ART SPIEGELMAN

BORN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, 1948; LIVES NEW YORK

MAUS II, PAGES 23-24-25-26-27-28
1991

ARTIST REPRODUCTION
ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM COLLECTION, GIFT OF SUSAN FEINSTEIN

Art Spiegelman, son of Polish Jewish Holocaust survivors, was an established cartoonist when he began conversations with his father Vladek about his wartime experiences. The resulting three-page 1972 comic grew into the two-volume *Maus*. The book interweaves past and present, as Spiegleman illustrates Vladek's testimony along with their fraught family dynamic, intertwined with the creation of the book. Through *Maus*, Spiegelman processed his traumatic childhood, including his mother's 1968 death by suicide. Casting Jews as mice, Germans as cats, and Poles as pigs, Spiegelman turned Nazi vermin imagery against itself. *Maus* revolutionized Holocaust literature and graphic novels, earning the genre's first Pulitzer Prize.

"For me, it was powerful just because it allowed me to deal with the material by putting a mask on people. By reliving it microscopically, as best I could, moment by moment — it allowed me to at least come to grips with something that otherwise was only a dark shadow." — Art Spiegelman

ART SPIEGELMAN

BORN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, 1948; LIVES NEW YORK

CROSSROADS

1997

BLACK INK ON WHITE PAPER, LITHOGRAPH
ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM COLLECTION, DONATED BY SUSAN SCHACHTEL
IN MEMORY OF RON SCHACHTEL AND SURVIVOR DAVID SCHACHTEL

Crossroads is based upon Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel, *Maus*. As in *Maus*, Spiegelman depicts Jews as mouse-like humans. The work references Gustave Doré's *The Wandering Jew* (top left box), which depicts a Jewish figure from Christian legend condemned to wander the earth. Spiegelman reclaims this antisemitic image to reflect on Jewish exile across generations. Alongside the central image of Spiegelman's parents, both Holocaust survivors, are Spiegelman himself and his children: three generations of Jews, each at their own crossroads.

"Basically, it went from past to future, much like the window I'm working on, and the whole goal was to locate what existed at that crossroads*, which was literally a crossing over between history, family and form."* — Art Spiegelman

KEBEDECH TEKLEAB

BORN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 1958; LIVES NEW YORK

THE RIVER IN RWANDA

1994

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP LLC

From April to July 1994, militia forces and civilians led by the ethnic Hutu-majority government murdered an estimated 1,000,000 ethnic Tutsi and politically moderate Hutus. Tekleab spent ten years in a Somali prison camp during the war between Somalia and Ethiopia, another African war rooted in colonial politics. *The River in Rwanda* reflects the parallels between the genocide in Rwanda and Tekleab's experiences. The river flooded with blood and entangled bodies makes individuals no longer recognizable, becoming a mass within the landscape.

"I am fascinated by the duality of life: the benevolence and the cruelty, the good and the bad, the darkness and the light. My art is a reflection of life that draws from this reality. It is done rationally and emotionally, embracing the bitter taste of life while yielding an aesthetic beauty of its own."
— Kebedech Tekleab

EDUARDO MEDICI

BORN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, 1949

TANTO TIEMPO DE TANTA MUERTE (SO MUCH TIME, SO MUCH DEATH) 1997

PHOTOGRAPHIC NEGATIVES ON CANVAS
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP LLC

In *Tanto Tiempo de Tanta Muerte*, Medici manipulates photographic negatives to obscure the identities of the individuals in the images. Medici survived Argentina's "Dirty War" (1976–1983), in which a brutal military junta kidnapped, tortured, and disappeared thousands of suspected political opponents. The work reflects the anonymity and loss of identity that result from mass death and mass disappearance.

