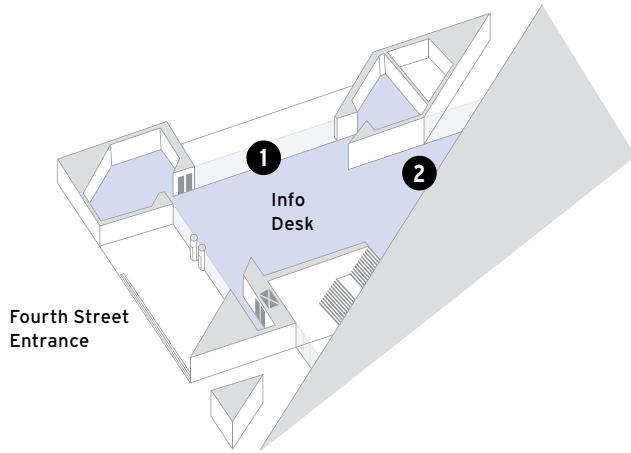


LESS THAN AN HOUR?

East Building Highlights

A short tour of twenty-three works of modern and contemporary art in the National Gallery of Art collections



Ground Level



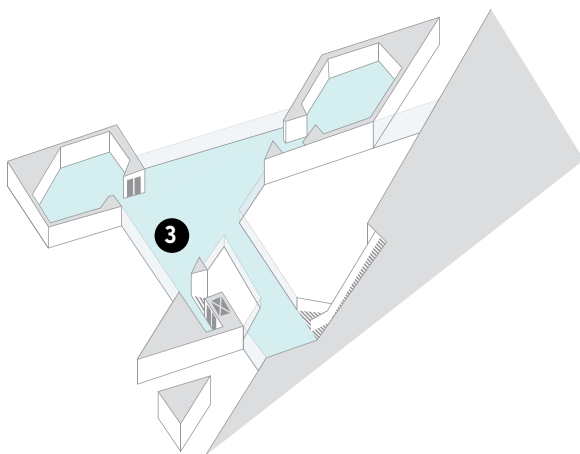
1 **Andy Goldsworthy**
Roof, 2004–2005 (detail)

Created for this site, *Roof* consists of nine hollow domes of stacked slate. The view from the Mezzanine reveals a rippling configuration around velvety black oculi. "I wanted to make a piece that had a physical connection between the city and its origins," Goldsworthy has said, referring to a geologic past before the construction of Washington's famous domes and neoclassical architecture. The forms also recall human-made and natural constructions—from burial chambers to bubbles.



2 **Ellsworth Kelly**
Color Panels for a Large Wall, 1978

The 18 color panels of Kelly's work spread out across the space available and might go further if given the opportunity. "I propose a new scale of painting, a closer contact between the artist and the wall, providing a way for painting to accompany modern architecture," Kelly declared in 1951. What interests him is space and color, not expression; anonymity, not intimacy. He said that he preferred viewers to stand back from his work rather than scrutinize it up close.



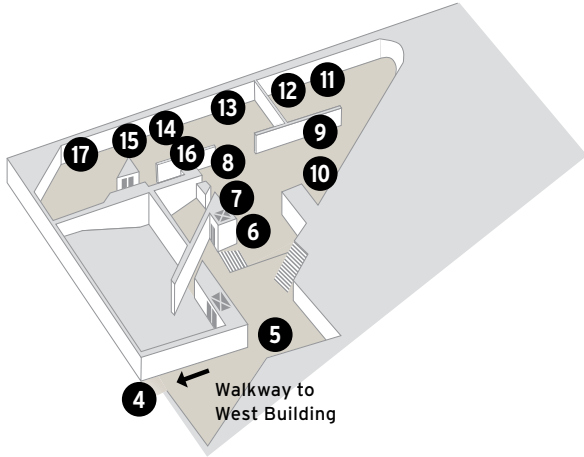
Mezzanine

3 **Rachel Whiteread**
Ghost, 1990

Plaster's normal domestic application—to build up walls that enclose space—has been turned inside out. A room's interior, stripped of its protective architectural shell, has become a tangible volume. Its features—fireplace, door, and window—now recede, like ghosts. Habitable space, occupied by humans, disappears into an airless solid (but one with cracks).



Please note that gallery configurations and wall locations change and may not be exactly as shown. Individual works of art may also be temporarily off view. Please do not touch works of art; maintain a one-foot distance.



Concourse Art since 1950

4 Leo Villareal *Multiverse*, 2008

The light sculpture *Multiverse* inhabits the busy passage between the East and West Buildings. Enclosed by keyhole-shaped entry points, it is a vast, continually unfolding constellation of programmed LEDs, its sequences unlikely ever to repeat. The title notes the work's celestial aspect and infinitude.



