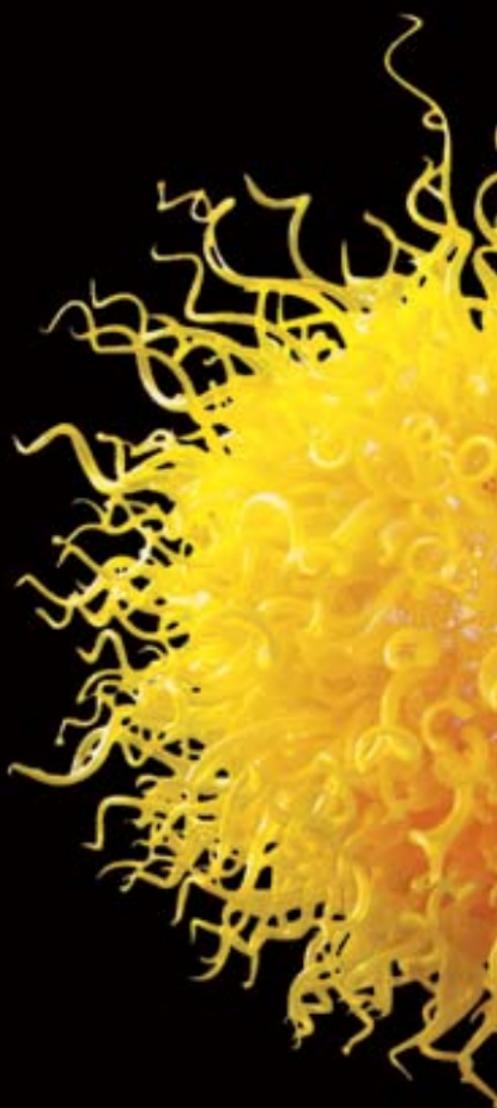


Believe It *or Not*



A TOUR
THAT REVEALS
TANTALIZING
TIDBITS ABOUT
WORKS OF ART



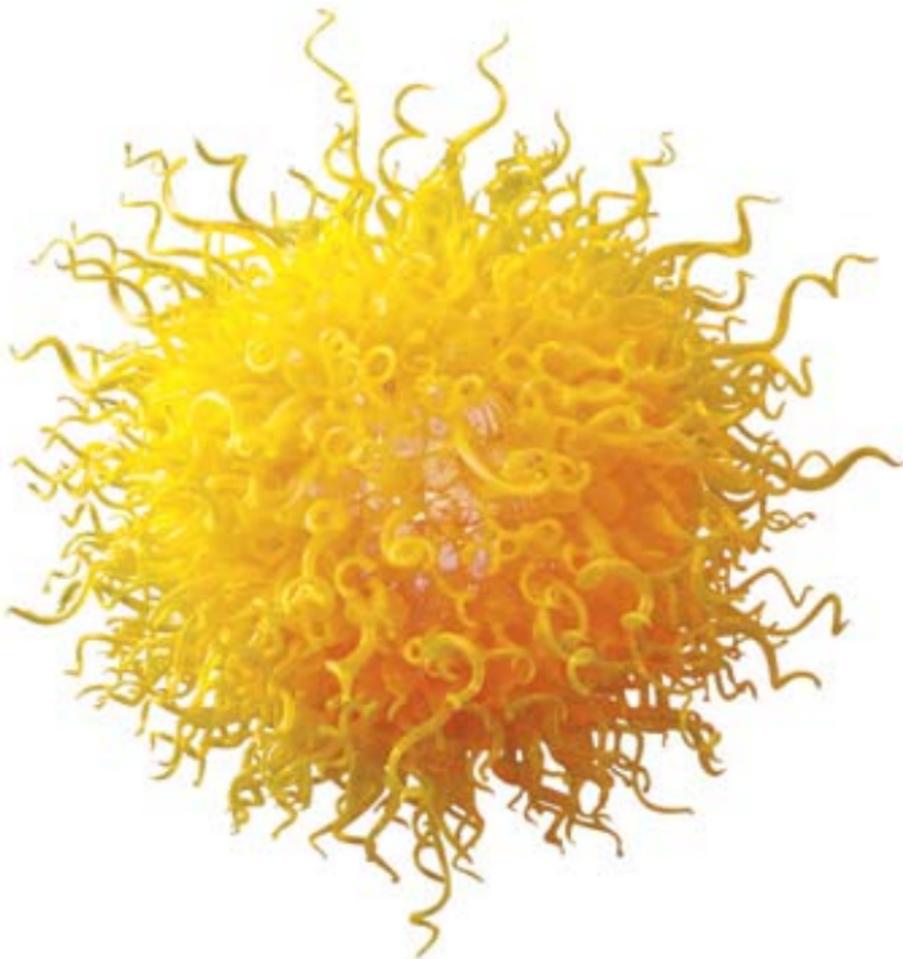
MINNEAPOLIS



INSTITUTE

OF ARTS

WELCOME! THIS HOUR-LONG TOUR OFFERS YOU A BEHIND-THE-SCENES GLIMPSE OF OUR WORLD-CLASS COLLECTIONS. ENJOY ON YOUR OWN OR WITH A FRIEND.



Dale Chihuly, American, b. 1941

Sunburst, 1999, blown glass, neon, metal armature,
gift of funds from Cargill and Donna MacMillan
Third Avenue lobby

Ten feet in diameter and weighing approximately 3,000 pounds, this electric-light sculpture was constructed from exactly 901 glass pieces that surround a core of red and yellow neon tubing. Each corkscrew squiggle was blown individually in the state of Washington. Upon the arrival of the pieces in Minneapolis—packed in 98 crates—Chihuly and his assistants assembled *Sunburst* like a celestial jigsaw puzzle. The museum's ceiling was reinforced, and seven steel cables installed to hold the sculpture aloft. Like any artwork, *Sunburst* collects plenty of dust. Using compressed air and watercolor brushes, the museum's cleaning crew dusts it twice a year—a chore that takes four to five hours.

How to Find these Works

To save time, view the works of art in the order presented. Gallery numbers are listed.

China, Ch'ing dynasty

Imperial robes, 1644–1911, The John R. Van Derlip Fund Gallery 218

Garments worn by men and women associated with the dragon throne said more about their wearers than designer brands do today. Through their colors, insignia, and accessories, these garments made status distinctions visible to all. Swathed in yellow silk? You must be the emperor, empress, empress dowager, or heir apparent (lucky you!). Blue or brown? A noble or official. The number of claws on your robe's embroidered dragon signaled your place in the pecking order. With the founding of the Chinese Republic in 1913, such imperial pretensions fell out of favor. And so did these silk robes, which the museum purchased from a San Francisco collector in 1942. To tell if a robe was among this lot, refer to the accession number found on the object label, which would start with 42.







