, 1900–

seems to question the value of the telephone—

exhibition. Duchamp's skillful defense of the object in the wake of its scandalous rejection would transform artmaking from that point forward by introducing a new class of object, "the readymade," the significance of which resided not in the skill exhibited in its making, but in the idea with which the artist associated with it.

ALFRED STIEGLITZ
American, 1864–1946

, 1906
photogravure

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
2015.13

As magazine editor, gallerist, and the champion of numerous modernist artists, Alfred Stieglitz was a highly visible presence in the New York art world and the leading advocate in America for photography as a fine art medium. pictures passengers whose limited financial means consigned them to the least expensive section of the ship. Pablo Picasso admired the photograph, as its abstract, nearly cubist composition had much in common with his own visual experiments. More than two decades later, Stieglitz described his memory of the moment when he created this picture: "Coming to the end of the [first-class deck] I stood alone, looking down. . . . The scene fascinated me … I saw shapes related to one another—a picture of shapes, and underlying it, a new vision that held me: simple people; the feeling of ship, ocean, sky; a sense of release that I was away from the mob called the 'rich.' Rembrandt came into my mind and I wondered would he have felt as I did."

Pablo Picasso
Spanish, 1881–1973

, 1912
etching

evolution of new ways of seeing and understanding, characteristic of the technological and social transformations of the new century.

GERTRUDE STEIN
American, 1874–1946

; published in , special number (August 1912), 1909
printed page

Private Collection

Portraiture in verse traditionally had relied on a description of a subject's physical appearance. Gertrude Stein, the American expatriate and catalyst for the international avant-garde, changed all that. In works like "Pablo Picasso"—composed in the years after the artist painted her—no description occurs at all; the poems, instead, rely on the repetitive, almost nonsensical, narration

photogravure

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
2017.29.3

MARIUS DE ZAYAS
American, 1880–1961

, ca. 1912-13, from ,
no. XLVI, ca. 1913
photogravure

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
2017.29.2

MARIUS DE ZAYAS
American, 1880–1961

, ca. 1912–13, from , no. XLVI, ca.
1913
photogravure

MARIUS DE ZAYAS
American, 1880–1961

, ca. 1912–13, from , no.
XLVI, ca. 1912
photogravure

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
2017.29.6 and 2017.29.1

A celebrated caricaturist early in his career, the Mexican artist Marius de Zayas became part of the circle of artists who clustered around “291,” the New York gallery of the photographer, publisher, and promoter of modern art Alfred Stieglitz. The work of de Zayas was highlighted in three exhibitions by Stieglitz between 1909 and 1913. One of the first artists to equate “likeness” with abstraction that revealed the inner qualities of the sitter, de Zayas sought to find pictorial strategies to describe the invisible reality that animated the individuals in our midst. His use of numerical equations (with no known mathematical significance) was intended to capture the enduring spirit of Agnes Meyer and Alfred Stieglitz, whose physical appearance would be subject to change. The artist’s depiction of President Theodore Roosevelt may play in part off of the politician’s published response to the 1913 Armory Show, which introduced the American public to modern art, prompting among many viewers derision and even alarm at the shock of abstraction.

MARIUS DE ZAYAS, PAU

In 1914, Marin spent his first summer in Maine. This marked the start of an involvement with Maine's rocky coast that would last the rest of his life. In this study for a larger painting, Marin uses swirling, expressive lines to convey the sea's constant movement, and jagged, dark lines to create the formidable rock face. The density of marks, both in the rocks and the sea, lend intensity to the scene. Although Marin was initially influenced by Cubism, in his later works, such as , he began to depart from the rigidity of that precedent and allowed the energy of the subject to dictate the work's composition. Marin's loose and abstract lines, elements seen in this work, were important influences on the younger generation of New York artists who established the Abstract Expressionist movement.

MARGUERITE THOMPSON ZORACH
American, 1887–1968

, ca. 1924
oil on canvas

Gift of Dahlov Ipcar and Tessim Zorach
1979.77.

Marguerite Thompson Zorach was among the first women admitted to Stanford University. She left before graduating, however, to pursue an artistic education in France, where she met her husband, fellow artist William Zorach. In Paris she absorbed the lessons of modernism gleaned from artists such as Henri Matisse, André Derain, and the Fauvists, a group of painters that favored exuberant color, modern design, and expressive brushwork. She and her husband eventually settled in New York, where they exhibited in the landmark 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art, colloqu

Hall, Zorach exhibited the large plaster model for the work at other venues in New York.
became a sensation. The work was soon reinstated at Radio City Music Hall, and Zorach responded to this “tremendous amount of acclaim and notoriety,” as he recalled the public response in his 1967 autobiography, by editioning the work in two sizes.

