

Sheldon Treasures

August–December 2020

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Sheldon Museum of Art is home to two art collections. In addition to holding objects acquired by the University of Nebraska, the museum stewards a collection assembled by the Sheldon Art Association, founded by community members in 1888 as the Haydon Art Club. Their vision was to establish a museum collection that would support both the education of students at the university and the economic development of the state. Together, the collections now comprise nearly 13,000 original works of art in various media.

Both collections include unparalleled treasures. Some are masterworks by renowned artists; others are beloved favorites of museum visitors. Many have traveled great distances to be seen in national and international exhibitions. This gallery presents a selection of such objects, a testament to the wisdom and foresight of Sheldon's founders, leaders, and advocates who have assembled these works for the benefit of future generations.

Sheldon Treasures

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Marguerite Thompson Zorach
***Provincetown, Sunrise
and Moonset***



Stuart Davis
Arch Hotel



Peter Blume
The White Factory



Joseph Stella
Battle of Lights, Coney Island



Hans Hofmann
The City



Norman Lewis
Untitled



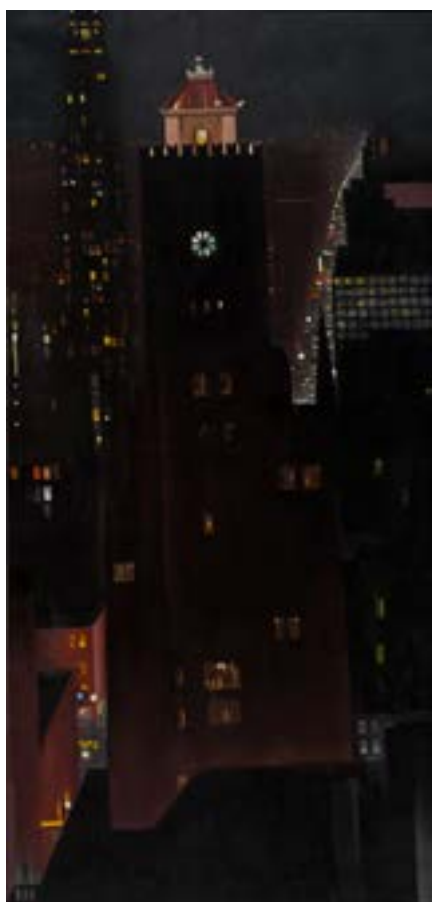
Barbara Hepworth
Small Form Resting



Helen Frankenthaler
Red Frame



Alexander Calder
Sumac II



Georgia O'Keeffe
New York, Night



Marguerite Thompson Zorach
Santa Rosa, CA 1887–New York, NY 1968

Provincetown, Sunrise and Moonset

Oil on canvas, 1916

Sheldon Museum of Art, Nebraska Art Association, Nelle
Cochrane Woods Memorial

Acquired 1968



Marguerite Thompson Zorach

Provincetown, Sunrise and Moonset

Marguerite Thompson Zorach captured the subtle effects of morning light shimmering over the waters of Cape Cod Bay off the coast of Massachusetts by painting both the sun rising at left and the moon setting at right. Her decisions to flatten this three-dimensional scene and to reduce the landscape to bold, bright planes reveal her understanding of the cubist construction of space and fauvist use of color championed by Picasso and Matisse respectively. Zorach's grasp of the period's most current trends in painting was widely recognized—her paintings were included in the 1913 Armory Show, the controversial exhibition that introduced European modernism to the American public.

Did you know?

During the mid-1910s, Marguerite Thompson Zorach and her artist-husband William spent their summers in Provincetown, Massachusetts, where she painted Sheldon's canvas. Provincetown, at the very tip of Cape Cod, has proven to be a popular destination for artists, with Milton Avery, Helen Frankenthaler, Hans Hofmann, Edward Hopper, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, and Jackson Pollock all spending time there.



