

With Alex Haley's 1976 novel *Roots* as its centerpiece, Arceneaux's *Failed Attempt at Crystallization III* reveals the artist's interest in the relationships between seemingly disparate objects and their histories. *Roots* chronicles the abduction and bondage of its fictionalized West African-born protagonist Kunta Kinte, whose character was inspired by narratives of enslaved African people in the American South. Arceneaux encrusts the book with sugar crystals so that the organic material appears to consume the book like a living thing—a reminder of this plantation crop's connection to the growth of slavery.

Dimé's imposing wooden form incorporates organic and industrial elements, each sourced from Dakar's urban environment. The sculpture connects the physical labor of artmaking to Sufi spirituality and Islamic practices while reflecting the artist's study of street carvers and furniture makers, combining woodworking by hand with material salvage. The solid tree trunk that comprises the figure's vertical axis would, in Senegal, be recognizable to many as a makeshift butcher's block; by reusing this wood, Dimé drew from a traditionally masculine vocation to create a feminine figure.

Dubuffet railed against prevailing notions of “good” taste across his multifarious production of paintings, sculptures, prints, and experimental writings. The artist began making prints in the mid-1940s, emphasizing texture and improvising with unconventional materials. His revolutionary approach to the medium reached its height with the Phenomena series (1957–62), comprising 362 compositions in twenty-four albums. Here, Dubuffet brought chance and accident into play by impressing dirt, fruit peelings, and leaves onto his printing surfaces, dragging burning rags across and spilling chemicals onto them. He created a tactile universe that seems to capture ever-changing forces of nature.

Though her work was inspired by visions and dreams that began during childhood, Evans didn't put pen to paper for her first ink drawings until 1935, when she was in her early forties. "Something told me to draw or die," the artist recalled. Tracing her roots to an enslaved maternal ancestor transported to the US from Trinidad, Evans, who was employed as a domestic worker in Wilmington, North Carolina, received no formal artistic training. She used pigmented wax crayons to create colorful and complex linear patterns that evoke animals, plants, and spiritual symbols, reflecting the connections she perceived between the earthly and the divine.

On view for the first time at MoMA, Hammons's *Afro Asian Eclipse (or Black China)* emphasizes intersections between Afro-Atlantic and Afro-Pacific cultures. The hanging scroll echoes a traditional Japanese scroll painting, but instead of a picture inset within a fabric background, Hammons creates a central panel of wire chicken-coop mesh. This metal grid is interlaced with poured red and pink paint and tufts of hair that the artist collected from the floors of Black barbershops. By enmeshing pigment within geometrically patterned segments of hair, Hammons upends the conventions of painting, sculpture, and textiles all at once. The work's title nods to jazz musician Duke Ellington's 1971 album *The Afro-Eurasian Eclipse* and the possibilities of global cultural identity.

*Last Trumpet* is an ensemble of four eighteen-foot-long horns that are both monumental sculptures and musical instruments. The work embodies Adkins's "quest," in his words, "to make music as physical as sculpture might be and sculpture as ethereal as music is." The artist fabricated *Last Trumpet's* colossal, valveless horns, or "Akrhaphones," as he called them, by attaching the bells of used trombones and sousaphones to conical sections of cast brass. "I made [the horns] on the scale at which I thought angels would play them," Adkins explained. *Last Trumpet* was first presented in an exhibition dedicated to the artist's deceased father, Robert Hamilton Adkins, an educator and musician whose initials appear in the word *Akrhaphone*. In the work's 1996 debut musical performance, members of the Lone Wolf Recital Corps, a collective the artist founded in 1986, played the instruments. Adkins would continue to perform with these works until the end of his life.

For *Friendship*, Martin covered an underlayer of oil paint with a thin layer of goldleaf, which she then scored by hand to reveal the ground beneath. Gold, with its connotations of luxury and opulence, was an unusual choice for the artist, who once said that to paint was “to accept the necessity of the simple, going into a field of vision as you would cross an empty beach to look at the ocean.” Though Martin’s trademark format of a six-by-six-foot gridded canvas links her practice to the serial repetition and geometric forms of Minimalism, the use of goldleaf evokes the religious tradition of Christian icon painting. Indeed, Martin often drew on spiritual ideas, particularly those found in Taoism, Zen Buddhism, and American Transcendentalism, in her work. Here, the luminous quality of the work’s textured surface suggests, in the artist’s words, “a world without objects, without interruption.”

Clothespins, plastic butterflies, blowtorches, buttons, a red feather duster, a Japanese fan, a map of the world—these unexpected objects are invoked in Patterson's whimsical scores for *Overture and Variations for Double-Bass*. Patterson, a composer and classically trained bassist, was denied employment with orchestras because of his race. In the 1960s he began traveling the world with the international Fluxus collective, becoming one of its key participants and its only African American member. Rejecting the conventions of Western musical notation and performance, Patterson created a form of communal creation in which participants interpreted and "composed" in the moment, rather than following a predetermined set of notes or instructions. The result was startlingly open-ended. Indeed, the score for *Variations for Double-Bass* denies the very existence of a score: "Pitches, dynamics, durations and number of sounds to be produced in any one variation in this composition are not notated. In the first performance by the composer a graphic score derived from ink blots was used as a guide; however, there are many other satisfactory solutions." By prompting performers to elicit unconventional sounds from unconventional sources—such as whistling tea kettles and bursting balloons—Patterson created multisensory experiences that redefined both music and art.



Tone was a composer, theorist, and key figure within Fluxus—a loose international group of artists, poets, and musicians brought together by a shared impulse to integrate art and life. Written for a string quartet, his score for *Anagram for Strings* bypasses the conventional language of Western musical notation, with its constellation of abstract dots and black and white circles. Each symbol corresponds to a length of glissando, or a glide from one musical pitch to another; performers can interact with the symbols to create their own improvisational score. One possible option is to “draw an oblique line from left to right and play where the oblique line intersects with the circle.” The work often produces dissonant, droning tones and upends the traditional roles of composer and performer, creating a hybrid of drawing, sound, and thought.