China, Ming dynasty

Wu Family Reception Hall, about 1600, gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton

Gallery 218

For traditional upper-class families, halls like this one were used for two important purposes: formal receptions, such as wedding banquets, and paying homage to the gods or ancestors. With time, such halls fell into disrepair, especially those in rural areas. During the socialist era, many were used to store farm equipment, grain, or animals. When the Institute's Asian arts curator located this hall in 1995, local farmers were renting it from the owners, who lived far away in Shanghai. The owners eagerly agreed to sell it to the museum, hoping to replace it with a modern structure. As traditional Chinese architecture is built with mortise-and-tenon joinery, without glue or nails, the entire structure was easily disassembled without damage. Under the curator's supervision, it was loaded beam-by-beam, fumigated to exterminate insects, and shipped to the MIA for installation.



China, Ch'ing dynasty, Ch'ien-lung period
Jade Mountain Illustrating the Gathering of Poets at the Lan T'ing Pavilion, 1784, light green jade, The John R. Van Derlip Fund and gift of the Thomas Barlow Walker Foundation
Gallery 210

When entertaining guests, many people adorn their dining tables with centerpieces—a bouquet of flowers, perhaps. But how about orchestrating a meal around *Jade Mountain*? Weighing 640 pounds, this sculpture was said to be a favored dining companion of Thomas Barlow Walker, founder of the Walker Art Center. According to legend, Walker kept it permanently on the formal dining table at his family's Hennepin Avenue mansion. A granddaughter recalled it being featured at special occasions. And how exactly does one place such a treasure on the table? Carefully, to be sure. *Jade Mountain* was slid into its spot on rollers to avoid wrinkling the tablecloth.