"...I never worked from the conscious, it wasn't that I was interested in working on that subject, mine was a much more existential issue, to say so somehow, it was never a political or militant position, I think it will have been transmitted and it will have appeared in my work because it was surely inevitable... ." — Eduardo Medici

ANA TISCORNIA

BORN MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY, 1951; LIVES NEW YORK

PORTRAITS II/RETRATOS II

2000

FRAMED DIGITAL IMAGES, ARCHIVAL ULTRACHROME INK PRINTS
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

Portraits II was made in response to the hundreds who disappeared under the Uruguayan dictatorship (1973-1985). Tiscornia took picture frames and turned them backwards to hide what one expects to see most—the images of those included in the photographs. Tiscornia has stated, "I tried to create a visual metaphor for the impotence that disappearance imposes on us, at the same time I wanted to create a poetic construction as a tribute to those that lost their lives." The included texts are from Holocaust survivors and others who lived through traumatic events such as the dictatorship in Chile.

"I have always had the sense that I have a tool in artmaking and that imposes on me a responsibility. I feel compelled to produce work that reflects my lifetime and takes an ethical position on social injustice. I think of myself as an activist and hope I can influence change with my art... ."
— Ana Tiscornia

DREX BROOKS

BORN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, 1952; LIVES OGDEN, UTAH

CAMP GRANT MASSACRE SITE, ARAVAIPA CANYON, ARIZONA, AND MARIAS RIVER MASSACRE SITE, MONTANA

FROM THE SWEET MEDICINE SERIES

1987-1990

DIGITAL BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

Brooks took these photographs of indigenous massacre sites in the Western United States as part of his *Sweet Medicine* series. The series is named after Sweet Medicine, a cultural hero and prophet of the Cheyenne who taught rituals and ceremonies and spoke of the dire consequences for the Cheyenne of the coming white people. The images combine beauty with emptiness and bear witness to the immense suffering that occurred in these places.

"While living in Denver, I became curious about a little red mark with the title of Sand Creek Massacre on the Colorado road map, so I went there to look around. The next week I went back with a camera... . I also started reading about the place and what happened there... . I learned about other sites... . A few places were historical sites that were well marked, but most were not...The significance of these locations was...the obscurity of the sites and the lack of accurate cultural memory regarding the events that happened in the places... ." — Drex Brooks

WON-CHUL JUNG

BORN SOUTH KOREA, 1960; LIVES SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

THE TESTIMONY

1998

BLACK AND WHITE LINOCUT PRINTS ON PAPER
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

To create these prints, Jung photographed a number of Korean women, out of the tens of thousands who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese Army during World War II. The linocut technique deepens the lines and shadows of the women's faces. The close-up view and large scale of the prints force the viewer to encounter these women as they are today decades after they survived the unthinkable.

"Although the wrinkles in each portrait represent each individual's historical truth... . Emotional scars are untouchable." — Won-Chul Jung

JOZEF SZAJNA

BORN RZESZOW, POLAND, 1922; DIED WARSAW, POLAND, 2008

THE ANT COLONY
BEGUN IN 1978

ACRYLIC ON PAPER
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

A Polish Catholic survivor of the first transport to Auschwitz in 1940, Szajna became one of post-war Poland's most prominent cultural figures. His art developed from his career as a director and set designer for theater and often included surreal explorations of the human condition. The motifs in *The Ant Colony* first appeared in Szajna's work as part of a set design in 1969. Over several decades, he created the series based on his experience of a concentration camp roll-call; the frightening reality of a faceless individual lost in the swirl of a powerful mass.

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*"The 20th century belittled the human; turning his personality into an insignificant number, a number in the era of genocide... .*The Ant Colony *paintings portray condensed lines of nameless people. The lines depict the contours of silhouettes devoid of individual characteristics that are suspended in a vacuum, mutual loneliness, and often alienation and aggression."* — Josef Szajna

ANNA BIALOBRODA

BORN POLAND, 1946; LIVES NEW YORK

PARTING

1988

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

Growing up as a child of Holocaust survivors, Bialobroda stated that "the sense of loss was a silence omnipresent in our house." That loss is depicted in *Parting*—a woman in motion, arms extended to the funerary cart carrying a loved one. With only a few gestures, Bialobroda expresses what has happened in this agonizing drama.

