

The Making of Americans

Programs

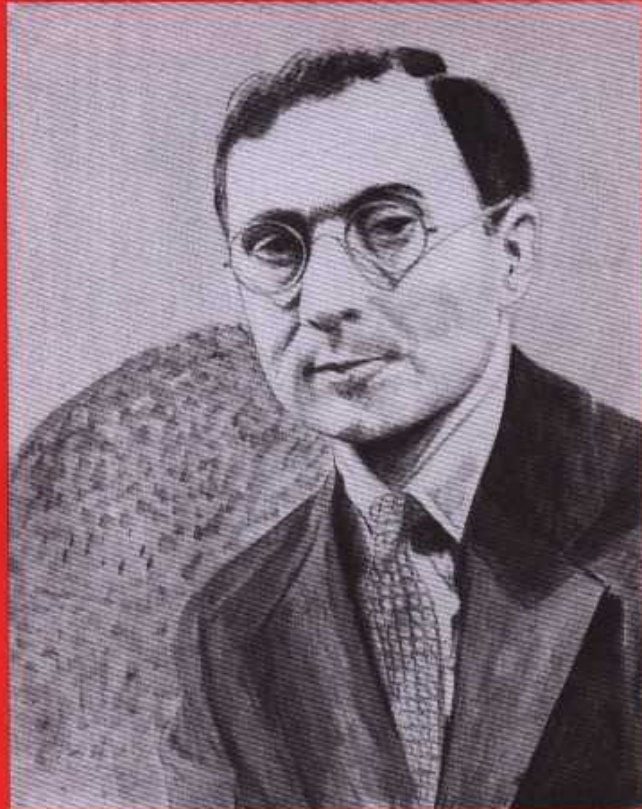
Mar 10-13	Bruce Altshuler Claire Bishop Carlos Basualdo Manuel Borja Villeda Paul Chan Beatriz Colomina Okwui Enwezor Pamela M. Lee Maria Lind Terry Smith Philippe Vergne
Mar 15	Wanda Corn Michael Leja Jed Perl
Mar 16	John Angeline Katherine Dreier Hilla Rebay
Mar 21	Gertrude Stein
Mar 23	Erica Kaufman Barbara Guest Joan Mitchell
Mar 28	Dorothy Miller
Mar 30	Shelly Eversley Lorraine Hansberry Nina Simone
Mar 31	Aoibheann Sweeney James Johnson Sweeney
Apr 4	Porter McCray
Apr 6	Peggy Samuels Adrian Sudhalter Margaret Miller Elizabeth Bishop
Apr 7	Emily Braun
Apr 11	Alfred H. Barr Yevgeniy Fiks Piotr Piotrowski Julia Sneeringer
Apr 13	Rowena Kennedy-Epstein Berenice Abbott Muriel Rukeyser
Apr 14	Romy Golan



