



Jane Freilicher (New York City, 1924–2014)

Telephone Poles 1963

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, November 1, 1982

After studying with the abstract expressionist Hans Hofmann in the late 1940s, Freilicher and several of Hofmann's other students developed representational modes that acknowledged the lessons learned from total abstraction: an attention to the material properties of paint and an awareness of the flatness of the canvas. Freilicher drew her subject matter from her immediate experience of the world—New York's Greenwich Village, where she spent her winter months, and, as illustrated in *Telephone Poles*, Water Mill, Long Island, where she passed her summers.

Postwar Realisms



Lois Dodd (Montclair, NJ, 1927)

View through Chicken House 1971

Oil on Masonite

Gift of Lois Dodd, 2004



Lois Dodd (Montclair, NJ, 1927)

Self-Portrait 1984

Oil on composition board

ANA diploma presentation, March 2, 1988

New Jersey-native Lois Dodd studied at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art and helped found the Tanager Gallery, an early cooperative gallery in New York. Now in her eighth decade as a painter, Dodd has consistently depicted views through windows and doors—painterly metaphors for transition, reflection, concealment, and insight. With its absence of any human presence, *View through Chicken House*, starkly contrasts the directness of her Academy self-portrait.



Philip Pearlstein (Pittsburgh, PA, 1924)

Nude Torso 1963

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, May 6, 1987

Any nude triggers memories of past art: Venuses and courtesans, sensual limbs in mythological gardens, come-hitherish glances, golden skin. Involuntarily recalling all that, we get this. An austere, factual body. Bare, if intricate, description. Nothing else. No sweeteners, no captions. To me, Pearlstein's empiricism gives the human body a strange, compelling dignity, and even makes it seem (impossibly!) new. Looking at this torso, right at eye level, I feel like an art student on the first day of life class. I'm absorbed and calm, buoyed by the optical Adderall of bright light.

—Alexi Worth, NA



Jules Kirschenbaum (New York City, 1930–2000 Des Moines, IA)

Dark in the Forest 1951–52

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, October 2, 1967



Ivan Albright (North Harvey, IL, 1897–1983 Woodstock, VT)

Self-Portrait 1948

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, May 2, 1949



Andrew Wyeth (Chadds Ford, PA, 1917–2009)

Self-Portrait 1945

Egg tempera on gessoed panel

ANA diploma presentation, February 5, 1945

Wyeth, son of artist N. C. Wyeth, was introduced to egg tempera by Peter Hurd, his father's student who later married his sister Henriette, also an artist (Hurd's and N. C. Wyeth's diploma works are also on view in this exhibition). The medium enabled Wyeth to successfully achieve the technical facility and clarity of detail he was seeking for his work. This self-portrait—among Wyeth's first mature paintings in the medium—is a master study in ambivalence. Does Wyeth look through or past his viewer? Is the young artist's gaze one of steady determination or a register of trouble just ahead? Do the dry, wild grasses engulf his lone figure, or part for a pathway? And might the black hawks register his presence, or ours, from afar?



Aaron Bohrod (Chicago, IL, 1907–1992 Madison, WI)

Façade, New Orleans not dated

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, April 5, 1954



Aaron Bohrod (Chicago, IL, 1907–1992 Madison, WI)

Artist in Residence: Self-Portrait 1943

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, December 3, 1951

Bohrod studied with Kenneth Hayes Miller, one of the most influential teachers of his generation. (Within this exhibition alone, Miller's other students include George Bellows, Isabel Bishop, Reginald Marsh, and George Tooker.) This self-portrait was completed while Bohrod was a visiting artist at the Southern Illinois Normal University (now Southern Illinois University) in Carbondale. "It pleased me," he reflected the following year, "when it seemed that the strip mines, the town railroad park, the streets, and the surrounding country which they knew so well and which may have seemed so commonplace in the eyes of most of the students, took on a new interest after they had seen them portrayed through the eyes of a painter."



Wayne Thiebaud (Mesa, AZ, 1920)
Tennis Player (Self-Portrait) 1985
Oil on plywood panel

ANA diploma presentation, October 1, 1986



Will Barnet (Beverly, MA, 1911–2012 New York City)
Self-Portrait 1981
Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, April 6, 1981



Charles White (Chicago, IL, 1918–1979 Los Angeles, CA)

Matriarch 1967

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, February 5, 1973

Rather than a likeness of himself, White submitted *Matriarch*—a portrayal of his great-aunt Hasty Baines, born into slavery in 1857 on the Yellowley Plantation in Ridgeland, Mississippi—to the Academy as his diploma portrait. Painted 110 years after her birth, in the thick of a decade rife with political and social struggle, this deeply personal work stood for White as a symbol of wisdom and courage, universal themes also explored in his mature work *Mother Courage II*. After extensive conservation, *Matriarch* is on view for the first time in nearly four decades.



Charles White (Chicago, IL, 1918–1979 Los Angeles, CA)

Mother Courage II 1974

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, March 3, 1975



May Stevens (Boston, MA, 1924–2019 Santa Fe, NM)

Benny Andrews, the Artist, and Big Daddy Paper Doll 1976
Acrylic on canvas

NA diploma presentation, May 19, 2004

Stevens is a committed social and political activist and has been for most of her life. This work is from a series Stevens created in response to the United States's involvement in the Vietnam War. She depicted herself alongside her close friend, the collage artist Benny Andrews, who taught art to prisoners at Rikers Island Correctional Facility with Stevens's husband, the artist and educator Rudolf Baranik. Andrews's diploma work is also on view in this exhibition.



George Tooker (New York City, 1920–2011 Hartland, VT)

Voice II 1972

Egg tempera on gessoed panel

NA diploma presentation, October 2, 1972



George Tooker (New York City, 1920–2011 Hartland, VT)

Self-Portrait 1969

Egg tempera on gessoed panel

ANA diploma presentation, March 3, 1969



Richard Estes (Kewanee, IL, 1932)

NYC Parking Lot 1969

Oil on Masonite

NA diploma presentation, January 7, 1987

At first glance, this picture appears to show an unremarkable jumble of empty cars. But they could just as easily be a crowd of commuters squeezed into uncomfortable proximity. They maintain their individuality and dignity despite it all. The TLC Estes lavished on these beauties ennobles them and the banal space they occupy. This is “street art” at its finest: transforming ordinary moments into joyful, transcendent aesthetic experiences.

—Walter Chatham, NA



Hughie Lee-Smith (Eustis, FL, 1915–1999 Albuquerque, NM)

Self-Portrait 1964

Oil on canvas

ANA diploma presentation, April 4, 1966



Hughie Lee-Smith (Eustis, FL, 1915–1999 Albuquerque, NM)

The Bridge before 1968

Oil on canvas

NA diploma presentation, March 4, 1968

“It’s rather odd the way I view it,” Lee-Smith said on becoming a National Academician, “because this is one of my—well you might say, childhood dreams. . . . It represented to me or for me a sort of life-long dream come true.” Since Henry Ossawa Tanner had asked Richard E. Miller to paint his diploma portrait (also on view in this exhibition) in 1910, Lee-Smith’s self-portrait was the first by an African American artist to enter the collection. The Academy’s highest honor was awarded to Lee-Smith during a pivotal time in the Black civil rights movement, and *The Bridge* may have served as a metaphor for transitions in the artist’s personal life or for the visible fractures in America’s political and social landscape.