Starry Night and the Astronauts
Alma Thomas
Gallery 291

Alma Thomas was entranced by astronauts and outer space. This painting, made when she was 81, showcases that fascination through her signature style of short, rhythmic strokes of paint. “Color is life, and light is the mother of color,” she once proclaimed. In 1972, she became the first African American woman to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

“After decades as a representational painter, Alma Thomas turned to abstraction when she was in her seventies, creating shimmering, mosaic-like fields of color with rhythmic dabs of paint that were often inspired by forms from nature.”

Mr. Pointy
Takashi Murakami
Gallery 292

Takashi Murakami skillfully mixes Japanese pop culture, animé, and cartoon aesthetics into a new form of global pop art. Both an artist and a businessman, he creates large-scale paintings and sculptures, animation, and merchandise, including a fashion collaboration with Louis Vuitton. The character of Mr. Pointy was devised by Murakami in 2003 and has since been repeatedly rendered in paintings, mass-market prints, and sculptures.

“Murakami’s Mr. Pointy character combines religious iconography taken from sources as diverse as Mayan culture, Tibetan Buddhism, and the Thousand-Armed Buddha (Kannon in Japanese) with a cartoon style informed by sources including Walt Disney.”

Fan Favorites

See a selection of works in our collection that have become our visitors' faves.

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“At the beginning of the 20th century, Rodin was the world’s most famous artist. A master of visual communication, he created sculpted bodies that speak to us through carefully constructed gestures and poses and in the tactile surfaces of their materials.”

Adam
Auguste Rodin
Gallery 200

Auguste Rodin’s figure of Adam was originally intended to be paired with a sculpture of Eve to flank his monumental bronze portal, The Gates of Hell, for the Musée de Arts Décoratifs, Paris. Rodin created over 200 of its figures and groupings, exploring the expressive potential of the human body. However, the museum building was never constructed and the portal never completed as originally conceived.

Buddha Shakyamuni Seated in Meditation (Dhyamamudra)

Seated in a posture called the lotus, this serene 12th-century Buddha rests his hands and feet atop one another as he gazes downward, his eyelids lowered, the touch of a smile on his lips. The symbols that distinguish him as a great being—such as the urna on his forehead and ushnisha on top of his head—are delicately carved in the hard granite.

“This Buddha comes from the south Indian coastal town of Nagapattinam, where Buddhist monasteries flourished and attracted monks from distant lands.”

A Sunday on La Grande Jatte — 1884
Georges Seurat
Gallery 240

For his largest and best-known painting, Georges Seurat depicted Parisians enjoying all sorts of leisurely activities—strolling, lounging, sailing, and fishing—in the park called La Grande Jatte on the River Seine. He used an innovative technique called Pointillism that was inspired by optical and color theory, applying tiny dabs of different colored paint that viewers would see as a single, and Seurat believed, more brilliant hue.

“The bedroom was the first home the artist could call his own. Upon arriving, he immediately and enthusiastically set about decorating, painting a suite of canvases to fill the walls.”

The Bedroom
Vincent van Gogh
Gallery 241

In 1888, Van Gogh moved into his own home in Arles, France. He dubbed it the “Studio of the South,” hoping that fellow artists would join him there to work. This is one of three versions he painted of his beloved Arles bedroom. While its vivid palette and dramatic perspective seem to burst with nervous vitality, Van Gogh intended the painting “to express utter repose.”

“Van Gogh's 'Yellow House' is the first home the artist could call his own. He once wrote, 'I want to make modern people, in their essential traits, move about as they do on those friezes, and place them on canvases organized by harmonies of color.'”