

Come Together
*3,000 Years of Stories
and Storytelling*

JANUARY 30 TO MAY 3, 2026

LARGE PRINT LABELS

The
Morgan
Library &
Museum

Cy Twombly (1928–2011)

***Untitled II*, 1967–74 (dated 1967)**

Etching and aquatint

The Museum of Modern Art, New York; 277.1974

NARRATIVE POSSIBILITIES

Looping lines suggest the written word and narrative possibilities in this exceptional print by American artist Cy Twombly. The unpredictable spread of the acid across the etching plate enhanced the flow of his hand-drawn, calligraphic coils. Twombly adopted a similar gestural approach for a series of “blackboard” paintings and drawings made around the same time, which likewise employ graphic marks that mimic text. In 1957 Twombly moved to Rome, with its evocative ruins and antiquities, which only heightened his interest in storytelling. References to classical literature, epic poetry, and mythology abound in his work.

Richard Artschwager (1923–2013)

***Book*, 1987**

Formica on wood

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; 2024.67

NARRATIVE POSSIBILITIES

Giving tangible form to the idea of story, Richard Artschwager's *Book*, with its seductively shiny surface, draws us in. Splayed open in invitation, its blank pages evoke the tabula rasa, the potential of stories yet to be told. Alternatively, the sculpture can be viewed as a repository of memory: a mute object that nonetheless suggests every story ever recounted. The piece is one of several identical "books" produced by the artist, who often released sculptures in multiples. In this case, the serial nature of the object simulates the publishing process.

Pen case with reed pen

**Egypt, oasis near the village of al-Hamuli, southern Faiyum,
ninth century AD**

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1911; Coptic Writing Box 3

NARRATIVE POSSIBILITIES

Never before displayed, this thousand-year-old pen case was concealed in a well in the Egyptian desert alongside a large cache of manuscripts. Complete with a lead inkwell and reed pen, it bears a remarkable resemblance to writing tools still in use today.

The pen would have been wielded by the monks of the Monastery of the Archangel Michael, whose lives were shaped by sacred narratives. Two other pen cases, also dating to the ninth century AD, were found in the same cistern. Why these items and the manuscripts were deposited there remains unknown; they are the sole evidence of this lost community.

Edward S. Curtis (1868–1952)

***The North American Indian: Being a Series of
Volumes Picturing and Describing the Indians of the
United States, the Dominion of Canada, and Alaska***

Cambridge, MA: The University Press, 1907–30

**Acquired by J. Pierpont Morgan and J. P. Morgan Jr.,
1907–30**

IDENTITY AND ANCESTORS

This 1914 photogravure of masked dancers is from *The North American Indian* by Edward S. Curtis, a twenty-volume book project based on fieldwork funded by J. Pierpont Morgan and his son. George Hunt (1854–1933) was crucial to Curtis's enterprise. The son of an Englishman and Tlingit noblewoman from Alaska, Hunt was born among the Kwakwaka'wakw of Fort Rupert, British Columbia, and married into the community.

A seasoned ethnologist, Hunt was ideally placed to assist Curtis, having served for decades as collaborator and coauthor of anthropologist Franz Boas (1858–1942), professor at Columbia University and curator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The nearby Raven mask is one of hundreds of objects Hunt collected for Boas, systematically documenting their uses, familial affiliations, and stories.



George and Francine Hunt, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, 1930.
Photo: J. B. Scott. American Museum of Natural History, New
York, 328734.

Edward S. Curtis (1868–1952)

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IDENTITY AND ANCESTORS

These dancers from Edward S. Curtis's *The North American Indian* embody the supernatural bird-servants of the Man-Eater-at-the-North-End-of-the-World: Raven (Gwaxgwakwalanuksiwe') on the left and Huxwhukw of Heaven on the right. Shredded cedar bark embellishes the masks and conceals the bodies of the dancers, who would have manipulated the beaks by pulling hidden strings.

The masks were made as props for Curtis's 1914 film *In the Land of the Head Hunters*, a fictional story of love and war shot in and around Fort Rupert, British Columbia. The production relied entirely on the ingenuity and expertise of the local Kwakwaka'wakw community, who formed the cast and crew. George Hunt, Curtis's principal collaborator, scouted locations, commissioned and carved props, and served as assistant director; his wife, Francine Hunt, acted in the film and made regalia.

Attributed to Bob Harris (ca. 1870–1930)

Raven mask

Wood and cloth

Collected in 1901 by George Hunt in Fort Rupert, British Columbia, Canada

American Museum of Natural History, New York; 16/8533

IDENTITY AND ANCESTORS

Attributed to Xi'xa'niyus (Bob Harris), this Kwakwaka'wakw mask would have been worn during the Hamat'sa (Cannibal Dance), a prestigious initiation ritual that forms part of the Winter Ceremonies held in the Big House. The mask embodies the supernatural Raven, Gwaxgwakwalanuksiwe', one of the bird-servants of the Man-Eater-at-the-North-End-of-the-World. Clapping their hinged beaks and uttering distinctive calls, the birds emerge after the initiate has circled the central fire. Possessed by the Man-Eater's spirit, the initiate first appears frenzied but, as the ceremony progresses, is restored to calm. Harris was a highly regarded chief, master carver, singer, and dancer, and an initiated Hamat'sa who had undergone this ritual.



Bob and Mary Harris, Alert Bay, Cormorant Island, British Columbia, 1913. Photo: Possibly Rev. Corker. Royal British Columbia Museum, PN2566.

Edward S. Curtis (1868–1952)

In the Land of the Head Hunters, 1914

Courtesy of Milestone Films and Kino Lorber

Barb Cranmer (1960–2019)

Potlatch: To Give, 2011

Moving Images Distribution

IDENTITY AND ANCESTORS

“Hutłilaxda’xwla yaxs laxdamułasan’s k’walsk’wal’yakw’wala
yaxwa ka’e Edward Curtis ka sabadzewgile’s.”

“Listen, everybody, about the time our old people danced for
Edward Curtis so that he could make a film.”

—Chief William T. Cranmer

Edward S. Curtis’s *In the Land of the Head Hunters* was the first
feature-length motion picture with an all-Indigenous cast.

George Hunt helped Curtis direct the melodrama, advising on
all aspects of Kwakwaka’wakw life and traditions, and Hunt’s on
Stanley starred as the romantic lead. The film premiered
simultaneously in Seattle and New York in December 1914, the
same year the Canadian government imposed further bans

restricting First Nations from dancing and wearing ceremonial regalia. Here, Curtis's footage is interspersed with clips showing Kwakwaka'wakw dancers from the 2011 film *Potlatch: To Give* by Barb Cranmer, a descendant of George Hunt and granddaughter of Chief Dan Cranmer, who famously defied the federal Potlatch Prohibition.

**Tablet inscribed in Akkadian with a fragment of the
Epic of Atrahasis Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq),
First Dynasty of Babylon, Reign of King Ammi-saduqa
(ca. 1646–1626 BC)**

Clay

**Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan between 1898 and 1908;
MLC 1889**

BELIEF AND BELONGING: ORIGIN STORIES

The oldest story represented in this exhibition in material form is a fragment of the *Epic of Atrahasis*. The cuneiform tablet bears an inscription stating that it was copied in the Babylonian city of Sippar, around 3,500 years ago, by the junior scribe Azag-Aya. Pressing a reed into the wet clay, he recorded the story of how humans were created, multiplied, and grew so noisy they kept the gods awake at night. Enraged by the din, the god of wind and storms, Enlil, sent a great flood to destroy them. However, the god of water and wisdom, Enki, advised Atrahasis to build boat—saving himself, his wife, and pairs of animals. This is the earliest known version of the Deluge story in Akkadian, a source for the story of Noah’s Flood recounted in Genesis.

Vincent Smith (1929–2003)

***How Man and Woman Were Made*, 1975**

Illustration for *Stories from Africa* (1975) by

Marguerite Dolch

Watercolor and gouache

**Purchased on the Fellows Fund and the Drue Heinz Fund,
and gift of Mary Jo and Sheldon Weinig; 2022.204:1**

BELIEF AND BELONGING: ORIGIN STORIES

In the beginning there were only two beings, Moon and Toad, each intent on creating humans in their own image. Puffed with pride, Toad fashioned a crude pair, but Moon reshaped and nurtured them, naming the couple Hanna and Bateta. Moon could not, however, gift them with immortality because they had been created by the mortal Toad. Beams streaming from Moon alight on the couple as shown in Vincent Smith's exuberant illustration for a children's book on African folklore.

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)

Adam and Eve

Engraving, dated 1504 on plate

Drawing in pen and brown ink and wash, 1504

ENGRAVING: Purchased as the gift of Eugene V. Thaw, S. Parker Gilbert, Rodney B. Berens, Mrs. Oscar de la Renta, Elaine Rosenberg, T. Kimball Brooker, George L. K.

Frelinghuysen, and on the Ryskamp Fund, the Edwin H.

Herzog Fund, and the Lois and Walter C. Baker Fund; 2006.80

DRAWING: GIFT of J. P. MORGAN JR., 1924; I, 257D

BELIEF AND BELONGING: ORIGIN STORIES

According to the book of Genesis, Eden—a serene and perfect garden—was home to Adam and Eve, who lived in harmony with all living creatures before they disobeyed God and were evicted. This engraving by Albrecht Dürer shows the couple about to defy their Creator, capturing the pivotal moment before their banishment. Dürer's Eden is a craggy forest with an ibex poised on a cliff, and Adam and Eve are classically proportioned nudes.

In his preparatory drawing for the print, he sketched the figures on separate sheets of paper, enabling him to adjust the distance between them before joining the pair. Each holds the apple that precipitated their downfall—another compositional element with which he experimented.

Crossing the Red Sea

Leaf from “The Morgan Picture Bible”

France, Paris, ca. 1244–54

Purchased by J. P. Morgan Jr., 1916; MS M.638, fol. 9r

BELIEF AND BELONGING: ORIGIN STORIES

This thirteenth-century Parisian painting depicts the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt. At the top, the Red Sea miraculously parts and they reach the opposite shore, but when Moses strikes the sea, the waves drown Pharaoh's army. Originally unaccompanied by text, the later additions of Latin, Persian, and Judeo-Persian inscriptions reveal the story's resonance across cultures and faiths. In America, enslaved people, longing for their own emancipation, sang of the walls of water that engulfed Pharaoh's army, transforming the ancient tale into a song of resistance, courage, and hope.

Labor in Egypt and ritual foods

The Rose Haggadah

Illuminated by Barbara Wolff with Hebrew script

by Izzy Pludwinski and English script by Karen Gorst

New York and Jerusalem, 2011–13

Gift of Joanna S. Rose, 2014; MS M.1191, pp. 9, 16

BELIEF AND BELONGING: ORAL TRADITIONS

This parchment sheet was illuminated by Barbara Wolff in preparation for the printed Haggadah displayed below. In the printed copy, these two pages are not contiguous. On the right, Egyptians impose “heavy labor” upon the Israelites; at top left is the matzah.

Underscoring the continuous telling of the Passover story, Wolff superimposed her ritually broken matzah (*yachatz*) on an ornate and richly colored rendering of the unleavened bread depicted in an outstanding Haggadah made in Catalonia seven hundred years earlier. Strikingly, the medieval matzah’s geometric pattern recalls the ornamental brass grille of the seder set. Traditionally at the Passover seder, the youngest child asks, “Why is this night different from all other nights?”—a question that ensures the retelling of the Exodus from generation to generation as commanded in the Torah.



Matzah depicted in the Golden Haggadah. Sephardi, Catalonia, 1320. British Library, London; MS 27210, fol. 44v.

Tiered seder set

Eastern Galicia or western Ukraine, eighteenth–nineteenth century

Brass, wood, ink on paper, and textiles

Jewish Museum, New York, gift of the Danzig Jewish community; D115

BELIEF AND BELONGING: ORAL TRADITIONS

In July 1939, shortly before the Nazi invasion of Poland, Jewish community leaders of Danzig (now Gdańsk) sent this object and more than three hundred others to New York for safekeeping. Designed for the annual Passover meal (seder), which commemorates the Israelites' escape from Egypt, this container experienced its own exodus. The base conceals wooden trays for pieces of matzah (unleavened bread), while the top holds five small bowls for ritual foods and a brass crown for the wine cup of the prophet Elijah, herald of the Messiah. Pairs of lions support plaques inscribed with Hebrew blessings from the Haggadah, the service book read aloud at the celebratory feast.



Each guest at this seder has their own Haggadah bound in red. William Kurelek (1927–1977), *Doctor's Family Celebrating Passover in Halifax*, 1975. Mixed media on board. McMichael Canadian Art Collection. © Estate of William Kurelek, courtesy of the Wynick/Tuck Gallery, Toronto. Photo: Michael Cullen, Dunnville, Ontario.

