

ABOUT THE ART

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Art Since 1950

Gallery 12

ACKLAND

QUESTIONS?

Contact us at acklandlearn@unc.edu

ACKLAND ART MUSEUM

The University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill
101 S. Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Phone: 919-966-5736

MUSEUM HOURS

Wed - Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sun 1 - 5 p.m.

Closed Mondays & Tuesdays.

Closed July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve,
Christmas Day, & New Year's Day.

About About the Art

The Ackland's *About the Art* guides offer information about every work of art from the Museum's collection that is on view in galleries 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. All of these galleries are marked on the Gallery Map available at the desk in the Lobby. In the bottom right corner of the label beside each object, there is an open book symbol with a number. You can find the same symbol and number on the top of the corresponding page in *About the Art*.

Within each entry, you can find the following information:

- At the top of the page, you'll see a thumbnail image, the title of the object, who made it and with what materials, and where and when it was made
- Next, you'll see bullet points with information or observations about the object (more or fewer, depending on how much we know about the object so far). There is no standard formula for what kinds of information appears, but you will often find comments on historical context, style, and materials.
- In keeping with the Ackland's tagline, "Look Close, Think Far," the first bullet point will often highlight something visible in the work of art itself.
- You will find names, phrases, and concepts that could be good internet search terms for those who want to learn more
- When specialized terms are used, you'll see a definition, helpful contextual information, or language suitable for an internet search.
- Whenever we know the artist's name, there will be some details about the artist's life, often under the heading "About the Artist," but sometimes as one of the bullet points.

For those visitors who want to engage further with an object, we also suggest other resources to investigate on our website: ackland.org/education/learning-resources.

The authors of *About the Art* include Ackland curators and educators who use a variety of sources. They consult museum records, art historical research, comments from outside specialists, and more.

About Gallery 12: Art Since 1950

The works of art in this gallery were selected to suggest the variety of subjects, styles, forms, and materials that artists have engaged with during the last seventy-five years. The majority of these works were made by artists from the United States, but shorter-term installations of selected prints, drawings, and photographs on the angled walls sometimes include artists from other places, drawn from the Ackland's extensive collection of modern and contemporary art from around the world.



George Segal
American, 1924 – 2000
The Legend of Lot, 1958
plaster, wood, burlap, chicken wire and
oil on canvas
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art
Fund and Gift of The George and Helen
Segal Foundation, Inc., 2009.1

About the Art

- George Segal designed this piece to blur the boundary between art and viewer, placing the life size principal figure in front of the painting.
- The piece is based on the biblical story of Lot, who fled his home in the land of Sodom, just before God destroyed it as punishment for the sins of its other inhabitants. Against the instruction of the angels who urged Lot's family to flee, his wife looked back at Sodom and was turned into a pillar of salt.
- The separation of Lot, expressively modeled in white plaster, from the boldly defined figurative painting underscores the theme of exile as he leaves his home and his wife behind. The two-dimensional figure at the left of the canvas also represents Lot.
- At the time Segal made *The Legend of Lot*, his art was transitioning away from his earlier work. He stopped making paintings of figures in the Abstract Expressionist style in favor of plaster-cast figures set amid actual life-sized environments.

About the Artist

1924: Born November 26 in New York, New York

1947–49: Studied at the Pratt Institute of Design and the University of New York

1949: Bought a chicken farm

1958: Made the *Legend of Lot*; sold his chickens and converted the farm to an art studio

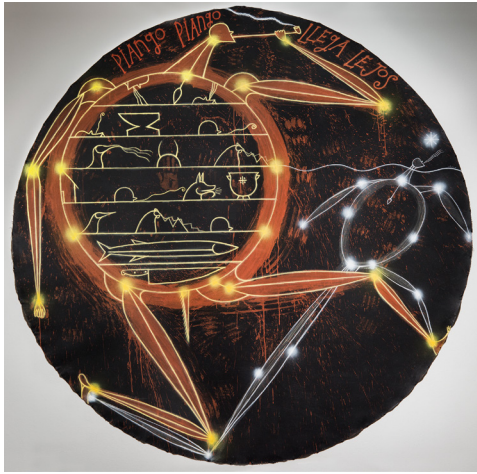
1964: Focused exclusively on sculpture, rather than painting

