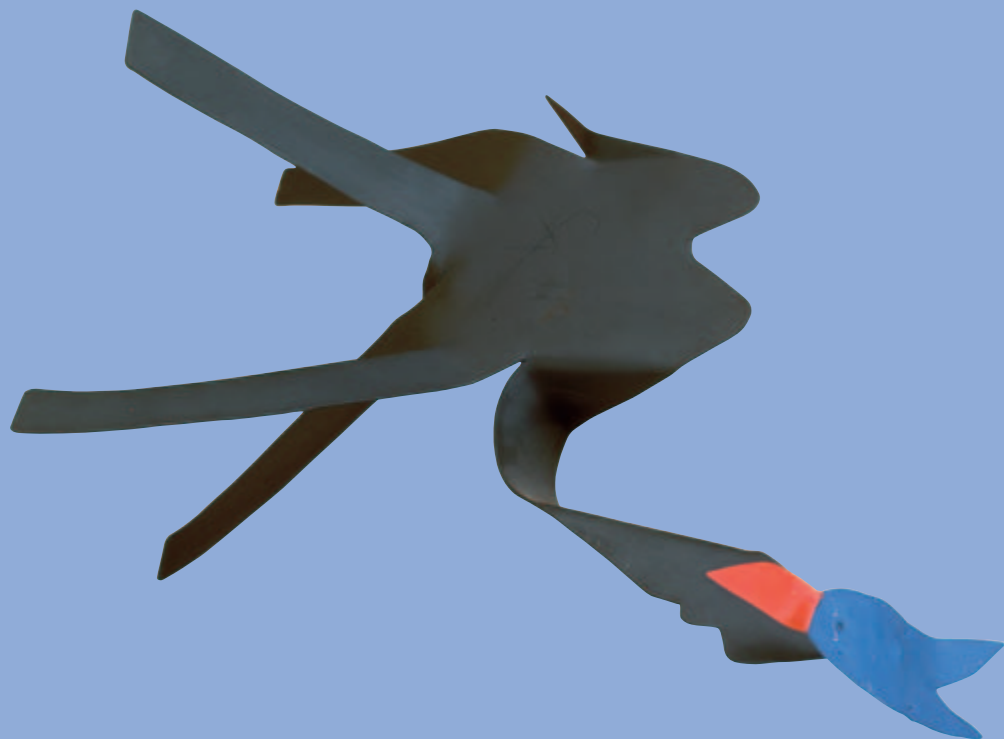


LESS THAN AN HOUR?

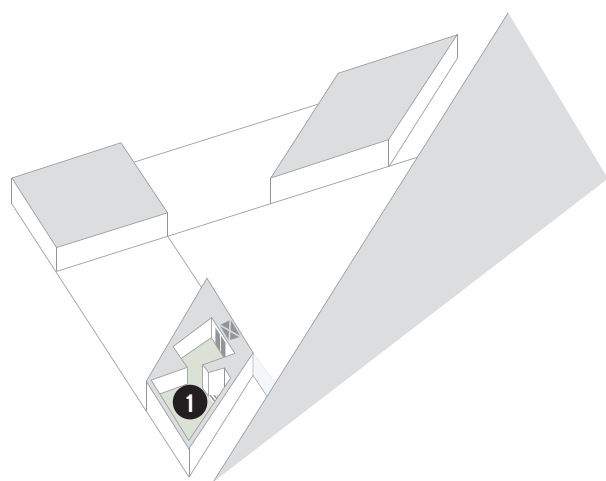
East Building Highlights

Short notes for a short trip through
the National Gallery's East Building,
dedicated to the art of our time.



www.nga.gov

Spring/Summer 2008



Tower Matisse Cutouts

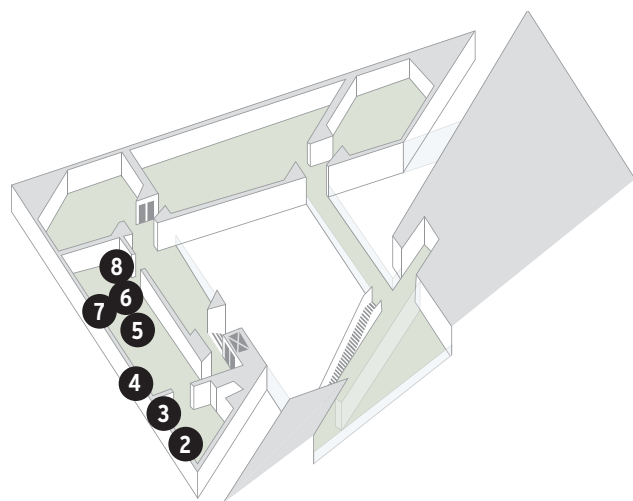
on view Mon-Sat, 10:00-2:00; Sun, 11:00-3:00



1 Henri Matisse Cutouts

left: *La Nègresse*, 1952 (detail)
center: *Venus*, 1952
right: *Woman with Amphora and Pomegranates*, 1953

Matisse's final artistic triumph was "cutting into color." He conducted rhythmic color symphonies by "drawing with scissors," and then composing, re-cutting, and combining the resulting shapes. "It's like a dance," he said.