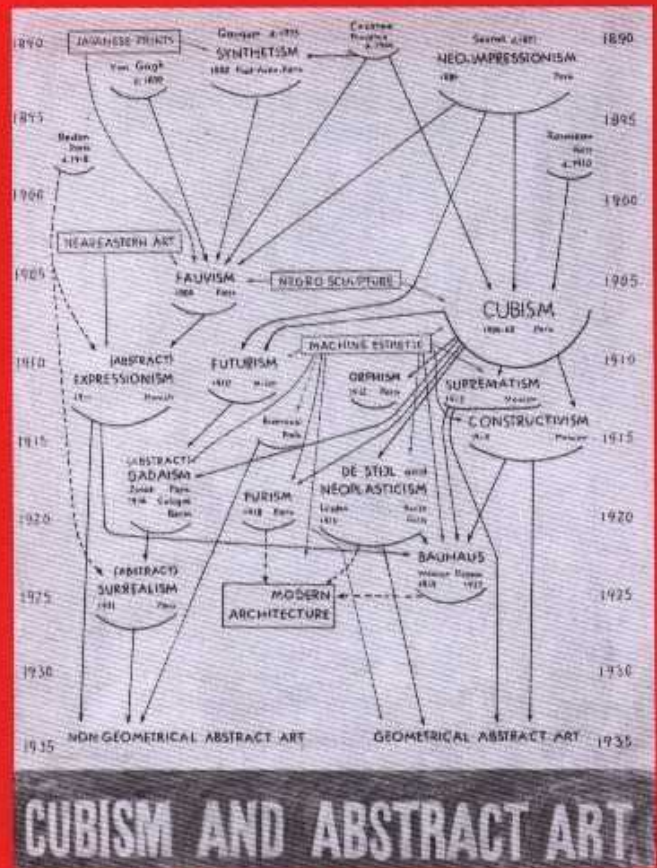
Gertrude Stein, portrait



Dorothy Miller, portrait



Alfred H. Barr, Jr., portrait



Cubism and Abstract Art, catalog

The Making of Americans

**The James Gallery
The Center for the Humanities
The Graduate Center, CUNY**

**presents the collection of
The Museum of American Art, Berlin**

**365 Fifth Avenue at 35th Street
New York, NY 10016**

centerforthehumanitiesgc.org

**Free and Open to the Public
Tue and Wed, 12-7pm
Thur to Sat, 12-6pm**

Programs

Exhibition

The Making of Americans at The James Gallery takes an innovative approach to the modern narrative of art history, particularly in the controversial period directly following World War II. The presentation at the James includes a visual investigation of the 1959 exhibition *New American Painting*, which toured to eight cities in Europe and was curated by Dorothy Miller, Alfred Barr's assistant at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. As taken from the exhibition catalog, paintings from the exhibition are recreated including work by Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman. Undertaken in collaboration with the Museum of American Art, Berlin, the exhibition at the James will be the first presentation of this work in New York. The Museum of American Art, Berlin has shown its collection at the Venice Biennale (Arsenale, 2005); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2009); Istanbul Biennial (2009); Museo Rafael Tamayo (2010).

In order to contextualize and investigate the significance of Miller's historic exhibition in shaping the new identity of American art at the time, the exhibition at the James will also explore important precursors: Alfred Barr's original layout of the Museum of Modern Art, the Armory Show, Katherine Dreier and Marcel Duchamp's *Société Anonyme*, and Gertrude Stein's *Salon de Fleurus*, a collection considered to be the prototype of modern American collections of European art. A mixture of paintings and artifacts, the overall exhibition will anchor its historical inquiry, asking how postwar American art was understood when it was contemporary, and finally, what were the motivations—artistic, cultural, and political—and how they differ from the narrative that has been constructed since then?

Programs

In keeping with the mission to create dialogue across disciplines and catalyze research and knowledge production in contemporary art, every exhibition in the James Gallery is complemented by innovative programs in the humanities. Programs for *The Making of Americans* will focus on alternative cultural formations in the postwar period. Highlighting an array of curators, artists, writers and intellectuals whose innovations have dropped off the historical record, these events will explore new ways of thinking about the now dominant post-war narrative of American belligerence and chauvinism.

Exhibition Histories

This series of lectures given in conjunction with the Museum of American Art, Berlin, provides access to little-known research and new viewpoints on key figures in the development of the narrative of American modern art. Delivered in the intimate setting of the gallery, they will offer opportunity for discussion in the context of the works on view.

The James Salons

The postwar period produced plenty of paint-slinging patriarchs, but behind, beside, and in front of these men were the women who shaped cultural and intellectual life before and after the war. The James Salons invite the public for a series of discussions about these women: speakers and participants will discuss biographical material that provides insight into rethinking the period, and will read and consider the work, correspondence and achievements of these extraordinary women. Reading material will be available online and at the salon.