1976: Began casting sculptures in bronze

1999: Presented with the United States National Medal of Arts

2000: Died June 10 in South Brunswick, New Jersey

[Chat with this work of art using ArtBot. Instructions available in the Museum lobby.](#)



José Bedia

Cuban, born 1959

Piango Piango Llega Lejos (Step by Step, We Arrive Very Far), 2000

acrylic stain and oil pastel on canvas
Ackland Fund, 2001.2

About the Art

- The title is drawn from the phrase painted at the upper edge of the work: Piango Piango Llega Lejos. About this phrase, Bedia said, “‘Piango Piango’ is a Kongo phrase that means ‘slowly, slowly,’ or ‘step by step.’ It is something that an elder would say to a young person. You know, step by step — be patient — you will get there. That’s why this guy has a turtle body.”
- On the main figure’s back are items related to the Palo Monte faith, an Afro-Cuban religion derived from Central African beliefs to which Bedia adheres. They include the iron reliquary vessel, Cuba’s *arriero* bird, and the anvil.
- Bedia has also spent significant time studying with the indigenous Lakota and participating in their sweat lodge rituals. The unframed circular canvas of this work can be seen as reminiscent of Plains Indian hide paintings.

About the Artist

1959: Born on January 13 in La Havana, Cuba

1981: Received his BFA from the Instituto Superior de Arte de la Habana, Cuba

1983: Applied for and completed initiation into Palo Monte

1985: Apprenticed with a Lakota shaman

1990: Emigrated to Mexico

1993: Emigrated to Miami

2000: Created *Piango Piango Llega Lejos (Step by Step, We Arrive Very Far)*



Barkley L. Hendricks
American, 1945 – 2017
New London Niggah / Big Chuck (Charles Harvey), 1975
oil and acrylic on linen canvas
Ackland Fund, 2008.6

About the Art

- Barkley Hendricks sets a realistic figure against an unreal, abstract, blue field of color. The absence of any environment and of any objects in Charles Harvey's hands emphasize the presence and power of his body.
- Hendricks matches the subject's self-confident, proud pose with the title's forceful use of a term that is a vernacular version of a traditional racial slur that is sometimes used by African Americans as a gesture of reclamation.
- Harvey was an acquaintance of Hendricks' and posed for him on several occasions. Hendricks lent Harvey the Yale t-shirt he wears in this painting; he preferred the way its white color contrasted with the blue background to the black t-shirt Harvey had been wearing.
- Hendricks kept this painting for over thirty years, until the Ackland bought it in 2008.

About the Artist

1945: Born April 16 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1967: Graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia

1972: Graduated from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, receiving a bachelor's and master's degree; began teaching at Connecticut College in New London

1975: Made the Ackland's painting

1984–2002: Turned to photography instead of painting

2008: *New London Niggah/Big Chuck (Charles Harvey)* was included in the exhibition *Barkley L. Hendricks: Birth of the Cool*, organized by the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina

2010: Retired from Connecticut College

2017: Died April 18 in New Haven, Connecticut



Julie Heffernan
American, born 1956
Self-Portrait as Dirty Princess, 2004
oil on canvas
Ackland Fund, 2005.2

About the Art

- Instead of a traditional ballgown, Julie Heffernan adorns her semi-nude body with a huge skirt composed of flowers, dead fish, and dead animals, combining elements of traditional portraiture with still life painting.
- Heffernan set this scene in the Long Gallery at the Royal Palace in Brussels, Belgium, which she represents in shimmering splendor. Light from a glowing chandelier and ornate sconces is reflected in the mirrored doors and the polished floor.
- By presenting a royal figure standing grandly in this lavish hall and dressed in an abundance of flora and fauna, Heffernan critiques the excesses of power – both historical and contemporary – in which decisions by those in authority can foment disorder and destruction in faraway places.

