

# Morris Brose

(1914–2000)

The sculptor and photographer Morris Brose was one of the Detroit-based artists supported by Gertrude Kase. His work was featured in several group exhibitions at her gallery during the late 1960s and in a critically-acclaimed monographic exhibition in 1969. Brose's sculptures explore the expressive capabilities of line in three-dimensional form, conveying the dynamism of Abstract Expressionism. Interested in how physical rhythm is manifested in art, he uses line and contour, typically associated with drawing and painting, to suggest movement in metal. Here, his elegant, undulating lines are fused with the brutalist, angular forms often employed by sculptors and architects during the 1970s, creating a design that recalls both the weight of an anvil and delicate lines of calligraphy.

Brose produced a selection of works for public spaces in Detroit, including the *Sentinel* series of steel sculptures begun in 1968, one of which is featured in Wayne State University's Art Walk.

# David Budd

(1926–1991)

After Gertrude Kasele retired to Sarasota, Florida in 1992, she continued to support and collect the work of artists in her new hometown, including painter David Budd. A member of the second generation of avant-garde artists working in the postwar era, Budd embedded himself in New York City's artistic community, befriending the painters Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) and Robert Motherwell (1915–1991), among others.

As Budd became plagued by severe health problems in later life, his work turned increasingly introspective. In *Journey Without Maps VIII*, from one of his last series of paintings, he used a palette knife and white paint to sculpt a landscape of ridges that recall swelling ocean currents. He then dyed the whole work a subsuming blue. At once sculptural and painterly, this work poignantly suggests the uncertain personal terrain that awaits the artist.

# David E. Davis

(1920–2002)

The sculptures of Cleveland-based artist David E. Davis are notable for their lyrical, harmonious forms. Davis deliberately restricts his artistic vocabulary to simple shapes—triangles, squares, and circles—that he inventively manipulates based on a system he calls the Harmonic Grid.

*Divine Triangle* integrates organic and man-made materials, with neatly stacked wooden triangles forming a curvilinear structure that culminates with three stainless steel rods arching to make a pinnacle. The twisting form defies the rigidity of wood and steel, creating a sense of flexibility as the sculpture reaches dynamically toward the sky. The divinity implied in the title is suggested by its soaring vertical orientation.

# Jim Dine

(born 1935)

Known primarily for his paintings, Cincinnati-born Jim Dine is also an accomplished printmaker. His interest in this medium developed when he was introduced to Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) founder Tatyana Grosman in 1962. Based in New York, ULAE sought to promote printmaking by avant-garde artists. Gertrude Kasle fostered connections with artists collaborating with ULAE, including Dine, whose prints were the subject of an exhibition at her gallery in 1966.

Though Dine's work is commonly associated with the Pop Art movement, it is often autobiographical. He aggressively makes his presence known in his prints through incisions and wild, haphazard strokes that border on destructive. In *Jerusalem Plant*, one of a series of eight lithographs, Dine plays with texture and the application of ink to portray a Dracena (dragon plant). This print derives from a trip Dine made to Jerusalem, making it at once a still life, botanical portrait, and personal memento.

# Carroll Dunham

(born 1949)

Carroll Dunham is one of the artists that Gertrude Kasele collected later in her life, as she continued to seek out innovative works by artists who experimented with gestural techniques and evocative colors. Dunham is best known for his biomorphic paintings exploring themes of distortion, violence, fantasy, and eroticism. After attending Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, Dunham moved to New York City, where he became interested in artistic movements like Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism, as well as less conventional art forms such as graffiti and cartoons.

In this suite of images, Dunham experiments with lithography, a planographic printmaking method that enables artists to draw freely with a grease-based crayon onto the surface of a matrix. This group of lithographs displays Dunham's interest in creating surreal, psychedelic compositions using strong colors in which shapes morph to resemble anatomical body parts.

# Jimmy Ernst

(1920–1984)

After moving to Florida, Gertrude Kasele acquired this painting by Jimmy Ernst, marking her shift toward collecting art that resonated visually with the landscapes of her new surroundings. Ernst, the son of Surrealist painter Max Ernst (1891–1976), emigrated to the United States from Germany in 1938. He soon immersed himself in the community of Abstract Expressionists working in New York City, though he remained enthralled with Surrealism and its exploration of the psyche. He was also influenced by jazz, incorporating the improvisational structure and swing of the music into his paintings.