Bitter herbs and matzah

The Rose Haggadah

New York: SugarHill Works, [2014]

Gift of Joanna S. Rose, 2018; PML 197762

BELIEF AND BELONGING: ORAL TRADITIONS

The Haggadah (“telling” in Hebrew) is read aloud at the Passover seder, a festive meal commemorating the Israelites’ escape from Egypt. Each symbolic food evokes an aspect of the story: Sprigs of parsley, shown in the right margin, are dipped in salt water to recall the bitterness of slavery, while the matzah (unleavened bread) at the top of the opposite page signifies the Israelites’ hurried flight—there was no time for dough to rise.

**Praenestine cista with cover Italy, Palestrina
(ancient Praeneste), about thirty-five kilometers
east of Rome, ca. 200 BC**

Bronze

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1907; AZ046a–b

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

Ancient myths are not only preserved in memory and the written word but also in the form of objects. This cylindrical container, used by women to store cosmetics and other grooming aids, is engraved with subjects from Greek mythology. Among the figures are a woman or goddess clutching a bird, armed men tending horses, and Silenus, the god of wine, brandishing an empty cup as he accosts a maiden. Winged beings crouch on each of the solid cast bronze feet, while a nimble female acrobat, serving as the vessel's handle, does a backflip on the lid.

Jim Dine (b. 1935)

Glyptotek Drawing 13, 1987–88

**Lithographic crayon, enamel paint, and india ink
on plastic sheet**

Promised gift of the artist

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

Across cultures, stories have often been conveyed through architecture and monumental art. The wounded soldier depicted here comes from the west pediment of the Greek Temple of Aphaia in Aegina (ca. 485–480 BC), originally part of a sculptural tableau depicting a battle between Greeks and Trojans. Figures from the temple's frieze, now housed in Munich's Glyptothek Museum, inspired Jim Dine to create a series of graphic works, including this one, that capture their mystery, power, and pathos.

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669)

Jupiter and Antiope, the Larger Plate, 1659

Etching with drypoint

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1905; RvR 289

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

One of the very few erotic etchings made by Rembrandt, this cropped composition creates a sense of intimacy and immediacy. The Roman god Jupiter, disguised as a satyr, gently lifts the sheet from the slumbering Antiope, revealing the nymph's sensuous body—a prelude to their coupling, which produces twin sons. The episode is listed among the many conquests of Jupiter in Ovid's first-century AD epic poem *Metamorphoses*, one of classical mythology's foremost sources. Created in the last decade of the artist's life, this print was Rembrandt's final mythological subject. Some scholars have proposed that he lent the satyr his own features.

George Platt Lynes (1907–1955)

***Birth of Dionysus*, ca. 1945**

Gelatin silver print

Purchased on the Photography Collectors Committee

Fund; 2019.75

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

In one version of the Greek myth, Dionysus—son of the god Zeus and a mortal woman—is rescued from his dying mother’s womb and reborn from the thigh of his father. This episode is depicted on a vessel dating from the fourth century BC, which shows the god looking entirely at ease as the newborn is extracted from a sizable hole in his flesh. Far more startling is the rendition by American photographer George Platt Lynes, who was influenced by the French Surrealists. Merging two negatives and airbrushing the seams, Lynes expertly captured the play of light on the torso of his twentieth-century Zeus.



The Birth of Dionysus, Apulian red-figure volute krater, fourth century BC (detail). National Archaeological Museum of Taranto. Photo: © Raffaello Bencini/Bridgeman Images.

Homer

The Iliad

Papyrus fragment, fourth century AD

**Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1911; Greek Papyrus
202.43**

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

Composed in verse and rooted in oral tradition, Homer's *Iliad* was probably codified around 700 BC. Set in a much earlier time, when gods routinely mingled with mortals and heroes juggled boulders with ease, the epic is characterized by combat and dissent. The Greeks not only wage war on Troy but also quarrel bitterly among themselves. Though steeped in blood, the epic stresses the value of human life. As the academic Barbara Graziosi observes, there is no "unknown soldier" in Homer: "Each has a name, a family, and a specific life that has been cut short." This page from a papyrus copy containing books 11–16 shows multiple scribal errors, suggesting that it was hastily produced for the commercial market.

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Perséphone

Cover illustration by Théodore Stravinsky (1907–1989)

Paris: Édition Russe de Musique; Berlin: Russischer Musikverlag, [ca. 1934]

Mary Flagler Cary Music Collection, gift of Robert Owen Lehman, 1983; PMC 1699

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

Abducted by Hades and dragged to the underworld, Persephone was mourned by her mother, Demeter, goddess of harvests and fertility, who searched for her ceaselessly, neglecting the crops and causing them to die. Humanity would have starved had not the gods intervened. They arranged for Persephone to spend part of the year below ground with Hades and the rest of the year with her mother above. The myth thus explained the seasonal cycle: The barren winter months represented Persephone's shadowy sojourn underground, while spring and summer marked her return to the fertile earth. Igor Stravinsky's ballet *Perséphone*—an avant-garde interpretation of this etiological narrative—is represented here by its printed sheet music.

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Perséphone

Autograph manuscript, ca. 1934

Mary Flagler Cary Music Collection, gift of Robert Owen Lehman, 1983; Cary 516, pp. 4–5.

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

Igor Stravinsky's *Perséphone* unites spoken word and music. The libretto, by André Gide, reimagines the seventh-century BC *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, though the ballet's concept originated with the Russian dancer and impresario Ida Rubinstein. Her company staged the première at the Paris Opéra in 1934, and she played the title role. However, when the ballet toured South America in 1936, Argentine writer and intellectual Victoria Ocampo performed the part. In gratitude, Stravinsky gave her this autograph manuscript, which bears a dedication praising her “unforgettable” recitals.



Igor Stravinsky and his son Soulima with Victoria Ocampo, Beccar, Argentina, 1936.

Bethany Collins (b. 1984)

The Odyssey: 1961/1967, 2021

Graphite and fixative toner

Gift of the Modern and Contemporary Collectors

Committee, 2021; 2021.59

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

“Tell me, Muse, of the man of many turns, who was driven far and wide, after he had sacked the sacred city of Troy.” So begins Homer’s *Odyssey*, which explains how the hero, Odysseus, strives to return to his home, Ithaca—a ten-year journey that involves encounters with a one-eyed giant, an enchantress, and a passionate nymph.

These oversize pages replicate two different English translations of the epic poem. Select passages were copied by the artist, Bethany Collins, who then erased all but the lines describing Odysseus despairing for Ithaca, unaware that he has washed up on its shores.

Bahram Gur Kills a Dragon

Nizāmī Ganjavī (ca. 1141–1209)

***Khamsa* (Quintet), in Persian**

Iran, probably Shiraz, 1585

Bequest of Belle da Costa Greene, 1950; MS M.847.1 verso

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

This image illustrates the opening scene from the *Haft Paykar* (Seven Beauties), one of five tales from Nizāmī Ganjavī *Khamsa* (Quintet), among the most celebrated compilations of epic poetry in the Persian-speaking world. Unlike the heroes of the Homeric epics, the figure of Bahram Gur—shown here slaying a dragon—is indisputably based on a historical figure, a Sasanian king (r. 430–38 AD) famed as both a great lover and hunter. After killing the beast, Bahram Gur seized the treasures it had been guarding.

Gustave Doré (1832–1883)

Don Quixote Musing Against a Rock with Sancho Embracing His Donkey and Sancho Strewing Boughs, ca. 1870

Pen and brown ink over black chalk

Gift of Norman H. Strouse; 1975.21:4–6

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

Gustave Doré's large drawing shows a weary Don Quixote and his battered sidekick, Sancho, after having been trounced by a young man, Cardenio, whom they had met by chance. Cardenio had told them of his beloved Luscinda and her fondness for a certain book of chivalry—music to Don Quixote's ears. But when Cardenio asserted that the queen in the tale had an affair with her physician, Don Quixote was provoked to defend the monarch's honor. In the ensuing brawl he was flattened by a rock, and Sancho was knocked senseless.

Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827)

***Don Quixote and Sancho Refreshing Themselves
in the Blue Mountains***

Pen and red ink and gray wash

Removed from an extra-illustrated copy of

***Don Quixote de la Mancha* (PML 4039–47)**

1975.17:66

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

This drawing by Thomas Rowlandson shows Don Quixote and Sancho pausing for a much-needed break. As Sancho squats down to evacuate his bowels, Don Quixote relieves his bladder, turning his back on the viewer for privacy. Their steeds follow suit. The bawdy humor is in keeping with Rowlandson's satirical works and with English translations of the novel that tended to play up its ribald elements.

Lancelot du Lac

**Northeastern France, perhaps Saint-Quentin or
Laon, ca. 1310–15**

**Illuminated by the Master of Sainte Benoîte,
with Reims 217 Master**

**Purchased on the Lewis Cass Ledyard Fund, 1938;
MS M.805, fols. 38v–39r**

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

Medieval accounts of King Arthur and his knights merge magic, mythology, romance, and religion. This manuscript recounts the exploits of Lancelot. Painted by a single artist, the miniatures depict scenes of valor and his affair with Guinevere, Arthur's queen. These images show Lancelot unhorsing the wicked Brandin and departing with the wounded lord slung over his horse. Having previously captured Brandin's cursed castle, La Douloureuse Garde (Woeful Fortress), Lancelot puts an end to its evil enchantments.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616)

El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha

Madrid: Joaquin Ibarra, 1780

**Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Toovey Collection,
1899; PML 2145**

BELIEF AND BELONGING: MYTHS, EPICS, LEGENDS

Considered by many the first modern European novel, Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605) is a triumphant parody of chivalric romance. As explained in the opening chapter, the protagonist, Alonso Quijano, obsessed with tales of ancient knights and heroes, reads so many stories of “enchantments, quarrels, battles, . . . loves, tempests, and other impossible follies” that he loses his mind. Unable to distinguish fantasy from reality, he becomes a knight-errant under the name Don Quixote de la Mancha and sets off on multiple adventures. These are plotted on the map in this deluxe edition of the work commissioned by the Royal Spanish Academy. In addition to the map, the first to chart Quixote's itinerary, it includes lavish engravings and a biography of Cervantes.

Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850)

Eugénie Grandet

Autograph manuscript and typescript with revisions, 1833

Purchased, 1925; MA 1036

SHAPING STORIES: BACKSTORY

Excised lines, notes, additions, and tortuous revisions mark the pages of this working copy of *Eugénie Grandet*, one of Honoré de Balzac's ninety-one interconnected works known collectively as *The Human Comedy* (1829–48). To the frustration of his printers, he made last-minute changes to nearly every paragraph, often shifting whole chapters just before his books went to press. Sustained by countless cups of coffee, Balzac habitually worked through the night, perfecting his prose.

James Joyce (1882–1941)

Ulysses

Single leaf of manuscript, 1921

**Gift of Rowland Burdon-Muller in memory of Belle da Costa
Greene, 1950; MA 7148, verso**

SHAPING STORIES: PUBLISHERS

This draft in James Joyce's hand is a passage of his novel *Ulysses*. Set in Dublin over the course of a single day, the work takes its structure from Homer's *Odyssey*. Four women were crucial to its publication: Harriet Shaw Weaver financed Joyce's writing; Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap serialized portions in *The Little Review*; and Sylvia Beach published the first edition privately in Paris after the book was banned for obscenity in the United States. All three publishers who formed Joyce's unique network of literary support were openly gay, as was Janet Flanner, a foreign correspondent for *The New Yorker* to whom Beach gave this page, tucked into a copy of the newly printed book.



Sylvia Beach and James Joyce at Beach's bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, Paris, 1922. Photo: Courtesy of the UB James Joyce Collection of the Poetry Collection, University Libraries, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.

Jean de Brunhoff (1899–1937)

Histoire de Babar, le petit éléphant, 1931

Dummy for pp. 14–15

MA 6304.10.09 (verso) and 6304.10.10 (recto)

SHAPING STORIES: BACKSTORY

These drawings are among the earliest depictions of Jean de Brunhoff’s beloved elephant, Babar, who originated in bedtime stories told by his wife, Cécile, to their sons. The double-page illustration shows Babar creating his signature look. The text, which begins, “Then he buys . . .” (ALORS IL S’ACHETE . . .), lists his purchases, paid for by his benefactor, the “old lady” (*vieille dame*) who offers him material and emotional support. For the first time ever he dons his distinctive green suit, bowler hat, and shoes. As he models his elegant clothes, the orphaned elephant—forced to flee the great forest and seek refuge in the city—accommodates himself to his new reality.

Jean de Brunhoff (1899–1937)

Histoire de Babar, le petit éléphant, 1931

Study for text and illustrations

Color study for the character of Babar

MA 6304.4.01 and 6304.8.4

SHAPING STORIES: BACKSTORY

This vigorous graphite sketch reveals Jean de Brunhoff's working methods. Still new to the concept of clothing, Babar wrestles with his suit jacket, struggling valiantly to put it on—an endearing and believable detail. The jacket's color is not disclosed in the captions, but in the double-page illustration it is referred to and depicted as “a becoming shade of green.”

