

Friends Who  
Came to See Me  
*Drawings from John  
Ashbery's Collection*

MAY 1 TO OCTOBER 25, 2026

LARGE PRINT LABELS

The  
Morgan  
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Museum

**John Jonas Gruen**

**b. 1926, Enghien-les-Bains, France; d. 2016, New York**

***John Ashbery, Water Mill, 1965***

**Gelatin silver print**

**Lucy Ricciardi**

## **John Ashbery**

**b. 1927, Rochester, New York; d. 2017, Hudson, New York**

***Late for School*, 1948**

**Collage of cut printed papers**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.150**

Ashbery grew up on a farm outside of Rochester. At the age of nine, he read an article about the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* in *Life* magazine, which sparked an early interest in Surrealism that was reinforced when he saw Surrealist collages in *Vogue* two years later. Created while Ashbery was an undergraduate student at Harvard, *Late for School* is one of his earliest collages, among the few that he kept over the years. Ashbery's main source of inspiration was Max Ernst's collage novels, such as *La Semaine de Bonté* (1934). *Late for School* was made from images cut from nineteenth-century German schoolbook and pasted without text to produce a purely visual narrative. The unlikely aesthetic juxtapositions of collage would provide an important model for the development of Ashbery's poetry.

**Constantin Guys**

**b. 1802, Vlissingen, The Netherlands; d. 1892, Paris**

***La Belle Thérèse*, undated**

**Black and brown inks over traces of graphite**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John Ashbery; 2022.148**

Made by the nineteenth-century artist and illustrator Constantin Guys, at first glance, this work seems to be an outlier in Ashbery's collection of postwar art. But, in many ways, the drawing sits at the intersection of his lifelong investment in the relationship between poetry and visual art. Ashbery's interest in it lay in the artist's close connection to the French poet and critic Charles Baudelaire, who in the early 1860s modeled the subject of his essay "The Painter of Modern Life" after Guys. The essay soon became the archetypal description of Second Empire Paris and the flâneurs, dandies, stylish women, sex workers, and soldiers who strolled along the modernizing city's newly widened avenues—all captured in Guys's fleeting sketches.

**Jan Matulka**

**b. 1890, Vlachovo Brezi, Bohemia (now Czech Republic);**

**d. 1972, New York**

***Untitled*, mid-1920s**

**Watercolor and opaque watercolor over black chalk**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2022.147**

Jan Matulka began his art education in Prague before immigrating to the United States at the age of seventeen and continuing his studies in New York. This watercolor was probably inspired by one of the New England seaport towns—Gloucester, Rockport, or Provincetown—where he regularly summered from the mid- to late 1920s. He produced numerous landscapes during these visits, showing less concern with capturing details of a place than with creating a compelling modern composition.

Ashbery did not know Matulka personally but was drawn to the melding of tradition and experimentation in his work. According to David K. Kermani, this watercolor is one of the few artworks that Ashbery “actually purchased for himself (when he finally had some spare cash)” in the late 1970s or early ’80s.

**Anne Ryan**

**b. 1889, Hoboken; d. 1954, Morristown, New Jersey**

***Untitled*, 1953**

**Collage of cut fabrics and papers**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.168**

Anne Ryan did not begin her artistic career until she was in her fifties. Following a divorce, she left her native New Jersey and in the 1930s settled in Greenwich Village, where she befriended artists such as Hans Hofmann, Barnett Newman, and Tony Smith. She first worked as a printmaker but transitioned to producing textile collages.

Ashbery framed Ryan's approach to collage as anticipatory of midcentury *matérisme* because of her poetic treatment of discarded substances. He also likened her work to "domestic" versions of Kurt Schwitters's *Merz*—assemblages and collages made with scavenged materials—noting how Ryan's repurposed cloth evokes the patterns of aprons or dishtowels. Ryan, however, was uneasy about gendered associations attached to her use of domestic objects.

