

# PAINTING IN BUFFALO

A guide for art movements focusing on  
Buffalo, NY artists from 1832-1972



# ROMANTICISM

## What is romantic art?

The romantic movement started at the end of the 1700s and reached its peak in the early 1800s.

Here is a painting by Thomas Mickell Burnham titled *The Port of Buffalo*. Thomas Mickell Burnham was an American portrait, landscape and genre painter born in Boston, MA in 1818.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY ROMANTIC ART?

1. The skies are gloomy or cloudy as a sign of imminent danger and fear of the unknown.
2. A focus on nature and/or mystical landscapes with dark mysterious atmosphere; dark in both a literal and figurative sense.

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and contrast them to *The Port of Buffalo*.

Note their similarities and differences.





**gloomy or cloudy skies**



**focus on nature**



**prominent sky**

Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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## QUESTIONS

Now that you know how to identify romantic art, does your opinion change?

Why is it called Romantic Art?

Do you think these paintings is dramatic?

Do you think the artist had an interest in nature?

What emotions do you think the artist was trying to portray?

# REALISM

## What is realistic art?

Realism was an art movement that revolted against the dark and exaggerated themes of Romanticism. Realistic art is rooted in the reality of everyday life.

You're looking at *The Shore of Capri* by Charles Caryl Coleman (1840-1928). Charles Caryl Coleman was born in Buffalo on April 25, 1840. Coleman was a painter who spent most of his life and career living in Italy.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY REALISTIC ART?

1. Realistic paintings depict the everyday reality of ordinary people from the middle and lower classes of society.
2. Realism is a sympathetic portrayal of poor, urban and rural workers in bent postures, struggling with their hard, manual labor.

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and contrast them to *The Shore of Capri*.

Note their similarities and differences.



**ordinary people**

**workers in bent postures**

Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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## QUESTIONS

Do you think that the painting, *The Shores of Capri*, is a Realist painting?  
Why or why not?

Does it feel like you could step into the paintings?  
Can you hear the waves in this painting? Feel the wind on your face?

What realistic scene would you create?  
What kind of work or landscape would you focus on?



# IMPRESSIONISM

## What is impressionist art?

Impressionism started in France by a group of young artists who rebelled against the art exhibitors of the time, called The Salon. In their rebellion, they formed a new style of painting, impressionism. This art movement was most prominent in the 1870s and 1880s.

This is *Five O'Clock Tea in the Studio* by Frank Penfold. Frank C. Penfold was a landscape, marina, and portrait painter. He was born in Lockport, New York, in 1849, to a family of artists. He was Buffalo's best-known and most famous artist of the early twentieth century. Around 1877, Penfold decided to further his studies abroad. He traveled to France, and exhibited most notably at The Salon in 1882-1885.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY IMPRESSIONIST ART?

1. Look for paintings with thick dabs and blobs of paint; the choppy brushwork will make you wonder if the artist finished the painting in a hurry.
2. There's no clear outlines or many details. The very loose brush strokes are suggestive rather than outline the figure. Impressionist blend colors next to each other to blur any lines or details.
3. If the painting is uncharacteristically indoors, it would still portray middle class socociety. They will be drinking, dining or dancing. The paintings show them in settings that include bars, cafés, opera houses and ballet classes.

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and constrast them to *Five O'Clock Tea in the Studio*.

Note their similaries and differences.



**thick blobs of paint**



**no clear outlines**



**maybe indoors**

Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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## ACTIVITY

Study the details of the painting, *Five O'clock Tea in the Studio*. Look at the setting, the posture of the people and the colors. What are they doing in this painting?

Write 1 - 3 paragraphs imagining the story behind the painting. Try to put yourself in the person's shoes, think about how they are feeling and what they might be thinking about at that moment. Imagine how it would feel like to be in that setting. Describe the sounds they can hear, the smells, how their body feels in that position. Try to use lots of adjectives (descriptive words).

Once you have written your paragraphs, you could try to write a full short story, with a beginning, middle and end. You could imagine what happens to those people after they leave the scene and create a whole adventure for them.

# POST IMPRESSIONISM

## What is post-impressionist art?

After Impressionist artists created this new style of art, the Post Impressionists wanted to continue to innovate and push boundaries. This art movement lasted from about 1885-1910.