Peter Blume

Smarhon', Belarus 1906–New Milford, CT 1992

The White Factory

Oil on canvas, 1928

Sheldon Museum of Art, Nebraska Art Association, Nelle
Cochrane Woods Memorial

Acquired 1957



Peter Blume

The White Factory

In *The White Factory*, Peter Blume, like many of his fellow precisionists from this period, took modern industrial developments in America as his subject matter. Rising vertiginously from its surroundings, his rectilinear factory, with its prominent and crisply rendered smoke stack, is a vision of the future. The factory towers over its past, symbolized by the surrounding ramshackle buildings that have been haphazardly grouped in a way that defies strict perspectival logic.

Did you know?

Even though Blume was inspired by the landscape of New York’s Hudson Valley, this scene was composed entirely from his imagination.



Hans Hofmann

Weissenberg, Germany 1880–New York, NY 1966

The City

Oil on canvas, 1958

Sheldon Museum of Art, Nebraska Art Association, Thomas C.
Woods Memorial

Acquired 1964



Hans Hofmann
The City

A well-known art teacher, Hans Hofmann counted prominent artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, and Joan Mitchell among his students, but he also painted prolifically in his later years. Sheldon's painting, which dates to this final period of his career, is typical of Hofmann's distinctive abstraction. He successfully paired floating planes of color with vigorous and gestural brushstrokes to suggest the architectural forms and energy of the bustling city.

Did you know?

Hofmann often planned his paintings by pinning rectangles of colored paper to the canvas.