**James Bishop**

**b. 1927, Neosho, Missouri; d. 2021, Dreux, France**

***Untitled, 1960***

**Oil paint**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.151**

James Bishop moved to France in 1957 and spent most of his life in relative isolation in a small town in the countryside. As a result, his contribution to postwar American art has been marginalized. Ashbery, however, reviewed several of Bishop's exhibitions in the 1960s and '70s and declared him "one of the most original American painters of his generation." Describing another painting from the same period as this untitled work, Ashbery invoked the "intensely charged atmosphere . . . that reigned deep within the canvas, appearing on its surface in the form of faint seismic displacements. . . . Except for Rothko, it is hard to think of a modern painter who has used color with so intuitive a knowledge of what it can and cannot do."

**Norman Bluhm**

**b. 1921, Chicago; d. 1999, East Wallingford, Vermont**

***Untitled, 1961***

**Oil paint and opaque watercolor**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.152**

Norman Bluhm was a second-generation Abstract Expressionist who continued to work in a gestural style even as Pop art and Minimalism rose to prominence. His attention to chance elements in his paintings from the 1960s is a quality also found in the poetry of his friends and frequent collaborators Frank O'Hara, Bill Berkson, and Paul Auster, who traveled in the same literary circles as Ashbery. In this untitled work, Bluhm made evident his manipulation of the paper during the drying process, placing it at an angle so that the paint formed vertical drips that accrued over the course of many layers. In a review written in the mid-1960s, Ashbery praised Bluhm's "pungent color harmonies" and the "new architectural dimension" that the painter had introduced earlier that decade.

## **Fairfield Porter**

**b. 1907, Winnetka, Illinois; d. 1975, Southampton, New York**  
***Boathouses, 1961***

## **Graphite**

**Gift of David K. Kermani in memory of John Ashbery;**  
**2019.165**

Fairfield Porter spent nearly every summer—what he called “painting season”—at Great Spruce Head Island in Penobscot Bay, Maine. Like Ashbery, Porter also worked as an art critic and wrote poetry. The two met in 1952 at Tibor de Nagy Gallery in New York and remained friends until Porter’s death. This 1961 drawing is a study for a painting made that same year, now at the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC. In 1981 the sketch was reproduced in an anthology of Porter’s poems and drawings, paired with “To the Mainland,” a poem that describes the departure of a lobster fishing boat in the early morning. Ashbery wrote the introduction to the anthology, remarking there that Porter’s “paintings and poems are animated by the same quiet urgency.”

**Jean Hélion**

**b. 1904, Couterne, Normandy; d. 1987, Paris**

Top to bottom:

***Untitled, 1962***

**Brown ink, watercolor, pastel, colored pencil, and graphite on blue paper**

***La fille au mannequin salué (The Girl with a Man Greeting a Mannequin), 1945***

**Black ink and watercolor**

**Gifts of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John Ashbery; 2019.160 and 2023.66**

Jean Hélion began his career in the 1930s as an abstract painter and helped to found progressive artist organizations such as the Abstraction-Création association in Paris and the American Abstract Artists group in New York. Toward the end of the decade, however, he began to introduce figures into his compositions. His imprisonment in a German camp during World War II confirmed this new direction, giving him, as he recounted, “a violent passion for life . . . as it was denied to me, the streets, the people, the things.” *La fille au mannequin salué* is a typical work of this period. Although created two

decades later, *Untitled*, a study for the large oil painting *Concerto for the Roofs* (1962), speaks to a similar interest in quotidian subjects.

**Clockwise from top left:**

**Jane Freilicher**

**b. 1924, New York; d. 2014, New York**

***Portrait of John Ashbery, 1954***

**Graphite on paper removed from a sketchbook**

**Rodrigo Moynihan**

**b. 1910, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands; d. 1990,  
London**

***JA at St. E., 1962***

**Colored inks and marker on paper removed from a  
sketchbook**

**Jean Héliion**

**b. 1904, Couterne, Normandy; d. 1987, Paris**

***Portrait of JA, ca. 1965***

**Crayon, pastel, brown ink, and opaque watercolor on  
dark brown paper**

**Gifts of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John  
Ashbery; 2019.157, 2019.163, and 2019.161**

Jane Freilicher, who became one of Ashbery's closest friends,

was the first artist he met after moving to New York in 1949. In 1953, one year after her first solo exhibition at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, Freilicher created illustrations for Ashbery's book *Turandot and Other Poems*. It was around this time that she drew this portrait in her studio, "a cramped tenement apartment in the far East Village," as Ashbery, who visited her almost daily, described it. Presenting Ashbery shirtless, the portrait conveys the intimacy between the two friends.

