



Eugene C. Fitsch

*After Performance*, 6/20, 1930

Lithograph on paper

Gift of Alice Fitsch

---

## After Performance

By Carol A. Amato

Her ruffled gypsy skirt, loosed,  
falls to the dressing room floor  
and she, exhausted, onto the cot.

On stage, moments before  
emotion consumed the whole of her  
feet pounding with fierce aggression  
dark eyes flashing, incited  
by the percussive guitars  
rising to a high-pitched climax  
again and again matching the fury  
of the intensity she cannot repress  
every muscle tensed taut as if each  
might snap with further movement.

The guitars strum gently to offer calm.  
Her held breath releases audibly.  
Raising her arms she sways sensually,  
wrists undulating as her fingers explore  
the still charged air hands lifting like doves  
flying above her. As she exits the stage  
the audience cheers.

When she wakes she aches  
and can barely move, feels an inertia  
that must be close to a dying of the soul.  
But onstage the guitarists shout, Ay! Ay! Ay!  
playing joyfully her favorite Alegrias.  
The poignancy of their voices shivers her.  
She rises, ready.



Robert Vickrey

*Nun*, n.d.

Egg tempera on board

Gift of Frank H. Hogan

---

## The Nun in the Museum

By rose auslander

A man who could be my brother  
misses church, not ready  
to face the house of god  
with a catheter between his legs

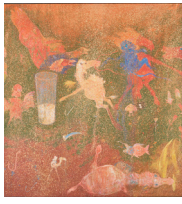
& a woman who could be my sister  
longs to sing in the choir  
up in the church loft, but her wheelchair  
can't seem to learn to fly.

As we rest together in the quiet  
of paint & canvas,  
the nun in her frame stands silent  
with this brother & sister & me.

Her face erased, hat a cloud, her reflection  
held in a cage of leafless branches,  
suspended  
between the life we all forsake  
& the life we live

she stands, unspeaking  
our unspoken prayers. Swaying  
in stillness, as if seeking for us the blue  
mercies of light, the blessings

of shadows, she listens to bells  
about to ring,  
melodies we can hold  
when we lie alone in the dark.



Robert Beauchamp  
*Allegorical Scene*, 1969

Oil on canvas

Gift of the Robert Beauchamp Estate

---

## Dawning

By Kathleen Baker

In faintest light  
I watched  
the dahlias stretch  
their sepaled cores  
until they burst open  
radiant transcendent  
all Ram Dass  
as beautiful as Rumi  
as Isabella Stewart Gardner in Venice  
throwing open doors  
calling,  
*Come out, all of you – this is too beautiful to miss!*

Indeed!  
Why are we waiting  
on the faintest light  
to burst through  
the shadowy doors?  
Why are we waiting  
for an invitation  
to dance  
as our dazzling selves,  
when, here,  
in our own hearts  
where the light is the greatest,  
where we are what we are -  
Beauty -  
*That is not to be missed*



Maurice Freedman

*Moonlight Interior*, 1962

Oil on canvas

Gift of Alan J. Freedman & Marjorie Morrow

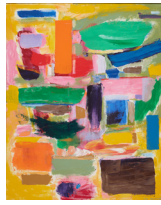
---

## Moonlight and Madness

By Kim M. Baker

If I could go back to one place in time  
it would be this: the living room when I was five  
finding her in the middle of the night, frightened  
fogged in by Winstons and gin  
lightning lashing at her face, her eyes like spiders  
staring into the abyss wishing to take, not be, prey  
she was becoming her own storm that night

If I could go back, I would turn her away from the thunder  
face her inward, tuck up her fleeing feet  
replace the liquor with cappuccino, fill the vase with nature  
paint in a moon so full and soft, splashing its joy, its adoration  
then take her naked face in my hands so she would never see  
the insidious black shadows of her childhood  
pooling beneath her feet, already starting to climb