You're looking at *The Mountaineer*, by Alexander O. Levy. Alexander Levy was a Western New York painter, illustrator, and printmaker. He was born May 26, 1881, in Bonn, Germany. His family immigrated to America when Levy was three. In 1909, Levy moved to Buffalo where he worked as a commercial artist, illustrator, and painter for the remainder of his life.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY POST-IMPRESSIONIST ART?

1. The main characteristic among all the various Post-Impressionist styles is heavy outlines. Artists painting in this style no longer blur outlines or rely on that fuzziness that Impressionists used.
2. Because this is a period of painting rather than a style of painting, artists who painted this way carried their unique style to many other art movements in the future. Post-Impressionist's inspired future art movements like Cubism, Surrealism and Expressionism.

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and contrast them to *The Mountaineer*.

Note their similarities and differences.





**clear outlines**



**focus on form**

Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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# SYMBOLISM

## What is symbolism art?

Symbolism was an art movement in response to Realism and Impressionism. Symbolist painters wanted their paintings have meaning beyond the figures that they drew.

This is *The Spirit of Niagara* by Evelyn Rumsey Cary. Evelyn Rumsey Cary was a Buffalo painter and patron of the arts. She was born in 1855 in Buffalo and lived in her family home throughout her life. In 1901, she created the official emblem of the Pan-American Exposition, *The Spirit of Niagara*. Capturing the spirit of Niagara Falls, the feminine figure in the piece has been deemed the original maid of the mist and is perhaps Cary's best-known work.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY SYMOBLISM ART?

1. Many symbolism paintings feature main figures that are statuesque
2. As the name of the art movement implies, the paintings display objects—symbols—that represent abstract ideas. Extending the symbolism to a whole painting makes it **allegorical**. In Remember in symbolism art every has meaning!

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and constrast them to *The Spirit of Niagara*.

Note their similaries and differences.



### **statuesque figures**

Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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## **QUESTIONS**

Look at our painting, *Spirit of Niagara*.

What images are shown that seem odd?

Could they have a deeper meaning?

What do you think the artist was trying to say with this painting?