Created with feathery strokes of the brush, the small painting at right is among Brunhoff's most playful. Here, Babar appears in mid-stride, perhaps testing his new shoes for the first time. When he ultimately returns to the great forest, he is proclaimed king of the elephants and marries his beloved Celeste, exchanging his bowler hat for a crown.

Odilon Redon (1840–1916)

Bottom Gazing at His Reflection, 1881

Charcoal

Thaw Collection; 2017.203

SHAPING STORIES: POINTS OF VIEW

French Symbolist Odilon Redon drew inspiration from literature, including William Shakespeare's plays, and created ambiguous and dreamlike images in response. His works in charcoal and lithography are known as his *noirs*; the softness of the medium adds to the allusive nature of the drawing. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Puck famously turns the comic fool Bottom's head into that of an ass. Although the audience witnesses this transformation, Bottom himself remains unaware of the metamorphosis. Redon depicts Bottom on a riverbank gazing at his reflection in the water's surface, amazed to find that he bears the head of a beast.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies

London: printed by Isaac Iaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1896; PML 5122

SHAPING STORIES: POINTS OF VIEW

The first collected edition of William Shakespeare's plays opens with his portrait and a dedicatory poem by Ben Jonson, who laments the engraver's failure to capture Shakespeare's wit; to experience that, he says, we must "looke" on "his Booke."

In his comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare presents a play within a play performed by craftsmen, including Bottom. To ensure the fictive violence will not cause alarm, Bottom suggests that he and his fellow actors step out of character and address the audience: "Let a prologue seem to say we will do no harm with our swords and . . . tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver." Characteristically, Shakespeare blurs the boundaries between art and life.

Geoffrey Chaucer (d. 1400)

The Canterbury Tales

Westminster: William Caxton, ca. 1483

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Bennett Collection, 1902; PML 693

SHAPING STORIES: POINTS OF VIEW

In *The Canterbury Tales*, pilgrims traveling from London to Canterbury compete in a storytelling contest. Pictured here, Alison, the Wife of Bath, is Chaucer's most famous raconteur. She fingers her rosary, having already visited the most prestigious shrines. "She knew much wandering by the way," the poet suggestively observes, alluding to less pious activities she may have enjoyed on her travels. Chaucer portrays her as a libidinous, loquacious, vain, and manipulative woman, but these stereotypes are subverted by Alison herself. She argues that women would be described quite differently if only they controlled the narrative.

After Albert Letchford (1866–1905)

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp

Illustration to *The Arabian Nights* by

Sir R. F. Burton (1821–1890)

London: H. S. Nichols, ca. 1897

PML 18952

SHAPING STORIES: TRANSLATORS AND COMPILERS

The Thousand and One Nights (also known as *The Arabian Nights*) exemplifies the story-within-a-story genre. Every night, for 1,001 nights, the incomparable raconteur, Shahrazad, tells stories to Sultan Shahryar that keep him wanting more. The Arabic tales reached Western Europe via Antoine Galland, whose French translation was published between 1704–17. The most illustrious tales, including “Ali Baba” and “Aladdin” have no surviving Arabic source; their earliest appearance is in Galland. Scholars once doubted their authenticity, but we now know their origin. In 1709 Hanna Diyab, a nineteen-year-old Syrian Christian, journeyed to Paris. He was presented to King Louis XIV and met Galland, who was eager to hear his stories and included several in *The Nights*.

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)

Mrs. Dalloway

London: published by Leonard & Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1925

Bequest, Gordon N. Ray, 1987; PML 136395

SHAPING STORIES: POINTS OF VIEW

May 14, 2025, marked the centennial of the publication of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, a novel as invigorating and sharp today as when it was first released. From its opening pages, we are swept into the “bellow and the uproar” of the city Clarissa Dalloway loves—London—on a single day in June. Exposing the minds of her characters, Woolf reveals their memories, regrets, desires, faults, and frailties. As in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the stream of consciousness has many tributaries that ebb and flow like the great city itself.

Left:

John Tenniel (1820–1914)

The White Rabbit, 1864–65, and Alice Grown Tall, 1860s

Graphite with pen and brown ink

Gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Gale; 1982.11:1–2

Right:

John Tenniel (1820–1914)

White Rabbit and How Alice Grew Tall

Hand-colored proofs

Gifts of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1987; 2005.191–92

SHAPING STORIES: AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS

“What is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?” Alice asks at the beginning of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. The original manuscript, made by Lewis Carroll for Alice Liddell in 1864, contained thirty-seven ink drawings by the author. For the 1865 print edition, Carroll enlisted the established illustrator John Tenniel but did not grant him free rein; Carroll expected Tenniel’s characters and settings to conform to his own vision. “Lewis Carroll is impossible,” Tenniel confided to his friend and fellow illustrator Harry Furniss, and he refused to illustrate the sequel when initially asked.

Lewis Carroll (1832–1898)

**Letter signed C. L. Dodgson to Harry Furniss (1854–1925),
September 23, 1889**

Gift of John Hay Whitney, 1971; MA 2878.40

SHAPING STORIES: AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS

Lewis Carroll issued comprehensive instructions to his illustrators. Sent to Harry Furniss, this letter concerns illustrations for *Sylvie and Bruno*. Carroll wants the book published by Christmas, but notes that “the case looks *almost* hopeless,” because seven chapters await pictures. Undeterred, he lists subjects for these illustrations and asks if Furniss can complete the work within weeks. The first subject on Carroll’s list, accompanied by a sketch, is: “Albatross fluttering round lamp & turning into postage stamp.” “I’m aware it’s an almost *impossible* subject!” he concedes, “but don’t you think there is a certain zest in trying impossibilities?”

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778)

Julie, ou La nouvelle Héloïse. Lettres de deux amans, habitans d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes

Autograph manuscript, undated [1759]

Gift of the Heineman Foundation, 1977; MA 6711

SHAPING STORIES: AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS

Julie, or the New Héloïse was the most celebrated of Jean Jacques Rousseau's works during his lifetime and the best-selling novel of the eighteenth century. The book follows the correspondence between the innocent aristocrat, Julie d'Étange, and her tutor, Saint-Preux. Rousseau modeled his heroine on Héloïse d'Argenteuil, whose twelfth-century letters to her lover and mentor, Peter Abélard, had captivated the French public. Rousseau prepared this clean final draft for his Amsterdam printer, Marc-Michel Rey, who used it to typeset the first edition.

Jean Michel Moreau, known as Moreau le Jeune (1741–1814)
Suite of plates for *Collection complète des oeuvres de*
J. J. Rousseau*, including *Julie, ou La nouvelle Héloïse
London [i.e. Brussels]: J. L. De Boubers, 1774–83
Bequest, Gordon N. Ray; PML 140140

SHAPING STORIES: AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS

More than seventy editions of Jean Jacques Rousseau's epistolary novel were issued between 1761 and 1800, and the work was frequently illustrated. In this engraving by Moreau le Jeune, Julie grants a first kiss to her lover. The episode was a favorite of the novel's illustrators, beginning with Hubert François Bourguignon (known as Gravelot), who received detailed instructions from Rousseau: "The scene's setting is a grove. Julie has just given her friend a kiss so full of pleasure that she falls into a kind of faint. . . . A rapture, a very lively transport of pleasure and alarm must reign in his gesture and on his face."

***Cinderella, or, The Little Glass Slipper; Beautifully Versified,
and Illustrated with Figures***

London: printed for S. and J. Fuller, 1819

Gift of Miss Julia P. Wightman; PML 87094

SHAPING STORIES: TRANSLATORS AND COMPILERS

Cinderella is a story of multiple transformations: A pumpkin becomes a coach, mice turn into horses, a rat into a coachman, and a mistreated girl into a princess. In 1697 Charles Perrault—the French “Father of Fairy Tales” and secretary to King Louis XIV’s powerful finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert—published his foundational collection, *Stories of Times Past*, drawing on traditional folktales. Written in an elegant and ironic style, Perrault’s stories appealed to an educated, largely female readership. Women writers, including Marie-Catherine d’Alnoy and Perrault’s niece Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier, also contributed to the genre.

Charles Perrault (1628–1703)

***Les contes de Perrault / dessins par Gustave Doré;
préface par P.-J. Stahl***

Paris: J. Hetzel, 1862

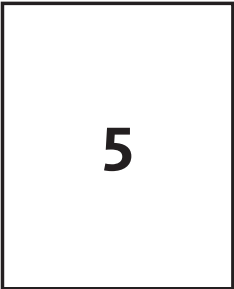
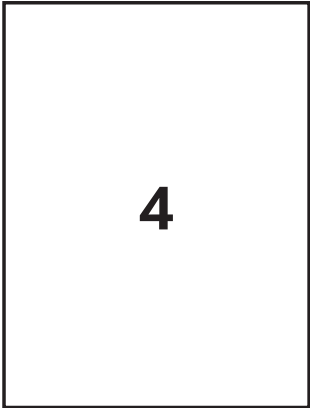
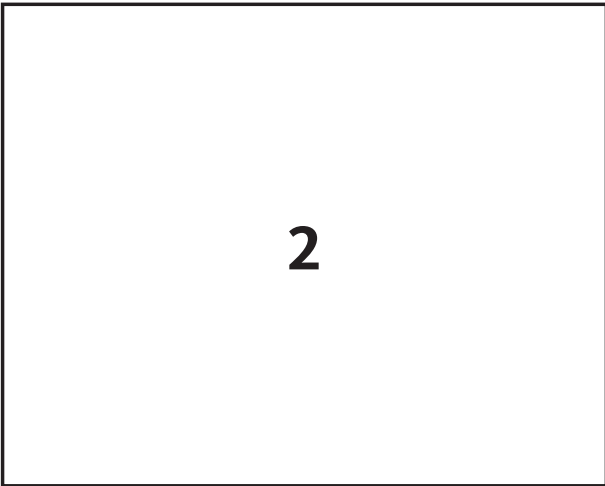
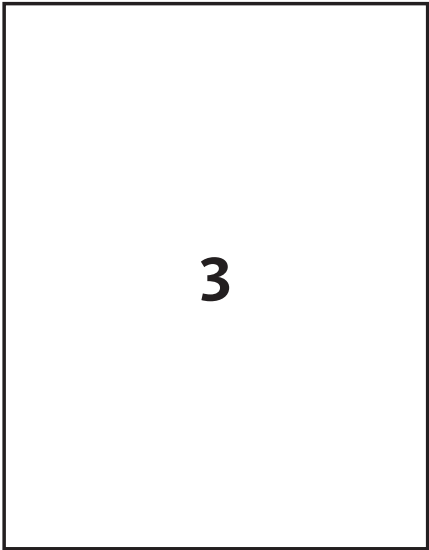
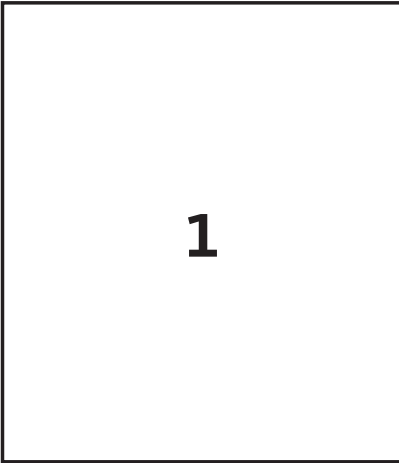
Gift of Elisabeth Ball; PML 46605

SHAPING STORIES: TRANSLATORS AND COMPILERS

Charles Perrault’s fairy tales achieved immediate and lasting success. In the nineteenth century illustrated editions proliferated, including that of Gustave Doré, whose engravings for “Little Red Riding Hood” are unsurpassed. The moral of the story—that young women should beware of predatory men (wolves)—reflects its adult female readership. But, apparently, some children also heard the tales. In the earliest extant copy, prepared in 1695 for nineteen-year-old Elisabeth Charlotte d’Orléans, niece of King Louis XIV, a note occurs at the exchange between Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf (“Grandmother, what big teeth you have!” / “All the better to eat you!”). Inscribed in the margins, it instructs the reader: “Say these words in a loud voice to scare the child, as if the wolf were going to eat them.”

* on prononce ces
mots d'une voix
forte pour faire
peur a l'enfant
comme si le loup
l'alloit manger.

Note inscribed in the margins of Charles Perrault, *Contes de ma mere l'Oye*. Manuscript in a scribal hand, 1695. Purchased as a gift of the Fellows, 1953; MA 1505, fol. 30, verso.



