. France, 1851–1908)
The Battle of April 2, 1867, 1902
Oil on canvas
162.5 by 167 in. (413 by 424 cm)
The Battle of May 5, 1862, 1903
Oil on canvas
158.8 by 214 in. (403 by 544 cm)
Pictured:
José Vivar y Valderrama
(Mexican, active mid-eighteenth century)
Baptism of the Tlaxcalan Nobility, 1752
Oil on canvas
162.5 by 167 in. (413 by 424 cm)
Miguel Jerónimo Zendejas
(Mexican, 1724–1816)
The Warehouse, 1797
Oil on wood panel
116.5 by 488.5 in. (296 by 1241 cm)

The National Museum of History will conserve four large-format oil paintings in its permanent collection. Two are by Josep (José) Cusachs y Cusachs, each depicting a battle in which President Porfirio Díaz played a significant role. Another painting, by José Vivar y Valderrama, depicts the Catholic conquest of Mesoamerica. Finally, a ten-panel work by Jerónimo Zendejas, which shows scenes related to the foundation of a botanical garden for scientific study, will also receive conservation treatment. Once the work is completed, the museum will attain in-depth knowledge about the techniques and materials used by important artists in Mexican history.

Based on a visual examination of the works, the intervention proposal includes dust cleaning, along with surface cleaning, consolidation, joint repairs, filling and toning. Then, the paintings and their frames will be varnished. The project will conclude with a written and photographic report comparing the initial and final condition of the paintings and the conservation treatments performed.

The project will be carried out in situ, so that visitors can view the conservation process and learn about its importance in the museum. Materials will be provided to visitors explaining the art and science unique to the project. Once treatment has been completed, visitors will be able to discover the aesthetic qualities of the paintings as the artists intended.
Gibbons is a major ink painting by Singaporean artist Chen Wen Hsi. Born in Guangdong, China, Chen studied both Chinese-style ink painting and Western oil painting. He settled in Singapore in the late 1940s, where he would become an influential teacher. Gibbons is a mature work from the 1970s and is scheduled for display in 2025 as a key highlight in a large-scale exhibition on Singapore’s art history.

This large Chinese-style ink and color on paper suffers from severe discoloration, as well as numerous tears and losses on various parts of the painting. It was previously framed with a paper support, fully adhered to the wooden backing board, which has deteriorated over time. It will need to be stabilized for storage and display.

Due to the scale and complexity of the conservation process, the Heritage Conservation Centre (HCC), the custodian of Singapore’s National Collection, has scheduled the conservation treatment in phases, beginning with washing the work to lighten the discoloration and foxing spots (areas of mold or metal contamination on paper). After that, the tears and losses will be treated, followed by the painting’s remounting with new conservation-grade materials. As a part of the treatment in the second phase, a professional scroll mounter will work with the team at the HCC and share expertise with its conservators. A customized frame will be made for this artwork to accommodate its large size, enhancing the experience of museum visitors while minimizing future handling.
The Light of the World, by Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt, is based on a biblical reference: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him…” One of the most viewed works of religious art from the twentieth century in the world, the painting in St. Paul’s Cathedral is the third version by the artist. It was created approximately fifty years later than the previous two and is thought to be the culmination of Holman Hunt’s vision. There were several sitters who initially posed for the figure of Christ, including Christina Rossetti, sister of fellow Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It is housed in a gilded gesso frame produced in 1904 by Hilda Hewlett, who would later become the first woman in Britain to earn a pilot’s license and was an early aviation entrepreneur.

Conservators found that the surface gloss is uneven and craquelure evident. A previous treatment of varnishing and waxing has made further cleaning of the surface difficult.