Ashbery first met Rodrigo Moynihan in Paris in January 1961, at the suggestion of the artist Jean Hélion. Ashbery was impressed with Moynihan's restrained painting style, which he described as moodier and lighter in touch than that of Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. In the title of this portrait, *St. E.* refers to Saint-Estève, a town in the South of France where Moynihan and his wife, the painter Anne Dunn, set up home and studio in the autumn of 1960—a place Ashbery visited frequently during his last five years in Europe.

**Philip Pearlstein**

**b. 1924, Pittsburgh; d. 2022, New York**

***Untitled (Portrait of John Ashbery)*, ca. 1972**

**Graphite**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.164**

This portrait, which depicts Ashbery in his forties, unposed, and with a disengaged expression, was made in Philip Pearlstein's studio on New York's Upper West Side. The two men first got to know one another during Ashbery's tenure as an executive editor at *ARTnews*, a position he held from late 1965 until 1972, around the same year that this drawing was made.

Pearlstein had become known in the 1960s for his clinical, unidealized nudes. His art was based on the close observation of reality and a veristic treatment of his subjects. Ashbery, meanwhile, sought to introduce into his poetry something he described as "counterfeit reality," an aesthetic that went beyond the surface to uncover revelations about the world.

**R. B. Kitaj**

**b. 1932, Chagrin Falls, Ohio; d. 2007, Los Angeles**

***Untitled (Portrait of John Ashbery), 1979***

**Charcoal and pastel**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.162**

R. B. Kitaj, born Ronald Brooks-Benway, began his career in the United Kingdom, where he gained recognition for his rigorous life drawings. He drew this portrait of Ashbery during a yearlong stay in New York and subsequently made a series of prints with a nearly identical composition. That same year Ashbery wrote in *New York* magazine about the artist's purposeful draftsmanship, noting the "delicate whiplash of outline, the melancholy smudges of shadow. An image has been deftly but firmly coaxed into being, and it will stay around to haunt you."

While Ashbery sat for many portraits and often received them as gifts, he kept most of these works out of sight. Kitaj's was an exception. For over a decade, it sat leaning against the fireplace in the poet's upstairs sitting room.

## **Larry Rivers**

**b. 1923, the Bronx; d. 2002, Southampton, New York**

Clockwise from left:

***David and John, 1977***

**Graphite and colored pencil with blue ballpoint pen on joined papers**

***Untitled (Portrait of John Ashbery), 1962***

**Graphite on paper removed from a sketchbook**

***Untitled (Portrait of John Ashbery), ca. 1950***

**Graphite**

**Ca. 1950 and 1977 drawings: Gifts of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John Ashbery; 2019.166 and 2019.167**

**1962 drawing: Purchased on the Manley Family Fund; 2022.8**

Born Yitzroch Loiza Grossberg, Larry Rivers changed his name in 1940 for his first career as a jazz saxophonist. His visual art reflected his musical sensibilities and, after he met Ashbery in 1949, as well as other New York School writers, it also began to manifest the formal influence of their poetry. In the early 1950s, Rivers became obsessed with drawing and redrawing, often erasing or smudging his work in pencil or charcoal and

leaving traces of this subtractive process on the surface, as seen in the works here. In 1962 Ashbery described Rivers's use of erasure as means of producing windows through which to view the subject more precisely.

*David and John* features another of River's recurring techniques: the meticulous rendering of text to mimic movable type. The text here comes from "No Way of Knowing," a poem included in Ashbery's 1975 collection *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*.

**Jane Freilicher**

**b. 1924, New York; d. 2014, New York**

***Untitled (ARTnews)*, 1963**

**Pastel and charcoal**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.158**

From the early 1960s on Jane Freilicher's main subjects were still lifes and landscapes. Featuring an otherwise traditional arrangement of flowers and fruits, *Untitled (ARTnews)* includes three singular elements: a red notebook, an issue of *ARTnews* magazine, and a mysterious black shape cropped by the right edge of the sheet. The carefully drawn letters on the magazine cover recall the newspaper titles that frequently appear in Cubist still lifes, serving as hidden allusions to real people and events. Here, the magazine appears to directly reference Ashbery. Since the late 1950s, he had been writing criticism for *ARTnews*, and he would become one of its editors in 1965. The presence of the notebook—a writer's attribute—may be a further reference to the poet, to whom Freilicher eventually gave the drawing.