Postwar Debates: Two Panel Discussions

The impact of American culture and policy in the postwar period has produced intense debate in the discipline of Art History. These two panels invite key scholars and figures in this debate to reconsider the established narrative of postwar art movements.

All events are at The Graduate Center and are free and open to the public.

Unless otherwise noted, all events take place in The James Gallery.

Thu Mar 10–Sun Mar 13
conference

**The Now Museum: Contemporary Art,
Curating Histories and Alternative Models**

What exactly do museums of contemporary art stand for today? What are the most significant precursors of the contemporary museum—and what are its possible futures? This conference aims to tackle key questions around the museum as an institutional entity and contemporary art as an art historical category. Particular attention will be paid to the construction of historical narratives (or their abandonment) through collection displays, as well as the role of research in relation to contemporary art. Panels and speakers will explore the alternative models that are already having an impact, and their relationship to more traditional museum infrastructures.

Participants include Bruce Altshuler, Museum Studies, New York University; Claire Bishop, PhD Program in Art History, the Graduate Center, CUNY; Carlos Basualdo, Philadelphia Museum of Art & MAXXI, Rome; Manuel Borja Vilel, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; Paul Chan, artist; Beatriz Colomina, Architecture, Princeton University; Okwui Enwezor, curator; Pamela M. Lee, Art History, Stanford University; Maria Lind, curator; Terry Smith, History of Art and Architecture, University of Pittsburgh; Philippe Vergne, Dia Art Foundation.

See website for the full schedule and registration.

co-sponsored by the Ph.D. Program in Art History, Independent Curators International, New Museum

Tue Mar 15, 6:30pm
postwar debate

What is American about “New American Painting?”

What are the cultural and artistic precedents for the shift in American abstraction that “New American Painting” was meant to represent? What are its implications for modernism, and finally for American cultural identity? Join three eminent scholars and writers as they explore these much-contested questions.

Participants include Wanda Corn, Professor Emerita of Art and Art History at Stanford University, and author of *The Great American Thing*; Michael Leja, Professor of the History of Art, University of Pennsylvania and the author of *Looking Askance: Skepticism and American Art from Eakins to Duchamp* as well as *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s*; and Jed Perl, art critic for the New Republic and author of, most recently, *New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century*.

The Skylight Room (9100)

Wed Mar 16, 1pm
salon

Katherine Dreier and Hilla Rebay

Salon led by John Angeline, Art and Design History, Parsons The New School for Design

Katherine Dreier (1877–1952) was an artist and collector who played an early and essential role in generating American interest in and acceptance of modern art. Together with Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray she founded the Société Anonyme, an organization designed to generate support for modernist art. She was friendly with Hilla Rebay (1890–1967) artist, art collector and the founder and director of the Museum of Non-Objective Art (now the Guggenheim Museum). This salon will focus on the ways these two women, alongside many others, inspired and in some cases built the institutions that make up the New York art world.

Mon Mar 21, 2pm

lecture

Exhibition Histories: The Moderns

Gertrude Stein, writer

The first lecture in the Exhibition Histories series will address legendary writer Gertrude Stein's (1874–1946) place in the making of the modern narrative of art history. Stein's Salon de Fleurus is featured in the "Making of Americans" exhibition on view as a formative precursor for collections including the Museum of Modern Art.

Wed Mar 23, 1pm

salon

Barbara Guest and Joan Mitchell

Salon led by Erica Kaufman, English,
The Graduate Center, CUNY

Barbara Guest (1920–2006) was a poet and a member of an informal but highly influential group of writers known as the New York School of poets. Influenced by modern art, especially surrealism and abstract expressionism, she also wrote prose, which was eventually collected in *Forces of the Imagination: Writing on Writing* and includes an essay on her friend Joan Mitchell (1925–1992) whose painting she promoted. Along with Lee Krasner, Grace Hartigan and Helen Frankenthaler, Joan Mitchell was one of the few female painters associated with abstract expressionism to gain critical and public acclaim. This salon will focus on the ways these two professional artists navigated the cold war climate of chauvinism and repression.