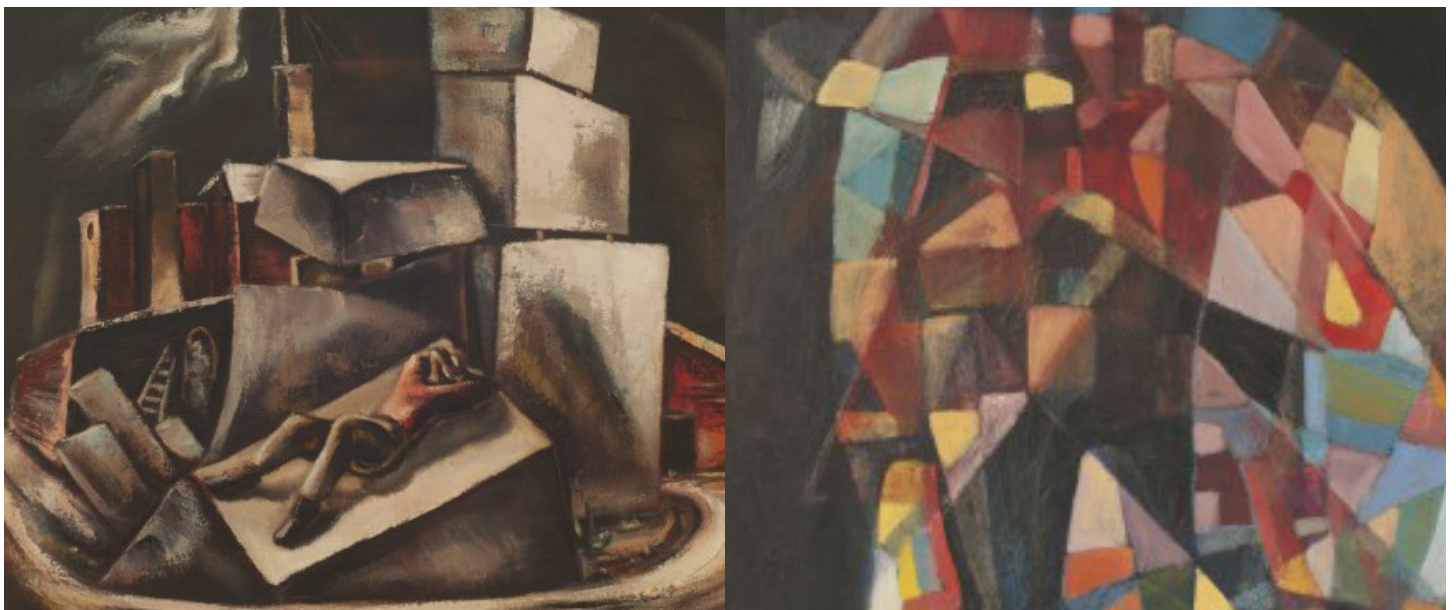


# CUBISM

## What is cubist art?

Cubism was started by two artists, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. Cubist art focuses on looking at objects and figures in different ways- depicting three dimensions on a two dimensional or flat surface. Cubist's, break up the subject into many different shapes and then repaint it from different angles. This art movement lasted from 1908 to 1920.

Here are two examples of cubist art. On the left is, *Night Shift* by James Vullo and on the right is an untitled work by Joseph Orfello. James Vullo was a noted artist and teacher. Born in Buffalo May 29, 1914, he lived on the city's West Side for most of his life. He reflected on his love and appreciation for the city through his art, which primarily consisted of regional landscapes and incorporated cubist and expressionist elements. Joseph Orfello was a Buffalo-based painter and sculptor born January 5, 1926. He studied for two years at the Albright Art School before serving in World War II beginning in 1943. Following his return from service in 1946, he continued his artistic training at the Art Institute of Buffalo. While Orfello was primarily a watercolorist, this painting represents a rare but successful experiment with cubism.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY CUBIST ART?

1. Paintings are composed of little cubes and other geometric shapes (e.g. squares, triangles and rectangles). Objects are deconstructed and then broken-up and combined with other shapes.
2. Cubist paintings are often monochromatic. You'll find muted colors. Artists would choose one basic color for the entire work, and use variations of that color throughout.

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and contrast them to *Night Shift* and *Untitled*.

Note their similarities and differences.



**geometric shapes**

Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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## ACTIVITY

### Cardboard Cubism Project

Start with a piece of cardboard, about 8"x10". Cut up small pieces of cardboard (triangle, rectangle, square shapes) to use as a material to create your cubist artwork. Next, paint your various pieces of cardboard using lots of different colors. Once your pieces are dry, use glue to fix the pieces together. One at a time, arranged in a cubist fashion. If the artwork is to be hung later, a loop of yarn can be attached for hanging purposes. Encourage students to have fun and be creative! Some students may even add lines, dots, etc. while painting.





# ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

## What is abstract expressionism?

New York City became the world's center of modern art during the years that followed World War II. Abstract Expressionism has no subject matter. These paintings consist mostly of lines, shapes, and colors. Even though abstract art has no subject matter, the artist is usually trying to convey some kind of emotion.

Take a look at Lawrence Calcagno's painting, *Red #4*. Lawrence Calcagno was born in San Francisco in 1913. His paintings range from abstract landscapes to free-form abstract expressionism, and his saturated color palate and foggy compositions reflect his San Franciscan roots. Calcagno considered his aesthetic to be derived from elements of nature: the sea, sky, horizons, and darkness of night. His work points out and illuminates the mystery and solitude of man's existence in the universe.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST ART?

1. Look for large canvases covered and smeared in blobs, swirls and splatters of paint. The spectacle of creating the artwork was in a sense more important than the artwork itself.

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and contrast them to *Red #4*.

Note their similarities and differences.





**large canvases and splatters of paint**

Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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## ACTIVITY

Abstract expressionists were also influenced by a type of surrealist art called automatism.

### **What is automatism?**

This means you don't plan what you're going to draw or paint, you rely on chance and happy accidents to make your picture.

### **How to make Automatism Art**

You'll need paper and a pencil. Place your pencil on the paper. Next, close your eyes and let your hand guide the pencil all over the paper. Then open your eyes. You just made your first automatism artwork!