"Painting is, literally, the primal impulse to mark. It's such a clear way of formulating what's inside one's head; it's the most direct way of communication." — Anna Bialobroda

DJIBRIL SY

BORN DAKAR, SENEGAL, 1950; LIVES IN DAKAR, SENEGAL

UNTITLED (MOTHER OF A DEAD CHILD) AUGUST 4, 2003

COLOR PRINT
ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM COLLECTION, MUSEUM PURCHASE

As a photojournalist and artist, Sy covered the second Liberian civil war (1999-2003).

"Purely aesthetic beauty in a photo doesn't interest me; it's the meaning behind it that matters. ...There's an image of a woman who had come to see [the United Nations envoys] because her child had been buried in a mass grave against her will. She had come back to retrieve the body of her daughter...but the Health Unit and the doctor said, 'No, we can't give your child back to you!' So the woman wept and screamed that she would not leave without her baby... . She was overcome by her pain and sorrow... . She was gesticulating so frantically and shouting so loudly, lying down on the graund...a woman who had lost her child in Liberia, an African woman in all her anguish... ." — Djibril Sy

IVAN SAGITA

BORN MALANG, INDONESIA, 1957; LIVES YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA

WAITING FOR DEATH

1999

OIL ON CANVAS

ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

In *Waiting for Death*, Sagita used realistic painting to make an unrealistic image. In the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta, Sagita observed the struggles of women dealing with poverty and death. Set upon an Indonesian landscape, it is unclear if the women are floating toward the sky or being pulled to the ground. This suspended moment in time makes us question what is surreal—the artwork or the realities of the subjects' lives on the edge of life and death.

"To me, life always goes differently than we expect to. This is why I tend to express uncertainties. Seeing the life in my surroundings I get the impression that everybody is controlled by an invisible power." — Ivan Sagita

CARRIE MAE WEEMS

BORN PORTLAND, OREGON, 1953; LIVES NEW YORK

EBO LANDING
FROM THE SEA ISLANDS SERIES
1992

GELATIN SILVER PRINTS AND TEXT PANEL
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

Weems's photographs of a tranquil marsh and windblown trees reveal little of the location's significance or history. The central text tells the story of enslaved people being brought ashore and their final act of resistance. *Ebo Landing* is part of a series which chronicles and celebrates a group of African American communities in the Sea Islands off South Carolina and Georgia. These community members, descended from the West African people of the Gola tribe, were brought to the United States as enslaved people and later formed a unique creole culture and language known as Gullah Geechee, which still exist today.

"Home for me is both mysterious and mythic—the known and the unknown. My search begins with the Sea Islands *piece. That initial focus on family folklore was the beginning of my searching out a home place, trying to figure out for myself, at that moment in the early 1980s, where I come from, how is that place constructed, what went on there… ."*
— Carrie Mae Weems

NAOMI TEREZA SALMON

BORN JERUSALEM, ISRAEL 1965; LIVES WEIMAR, GERMANY

ASSERVATE

1989-1995

COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

In 1989, Salmon was commissioned to photograph artifacts in the collection of Yad Vashem, the central Holocaust memorial and museum in Israel.

"I was supposed to produce documentary portraits of objects to assist in keeping records. ... Only in very few cases were there reliable indications of their place of origin—the concentration or extermination camp, ghetto, region or country. ... The only sure thing was that the [objects] had once had an owner. ... They stood for people who had been deprived of their humanity, of the right to life, and of the right to awaken memories... The question as to who owned many of the objects remains unanswered. ... The more I became aware of the nature of the things, the more I tried not to interpose myself between them and the camera. I saw my assignment as [making] myself invisible during the act of photography—so that the objects could become visible."
— Naomi Tereza Salmon

WILLIE COLE

BORN SOMERVILLE, NEW JERSEY, 1955; LIVES MINE HILL, NEW JERSEY

STOWAGE

1997

WOODBLOCK ON KOZO-SHI PAPER
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

Cole created *Stowage* by embedding a metal ironing board and bases of twelve irons into a sheet of plywood. He inked the surface and then applied paper to create the print. At the center of the work, the perforated ironing board evokes illustrations of how African enslaved peoples were shipped as human cargo in vessels bound for the Americas. Surrounding the board, the iron bases suggest facial scarification markings of African tribes, traditional masks, or a close up view of the way in which slaves could be laid into a ship. The pattern of the plywood simulates the ripples of the ocean.

