NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum: Masterpieces

Twenty modern paintings from the Guggenheim collections in New York and Venice, strongest in abstraction and early twentieth-century work.



The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York is best known for Frank Lloyd Wright's spiral building, but it began as a collection of modern art. Its holdings include an important group of works by Kandinsky, alongside other artists who found ways to paint without relying on traditional representation.

This guide leaves the building aside for the paintings. The twenty chosen come mostly from New York, with a few from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. They run from a Pissarro landscape and a Cézanne portrait to Mondrian's grid and Kelly's colour panels. Kandinsky, Chagall, Miró and Pollock are each represented by a pair of works, so each can be compared with himself. Miró is crowded in one and spare in the other. Kandinsky's forms are hard to separate in one and set cleanly apart in the other. Pollock's tangled web can be set against a later painting in which eyes and pieces of bodies seem to surface.

Artline chose these works from documented Guggenheim holdings, and the selection is independent of the museum. Owning a work is not the same as showing it, so any of these may be on loan or off display. Dates and attributions follow the linked records, including their qualifications.

Explore this selection in Artline

See the selected works alongside books and events from their period, or compare when the artists lived. The books and events provide context, not evidence of direct influence. Works without confirmed dates remain in this guide.

Artworks in context Who lived when?

artlines.org/guides/guggenheim-new-york

The selection · 20

1. Paris through the Window
   Marc Chagall · 1913
2. Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red
   Ellsworth Kelly · 1966
3. Composition No. 2
   Piet Mondrian · 1922
4. Enchanted Forest
   Jackson Pollock · 1947
5. The Tilled Field
   Joan Miró · 1923–1924
6. The Hermitage at Pontoise
   Camille Pissarro · 1867
7. The Hare
   Joan Miró · 1927
8. Landscape with Rain
   Wassily Kandinsky · 1913
9. Man with Crossed Arms
   Paul Cézanne · 1900
10. Nude
    Amedeo Modigliani · 1917
11. Ocean Greyness
    Jackson Pollock · 1953
12. The Artillerymen
    Henri Rousseau · 1893
13. The Soldier Drinks
    Marc Chagall · 1911–1912
14. Three Studies for a Crucifixion
    Francis Bacon · 1962
15. New Harmony
    Paul Klee · 1936
16. Upward
    Wassily Kandinsky · October 1929
17. Cats
    Natalia Goncharova · 1913
18. At the Cycle-Race Track
    Jean Metzinger · 1912
19. The Steer
    Franz Marc · 1911
20. Windows Open Simultaneously
    Robert Delaunay · 1912

01 / 20

Paris through the Window

Marc Chagall

1913 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Marc Chagall. Paris Through the Window. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

A window looking out over a city is a familiar device, and Chagall uses it to frame a view that no street could supply. You can recognise Paris landmarks, but they share the scene with a two-faced figure, a cat with a human expression and much else besides. The city is real enough to name. The view is not, though: nobody could have seen it from any actual apartment. What lies beyond this window comes from the painter's imagination as much as from Paris.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 37.438

02 / 20

Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red

Ellsworth Kelly

1966 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Ellsworth Kelly. Blue Green Yellow Orange Red. WikiArt source label: (c) Ellsworth Kelly, all rights reserved. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/ellsworth-kelly/blue-green-yellow-orange-red-1966 · (c) Ellsworth Kelly, all rights reserved (WikiArt source label)

The title is a list, and the painting keeps to it: five upright panels of colour set side by side, with no room or landscape depicted. Where blue meets green there is no painted line, only the edge where one panel stops and the next begins. That physical division does the job an outline does in other paintings, fixing how far each colour extends. What it cannot fix is how strong each colour looks, because that depends partly on its neighbours.