About the Artist

1956: Born in Peoria, Illinois

1985: Graduated from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, with a master's degree in painting

1992–93: Taught at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

1997: Began teaching at Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey

2004: Painted the Ackland's *Self-Portrait as Dirty Princess*

2011: Elected National Academician to the National Academy of Design in New York, New York

2014: Co-founded the online journal *Painters on Paintings*



Hung Liu
American, born in China, born 1948 - 2021
Peaches, 2002
oil on canvas
Ackland Fund, 2002.7

About the Art

- The central figure in this painting is based on a historical photograph, one of a group of photographs of Chinese prostitutes that Hung Liu discovered in a Beijing archive in 1991.
- While in some places the oil paint is noticeably thick (as in the blossom at the woman's collar), there are also drip marks extending down the surface of the canvas, made with much thinner mixtures of paint. The drips, together with the woman's impassive expression, convey a mood of sadness.
- The peaches and bats (often symbols for happiness) swirling around the woman's head were inspired by an eighteenth-century ceramic plate that the artist studied at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. An image of a similar plate is printed to the right.



Dish with Peaches and Bats, 18th century; Porcelain with overglaze enamels. 20.7 cm. diameter. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

About the Artist

1948: Born February 17 in Changchun, Jilin Province, China
1968: Worked as a farm worker during the Cultural Revolution in China
1981: Completed graduate study at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, China
1984: Immigrated to the United States; attended graduate school at the University of California at San Diego
1990: Began teaching at Mills College in Oakland, California
2002: Painted the Ackland's *Peaches*
2014: Retired from Mills College
2021: Died August 7 in Oakland



Pablo Picasso

Spanish, 1881 – 1973

Claude at Two-Years-Old with His Horse on Wheels,
1949

oil on canvas

Lent by Alexander and Alexandra Robertson, in honor
of Julian and Josie Robertson, L2024.10

About the Art

- This is a portrait of the son, Claude, that Pablo Picasso had with French painter Françoise Gilot (1921 – 2023). It was painted while the family was living in Vallauris in the south of France.
- The vibrant tones of blue, green, purple, and red convey a sense of childhood entertainment that is fitting for a portrait of a boy and his hobbyhorse.
- This canvas was one of two that Picasso made of the same subject on June 9, 1949. In both, Claude wears a blue-and-white checked shirt.

About the Artist

1881: Born 25 October in Málaga, Spain

1888: Received lessons from his father, the painter José Ruiz Blasco

1897-98: Attended the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid, Spain

1900-04: Moved between Spain and Paris, France, finally settling in Paris

1906: Met his patrons Leo and Gertrude Stein

1910-12: Exhibited internationally from Moscow, Russia, to New York

1916-24: Designed five complete ballet productions

1940-44: Lived in Spain during World War II before moving to Southern France

1949: Made *Claude at Two-Years-Old with His Horse on Wheels*

1973: Died 8 April in Mougins, France



Marc Swanson

American, born 1969

Untitled (Looking Back Buck), 2004

crystals, polyurethane foam, and adhesive
Ackland Fund, 2012.11

About the Art

- Placed above eye level, *Looking Back Buck* recalls the way hunting trophies are hung on the wall. But most hunting trophies are not covered in glittering crystals, and the animal heads face forward, not back.
- A hunting trophy like this complicates the ideas of manliness often associated with such totems. There is also a hint of vulnerability in the exposed neck and head position.
- A son of a small-town New England hunter, Marc Swanson spent his twenties immersing himself in San Francisco's gay culture scene. His artistic practice investigates the dualities inherent in these disparate life experiences.

About the Artist

1969: Born in New Britain, Connecticut

1990s: Moved to San Francisco, California

2004: Made the Ackland's sculpture; graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree from Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

2009: Commissioned to make an original, multiple-edition piece for the Norton Family Christmas Art Project

2012: Elected to the Board of Governors, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine



Tokumaru Kyōko
Japanese, born 1963
Rising Snake Island, 2014
unglazed porcelain
Gift of Mina Levin and Ronald Schwarz, 2020.8

About the Art

- Because the porcelain is unglazed, viewers more easily notice what appear to be shimmering pools of water cupped in descending leaves. This effect was probably achieved by introducing glass during the firing of the piece.
- The artist states, “Since Japan’s ancient Jomōn Era, the snake has been perceived as a god of wisdom in disguise or god’s messenger.”
- Tokumaru Kyōko’s works that include “island” in their titles are intended as representations of the divine spirit, or objects to which such a spirit is drawn, even in contemporary life.