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- 1. George Condo (b. 1957)**
The Awakening, 2003
Gift of Anna Nikolayevsky; 2021.105
- 2. William Wetmore Story (1819–1895)**
Two Studies of Robert Browning Reading, 1869
Gift of Mrs. Herbert N. Straus; 1954.5
- 3. Gustave Clarence Rodolphe Boulanger (1824–1888)**
A Man Reading, undated
Bequest of John M. Thayer; 2005.15
- 4. Hans Thoma (1839–1924)**
Study of Adalberte Schroeter Reading, undated
Purchased on the Fellows Fund; 1985.10
- 5. Anonymous (Flemish School), eighteenth century**
A Man Reading a Book, undated
Purchased as the gift of the Fellows; 1964.12
- 6. Charles Fairfax Murray (1849–1919)**
Young Woman in Profile to the Left, Reading, undated
Purchased in 1961; 1961.21

- 7. Giovanni Battista Piazzetta (1682–1754)**
Portrait of a Man Reading, undated
Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1909; IV, 92
- 8. John Sloan (1871–1951)**
Reading in the Subway, 1926
Gift of Kraushaar Galleries, New York,
in Memory of Donald Oresman; 2016.19
- 9. James Gillray (1756–1815)**
Tales of Wonder!, 1802
Bequest of Gordon N. Ray, 1987; 1986.625
- 10. Marie Adélaïde Castellás Moitte (1747–1807)**
*Seated Man Reading Above Studies of
Four Hands*, undated
Gift of Charles Ryskamp in honor of
Gertrude Dennis; 2002.65
- 11. Honoré Daumier (1808–1879)**
Reading, ca. 1860
Thaw Collection; 2017.51

12. Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669)

***Woman Reading*, 1634**

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1905;

RvR 460

13. Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1783–1853)

***A Young Girl Reading a Book*, undated**

Bequest of Charles Ryskamp; 2010.37

PORTRAITS OF READERS

An elderly man leans forward, eager to catch every word of a book read aloud. Three women in a cozy parlor listen intently as a fourth recounts “Tales of Wonder.” Others, absorbed in their books, read silently. Spanning more than three hundred fifty years, these portraits capture the intimacy and pleasure of the page.

Studio K.O.S.

The Fire Next Time (after James Baldwin), 2022

Collage on panels

Purchased on the Edwin V. Erbe Fund, 2024; PML 199191–2

SHAPING STORIES: INSPIRATION

These collages were inspired by James Baldwin’s 1963 book *The Fire Next Time*, an unflinching critique of racism in America. Members of Studio K.O.S.—a multidisciplinary collective and offshoot of the 1980s after-school program in the Bronx run by artist Tim Rollins—read Baldwin’s words aloud as they worked. As Angel Abreu explained, “We conducted a series of seances of sorts in which MLK and Baldwin were conjured to collaborate with us.” Studio K.O.S. uses books to generate ideas and as primary material. Part of a series, these panels were made from a copy of *The Fire Next Time*, including the front cover featuring Baldwin’s portrait.

James Baldwin (1924–1987)

Transcript and cassette tapes, 1982–83

Interview published in *The Paris Review*, no. 91 (Spring 1984)

Purchased in 1999; MA 5040

SHAPING STORIES: INSPIRATION

These cassette tapes and typescript preserve James Baldwin's conversations with Jordan Elgrably and George Plimpton for *The Paris Review*. Long settled in France, Baldwin reflected on his youth, early years in Paris, and the writers who shaped him: "I read everything. I read my way out of the two libraries in Harlem by the time I was thirteen. One does learn a great deal about writing this way. . . . All I know is that you have to make the reader *see* it. This I learned from Dostoyevsky, from Balzac. I'm sure that my life in France would have been very different had I not met Balzac."

Toni Morrison (1931–2019)

Transcript with the author's corrections and additions, March 13, 1993

Interview published in *The Paris Review*, no. 128 (Fall 1993)

MA 5040

SHAPING STORIES: INSPIRATION

Toni Morrison and James Baldwin, who met in 1973, became close friends and allies. Writing to his biographer David Adams Leeming, he confided, “I dig Toni, and I trust her.” Speaking at Baldwin’s funeral, in 1987, Morrison addressed him directly: “You knew, didn’t you, how I needed your language and the mind that formed it? How I relied on your fierce courage to tame wildernesses for me?” Her 1993 acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature likewise centered on the power of language, as did her *Paris Review* interview published that same year, in which she advocated freeing language: “Tease it. Blast its racist straitjacket.”

Comic Book Foldees

Edited and with art direction by Woody Gelman (1915–1978)

Brooklyn: Topps Chewing Gum; National Periodical

Publications, 1966

Gift of Julia P. Wightman, 1991; PML 88424

SHAPING STORIES: STORIES BY CHILDREN

These bubblegum cards, part of a set of forty-four, could be purchased for five cents apiece. Each card features a DC hero or villain on the front and two other characters on the back, among them Charlie Chaplin and Mahatma Gandhi. Simply by folding one or both perforated flaps, gum-chewing kids could swap the figures' heads and/or bodies and create a new cast of characters. In the lift-the-flap book displayed alongside, the pictures align to tell a coherent story, but the cards surprise with their unlikely physiques and mismatches.

John Ruskin (1819–1900)

The Puppet Show: or, Amusing Characters for Children

Autograph manuscript, 1829

Bequest of Helen Gill Viljoen, 1974; MA 7783

SHAPING STORIES: STORIES BY CHILDREN

John Ruskin is famous for his works of art criticism, whose autograph copies are held by the Morgan. When he was ten years old, Ruskin made this book, which reflects his lifelong interest in tales of fantasy and adventure, including Grimm's fairy tales. A contemporary of the Brontë children, Ruskin, like them, created diminutive books modeled on published volumes. This book contains fifty-seven watercolors: twenty-nine "portraits" of the "amusing characters" at the head of each poem, with additional vignettes below. Many of them depict armed warriors, some resembling toy soldiers like Ruskin's own displayed nearby.

John Ruskin's toy soldiers, England, nineteenth century

13 of 27 painted lead figurines

AZ090

SHAPING STORIES: STORIES BY CHILDREN

These toy soldiers belonged to the young John Ruskin, who was captivated by tales of clashing knights. Figures such as Hector of Troy and King Henry V populate the book he wrote and illustrated as a child, which is displayed nearby. Miniature warriors also shaped the imaginative worlds of the Brontë siblings and featured prominently in popular fairy tales. Most famous of all is Hans Christian Andersen's "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," which tells of a one-legged protagonist who falls in love with a dancing ballerina: "One leg was lifted so high behind her that the tin soldier couldn't see it at all, and he supposed she must have only one leg, as he did. 'That would be a wife for me,' he thought."

Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855)

Arthuriana, or, Odds and Ends

Autograph manuscript, September 27–November 20, 1833

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1901; MA 29

SHAPING STORIES: STORIES BY CHILDREN

This page from a book made by Charlotte Brontë reflects the imaginative worlds invented in childhood by the young writer and her siblings, Branwell, Emily, and Anne. Branwell's toy soldiers inspired them to devise a play and tales of adventure starring their favorite combatants, including Arthur Wellesley, cited in Charlotte's title: *Arthuriana*. From the *The One Thousand and One Nights* they borrowed genii—figures to be identified with the all-powerful child authors—who could protect their protagonists. Many of Charlotte's earliest tales were inspired by the *Nights* and feature stories-within-stories and desert settings. In *Arthuriana*, for example, there is a reference to the magic carpet featured in "The Story of Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Perie Banou."

Beginning, Progress, and End of Man, 1698

Early lift-the-flap book

Gift of Julia P. Wightman; MA 4432

SHAPING STORIES: STORIES BY CHILDREN

This rare lift-the-flap book, dated 1698, was almost certainly made by a child. Its four sets of pictures, arranged side by side, transform as the flaps are raised and lowered: Adam becomes Eve, who turns into a mermaid; a lion turns into a griffin, which becomes a baby-snatching eagle; the infant, who escapes, becomes a miser whose inverted heart turns into a money bag. And finally, the rich man, old and ailing, is revealed as a skeleton. To ensure the story progresses, the accompanying verses direct the reader's actions.

Rama and Laksmana Search for Sita

Folio from a *Ramayana*

India, Rajasthan, Mewar School, ca. 1700–1720

Gift of Anna C. Walter, 1980; MS M.1024.4

PICTURE THIS: VISUAL NARRATIVES

In illustrations of Indian epics, different moments in a story are often depicted in a single image. In this miniature from the *Ramayana* (Adventures of Rama), the eponymous, blue-skinned hero and his brother Lakshmana appear five times as they search for Rama's wife, Sita, who had been abducted by the demon king, Ravana. Entering the scene at bottom left, they discover Ravana's wrecked chariot and lifeless driver, but not Ravana or Sita. The brothers' journey continues above, until the grief-stricken Rama collapses. Finally, at lower right, they encounter an ascetic. Arranged in a pleasing arc across the page, the story unfolds in a blaze of color.

Layla Summons Majnun to Her Camp

Nizāmī Ganjavī (ca. 1141–1209)

***Khamsa* (Quintet), in Persian**

Persia, Qazvin, 1549–51

Bequest of Belle da Costa Greene, 1950;

MS M.836, fols. 308v–309r

PICTURE THIS: VISUAL NARRATIVES

This miniature illustrates the love story of Layla and Qays, as told by the Persian poet Nizāmī Ganjavī, who based his celebrated verses on centuries-old tales from Bedouin Arabia. The union of the child sweethearts is ultimately thwarted, and they spend most of the story apart. Insane with longing, Qays, christened Majnun (“madman”), retreats to the wilderness, where he reads and composes romantic poems. Equally heartsick, Layla, ensconced in her tent, sends a messenger to Majnun to arrange a rendezvous. Shown at bottom right and top left, the lovers are separated by an encampment of shepherds and a steep mountain ridge.

Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997)

***Crak!*, 1963**

Offset color lithograph

**Gift of William M. Voelke in honor of
William M. Griswold; 2007.105**

PICTURE THIS: SHOW AND TELL

Inspired by comic books, Roy Lichtenstein's *Crak!* still packs a punch, although not the knockout blow it landed on the New York art world in 1963. Lichtenstein's figure was adapted from a panel in DC's April/May 1962 issue of *Star Spangled War Stories*, written by Bob Haney and illustrated by Jack Abel. But the broader model was Mademoiselle Marie, who first appeared in the August 1959 issue in a story by Robert Kanigher and Jerry Grandenetti. Gracing the cover of the comic book in her trademark red beret, she aimed a blazing submachine gun at attacking Nazis. Mademoiselle Marie was informed by actual women in the French Resistance who risked or lost their lives fighting fascism, including Simone Segouin, a young farm girl.



World War II French Resistance fighter Simone Segouin (1925–2023). Photo: US National Archives and Records Administration.

Maurice Sendak (1928–2012)

Storyboard for *Where the Wild Things Are*, 1979

Watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite on board

Bequest of Maurice Sendak; 2013.103:72a

PICTURE THIS: VISUAL NARRATIVES

Maurice Sendak made this storyboard for an opera based on his 1963 book *Where the Wild Things Are*. Like the adjacent medieval painting, it is a sequential narrative, reading from left to right and top to bottom: Max misbehaves and is banished to his room, which turns into a jungle. In the sixth frame, the constricted chamber gives way to the great outdoors, and he makes his fantastical escape. He then sails to the land of the Wild Things and becomes their king.

Scenes from the Bible

Single leaf from the “Eadwine Psalter”

England, Canterbury, Christ Church Priory, 1155–60

Purchased in 1927; MS M.724r

PICTURE THIS: VISUAL NARRATIVES

Medieval artists were accomplished storytellers and often used sequences of pictures to convey narratives. Created around eight hundred years ago, this painting on parchment depicts key biblical scenes, from the birth of Moses (top left) to David’s victory over Goliath (bottom right). Among other events arranged chronologically from left to right and top to bottom are Moses’s encounter with God at the Burning Bush, the Parting of the Red Sea, and Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. Text is absent; the original viewers, Benedictine monks, would have known the stories well and understood their significance.

Charles Schultz (1922–2000)

***Writing by Firefly*, September 8, 1973**

Four-panel strip cartoon for *Peanuts*

Pen and black ink, black felt pen, and white paint on illustration board

Gift of Mr. Charles Monroe Schulz; 1973.49

PICTURE THIS: SHOW AND TELL

Charles M. “Sparky” Schultz drew around eighteen thousand *Peanuts* comic strips. Snoopy made his debut on October 4, 1950, in one of the very first. Originally he was portrayed on all fours, but as his character evolved, Schultz stood him upright, indulging his irrepressible spirit. Here, Snoopy, the aspiring author seated on his doghouse, is enveloped by blackness, which prevents him from typing. It is a dark, if not particularly stormy, night. Thought bubbles alone reveal Snoopy’s exasperation; he does not speak in the comic strips, although he imagines he can.

Richard McGuire (b. 1957)

Here, 1987–88

Pen and ink, gouache, and collage

Gift of the artist; 2014.51

PICTURE THIS: SHOW AND TELL

Richard McGuire’s short comic “Here,” published in 1989, is preserved in these original drawings. “Here” redefined comics, and an expanded full-color version was published in 2014. The title alludes to a single place—the corner of a room in a modest house where multiple narratives unfold. Shown empty in the first frame, the space serves as the silent witness of events dating from 500 billion BC to 2033 AD. These are presented in a capricious, rather than chronological order, as McGuire dispenses with the conventions of linear storytelling. Multiple moments and viewpoints are often presented simultaneously, mimicking the way memory works. In McGuire’s fictional world, as in reality, the humdrum and historic coexist.

