

Fact Sheet

Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror
September 29, 2021–February 13, 2022
Press Preview: September 22, 2021

Who organized the exhibition?

Jasper Johns: Mind Mirror is one exhibition at two museums in two cities at the same time. It is jointly organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The exhibition is on view from September 29, 2021 until February 13, 2022.

How many works are included in the exhibition in Philadelphia?

There are 288 works. These include 63 paintings, 187 works on paper, and ten sculptures by Jasper Johns, several of which are new works created since 2019. Note that numerous works contain multiple parts (for example, one is comprised of 24 prints).

How many loans are in the Philadelphia presentation?

The exhibition here contains 240 loans by a total of 88 lenders from the United States and abroad.

How many works in the Philadelphia presentation have never or rarely been exhibited in the U.S. before?

Ninety-five (95) works have never or only rarely been exhibited in the US. (Rarely is defined as having been seen in 2 or fewer exhibitions over the years).

Any especially noteworthy works or groupings of works in this presentation?

Here are just a few interesting notes:

One section in Philadelphia is devoted to Johns's early exhibition at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, in 1960. It reassembles a total of six of the eight works that were displayed in that historic exhibition.

The exhibition also includes an installation of work and archival documents that illuminate Johns's relationship with Japan, which is not widely known.

Usuyuki, 1982, a major painting on loan from the Sezon Museum, Japan, is installed in context with related works dedicated to the same theme. Only once before has this large-scale painting been shown in the United States; it was at a gallery in New York in 1983, for four weeks only.

Another major large-scale work, *Untitled*, 1972 (Ludwig Museum, Cologne) was last seen in the United States in 1996 at a retrospective devoted to Johns organized by the Museum of Modern Art. Since that exhibition, which also traveled to Japan, the painting has remained continuously until now at the Ludwig Museum.

The exhibition offers unusual insight into the artists working methods through its installations of trial and working proofs.

How is the exhibition organized and how do the Philadelphia and New York presentations mirror one another?

The exhibition is conceived as a unified whole, comprising two autonomous parts. Inspired by the artist's fascination with mirroring, symmetry, reversals and doubles, the exhibition's two halves will mirror one another. For example, a pairing focuses on the effect of specific places or communities on Johns's art, with a room in Philadelphia devoted to his formative time in Japan while a room in New York focuses on South Carolina, where Johns spent part of his childhood and worked for a time as an adult.

In brief, sections at the Philadelphia Museum of Art include:

Circa 1954

Jasper Johns moved to New York in 1953 where he became acquainted with a group of artists forging their own path in the art world, including Robert Rauschenberg, with whom he had a romantic and creative relationship; the composer John Cage; and Cage's partner, the dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham. By late fall of 1954, Johns made a radical new start and began to paint his first flag soon after. One night, Johns dreamt that he painted a flag (not a painting of a flag) and the work that followed would soon determine the public reception of his work and shift the course of art history.

Real Things as Painting

This section suggests the beginning of Johns's lifelong fascination with Marcel Duchamp, and as such these works test the relationship between image, language, and object, process, and product, in a manner both literal and philosophical. At the Whitney, a related gallery focuses on themes of *Disappearance and Negation* in the artist's early work.

Numbers

The artist's early recurrent motifs include flags, maps, targets, letters, and insistently, numbers. Numbers zoom in and out of scale and focus and are treated in a variety of ways, perhaps offering an analogy to which numerals function in the digital age, evoking ceaseless production in daily life. At the Whitney, a related section exploring first motifs focuses on *Flags and Maps*.

Leo Castelli, 1960

The influential art dealer Leo Castelli offered Johns his first solo exhibition in 1958. Johns's early shows at Castelli exemplify precision with respect to display, and this installation partially recreates one such exhibition as Johns arranged it in 1960. A related gallery in New York recreates Johns's Castelli Gallery exhibition from 1968.

Japan

Japan loomed large in Johns's experience and imagination, with the artist having spent six months in army service in Sendai in 1952–53. He returned for two months in 1964 and again in 1966. In the following decades, Johns retained deep fascination with Japanese art and culture, as reflected in a prolific series of cross hatch works titled *Usuyuki*, or *light snow*. In New York, another gallery focuses on the artist's relationship to *South Carolina*, his home state.

Untitled, 1972

By the early 1960s, Johns had introduced monumental paintings that both referenced earlier works and contained generative inspiration for new work. The four-paneled work, *Untitled* (1972), is a prime example of this mode. A corresponding gallery in New York focuses on *According to What*, 1964.

Doubles and Reflections

Twin concepts of the mirror and the double—understood as both image and process—stand out among Johns's most abiding preoccupations, confronting the viewer with paradoxes of sameness and difference. A related gallery in New York also focuses on *Doubles and Reflections*.

Nightmares

Early in the 1980s, a deeply somber mood erupted in Johns's art. In some of these works, references to John Cage's musical composition, *The Perilous Night* (1944), amplify the gruesomeness of cast-wax arms seemingly afflicted with ailment. The persistence of this motif over the following years has been read as a reference to the AIDS crisis. A corresponding gallery in New York focuses on dreamy visions.

Trial and Working Proofs

Johns has long demonstrated as much interest in the process of printmaking as he has in the final result, often making dozens of trial prints to test a design in various ways. Johns's unique prints share in the logic of repetition and difference as well as an insistent distrust in conceiving any work as "finished." In New York, a related gallery exploring unique prints focuses on monotypes, including *Savarin*.

Elegies in Light

The past 25 years in the artist's production include significant focus on sorrow, loss, and mortality, a preoccupation seen in a wide variety of paintings, drawings, and prints that reintroduce variations of familiar motifs and add a disparate set of new sources. A related gallery in New York focuses on sorrow and mortality through darker versions of recent motifs.

Prints (Rolywholyover)

Unique to Philadelphia and conceived as both a complement and a counterpart to the exhibition, this section features a group of prints selected to represent an array of Johns's work in that medium. Out of a selection of sixty-two prints, thirty-four will be on display at a time. The prints are rotated and arranged according to chance operations with the aid of *jjRover*, an updated version of *ROVER*, a computer program developed by composer and musician Andrew Culver and musician, artist, and poet John Cage.

Dance performances in Philadelphia

In honor of the artist's longstanding support of the performing arts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art is planning for dance performances in early 2022. Highlighting Johns's former role as the Artistic Director of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, these performances will stage historical Events choreographed by Merce Cunningham and feature recreated costumes by Jasper Johns. The performances are expected both to continue Johns's legacy of collaborating with dance and offer a new generation of dancers an opportunity to make Johns's creations their own. (More information to follow).

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lively, and always memorable. We are committed to inviting visitors to see the world—and themselves—anew through the beauty and expressive power of the arts.

For additional information, contact the Marketing and Communications Department of the Philadelphia Museum of Art phone at 215-684-7860 or pressroom@philamuseum.org.