About the Artist

1963: Born in Tokyo, Japan

1992: Earns her MFA in ceramics from Tama Art University Graduate School

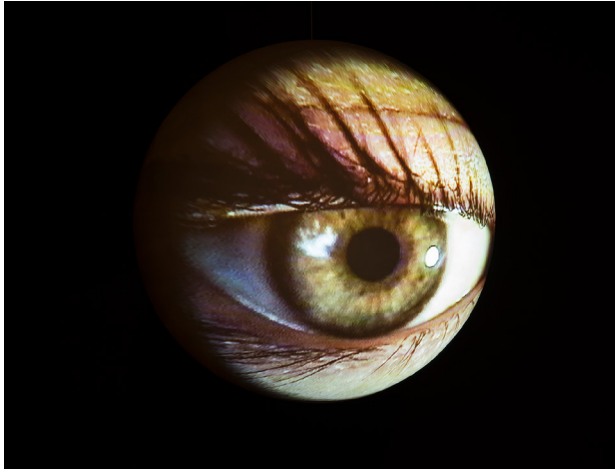
2003: Guest artist at Philadelphia’s The Clay Studio

2006: Receives a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation

2012: Guest artist at Taiwan’s Yingee Ceramic Museum

2013: Receives the Takashimaya Art Prize, an award given to artists who represent the highest levels of Japanese art and design

2014: Created *Rising Snake Island*



Tony Oursler
American, born 1957
Eye in the Sky, 1997
mixed-media video installation:
projector, DVD, DVD player,
eighteen-inch fiberglass sphere,
acrylic paint, and tripod light stand
Ackland Fund, 2000.11a-b

About the Art

- Without a body or face to convey expression, a single eye, belonging to the artist's collaborator, the performance artist Mary N., compulsively watches the rapidly changing channels on a television screen that is reflected in its iris.
- By using a liquid crystal display projector, Oursler is able to show this video on a convex surface, rather than on a flat television monitor.
- One of the major themes in Oursler's work has been the psychological effects of mass media and the visual processing of information. Watching and being watched are important topics.
- Like some strange creature from a science fiction film or surrealist dream sequence, Oursler's disembodied eye is a metaphor for the human condition in a media-saturated age.
- The artist makes no attempt to hide the mechanics of this work.

About the Artist

1957: Born in New York

1979: Earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California

1977-1989: Created installations involving handmade video tapes, sound, and language mixed with sculptural elements

1991: Began working with LCD video projectors

1992: Exhibited work in *Documenta 9* in Kassel, Germany

1997: Created the Ackland's *Eye in the Sky*

1999-2001: Exhibited work in *Introjection*, a mid-career survey at Williams College Museum of Art



Horst Egon Kalinowski
German, 1924 – 2013
Condottiere, 1964
leather and wood
Ackland Fund, 64.12.1

About the Art

- This piece is an assemblage, which is an art form that is made by assembling disparate elements that have been scavenged by the artist or bought for the purpose. Often those elements come from within everyday objects.

- Much of Kalinowski's work features leather as a medium. In an interview, he said:

My style began when I was studying at the academy and I began to feel deeply unsatisfied with the limitations of pastel colors and so I tried to find out which material could explain me and my own feeling. At the time it was really only with my own clothes that I knew how to express myself but a voice in my head said "begin with this." Instead of copying a skin however, you take a skin and make it into artwork.

- The work's title, *Condottiere*, refers to mercenary soldiers in Renaissance Italy. Kalinowski has explained that he is drawn to leather because it bears the marks of its past life. As such, *Condottiere* could be viewed as an evocation of the injuries and scars that would mark a soldier-for-hire.

About the Artist

1924: Born in Düsseldorf, Germany

1945-1948: Was a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Düsseldorf

1950-1952: Trained in Paris, France in non-figurative painting

1956: Abandoned painting in favor of collage and assemblage

1961: Participated in the exhibition *The Art of Assemblage* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York

1964: Created *Condottiere*

2013: Died in Düsseldorf



Archie Byron
American, 1928 – 2005
Family Pain, 1988
glue, sawdust, and pigments on plywood
Gift of Ron and June Shelp, 2020.30.2

About the Art

- *Family Pain* is an example of Byron's "sawdust art," where he mixed the sawdust of his workshop with Elmer's glue, water, and pigments to produce a doughy substance that could be applied in layers to create sculptures in low relief.
- Byron's compositional choice to intertwine the legs of the two adult figures while also wrapping their arms around one another creates a visual solidity that underscores the emotional interconnectedness of the family unit.
- Byron created *Family Pain* during his second term as a city councilman. He remarked, "Part of my work is a reaction to what I see on a daily basis. The average request... is ... a kid needing food or a person needing shelter." By depicting the family unit unclothed and against a blank background, Byron suggests that the pain this family suffers could be due to a lack of material necessities.