**Joe Brainard and Kenward Elmslie**

**Brainard: b. 1942, Salem, Arkansas; d. 1994, New York**

**Elmslie: b. 1929, New York; d. 2022, New York**

***Giotto: Happy Birthday John Ashbery, 1965***

**Watercolor, opaque watercolor, and colored pencil  
over graphite**

**Joe Brainard**

***Untitled, 1971***

**Cut paper, acrylic, and paper**

**Gifts of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John  
Ashbery; 2019.153 and 2019.154**

In June 1965 Ashbery traveled from Paris to Perugia, Italy, to participate in Spoleto Festival. From there he took day-trips to regional museums with Joe Brainard, a writer and visual artist whom he had met two years prior in New York, and the poet Kenward Elmslie, Brainard's partner. Made for Ashbery's thirty-eight birthday that July, Brainard's watercolor references some of the Renaissance paintings the trio had viewed together. Later that year Brainard began a series of collages featuring appropriated images of the Virgin Mary. He was drawn to collage, as well as other nontraditional mediums and

materials, not only for economic reasons but also because of his interest in transforming everyday things and experiences. A similar impulse can be seen in his cut-paper works, such as this example depicting a spider web.

**Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely**

**Saint Phalle: b. 1930, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France; d. 2002, La Jolla, California**

**Tinguely: b. 1925, Fribourg, Switzerland; d. 1991, Bern**

***Untitled (Illustrated Letter to John Ashbery)*, ca. 1963**

**Ink stamps, ballpoint pens, markers, crayons, graphite, and decal**

***Untitled (Illustrated Letter to John Ashbery)*, 1966**

**Colored porous point and ballpoint pens, crayon, and graphite with collage of cut printed paper, paper, pink yarn, and tape**

**Niki de Saint Phalle**

***My Love, My Love*, 1968**

**Color screenprint**

**Gifts of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John Ashbery; 2019.171, 2019.170, and 2019.169**

Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely were frequent artistic collaborators and longtime on-and-off lovers. Their illustrated letters to Ashbery describe everyday events, such as the couple's recent trip to Italy, and propose plans for an upcoming rendezvous with the poet, who was then living in Paris.

Collaged elements intermingle with text and doodles—some

made by a young child, likely Saint Phalle's son.

Many of Saint Phalle's and Tinguely's contributions reference their works of the time. In the 1966 letter, for instance, Tinguely sketched a machine sculpture closely resembling his sculpture *Chariot M. K. IV*, completed that year, while Saint Phalle drew an early example of one of her "Nanas," colorful female figures with large bellies that she began showing in exhibitions in 1965. Her Nanas are again featured in her screenprint *My Love, My Love*, this time depicted with speech bubbles that reveal a self-conscious awareness of the male gaze, possibly inspired by Saint Phalle and Tinguely's tumultuous relationship.

## **Red Grooms**

**b. 1937, Nashville**

***Summer Still Life, 1978***

**Watercolor and graphite**

**Gift of David K. Kermani from the collection of John Ashbery;  
2019.159**

“It’s more fun for me to do a watercolor than to go fishing,” explained Red Grooms when asked why he worked during his vacations. In the 1960s he had established his reputation through large-scale sculptural installations that required extensive help by assistants. By contrast, his watercolors were “very personal. I just do them myself,” he said.

In the 1980s Ashbery wrote several pieces on Grooms, praising his success “at being truly modern and pleasing the general public as well.” Dubbing Grooms “the Canal Street Canaletto” for his New York environments, Ashbery contrasted “moments when euphoria seems to dominate” with the “quiet moments”—represented by the travel watercolors—“when the light is muted and the human comedy seems to be taking a siesta.”