Taro Yamamoto

*Fried Egg Sandwich*, 1989

Oil on canvas

Gift of George Zhouf

---

## Coloring

By Kim Berner

I'll fill this  
blank, white page  
with something worthy  
perhaps words  
Freedom, Democracy  
Threat, Rape  
Abortion, Cats and dogs  
Immigrants, immigrants, Immigrants  
Our Way of Life  
is Under Attack  
hmm well - yes  
I am a childless cat lady  
spitting, hissing, howling  
mad.  
I've been allowing  
you your opinions  
first amendment and all  
perhaps also because I am a woman, well versed in accepting or ignoring  
which you took for acquiescence  
which it wasn't  
Haitian, Mexican, Venezuelan Criminals  
Some Really Good Guys, white supremacists, Were There  
What Climate Change?  
She Isn't Even My Type  
They Don't Really have a Direct Stake in our country ... their country  
The Best, Most, Greatest  
Of All Time  
Ever Seen  
these words are lousy  
perhaps I should just pull out my crayons and color



Joseph Kaplan  
*Driftwood*, n.d.  
Oil on canvas  
Anonymous Gift

---

## DRIFT

By John Bonanni

Pitch pines, once large here, stab the landscape.  
Two hard bristled trunks suggest: *new splinter*.  
Now my body approaches—the past, a figure

between them. When my hand touches one trunk,  
it nearly topples. As though roots, after long consideration,  
become unnecessary, a sand swirl, a shadow lifted

by way of ocean, soft will, & salt wind.  
Years later, science will prove that trees talk  
to one another, root systems like dirty telephone

wires. For now, we ponder the past's dead  
wood. I steady each trunk. Then, when I open my palm,  
shades of green oil smear across my splinters:

didactic, dialectic, conversation, viridian.  
The two stare at each other in a dance,  
arms heightened beneath an emerald lamp,

moving like it's a Grateful Dead show,  
air full of ganj, & streaks of blue to roll away.  
The dune is blood. & if we're being

honest here, this driftwood is a ghost  
left by something once alive to mimic  
aliveness. Time grows obvious with each layer.

*Small wounds, they say. Small wounds.*



Betsy Bennett

*Elegy for a Summer*, 1982

Egg tempera on board

Gift of Betsy Bennet

---

## CHANGE

By J. Lorraine Brown

*You can't bring that, she says.*

*Or that or that. It won't fit. She points*

to the narrow table in the hall,  
your picture next to the ginger lamp.

But how can I leave the scarred sideboard,  
the heavy, fluted wedding glasses,

the four-poster double bed  
perfectly wide enough for two.

Or the oak cabinet with its little iron key  
and crisscrossed panes of glass.

Or the rocker, fabric finally faded after years  
of sunlight in this dazzling room.

Outside, bushes sway in the wind.  
They slap against the window. One

lonely sunflower leans toward the earth.  
The long summer has left everything crimped and dry.



Rachel Kaufman  
*The Iron Bedstead*, n.d.  
Pastel on paper  
Gift of Rachel Ellis Kaufman

---

## SISTERS 1970

By Lucile Burt

Florence, look what I found! I haven't seen this painting in years.  
Can you see it OK? Here are your glasses. When did I paint it, do you think?  
I found it in a pile of my old paintings. I've been trying to clear out things.  
Must be forty/fifty years ago before they put in electricity.  
I'm going to leave it here on the nightstand where you can see it.  
How many years did we rent that little cottage? Long gone now.  
We were lucky to have those Augusts before school started, weren't we?  
Remember how we always chose those two attic bedrooms  
with the sloping floors and low ceilings? That's one of your quilts.  
I had forgotten how we took a couple of them along.  
You made so many.  
Lots of fancier ones but I liked just the plain squares.  
You liked that one with roses...sleeping in a bed of roses, you said.  
How we loved that view of the sea—worth the climb up steep stairs—  
and the breeze blowing through the open door between us.  
I preferred that narrow back room, with the iron bedstead and the sun spilling  
its late orangey light through the little window onto the bed. Just like I painted it, see?  
Oh, we knew the neighbors called the two of us old maid schoolteachers,  
spinsters. They meant passionless, unloved, childless, somehow incomplete.  
We just smiled. Some of our adventures would have surprised them...  
that moonlit camel ride I took to the pyramids in Egypt. Oh my!  
Your trysts with that Scotsman...What was his name... something MacGregor.  
He gave you that little MacGregor plaid box of dried heather when you left.  
I know you still have it in your drawer there!  
Shall I get it out for you before I go?

