

Fondazione Prada

PARAVENTI

FOLDING SCREENS FROM
THE 17TH TO 21ST CENTURIES

Milano

PARAVENTI

NICHOLAS CULLINAN

Either/or, neither/nor: painting or sculpture? Art or furniture? Utilitarian or ornamental? Prop or performative device? Decorative, functional, architectural or theatrical? The triptych exhibition “Paraventi”—unfolding across three places at once: Fondazione Prada in Milan, Prada Rong Zhai in Shanghai, and Prada Aoyama Tokyo—examines the many questions and paradoxes surrounding the history of the paravents.

Intertwining several cultures, this exhibition traces the origins of paravents in China in the late Chou dynasty, where they began as objects of spiritual contemplation and inspiration; their migration to Japan, often placed at the threshold of a home to ward off malign influences; the way they were then imported to the West, in the process parsing the evolving distinction between polyptychs and paravents; their deployment during the Baroque period as props in both theater and opera; and finally and most fundamentally, their adoption by an astonishing array of artists, architects, and designers during the 19th and 20th centuries, and on to the present. Indeed, the decisive rupture in this singular history came in the late 19th century, when artists from Paul Cézanne to James McNeill Whistler reclaimed—also in the West—the paravent from its essentially functional status as furniture, and instead invested it with its still current hybrid role as something for artistic expression, an evolution which then grew exponentially during the 20th century.

In this context, the exhibition project “Paraventi” continues its journey up to the present with a series of works expressly made by such artists as Tony Cokes, Cao Fei, Wade Guyton, Anthea Hamilton, William Kentridge, Shuang Li, Goshka Macuga, Kerry James Marshall, Chris Ofili, Laura Owens, Betye Saar, Tiffany Sia, John Stezaker, Keiichi Tanaami, Wu Tsang, Luc Tuymans, and Francesco Vezzoli. They all have contributed to the thematic reading of history of paravents and reconsidered the folding screen in the context of contemporary art and society. The resulting submissions cover a range of references to the history of the paravent and to the spatial complexity, narrative value, political ambiguity and relationship to the human body that distinguish this liminal object. The artists’ thoughts and the dynamics of the production of these 21st-century screens demonstrate the potential and paradoxes of the folding screen—including those which mediate, and increasingly shape and define, our digital experience and our reality—from a variety of perspectives, artistic practices, and personal research, but also reveal the extent to which this unique art form is still very much unfolding.

This history is thus characterized by cultural migrations, hybridizations, and collaborations and by what is concealed and revealed, withheld and unfurled. It is, especially the way it manifests in the present, one of liminal objects and of liminality itself: of being between things, both literally and metaphorically, and in the process collapsing the rigid distinctions and hierarchies between these different disciplines of art and architecture, decoration and design.

Excerpt from the essay by Nicholas Cullinan “The Fold,” in *Paraventi. Folding Screens from the 17th to 21st Centuries*, exhibition catalogue (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2023), pp. 9 ff.

THE EXHIBITION

PODIUM, PODIUM +1

The exhibition project has been conceived in partnership with the architectural firm SANAA founded by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa. The more than seventy screens, dating from the 17th century to the present, are spread across the two floors of the Podium.

Traversing space and time, centuries and continents, the works on the ground floor present seven themes in a cluster of rooms that flow into one another without hierarchy, fixed sequence or narrative. The exhibition's key themes are presented in a series of spaces formed by curving, transparent Plexiglas walls and sinuous curtains.

The first section—"Readings, East and West"—focuses on how the decorations on the works can be read, whether from the right or left, as landscape or cartography, emphasizing their transnational character and complex history of migration and translation.

"Public/Private" explores the function of folding screens to create spaces for purposes of intimacy, with particular reference to their erotic nature and sexual connotation, from the domestic dimension to taboos.

"Split Screens" highlights how screens today reflect our pervasive digital experience. Originally, a folding screen was not a place of visibility, but an object offering physical protection. This dialectic between revelation and concealment survives today in the screens of our devices, which are both opaque and transparent, windows and flat surfaces.