*Untitled (Sea of Grass)* combines the gestural brushstrokes and impasto (the heavy application of paint) of Abstract Expressionism with the reverie-like states explored in Surrealist works. With its repeated motif of a looped line suggesting soft, reverberating waves, this work navigates the relationship between abstraction and figuration, offering both a meditation on color and texture and a depiction of an eerie moor or coastal landscape.

# Robert Goodnough

(1917–2010)

Robert Goodnough, who was associated with the New York School of avant-garde artists working in the 1950s and '60s, exploits the energetic potential of simple shapes to enliven the surface of his paintings. Each composition of shapes clustering over a neutral background seems to have its own center of gravity.

Gertrude Kasse featured Robert Goodnough's work in multiple one-man shows at her gallery. In a 1974 press release for one of these exhibitions, she wrote of Goodnough's work: "Neither the cluster nor the field in which it moves predominates. There is no figure and no ground, but rather a two-dimensional space where collage-shaped forms drift on the picture plane." Indeed, his images seem to have a weightlessness similar to that of a swarm of bees or flock of birds.

# Adolph Gottlieb

(1903–1974)

The work of the prolific Adolph Gottlieb, whose practice spanned the 1920s to '70s, seamlessly bridges multiple twentieth-century artistic movements. During his celebrated career, Gottlieb's paintings, sculptures, and prints were widely exhibited in New York City galleries, and at museums throughout the United States and Europe. Gertrude Kaseb notably brought his work to Detroit in two solo exhibitions.

Gottlieb's images often evince the Surrealist interest in creating psychological tension through the use of uncanny juxtapositions of subjects drawn from the human psyche. He also experimented with different abstract painting techniques throughout his career. In what he called his "imaginary landscapes," abstract shapes articulate fantastical topographies. Here, a blazing sun and uneven ground are rendered in thick, inky-black and splattered lines. Though Gottlieb's work often references natural forms, he continually reinvented his approach to abstraction.

# Philip Guston

(1913–1980)

One of Gertrude Kase's achievements was bringing to Detroit audiences the work of prominent East Coast artists like Philip Guston. A member of the New York School, a group of abstract painters that emerged in the 1950s, Guston's practice was grounded in drawing. *Untitled VIII/X*, an ink-on-paper drawing from 1966, exemplifies a dramatic shift Guston's work underwent beginning that year and lasting until 1968. In it he explores the elusive relationship between figurative and abstract forms through the gestural application of thick black lines on a white background. In a 1969 exhibition press release, Gertrude Kase described the tension in Guston's work: "In his never-ending struggle between impulse and knowledge, spontaneous rendering of internal images is tempered by memories of the natural world, as well as by history."

# Jane Hammond

(born 1950)

The prints by important contemporary artists that Gertrude Kasek brought to Detroit included dynamic images by New York artist Jane Hammond, whose *The Wonderfulness of Downtown* explores past and present conceptions of Manhattan. The print's title derives from the artist's long collaboration with Pulitzer Prize-winning poet John Ashbery (1927–2017), who crafted a list of forty-four titles from which Hammond created a body of work.

In this large-scale collage, Hammond charts her own history of Manhattan, subverting and challenging the established narrative of the European colonization of North America. Dressed as an armor-clad European conquistador, she stands adjacent to a schematic map of Manhattan plastered with present-day photographs of everyday life along the city grid. By juxtaposing old and new, Hammond questions the supposed objectivity of geographical maps and exposes their historical complexities. Kasek, who grew up in New York City, gave this print pride of place in the foyer of her Sarasota apartment.

# Grace Hartigan

(1922–2008)

Gertrude Kasle had a long and close friendship with Grace Hartigan, who was one of the few women artists of the New York School to gain prominence during the 1950s and '60s. Thirty years of Hartigan's work are represented in this exhibition, ranging from brightly colored monumental paintings to intimate monochrome prints.

In 1976, Kasle wrote that Hartigan "dramatizes the reality which she sees." Although she embraced the gestural style favored by Abstract Expressionists in the immediate postwar period, she often broke with the strictly abstract approach of her peers, veering tantalizingly close to figuration. She wove together references to poetry, art history, and contemporary life, heightening the drama of a scene through the juxtaposition of bold colors and graceful black lines. As in the color studies of Henri Matisse (1869–1954), in which human forms painted with loosely articulated lines rest atop broad textured fields of color, Hartigan's figures inhabit bold landscapes inspired by her contemporary surroundings.