The Wolf and the Crane

Hugo von Trimberg (ca. 1230–1313)

Der Renner

Austria, probably Tyrol, last quarter of the fifteenth century

Purchased in 1930; MS M.763, fols. 38v–39r

PICTURE THIS: ANIMAL STORIES

This medieval image illustrates a fable attributed to the Greek storyteller Aesop, said to have lived in Thrace in the early sixth century BC. Compiled over centuries, Aesop's fables actually represent the work of multiple authors. According to the story, a crane removed a bone stuck in the throat of a wolf, who sought her assistance. Although he had offered her a reward, the wolf reneged on his promise, saying it was sufficient that she still had her head. The moral? There's nothing to be gained by helping the wicked!

***The Wolf and the Crane Fables of Aesop According
to Sir Roger L'Estrange***

Illustrated by Alexander Calder (1898–1976)

**Paris: Harrison; New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1931
Carter Burden; PML 184359**

PICTURE THIS: ANIMAL STORIES

Alexander “Sandy” Calder’s line drawing depicts the same fable shown in the adjacent medieval manuscript. Calder’s cautious crane does not plunge its head into the predator’s maw but more gingerly extracts the bone, which can be seen, as if in X-ray, at the base of the wolf’s throat. Animals, among Calder’s most frequent subjects, are portrayed in his first book, *Animal Sketching* (1926), and the miniature circus he debuted in Paris that same year.

Jean Ignace Isidore Gerard, known as

J. J. Grandville (1803–1847)

Les métamorphoses du jour

Paris: Chez Bulla et chez Martinet, 1829

Bequest of Gordon N. Ray;PML 140303

PICTURE THIS: ANIMAL STORIES

This book brought to prominence the French caricaturist J. J. Grandville, whose extraordinary hand-colored lithographs influenced generations of artists, including Walt Disney. The seventy prints of humans with animal faces playing out scenes from Parisian middle-class life highlight society's absurdities. In this scene, parrot children in a classroom master basic grammar by parroting the words of their instructor. Demonstrating his rote learning of the verb meaning "to tire, bother, or bore" (*ennuyer*), the insolent student called on to respond tells his donkey teacher: "We are tired; you tire us."

Amy Cutler (b. 1974)

***Four Little Pigs*, 2000**

Gouache

Gift of Marianne Elrick-Manley and Amy Wolf; 2013.109

PICTURE THIS: ANIMAL STORIES

Animals, including pigs, are recurring subjects for Amy Cutler. They are featured in this painting, loosely inspired by “The Three Little Pigs.” While the meticulous rendering and white ground evoke children’s storybooks, Cutler’s image is a crime scene. One pig has been axed while another offers a bribe; yet the violence is more slapstick than sadistic.

Walt Disney (1901–1966)

***Plane Crazy* (drawing for the animated short film), 1928**

Pen and ink and gray wash, with celluloid cutouts

Drawing by Ub Iwerks (1901–1971)

Gift of Walt Disney; 1954.18

PICTURE THIS: ANIMAL STORIES

Hundreds of drawings were shot in sequence to create early animated films. Each pencil sketch would be topped by a celluloid layer and inked in. For *Plane Crazy*—Mickey Mouse's first screen appearance—animator Ub Iwerks supplied up to seven hundred drawings a day, totaling around five thousand. In these early images, Mickey appears without gloves or shoes, his large eyes dominating his face. Influenced by Felix the Cat and partly modeled on Charlie Chaplin, Mickey embodied both slapstick exuberance and charm.

Walt Disney (1901–1966)

***Plane Crazy*, 1929**

**Title Credit: “A Walt Disney Comic by Ub Iwerks
[1901–1971]”**

Animated film, with sound, 6 min.

PICTURE THIS: ANIMAL STORIES

On May 15, 1928, *Plane Crazy*—the first Mickey Mouse film—was screened on Sunset Boulevard. The story follows Mickey’s attempt to build and fly a plane, inspired by Charles Lindbergh’s pioneering solo transatlantic flight of May 1927. Despite questionable gags and Mickey’s belligerent attempts to kiss Minnie, the cartoon’s buoyant tone captivated moviegoers. When released with sound in 1929, critics praised the novel “squeaks, yawps and goofy noises” that heightened the comedy.

Mickey Mouse Movie Stories

Stories and illustrations by staff of Walt Disney studio

Philadelphia: David McKay, 1931

Carter Burden; PML 184765

PICTURE THIS: ANIMAL STORIES

No single creature has had a greater impact on modern popular culture than a certain mouse conceived in 1928. Unlike some other comic characters, notably George Herriman's Krazy Kat, who made the leap from printed comics to animation in 1916, Mickey Mouse was invented to star on the silver screen. *Mickey Mouse Movie Stories* translates his cinematic antics into print, complete with sound effects and slapstick humor. Mickey basks in the spotlight on the front cover, as does Minnie on the back. The two are even made to dance when the pages are flipped in quick succession, a feature simulating animation.

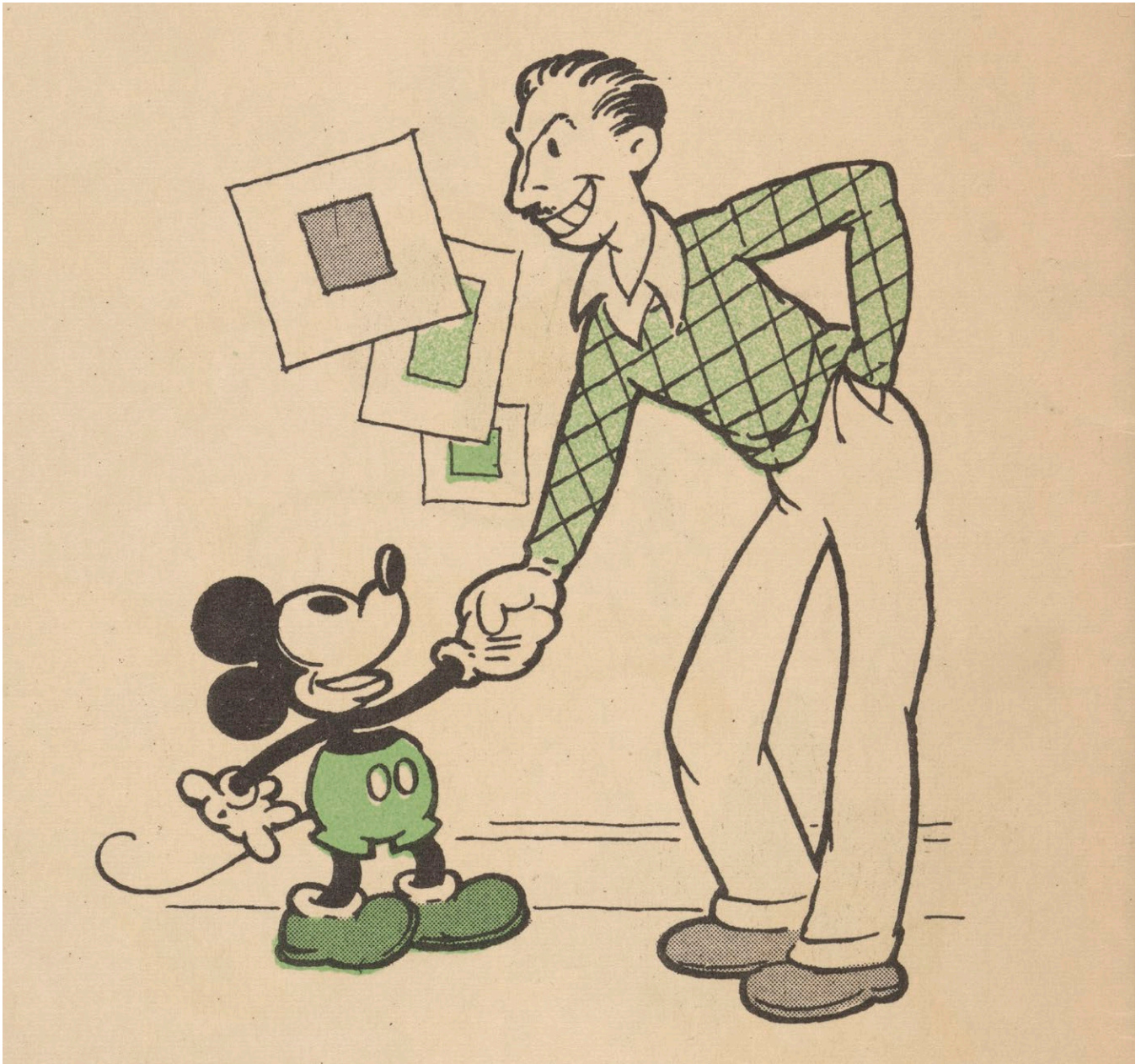
Mickey Mouse Book

New York: Bibo and Lang, 1930

Carter Burden; PML 184764

PICTURE THIS: ANIMAL STORIES

This Mickey Mouse book, the very first for children, was a father-and-daughter collaboration. Publisher Irving Bibo, a Tin Pan Alley composer, wrote the song extolling the furry film star, and his eleven-year-old daughter Bobette contributed the story, which tells how a mischievous rodent, yet unnamed, is cast out of a celestial “Mouse Fairyland” and lands in Hollywood. The board game, also by Bobette, represents Mickey’s road to stardom. Players landing on squares marked “MOVIE STUDIO” or “HOLLYWOOD” advance, while those landing on “MOUSE TRAP” regress. One unlucky square reads “HIT BY AEROPLANE,” a reference to *Plane Crazy*, Mickey’s 1928 debut film.



Albert Barbelle (1887–1957), illustration of Mickey Mouse and Walt Disney in *Mickey Mouse Book*.

George Grosz (1893–1959)

***Cuckoo and Parrot: Costume Studies for “Methusalem,”* 1922**

Pen and ink and watercolor

Bequest of Fred Ebb; 2005.130

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

Active in communist and revolutionary organizations, George Grosz published satirical newspapers and produced caricatures, collages, and photomontages intended to promote the workers' cause by portraying the collapse of capitalism. Among his numerous activities in the service of the radical left, Grosz created theatrical sets and costumes. The play *Methusalem*, or *The Eternal Bourgeois*, was a satire of capitalism written in 1921 by Franco-German playwright and poet Yvan Goll (1891–1950). Grosz conceived these characters as giant articulated puppets. The instructions on this watercolor indicate that the beaks, wings, and eyes were intended to move. The eyes were also meant to glow by means of a battery-operated device.

Maurice Sendak (1928–2012)

**Study for Wild Things costume, with notes
(*Where the Wild Things Are*), 1979**

Watercolor and mixed media

Bequest of Maurice Sendak; 2013.103:19

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

Depicting one of Maurice Sendak’s trademark “Wild Things,” this costume study was made in preparation for his opera *Where the Wild Things Are*, which opened in Brussels in November 1980. “Eyes must move!” Sendak insists in the notes, claws must extend and retract, and the costume must be lightweight. A megaphone was meant to project the performer’s voice from inside the costume, but things went awry in Belgium, where one Wild Thing even fell into the orchestra pit.

Le theatre des ombres chinoises

Paris: Le Bailly, [1910?]

Purchased on the Elisabeth Ball Fund; PML 86486–87

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

Originating in medieval China, shadow puppetry reached Europe in the eighteenth century and quickly captivated audiences. Attracting enormous crowds, François Dominique Séraphin performed his first shadow plays at Versailles in 1772 and later in Paris. Though the art form gradually waned in popularity, it was revived in the late nineteenth century by avant-garde artists at Montmartre's legendary cabaret Le Chat Noir. Inspired by this trend, publishers of games and puzzles, including Léon Saussine, produced shadow theaters for home use, like this set with over thirty puppets, including some Chat Noir characters.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863)

***Theatre Audience*, ca. 1860s**

Brown ink

Gift of Lincoln Kirstein, 1956; 1956.29

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

William Makepeace Thackeray, author and illustrator, delighted in performances of all kinds, and these informed his fiction. Framed as a puppet play, his novel *Vanity Fair*, for example, satirizes social climbing. His drawing of a theater audience is likewise a send-up of human behavior. In the cheap seats, ale is imbibed as children perch dangerously close to the railing; a bored gentleman and amorous couple appear in the boxes; while an attentive audience occupies the orchestra seats.

Alexandre Benois (1870–1960)

***Costume Design*, 1938**

Watercolor and mixed media

**Gift of Charles Ryskamp in memory of
Mrs. Werner Abegg; 2001.4**

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

This costume design shows Drosselmeyer holding aloft the Nutcracker. It was made for a 1938 performance of Piotr Tchaikovsky's ballet at La Scala opera house in Milan. How did *Nutcracker and Mouse King* become a favorite seasonal entertainment? Set in Germany on Christmas Eve, E. T. A. Hoffmann's story of toys that spring to life was printed in Berlin in 1816. A portion of the tale, the first to appear in English, was published in 1833 by William Makepeace Thackeray, who translated it himself. Of far greater consequence, however, was Alexandre Dumas's 1844 short story, "The Nutcracker." His retelling of the narrative inspired Tchaikovsky's world-famous ballet.