*In memory of Miss Clara Belle Dwight (January 1880-January 1978)  
and Miss Florence Marion Dwight (January 1882-February 1971)*





Thomas T. Eastwood  
*Sprouting Peas*, 1933

Oil on canvas

Gift of Evelyn Eastwood

---

## MORE VOTIVE THAN BONFIRE

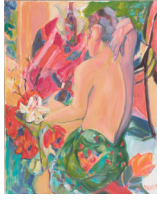
By Deirdre Callanan

She bore the trug  
    into their garden,

Snipped tatsoi,  
    Bougainvillea,  
    Birds of Paradise.

Persimmon occurred to her,  
    then malachite.

Dusk bloomed.  
She waited,  
still, for him.



Suzanne Packer  
*River Rising*, 2000

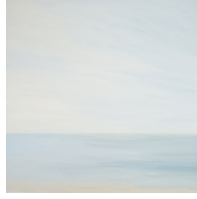
Oil on canvas  
Gift of the Artist

---

## THE BATH

By Kathleen Casey

Crimson poppies bloom.  
White lilies fill  
the air with fragrance.  
Warm water rises  
around her tired feet,  
up to her calves and knees,  
beyond her thighs.  
As she releases the silk sarong,  
liquid caresses her hips, waist,  
then bare breasts,  
calming and healing all,  
as the goddess Sulis had done  
long ago for those  
who bathed in thermal springs.  
In this enchanted place  
with arms half-submerged,  
her buoyant body  
is without boundaries  
from the ebb and flow,  
the letting go—  
an eternal gift of water.



Rick Fleury

***Happiness***, 2003

#3 of triptych *Faith, Hope & Happiness*

Oil on canvas

Gift of the Artist

---

## WHAT LIES BENEATH

By Robin Clarke

Stillness on the horizon,  
silent junction of ocean, sky,  
random ripples curl, a portent  
calm can shatter, as suddenly

as a whale's majestic breach  
crests concentric waves, or  
earth shudders a tsunami,  
wipes out entire islands.

Here, now, disruptive thoughts spit  
tempests, friends become divided.  
We clutch our shawls around us, pray  
sanity quells tremors.

So much lurks beneath the surface.  
Will we rise or rain destruction?



Eugene Jackson

*What a Strange Animal is Man*, 1971-1976

Woodblock on paper

Gift of Arnold Elkind

---

## This Thing of Darkness

By Jeannette de Beauvoir

*“This thing of darkness I/Acknowledge mine.” (Shakespeare)*

Prospero’s admission is ours: we’re creators of monsters. Still, it took longer perhaps than it should have, our self-destruction. We’d been trying for so long. Typical, you say when I mention it: typical of humanity, to

not even get that part right. In Nepal I watched climbers prepare to conquer the world’s highest peak, eager to leave garbage and bodies behind if need be. You laughed. We are outdoing ourselves here, you said;

the mountain has always been there—only humans felt the need to subdue it and are shocked when we cannot. We shouldn’t be surprised: the animals have always known. They feel cold, wind, merciless

heat with no complaint. They watch us running too fast, running too late, running out of everything: clean water, forests, fossil fuels. Compassion. And even nature, red in tooth and claw, looks on in horror at

our gleeful self-destruction. A wolf will chew off a leg caught in a trap to free itself, the courage of survival: it knows. Violence is familiar, expected, understood. But never embraced. We’re the only ones who love it. We revel

in war, in rape, in torture, in death. We know our way around the badlands, dark spaces lonely, abandoned, on the margins: places where we sense harm has been done, where anguish is trapped. We have trapped it

there, violated bodies dumped without ceremony, screams echoing through forests whose creatures look on in bewilderment, and I have to wonder what they think of us all, of our violence, of our greed, their

wisdom greater than ours, honed by centuries of life in a world now being destroyed by our upstart race. Why they never rose up against us, when they still could, to save the world, to save themselves: I have questions to ask the coyotes.