# Jasper Johns

(born 1930)

Gertrude Kase's relationship with print studio Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), founded by Tatyana Grosman, enabled her to introduce the Detroit community to prints produced by pioneering artists from New York City. Kase believed that Johns's collaboration with ULAE was especially successful due to Grosman's understanding of his sensibility and artistic goals. In these works, Johns interrogates the concept of what constitutes high art by elevating everyday objects and subjects.

In *Savarin*, an adaptation of his sculpture *Painted Bronze* (1960), a coffee can filled with brushes from Johns's studio is transformed into an emblem of the artist. In *After Holbein*, which references the sixteenth-century artist Hans Holbein the Younger (ca. 1497–1543) and his *Portrait of King Henry VIII* (1536–37), Johns makes a statement about artistic agency and engagement with the past by reconstructing an historical portrait on his own terms, while distilling elements of Holbein's painting style. Johns's interest in creating visual and verbal dialogues between himself and other artists is also embodied in his *Voice 2* suite, in which the series title is fragmented across three prints, calling attention to the artist's role in engineering meaning through visual language.

# Ellsworth Kelly

(1923–2015)

Gertrude Kasele's interest in printmaking grew in part from her commitment to making the work of innovative contemporary artists, such as Ellsworth Kelly, accessible to Detroit audiences. A part of the second generation of avant-garde artists living and working in the United States after World War II, Kelly is best known for his large-scale paintings featuring bold swaths of color and monolithic shapes. Although he described himself as a colorist, drawing was integral to his creative process.

His groundbreaking mode of abstraction stemmed from forms he found in nature. Kelly made over one thousand drawings of plants during his career, inspired by the sketches of nature and figures by the French artist Henri Matisse (1869–1954). His precise and controlled draftsmanship exudes a skillful economy of line. In *Oak IV*, a lithograph acquired by Kasele later in life, Kelly renders the crisp contours of an oak leaf with an assertive line that negates volume and emphasizes flatness. This work is one of a series exploring oak leaves growing on trees around Kelly's former home and studio in Spencertown, New York.

# Susanna Linburg

(1935–2017)

Susanna Linburg was one of the local Detroit artists supported by Gertrude Kasele during her time as a gallerist. Kasele celebrated Linburg's ability to engage with and reinvent classical antique architecture in her sleek steel and bronze sculptures. *Caryatid VII* is rooted in Linburg's interest in historical and present-day conceptions of femininity and strength. In this work, she references structural supports known as caryatids—female statues that act as columns, famously featured on the porch of the Erechtheion, an ancient Greek temple. In Linburg's version, the caryatid is embalmed in a column that acts as an emblem of female strength. Through this meditative sculpture, Linburg explores historically engendered themes of women as providers, nurturers, and bearers of burdens.

# Robert Motherwell

(1915–1991)

Gertrude Kase was proud to feature Robert Motherwell, a celebrated member of the New York School—a group of avant-garde artists that employed gestural abstraction in their paintings—in solo exhibitions at her gallery. Both *Summertime with Blue* and *Africa I* are representative of Motherwell's interest in the lyrical qualities of abstraction. *Summertime with Blue* is a collage that replicates the dynamism of painting—the serendipitous tear of the paper seems to parallel the gestural stroke of a paintbrush. *Africa I*, a silkscreen print, mimics the thick line of a painted brushstroke from one of his large-scale canvases. While Motherwell's images are comprised of abstract shapes and forms, they often reference significant historical moments and contemporary landscapes informed by his studies in philosophy and art history, and by his travels around the world.

# Michele Oka Doner

(born 1945)

Influenced by the landscape of her native Miami, Michele Oka Doner's dynamic sculptures deeply engage with the natural world. While Gertrude Kase supported Oka Doner, a University of Michigan alumna, early in her career, both of the sculptures on view were commissioned from the artist after Kase moved to Florida. Like Oka Doner, Kase became enamored with the beauty and history embodied in the natural forms of the ocean landscape. Oka Doner incorporates into these sculptures casts of found and fossilized materials that have been rendered in bronze and painted or gilded ceramic. Each element refers both to the living being it once was and to the evolutionary history of the earth. Through the act of searching below the glass of each table and discovering the bronzed amulets and textured details of the objects, the viewer becomes a participant in the exploration of the natural world and the creatures that inhabit it.