WALTER PACH
American, 1883–1958

, 1923

oil on canvas

1933

oil on linen

Gifts of Francis M. Naumann and Marie T. Keller
2017.56

Walter Pach helped shape the notion of modernism in the United States and beyond. The prolific artist, curator, and author is best known today as one of the organizers of the 1913 Armory Show, together with Walter Kuhn and Henry McBride, which introduced American audiences to European abstraction and modernism more broadly. He later collaborated with Marcel Duchamp and Walter Arensberg to establish the Society of Independent Artists in 1916. In the early 1920s, Pach visited Mexico, where he was impressed by the work of artists such as José Orozco, Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, and Rufino Tamayo. His enthusiasm for Mexican modernism would lead him to help create a Mexican chapter of the Society of Independent Artists and would inspire him to write extensively about Diego Rivera.

WALTER PACH
American, 1883–1958

1934

In 1927, Walter Pach participated in an Institute for Art at Bowdoin, which included leading figures in the field such as Alfred Barr, William Ivins, and Violet Oakley. The idea for a series of biennial institutes began in 1923 and originated with President Kenneth C. M. Sills, Class of 1901, who saw them as a way to bring to campus outstanding figures in politics, the arts and humanities, and the natural and social sciences. Speakers were selected by the faculty in departments that were most closely linked to the theme of the program. The institutes took place over a two-week period in May. Following a public lecture in the evening, there would be an informal roundtable meeting the following morning to allow students to meet with the speaker.

John Cross, Secretary of Development and College Relations at Bowdoin College

WALTER PACH
American, 1883–1958

ca. 1936

watercolor and pencil

Museum Purchase, Jane H. and Charles E. Parker Jr. Fund
2016.15.3.1

This watercolor depicts the back of the Chapel, Maine Hall, Winthrop Hall, Adams Hall, the heating plant, and Sargent Gymnasium. As John Cross notes, “the perspective for the painting is from what would have been a second-floor window on the north side of the Moulton Union,” suggesting that this drawing may date to the winter of 1936, when Pach taught at Bowdoin.

GUY PÈNE DU BOIS
American, 1884–1958

, 1922

oil on panel

Gift of Walter K. Gutman, Class of 1924
1966.37

GUSTAV GUSTAVOVICH KLUTSIS
Russian, 1895–1938

, 1930
lithograph

Generously lent by Svetlana and Eric Silverman ’85, P’19

In the new Soviet Union, avant-garde artists like Gustav Klutsis questioned painting’s ability to represent reality in a moment of flux. They searched for the most effective means to communicate, while simultaneously waging a war against outlived bourgeois and aristocratic aesthetics. Photomontage provided a viable new language. Combining camera-derived factual content with political function, it delivered a new aesthetic necessary for expressing Socialist “truths.” Reprinted quickly, cheaply, and in large print runs, posters designed with the photomontage technique were the opposite of “fine art,” which seemed increasingly outmoded due to its perceived reliance on traditional academic techniques. Iconoclastic artists welcomed the revolutionary events of October 1917 and initially identified with the regime. “A new artistic form is a protest against the old, and in that struggle, lays the life and development of art,” wrote Roman Jacobson, a pioneering Russian linguist and theoretician, in 1919.

VALENTINA NIKIFOROVNA KULAGINA
Russian, 1902–1987

, 1930
lithograph

Generously lent by Svetlana and Eric Silverman ’85, P’19

In the years after the Russian Revolution, posters depicted women as active, strong, young, and often somewhat androgynous. The Bolsheviks’ goal was to liberate all women and men from discrimination and exploitation, from sexual prejudice, and from gender stereotypes. In their view, class, not gender, was the cause of inequality in social relations, and such divisions were to be eliminated in Soviet society. According to Russian politician Alexandra Kollontai, Communism would deliver women from “domestic slavery, so that their lives could be richer, fuller, happier and freer.” Artist Valentina Kulagina studied at the State Free Art Studios where she built a reputation as an exhibition designer. She cut short her education at the urging of her then-teacher and future husband Gustav Klutsis. After he was arrested in 1938, she too disappeared from public view.