Mirosława Pissarenko

*Untitled, 1976*

Wycinanki (Polish cut-paper work)

Gift of Roy & Anne Freed

---

## paper

By Christine Ernst

the map of the roads from the village in Poland to the ship in Germany

the third class ticket in your pocket      Hamburg to Boston

the cardboard-backed photo of your parents inside the small trunk

the stiff tag with the address sewn inside your coat

*122 Ascutney Street      Windsor, Vermont US of A*

the newsprint stuffed inside the mattress on the floor in the attic

the boxes for the blankets at the cotton mill in Queechee

the marriage license    1920    a Tuesday in May *Mary* it says not *Marya*

the sign he letters in two languages for the window of the cash market

*authentic Polish meats    autentyczne polskie wędliny*

the brown wrapping for the chops and roasts and homemade kielbasy

the roll of bills secreted inside the bag of sugar the tin of cocoa the cured ham sent overseas

the deed for the big house on Atkinson Street

the letter from your mother    deported    dying in Siberia

*Modłę się, aby Bóg nas zbawił    I pray that God will save us*

the sewing patterns for the girls' prom gowns    wedding dresses

the oatmeal box filled with onion skins to dye the eggs at Easter

the napkins carefully rinsed and wrung to use again    hung above the heating grate to dry

the birthday card and the five dollars    sent to every grandchild

*you are precious    with love from Babcia*

the figures and filigree cut from saved giftwrap    a rooster    a family    a girl and her horse

the layers pasted carefully    your gnarled hand curved around the tiny scissors

the roses the children the virgin's lace halo    you are surgeon artist    *chirurg artysta*

the snipped scraps that fall into your lap    onto the floor below the kitchen table    at your feet

*like confetti*



Denny Camino  
*I Am*, 2003-2004  
Oil on board  
Anonymous Gift

---

## MOST ALONE

By Diane Hanna

Sometimes you feel as if you  
are the only one left.

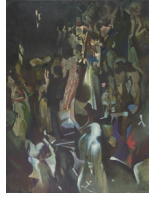
There are no flowers, no music,  
no hand to hold.

At such times, it is good  
to root yourself, to let your shoes

sink into the ground, to let the wind  
blow through the limbs of you.

It is good to let the sky encircle you,  
to settle its clouds around your shoulders.

It is good to know that when you are most alone,  
the sky intervenes, the earth says otherwise.



Xavier Gonzalez

*Dance*, n.d.

Oil on canvas

Gift of Frank and Ruth Hogan

---

## DANCE CLUB

By Benton Jones

Finally permitted...I enter the hive of humans,  
Drawn inward from orbit to haunt a thriving necropolis.

Engrossed in darkness...Boom, ba boom, Boom, ba boom...lights flash.  
Flexuous bodies surrender to a primal collective,  
Synchronized in reflexive movement.

Forward into the mass, we meld deeper within blackness.  
Sweet sweat soars, induced by narcotic rhythms.  
I offer my obedience to the pulsating sound.  
The sonic Queen feeds abandon with her potent hypnotic jelly.

Divisions dissolve. We are one.