Andrew Sendor (b. 1977)

Four replicas of stills from the documentary “Interview Sessions with Francis Gray: On Encoding, Storage, and Retrieval,” 2014

Graphite

Gift of Mickey Cartin; 2016.16

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

Rendered in monochrome, Andrew Sendor’s drawing looks distinctly cinematic. Above, a gloved woman gazes at a hand reaching through a frame; below, a scenic road ends as abruptly as the diagonal slash dividing the composition. By relying on the technical precision of photorealism, Sendor, who delights in creating nonlinear narrative worlds, conjures the strangeness of a dream.

James Ivory (b. 1928)

Editing notebook for the film *Maurice*

Autograph manuscript, 1987

Gift of James Ivory; MA 9281

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

Following film shoots, James Ivory would distill hundreds of hours of footage into a feature-length film. This notebook documents that process. Thinking on the page, Ivory contemplates—in storyboard form—an addition to the opening scene of *Maurice*, based on the gay love story of the same title written in 1913 by E. M. Forester (1879–1970), when homosexuality was still criminalized in Britain. Fearing legal repercussions, Forester had *Maurice* published posthumously. A sensitive affirmation of same-sex desire, Ivory and Ismail Merchant's film garnered praise for its boldness and beauty.

Charlie Chaplin (1889–1977)

***The Kid*, 1921, revised 1972**

Starring Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan

Written, produced, and directed by Charlie Chaplin

**Black-and-white video, transferred from 35 mm film, silent,
53 min.**

© Roy Export S.A.S., courtesy Janus Films

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

One of the greatest films of the silent era, Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid*, released in 1921, tells the story of a “tramp” who adopts an abandoned baby. Philanthropist Anne Morgan, daughter of J. Pierpont Morgan, organized the film's European premiere in Paris to raise funds for her humanitarian organization, the American Committee for Devastated France, which served communities that still remained in need three years after World War I. Chaplin himself issued an invitation to the screening, cleverly referencing the movie's theme: “I will present, in person, for the first time in France, my film *The Kid* to benefit this charity. Every seat taken means a poor baby saved; every box means a home reborn. You will come, won't you, madame? You will come, monsieur!”

**Photographers unknown, apart from:
H. Parker Rolfe (1856–1939)
Girls dressed as fairies, undated
Hans Lindner (1893–1978)
Child in mask with carnival props, undated
Robert Mesterton (1927–2017)
Man in J. Pierpont Morgan costume, undated
Commercially processed gelatin silver prints
Gifts of Peter J. Cohen; 2025.103:1–18**

PICTURE THIS: STAGING STORIES

A pint-size cowboy, a proud panda, boys on broomsticks, a gaggle of geese—these snapshots preserve amateur theatrics, the carnivalesque, spontaneous moments of dressing up. For centuries, masquerading has enabled people to intermingle, subverting social hierarchies. One photograph depicts a young man dressed as J. Pierpont Morgan, as specified by the inscription on the back. Others show women dressed as men, and men as women, reminding us that costumes have historically made cross-dressing acceptable and fostered freedom.

Blossom Fulbright Powe

“It Was Here,” page from a collection of thirty poems

Typescript, 1970

**Purchased on the Drue Heinz Twentieth-Century Literature
Fund, 2021; MA 23741.1–32**

LIFE STORIES

Blossom Fulbright Powe’s poem “It Was Here” offers an unflinching account of the violence she witnessed during the 1965 Watts Uprising. The rioting, which took place in that South Los Angeles neighborhood following an altercation with police, resulted in thirty-four deaths, mostly of Black citizens. Powe was a founding member of the Watts Writers Workshop, established by screenwriter Budd Schulberg for young Black writers. Thirty of her poems were recently acquired by the Morgan; twenty-four remain unpublished, including this one.

Glenn Ligon (b. 1960)

Untitled (I remember the very day that I became colored), 1992

Oil stick and paint

Gift of Larry Shopmaker; 2020.38

LIFE STORIES

In the early 1990s Glenn Ligon gained prominence for his text-based paintings, many featuring excerpts that probe the intersections of race, history, and representation in America. Often in these works a single sentence is repeated across the picture plane, using language as both form and content. This sentence, “I remember the very day that I became colored,” is from Zora Neale Hurston’s influential 1928 essay “How It Feels to Be Colored Me.”

Kara Walker (b. 1969)

Freedom, a Fable: A Curious Interpretation of the Wit of a Negress in Troubled Times

[Santa Monica, CA: Peter Norton Family], 1997

Gift of the Peter Norton Family Foundation, courtesy of Susan Cahan, Director of Art Programs, 2000; PML 86314

LIFE STORIES

Kara Walker achieved fame in the mid-1990s for her narrative panoramas of cutout silhouettes confronting the history of slavery. Here, she appropriates the playful form of the children's pop-up book to convey a harrowing narrative. Its protagonist, a newly emancipated woman named N—, endures abuse at the hands of her former enslaver, despite her newfound freedom. Her attempt to travel to Africa is thwarted and she finds herself adrift. Like Walker's large-scale silhouettes, this book addresses the unspeakable.

Nellie Mae Rowe (1900–1982)

Untitled, 1978

Mixed media on black-and-white photographic print

2018.100

LIFE STORIES

For much of her adult life, Nellie Mae Rowe was employed as a domestic worker, but at age forty-eight she began to devote most of her time to art. Her practice encompassed the creation of drawings, dolls, and found-object assemblages, and, most ambitiously, the embellishment of her yard and three-room frame house in Vinings, Georgia, which she christened her “playhouse.”

Duane Michals (b. 1932)

***A Letter from My Father*, 1960 (image); 1975 (text)**

Gelatin silver print, edition 24/25

Gift of Duane Michals; 2019.78

LIFE STORIES

In this photograph Duane Michals turns the lens on his own life. His brother, in the foreground, all but conceals his mother, positioned on the right. Facing forward but avoiding eye contact, Michals's father dominates the physical and psychological space. Titled *A Letter from My Father*, the artwork had a long gestation period: Michals took the photograph in 1960, but it was not until his father's death in 1975 that he printed it and composed the commentary, which speaks of his unrequited longing for paternal love.

Édouard Manet (1832–1883)

Notebook, 1860–62

**Purchased as the gift of Mrs. Charles Engelhard and children
in memory of Mr. Charles Engelhard, 1974; MA 3950.2:1**

LIFE STORIES

Letters, receipts, photographs, diaries, and hastily scribbled notes are evidence of lives lived. This small notebook, which belonged to Édouard Manet, contains glimpses into his artistic circle. Among its pages is the earliest known reference to Victorine Louise Meurent, the woman who posed as the courtesan in his celebrated painting *Olympia* (1863). It also contains the only known reference to Laure (surname unrecorded), the Black model depicted in the same work. Redolent of 1860s Paris, the notebook bears the label of the stationer, J. Mèche, located at 189 rue Saint-Honoré.



Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1865. Oil on canvas. Photo:
© Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Patrice Schmidt.

Harold LaVigne (1933–2014)

Untitled (December 1973), 1973

Brush and ink

2023.32

LIFE STORIES

Life on the domestic front can barely be contained in Harold LaVigne's drawing, which even includes the kitchen sink.

Both LaVigne and his wife, Lani Chamberlain, drew what they saw around them, inspired by their friend Rick Barton and the bohemian energy of San Francisco. Drawing was often a communal activity, with artists meeting at Foster's Cafeteria for "blabbermouth nights," during which they would "find the line" and often end up working together on the same pieces.

Harold LaVigne (1933–2014)

Untitled (June 25, 1966), 1966

Brush and ink

2023.33

LIFE STORIES

A steady stream of New Yorkers flows by in this drawing made by Harold LaVigne on a trip to the city with his wife, Lani Chamberlain, in 1966. Though crowded together, each person has their own agenda, separate thoughts, places to go. A diaristic entry on the reverse describes Lani and Harold's day. They draw, see a movie, and visit friends, including artist Rick Barton. LaVigne writes, "Lani gets some sea bass from Pamela and we . . . eat a marvelous dinner. . . . Dean is drunk and speaks of the horror of his life with its sad love affairs, and of how bitter he has become. Rick stays to care for him as we leave."

Dawn Clements (1958–2018)

The Name of the Rose (Self-Portrait, MacDowell), 2018

Watercolor and mixed media

**Gift of the Modern and Contemporary Collectors Committee
and Lawrence R. Ricciardi; 2022.68**

LIFE STORIES

The largest artwork in this exhibition is also the most intimate: Dawn Clements's monumental self-portrait, completed months before her death from breast cancer. Known for her intricate drawings often extending to vast panoramas, Clements here turned her gaze inward. She started the drawing with a detailed rendering of her left arm wrapped in a compression bandage, then expanded outward to include the floral pattern of her dress and her feet. The piece is inscribed with quotations from Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*, which she listened to while working.

Matthew Wong (1984–2019)

***Between Two Cliffs*, 2019**

Ink on xuan paper

**Gift of Monita and Raymond Wong, in honor of their son,
Matthew Wong; 2023.49**

LIFE STORIES

Two cliffs are set against a star-studded sky in this ethereal painting by Matthew Wong. The rocky masses frame a tree with translucent blue foliage whose trunk bends toward a figure seated on the ground. The solitary figure is a recurrent motif in Wong's work. Recalling the Romantic image of humankind dwarfed by nature, the motif may signal emotional isolation. But Wong's transcendent painting also presents the landscape as an awe-inspiring and enduring retreat from the cares of daily life.

Nuha al-Radi (1941–2004)

**Diary kept during the Persian Gulf War, Baghdad,
January–April 1991**

**Photocopy of a typescript, with manuscript additions
Gift of Nuha al-Radi; MA 23003**

LIFE STORIES

“I woke up at three a.m. to exploding bombs and Salvador Dali, my dog, frantically chasing around the house barking furiously.” So begins Nuha al-Radi’s “Baghdad Diary,” capturing the disorienting rhythms of everyday life during the Persian Gulf War: “The entire country has collapsed and disintegrated. . . . Birds in the wild fly upside down and do crazy somersaults. Hundreds, if not thousands, have died. . . . Stray dogs . . . during bad air raids . . . actually cry with fear—the most awful, pathetic sound. . . . We are still here, ruined and going strong. . . . For forty days and nights . . . we have stood with our mouths open swallowing bombs.”

Apocalypse

England, London, ca. 1255–60

**Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1908; MS M.524,
fols. 10v–11r**

LIFE STORIES

In the late twelfth century, the monk Joachim of Fiore predicted that the world would end in 1260. This Apocalypse was painted in England in the mid-thirteenth century when such prophecies were circulating widely. The manuscript describes terrifying events that were expected to occur prior to the final cataclysm. As shown here, the misguided worship of two powerful, multiheaded beasts culminates in the slaughter of the faithful. In 1966 artist Nancy Spero, enraged by American intervention in Vietnam, drew on medieval apocalyptic imagery to create searing political allegories, including *Male Bomb II*, displayed nearby.

Nancy Spero (1926–2009)

***Male Bomb II*, 1966**

Gouache and brush and ink

**Gift of the Modern and Contemporary Collectors Committee;
2014.22**

LIFE STORIES

Television brought the Vietnam War into American homes on a nightly basis, confronting viewers with scenes of carnage. Nancy Spero's painting transforms that horror into protest. The figure—part man, part weapon—embodies the violent fusion of sexuality and militarism. The work belongs to *The War Series* (1966–70), which grew to over 150 works on paper depicting defecating, ejaculating, erupting, and vomiting “bombs” and killing machines. “Manifestos against a senseless obscene war,” these paintings were inspired by apocalyptic imagery, like the multiheaded beasts shown in the nearby medieval manuscript.

Art Spiegelman (b. 1948)

Four Mice, 1991

Portfolio of four lithographs printed in an edition of 30: *Mickey, Maus + Mouse; Mäuse + Mouse; Nadja, Mickey + Mäuse* (“*The Past Hangs Over the Future*”); *Cat + Maus*

Private Collection

LIFE STORIES

“I grew up in Queens . . . I loved comix. . . . My parents survived Auschwitz. . . . I made a comic book about it . . . you know . . . the one with Jewish mice and Nazi cats.” First published in installments and later as a graphic novel, Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* proved irrevocably that comics were as adept as other forms of artistic and literary expression in conveying human experience and supporting the weight of memory. Juxtaposing actual rodents, Mickey Mouse, and Spiegelman’s allegorical mice, these lithographs commemorate the completion of his Pulitzer Prize–winning work. The layering and blending of different narrative strands, characteristic of *Maus*, is exemplified by the print showing the author and his young daughter seated amid her toys, in the shadow of the gallows.