Upper Level Early Twentieth-Century Art



2 Pablo Picasso

Family of Saltimbanques, 1905

Picasso may be the harlequin figure (left) in this image of an itinerant circus troupe that often performed near his bohemian Parisian neighborhood of Montmartre. Young and poor himself, Picasso identified with these street artists. Their stark backdrop and disconnected gazes underscore the loneliness and marginality the artist keenly felt.



3 Henri Matisse

Open Window, Collioure, 1905

Those who saw Matisse's painting in 1905 got a glimpse of the future: a pink sea, turquoise sky, and vines brushed with tadpoles of green. Had color or form ever strayed so far from nature? This window opens onto the abstraction of the twentieth century.



4 Pablo Picasso

Head of a Woman (Fernande), model 1909, cast before 1932

The head of Fernande is often referred to as the first cubist sculpture. The downward-turning head and inward-turning affect of the work also make it a portrayal of introspection, perhaps melancholy.



5 Piet Mondrian

Tableau No. IV; Lozenge Composition with Red, Gray, Blue, Yellow, and Black, c. 1924/1925

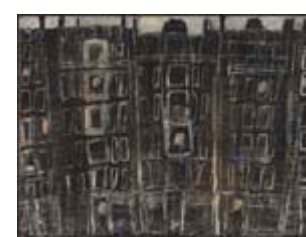
Mondrian subverts the convention of a painting as a rectangular window by tilting it diagonally and emptying the center of color. The focus becomes the dynamic relationships among the geometric shaped and painted forms, which appear "cut out" from an infinite pattern.



6 Constantin Brancusi

Bird in Space, 1927

The form of *Bird in Space* is simplified and abstracted to its purest essentials, becoming the physical embodiment of the artist's famous statement: "I do not sculpt birds, but flights."



7 Jean Dubuffet

Façades d'immeubles (Building Façades), 1946

Seeking directness and authenticity in a world ravaged by war, Dubuffet took inspiration from the art of children and the mentally ill. He created the animated, crudely drawn stick figures of this apartment complex by scratching through black paint to reveal hidden, delicate colors.

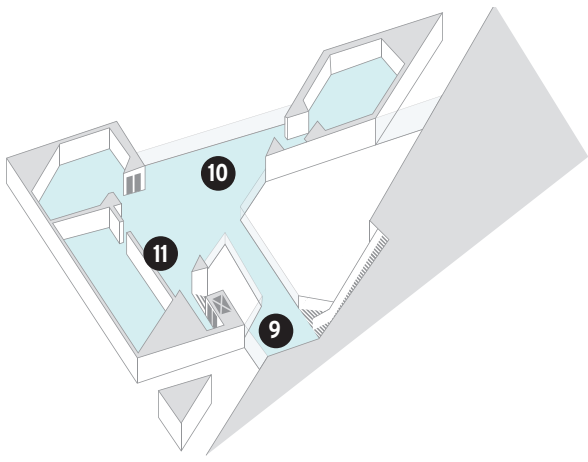
8 Joan Miró

The Farm, 1921-1922

With lasting reverence for his native Catalonia, Miró lovingly documented his family's farm in the Spanish village of Montroig. His canvas, detailed yet abstract, childlike yet avant-garde, encapsulates all that he loved about his country home — "from a huge tree to a tiny snail."



Note: Works may be temporarily off view.



Mezzanine



9 David Smith
Voltri VII, 1962

Created in Italy with materials found in an abandoned factory, *Voltri VII* responds to the pull of an ancient place. Machine wheels and attenuated forms suggesting an Etruscan funeral cart combine with forgings that rise like silent ululations.



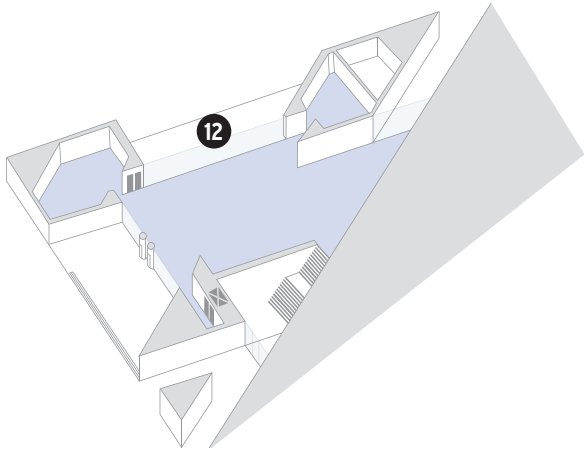
10 Tony Smith
Die, model 1962, fabricated 1968

Inspired by the Industrial Welding Company's logo, "You specify it, we fabricate it," Smith telephoned the company with instructions for constructing *Die*. Its deceptively simple title alludes to casting, to chance, and ultimately, to death. "Six foot box. Six foot under," Smith remarked.



