

The Object Podcast Self-Guided Tour

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Joshua Johnson
Portrait of Richard John Cock, c. 1817
Gallery 304

Season 4: The Possibly True Story of America's First Black Artist

In 1798, a portrait artist named Joshua Johnson advertises himself as a "self-taught genius." A few decades later, he is all but forgotten. It's a mystery only now coming to light: the unlikely story of the man sometimes called America's first Black professional artist.



Blanche Hoschedé-Monet
Landscape, Snow Effect, 1888
Gallery 355

Season 8: The Other Monet

Claude Monet, by the 1900s, is the most famous artist in the world, a singular genius (if not exactly genial). But there is another Monet: Blanche Hoschedé-Monet. The only artist Claude Monet takes under his wing—and almost completely forgotten, until now.



Santiago Rusiñol
Landscape, Snow Effect, c. 1892-94
Gallery 355

Season 6: Endless Summer

Santiago Rusiñol is a newly married heir to a Barcelona textile fortune when he decides to become an artist in Paris instead, inventing a new vocabulary for modern art. But when he comes across an idyllic seaside village back in Spain, his quest becomes a question: What are we really running from?

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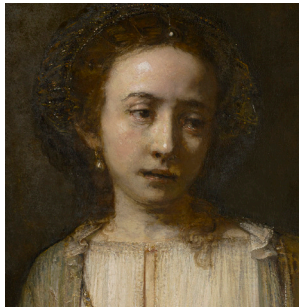
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Elisabeth Louise Vigée-Le Brun
Portrait of Countess Maria Theresia Bucquoi, née Parr, 1793
Gallery 306

Season 6: The Woman Who Won Paris

The daughter of a struggling artist, Elizabeth Vigée Le Brun wins the hearts of the French aristocracy with her sensitive portraits. But it's their heads she should be worried about, and when the Revolution hits she has to make a difficult choice to save her own.



Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn
Lucretia, 1666
Gallery 311

Season 1: The Case of the Missing Rembrandt

In 1666, Rembrandt painted a masterpiece that disappeared almost as soon as he finished it. Where it went, and what it meant to its various owners, is as fascinating as the question it begs: how can people be so tender and also so cruel?



Georgia O'Keeffe
Black Place I, 1945
Gallery 301

Season 4: The O'Keeffe We Never Knew

In the 1970s, Georgia O'Keeffe is supposedly the hermit savant of the New Mexico badlands. But when curators, journalists, and even the FBI come calling, it seems the head ghost of Ghost Ranch is the host with the most—and hardly ever alone.

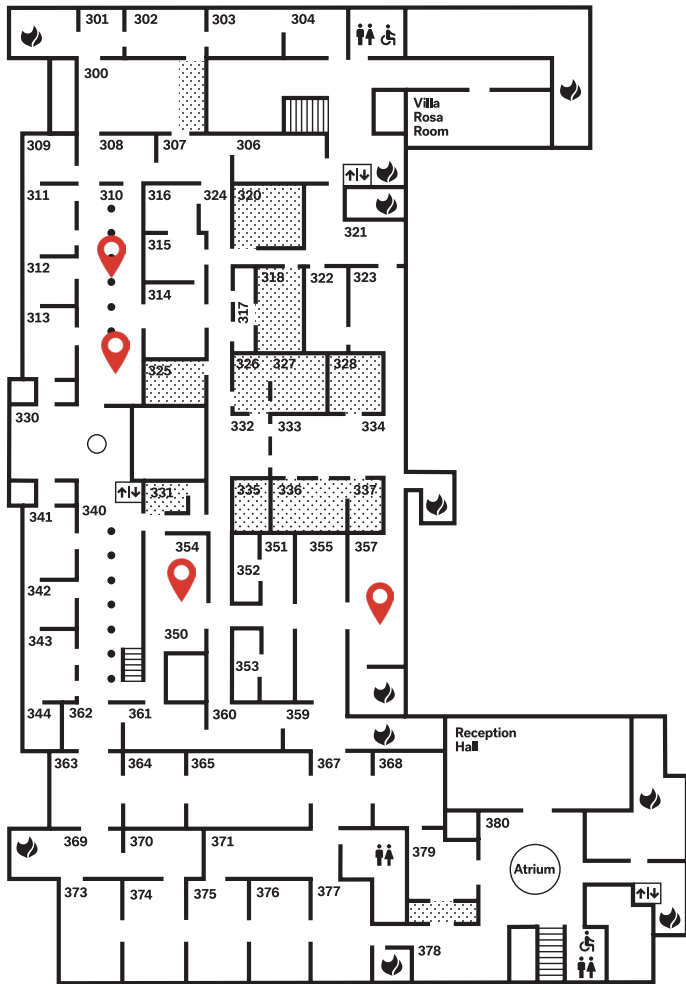


Grant Wood
The Birthplace of Herbert Hoover, 1931
Gallery 303

Season 6: The Wonderful Wizard of Iowa

In the 1930s, Grant Wood is famous as the artist behind American Gothic—an artwork so celebrated and curious it's called the "modern Mona Lisa." But as times change, Wood finds himself fighting for his livelihood, protecting a secret he's hid almost everywhere but in his art.