Barbara Hepworth
Wakefield, England 1903–Saint Ives, England 1975

Small Form Resting
Seravezza marble, 1945

Sheldon Museum of Art, Nebraska Art Association, Thomas C.
Woods Memorial

Acquired 1959

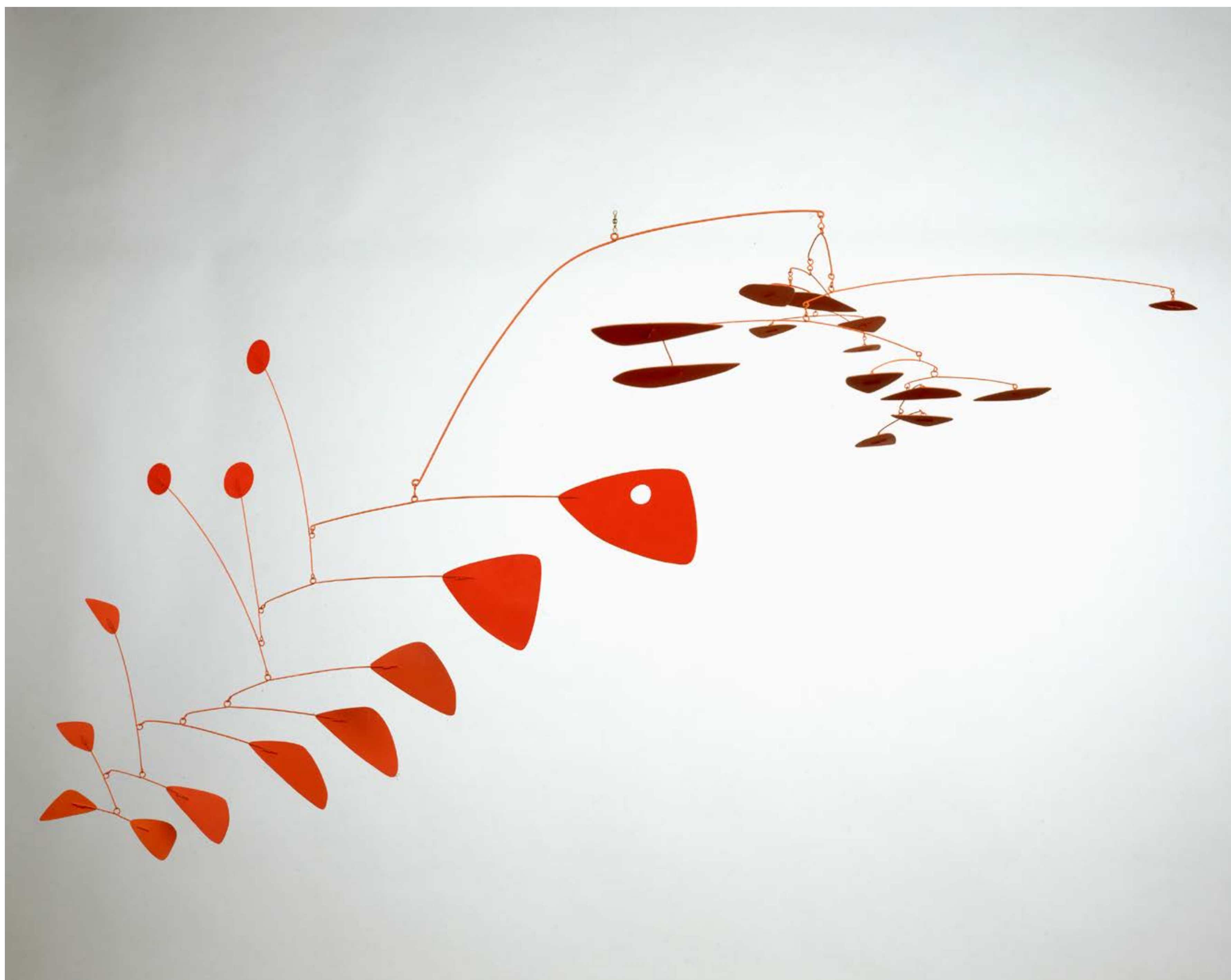


Barbara Hepworth
Small Form Resting

Preferring to avoid making preparatory drawings or sculptural models, Barbara Hepworth did not carefully plan out her compositions. Instead, she practiced direct carving, where she worked directly with her materials and allowed her sculptures to emerge organically from the material. The ovoid forms in *Small Form Resting* were likely inspired by rock formations near Hepworth's home in St. Ives, Cornwall, on the southwestern coast of England.

Did you know?

The marble Hepworth used was excavated from a quarry located in the town of Seravezza, northwest of Florence, Italy. This mountainous region has long been known as a source of high-quality marble—even the Renaissance master Michelangelo obtained his monumental marble blocks from this region.