About the Artist

1928: Born February 2 in Atlanta, Georgia

1961: Created the first African American detective agency in the United States

1975: After finding a tree root that resembled a gun, he began what he called his "tree limb art"

1977: Byron began experimenting with "sawdust art"

1981: Byron is elected to Atlanta City Council, where he serves until 1989

1988: Created *Family Pain*

2005: Died August 29 in Atlanta



Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri
Australian Aboriginal, c. 1932 – 2002
Kangaroo Dreaming, 1993
synthetic polymer paint on cotton canvas
Anonymous Loan, L2023.5

About the Art

- In Aboriginal cultures, the word “dreaming” is sometimes used in reference to the characteristics of a specific place as it relates to the artist’s individual ancestral history. In *Kangaroo Dreaming*, Tjapaltjarri refers to an area of Mount Denison Station near Alice Springs.
- The patches of gathered white wisps symbolize decorations used in dance traditions where white cockatoo feathers are part of the costumes.
- The artist was affiliated with the Papunya Tula Artists who popularized contemporary Aboriginal “dot painting.” While much of their painting tradition emerged from sacred rituals, contemporary Aboriginal artists such as Tjapaltjarri employed dotting, as seen throughout *Kangaroo Dreaming*, both to evoke the vastness of the Australian landscape and to protect their heritage by obscuring some tribal imagery from mainstream audiences.

About the Artist

c. 1932: Born in Napperby Station, Australia

1972: Joined Papunya Tula Artists, a company entirely owned and directed by Aboriginal people from the Western Desert, as a founding director

1988: London’s Institute of Contemporary Art organizes a retrospective for him, his first solo exhibition.

1993: Painted *Kangaroo Dreaming*

2002: Appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for his contribution to art and to the indigenous community. Died June 21 in Alice Springs, Australia



Sean Scully
American, born 1945
Red Durango, 1991
oil on linen
Gift of Mary and Jim Patton to honor
Josie Patton, 2001.29

About the Art

- The title of this work refers to the Mexican city and state of Durango, an area rich in minerals and ferrous metals.
- Over the course of his career, Sean Scully has developed a vocabulary for the stripe that expresses a wide range of emotions and ideas. Within a seemingly narrow iconography, the artist has produced brilliantly nuanced effects by experimenting with the dimension, color, and composition of the stripe in its vertical, horizontal, and diagonal orientations.
- By constructing his paintings on a heroic scale in thick, multi-paneled arrangements, he injects a sculptural quality that heightens the work's texture and design.

About the Artist

1945: Born in Dublin, Ireland on June 30

1949: Family moved to London

1965–67: Studied painting at Croydon College of Art

1971–72: Studied at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

1972: Awarded a Knox Fellowship to study art at Harvard University for a one-year residency

1975: Moved to the United States and settled in New York City

1977–1982: Taught at Princeton University

1983: Became a United States citizen; received a Guggenheim Fellowship and an artist fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts

1989 and 1993: Nominated for the Turner Prize by the Tate Gallery in Britain

1991: Painted *Red Durango*

2013: Became a member of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, England



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Louise Nevelson

American, born in Ukraine, 1899 – 1988

Untitled, 1982

painted wood

Gift of Jeanne Berry in Honor and Memory of B. Carroll Berry, Jr.
Class of 1954, 2020.35

About the Art

- Nevelson is known for her assemblage sculptures consisting of everyday items painted uniformly to create cohesion. Here, boxes are stacked against a wall and negative spaces between them are filled with moldings, spindles, dowels, and other fragments of furniture.
- The disparate objects, painted a monochromatic black, play with vertical lines and shapes and harken back to the Cubism and Constructivism movements, both of which used geometric shapes and lines to explore dimension and space.
- Although primarily a sculptor, Nevelson shared with the Abstract Expressionist painters who were her contemporaries an interest in creating large works that play with line, flatness, and scale. Although they appear as a collaged jumble, each piece has been deliberately placed, to evoke a sense of order.