Planned work includes replacement of a panel on the stretcher; lining the frame rebate and checking if the canvas edges are failing; covering the back of the stretcher with Tyvek (a brand of synthetic fibers) to protect the painting; and, finally, reinstating glazing with nonreflective glass to protect the canvas from day-to-day damage and reduce the effects of environmental change. The painting will then be reinstalled in the Cathedral later in 2023.
Tampa Museum of Art
Haitian artworks from the Arthur R. Albrecht Collection

In 2022, the Tampa Museum of Art received a gift of 69 paintings, nine wooden sculptures and one print from the Arthur R. Albrecht Revocable Trust. The Albrecht Collection is composed of important artworks by first- and second-generation Haitian painters. The first-generation painters emerged in the 1940s and were among the initial students to train at the Centre d’Art in Port-au-Prince. The Albrecht Collection artists in this group include Rigaud Benoit, Wilson Bigaud, Préfète Duffaut and Philomé Obin. The second-generation artists, such as Wilmino Domond, André Pierre and Gérard Valcin, trained under their predecessors and rose to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s. Imagery includes street scenes, landscapes, flora and fauna, and glimpses into daily Haitian life.

Due to their fragile condition, Mr. Albrecht’s Haitian paintings have been rarely, if ever, on loan or on view to the public. The paintings suffer from various levels of grime, accretions, staining and more in-depth concerns such as lifting paint and punctures or tears, as well as framing issues.

In celebration of this significant acquisition, the museum plans to premiere the Albrecht Collection with a major exhibition in summer 2023. To ensure the works are in safe condition and exhibition ready, the collection will be evaluated and treated by conservators. All the works will be cleaned, stabilized and put in a good state of preservation for the display, study and enjoyment of this unique collection of Haitian art.
While many of Andy Warhol’s best-known works are his Pop art portraits, the Oxidation series is his take on abstraction. Paintings in this series are canvases prepared with metallic acrylics and urine. Works from this aesthetically rich and delightfully transgressive body of work are found in public and private collections worldwide. Minimal conservation research on them exists, and there is limited understanding of their long-term preservation requirements.

The Andy Warhol Museum will conduct a novel conservation project on the series, focusing on the largest Oxidation painting in the museum’s collection. In June 2020, the painting was subjected to elevated temperatures and humidity, causing drips of liquid to seep from within the canvas and new corrosion patterns to emerge.

The project includes a chemical analysis of the Oxidation series to determine ideal display and storage conditions. A variety of analytical techniques, including scanning electron microscopy, will be employed to capture relevant scientific data and inform conservation and treatment plans. As the global keeper of the artist’s legacy, The Warhol is uniquely positioned to conduct this project. The permanent collection contains more than 10,000 artworks in various media along with Warhol’s diaries and artmaking materials, which will provide essential project context and supplies.

Due to its oversized format, the Oxidation painting is on permanent view in the museum. Conservation activities will occur in the gallery, and interpretive materials will provide visitors with an explanation of the art and science behind the conservation project. To support the preservation of this series of artworks for future generations, The Warhol will share findings with the worldwide professional conservation community.
Peter Paul Rubens’ The Judgement of Paris is one of the artist’s best-known works and is of paramount importance both within the artist’s oeuvre and The National Gallery’s collection. Painted in the last decade of Rubens’ life, the work shows the moment Paris makes his fateful choice between the goddesses Venus, Minerva and Juno. Rubens painted this subject on several occasions, but this version is one of the artist’s most recognizable and significant paintings, exemplifying the Flemish master’s exuberant style, brimming with vivacity and eroticism, and conveyed in rich colors.

 Integrating both scientific and art historical research, conservation treatment will involve removal of the cloudy and discolored varnish and retouchings, and important structural work to the complex oak panel support, followed by revamishing and retouching. This will be combined with research into the painting’s technique, materials and evolution, using an array of new noninvasive investigative techniques, which will advance conservators’ understanding of the work, the artist’s practice and process, and the genesis of its composition.

 In May 2024, The National Gallery will celebrate its 200th anniversary. This outstanding masterpiece will be conserved as part of a program to preserve some of the museum’s greatest works, in advance of a comprehensive redisplay of the collection, marking the culmination of the bicentenary year.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.
Two paintings by Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906)

Pictured:
Mont Sainte-Victoire, 1886–87
Oil on canvas
23.5 by 28.5 in. (59.6 by 72.3 cm)
Acquired 1925

Self-Portrait, 1878–80
Oil on canvas
23.8 by 18.5 in. (60.3 by 46.9 cm)
Acquired 1928

Paul Cézanne’s paintings are vitally important to The Phillips Collection, America’s first museum of modern art, established in 1921. The Phillips will treat two of his popular works, Mont Sainte-Victoire and Self-Portrait, which are constantly in demand for exhibitions and loans but have not received conservation treatment in more than forty years.