**Francesco Clemente**

**b. 1952, Naples, Italy**

***Untitled*, 2007**

**Watercolor**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.155**

When Francesco Clemente moved to New York from Italy in the 1980s, he was affiliated with *Transavanguardia* (“beyond the avant-garde”), a figurative Neo-Expressionist movement characterized by an intentionally enigmatic use of mythic tropes. His work draws from a host of sources, and this watercolor dates to years when he spent extended periods in Brazil. It may reference the ritual performances and objects of Candomblé, a syncretic religion combining Yoruba deities with Catholic iconography. Checkerboards and nails similarly reoccur in his paintings of this period. As Clemente explained to Ashbery, his work consists of a “continuous proliferation of images.”

**Suzan Frecon**

**b. 1941, Mexico, Pennsylvania**

***Double Orange Curved, Indigo, 2007***

**Watercolor**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John**

**Ashbery; 2019.156**

Sometimes affiliated with the Hard-Edge painters that emerged in the 1960s, Suzan Frecon has intentionally set herself apart from other geometric abstractionist in her painterly approach. Considering herself more of an oil painter, Frecon only began working in watercolor following an illness in the late 1980s that led her to seek a smaller format. Frecon often uses watercolor to create studies for her larger-scale oils, but that is not the case with *Double Orange Curved, Indigo*. Instead, this work, which she gave to Ashbery for his eightieth birthday, is one in an unnumbered series inspired by her earlier oil-on-linen painting titled *Double Red Curved* (2003; Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland).

**Trevor Winkfield**

**b. 1944, Leeds, United Kingdom**

***Study for "The Net," 1994***

**Collage of cut colored and printed papers (stencil prints)  
with graphite**

**Gift of David K. Kermani, from the collection of John  
Ashbery; 2019.172**

Trevor Winkfield first encountered Ashbery in 1965, when the poet gave a public reading of "The Skaters" in London. Winkfield soon wrote to Ashbery asking for reading recommendations, and the two men officially met in 1969, when Winkfield moved to New York, where he still resides. They often collaborated and mutually influenced each other's work. This collage is a study for a finished work in acrylic on linen, now in a private collection. Winkfield gave the collage to Ashbery for his birthday in 1997 and later noted it was an attempt to visualize the ability of Ashbery's poetry to "capture everything."

## **John Ashbery and Joe Brainard**

**Ashbery: b. 1927, Rochester, New York; d. 2017, Hudson, New York**

**Brainard: b. 1942, Salem, Arkansas; d. 1994, New York**

***Diana @ Buster, 1966–67***

**Pen and black ink with correction fluid**

***Dr. Fantod, 1966–67***

**Pen and black ink**

**The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature;  
MA 22233.1 and 22233.2**

Like other figures in the New York School, Ashbery and Joe Brainard shared an interest in connecting the visual and literary arts. For Brainard, this often resulted in making comics and printing them in his publication *C Comics*. He first created the sketches and then passed them to his collaborators, leaving blank spaces for them to add text. Although *Diana @ Buster* and *Dr. Fantod* were not published in *C Comics*, which ended after two issues, earlier Brainard-Ashbery collaborations did appear, including *The Great Explosion Mystery* (1965). These comic strips demonstrate the friends' playful, campy humor and feature popular characters such as Ernie Bushmiller's Nancy, who appears throughout Brainard's work.

**John Ashbery**

**b. 1927, Rochester, New York; d. 2017, Hudson, New York**

***The Vermont Notebook***

**Illustrated by Joe Brainard (1942–1994)**

**Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1975**

**Joe Brainard**

**b. 1942, Salem, Arkansas; d. 1994, New York**

***Untitled (Shirt), 1974***

***Untitled (Poodle), 1974***

**Ink**

**Gift of Nathan Kernan; PML 199745, 2026.75, and 2026.74**

The same year Ashbery achieved international recognition for his multi-award-winning collection *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, he published an experimental work entitled *The Vermont Notebook*, in which each of his poems was accompanied by an ink drawing by artist Joe Brainard. Brainard's contributions to the project are strikingly prosaic, taking as their subject the unremarkable clutter of the everyday: a washing machine, a collared shirt on a hanger, a bedside picture frame. Brainard's earnest exploration of the joy embodied in Americana parallels

Ashbery's prose poetry, which includes the assertion, "America is a fun country. Still, there are aspects of it which I would prefer not to think about."