# Robert Rauschenberg

(1925–2008)

Gertrude Kaseb exposed Detroit to some of the most groundbreaking American artists of the second half of the twentieth century, including Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Heavily influenced by both pop culture and art history, Rauschenberg often assembled found images and manufactured objects into three-dimensional sculptures he called “combine paintings.” His technique of layering different materials in these works influenced his two-dimensional printmaking experiments made in collaboration with the print publisher Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), which are on display here.

Rauschenberg’s prints, collected by Kaseb from the 1970s to ‘90s, often layer together the artist’s own photographs with visual material from mass media and reproductions of famous works of art. The cacophony of disparate images references familiar subjects, from Italian Renaissance statues to modern forms of transportation, speaking to the shifting relationships between visual culture, commercialism, and fine art.

# Susan Rothenberg

(born 1945)

After her gallery closed, Kase continued to foster the careers of emerging artists. Susan Rothenberg is associated with the late-twentieth-century Neo-Expressionism movement, characterized by a return to a vivid, gestural articulation of figures and objects in response to the austerities of Minimalism and Conceptualism. She is well-known for integrating printmaking, painting, and drawing into her work. Although Rothenberg's early focus was on the horse, this image from her *Missing Corners* series represents her shift in the 1980s to the human form. A sketchy outline of a figure rendered in white and four orbs streaked with red are asymmetrically arranged in a black rectangular field missing two of its corners. The missing pieces speak to Rothenberg's process, wherein she adds and subtracts lines and shapes by selectively hand-inking her lithographic plates. The result is an ethereal representation that seems to vibrate with energy as it floats across the surface of the paper.

# Pamela Sumner

(1941–2016)

Based in Sarasota, Florida, Pamela Sumner was one of the many artists that Gertrude Kase collected as part of her ongoing support of local artistic communities, even after her move to Florida. Sumner's delicate black ink drawings, made beginning in the 1990s, balance her penchant for calligraphic lines with her interest in natural landscapes. Her work is strongly influenced by both fifteenth-century Japanese *sumi-e* (ink wash painting) and Abstract Expressionist painting from the 1950s. Sumner's image emphasizes the physical and meditative application of ink, with each dark line articulating the movement of the artist's brush across the surface of the paper. While the uneven spacing of individual lines is reminiscent of tall thin reeds, there is no concrete reference to size or scale in the image. The cadence of the lines is interrupted only by a vibrant red circle at the bottom of the composition.

# William Tarr

(1925–2006)

William Tarr is one of the artists that Gertrude Kasse patronized after closing her gallery in Detroit. He is known for his monumental, abstract steel sculptures that commemorate significant historical figures and events. This tabletop sculpture was one of a number of studies Tarr created over a twenty-six-year period in preparation for the immense bronze sculpture *Gates of the Six Million* (1989), (also known as *Gates of Hell*) which memorializes the victims of the Holocaust. Although small, this sculpture retains the striking physicality of the final work, now in the collection of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Tarr's work references the iconic *Gates of Hell* (1880–1917) by French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). But while Rodin conveyed the concept of hell through the representation of human emotion, Tarr suggests feelings of threat, terror, and fear through textures and aggressive abstract forms.

# Larry Rivers

(1923–2002)

Larry Rivers was one of the first New York artists with whom Gertrude Kasle worked directly during the early years of her career as a gallerist and collector, and was among the most prominent. He was instrumental in introducing Kasle to other contemporary national and regional artists, including Grace Hartigan, and encouraged her to open her own gallery in Detroit. This vibrant red painting was gifted to Kasle by the artist and bears the inscription: "Especially for Gertrude," memorializing their close working relationship.

Before studying painting with Abstract Expressionist Hans Hofmann (1880–1966), Rivers trained as a jazz saxophonist. His work embodies a lyrical style informed by his musical past and, notably, does not subscribe to any single artistic movement. His canvases were celebrated for their unconventional and irreverent combinations of figural and abstract elements. Kasle said of Rivers, "his artistic innovations reveal our society, sometimes with humor, sometimes with pathos, but always with sensitivity."