Herman Maril

*Cat Tails*, 65/100, 1975-1980

Serigraph on paper

Gift of Esta C. Maril

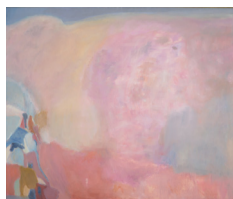
---

## CATTAILS

By James Kershner

Guardians of the salt marsh  
defend the estuary  
standing tall like soldiers  
against the fluctuating tides  
calming stormy seas  
hosting shorebirds  
turtles and frogs  
catfish and clams  
moderating storms  
with their brown cylinders  
against the winds





Sabina Teichman  
*Oh, Sleeper Awake*, 1975

Oil on canvas

Gift of Wendy and Kent Levine

---

## IN THE GARDEN OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Alice Kociemba

*The number of homeless people on Cape Cod is the highest in 10 years,  
with the number of the unsheltered even higher because of the warmer weather*

—Barnstable County News

I'm my typical 5 minutes late for the early morning  
meeting. I cut across the grass and spot him  
beside a bed of prize-winning roses.

His pillow, a grey backpack.  
His bedding, two bright beach towels.  
One to protect him from the dew,

one to keep him warm.  
He's young, lean. Rumpled and stained.  
I startle to a stop. Startle him awake,

stare down into electric blue eyes.  
*I know him from somewhere.*

My cheeks flame. I turn. Take a few steps and stop.  
*Do I call for help? Give him some cash?  
Or pretend he's not even here?*

I turn back to where he had slept.  
Already the grass is forgetting him.



Howard Dunn

*Paris (Garden of the Tuileries),*

6/88, 1992

Silver gelatin print on photographic paper

Gift of the Artist

---

## COVEN

By BettyAnn Lauria

“A wicked company of dangerous witches.”

- From Thomas Potts. *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches*. c1613

They sit with their backs bare, strong, unapologetic,  
each thinking her own thoughts, maybe sharing,  
later when the sun goes down and the moon  
reveals the beauty hidden during the day.

They smile at being misunderstood.  
How could a word that once meant a meeting,  
a convent of common purpose,  
become something considered evil, suspect, feared?  
Fear begets loathing; loathing begets violence.

Nothing could be tamer than  
a group of women meeting  
with a common purpose.  
No. That's not right.

Nothing could be more powerful  
than a group of women  
meeting with a common purpose.

Whether it's old Salem,  
Tehran,  
or these United States.

Reeling from each setback, pushing on.  
Even when they hit a wall,  
solid, sturdy, full of tears.



Howard Gibbs

*Oracle of the Seasons*, 1947-1949

Oil on canvas

Gift of Katherine Gibbs

---

## THE ORACLE OF ELEGANCE / ODE TO A FALLEN ANGEL

By Eir Lindström-Holmy

From winter summer springs, and then comes fall - and fall and fall and fall and fall again  
like autumn leaves words tumble from your mind, this cross you bear the altar of your shame  
cloaked in the scarlet cape of womanhood, of motherhood and of mortality  
these brittle bones of frailty encased  
in failing flesh awaiting their escape

Farewell my fallen angel once immense, to cling to earthly bodies makes no sense  
this prison for your stubborn beating heart a carousel of existential threats  
the secret tumor bursting through your skin, the fractured hip, the wound that would not heal  
pot-belly of a famine-ravaged child  
the worst wounds are the ones we know we've earned

Your mind the architect of this demise these daemon-devil-dogs that hound and plague  
what fever dreams can dance you love from this world to Bardo where your spirit-guide awaits?  
A cardinal and other things that fly, wings chiaroscuro against cerulean sky  
to find that girl, the one who hurt before:  
inside the Russian doll that's tangled in your hair

I long to weave a symmetry in love but worlds turn and I cannot linger long  
You saw me from the spirit-world to this - I hope you'll be with me when my time comes  
But storms are gathering and I must fly for days might pass and mouths to feed won't wait  
so float on over Paris with the wild wind  
I'd stay if I knew when your bird would fly

You drift away and leave behind your art, your beauty and your child your legacy  
strange Mona Lisa grimace happy-sad - You: conjurer of beauty and of pain  
your absence from existence wrongs my heart, you live on in my blood and that's a start  
a baby girl would have your eyes and mine:  
I'd love to meet her call her by her name



Emily Farnham

*Black Flowers and the Sun*, n.d.