Alexander Calder

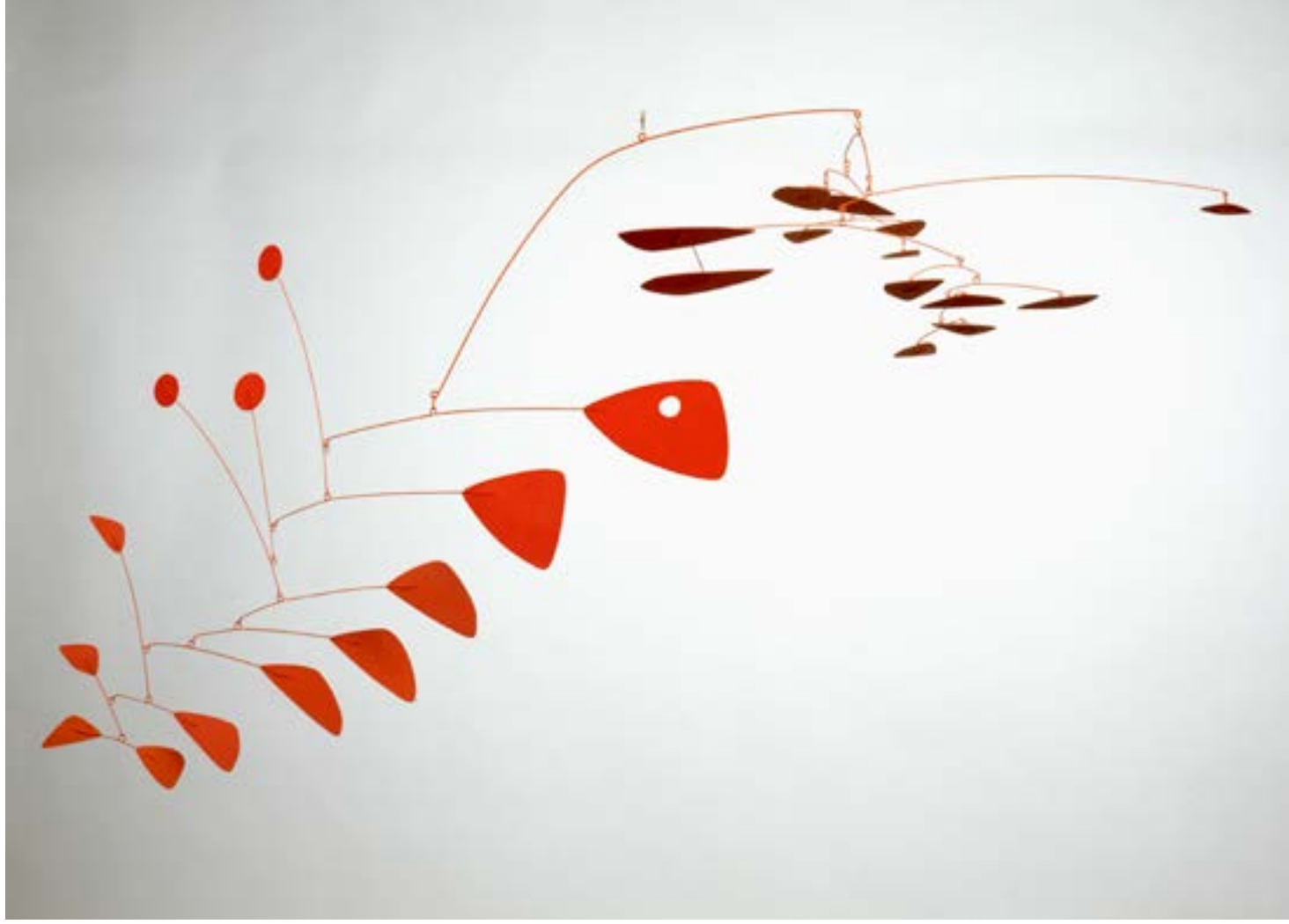
Lawnton, PA 1898–New York, NY 1976

Sumac II

Sheet metal, wire, and paint, 1952

Sheldon Museum of Art, Nebraska Art Association, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick S. Seacrest

Acquired 1979



Alexander Calder
Sumac II

Made of small pieces of sheet metal that he cut and linked together, the format of Alexander Calder’s *Sumac II* revolutionized sculpture. Instead of placing the work on a pedestal or on the floor, Calder suspended his “mobiles” from the ceiling, where they could gently sway in response to moving air. For Calder, red was a compelling color. He not only named this sculpture *Sumac*, or “red” in Arabic, but in a 1962 interview, he also famously said, “I love red so much that I almost want to paint everything red.”

Did you know?

Sumac II recently returned from a tour to Montreal, Canada, and Melbourne, Australia, as part of the major Calder retrospective, *Alexander Calder: Radical Inventor*.



Georgia O'Keeffe
Sun Prairie, WI 1887–Santa Fe, NM 1986

New York, Night

Oil on canvas, 1928–1929

Sheldon Museum of Art, Nebraska Art Association, Thomas C.
Woods Memorial

Acquired 1958



Georgia O'Keeffe
New York, Night

Georgia O'Keeffe based her glittering nocturnal view of New York City on what she saw from the north-facing window of her studio in the Shelton Hotel, a brand-new skyscraper north of Grand Central Terminal. Her painting celebrates American industrial energy of the period by juxtaposing the distant headlights from cars driving along Lexington Avenue against the vertical thrust of the buildings lining the street, most notably the Beverly Hotel, identifiable by its distinctive rosette window. As O'Keeffe has noted, "Lexington Avenue looked, in the night, like a very tall thin bottle with colored things going up and down inside it."

