

AMFA Foundation Collection Fact Sheet

Overview

The rich and distinctive Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Foundation Collection contains approximately 14,000 works of art in various media, primarily from Europe and the Americas, dating from the 14th century to the present. Strengths include 19th- through 21st-century works on paper with a focus on drawing, contemporary craft, and art of the American South.

History

The AMFA Foundation Collection was built through the support of both local and national donors and strategic purchases. Early gifts of art, made in the 1930s soon after the institution was established, include Italian paintings: *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* (circa 1400) attributed to Lorenzo di Niccolò and *Adoration of the Shepherds* (circa 1580) by Francesco Bassano II. These paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation set the precedent for developing an international collection. Additional gifts of 18th and 19th-century American paintings contributed to the growth of the fledgling collection, such as: *Mother and Son* (1765-1778), attributed to John Hesselius, and *Study for June Shower* (1853) by Asher B. Durand, among others, from Frederick W. Allsopp, business manager of the Arkansas Gazette newspaper.

Beginning in the 1950s, significant works of early 20th-century Mexican, American and European modernism entered the collection through Governor Winthrop Rockefeller and his family. These include *Dos Mujeres* (1914) by Diego Rivera; *Andromeda* (1912) by Odilon Redon, to more recent gifts, including *Black Iron* (1935) by Charles Burchfield, and *A Bouquet* (1928) by Charles Demuth. The annual juried *Delta Exhibition*—inaugurated in 1958 to highlight artists active in Arkansas and its adjoining states—became a steady source of additional acquisitions, establishing a deep collection of contemporary art from the region with works from artists such as David Bailin, Tarrence Corbin, Lisa Krannichfeld, and James Surls.

In 1962, the Board of Trustees established a focus of collecting works on paper. With the arrival of Executive Director and Chief Curator Townsend Wolfe in 1968, a more refined focus was developed that set AMFA on a defining course: a steadfast dedication to drawings. In 1986, AMFA inaugurated the *National Drawing Invitational*, a series of exhibitions that have contributed to the growth of the collection of works on paper. Similarly, AMFA established the *National Craft Invitational and the Regional Craft Biennial*, a series of exhibitions that promoted national and regional artists and contributed to the growth of the contemporary craft collection.

AMFA Foundation Collection Fact Sheet

Six major works in a variety of media from the landmark traveling exhibition *Objects: USA* became the foundation for AMFA's collection of contemporary craft. These gifts from the S.C. Johnson Company include *Vertical Sculpture* (1963) by John Mason; *Rendering Lorraine* (1969) by Gerry Williams; *Valentine for Sabina* (1968) by Stephen J. Daly; *Ruby* (1969) by Boris Dudchenko; *Wall Hanging* (1963) by Rachel Appleton; and *Wild Sister and the Other Brother* (1968-69) by Jean Stamsta. In the 1970s and 1980s, Little Rock's Diane and Sandy Besser generously donated their collection of British studio ceramics and sculptural baskets, while fellow Arkansans, Robyn and John Horn, donated ceramics, turned wood, and additional baskets—further strengthening the craft collection. Recent acquisitions by contemporary artists, such as Raven Halfmoon's *Do You Practice Your Culture?* (2019) and Peter Pincus' *A Familiar Kind of Riddle* (2018), continue to advance the Museum's ceramic holdings.

Since the appointment of Executive Director Victoria Ramirez in 2019, the Museum has acquired over 800 works for the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Foundation Collection.

In 2022, the AMFA Foundation received a \$1 million grant from the Windgate Foundation to establish an endowed fund to support acquisitions of works by living artists and living artists of contemporary craft.

Works on Paper

Renaissance and Old Master Drawings

A group of Renaissance and Old Master works on paper includes examples from the Workshop of Master E.S., *An Angel from the Baptism of Christ* (circa 1465), the oldest drawing in the collection; Bernardino Lanino, *Study of the Head of the Virgin (or a Female Saint or Angel)*, circa 1550; Peter Paul Rubens, *Hygieia, Goddess of Health, Feeding the Serpent* (circa 1614-15); Giovanni Barbieri (Il Guercino), *Study for the Figure of Ahasuerus* (circa 1637-39); Pietro da Cortona, *Study of an Armed Rider/Two Studies of a Nude Figure* (1640); and Rembrandt van Rijn, *Jeroboam Interrupted by the Prophet* (circa 1648-52).

French Post-Impressionism

The AMFA Foundation has the largest public collection of Paul Signac's watercolors outside of France—a gift from Arkansas industrialist James T. Dyke. The donated Signac collection spans the artist's career and is comprised of 133 watercolors and drawings, and one print. Among the earliest are several images of St. Tropez in 1893. Among the latest are a set of 22 watercolors from a series that Signac's patron, Julian Lévy, commissioned in 1929—when Signac was asked to paint 100 French ports. The Signac collection also includes four of the rare still lifes the artist painted in the 1910s and 1920s in a style influenced by Paul Cézanne, as well as a variety of sketches and eight large ink wash preparatory drawings for paintings.