# OP ART

## What is op art?

Op art is short for 'optical art'. The word optical is used to describe things that relate to how we see.

Check out this untitled painting by Donald Robertson. Painter and educator Donald Robertson was born in Springfield, Illinois in 1925. Known for his optical paintings, he studied under Joseph Albers, the father of optical art. Much of his work consists of geometric shapes with progressive beams of color that radiate from a center, which gives a phosphorescent-like effect and makes the shapes almost seem to pulsate or move inside each other.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY OP ART?

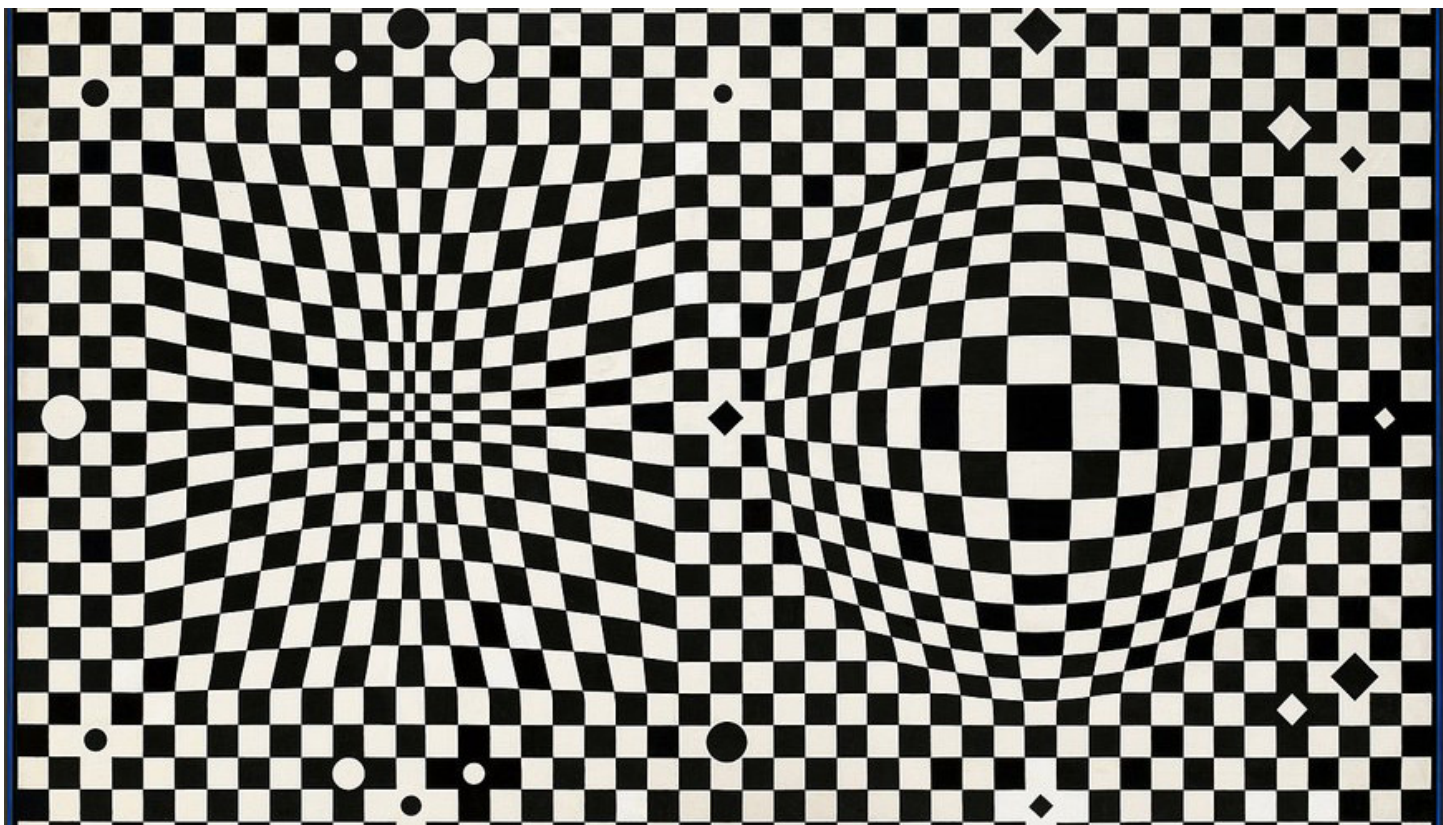
1. Artists use shapes, colors, and patterns in special ways to create images that look as if they are moving or blurring

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and contrast them to *Untitled*.