**John Ashbery**

**b. 1927, Rochester, New York; d. 2017, Hudson, New York**

***Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror***

**Prints by Richard Avedon (1923–2004), Elaine de Kooning (1918–1989), Willem de Kooning (1904–1997), Jim Dine (b. 1935), Jane Freilicher (1924–2014), Alex Katz (b. 1927), R. B. Kitaj (1932–2007), and Larry Rivers (1923–2002)**

**San Francisco: Arion Press, 1984**

**Purchased on the Edwin V. Erbe Acquisitions Fund, 2023;**

**PML 198986**

First published in 1975, Ashbery's collection *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* won the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and the National Book Critics Circle Award—the only book to have won all three. The eponymous poem, titled after a painting of the same name by the Italian Renaissance painter Parmigianino, contends with themes of identity, self-perception, and representation. This 1984 edition by Arion Press includes a recording of Ashbery reading the poem on the radio in 1975. Matching the circular shape of the record, the poem is printed on round sheets, with each line radiating from the center. The text is interspersed with prints by Ashbery's artist friends, including the hand-colored etching by Larry Rivers seen here.

Top:

**John Ashbery**

**b. 1927, Rochester, New York; d. 2017, Hudson, New York**

**“Amid Mounting Evidence”**

**Typescript with autograph corrections, December 2, 1986**

**Gift of John Ashbery, 1986; MA 4391**

Ashbery gave this annotated typescript of “Amid Mounting Evidence” to the Morgan after reading the poem here on December 2, 1986. The following year he would publish the poem in *Poetry* magazine and his collection *April Galleons*. Weaving together seemingly disparate themes and images—from radiation theory, to moths eating blankets, to Roman candles exploding at night—Ashbery reflects on evolution, change, and the passage of time.

Bottom left:

**John Ashbery**

**b. 1927, Rochester, New York; d. 2017, Hudson, New York**

***Fragment***

**Illustrated by Alex Katz (b. 1927)**

**Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1969**

**The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature;**

**PML 184019**

When Alex Katz entered the New York art scene in the early 1950s, poetry had taken a markedly nontraditional turn. Much like the visual artists of the same period, poets eschewed conventional structures, instead opting for a dynamic, open-ended style. Ashbery's *Fragment* is one of his longer poems, spanning five hundred lines and broken up into fifty ten-line stanzas. In addition to illustrating *Fragment*, Katz also produced images for Ashbery's book *Coma Berenices* in 2005.

Bottom center and bottom right:

**John Ashbery**

**b. 1927, Rochester, New York; d. 2017, Hudson, New York**

***Some Trees***

**New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956**

**PML 198985**

***Turandot and Other Poems***

**Illustrated by Jane Freilicher (1924–2014)**

**New York: Editions of the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, ca. 1953**

**The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature,**

**PML 184022**

Ashbery's first book, *Turandot and Other Poems*, was just twenty-three pages. *Some Trees*, originally titled *Poems*, marked his first full-length collection, published after it won the Yale Series of Younger Poets prize in 1955. British poet W. H. Auden, who was the competition's judge, had originally rejected it for being "under length" but later reversed his decision. Containing poems such as the "The Painter" and the titular "Some Trees," the book grapples with topics such as personal relationships and the creative act. In 1975 Ashbery inscribed this copy to artist R. B. Kitaj, whose portrait of Ashbery can be seen on the back wall of this gallery.

Far right:

**John Ashbery**

**b. 1927, Rochester, New York; d. 2017, Hudson, New York**

***The Poems***

**Screenprints by Joan Mitchell (1925–1992)**

**New York: Tiber Press, 1960**

**Gift of Family of Carter Burden; PML 182570**

Ashbery likely first met the artist Joan Mitchell in New York through fellow writer Frank O'Hara, with whom she developed a friendship in 1952. During the creation of *The Poems*, both Ashbery and Mitchell were living in Paris, where the two grew closer. In the book, Ashbery's spontaneous, unorthodox approach to poetry finds a natural companion in Mitchell's expressive mark-making. Her loose, textured lines of color seem to match the fragmentary cadence of his language. *The Poems* belongs to a four-volume series of collaborations between artists and poets published by Tiber Press in 1960.