

[Johns at Gagosian Gallery](#)

[Johns at Matthew Marks Gallery](#)

Artist Resources – Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)

“I think one has to work with everything and accept the kind of statement which results as unavoidable, or as a helpless situation. I think that most art which begins to make a statement fails to make a statement because the methods used are too schematic or too artificial. I think that one wants from painting a sense of life,” Johns told art critic David Sylvester in a [1965 interview](#) that was [broadcast on the BBC](#). “The final suggestion, the final statement...has to be what you can’t avoid saying, not what you set out to say. ”

Johns also spoke [with Artforum in 1965](#), about the early years of his career in New York and the repetition of patterns and motifs in his work. “The early things to me were very strongly objects. Then it occurs that, well, any painting is an object...But I thought how then to make an object which is not so easily defined as an object, and how to add space and still keep it an object painting.”

In a 1977 conversation with [Interview Magazine](#), a playfully combative Johns hesitantly answered questions about the importance of work and art.

“Much of my work develops from rules of some sort. The rules are usually broken as the work progresses...I work to have [colors] look less schematic, to have the rules not jump out at you,” reflected Johns in 1995 with [BOMB Magazine](#), discussing process, challenge, and experimentation.

[The Brooklyn Rail](#) spoke with Johns in a rambling 2007 interview about the inspiration he draws from poetry, music, literature, other artists, in conjunction with [The National Gallery’s survey](#) of the first ten years of Johns’ career through over 80 prints, paintings, and drawings.



Johns in New York studio, 1958
Photography: Robert Rauschenberg



Johns in his Connecticut studio, 2013
Photography: John Lund

Over 120 paintings, prints, sculptures, and drawings graced the galleries of [The Broad in Los Angeles](#) in 2018. Organized in partnership with the [Royal Academy of Art in London](#), *Jasper Johns: Something Resembling Truth* traced Johns’ trajectory through six decades of work.

In 2019, the [Museum of Fine Arts Houston](#) brought together a suite of 100 prints made by Johns over the course of 10 days in 2015.

The Walker Art Center’s 2020-21 exhibition [An Art of Changes](#) celebrated Johns as one of the most significant printmakers of the twentieth century through over 90 works from the Walker’s collection. Intaglio, lithographs, woodcuts, linoleum, screenprints, and lead reliefs made between 1960 and 2018 show Johns as an inventive mind unafraid of trying, and re-trying, techniques, styles, and themes. The exhibition toured [the Carnegie Museum of Art](#) in Pittsburg and will visit museums in Florida, Michigan, and New York through 2022.

In September 2021, the most comprehensive retrospective of Johns’ career will open simultaneously at both [the Whitney](#) in New York and the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#). Five years of study and will provide new perspectives on 500 works between the two venues, structured chronologically around themes of mirroring that flow throughout the artist’s practice.



Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)

Cicada, 1979

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2023:51.1

Jasper Johns is one of the most important American artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. Known for his series of targets, flags, maps, numbers, patterns, and letters, Johns's exploration of "things the mind already knows," as he put it in 1959, has defined his prolific career.

Cicada is a study of repetition, titled for the loud chirping insect that emerges in the late summer. The picture plane is covered with a patchwork of hatched marks, with primary colors in the center and secondary colors developing outwards. This disorienting kaleidoscope of color and movement is emphasized by the artist's broken signature at the bottom, which reads: "OHNS 1979 CICADA JASPER JO."

On view July 12, 2023 – January 7, 2024

Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)

