

Paul Chan
(American, b. Hong Kong, 1973)

Constellation Series, 2005

Ten ink-jet prints

Collection of the University of Chicago

Booth School of Business

Paul Chan reconnects the stars in constellations, showing that even ancient patterns can be reimagined. Believing that “freedom of speech is more magical than Orion’s belt,” he dedicates these new celestial patterns as monuments to civil liberties. Despite being our society’s guiding lights, these rights are fragile, imperfectly protected, and perhaps just as mythical as Perseus, Aquarius, or Gemini. Placing America in the sky as a beacon, Chan nourishes hope for the survival of democracy, “not here, but up there,” among the stars.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT,
TOP TO BOTTOM

*No cruel and unusual punishment
(formerly Perseus)*

*Right to keep and bear arms
(formerly Cancer)*

Distributive justice (formerly Orion)

Freedom of speech (formerly Centaurus)

Democracy to come (formerly Ursā Mājor)

*Right to peaceably assemble
(formerly Cassiopeia)*

*No taxation without direct representation
(formerly Andromeda)*

*Separation of church and state
(formerly Gemini)*

A jury of peers (formerly Aquarius)

A free press (formerly Ursā Minor)

Margot Bergman
(American, b. 1934)

Marie Christine, 2014

Acrylic on linen

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, gift of Joseph and Jory Shapiro
Fund, Mary and Earle Ludgin by exchange,
2014.38

An uncanny pair of eyes emerges from the sullen face of another figure. Are they rising to the surface or being subsumed? Drawing on her experience of painting on found canvases, Margot Bergman's raw, direct style speaks to the unknowable psychological depth of the women she depicts. Yet, as she explains of her own process, "I am working right now from the body and not the mind."

Isa Genzken
(German, b. 1948)

Galerie (Gallery), 1987

Concrete and steel

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, gift of Mary and Earle Ludgin
by exchange, 2011.24.a-k

The concrete and steel of Isa Genzken's *Galerie (Gallery)* are building materials in their rawest forms. The sculpture recalls the bluntness of modernist architecture, a mid-twentieth-century style that emphasized simple materials and geometric forms rather than the lavish ornament of earlier styles. Stripping and pitting the concrete, Genzken hints at the failure of the movement's utopian and supposedly universal ideals. Yet the work has an unexpected openness at its center. Change your orientation and the dense matter becomes a gallery: a space for seeing deeper.

Kate Gilmore
(American, b. 1975)

Between a Hard Place, 2008

Single-channel video

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, restricted gift of Emerge, 2010.9

Kate Gilmore punches and kicks her way through solid matter—in stilettos. In this video, the artist constructs an elaborate set of walls only to burst through them, layer after layer. The result is an abstract plane of shape and color, seemingly flattened by the camera into a formal composition. Yet her statement is expressly political: a feminist intervention dramatizing the strength and struggles of women.

Helen Mayer Harrison
(American, b. 1929)

Newton Harrison
(American, b. 1932)

*Ring of Fire: Sketch in Metaphor for
the Seventh Lagoon, 1975*

Oil, ink, graphite, and red pencil on a map
mounted on canvas

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, restricted gift of MCA Collectors
Group, Men's Council, and Women's Board,
and National Endowment for the Arts
Purchase Grant, 1980.48

Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison work collaboratively in the service of the environment. This sketch, from a twelve-year project called the *Lagoon Cycle*, uses cartography and poetry to prompt us to pay closer attention to the earth. It invites us to think about the Ring of Fire, a vast zone of frequent earthquakes deep beneath the Pacific Ocean, on a more human scale. "What if," they ask, we imagined a "simplification of biocultural complexities?"

Kenneth Josephson
(American, b. 1932)

Washington, D.C., 1975, 1975

Gelatin silver print

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, Illinois Arts Council Purchase
Grant, 1980.12

The iconic Washington Monument is mirrored once in its reflecting pool and twice more on a measuring device held up against the sky. Kenneth Josephson is interested in revealing the artifice of photography, the way a picture tells a story that might be different from reality. In this photograph, the camera has flattened and frozen the image from its own perspective, causing the device's off-center orientation. Could there be alternate vantage points from which the negative space and the monument might align differently?