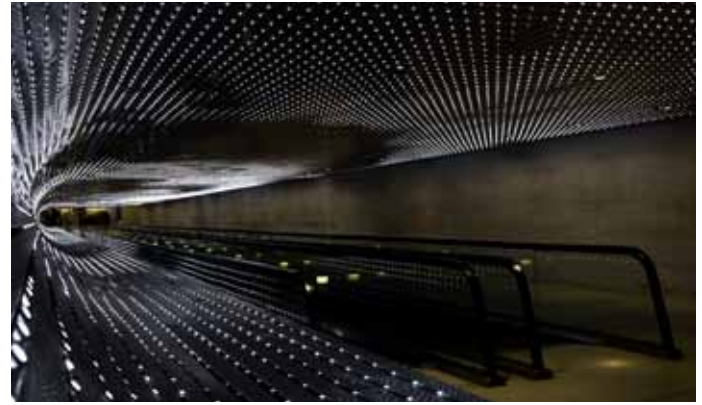
5 Richard Serra *Five Plates, Two Poles*, 1971

Like a house of cards, this "plate-and-pole" work seems intimidatingly precarious, yet also in perfect balance. Move around it to shift your experience of its weight, mass, and gravity.



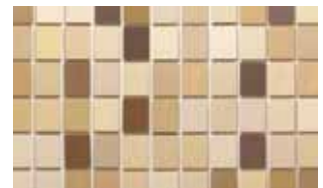
6 Chuck Close *Fanny/Fingerpainting*, 1985 (detail)

With thousands of applications of finger to canvas, Close created subtle gradations of tone. The effect is paradoxically photographic, highlighting every wrinkle and pore, each strand of hair, and a satiny blouse. Closer inspection dissolves the image into an abstract pattern, a curious production both intimate and impersonal.



7 Robert Morris *Untitled*, 1967/1986

The industrial, transparent steel mesh hides nothing yet is curiously unyielding, evoking fences, cages, and incarceration. Offering neither artistic touches nor inviting surfaces, Morris' sculpture alienates us aesthetically and physically, yet its shape and pattern hold our gaze. The artist stipulated that the work could be displayed this way or turned over (as pictured), neither mode being preferred.



8 Byron Kim *Synecdoche*, 1991–present (detail)

Synecdoche is a continuing project, now comprising more than 400 panels. Finding sitters among strangers, friends, family, neighbors, and fellow artists, Kim creates an individualized panel, its size common to portrait photography, in oil paint usually mixed with wax. "Synecdoche" is a figure of speech in which a part stands for the whole or vice versa, like "canvas" for "painting." The subtitle consists of the names of the sitters, arranged alphabetically by first name.



9 Alice Neel
Loneliness, 1970 (detail)

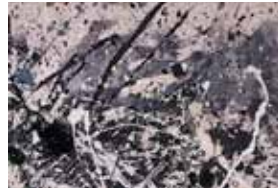
Neel's dedication to figuration and portrait painting remained constant, even when abstraction dominated the art world. Her paintings are expressive and frank, even absent a human subject. The artist called *Loneliness* a self-portrait, reflective of her emotions after her youngest son married and moved away. The setting is her apartment in New York City where she spent her last decades.



10 Henri Matisse Cut-Outs
Large Composition with Masks, 1953 (detail)

On view Mon – Sat, 10:00 – 3:00; Sun, 11:00 – 4:00

Matisse's final artistic triumph was "cutting into color." He conducted rhythmic color symphonies by "drawing" with scissors, then composing, recutting, and combining the resulting shapes. "It's like a dance," he said.



11 Jackson Pollock
Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist), 1950 (detail)

Trace the arcs of black, white, russet, silver, and blue to understand this work's delicate, layered composition. Laying canvas on the floor of his Long Island studio, Pollock then dripped and poured paint on it, "signing" it with handprints (upper corners).



12 Barnett Newman
Stations of the Cross series, 1958–1966

"I used a white line that was even whiter than the canvas, really intense," Newman said of the fourth of these works. That was when he realized he was in the middle of a series of fourteen paintings that together would represent Christ's Passion. Can abstract paintings tell a story or convey feelings of tragedy? You be the judge.



13 Mel Bochner
Theory of Boundaries, 1969–1970 (detail)

If "at/in" describes the hard-edged square at left, then "over/in" must refer to the seepage of pigment over the edges, and so on. Bochner slyly reveals the "mechanism" of his work's creation by inscribing a word fraction on each square, perhaps to teach us a different way of thinking about the artist's process.