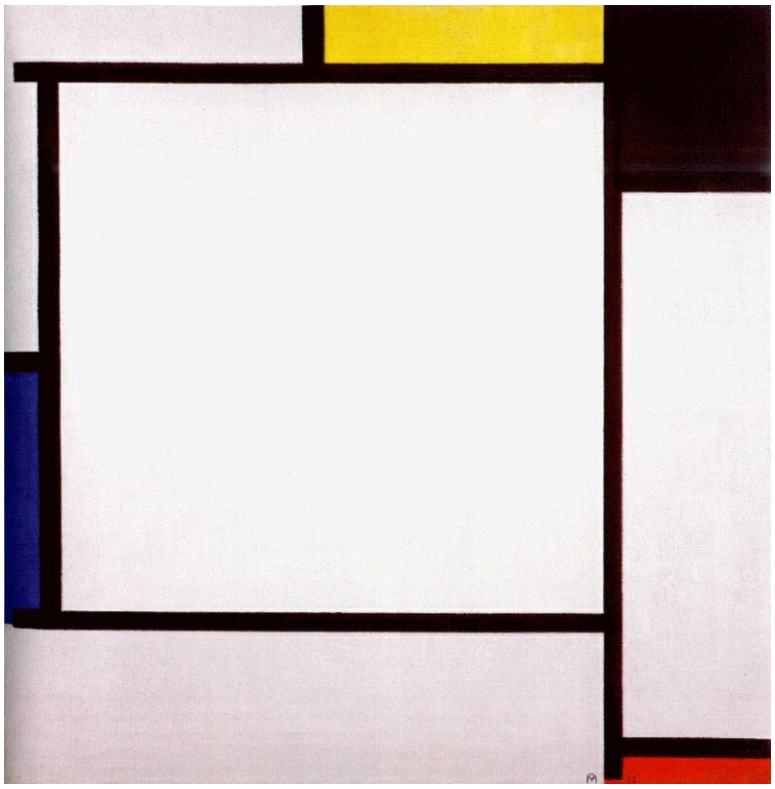
Object source · Open artwork

03 / 20

Composition No. 2

Piet Mondrian

1922 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Piet Mondrian. Composition 2. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/piet-mondrian/composition-2-1922 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

'Grid' is the obvious word, but it is not quite the right one. The rectangles enclosed by Mondrian's black lines are unequal, so no regular pattern ever forms. Much of the square is left white, and the colour is confined to smaller areas pressing in near the edges. The balance owes nothing to symmetry. At first the white can look empty, but the black divisions around it give it weight.

Object source · Open artwork

04 / 20

Enchanted Forest

Jackson Pollock

1947 · Oil and alkyd enamel paint on canvas · Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)



Enchanted Forest. WikiArt; Jackson Pollock. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Jackson Pollock

Try following a single line through Enchanted Forest, and sooner or later it disappears beneath another. The paint is oil and alkyd enamel, in black, white, gold and red. The lines overlap without forming any single object, and there is no central figure to arrive at. Even so, the web never thickens into a solid mass, because open areas between the strands keep individual lines legible.

Object source · Open artwork

05 / 20

The Tilled Field

Joan Miró

1923–1924 · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Joan Miró. The Tilled Field. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Miró gives us enough for a recognisable rural place: animals, plants, a house, flags. Then he makes the recognition unreliable. Proportions shift, details turn improbable, and the creatures do not keep to a consistent anatomy. The yellow ground holds these separate inventions together, so the eye can pass from a familiar animal to a sign that resists a name.

Object source · Open artwork

06 / 20

The Hermitage at Pontoise

Camille Pissarro

1867 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



L'Hermitage at Pontoise. WikiArt; Camille Pissarro. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

This is the earliest painting in the selection by a long way, and it has a modest subject: houses among trees on a slope, linked by the routes that run through the settlement. Pissarro lets neither the buildings nor the vegetation take over. Roofs break into the foliage, trees partly hide the houses, and the road makes sense of their scattered arrangement. Nothing monumental dominates the view. The landscape takes its structure from ordinary habitation.