Note their similarities and differences.





Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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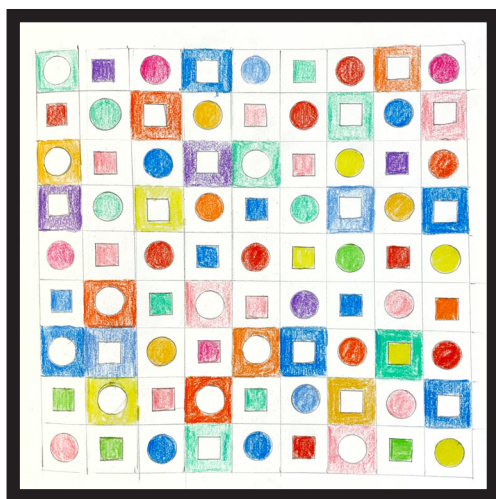
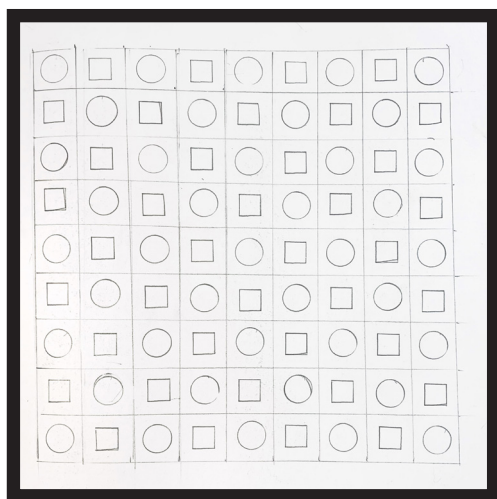


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## ACTIVITY

### Op Art Project

Cut your paper down to a 9x9" square. Using a pencil and ruler, draw a 1" square grid on the paper. Using a circle template and a ruler, draw circles and squares in your desired pattern inside the grid. Use warm, popping colors to fill in part of each section of the grid. Use cool, receding colors to fill in the rest of the grid.





# PHOTO REALISM

## What is photo realism?

Photorealism is a painting style characterized by the artist's detail and precision.

Unlike realism art, which portrayed the realistic views of the world while rendering figures realistically, this movement rejected painterly qualities and produced paintings that look like photos!

Take a look at these paintings by Walter Garver (*Street Scene*) and Paul Wiesenfeld (*Interior*). Walter Garver is a realist painter who incorporates surrealist and abstractionist principles to illuminate Buffalo's urban landscapes and city scenes; these scenes oftentimes include decayed buildings, old windows and doors, and shadowy figures in passages which "are not vital and filled with life, but dark and foreboding and signal deeper alienation and further destruction." Paul Wiesenfeld was an American realist painter who created comprehensive interior scenes and portraits. He was born April 2, 1942, in Los Angeles, California.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY PHOTO REALIST ART?

1. They are very easy to recognize by their striking similarities to life, they look like photos!

## COMPARE

Look at the paintings on the next page, compare and contrast them to *Street Scene* and *Interior*.

Note their similarities and differences.



**hyper realistic details**

Write down if you notice any more similarities or differences:

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## QUESTIONS

If you were to paint a photo realistic painting, what would your subject be?

Would you paint your neighborhood like Walter Garver or your living room like Paul Weisenfeld?