AMFA Foundation Collection Fact Sheet

Earlier French works on paper include: Eugène Delacroix, *An English Cavalier* (circa 1826-30); Gustave Courbet, *Seascape* (1872); Berthe Morisot, *Girl Resting* (1888-90), *Girl Leaning on Her Elbow* (1887), and *Julie Drawing* (1889); and Edgar Hilaire Germain Degas, *Three Nude Dancers* (circa 1903).

Other notable Post-Impressionist works on paper include Vincent van Gogh, *Man with a Spade, Resting* (1882), and Piet Mondrian, *Farm Behind Willows* (1905-06).

European Modernism

A distinguished collection of works on paper by European modernists includes Egon Schiele, *Kneeling Nude, Front View* (1914); Paul Klee, *Thistle Garden* (1918); Pablo Picasso, *Siesta, The Reapers* (1919); Juan Gris, *Seated Figure* (1920); Max Beckmann, *Jazz Band* (1922); Pierre Bonnard, *Martha Entering the Room* (1942); and Joan Miró, *Person in the Night* (1971).

AMFA's permanent collection also includes important works on paper by artists of Imperial Russia and former Soviet Union. Some of these Russian, Latvian, Ukrainian, and Uzbekistani modernists include Alexander Rodchenko, *Ruler and Compass Composition* (1915) and *Ruler and Compass Composition* (1917); Alexander Archipenko, *Still Life* (circa 1918); Ilya Chashnik, *Suprematist Composition* (circa 1922); Nikolai Suetin, *Cubo-Futurist Composition* (circa 1920); and Alexander Volkov, *The Dancing Bacha* (1926); as well as fifteen works by Oleksandr Bohomazov, forming the largest concentration of his work in an American museum.

American Modernism

AMFA's permanent collection contains 391 drawings and photographs by various artists of the Stieglitz Circle, including Alfred Stieglitz, John Marin, Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, Edward Steichen, and Charles Sheeler. The largest grouping is comprised of 297 works on paper by John Marin, 290 of which were a gift of the artist's family. These works include a 1912 watercolor sketch, *Woolworth Building under Construction*, made in preparation for Marin's influential series of watercolors exhibited in 1913 at Stieglitz's 291 Gallery and at the Armory Show.

Arthur Dove is represented by 31 drawings and watercolors, 28 of which come from his 1940s sketchbook "E," given by the artist's son, William C. Dove. Works by Georgia O'Keeffe include a 1931 pastel, *From Pink Shell*, donated through the estates of Little Rock collectors Louise and Fred Dierks, and a charcoal drawing, *Special No. 30 (Banana Flower)*, 1934, one of only five drawings the artist made while visiting the Bahamas. Other works of early American modernism include Marguerite Zorach, *Indian Rodeo, Yosemite Valley* (1920); Charles Burchfield, *Black Iron* (1935); Stuart Davis, *Untitled* (1923); and Reginald Marsh, *Coney Island* (1947).

AMFA Foundation Collection Fact Sheet

Modern Works on Paper

Notable holdings include: Jackson Pollock, *Untitled* (circa 1939-40); Elizabeth Catlett, *Newspaper Vendor (Study for "Vendedora de Periódicos")*, 1955; Helen Frankenthaler, *Emerson Series* (1965); Larry Rivers, *de Kooning with My Texas Hat* (circa 1967); Ed Ruscha, *Quit* (1967); Roy Lichtenstein, *Study for "Aviation"* (1967); Lee Krasner, *Earth #1* (1969); Willem de Kooning, *Untitled* (1969); Richard Diebenkorn, *Untitled (Ocean Park Series)*, 1972; Lee Bontecou, *Untitled* (1974-75); Joan Mitchell, *Untitled (Sally Up My Alley)*, circa 1975; Robert Motherwell, *Elegy Drawing No. 17* (1977); Tom Wesselmann, *Study for Bedroom Painting #55* (1982); Pat Steir, *Untitled* (1986); Luis Cruz Azaceta, *Exit II* (1989); Enrique Chagoya, *Tribute to Posada* (1989); and José Bedia, *Interior Shipwreck* (1991).

Contemporary Works on Paper

Notable works on paper include Robert Colescott, *Three Standing Demoiselles* (1985); Jacob Lawrence, *Study for "The Builders,"* (1985); Kerry James Marshall, *Cool Wind* (1985); and Alison Saar, *Invisible Man* (1985). Acclaimed collectors Dorothy and Herbert Vogel donated a group of more than 100 minimalist and conceptualist works on paper by artists Lynda Benglis, Michael Goldberg, Cheryl Laemmle, Robert Mangold, Lucio Pozzi, and Richard Tuttle. New York collectors Sally and Werner (Wynn) Kramarsky enhanced these holdings through their generous gift of more than 160 minimalist and conceptualist works on paper throughout the years.