11 Rachel Whiteread
Ghost, 1990

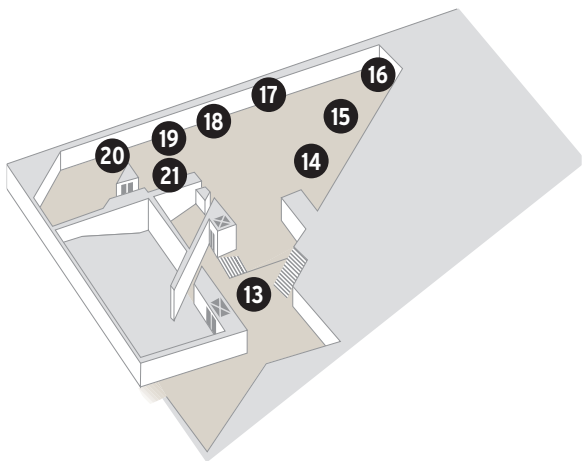
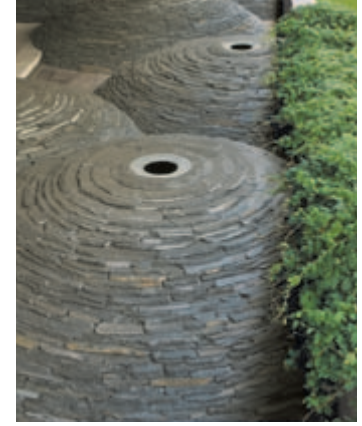
Intending to "mummify air," Whiteread created a negative plaster cast of a Victorian parlor interior. Windows, doors, soot-streaked fireplace, tile grids, molding, and light switch all appear in reverse. This ghostly structure conjures memory and time, absence and presence, life and death.



Ground Level

12 Andy Goldsworthy
Roof, 2004-2005

Created for this site, *Roof* consists of nine hollow domes of stacked slate. The view from above (Mezzanine) reveals a rippling configuration and velvet black oculi at the tops of the domes. "I am drawn to holes," Goldsworthy said, "with the same urge I have to look over a cliff edge."



Concourse Art since 1950



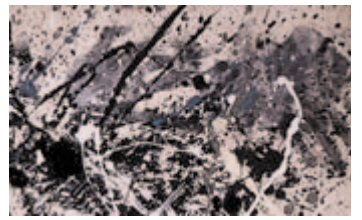
13 Richard Serra
Five Plates, Two Poles, 1971

Like a house of cards, this "plate-and-pole" work seems intimidatingly precarious, yet also in perfect balance. Walk around it to shift your experience of its weight (15 tons), mass, and gravity.



14 Robert Gober
The Slanted Sink, 1985

"I remember thinking that life would be different when I could see for myself the interior of the sink," Gober recalls of his childhood. The not-quite-sinks that he made in New York during the height of the AIDS epidemic balance subversive wit with nostalgia and grief.



15 Jackson Pollock (detail)
Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)

Trace the arcs of black, white, russet, silver, and blue to understand this work's delicate, layered composition. Placing canvas on the floor of his Long Island studio, Pollock dripped and poured paint on it, "signing" it with handprints (upper left corner and top).



16 Alexander Calder Gallery
1920s-1970s

This room is a microcosm of Calder's career. Trained as an engineer, he blended playfulness, delicacy, and exactitude in sculptures that move with air currents, summon nature, and perfectly pivot color, shape, and balance.



17 Mel Bochner (detail)
Theory of Boundaries, 1969-1970

If "at/in" describes the hard-edged square at left, then "over/in" must refer to the seepage of pigment over the edges, and so on. Bochner slyly reveals the "mechanism" of his work's creation by inscribing a word fraction atop each square, putting language at the center of the artist's process.



18 Roy Lichtenstein (detail)
Look Mickey, 1961

The irascible Donald Duck, thrilled to have caught a fish, will sputter when he learns—as Mickey Mouse can see—that he has hooked his own tail. This cartoon rip-off, pitting a gag against the lofty subjects of painting, is a prime example of pop art.



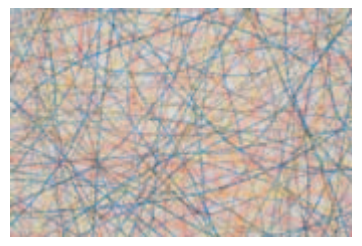
19 Yayoi Kusama (detail)
Infinity Nets Yellow, 1960

Kusama's painting is from her best-known series. It has been obsessively worked from edge to edge with repeated interlocking yellow motifs laid over a brown ground, as though a "thousand spiders had worked together for months to cover a field with their lace."



20 Jasper Johns
Perilous Night, 1982

Johns' art brims with references to his earlier work (the nailed-up hatchwork image and cast body parts), to Picasso and cubism (handkerchief and "wood"), and to the act of painting (primary colors and maulstick). Friend John Cage's musical score, source of the work's title, suggests other covert allusions.



21 Sol LeWitt (detail)
Wall Drawing #65..., 1971

If this work of crayon-color lines invokes childhood prohibitions against scribbling on the wall, consult the label. Its brisk directive signals the artist's aim: to set in motion a diagrammed idea, the execution of which (by assistants) leaves much to chance and variation.

These are stops on the Gallery cell-phone tour. For more information, please pick up a cell-phone tour brochure at the Information Desk.

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