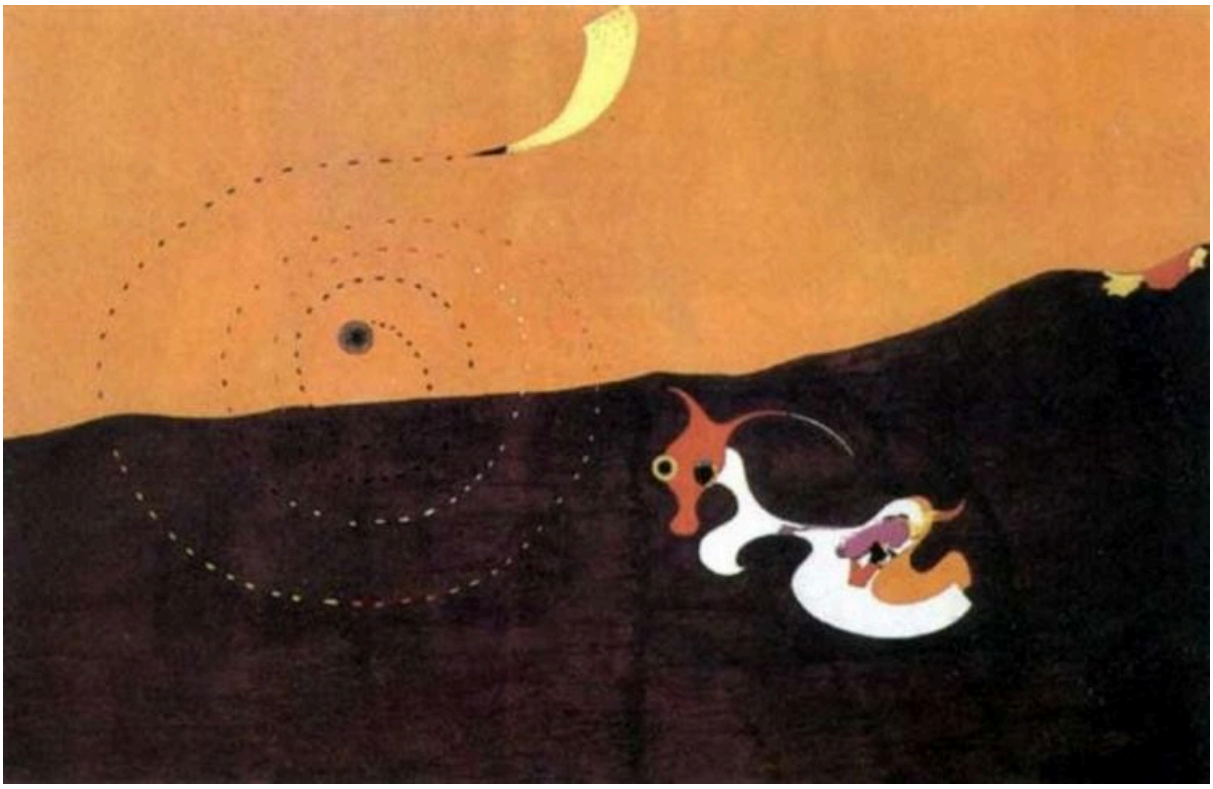
Object source · Open artwork

07 / 20

The Hare

Joan Miró

1927 · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Joan Miró. Landscape (The Hare). Image: WikiArt. Copyright protected (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Copyright protected (WikiArt label)

After the crowded inventions of The Tilled Field, Miró gives his hare a great deal of room. Much of the canvas is left to orange above a darker band, and the white, oddly jointed creature stands exposed against it. Only a few details mark it out as the animal of the title, but there are enough.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 57.1459

08 / 20

Landscape with Rain

Wassily Kandinsky

1913 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Wassily Kandinsky. Landscape with Rain. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/wassily-kandinsky/landscape-with-rain-1913 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

Here the title gives you a foothold, and a helpful one. The slanting marks read easily enough as rain. The hills and buildings are harder. Brighter and darker areas hint at them, but Kandinsky gives no stable viewpoint from which to reconstruct them. The diagonals also carry the weather across the whole surface, over forms that are already difficult to tell apart.