Did you know?

In 1958, the Nebraska Art Association acquired *New York, Night* from its annual invitational exhibition, making it part of Sheldon's permanent collection.



Stuart Davis

Philadelphia, PA 1892–New York, NY 1964

Arch Hotel

Oil on canvas, 1929

Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust

Acquired 1947

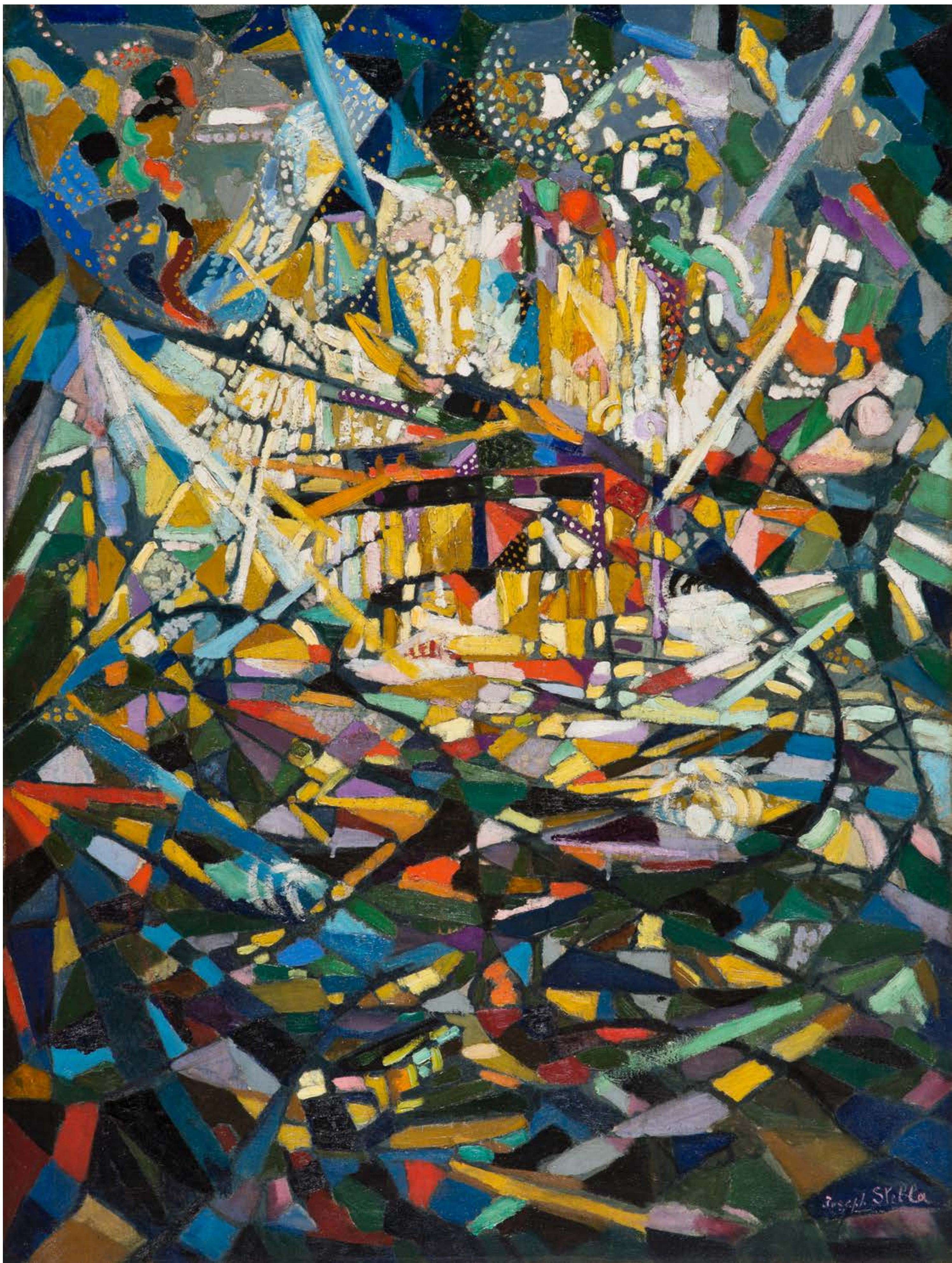


Stuart Davis
Arch Hotel

Stuart Davis painted *Arch Hotel* when he lived in Paris between 1928 and 1929. He had carefully studied the city and its architecture through a number of sketches made while looking out the windows of cafés on the right bank of the Seine River. In *Arch Hotel*, Davis reduced the buildings to broad planes of color and dramatically flattened the construction of three-dimensional space, revealing his own understanding of European modernism. He also merged cityscape and still life by including elements from his café table, such as a lemon and a bottle of rum, the ingredients of a drink he especially favored during the cold Parisian winter.

Did you know?

The number “721” recurs in a number of Davis’s other paintings, but its significance still eludes scholars.