About the Artist

1899: Born in Kiev, Russia

1905: Nevelson's family emigrated to Maine

1930s: Nevelson traveled across Europe and studied with Hans Hofmann in Munich

1941: First solo exhibition at Nierendorf Gallery

1956: First major museum acquisition by the Whitney Museum of American Art

1967: First retrospective held by the Whitney Museum

1982: Nevelson created *Untitled*

1988: Died in New York, New York



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Simon Tookoome
Canadian, Inuit, Nunavut,
Qamani'tuaq, 1934 – 2010
Dog Spirits with Pups, before
1996
colored pencil on paper
Gift of Rebecca Y. and
Bernard L. Herman, 2021.49.6

About the Art

- Dogs with spirits were a popular subject for Simon Tookoome. The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia also has a drawing by Tookoome of a dog whose body contains seven human heads. Scan the QR code on the right or visit <http://collection-online.moa.ubc.ca/search/item?keywords=simon+tookoome&row=21> to view the drawing.
- The characters in the lower right below the dog's paw represent the artist's signature in his native Inuktitut syllabary.
- Tookoome often composed images that referenced the *angakkuq* in Inuit culture, a shaman-like figure to whom shape-shifting abilities are sometimes attributed. Tookoome's uncle was an *angakkuq* who wanted his nephew to follow in his footsteps, but the artist did not do so.



About the Artist

1934: Born December 9 in Chantrey Inlet, Nunavut, Canada

1960s: Primarily made artworks from carved bone and soapstone

1969: Was a founding member of the Baker Lake (Qamani'tuaq) print shop, which operated until 1990

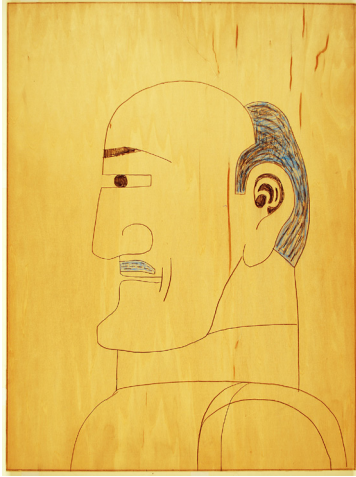
1971: Took up the medium of drawing

c. 1996: Created *Dog Spirits with Pups*

1998: Awarded first prize in a poster contest for the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary by the Canadian Olympic Committee

1999: Wrote and co-published *The Shaman's Nephew: A Life in the Far North*

2010: Died November 7 in Qamani'tuaq, Nunavut, Canada



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Saul Steinberg

American, born in Romania, 1914 – 1999

Untitled, c. 1970–80

pencil and colored pencil on wood panel

Gift of The Saul Steinberg Foundation, 2022.37.9

About the Art

- This drawing is made not on paper, but on wood panel; Steinberg enjoyed the smell of wood. Steinberg's most famous works on wood panel from the 1970s were his illusionistic *Drawing Table Reliefs* of 1973.
- The subject of this portrait is unknown. It is tempting to consider this drawing to be a self-portrait of the artist because of the figure's mustache and baldness. However, Steinberg scholars feel that this is unlikely because he never portrayed himself without glasses.
- In the late 1970s, Steinberg began drawing many portraits of visitors to his home in Amagansett, New York, and of his partner Sigrid Spaeth.

About the Artist

1914: Born June 15 in Râmnicu Sărat, Romania

1936: Contributed cartoons to humor magazine *Bertoldo*

1941: Had his first drawing published in *The New Yorker*

1942: Received his US visa and arrived in New York before receiving a commission in the US Navy

1946: Included in the exhibition *Fourteen Americans* at the Museum of Modern Art

1970s: Created the Ackland's untitled drawing

1974: Awarded gold medal for Eminence in Graphic Art by the National Institute of Arts and Letters

1976: Received an honorary doctorate from Harvard University

1999: Died on May 12 in New York, New York