Oil on canvas board

Gift of Emily Farnham

---

## EQUINOX

By Kaimi Rose Lum

Thunder & sunlight—  
a day that can't make up its mind.  
On the coffee table, a golden square  
vanishes and reappears,  
fades again  
as clouds whisk out,  
whisk in—  
push, pull, over the season's threshold.  
The room grows dim.  
Outside a nuthatch climbs  
into the shadow-puzzle on an apple's limb—  
bark blotched with silver cloud-print.  
We're watching from the window  
when the bird breaks in,  
his tree branch merging with a stem  
arched in the foreground—in a late bouquet  
of seedheads: three black, withered suns,  
a single petal dropped below.  
What's left of summer in this silhouette  
a vase holds on the windowsill.

Lightning. Thunder. The nuthatch leaves  
the dead-end stem and finds his branch again.  
The rain begins—softly, then strong, unstinting,  
its furious strokes pelting the roof, the glass, the tree—  
and we get up finally and clear the dishes,  
freed to play all day in the resounding gray.



Sister Mary Corita Kent  
*Sacrifice of Abraham*, 1958-1959

Serigraph on paper  
Gift of Rev. William G. O'Brien

---

## THE POSSIBLE WORLD

By Chuck Madansky

So, in the Bible story,  
God tells Abraham to sacrifice  
his son, Isaac.

He leads Isaac  
up the mountain—knife,  
flint and tinder in a sack.

At the last minute, God  
says “Just kidding”  
and a ram gets sacrificed

instead. But what if Abraham  
had slain Isaac?  
Each person is a world

so a world lost,  
and a lineage.  
Now think of the ram.

And maybe  
what the world  
would be like

if Abraham  
had sacrificed  
his knife.



Dorothy Polansky  
*Circle Within*, 1986

Portuguese marble  
Anonymous Donor

---

## ON AND ON

By Rosemary Dunn Moeller

On one side of infinity, I'm stretching my lifeline  
as far as it goes. I can see a bit of my future,  
my past, my adhesion to the present moment.  
This torus is beautiful, stained, imperfect.  
All lines curve; eventually, all converge.

“Here” appears so imposing, large, important.  
So much depends on a sedimentary settling  
within the stone, unintentional, unplanned.  
Eons were spent in forming us.

And I have been sanded, chiseled down  
by occasions of ineptitude, polished in moments  
of clarity. So much has to be lost to create.  
I forget where I swept the dust of me.

What I've created, who I've made, inflates  
me, adds meaning to me, gives me substance;  
I am the path I'm following.



Eugene Jackson  
*Forest Idyll*, 1971-1976  
Woodblock on paper  
Gift of Arnold Elkind

---

## GHAZAL FOR EUGENE

By Rosalind Pace

Yes! Fairy tale, fable, myth and dream. Starring animals.  
Yet truth, as revelation, sees people cast as animals.

We're out of doors, escaped from walls, wars and laws.  
We're sparring, chanting, dancing. Unanimous animals.

A forest idyll is an interlude romantic, but such music!  
Growls, chirps, chortles, howls – we are ecstatic animals.

You disguised the central couple as unicorn, ass, or moose.  
We look upon each other. Our eyes! We're startled animals.

Are we trying to escape our human-ness or reveal it?  
What does it mean for us to act like animals?

That dancing couple - maybe one of them is saying  
Here's a flirty back-kick, you ravenous animal!

We belly laugh or snicker, but - Who are we exactly?  
What is this ritual dance of scandalous animals?

You're the white-haired wizard with knives and chisels.  
A slow reveal of beak, snout, tail, wing. Enigmatic animals.

What have you faced us with, Eugene? You've given us  
a language for our secret selves: rebels passed as animals.



Jan Collins Selman

*Earth Birth II, (The Garden Series) 4/50, 1996*

Computer generated print on paper

Gift of Anonymous Donor

---

## MIDSUMMER'S EVE

By Mary Ellen Redmond

Last night, well after midnight, I woke to the forest erupting in a cacophony. Every bird was squawking, every living animal awake and sounding. I stumbled from bed, stood on my porch, afraid to go further.