Gyuto Monks, Tibetan

Yamantaka Sand Mandala, 1991, colored silicate and adhesive on wood, gift of funds from the Gyuto Tantric University; 3M; Construction Materials, Inc.; and the Asian Art Council
Gallery 212

Believed to impart healing energy, the mandala, or circle of life, is central to the tantric art of contemplation and reincarnation. Typically made of sand in an elaborate process that takes many days, a mandala frequently meets an inglorious end—to westerners' eyes, that is. Shortly after its completion, the sand is swept away, a metaphor for the impermanence of life. So why are still we able to behold this mandala? With the consent of the monks, who created the work onsite, 3M scientists formulated fade-resistant colored silicates and a special adhesive, thereby preserving the work for centuries to come. To date, not a grain has come loose.





Europe

Tapestries, wool, silk, linen, cotton, The Ethel Morrison
Van Derlip Fund

Fountain Court, Gallery 235

Many tapestries surrounding our Fountain Court have lived through it all, including feasts where the wine flowed, the mutton fat burned, and the smoke billowed. Add to this centuries of dirt and dust. Oh, the stories they told when, in the early 1980s, our conservation department undertook the job of washing them. The process was long and complex. Each tapestry was photographed, then cleaned of loose dust. Next, the fibers were tested for their colorfastness, and weakened areas were reinforced. To accommodate the tapestries' expanse, a large washing tank was installed in the museum's loading dock. There, each tapestry was laid flat, soaked, washed with a soapy solution, and gently hosed off. Finally, after being blotted with towels and air-dried, the tapestries were reinstalled. Now, they are vibrant again—just as they were when their wealthy owners once admired them.

MINNEAPOLIS



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Egypt

Mummy of Lady Teshat in Cartonnage (detail), 1085–710 B.C., cartonnage of painted linen; polychromed pine coffin,

The William Hood Dunwoody Fund
Gallery 236

Lady Teshat, one of several wives in a harem, died at about age 15. The daughter of the treasurer of the Temple of Amon at Thebes, she was privileged in life and death, affording her an elaborate burial. In 1975, the museum X-rayed the mummy and discovered a curious fact: a skull had been placed between her legs. The skull's placement might have occurred thanks to a mix-up at the embalmer's or the slovenliness of grave robbers. A CAT scan later revealed the skull was that of a grown man. Was it placed with Lady Teshat on purpose? Was it from a member of her family? DNA analysis could tell us. Until someone directs this analysis, though, the secret remains under wraps.





Beauford Delaney, American, 1901–79
Untitled, 1954, oil on raincoat fragment, gift of
Jacques and Solange du Closel
Gallery 375