14 James Rosenquist
White Bread, 1964

There is no realism here. Rosenquist, a former sign painter, straddles the languages of commercial art and abstraction. Four overwhelming and perfect slices of bread—as unyielding as marble—are squeezed between fields of yellow, making a peculiar sandwich. Yellow condiment spreads across the white bread the way paint covers a canvas.



15 Ed Ruscha
Lisp, 1968

Read the word on the painting aloud. It's an example of onomatopoeia, when a word's sound imitates its meaning. Someone has tried: note the telltale drops of spittle in the corner. "Writing" with paper, rather than on it, does not seem guaranteed to succeed either, however carefully done (notice the sharp folds and notch). Language, sound, and image mingle to effect communication (or not).



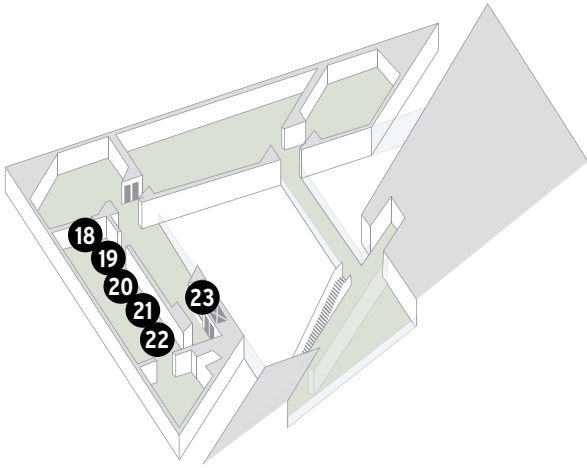
16 Tony Smith
Die, model 1962, fabricated 1968

Smith telephoned the Industrial Welding Company with instructions for fabricating *Die*, whose deceptively simple title alludes to casting, to chance, and ultimately to death. "Six foot box. Six foot under," Smith remarked.



17 Jasper Johns
No, 1961 (detail)

A study in denial? Gray tones, a mixture of hot wax and pigment, assume a lumpy, obtuse surface. Refusal dangles on a wire. Yet colors emerge from the gloom, and forms burrow underneath. Behind the suspended metal "NO," an imprint and multiple shadows of the word speak to us. It is signature Jasper Johns—mute/expressive, neutral/charged—above all, painting that enacts contradiction.



Upper Level

Early Twentieth-Century Art



19 Piet Mondrian
Tableau No. IV; Lozenge Composition with Red, Gray, Blue, Yellow, and Black, c. 1924/1925

Mondrian subverts the convention of a painting as a rectangular window by tilting it diagonally and emptying the center of color. The focus becomes the dynamic relationships among the geometric shaped and painted forms, all of which appear to be cut by the edge—except for one.



22 Joseph Cornell
Untitled (Medici Prince), c. 1953

Within the small chambers of Cornell's boxes, associations echo from objects both familiar and strange. A sad-eyed Renaissance boy behind melancholy blue glass. Isolated spheres and maps of destinations not traveled to. Fragments of French verse. With assemblages that are enigmatic and dreamlike, Cornell hoped to prompt what he called "sparkings" of the imagination in the mind of the viewer.



18 Juan Gris
Fantômas, 1915

Fantômas, sadistic protagonist of bestselling early twentieth-century crime novels—said to be nowhere and everywhere at the same time—haunts this still life that seems anything but still. A table, a glass, a newspaper, some fruit, a pitcher, a pipe, a chessboard, and more: each offers only a trace of itself, a contour here, texture or color there.



20 Marsden Hartley
The Aero, 1914 (detail)

The boldly colored shapes and forms of *The Aero* are abstracted from German military uniform emblems and regimental flags. It is an homage to the death of a young German officer whom Hartley loved and the military spectacle the artist witnessed in Berlin during preparations for World War I.



23 Hans Hofmann
Autumn Gold, 1957 (detail)

Luscious slabs of acid color deliver a visceral experience of paint and process. Hofmann, a European émigré to the United States, became an influential teacher to abstract expressionist artists in New York. He said his works were inspired by the dynamic experience of vision, the simultaneous perception of image and of depth, which he nicknamed "push/pull."

21 Alberto Giacometti
The Invisible Object (Hands Holding the Void), 1935

The hieratic and frontal pose of this otherworldly bronze goddess connects her to archaic times, yet the blank, staring face is derived from a modern-era protective mask. Immobilized behind the mask, and within her thronelike enclosure, only the goddess' hands are left free to communicate. They delicately describe an absence—or perhaps a memory.