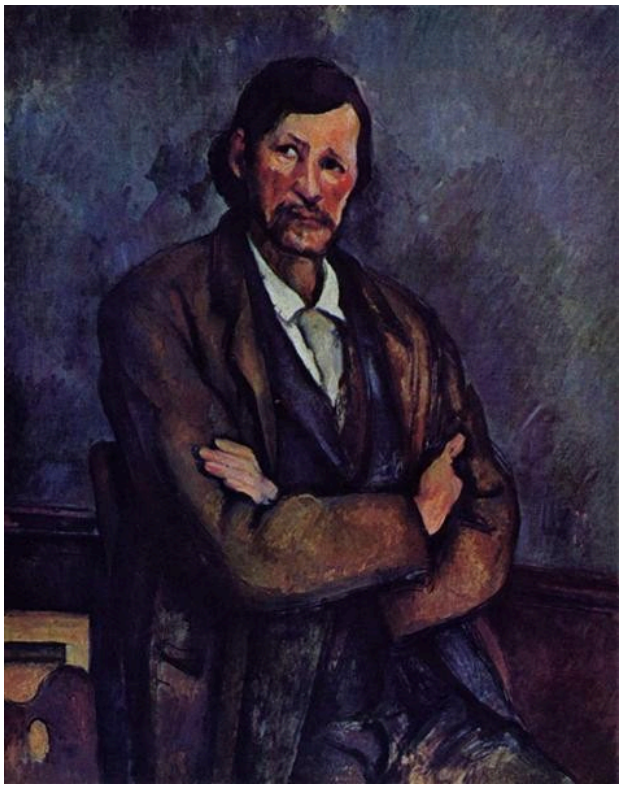
Object source · Open artwork

09 / 20

Man with Crossed Arms

Paul Cézanne

1900 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Man with Crossed Arms. WikiArt; Paul Cézanne. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

The folded arms give the sitter a compact shape, and the tilt of his head slightly unsettles it. Cézanne builds the blue coat and the face from patches of colour that stay visible. They never blend into a smooth imitation of cloth and skin. The man looks solid, but the solidity is assembled: his stillness depends on many small adjustments between neighbouring areas of paint.

Object source · Open artwork

10 / 20

Nude

Amedeo Modigliani

1917 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Nude. WikiArt; Amedeo Modigliani. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

Modigliani gives the reclining body almost the whole canvas. Little of the interior is shown and the furnishings are kept to a minimum, so you take in the pose at once and there is not much else to read. What holds the eye is the contour, a continuous line that keeps the warm flesh distinct from the darker setting. The stretched-out figure fills the picture so closely that its relation to the edges of the canvas becomes conspicuous.

Object source · Open artwork

11 / 20

Ocean Greyness

Jackson Pollock

1953 · Oil · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Ocean Greyness. WikiArt; Jackson Pollock. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Jackson Pollock

Enchanted Forest is a web that forms no object. Ocean Greyness, by contrast, keeps hinting at images. Black curves separate pale forms from a grey field, and some passages suggest eyes or parts of bodies. None of them adds up to a figure, and recognising one shape tells you nothing about the shape beside it. Despite the title, there is no dependable horizon dividing water from sky. If there is an ocean here, the grey seems to carry it alone.

Object source · Open artwork

12 / 20

The Artillerymen

Henri Rousseau

1893 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Henri Rousseau. The Artillerymen. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/henri-rousseau/the-artillerymen-1893 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

Rousseau's uniformed men gather around a cannon beneath trees, and nothing happens. There is military equipment but none of the movement of battle; the cannon simply tells you what the men's role is. The order in the scene comes from the way the group is put together. The bodies repeat, as a unit's should, but each face is individually distinct.