AMFA also owns nearly 90 drawings and other works on paper by American artist Will Barnet, most of them a gift from the artist and his wife Elena, in honor of former AMFA Executive Director Townsend Wolfe.

Local collectors Jackye and Curtis Finch, Jr., have donated more than 150 artists' self-portraits from their collection of over 400 drawings and have pledged to gift the remainder in the future. The collection includes examples by European and American artists dating from the early 20th century to the present.

Recent acquisitions of works on paper include Ebony G. Patterson, *Untitled (Marvini), from the Disciplez Series* (2009); Toyin Ojih Odutola, *The Philosopher* (2013-14); Titus Kaphar, *The Jerome Project (Asphalt and Chalk) VII* (2014); John Bankston, *Flowers to Chains* (2015); and Antonius Bui, *Holding onto these fragments, all these years (The Protectors)*, 2021, a monumental work on handcut paper—the first of their work to be acquired by any museum.

Contemporary Craft

AMFA's collection of contemporary craft spans all media. Works in ceramic range from Peter Voukos, *Cruciform Vase* (1958), John Mason, *Vertical Sculpture* (1963), and Robert Arneson, *Rat Pot #1* (1981), to more recent works, such as Marilyn Levine, *Doctor's Bag—Closed* (1972); Michelle Erickson, *Demon and Deity Pot* (2003-2004); Annabeth Rosen, *Untitled #18* (2005); and Steven Young Lee, *Diptych, Eagles* (2013).

AMFA Foundation Collection Fact Sheet

In 2021, the Los Angeles-based Enamel Arts Foundation donated more than 450 works of American enamel, spanning the 1920s to the present. This 2021 donation has made AMFA the leading collection in the country of modern and contemporary work in this medium.

Signature examples of modern and contemporary craft also include Ulysses Davis, *Winged Alligator* (circa 1950); Curtis Tann, *Plaque (The King)*, circa 1965; James C. Watkins, *Sleeping Posture Double-Walled Caldron (Guardian Series)*, 1995; Joyce Scott, *Jar Woman VI* (1992-1997); Whitfield Lovell, *Coin VII* (2002); and David Harper Clemons, *The Trees We Construct to Conceal Our Strange Fruit* (2006); glassworks by Lino Tagliapietra, *Red Dinosaur* (2006); Beth Lipman, *Laid Table with Bird, Goblet, and Fruit* (2006); and Luke Jerram, *Large Sars* (2010). Work in silver by Donald Colflesh, *“Circa 70” Tea and Coffee Service with Tray* (1960) is a highlight in that medium, and works in wood include Wendell Castle’s mahogany *Table with Fruit and Books* (1978), and Leon Niehues, *Chan Juan #63* (2001).

Historically Underrepresented Perspectives

AMFA has a commitment to amplifying diverse voices through its exhibitions. While there are benchmark moments in the collection history that align with this commitment, the Museum seeks to accelerate the diversification of voices represented by the AMFA Foundation Collection in the upcoming years.

Since 1971, AMFA has frequently organized and hosted exhibitions and installations dedicated to the work of Black artists, often leading to acquisitions. Highlights of works on paper acquired over the years include Bill Traylor—whose first solo exhibition was organized by AMFA—*Man with Red Vest and Cane* (circa 1939-42); Charles White, *Children’s Games II* (1976); works from Jacob Lawrence’s *The Migration Series* (1996), and works from the exhibition *30 Americans*, in 2015.

Through the *National Drawing Invitational*, AMFA presented and acquired works by a diverse roster of artists, such as: Benny Andrews, Ida Applebroog, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Jose Bedia, Enrique Chagoya, Robert Colescott, Diane Edison, Helen Frankenthaler, Whitfield Lovell, Kerry James Marshall, Alison Saar, Bibiana Suárez, and Kay WalkingStick. Within the last decade, AMFA has acquired recent work by artists such as Raven Halfmoon, Bisa Butler, Gale Tremblay, and Antonius Bui.

Art of the American South

The AMFA Foundation Collection also contains works by Arkansas and regional artists that illustrate their contributions to the broad arc of art history. Notable examples include Louis Betts, *Oranges* (1889); Mattie Thweatt Dubé, *Lost Illusions* (1890); Clementine Hunter, *She’s Swinging* (circa 1942); John Miller Howard, *Still Life with Mask* (1946); numerous watercolors, drawings, paintings, textiles, and jewelry by husband-and-wife artists Elsie Bates Freund and H. Louis Freund; Carroll Cloar, *The Draught of Fishes* (1965) and *Moonstricken Girls* (1968); and Thomas Hart Benton, *Clay County Farm* (1971).