**Anne Tracy Morgan (1873–1952), daughter of
J. Pierpont Morgan**

Photograph album, ca. 1917–24

**Photographs by Harry Lachman (1886–1975)
and others (unattributed)**

Gift of the estate of Anne Morgan, 1952; ARC 1505

LIFE STORIES

World War I unleashed unfathomable horrors, leaving an estimated 15 million dead and entire regions in ruins. In 1918, based near the Western Front, Anne Morgan and her partner, Anne Murray Dike, founded the American Committee for Devastated France to reconstruct French farms and villages. In the Aisne region, where 80 percent of buildings had been destroyed, their all-female team resettled around 50,000 homeless civilians; built orphanages, social centers, and clinics; and oversaw postwar relief. In addition to food, people hungered for books, which Morgan supplied, as these photographs attest.

Life in the Zone Rouge, 1920

Montage of films produced by the American Committee for Devastated France

Black-and-white film, silent

Film compilation courtesy of the Franco-American Museum, Château de Blérancourt

LIFE STORIES

The footage shown above is from *Life in the Zone Rouge*, a publicity reel created to advertise and raise funds for the American Committee for Devastated France. Founded by Anne Morgan and her partner, Scottish physician Anne Murray Dike, the organization helped French civilians whose homes had become WWI battlegrounds—a contaminated “red zone” unfit for habitation. Responding to requests for books, the organization, entirely staffed by women, including American librarians, formed France’s first network of open-stack public libraries. Book mobiles brought solace to communities and special provision was made for children.

Francisco Goya (1746–1828)

***Pesadilla (Nightmare)*, from Black Border Album (E),**

ca. 1816–20

Black ink and wash

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Bernhard, 1959; 1959.13

LIFE STORIES

Entitled *Pesadilla (Nightmare)*, this drawing by Francisco Goya depicts a disheveled woman astride a bull. Entangled in her bedsheets, she screams in terror. A sexual subtext may be discerned in the half-naked female rider, but the image is enigmatic. Has she had a bad dream, or does she embody the nightmare? Attracted to dark themes late in life, Goya filled eight albums and the walls of his home with macabre and malevolent figures. Now in the Prado, Madrid, these “black paintings” had a profound impact on the painter Philip Guston, who considered Goya an important touchstone—a precursor who gave form to “the monstrosity of humanity.” The angst-ridden figure in Guston’s nearby painting seems to share Goya’s existential fears.

Philip Guston (1913–1980)

Untitled, 1975

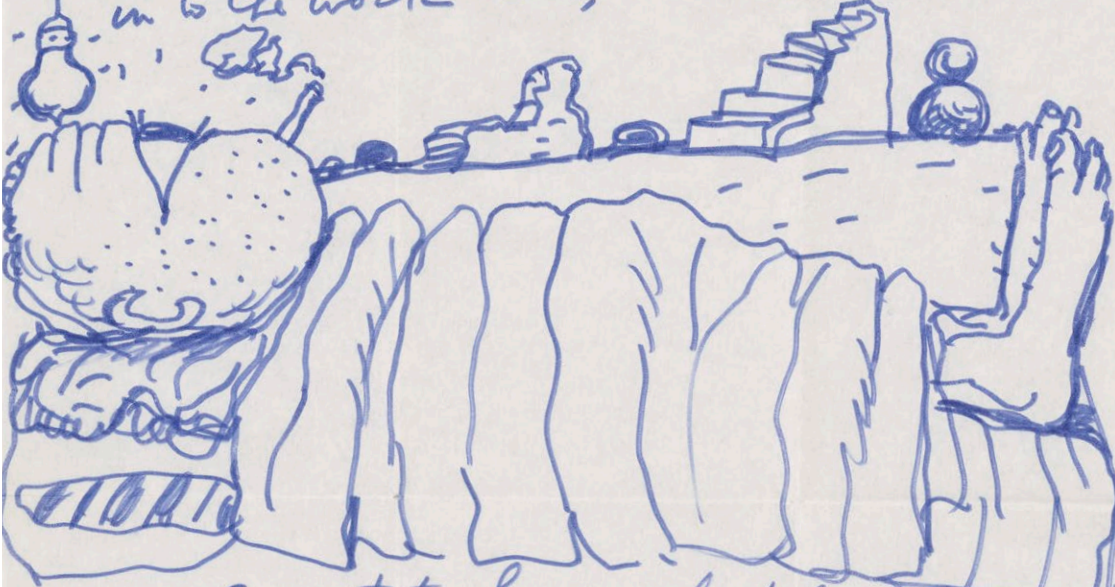
Pen and ink on illustration board

Gift of Musa and Tom Mayer; 2012.54


LIFE STORIES

“I couldn’t live without drawing. I know that. It’s constant. You scribble. You draw. . .” Philip Guston was a prolific draftsman, and it was through drawing that he negotiated dramatic shifts in his artistic practice, including his return to figuration. This drawing features one of Guston’s signature images: an insomniac smoker in need of a shave, with furrowed brow and bloodshot eyes, staring into space. The anxious figure appears in an important series of “bed” paintings, as well as in a letter sent by Guston to the sculptor Varujan Boghosian. In another letter, Guston explains that he is working on “more of my characters, painting, smoking, lying in bed, etc.—well, it’s all autobiography now—there is nothing left to paint.”

3/ Not much else new here - except
painting and images - Italy is coming
in to the work now, I think.



Great to hear about Gil!
Truman Commission - Tell him to be sure
to put on the base what ol' Harry said about
NIXXON - "He (Nixon) is or has always been
a shifty-eyed goddamned Liar!" Well,
I think always tenderly about you -
Love to Marilyn, Heidi and Beanie
Love to Franklin - Say Hello!
Lots of Embraces - Philip



Letter (June 26, 1974) from Philip Guston to Varujan Boghosian
illustrated with a figure in bed and Boghosian's dog, Beanie.
MA 8010.9. © 2026 The Estate of Philip Guston.

Salman Toor (b. 1983)

***Camera Group*, 2022**

Ink and gouache

Gift of Lawrence and Lucy Ricciardi; 2023.72

LIFE STORIES

Salman Toor's *Camera Group* conveys the vulnerability of a group of immigrants being photographed as they enter a new country. Lowered gazes and stooped shoulders suggest the men's deference, while the women's distinctive dress references the homeland they have left behind. Toor explores belonging and identity, subjects that reflect his own life as a Pakistani-born gay man and immigrant to the United States.

Hugo Crosthwaite (b. 1971)

Borderlands No. 3, 2022

Graphite, charcoal, and acrylic on museum board

**Gift of the Modern and Contemporary Collectors Committee;
2022.69**

LIFE STORIES

Hugo Crosthwaite was born in Tijuana, Mexico, the busiest land-border crossing with the United States. As a child, inspired by the eclectic mix of trinkets and objects in his family's souvenir shop, he told American customers fanciful stories to encourage sales. Storytelling still lies at the heart of his artistic practice. *Borderlands No. 3* belongs to a series combining realistic evocations of Tijuana with superimposed cartoonlike imagery. Here, footprints evoke migration and attendant themes of hope, peril, and violence. These are also explored in his 2018 animation *A Portrait of Berenice Sarmiento Chávez*.

Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)

Autograph manuscript, November 9, 1858–April 7, 1859

Select volumes from collection of thirty-nine journals,

[Concord], October 22, 1837, and November 3, 1861

Pinewood box said to have been built by Thoreau

Acquired by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Wakeman

Collection, 1909; 1302.24; 1302.26; 1302.27; MA 1302.34,

pp. 112–13 (displayed open); and 6057

LIFE STORIES

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach,” wrote Henry David Thoreau, whose lifelong journal is preserved in multiple volumes, some of which are displayed in this case alongside a box made to house them. He not only sought to examine his own life but also that of his nation; he questioned, for example, how a country that sanctioned slavery could call itself free. Thoreau’s meticulous notes on society and solitude, as well as on nature, often accompanied by sketches, like the hawk feather shown in the open volume, reveal an intimate picture of a man of wide-ranging interests committed to social justice.

Joe Baker (Lenape/Delaware, b. 1946)

Bandolier bag, 1997

Linen, satin, glass beads, wool, and cotton thread

Private collection

NEW YORK STORIES

This bandolier bag, the first item displayed in this room devoted to New York stories, gives primacy to the Lenape—the “Original People” of Manahatta (now Manhattan). As early as the mid-1600s, the Lenape began to be forcibly displaced from their unceded ancestral homeland, Lenapehoking, which encompasses New York City, New Jersey, and parts of Pennsylvania and Delaware. By the 1700s, as a result of settler colonialism, few Lenape were present in their own territory. This intricate bag is a testament to Lenape living traditions and survivance.

“ACHIMWI!” (“TELL ME A STORY!”)

Bandolier bags had all but disappeared from Lenape communities by the early twentieth century—bags that had held the stories of their makers, and the stories of the people who used them. Joe Baker (Lenape/Delaware) made this one in direct response to that lack. Inspiring others to continue the tradition, Baker’s bag revives an element of men’s attire that historically served as a marker of tribal and family identity, a “passport” to protect the wearer and enfold them in its embrace.

By celebrating beauty we honor our ancestors and acknowledge the miraculous gifts they have given to our present and future Lenape communities.

—Joe Baker

Will B. Johnstone (1881–1944)

**“Going Home in the Subway Crush with
J. Pierpont Morgan Jr”**

**Reproduction of *The Evening World*, Saturday,
February 1, 1913, p. 9.**

SUBWAY STORIES

In early 1913 journalist Will B. Johnstone spotted J. Pierpont Morgan's son and heir riding the subway. Shown at the far right, J. P. Morgan Jr. is the only commuter identified by name. Johnstone pads his article with trivia but reveals that J. P. Morgan Jr.'s firm had pledged to finance a new, expanded subway system at a commission of \$4.25 million. The resulting “Dual System” contracts, signed March 19, 1913, transformed urban life for millions since it doubled the size of the two existing networks, the IRT Company (serving Manhattan) and Brooklyn Rapid Transit.

Scott Joplin (ca. 1868–1917)

“Wall Street Rag”

New York: Seminary Music Co., ca. 1909

James Fuld Collection, 2008

NEW YORK STORIES

Scott Joplin rose to fame with “Maple Leaf Rag,” published in 1899. Far less familiar is this composition about the Panic of 1907, which occurred shortly after Joplin moved to New York. The composer describes the financial crisis and its resolution, with brokers feeling “melancholy” until they’re soothed by ragtime and “forget their cares.” Acting as the country’s de facto central banker, J. Pierpont Morgan helped to mitigate the panic and forestall more widespread collapse.

J. P. Morgan & Co.
Syndicate records
ARC 109

SUBWAY STORIES

J. Pierpont Morgan was one of the first financiers to help fund the creation of a subway system for New York City. These documents record his substantial investments—\$500,000 in 1900 and \$1 million in 1902—in the first subway line, built between 1900 and 1904 by the newly formed Rapid Transit Subway Construction Company (later IRT). Overseen by contractor John B. McDonald and backed by banker August Belmont Jr., the first line opened on October 27, 1904. Running from City Hall to 145th Street at Broadway, it stopped at Grand Central Station, conveniently close to Morgan's home.

Saul Steinberg (1914–1999)

***The West Side*, 1973**

Mixed media

Gift of The Saul Steinberg Foundation; 2014.67

NEW YORK STORIES

Sketched in 1973, Saul Steinberg's map depicts the world and the rest of the United States as an adjunct to New York City. The metropolis is disproportionately large, and every borough is precisely labeled, in contrast to the vague blob representing the United States. Conceptually, the drawing anticipates Steinberg's *View of the World from 9th Avenue*, which appeared on the cover of *The New Yorker* on March 29, 1976. Both images satirize the city's parochial and self-congratulatory residents.



Saul Steinberg, *View of the World from 9th Avenue*, 1976. Ink, pencil, colored pencil, and watercolor on paper. Private collection. © The Saul Steinberg Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Stuart Davis (1892–1964)

New York Waterfront, 1938

Gouache

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Department of Drawings and Prints, given anonymously; 583.1942

NEW YORK STORIES

Stuart Davis was sixteen when he arrived in Manhattan and began to sketch his urban milieu, including the newly constructed Empire State Building, which appears in his 1932 painting *Abstract Vision of New York*. Seeking to express an American ethos, Davis drew inspiration from Walt Whitman and, like the poet, gravitated to ports and docks. The abstract forms of this 1938 painting suggest warehouses, smokestacks, ships, and piers. The same motifs occur in a contemporaneous oil painting and a preliminary sketch dated May 29, 1938. In the artist's diary for that date, he wrote, "Roselle [Davis's wife] and I walked along the East River waterfront. Made some sketches . . . beautiful day."

Stuart Davis (1892–1964)

Diary

Autograph manuscript, May 1920–November 28, 1922

Purchased on the Young Associates Fund; MA 5062

NEW YORK STORIES

In 1921 Stuart Davis wrote down a list of three variables a painter must address in order to achieve a “logical, clean cut piece of work”: a subject, a selection of forms, and their organization on the canvas. Manufactured by the J. G. Shaw Blank Book Co. on Canal Street, this ledger is the earliest-known diary kept by the artist, representing the beginning of a lifelong practice of theoretical writing that would ultimately comprise some ten thousand reflections and sketches. Davis used the diary as an aesthetic workshop, a companion to his drawing and painting practice, and a space to explore the formal and conceptual issues that would engage him for decades.