The strengths of these pictures are diminished and dulled by deteriorated varnishes, and aged surface coatings obscure Cézanne’s brushwork, his brilliant palette and depth present in the compositions. Previous linings have flattened the paint films, reducing the original texture and impasto. Research indicates that resins applied in previous treatments become less soluble with age, advising discolored coatings to be removed while they are still relatively easy to safely take off the paintings’ surfaces. Their appearances will dramatically improve with the removal of these coatings and by replacing them with light varnish applications, as appropriate, using a stabilized natural resin varnish.

This project will provide an opportunity to analyze the artist’s process, furthering scholarship on Cézanne’s technique and approach to painting materials at distinct moments in his career. The two works to be treated are part of the museum’s world-renowned unit of six paintings and one print, esteemed by many scholars as Cézanne’s finest. This treatment will result in a fully restored unit that includes previously conserved works that will be exhibited and interpreted together for the first time in decades.
The San Diego Museum of Art’s collection of more than 22,000 objects from across the globe spans from 3000 BCE to the present day. It includes six sculptures on permanent display in the open-air May S. Marcy Sculpture Garden and on the perimeter of Plaza de Panama outside the museum’s entrance. These remarkable sculptures encompass the richness and range of Modernism, crossing boundaries of style, material and national origin. For years, these works remained under wraps in the museum’s storage vault—and were only recently reinstalled in 2016 for public view.

Due to their outdoor location and vulnerability to environmental changes, these sculptures have sustained damage over time, and conservation treatment is required to enable their ongoing long-term display. This project will be carried out collaboratively with experts from the Henry Moore Foundation, the Rosenthal Foundation and Carli Fine Art Conservation. Following an initial analysis, conservators will treat and restore the sculptures’ surface patinas, which have deteriorated; repaint and rewax as appropriate to each work; and strengthen their underlying structures as necessary. This conservation project will revitalize these important sculptures, ensuring they are safeguarded for long-term public exhibition.
Chiura Obata is a notable twentieth-century Japanese American artist, although his works have remained largely unknown until recent decades. Two Running Horses, an acquisition by the Utah Museum of Fine Arts from the Obata estate, is the largest format of this subject that Obata ever produced. A four-panel screen, it embodies a synthesis of Japanese and American art techniques and the artist’s mastery of sumi (black ink) painting.

In 2022, with support from a Bank of America Art Conservation Project grant, the renowned Nishio Conservation Studio in Washington, D.C., completed conservation treatment of Two Running Horses. During this process, the conservator at Nishio made the remarkable discovery of full-size practice underdrawings of the original Horses screen and roughly fifty to one hundred practice sketches hidden between the painting and the wooden lattice frame of the folding screen—a finding worthy of a conservation project in and of itself.