Joseph Stella

Muro Lucano, Italy 1877–New York, NY 1946

Battle of Lights, Coney Island

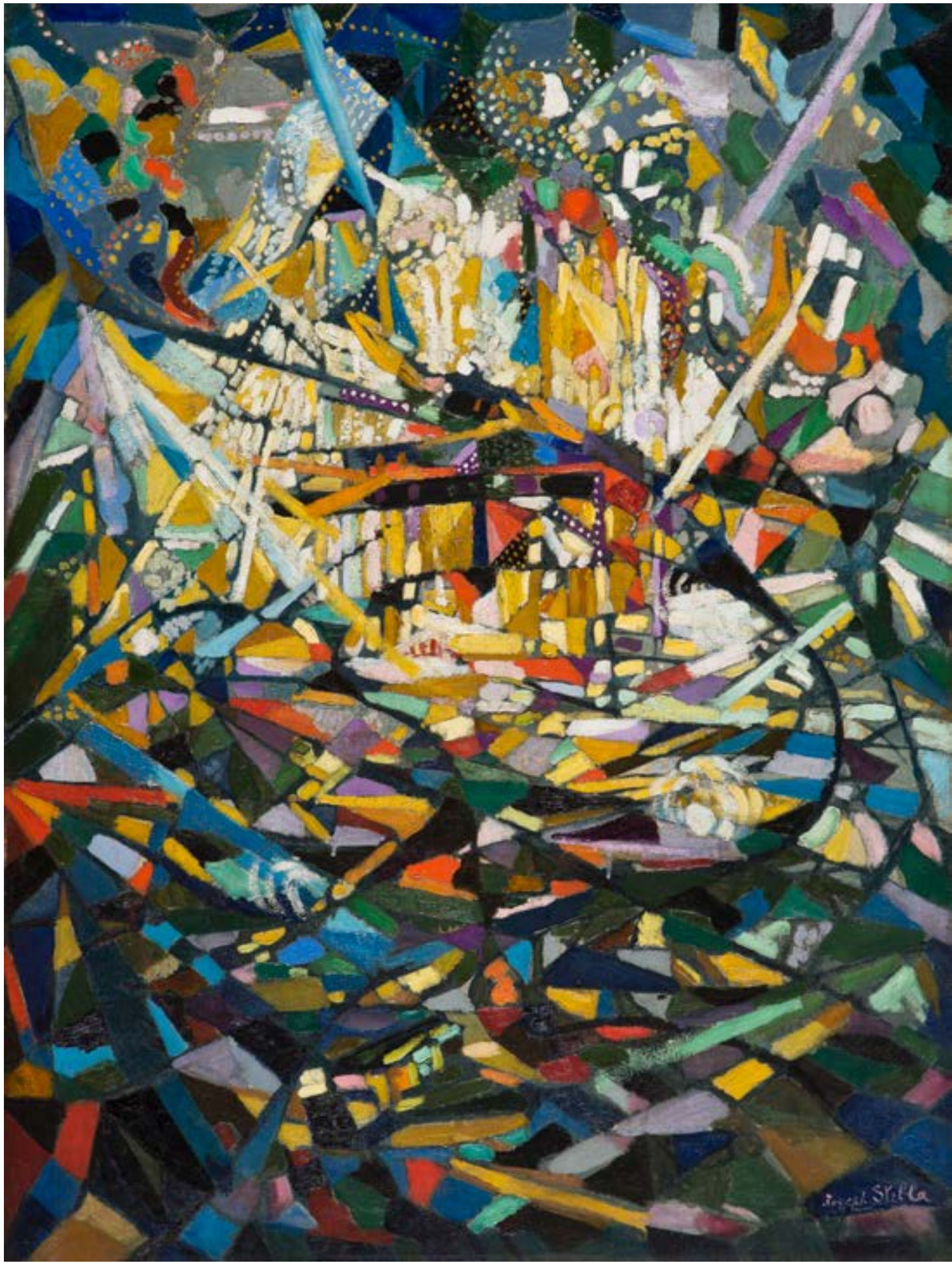
Oil on canvas, 1913–1914

Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Anna R.
and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust

Acquired 1960



**Back to
Contents**



Joseph Stella
Battle of Lights, Coney Island

Inspired by the Italian Futurists who sought to capture the effects of light and speed, Joseph Stella was drawn to technological advances seen at the famous amusement parks at New York City’s Coney Island. He captured the spectacle and dynamism of this place at night by abstracting its energy into bits of color that spiral from the center of the composition, highlighting both the bright electric lights and the whirling mechanical rides. Yet the people of all socioeconomic backgrounds who would have enjoyed these diversions are conspicuously absent from the painting.

Did you know?

As an immigrant from a small town outside of Naples, Italy, to the United States, Stella was fascinated by the modern beauty of New York. In addition to depicting Coney Island, he repeatedly painted the city’s major attractions and architectural innovations, including the Brooklyn Bridge, Broadway, Times Square, and the Flatiron Building.



Norman Lewis

New York, NY 1909–New York, NY 1979

Untitled

Oil on canvas, circa 1958

Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Olga N.
Sheldon Acquisition Trust and gift from Billy E. Hodges

Acquired 2012



Norman Lewis

Untitled