Stuart Davis (1892–1964)

Sketchbook No. 6, 1926

Black ink and colored and graphite pencils

Gift of Earl Davis and the Armand G. Erpf Fund, Margot Gordon, the Young Associates Fund, and the Vervane Foundation; 2001.20

NEW YORK STORIES

The words “New York City” proudly inscribed on the cover of this sketchbook reflect Stuart Davis’s passion for the city. On the detached leaf, the artist employs diminishing perspective to trace the lines of the elevated railway, a prominent and raucous feature of the city in his day. An advertisement for Havana cigars reflects his interest in signage decades before Pop artists exploited such motifs.



Circular Office Supply Co. stamp in Stuart Davis's sketchbook.

Roy DeCarava (1919–2009)

The Sweet Flypaper of Life

Text by Langston Hughes (1901–1967)

New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955

The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature;

PML 181734

NEW YORK STORIES

Published in 1955, *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* is a tribute to Harlem and a landmark collaboration between Langston Hughes and Roy DeCarava, who was born and raised in the neighborhood. DeCarava's photographs offer an insider's perspective, while Hughes's fictional text riffs on everyday realities and aspirations. Our guide is Sister Mary Bradley, of 113 West 134th Street, who has just rejected the Lord's call to "come home." Sister Mary wants to stay put to look after her grandchildren and see how integration will play out. As she states, "I done got my feet caught in the sweet flypaper of life and I'll be dogged if I want to get loose."

Jacqueline Gourevitch (b. 1933)

Harbor with Ellis Island (from #7), 2007

Watercolor

Gift of Jacqueline Gourevitch; 2011.46

NEW YORK STORIES

In 2000 painter Jacqueline Gourevitch was artist-in-residence on the ninety-first floor of the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Though she witnessed the events of 9/11 from her Tribeca apartment, she later returned to the World Trade Center site to paint in the new towers. Made in 2007, this watercolor depicts New York Harbor, a place of personal significance. In 1940, at age six, Gourevitch fled Nazi-occupied Europe with her mother and, after a circuitous journey, arrived at Ellis Island.



Jaqueline Gourevitch in her studio in 7 World Trade Center, New York, 2010. © 2026 Jaqueline Gourevitch.
Photo: Joe Woolhead.

George A. Walker (b. 1960)

Book of Hours: A Wordless Novel Told in 99 Wood Engravings

With engraved wood block and artist's proof

Toronto: The author, 2008

Purchased on the Gordon N. Ray Fund, 2011;

PML 195745–6, 195748

NEW YORK STORIES

This book and the related wood engraving mounted above by Canadian printmaker George A. Walker take us from September 10, 2001, to the morning of 9/11. The volume is composed of ninety-nine images, and all but the final ones show ordinary New Yorkers engaged in everyday activities—heading for bed, riding the subway, drinking coffee, and chatting with colleagues. The title references a 1919 wordless novel by Belgian artist Frans Masereel, who invented the genre, and evokes the medieval prayer book, a source of meditation and consolation.

Peter Hujar (1934–1987)

Gay Liberation Front poster image, 1969

Gelatin silver print

2013.108:1.76

Reproduction (opposite wall). Photo: © 2026 The Peter Hujar Archive/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

NEW YORK STORIES

Peter Hujar staged this rare action shot in the Flatiron District. His boyfriend Jim Fouratt (first row, second from right) needed a poster image for the Gay Liberation Front, formed in the aftermath of the Stonewall Uprising in June 1969, a defiant affirmation of gay rights in which both men participated. As group members ran by, Hujar shot three rolls of film capturing raw emotion, joy, courage, vulnerability, togetherness, and pride.



Peter Hujar, *Gay Liberation Front Poster*, 1970. Courtesy John Erdman and Gary Schneider. Photo: © The Peter Hujar Archive/ARS, New York.

Grace Paley (1922–2007)

Draft of speech for Muriel Rukeyser memorial

**Typescript, one of several, some with autograph
corrections, [1980?]**

MA 22173

NEW YORK STORIES

Writer Grace Paley has been described as “first and foremost an antinuclear, antiwar, antiracist feminist activist.” Her distinctive voice echoes the working-class Bronx neighborhood of her childhood, its inhabitants, and their rhythms of speech: “There is a certain place where dumbwaiters boom, doors slam, dishes crash; every window is a mother’s mouth bidding the street to shut up, go skate somewhere else, come home.” This typescript is a draft tribute to Paley’s role model Muriel Rukeyser (1913–1980), a fellow Jewish writer and activist from the Bronx who asked, “What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open.”

Spencer Finch (b. 1962)

Ulysses

Brooklyn: Trying to Press, [2016]

Purchased on the Gordon N. Ray Fund for the Sean and Mary Kelly Collection, 2021; PML 198671

NEW YORK STORIES

Spencer Finch's *Ulysses* takes its title from James Joyce's celebrated 1922 novel that describes Leopold Bloom's peregrinations in Dublin on a single day. Finch's volume traces his wanderings through Brooklyn on September 19, 2014, a walk on which he made use of a Pantone color book to match the colors of various objects he encountered. The resulting book, composed of these swatches, constitutes a chromatic stream of consciousness.

John Evans (1932–2012)

***Collage book (62 collages), December 22,
1974–March 20, 1975***

**Mixed media in bound notebook
2014.116**

NEW YORK STORIES

This collage book opens with photo-booth portraits of the artist John Evans and custom rubber stamps. The misleading attribution to the artist “G. Berkowitz” alludes to one of Evans’s Avenue B neighbors, a local character and folk artist. The page also features Evans’s trademark “Urseline Duck” motif—a tribute to his friend, the novelist and playwright Ursule Molinaro, with whom he collaborated on an artist book. Based on an Italian woman’s papers and photographs discovered in the trash, it combines Evans’s collages and Molinaro’s imagined narrative of her life.

John Evans (1932–2012)
Collage book (52 collages),
July–August 1995
Mixed media in bound notebook
2014.117

NEW YORK STORIES

Few artists have chronicled their neighborhoods with more rigor than John Evans, who made more than twelve thousand collages in a series of sketchbooks while living in the East Village. Every day from 1964 to 2000, he created a collage from the limitless supply of detritus he discovered on the streets: bus transfers, ticket stubs, photographs, labels, business cards, and more. Each collage marks a single day, with notes of his activities written on facing blank pages, including details of time spent with his wife, Margaret.

William Anastasi (1933–2023)

Without Title [Subway Drawing] Larry Weiner, 1997

Graphite

Gift of the Modern and Contemporary Collectors

Committee; 2008.11

SUBWAY STORIES

In the 1960s, on his arrival in New York City, William Anastasi began creating his “unsighted” drawings, a practice he sustained for over fifty years. Many, like this one, were executed while riding the subway. Balancing a drawing board on his lap and holding a pencil in each hand, Anastasi would record the movement and vibration of the train, like a human seismograph. With his body responding to the contours of the city, Anastasi recorded specific textures of the urban fabric.

Martin Wilner (b. 1959)

Journal of Evidence Weekly: 8/8/06 to 9/28/06,

Vol. #129, 2006

Pen and ink

Gift of Mickey Cartin; 2011.34

SUBWAY STORIES

Stretched out like a set of subway cars, this drawing by New York native Martin Wilner captures the congestion of a rush-hour commute. The crush is aptly conveyed by the compressed space, tilted picture plane, and fragmentary body parts. For Wilner, a practicing psychiatrist, the accumulation of details taken from daily life facilitates his search for the “hidden themes” and “whispered melodies” that exist in the unconscious.

Keith Haring (1958–1990)

Untitled [drawing], 1980

Sumi ink

Gift of the Keith Haring Foundation; 2011.42

SUBWAY STORIES

A colossus snatches up panicked figures in this Keith Haring drawing from 1980. That same year Haring discovered the blank matte-black panels in subway stations, intended for advertisements but begging for chalk. Between 1980 and 1985, he created over five thousand subway drawings, spontaneous works of pure performance—no revising, no erasing. “Keith’s subway panels greeted you like welcome mats at each downtown stop,” wrote Ann Magnuson, denizen of the 1980s East Village art scene, “personalized petroglyphs that spelled relief from the piss-soaked wreckage of the Lower East Side.”

Robert Tallon (1932–2015)

Man with newspaper waiting for subway

(cover illustration for *The New Yorker*), 1975

Oil on canvas

**The Melvin R. Seiden Collection, gift of Janine Luke in honor
of William M. Griswold and in memory of Melvin R. Seiden,**

2011; MA 12123

SUBWAY STORIES

Queens-born Robert Tallon is best known for his *New Yorker* illustrations, including thirty-four covers between 1974 and 1988. This example reflects his fondness for disparities in scale; towering iron girders dwarf a comically small yet impeccably dressed commuter. Tallon favored a reduced palette but used color to good effect. The electrifying green conveys the energy of the E train zipping down the track.

George P. Hall & Son (act. 1886–1914)

Lower Manhattan from the Brooklyn Bridge, ca. 1905

Gelatin silver print mounted on linen

2022.181

NEW YORK STORIES

This photograph was made twenty-two years after the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge on May 24, 1883, which was overseen by the remarkable Emily Warren Roebling (1843–1903). It is one of thousands of city views produced by George P. Hall & Son at a time of rapid urban expansion. George Hall and his son James photographed Manhattan's early skyscrapers, hotels, theaters, harbors, and downtown streets, as well as Brooklyn businesses and resorts, the Battery skyline, and much more.

Faith Ringgold (1930–2024)

***Tar Beach* Woodcut, 1993**

Printed by Mulberry Press, Cambridge, MA

**The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Department of
Drawings and Prints; 688.1993**

NEW YORK STORIES

Recalling her Harlem childhood, Faith Ringgold remembered retreating to the rooftop of her building—her “tar beach”—to escape the stifling summer nights. Drawing on African American textile traditions, Ringgold created her celebrated *Women on a Bridge* quilts in the late 1980s and published her book *Tar Beach* in 1991. This related woodcut shows Cassie Louise Lightfoot flying above the George Washington Bridge with her brother Be Be. As she glides, she imagines a better life for her family. An impassioned activist, Ringgold harnessed the power of storytelling to advance women’s rights and racial justice.

Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

Leaves of Grass

Brooklyn: printed by Rome Brothers, 1855

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Laurens Maynard collection; PML 6069

NEW YORK STORIES

“I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable, I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world,” declared Walt Whitman, speaking like a true New Yorker.

According to the poet, *Leaves of Grass*, published in 1855, arose out of his “life in Brooklyn and New York,” which he chronicled with a self-described “intimacy, an eagerness, and an abandon, probably never equaled.” His lifelong project, the book celebrates in hypnotic cadences myriad facets of the city, its “numberless crowded streets,” “high growths of iron,” and “the shops and shows.” Whitman’s verses encompass people of his own working class, and he gifted readers with the extraordinary “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” which transforms the daily commute into a moment of transcendence.

Daniel Denton (ca. 1626–1703)

A Brief Description of New-York, Formerly Called New-Netherlands

**London: printed for John Hancock . . .
and William Bradley, 1670**

**Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Irwin collection,
1900; PML 3521**

NEW YORK STORIES

This tract by Englishman Daniel Denton, who had immigrated to New York, was published in 1670 to persuade his countrymen to do likewise. Remarking on the decimation of the local Indigenous population, he attributed it to “the Hand of God.” He states, “To say something about the Indians, there is now but few upon the Island [Long Island], and those few no ways hurtful but rather serviceable to the English. . . . It hath been generally observed, that where the English come to settle, a Divine Hand makes way for them by removing or cutting off the Indians, either by Wars one with the other, or by some raging mortal Disease.”

Federico García Lorca (1898–1936)

A Poet in New York and Other Poems

Translated by Rolfe Humphries (1894–1969)

New York: W. W. Norton, 1940

Purchased on the Edwin V. Erbe Jr. Acquisitions Fund, 2019;

PML 198192

NEW YORK STORIES

In 1929 Andalusian poet Federico García Lorca arrived in New York, despondent after a breakup and speaking little English. Although he was welcomed by the city's Hispanic intelligentsia and inspired by Walt Whitman, a dark vision and sense of personal alienation infuse the poems he composed as he witnessed the city's injustices. In August 1936, shortly after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Lorca, a gay socialist, was executed in Granada by a right-wing firing squad. His works were publicly burned, and many remained banned in Spain until 1971.

R. C. Bellas

Mother of Exiles

Baltimore: Xavier Press, 1986

Bequest of Julia P. Wightman, 1994; PML 250900

NEW YORK STORIES

Completed in 1886 by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, the Statue of Liberty (then known as Liberty Enlightening the World), was designed to commemorate American independence and to act as a national symbol—a light to guide other nations seeking to abolish monarchy. Only later, after Emma Lazarus’s 1883 sonnet “The New Colossus” had been inscribed on the monument in 1903, was the statue viewed as a beacon for individuals seeking freedom. Immigrants who glimpsed the “Mother of Exiles” as they approached Ellis Island inevitably associated her with the city, and she became a New York icon.