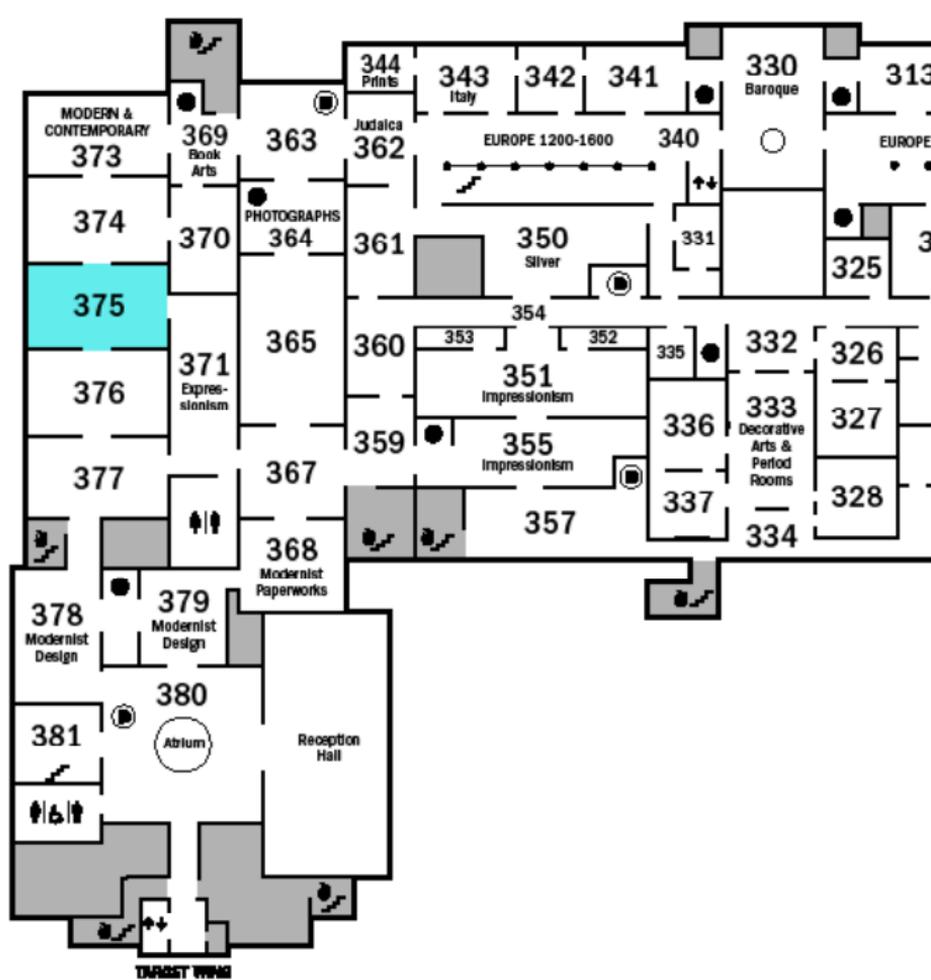
What are a painter's tools? Canvas, brushes, tubes of oil paint, and a thumb-anchored palette all come to mind. But some artists, either lacking money for these necessities or wishing to try something new, make surprising choices in their artwork. Delaney, for instance, was enduring an unseasonably cold Paris winter with little but a canvas raincoat to keep him warm. When a friend gave him a new winter coat, he cut up his old raincoat, which became his "canvas" for three paintings, including *Untitled*. Peek around the back to see the seam and the outline of the pocket. Delaney didn't necessarily require a paintbrush; here, he used a palette knife to apply paint or squeezed pigment straight from the tube onto the fabric. Similar resourcefulness is shown in *Portrait of Mlle. Hortense Valpinçon* (Gallery 351), by Edgar Degas, which is painted on mattress ticking.

MAPS

SECOND FLOOR

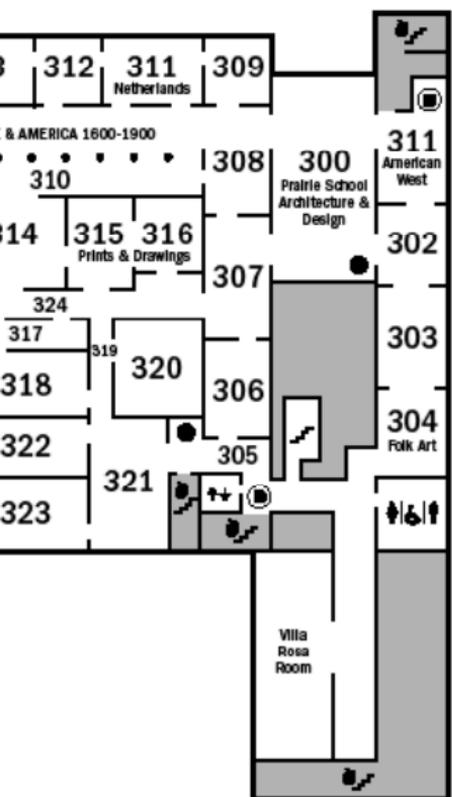


THIRD FLOOR





Ready to take a break and share your discoveries? Coffee, sandwiches, and snacks are available at the ArtsBreak coffee shop on the first floor, and Italian cuisine is served in ArtsCafé on the mezzanine level.



Galleries featured