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Runo Lagomarsino
(Swedish, b. 1977)

Untitled, 2010

Wall text with Letraset

Courtesy of the artist and Mendes

Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

In this text, the surface of the wall becomes a site for seeing beyond the visible.

Runo Lagomarsino aims “to create ‘a place behind the image,’ where things would seem to be slightly ajar.” This is not simply a neutral white wall located in abstract space. Reminding us to consider our own geographic specificity, Lagomarsino opens the possibility of rearranging the fraught networks that organize the global North, South, East, and West.

Jason Lazarus
(American, b. 1975)

*Standing at the Grave of Emmett Till, day of
exhumation, June 1st, 2005 (Alsip, IL), 2005*

Archival ink-jet print

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art

Chicago, restricted gift of Emerge,

Aviva Samet and James Matanky,

and anonymous donors, in memory of

Andree Stone, 2012.18

A clear day belies the violence hidden from view in this otherwise pastoral photograph. In 1955, an African American teenager named Emmett Till was lynched after being falsely accused of flirting with a white woman. His mother insisted on a public funeral to expose and serve as testimony to the violent crime. Despite the evidence, the killers were acquitted. Jason Lazarus documented the day, fifty years later, when federal authorities finally reopened the case and exhumed Till for autopsy. History, like the body, looms below the surface, drawing parallels between visibility and justice.

Esther Parada
(American, 1938–2005)

Overview #1 and #2, Site Unseen, 1979

Pencil and Van Dyke Brown emulsion
on Arches paper

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, Illinois Arts Council Purchase Grant
and gift of the artist, 1980.16.1–2

As Esther Parada's handwritten annotation suggests, this work exposes "how much and how little we see" in the negotiation between public and private domains. The photographs feature Dickson Mounds, Native American burial grounds near Lewistown, Illinois, where excavated bodies controversially were left uncovered for decades. The top image presents a detached and clinical view of the site, while Parada's technique of brushing emulsion on paper in the bottom image leaves the mounds, like centuries of rich cultural history, only partially revealed.

Pamela Rosenkranz
(Swiss, b. 1979)

*Because They Try to Bore Holes in My
Greatest and Most Beautiful Work*, 2012

Ink-jet print on photo paper and mounted
on Plexiglas

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, Bernice and Kenneth Newberger
Fund, 2012.119

The rich color of Pamela Rosenkranz's print comes from an enlarged digital reproduction of a work by French postwar artist Yves Klein. Known for his vivid blue monochromes, Klein boasted that the sky itself was his greatest artwork, with birds puncturing its purity. Rosenkranz rejects his claims to an unblemished surface. Highlighting layers of mediation and imperfection in the digital image, she deflates Klein's fantasy of total control.

Simon Starling
(English, b. 1967)

One Ton, II (Five handmade platinum/palladium prints of the Anglo American Platinum Corporation Mine at Potgieterus, South Africa, produced using as many platinum group metal salts as can be produced from one ton of ore), 2005

Platinum/palladium prints framed in acrylic boxes

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Gerald S. Elliott, Albert A. Robin by exchange, 2014.35

Simon Starling's photograph depicts a mine where one ton of ore was extracted: exactly enough to yield the precious metals used to make these five identical prints. Starling reminds us that the surface of a photograph is not merely the site of an image, but also a material object made from the stuff of the world, often requiring a disproportionately large amount of energy and resources.

Michelle Stuart
(American, b. 1938)

Turtle Pond, 1974

Earth and graphite on muslin-mounted
rag paper

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, gift of Robert and Marlene
Baumgarten, 1977.22

Michelle Stuart uses soil as pigment in her frottage scrolls. “By rubbing the paper into the earth,” she explains, “you make the image come up, like magic.” The surface of the earth blends with the surface of the paper to create a mystical monument to a particular place. These impressions function like material memories—faint traces displaced from their sources.

Jack Whitten
(American, b. 1939)

Pink Psyche Queen, 1973

Acrylic on canvas

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago, gift of Mary and Earle Ludgin
by exchange, 2012.14

Jack Whitten created this dynamic horizontal blur by scraping pink acrylic across the surface of a painted canvas. The technique both reveals and conceals the image lying below. The mountain-like shape in the center functions as a symbol buried deep within the collective consciousness of humanity. "Geologic remains are like that," he explains, "artifacts, which carry with them the psychic and physical data of our existence."