The documentation, conservation treatment, crating, shipping, exhibition and storage of these additional underdrawings and practice sketches by Chiura Obata are all well underway. Once conserved, these underdrawings and sketches will be showcased alongside the original Two Running Horses screen. These sketches and drawings tell a compelling story about the artist’s working methods on this beautiful example of Japanese-style screen painting.
Museo de Arte de la República, Bogotá: Ten paintings by Noel Llano
Museo de Arte de Lima, Peru: Paracas mantle, 100 BCE–100 CE
Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, San Juan: 370 works on paper
Museo de Arte Moderna, Mexico City: Two sculptures by Hércules and Mathieu González
Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City: Seventeen murals
Museo Diego Rivera Arribancalli, Mexico City: Four murals by Diego Rivera
Museo Frida Kahlo, Mexico City: Photographs from the personal collection of Frida Kahlo
Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City: Fifteen pieces of Mexican sculpture, 1400–500 BCE and 650–900 CE
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid: Juan Gris, Portrait of Madame Josette Gris, 1916
Joan Miro, Portrait of a 1938
Pablo Ruiz Picasso, Woman in Blue, c. 1903
Salvador Dalí and Man Ray, Portrait of Jaëlle, 1933–34
Museo Tamayo, Mexico City: Eight outdoor sculptures
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid: Titian, The Eucharist, c. 1433–35
Museo de Arte de São Paulo: Portrait II
Museo Frida Kahlo, Mexico City: Photographs from the personal collection of Frida Kahlo
Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, California:
Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar:
Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago:
Woman in Blue, c. 1901
Woman in Evening Dress, 1877–80
Two paintings by Vincent van Gogh
Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City: Fifteen pieces of Mexican sculpture, 1400–500 BCE and 650–900 CE
National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin:
Laertes Pontius, The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, c. 1600
National Gallery in Prague:
Rembrandt van Rijn, Six French marble sculptures
National Portrait Gallery, London:
Three portraits of English monarchs
San Francisco Arts Commission:
Revolution/Apokalyptische Landschaft Ludwig Meidner, 1912/13
San Diego Museum of Art:
Cándido Portinari, The North wind, 1933–34
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: Diego Rivera, Pan American Unity, 1940
Seattle Art Museum:
Susan Seidman, The Trinity Altarpiece, 1491–94
The Courtauld Gallery, London:
Paul Cézanne, The Large Bathers, 1895–1906
The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia:
Pablo Cézanne, The Large Bathers, 1895–1906
The British Museum, London: Marble figure of the Buddha Amitsara, 585 CE
Michelangelo, The Epiphany, 1550–53
The Corcoran Gallery, London:
Sandro Botticelli, The Trinity Altarpiece, c. 1491–94
Peter Paul Rubens: Cain Slaying Abel, 1608–09

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The Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida:
Three paintings by Salvador Dalí

The Frick Pittsburgh:
Three medieval tapestries

The Glass House, New Canaan, Connecticut:
Philip Johnson, The Glass House, 1949

The Huntington, San Marino, California:
Thomas Gainsborough, The Blue Boy, 1770

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art:
Simon Rodia, Watts Towers, 1921–54

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York:
Photographs in the James Van Der Zee Archive

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts:
Valentin de Boulogne, Abraham Sacrificing Isaac, 1630–31

The Museum of Modern Art, New York:
Two paintings by Paul Cézanne
Three paintings by Jackson Pollock
Alexander Calder, Mon-Ester with Pennants, 1945
Henri Matisse, The Swimming Pool, late summer 1952
Paula Modersohn-Becker, Self-Portrait with Two Flowers in Her Raised Left Hand, 1907
Vincent van Gogh, The Starry Night, Saint Rémy, June 1889

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library:
Eight works

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri:
El Greco, The Penitent Magdalene, c. 1580–85

The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg:
Three portraits by Vigilius Eriksen

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

The University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts:
Uemura Shōen, Noh Dance Prelude, 1936

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut:
Three modern works by three women artists

The Wallace Collection, London:
Two paintings by Canaletto
Jean-Honoré Fragonard, The Swing, c. 1767–68

The Vatican Museums:
Unknown artist, Apollo "del Belvedere," 130–140 CE

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond:
146 photographs by artists from the Kamoinge Workshop
Sixty works on paper by German Expressionists

Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg:
Beaded aprons by the Ndebele people, c. 1950s–80s

Cover image:
Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris
Sonia Delaunay (French, b. Odesa (now Ukraine), 1885–1979)
Rhythm, decoration for the Salon des Tuileries, 1938
Oil on canvas
Photo Paris Musées / Photo credit: Pascal Otlinghaus
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Mont Sainte-Victoire, 1886–87 (detail)
Oil on canvas
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Chen Rong, Five Dragons, thirteenth century
Ko Gifu, Cypress Tree, sixteenth century
Haniwa, Warrior in kake-no armor, sixth century CE
Three paintings by Watanabe Kazan
Buddhist monk's robe, Yuan–Ming Dynasty

Trinity College Library Dublin:
Four medieval Irish manuscripts, 500–900 CE
Attributed to Aed Ua Crimhthainn, Book of Lecster, twelfth century

University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive:
Works in the African American Quilts Collection, c. 1860s–2006

Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City:
Ouida Otaba, Two-Running Horses, 1932

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam:
Vincent van Gogh, Landscape at Twilight, June 1890

Vatican Museums:
Unknown artist, Apollo "del Belvedere," 130–140 CE

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Eleven works, 1268–1953

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