Norman Lewis began his career as a figurative painter whose work was influenced by cubism. By the late 1940s, he was working in an abstract visual language highly influenced by jazz and bebop music. In *Untitled*, he layered expressive patches of purple, blue, yellow, and black under a luminous white surface. He also seemed to depict what appears to be a bullfight—perhaps a reference to Picasso’s repeated treatments of the subject—with a crowd of spectators in the lower portion of the painting.

Did you know?

In 1950, Norman Lewis was the only African American artist included in the Artists’ Sessions at Studio 35 in New York. He, along with Hans Hofmann, Robert Motherwell, Willem de Kooning, Ad Reinhardt, and Richard Pousette-Dart, discussed the state of contemporary art in America and the abstract expressionist movement.



Helen Frankenthaler
New York, NY 1928–Darien, CT 2011

Red Frame

Acrylic on canvas

Sheldon Museum of Art, Nebraska Art Association, Nelle
Cochrane Woods Memorial

Acquired 1965



Helen Frankenthaler
Red Frame

Helen Frankenthaler devised a new technique where she poured diluted acrylic paint directly on unprimed canvas. As a result, her paint saturates the surface and creates large pools of color, upending the usual practice of building pigment up on the surface to create the illusion of depth. Typical of her practice, *Red Frame*'s blue, green, and yellow amorphous shapes are surrounded by a thin red border, which functions as both part of the work and its edge, reinforcing both the shape of the canvas and its status as an object on the wall.

Did you know?

Red Frame was made by rolling raw canvas onto the floor and allowing the act of painting determined its final size. A year prior to the completion of Sheldon's painting, Frankenthaler switched from oil paint to acrylic paint in order to eliminate the halos of oil that saturated the unprimed canvas.