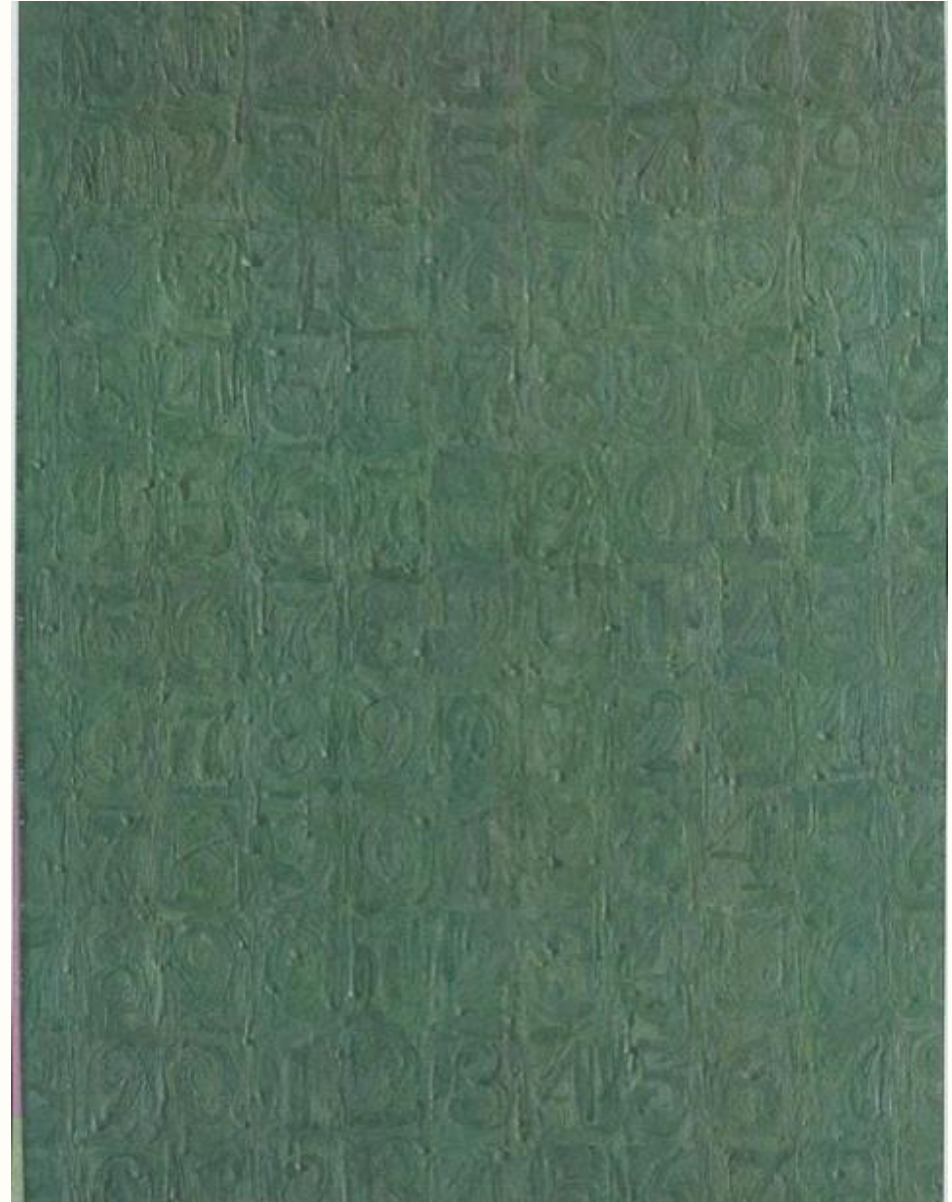
Gray Numbers, 1957

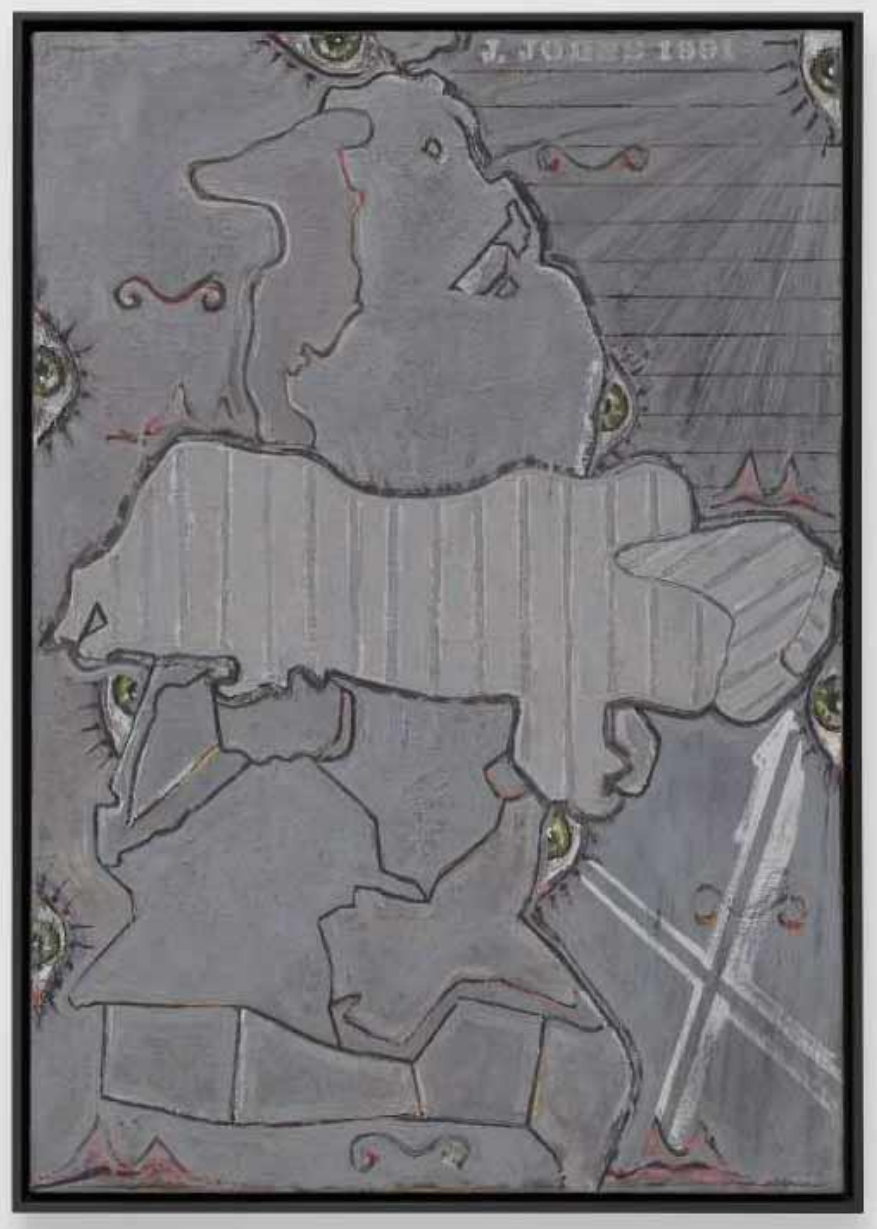
Encaustic on canvas

Private Collection; L2022:110.1

Jasper Johns is one of the most significant American artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The artist often works with encaustic, a mixture of pigment and hot wax that is fused to the surface of a canvas and leaves a distinct texture. In the early 1950s, Johns began using encaustic to create series of familiar signs and symbols such as numbers, flags, targets, and maps. **Gray Numbers** features a linear, repeating pattern of numbers 0 through 9. The encaustic medium and repetitive design make the painting seem abstract, directing attention to the artist's materials and techniques. As Johns once said: "I tend to like things that already exist."

On view October 26, 2022 – January 29, 2023





Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)

Untitled, 1991

Encaustic on canvas

Private Collection; L2022:71.1

Jasper Johns is known for his series of flags, targets, maps, letters, and numbers that interrogate symbols and their interpreted meanings. Along with Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), his partner for six years in the 1950s, Johns came to prominence in the last half of the decade. His work drew on found objects (such as beer cans) and recognizable images (such as the American flag) and exemplified the Neo-Dada movement, influencing the later development of Pop Art. **Untitled** is a rare later painting by the artist, who has only produced a few works each year since the 1980s. The grayscale map reads as abstract, though its use of pattern, line, and eye symbols indicate a deeper engagement with themes of borders and surveillance. Johns' characteristic use of encaustic, a mixture of pigment and hot wax on the surface of the painting, gives the work additional texture. As the artist once said: "All familiar things can open into strange worlds."

