Cy Twombly Foundation

**Vogue’s in-depth profile**, originally published in 1994, gives insight into Twombly’s enigmatic personality, which was captured through only a handful of interviews. The author visited Twombly in Italy, traveling between his homes in Rome and Gaeta as the artist prepared his *Four Seasons series* for an upcoming exhibition. “At a certain point I was ready to throw in the brush. But I got crazy in a good way here,” Twombly reflected about the series.

In 1994 MoMA hosted the most comprehensive exhibition of Twombly’s work in the United States, filling the third-floor galleries with 100 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper including key and lesser-known works never before seen together, tracing his development beginning in 1946 through his most recent work completed just before the exhibition opened.

The Menil Collection in Houston opened *The Cy Twombly Gallery* in collaboration with the artist in 1995. Twombly designed the building with architect Renzo Piano and had final say on the selection of works, which now range from 1953 to 2004 to provide a concise retrospective outline.

“I'm not too sensitive to colour, not really. I don't use it with any nuance that I know of. The form of the thing is more interesting to me than colour. I take the colour as primary - like, if it’s the woods, it’s green; if it’s blood, it’s red; if it’s earth, it’s brown,” Twombly explained in conversations with curator Nicholas Serota as the duo prepared for the Tate Modern’s *2008 exhibition*. Bringing together key works and series, the show surveyed Twombly’s career from the 1950s through present day. Serota also discussed Twombly and the exhibition during a gallery installation in *Tate Shots*.

American photographer Sally Mann, close friend and mentee of Twombly’s, captured the remnants of his Lexington VA studio for a memorial exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery, and a book of photographs in 2016. Taken from 1999 through 2015, Mann’s images move through Twombly’s cluttered and paint-splattered workspace, becoming material memories of creativity and artistic drive.

Twombly’s seminal *Fifty Days at Iliam* series (1977-78), which retells the narrative of Homer’s *The Iliad* in ten abstract canvases, maintains a permanent home at The Philadelphia Museum of Art. *In 2017, the museum also showcased* the full cycle with six sculptural parallels produced in the late 1970s.

Gagosian Gallery in London presented an exhibition of *Twombly’s sculptures in 2019*, celebrating the release of volume two of his catalogue raisonné. Twombly began experimenting with sculpture in the 1940s, creating assemblages of plaster, wood, iron, and found materials in his studio, which he frequently painted white – a nod to the marble sculptures of antiquity.
Cy Twombly (American, 1928-2011)
*Donna Fugata, Bassano in Teverina*, 1987
Oil stick, lead pencil on wooden panel
Private Collection; L2020:88.4

Merging antiquity with the contemporary, painterly romanticism with the raw energy of graffiti, Cy Twombly occupied a pivotal role in postwar American art. After graduating from the Art Students League and Black Mountain College, Twombly turned away from the conceptual craftsmanship of friends and contemporaries such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, favoring the gestural declarations of Abstract Expressionism. After his permanent move to Italy in 1957, Twombly developed a more lyrical style inspired by the ancient landscape and classical literature. *Donna Fugata, Bassano in Teverina* plays with the duality of two reference points: *donna fugata*, which loosely translates to “woman who fled” or “fugitive woman,” and is the namesake of a 14th century castle in Sicily; and Bassano in Teverina, a 14th century Vatican municipality north of Rome where Tombly lived part time. The range of gesture matches the range of materials and colors, producing an image that hesitates between the tangible and intangible, with shapes and associations suggesting themselves before dissolving back into the composition.

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