AMFA Foundation Collection Fact Sheet

John Miller Howard was a major figure in the growth of the arts in the region. He founded the art department at Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical, and Normal College (later University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff), and instructed such notable students as Tarrence Corbin, Kevin Cole, and Jeff Donaldson—who later moved to Chicago and became a founding member of the AfriCOBRA movement. Similarly, Elsie and Louis Freund established the Summer Art School of the Ozarks in Eureka Springs, while Louis founded the art department at Little Rock College (later University of Arkansas at Little Rock), both occurring in 1941.

Paintings

The earliest painting in the AMFA Foundation Collection is *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* (circa 1400), a tempera on wood panel attributed to Lorenzo di Niccolò. This work, and *Adoration of the Shepherds*, by Francesco Bassano II (circa 1580), was donated to the Museum by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation in 1934. An Old Master painting, Bartholomeus van Bassen's oil on oak panel *Interior of a Church* (1639), was the bequest of Elsie and A. Howard Stebbins III.

A small group of portrait paintings from the American and British Colonial era and the Early Republic includes John Hesselius, *Mother and Son* (circa 1765-1778), the earliest portrait painting in the collection; George Romney, *Lady Willoughby de Broke* (1779-1781); Charles Bird King, *General George Izard* (1813), a portrait of the second territorial governor of Arkansas; and Samuel F. B. Morse, *General James Miller* (circa 1827), a portrait of the first territorial governor of Arkansas.

Most of the paintings in the European collection date from the late 19th century to the present, beginning with Claude Monet, *Effect of the Sun Setting on the Seine at Port-Villez* (1883), Paul Cézanne, *Undergrowth* (1897-1898), and Odilon Redon, *Andromeda* (1912). European modernist painting is represented by Diego Rivera's cubist *Dos Mujeres* (1914). American post-war modernism is represented by Elaine de Kooning's *Standing Bull* (1958), donated to AMFA in 1973 through a gift arranged by the artist after she taught a workshop in the Museum's art school.

Jackson T. Stephens Collections

AMFA stewards the Jackson T. Stephens Charitable Trust for Art of late 19th and early 20th century European and American paintings, which are on long-term loan and exhibited on a rotating basis. The Jackson T. Stephens Charitable Trust for Art contains 23 total works, with 17 paintings and six works on paper. It includes significant Impressionist paintings and drawings by artists such as Claude Monet, Alfred Sisley, Berthe Morisot, Pierre-August Renoir, Edgar Degas, and Camille Pissarro; Post-Impressionist artist Paul Cezanne; French Symbolist Odilon Redon; as well as one painting by American Impressionist George Hitchcock and two paintings by American artist Andrew Wyeth, among others.

AMFA Foundation Collection Fact Sheet

Sculpture

AMFA's collection of American and European sculpture is concentrated in the post-World War II era. Signature examples include William Edmondson, *Rabbit* (circa 1940-1950); Eduardo Paolozzi, *Triple Fuze* (1960); Henry Moore, *Two Seated Figures against Wall* (1960); Louise Nevelson, *Tide Garden IV* (1964); Barbara Hepworth, *Two Heads (Christmas)*, 1970; and Roy Lichtenstein, *Untitled Head I* (1970). Henry Moore's *Large Standing Figure: Knife Edge* (conceived 1961; cast 1976) is permanently installed at the Courtyard Entrance of the Museum.

A 2021 gift from Robyn and John Horn expanded the collection with the donation of five contemporary outdoor sculptures installed on AMFA grounds including: David Nash, *Two Columns* (2004); Bernar Venet, *Indeterminate Line* (1994); Hoss Haley, *Toric Warped Grid* (2008); Jesus Moroles, *Broken Earth* (2003); and Jack Slentz, *Multiple Exits* (2001). A sculptor herself, Robyn Horn's work is well-represented in AMFA's Foundation collection of sculpture, which continues with the recent acquisition of *Approaching Collapse* (2016).

Photography

Photographers from the American South make up a focused area of the permanent collection, including works by William Eggleston, Lisa McCord, Susan Paulsen, and Jack Spencer. Will Counts, a Little Rock press photographer, donated 38 of his prints of events at Central High School in 1957. The AMFA Foundation Collection also includes more than 800 photographs by Arkansas photographer William E. Davis.

Other notable holdings include the Polaroid photographs in Andy Warhol's *Little Red Book, #9* (1975), donated by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. An additional strength of the photography collection includes nearly 400 works by Soviet-era non-conformist artists from present-day Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, and other former Soviet Republics.

Media Contacts

Malina Tabor
Director of Marketing and Communications
Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts
501.396.0352
mtabor@arkmfa.org