Mon Mar 28, 2pm

lecture

Exhibition Histories: Americans

Dorothy Miller, curator

Dorothy Miller (1904–2003) served as a curator at the Museum of Modern Art from 1942 to 1963 and produced a series of key exhibitions, including *Twelve Americans*, *Fourteen Americans* and *Fifteen Americans*, that brought wide attention to a new generation of artists. The international touring exhibition "New American Painting" (1958–9) presented canvases by Sam Francis, Grace Hartigan, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still. This lecture will focus on how her curatorial choices and the Museum of Modern Art's promotion of these exhibitions relate to the rebuilding of culture in the US and abroad in the postwar period.

Wed Mar 30, 1pm

salon

Nina Simone and Lorraine Hansberry

Shelly Eversley, English, Baruch College,
CUNY

Lorraine Hansberry (1930–1965) worked with Paul Robeson and WEB DuBois writing political speeches, letters and essays before she scored a Broadway hit with *A Raisin in the Sun* in 1959. She supported and inspired many other artists, including Nina Simone, who borrowed Hansberry's title, "Young Gifted and Black" for a song that would become a hit single in 1969. Nina Simone (1933–2003) was a musician whose thwarted aspirations to become a classical pianist led her to forge one of the most original and influential jazz styles of her day. This salon will focus on these two exceptional African American female artists in the context of the black avant-garde as it took formation from WWII forward.

Thu Mar 31, 6pm

lecture

James Johnson Sweeney and Modern Art in America

Aoibheann Sweeney, Director, Center for the Humanities, The Graduate Center

James Johnson Sweeney (1900–1987) was Director of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art from 1945 to 1946 and Director of the Guggenheim Museum from 1952 to 59. Owing to the fact that the dates of these two prominent directorships span the postwar period, the rare scholars who have attended to his work have done so mostly in the context of the cold war and in the ongoing debate about abstract expressionism. But Sweeney's connection to European and American modernists through the 20s and 30s changes the story. This talk focuses on Sweeney's career in the context of *The Making of Americans* exhibition.

Mon Apr 4, 2pm

lecture

Exhibition Histories: Museum of Modern Art and the International Program

Porter McCray, museum official

Porter McCray (1908–2000), served as the head of the Museum of Modern Art's International Program from 1947 to 1963. He oversaw exhibitions of modern art that traveled to five continents. Instead of assuming that cultural diplomacy was the key motivation of this program, this talk investigates the exhibition documentation, press coverage and personal interactions that helped shape the reception of American art abroad.

Wed Apr 6, 1pm

salon

Margaret Miller and Elizabeth Bishop

Salon led by Peggy Samuels, English, Drew University and Adrian Sudhalter, Fellow, Clark Institute

Margaret Miller was an Associate Curator at the Museum of Modern Art during the postwar period. She and the Pulitzer prize-winning poet, Elizabeth Bishop (1911–1979), were college roommates and founded a literary magazine at Vassar in the 1930s. After the war, Miller introduced Bishop to two modernist painters who deeply influenced her work: Paul Klee and Kurt Schwitters. This salon will focus on the influence of European modernism on post-war poets and the crucial role of these two intellectually-driven women in making that connection.

Thu Apr 7, 6pm

lecture

Magic Realism in 1943: Reconsidering MoMA's Exhibition History

Emily Braun, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center

This lecture considers the exhibition *American Realists and Magic Realists*, organized in 1943 by Dorothy Miller and Alfred H. Barr Jr. during the ideologically fraught years of the early 1940s. The exhibition presented a particular type of modern realism and an alternative narrative of 20th century art that was sidelined after WWII with the polarization of figurative and abstract styles and the rise of high formalist modernism. Emily Braun has written on Magic Realism and Giorgio de Chirico and most recently curated the exhibition *The Power of Conversation: Jewish Women and their Salons* (with Emily Bilski).