On view September 28, 2022 – January 1, 2023

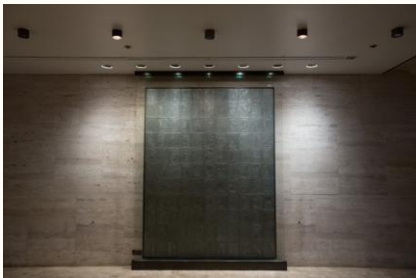
Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)

0 – 9, 2010

Bronze

Private Collection; L2021:133.1

One of the most significant American artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Jasper Johns is known for series of flags, targets, maps, letters, and numbers, and complex compositions that bring together objects and images from art, history, and daily life in a wide variety of media. In the 1960s, Johns completed a Sculpt-metal painting entitled *Number, 1964*, for the Lincoln Center in New York. The artist intended to compliment the painting with a large-scale bronze cast sculpture and began creating wax forms in 1968. However, Johns was unable to realize the project until 2008, when he began a series of number-themed sculptures in bronze, aluminum, silver, and copper. **0 – 9** is one of the last iterations of the series. Though each cast featured unique markings by the artist, this is the only one to feature Johns' handprint. The imprint acts as a signature and asserts the importance of Johns' hand in the creation process. The handprint also harkens back to *Numbers, 1964*, which featured a cast of choreographer/dancer Merce Cunningham's (1919-2009) footprint, because Johns "thought it was an amusing idea to get Merce's foot into Lincoln Center."



Jasper Johns, *Numbers, 1964* at the Lincoln Center
Photograph: The Wall Street Journal

On view November 17, 2021 – March 20, 2022



Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)

Flags 1, 1973

Silkscreen ink on J.B. Green paper; edition 36/65

Private Collection; L2020:127.2

Jasper Johns created his first works inspired by the American Flag in 1954, recreating the iconic textile through paint and encaustic on a collection of wood panels. He transformed the subject again in silkscreen following an introduction to the medium from Andy Warhol in 1960. Produced in the studio of master printer Hiroshi Kawanishi at Simca Artist Prints, **Flags I** honors Johns' favored combination of materials, capturing the nuance of depth and texture of pigment and wax in encaustic—on the left—and oil paint on the right, translated through the addition of screening gloss in the final stages of printing. Johns achieved the groundbreaking reproduction of layered pigment and painterly gesture in his *Flags* silkscreens by working with multiple screens, as many as 31, in a series of stages. A distillation of geometry, pattern, and color, the works occupy a core of Johns innovative seventy-year career, celebrated for its interrogation of meaning and symbolism, abstraction, and representation. As he reflected in the 1965, his relentless experimentation was in service of “[being able] to extend the space beyond the limits of the predetermined image...to add something, to go beyond the limits of the flag.”

On view March 10 – June 13, 2021

Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)
Between the Clock and the Bed, 1983
 Encaustic and oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2021:6.1

Pattern is key in this painting by Jasper Johns, who still ranks as one of the most significant and innovative painters and printmakers of the twentieth century. Johns began experimenting with hatching as an aesthetic motif beginning in the 1970s as he concentrated on a restrained repertoire of processes and moved seamlessly between a variety of conceptual and stylistic interests. In multiple works, he elevated the supportive texturizing technique into a pictorial solo act through engaged attention with patchwork compositions.



Between the Clock and the Bed—from an intimate series of early 1980s encaustics and oils—derives from a focused inspirational source: the Norwegian Expressionist, Edvard Munch. Johns' vertical triptych of abstract hatchings duplicates the pattern on the bedspread in Munch's 1940-43 *Self-Portrait: Between the Clock and the Bed*. In addition to the dedicated references to the linear, diagonal, and diamond-shaped forms on Munch's bedspread, Johns also seems to pay homage to the elder artist's celebrated expressive dexterity with color. Subtle shifts in hue move across each canvas, shimmering with life against segments of monochrome, celebrating the simplicity of line and pattern.

Munch, *Self-Portrait: Between the Clock and the Bed*, 1940-43, oil on canvas

On view February 17 – May 23, 2021

Extra Resources:

Jasper Johns and Edvard Munch exhibition at the [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts](https://www.vmfinearts.org/) .