Not one light flicked on. My neighbors slept in their air-conditioned vaults. Another animal noise surfaced over the chorus. A short sharp cry over and over. A fox gekkering? Then a chilling cry that sounded like a baby shrieking. Fisher cat? Mating raccoons? After a few long minutes, the ruckus subsided.

I went to bed. Slept deeply. Woke to a crow cawing in the distance. *Would you believe me if I told you when I opened my mouth, a bird flew out?*

The sun showed, breaking from the clouds to stream through the oak trees. The yard at play with shadow and light. Late morning I found the remains of a robin on my front stoop. I buried it in the garden.

Later, I spoke with my neighbor about the mystery of the woods.

Did you hear anything? I asked.

He scratched his head, unknowingly freeing a small grey feather that floated down, landing on his shoulder.

He shook his head.





Gilbert Franklin  
*Gaia, Earth Mother*, n.d.  
Bronze  
Gift of Gilbert and Joyce Franklin

---

## CELEBRATE GAIA

By Lee Roscoe

Round worlds emerge from earth, which births us into her and from us.  
Those uterine curves are not for human beings alone, nor not just smooth wood  
But oval egg creatures, crescent wing-shapes, the crook of a moose leg, the swelling thorax of a bee,  
A merganser's crest, a tiger's eye, a rise\  
Of ocean, sway of cloud; a stomach shape of drop of rain or acorn,  
A nest, a tipi, breast.  
Her gravid hills and crevices, ravines and moons, wind the path  
Of that which binds us all to one rare Gaia round the sun  
In green and brown and blue; rich plunging soil, and dancing grass, and iridescent stream, each  
miracle  
Of orogenic mountain and of prised swimming fish,  
Which bursts open to renew each creature, pod, and plant and even stone  
her water/blood  
And every spirit being  
within the ecstasy of this uniquely--earth.

The whelping dilation of her cervix /elates her in/ creating the birth  
of all of us  
Who lie in the embrace of her, unfurled upon her warm womb, nursed upon her bounty,  
(and whose curse, if we abuse her world...will cast us out).



Howard Gibbs

*Watchful Figure*, 1948

Oil on canvas

Gift of Katherine Gibbs

---

## INTERNAL FAMILY PORTRAIT

By Wilderness Sarchild

Imprisoned in  
the attic of judgment  
the basement of shame

I turned away from them, afraid  
to meet these internal monsters,  
the ones who were taught

*not smart enough   not pretty enough*  
*not good enough   not anything enough*

Eventually, the pain of their incarceration  
felt more harmful than my fear of exposure.  
My daily affirmation became: *Help me to love the unlovable.*

I began to look at the sorrows I carried within,  
malnourished as they were from lack of love,  
disfigured from their cramped cage.

I began to see their Holiness  
beneath their hungry bones. One by one  
I invited them into my living room,

served them tea and cake,  
listened to their origin stories,  
walked them out into the fresh air.

It has come to this:  
Finally, proudly, I present  
all of who I am to the world.



Selina Trieff

*Pink Bird on Her Shoulder*, 1990

Oil and gold leaf on canvas

Gift of Sanford & Carol Krieger

---

## THE TRANSIT OF SELINA

By Kathy Shorr

Here's what Hans Hofmann told Selina  
about art: *Whatever the secret is*

*it's my secret.*

*You have to find your own.*

So Selina drew and drew for years  
till she was drawing the back

of her soul, a hummingbird lit  
with gold leaf and fire.

No matter what the figures –  
court jester, chicken, robed monk,

a goat – they shared the same  
arched brows and opaque eyes.

It feels like they're trying to tell us  
about the life underneath this life.

*We're always surrounded by death*  
is what Selina said.

Look at that pink bird perched  
on the dancer's shoulder

as if she has a secret to share.