Mon Apr 11, 2pm

lecture

**Exhibition Histories: Abstract Cabinet
and the Modern Narrative**

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., museum director and
curator

Under the auspices of the Rockefeller family, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (1902–1981) became the first director of the Museum of Modern Art in 1929. What were the strategies and stories that the founder of the Museum of Modern Art fashioned in his conception of American modernism? This lecture focuses on the art historical context for Barr's layout of the original space, the positioning of the institution in the international art scene and the wide acceptance of the style of the artists the museum collected.

Mon, Apr 11, 6:30pm

postwar debate

**Constructing Cultural Identity in the
Postwar Period**

How was cultural identity constructed outside America in the 1950s? What was America's cultural and artistic impact—its politics, policies and modern art—on Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia? Moving beyond a characterization of the relationship simply as one of American hegemony or propaganda, this panel will examine the complex and unexpected ways these cultures informed each other—artistically and culturally—during the cold war.

Participants include Yevgeniy Fiks, artist and author of *A Communist Guide to New York City*; Piotr Piotrowski, Art Historian, author of *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-garde in Eastern Europe 1945–1989*, and Julia Sneeringer, Historian, author of the work in progress, *From Burlesque to Beatles: Hamburg and the Remaking of West German Popular Culture, 1949–1969*.

The Skylight Room (9100)

Wed Apr 13, 1 pm

salon

Berenice Abbott and Muriel Rukeyser

Salon led by Rowena Kennedy-Epstein,
English, The Graduate Center, CUNY

Berenice Abbott (1898–1991) trained as a sculptor in Paris in the 1920s and published poetry in the renowned literary journal *Transition* before garnering international acclaim for her best known project, *Changing New York* (1939). Her portraits of the artists of the time include her close friend Muriel Rukeyser (1913–1980), who wrote a foreword to a collection of her photography in 1970. She was an influential poet and political activist who nurtured Abbott's progressive politics. She travelled widely as a journalist through WWII and after, writing fiction, poetry, biography and essays to chronicle the violence and injustice she saw. This salon will focus on the connections between art, feminism and political activism made (in very different ways) by these two friends.

Thu Apr 14, 6pm

lecture

Other Rooms, Other Voices

Romy Golan, PhD Program in Art History,
The Graduate Center

Alternate spaces for exhibition—in public spaces and in unexpected areas within the walls of the gallery and the museum—were being activated by artists in the inter-war and postwar period in Europe. How do those activities relate to what characterized the European attitude and response to the near-mural scale that characterized most Abstract Expressionism works in America? Romy Golan is author of *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* and *Muralnomad: The Paradox of Wall Painting, Europe 1927–57*.

All illustrations are paintings depicting scenes and characters from the history of art of the 20th century's first six decades. They belong to the collections of the Museum of American Art and Salon de Fleurus.

Photos by Max Yawney

Design by MTWTF, New York

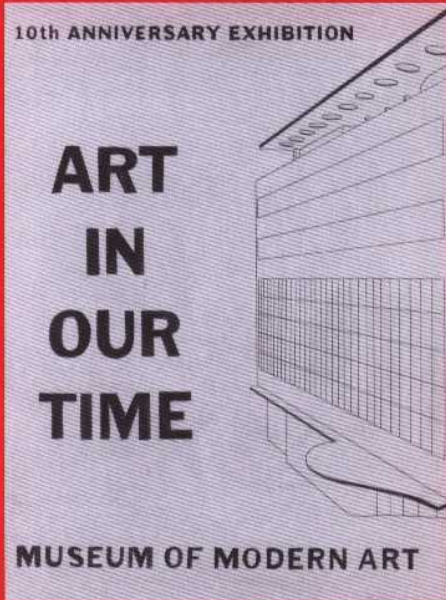
The Center for the Humanities at The Graduate Center, CUNY, was founded in 1993 as a forum for people who take ideas seriously inside and outside the academy. Through its public programs, seminars, conferences, publications and exhibitions, the Center puts CUNY students and faculty from various disciplines into dialogue with each other as well as with prominent journalists, artists and civic leaders to promote the humanities and foster intellectual community across the city.