EL LISSITZKY
Russian, 1890–1941

, 1921
lithograph

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
2018.18

Created in the wake of Russian Revolution of 1917, which overthrew the nation's imperial government in favor of rule by the people, El Lissitzky's abstract composition demonstrates the artist's desire to apply groundbreaking utopian aspirations to art making. The word "Proun" is an acronym signifying, in Russian, "Project for the Affirmation of the New." This work, part of a portfolio of "Proun" lithographs, affirms the artist's dedication to a non-objective art evocative of new methods of understanding materiality, space, and the creative process itself.

BERENICE ABBOTT
American, 1898–1991

1930 (printed later)

gelatin silver print

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
1998.6

American Berenice Abbott moved to Paris in 1921, where she served as a darkroom assistant to Man Ray. She eventually became a master photographer in her own right, as well as an inventor of equipment such as the distortion easel, patented in 1951. Projecting the negative of a 1930 portrait onto photographic paper mounted on the flexible easel, she created distorted variations of her own likeness. Her cool self-confidence prevents a reading of the results as a statement of psychological conflict; the images instead appear to be playful experiments. Abbott was a proponent of straight photography and was firmly set against manipulation in her own creative work. The small handful of distorted self-portraits she made were created to advertise and sell the distortion easel, rather than for her own artistic self-expression.

BERENICE ABBOTT
American, 1898–1991

, 1935

gelatin silver print

Museum Purchase, Gridley W. Tarbell II Fund
1994.16

One of the photographs in Berenice Abbott's series, done with the support of the Works Project Administration, this photograph both captures the rapidly changing skyline of the city as a whole and marks, through its title, the transformation of specific neighborhoods as well. As curator Andrea Rosen notes, the vertigo-inducing angle from which the photographer captured the new building—from the equally dizzying vantage point of the recently completed

fifty-six-story Chanin Building—may deliberately reflect Abbott's own fear of heights. As she observed later in her career: "While reality is the subject matter of the photographer, it follows that the knowledge of how far the camera can go, and the choice of subject, lead the photographer into the subjective. He cannot help equating the objective world with his self."

later write to his brother-in-law Jean Crotti: “Throughout history artists have been like gamblers at Monte Carlo, and the blind lottery causes some to stand out and others to be ruined.”

ROMARE HOWARD BEARDEN
American, 1911–1988

, 1945–46
oil and gesso on Masonite

Private Collection

A talented artist as well as a social worker, Romare Bearden created his visual work with a

wind-whipped waves lash unyielding stone, storm clouds pass overhead, and, in the distance, a pine-covered shoreline broods in solid silence. The movement of wind and water is plainly evident through the artist's use of dynamic diagonal lines and short choppy brushstrokes. Overall, the impression is one of contained power as the force of the storm balances the strength of the rock. Born in Lewiston, Hartley led a peripatetic existence for much of his life before returning to Maine in 1937. A pioneering modernist, he desired at his career's end to be known as "the painter of Maine."

ROCKWELL KENT

American, 1882–1971

, ca. 1932–1935

oil on canvas

Museum Purchase with Funds Donated Anonymously
1971.77

Although reluctant to identify himself as a "modernist," Rockwell Kent's spare painterly style, influenced by his early training as an architect, reflects an affinity for abstract qualities of color and form. An avid adventurer, this painting may reflect an episode described by the artist in his book : "One day as I sat at work I heard a gunshot, and looking up, saw two kayaks and an umiak or women's boat filled with people approaching my camp. . . . I invited them all up to my tent. . . . in little time we were all drinking hot coffee with lots of sugar in it and eating rye bread spread extremely thick with butter. . . . Presently, the repast having been finished, the guests arose, thanked me cordially and took their departure. . . . Two men got into their kayaks and the third enthroned himself on the top of the household goods in the stern of the umiak; the women, as usual, manned the oars."

ROY RUDOLPH DECARAVA
American, 1919–2009

, 1950

gelatin silver print

Gift of Samuella Shain
1992.40

Drawing attention through his title to a child, whose face presses against the glass of the window

a urinal and placed it on a pedestal on its back, and signed it with the pseudonym, “R. Mutt.” In response to the uproar the art work produced, and its resulting rejection from the 1917 Independents exhibition—which had been organized on the premise that all entries would be included—Duchamp and his friends, Henri Pierre Roché and Beatrice Wood, penned the accompanying article that detailed the fictitious artist’s intent. “The Richard Mutt Case” emphatically declared: “Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has not importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object.”