Cole believes that "when one culture is dominated by another culture, the energy, or powers, or gods of the previous culture hide in vehicles in the new culture." In *Stowage*, African spirituality inhabits the domestic tools used by slaves and their descendants in the Americas.

"I make art as a spiritual action, and because of the times I live in... it may appear to be political. But initially it's just spiritual, a buildup of energy. I want to get past language to the energy." — Willie Cole

BETYE SAAR

BORN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 1926; DIED LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 2026

RAGTIME

2005

MIXED MEDIA BOX ASSEMBLAGE
ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

Ragtime is part of a series of works that Saar created with objects she found, collected, or preserved. This work deals with traditional racial stereotypes having to do with music. Ragtime was a musical genre that combined African rhythm and European classical music. White communities later featured the music in blackface productions.

In *Ragtime*, a photograph of a minstrel strumming a banjo shares space with a scrap of a Confederate flag, an African mask, the layout of a slave ship, a clock face, a lock and chain, and block letters that spell out RAGTIME. Saar states, "The R is backwards, and the G is backwards, but so is slavery."

"It is my goal as an artist to create works that expose injustice and reveal beauty." — Betye Saar

SIMON NORFOLK

Born Lagos, Nigeria, 1963; lives London, England

THE EMPTY STREETS OF KIGALI AFTER THE GENOCIDE

FROM THE FOR MOST OF IT
I HAVE NO WORDS: GENOCIDE, LANDSCAPE, MEMORY SERIES

2000

GELATIN SILVER PRINT

ON LOAN COURTESY OF THEODORA'S ART GROUP, LLC

In 1994 in Rwanda militia forces and civilians led by the ethnic Hutu-majority government murdered an estimated 1,000,000 ethnic Tutsi and politically moderate Hutus, in a period of 100 days. Norfolk, a landscape photographer, had been photographing war zones and refugee crises as an exploration of the "battlefield" as a type of landscape photography.

"Anybody who knows African cities undoubtedly sees them as bustling and vibrant. When I arrived in Rwanda just a few months after the genocide of 1994, to see Kigali empty was unreal and disturbing. ... As the day ended, I have never seen a street market pack up so fast; it was if it had evaporated like mist. ... This sinister quality was what this picture was trying to capture. I made others that were more graphic. ... For me this picture conjures up all those images, but without the brutality of the frontal assault. Using beauty as a tactic to lure an audience into examining dark and unpleasant issues in the world is something I began in Rwanda..." — Simon Norfolk

MAURICIO LASANSKY

BORN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, 1914; DIED IOWA CITY, IOWA, 2012

KADDISH NO. 6, NO. 7, AND NO. 8 FROM THE KADDISH SERIES

1976-78

INTAGLIO ETCHING, ENGRAVING, SOFT-GROUND, AQUATINT, ELECTRIC STIPPLER, SCRAPING, AND BURNISHING ON PAPER
ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM COLLECTION, DONATED BY THE FEINSTEIN FAMILY IN MEMORY OF DR. STEPHEN C. FEINSTEIN

Lasansky began confronting the brutality of Nazi Germany with his landmark work *The Nazi Drawings* in 1968. Ten years later, as a response, he completed the *Kaddish* series, named after the Jewish mourner's prayer. Several motifs are repeated in the series: images of perpetrators, victims, and survivors; doves of peace; stenciled numbers always beginning with the number six, symbolic of the millions killed and of tattooed victims; masks; and hands in various positions.

" ...Most of them have a mask or use their hands, because I am still ashamed when I think of the suffering all the humans made the people endure, I get embarrassed just thinking about it, so I cover my embarrassment."
— Mauricio Lasansky