The Amie and Tony James Gallery catalyzes research and knowledge production in contemporary art and joins the Center for the Humanities' mission to create dialogue across disciplines.

The Museum of American Art, Berlin is an educational institution dedicated to assembling, preserving and exhibiting memories of modern American art shown in Europe during the 50s and early 60s. It opened in Berlin in 2004 at Frankfurter Allee 91. This museum is an offspring of the Museum of Modern Art, which itself is an exhibit in the Museum of American Art, as the most important American contribution to modern art. This small-sized MoMA encapsulates European modern art of the first half of the 20th Century, the way it was defined and promoted by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. This particular interpretation of modern art, based on "international movements," was established in New York in the mid-30s and brought to Europe after the war, where it gradually became the dominant narrative as we know it today.



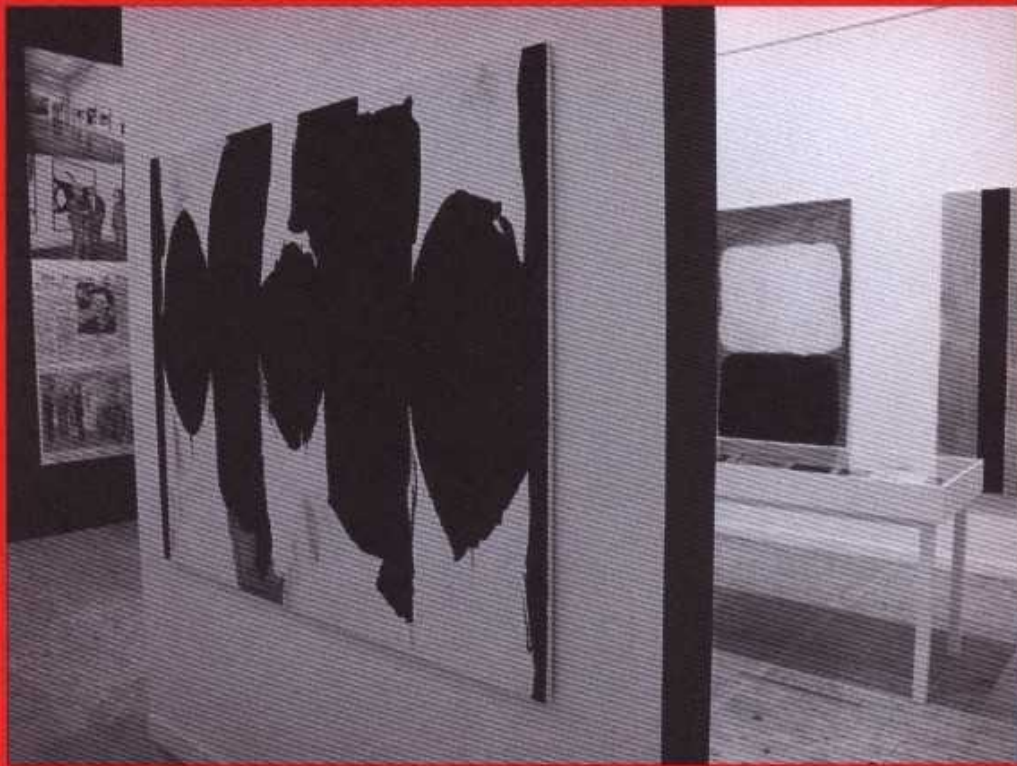
Malevich installation, MoMA



Art in Our Time, catalog



Bauhaus, 1919-1928 installation, MoMA



New American Painting installation, Museo Rafael Tamayo

The James
Gallery

The Center
for the
Humanities