Xavier Gonzalez

*Seagulls*, n.d.

Paper on collage

Gift of the children of Sarah Mead Ott

---

## FACING LEEWARD

By Robin Smith-Johnson

After storms, birds are blown off course  
much as I was one frigid winter's day,  
the wind blasting snow and sand:  
my little house whistling, my arms  
empty, my eyes fogged over.

It wasn't a death exactly, more absence.

I had rows of books, sheet music, old  
journals. I tried to write but I couldn't make  
my pen work or the pages understand  
my longing to speak out.

Like a lost seabird flying blind,  
I scrubbed and scrubbed the kitchen floor  
going over the same stubborn spots  
until something tore.



Thomas Eaton  
*Game Over*, 2011  
Oil on board  
Gift of the Artist

---

## A PRAYER TO THE AIR

By Al Starkey

My prayer is to the air full of promise  
a recitation in repetition like bird calls  
sung simply out of their own giftedness  
summoned from the core of all that is.

My prayer is a plea for intimacy  
to be the song on the air, always now  
to welcome flight, surrender to obscurity  
and suffer the questions, doubts and illusions  
of being so close to the ultimate why.

My prayer is to be at ease with inmost darkness  
to be alone there in the knowing I am not alone  
that I might utter my truth to the source of all truth  
that each would flow into the other  
and only one would remain.



Nicholas Kahn & Richard Selesnick  
*Lemon Leaf Man*, AP, 1997  
Greenman series

Silver gelatin print

Anonymous Gift in Honor of Mr. Robert Duffy

---

## BETWEEN STORMS

By Brett Warren

I've been told not to go. Warned  
of the dangers to trees, and so to me—  
the instability caused by too many storms  
and saturated ground. But I know

this forest. I know these trails. I know  
which trees are dropping bark, disrobing  
to the bones. Which ones are being measled  
by insects, drilled by woodpeckers,  
weakened at the trunk by antlering deer  
who scrape and rub, shavings of pungent relief  
sifting down. I see which trees have fallen  
into leaning, assess the strength of whatever  
they're leaning on. Isn't everything falling

anyway? I believe I'll hear the fractures  
when they come. And in my tree bones, I know  
the greater peril is staying away, caught  
in the leg-hold of the other world.



Denny Camino

*One Day*, n.d.

Oil on masonite

Gift of the Artist

---

## LOOK

By Lauren Wolk

Here is an elephant in the rain,  
a mahout with his turban, white blouse, bullhook,  
tucked up against her supple jowl,  
sheltering beneath the soft flap of her ear.

Her trunk blooms wide to the rain that coaxes  
the mud from her crinoline hide.  
And she lifts a hind foot to the thick, wet air,  
remembering how it felt to be born—

before she knew what a chain was for—  
when the tender soles of her feet  
were morning pale, clean as water  
before it hits the ground.



Ross Moffett

*Untitled (Life in the Village)*, n.d.

Oil on canvas

Gift of Frank and Ruth Hogan

---

## IN THE VILLAGE

By Rich Youmans

Your neighbor's name tastes of ash and regret  
so you hold your tongue, keep your eyes fixed  
on what's before you, a muted landscape  
where the dirt paths run rutted with shadow,  
where livestock heave themselves up and down  
like slow-beating hearts, where cottages  
lean toward collapse. In this village, light  
thickens with the clouds and the suspicions  
of all that remains unsaid and unseen.

You follow the same routine, day after day,  
and do not tell anyone of the same dream  
where a couple walks, side by side, his arm  
around her waist as both support and guide,  
her dress blurring white as a morning star.  
You do not tell how they walk away from  
all they know, into a horizon that glows  
with a promise of air threaded with sun,  
of breezes scented with orange blossoms.  
Before they slip over the break, they turn

but you look away, then wake into the gray  
of the village, the taste of ash and failure  
in your mouth, where the leaves of every tree  
are afraid to talk and you can't even trust  
yourself to walk, to cry, to breathe.