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Unknown artist
Nautilus shell cup, c. 1660–80
Gallery 310

Season 2: Monsters and Marvels, Part I: The Magic Shell

From narwhals to nautilus shells, dragon eggs to mermaid hands, the obsession with oddities in the Age of Discovery may seem, well, odd. But did the study of outliers, in the early version of museums, help make us the rational creatures we are today?



Unknown artist
Two-piece cutlery set, late 1500s
Gallery 354

Season 1: How to Stop an Assassin

Long ago, when everyone but your dog was a potential assassin, you needed to protect yourself by any means necessary. Starting with poison-proof silverware. A surprising story of art, myth, and the dangerous world that was.



Charles Caryl Coleman
The Bronze Horses of San Marco, 1876
Gallery 357

Season 3: The Stolen Horses of Venice

In the early 1800s, the four famous bronze horses of Venice are restored to their place atop Saint Mark's Basilica. But when an American painter arrives, his celebrated painting of the horses exposes clues to their real origins.



Sir Alfred Gilbert
Kiss of Victory, 1878–81
Gallery 310

Season 4: How to Live Forever (or Die Trying)

No one lives forever. But that hasn't stopped people from trying, and for a long time the noble way to avoid getting old and dying was to avoid getting old at all: the Greek notion of the "glorious death" that confers immortality in battle. It's an idea that resurfaces throughout history—until it meets its match in a war of many deaths and little glory.

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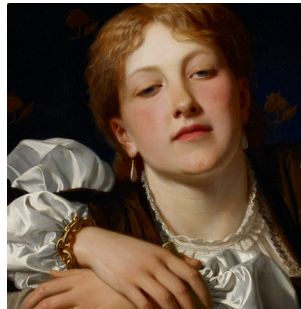
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Raffaello Monti
Veiled Lady, c. 1860
Gallery 357

Season 3: The Secrets of the Veiled Lady

They are illusions, no more real than someone being sawed in half onstage. Yet the veiled ladies that Raffaello Monti sculpts in the 1800s are very real to him. Poignant symbols of an identity he's forced to conceal, even as they make him famous. A story of pride and prejudice and dreams just out of reach.



Charles Edward Perugini
I know a maiden fair to see, take care, 1868
Gallery 357

Season 5: Finding Fanny: The Model Who Disappeared

She was instantly recognizable, her long copper hair filling painting after painting, even if few people knew her name: Fanny Cornforth, muse and mistress to the most influential artists of her time. Then she lost the one thing she could count on for sure: herself.



Leonora Carrington
Dear Diary - Never Since We Left Prague, 1955
Gallery 376

Season 4: Escape Velocity: The Woman Who Left the World Leonora Carrington has never felt at home in her wealthy, conservative family. But when she meets the Surrealists in the 1930s, and runs from everything she knows, it will take everything she has to become the artist and writer she wants to be. Most importantly: her singular imagination, which reveals the world as both more magical and more haunted than most of us care to admit.



Hans Ledwinka; Manufacturer: Ringhoffer-Tatra-Werke AG
Tatra T87 four-door sedan, 1948 (designed 1936)
Gallery 379

Season 1: The Car That Killed Nazis

When World War II began, nothing seemed capable of slowing the Nazis. Except a very fast, very unusual Czech automobile called the Tatra. A poignant story of poetic justice, grace in wartime, and the utopian future that wasn't.

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China
Dragon head Huang plaque, 2nd-3rd century
Gallery 215

Season 6: The Dragons Next Door

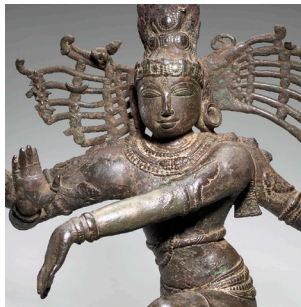
People have always imagined dragons among them. But they have always imagined them very differently: helping or hurting, making rain or breathing fire. The difference, of course, is us. A brief, beastly history of the creature we can't live with—or without.



Unknown artist
Jade Mountain, 1790
Gallery 210

Episode 37: The Mountain That Came to Dinner

It's one of the largest jade sculptures in the world, a 640-pound mountain commissioned by the Chinese emperor. But in 1901, in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion, it ends up leaving China with an American diplomat—only to resurface on the dinner table of a lumber baron. It's a story of power and scandal, a story as old as stone: can anyone be king of the hill for long?



Unknown artist
Shiva Nataraja (Lord of the Dance), c. 1100
Gallery 211

Season 1: Lord of the Dance

In the 1920s, the sculptural image of Shiva Nataraja—the Hindu god Shiva as the cosmic dancer, ensuring the cycle of life—suddenly becomes a museum must-have. As India strives for independence, the image comes to symbolize something of the nascent nation itself.



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Unknown artist
Striding figure, 300-30 BCE
Gallery 250

Season 5: The Department of Missing Limbs

It's a story as old as life itself: things fall apart. But what really happened to all those ancient statues missing arms, legs, heads, and other appendages? And have they shaped a perception of the past as more remote, mysterious, and, well, broken than it really was?