Object source · Open artwork

13 / 20

The Soldier Drinks

Marc Chagall

1911–1912 · Oil on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Marc Chagall. The Soldier Drinks. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Like Rousseau's artillerymen, Chagall's soldier is shown doing something other than fighting, and the action could hardly be plainer: a soldier, a drinking vessel, a table. It is the room that will not behave. Its tilted forms and figures at different scales make it hard to measure. The vessel does more to hold the subject in place than any consistent perspective could.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 49.1211

14 / 20

Three Studies for a Crucifixion

Francis Bacon

1962 · Oil and sand on canvas · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Francis Bacon. Three Studies for a Crucifixion. WikiArt source label: Francis Bacon Fair Use. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/francis-bacon/three-studies-for-a-crucifixion-1962 · Francis Bacon Fair Use (WikiArt source label)

Bacon gives the eye nowhere comfortable to rest. Bodies and meat-like forms are split across three panels instead of being gathered into one scene, and the bright orange and red settings make the pale flesh hard to overlook. Fragments of rooms provide a partial framework and little more. The title names a crucifixion, but the images do not resolve into an ordinary religious narrative, so it is fair to wonder how much of the religious subject survives beyond the word. What carries from panel to panel is the body's exposure, arranged differently each time.

Object source · Open artwork

15 / 20

New Harmony

Paul Klee

1936 · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Paul Klee. New Harmony. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Klee's rectangles work on the same principle as Mondrian's. They suggest a grid, but their proportions are unequal and nothing repeats mechanically. The two painters part company over colour. Mondrian sets his colour against broad areas of white. Klee keeps his muted throughout, with darker divisions giving each unit a different weight. The harmony of the title lies in these adjustments, which keep an order without making every part match.

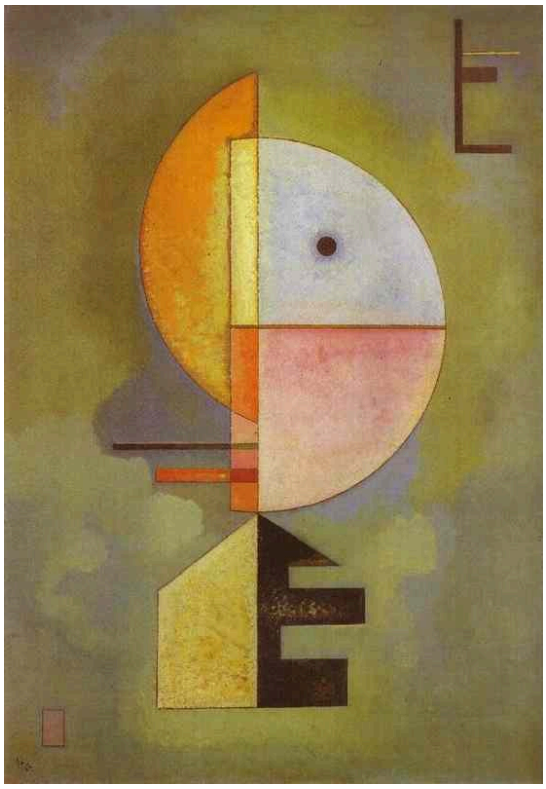
Object source · Open artwork

16 / 20

Upward

Wassily Kandinsky

October 1929 · Oil on cardboard · Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)



Wassily Kandinsky. Upward. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/wassily-kandinsky/upward-1929 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

Painted in oil on cardboard, Upward keeps its forms apart in a way Landscape with Rain never does. Enough of the turquoise-green field is left between them for their precarious connections to be easy to follow. A narrow vertical line supports semicircular and angular shapes, balanced off centre. The arrangement could pass for a figure built from parts, but the title points instead to the direction in which it seems to travel.