## Artwork References in Order of Appearance:

1. Thomas Mickell Burnham [Possibly] (1818 - 1866), *The Port of Buffalo*, Circa 1835, undated; oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches; Collection of John Tieman
2. Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, Circa 1817, oil on canvas, 38.5 x 29.1 inches; Collection of Kunsthalle Hamburg
3. John Constable (1776-1837). *The Hay Wain*, 1821, oil on canvas, 51.2 x 72.9 inches; Collection of National Gallery
4. J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), *The Grand Canal - Venice*, Circa 1835, oil on canvas, 35.8 x 48 inches; Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art
5. Charles Caryl Coleman 1840-1928, *The Shore of Capri*, 1890; oil on canvas, 39 x 52.75 inches; Collection of The Buffalo Club
6. Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875), *The Gleaners*, 1857, oil on canvas, 32.8 x 43.3 inches; Collection of Musee d' Orsay
7. Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), *The Stone Breakers*, 1849, oil on canvas, 64.9 x 101.2 inches; destroyed
8. Frank C. Penfold (1849-1921), *Five o'clock tea in the studio*, Buffalo New York, 1881; oil on canvas, 32 x 40 inches; Collection of the Burchfield Penney Art Center, Purchased with support from Jim and Joy Brandys, Joan and Gary Crosby, Donna and Bear Dusel, Scott Propeack and Heidi Freedman, Scott Goldman, Peter Heffley, Carolyn Morris-Hunt and Tim Hunt, John and Carol Kociela, Frank Kowsky, Gina and Erik O'Neill, Russell Ram, Janet M. and Richard H. Wetter, and Michael Wood, 2018
9. Claude Monet (1840-1926), *Woman with a Parasol*, 1875, oil on canvas, 39 x 32 inches; Collection of National Gallery of Art
10. Edgar Degas (1834-1917), *The Star (Dancer on Stage)*, Circa 1878, pastel, Collection of Musee d' Orsay
11. Edouard Manet (1832-1883), *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere*, 1881-1882, oil on canvas, 37.7 x 51.1 inches; Collection of Courtuld Institute of Art
12. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), *La Goulue arriving at the Moulin Rouge*, 1892, oil on canvas; Collection of Museum of Modern Art
13. Paul Cezanne (1839-1906) , *The Bather*, 1885, oil on canvas, 50 x 38 inches; Collection of Museum of Modern Art, Lillie P. Bliss Collection. Conservation was made possible by the Bank of America Art Conservation Project
14. Evelyn Rumsey Cary (1855-1924), *The Spirit of Niagara*, 1901; oil on canvas, 37 x 30 inches; Collection of The Buffalo History Museum
15. Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), *The Dream*, 1883, oil on canvas, 32.2 x 40 inches; Collection of Musee d' Orsay



16. James J. Vullo (1914-1999), *Night Shift*, ca. 1940s; oil on canvas, 22 x 27 inches; Private Collection
17. Joseph Orffeo (1926-2013), *Untitled*, ca. 1965; oil on canvas, 35 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches; Private Collection
18. Pablo Picasso, *Le Pigeon aux petit pois (Pigeon with Peas)*, 1911, oil on canvas; missing after art theft from Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 2010
19. Lawrence Calcagno (1913-1993), *Red #4*, 1957-58; oil on canvas, 46 x 35 inches; Collection of University at Buffalo Art Galleries: Gift of the David K. Anderson Charitable Remainder Trust, 2014
20. Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), *Convergence (Number 10)*, 1952, enamel and oil on canvas, 154 x 93 inches; Collection of Albright Knox Art Gallery
21. Mark Rothko (1903-1970), *Orange and Yellow*, 1956, oil on canvas, 90 x 70.8 inches; Collection of Albright Knox Art Gallery
22. Donald C. Robertson (1925-1984), *Untitled*, 1969; oil on canvas, 60 x 40 inches; Collection of Daniel and Shelley Fogel
23. Victor Vasarely (1906-1997), *Vega III*, 1957-59, oil on canvas, 51 x 76 inches; Collection of Guggenheim
24. Walter R. Garver b. 1927, *Street Scene*, 1967; oil on canvas, 29 1/4 x 39 1/4 inches; Collection of Daniel and Shelley Fogel
25. Paul Wiesenfeld (1942-1990), *Interior*, 1972; oil on canvas, 40 x 60 1/2 inches; Collection of Daniel and Shelley Fogel
26. Charles Bell (1935-1995), *Gumball No. 10*, 1973, 1978-83, oil on canvas, 66 x 66 inches; Collection of Guggenheim
27. Audrey Queen (1931-), *Queen*, 1975; Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art

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