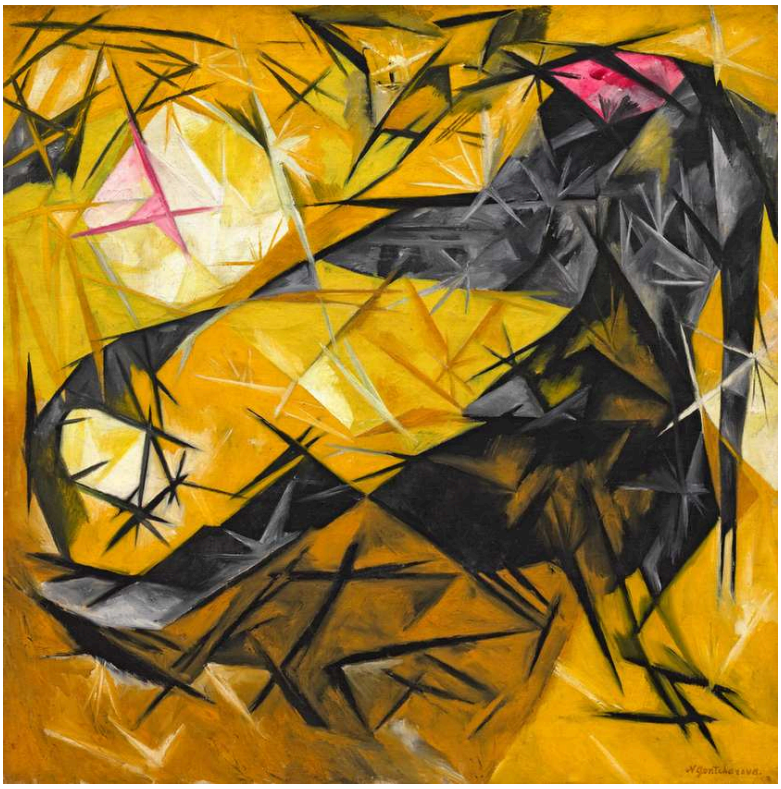
Object source · Open artwork

17 / 20

Cats

Natalia Goncharova

1913 · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Natalia Goncharova. Cats (rayist percep.[tion] in rose, black, and yellow). Image credit: Natalia Goncharova. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Resized and JPEG-compressed; selected source frame preserved. · Public domain

Finding the cats takes some effort. Yellow, pink and dark diagonals cross the surface so insistently, running through animals and background alike, that the distinction between them wears away. The title sends you looking for bodies, and they can be found. The diagonals, though, keep pulling the picture towards an order of their own.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 57.1484

18 / 20

At the Cycle-Race Track

Jean Metzinger

1912 · Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice



Jean Metzinger. At the Cycle-Race Track. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Metzinger conveys speed by crowding. Fragmented forms, lettering and glimpses of the track are pressed into close contact with the cyclist and the wheels, which remain identifiable throughout. Information from different parts of the event arrives together, and the gap between rider and setting narrows. There is no blurring of a stable view. The sense of speed comes from how much the picture shows at once.

Object source · Open artwork

19 / 20

The Steer

Franz Marc

1911 · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Franz Marc. The Steer (The Bull). Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Marc's pale steer curls into a landscape built from green, red and blue forms, and their curves echo those of its body. The animal therefore seems fitted into its setting, not laid on top of it. Colour still marks off one area from the next, while the shared shapes connect them. Of the animals in this selection, the steer is probably the one most at home in its surroundings.

Object source · Open artwork

20 / 20

Windows Open Simultaneously

Robert Delaunay

1912 · Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Robert Delaunay. Simultaneous Windows (2nd Motif, 1st Part). WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/robert-delaunay/simultaneous-windows-2nd-motif-1st-part · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

This is another window onto a city, and a very different one from Chagall's. Chagall keeps his window as a frame and fills the view beyond it with inventions. Delaunay breaks windows and view alike into overlapping areas of blue, green, yellow and red. Hints of both survive, but they compete with the divisions and connections that the colour makes by itself. The edges that ought to separate inside from outside become just more material for the surface. The last word of the title fits: the picture can be read in several directions at once and never settles into a single view.

Object source · Open artwork

Planning a visit

Enchanted Forest, Upward and At the Cycle-Race Track belong to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. The other paintings belong to the museum in New York. Check each museum's current records separately before travelling, since inclusion in this guide does not guarantee that a work is on display.

Further reading

Concerning the Spiritual in Art

Wassily Kandinsky; translated by Michael Sadleir · Read free · English

Kandinsky's own account of his ideas about colour and form, in Michael Sadleir's English translation. It sets out the painter's argument in his own words, which makes it useful company for Landscape with Rain and Upward.

Museum website · Official collection guide

Sources and visitor information checked: 2026-10-12