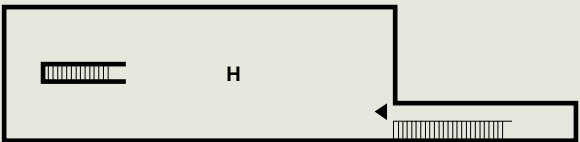
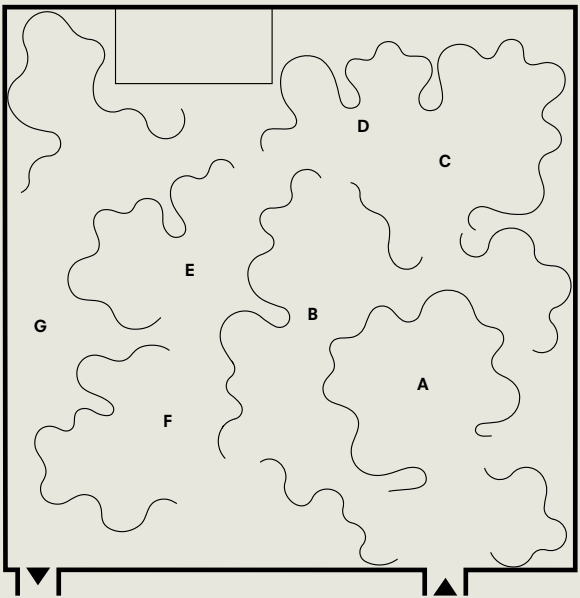
"Four Seasons: Space and Time, Figuration and Abstraction" examines how screens' physical structure allows the narrative to unfold sequentially in space and time, both in the traditional representation of the seasons and through figuration and abstraction.

Screens have also always existed as means to demonstrate wealth and power and to persuade; in the series of works with the theme "Propaganda," artists reflect on screens' political and provocative potential.

Furniture and decoration are domains in which 'high' art is separated from art considered less pure. The section "World of Interiors" addresses the potential subversiveness of queer aesthetics to redefine the semantic field of what is considered decorative.

Lastly, in the "Parody/Paradox" section, we analyze transparent screens, works whose structure contradicts the screening function, with humorous or parodical effects.

In contrast with the synchronic approach of the works on the ground floor, in Podium +1 the chronological organization of the section "Either/Or/Neither/Nor" follows the flow of history, emphasizing the constancy of screens' liminal status amid the negations they embody: as painting and sculpture, as art and furniture, as functional and ornamental objects, from Asia to Europe, from their origins to the present day. Here visitors follow a temporal and physical line, free to make their own associations and observations.



PODIUM

A Readings, East and West

B Public/Private

C Split Screens

D Four Seasons: Space and Time,
Figuration and Abstraction

E Propaganda

F World of Interiors

G Parody/Paradox

PODIUM+1

H Either/Or/Neither/Nor

PODIUM

- 1** Shuang Li, *This Mirror Isn't Big Enough For The Two Of Us*, 2023

Screen: sculpture – steel, paint, PVC projection screen;
bench: sculpture – stainless steel, acrylic paint

Courtesy Peres Projects, Milan

Inspired by the imagery and concept of shadow play, this installation is, in the words of the artist, "A metaphor of the relationship between screen and body, the work also aims to probe into intimacy and the different possibilities a digital screen can offer in contemporary life."

- 2** Cao Fei, *Screen Autobiography (Milan)*, 2023

Xiaomi MIX Fold 3, Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Fold, green screen cloth, blue screen cloth, black metal tripods, white bases
Courtesy of the artist, Vitamin Creative Space and Sprüth Magers

Cao Fei updates the language of the screens to include the way in which they are altering our reality by having a set of moving wallpaper play across a number of different

electronic devices. As she explains, "The screen within the screen is building our contemporary digital lives. It is also diluting our experience of reality and stirring up multiple relationships with the real. Electronics is an extension of human beings. On the one hand, it provides digital access to human beings, on the other hand, it keeps us deep in the realm of oblivion and multitude of time and space."

3A *The Battles of Ichinotani and Yashima*, Japan,

3B first half of the 17th century

Pair of folding screens, ink, mineral colors, and gold leaf on seven layers of paper, damask silk border, frame on lacquered wood frame of the period, with original bronze studs

Turin, MAO Museo d'Arte Orientale

These *nanban* screens—always conceived in pairs—recount a popular subject: the final battle of the Genpei War, a civil war between the rival samurai clans which lasted between 1180 and 1185. When this pair of screens were painted in the Edo period (1603–1868), Japan had just emerged from another civil war, and harking back to an era of ancient battles and legendary warriors was popular among samurai families to reaffirm their martial credentials. The gold leaf would have made both a symbolic statement about the wealth and status of the person or family who commissioned it, and also, more practically, would have provided a way to reflect light to illuminate a dark interior.

4 *Macao and Canton*, China, 2nd half of the 18th century

Lacquered wood, polychromy, silver, gold, paper, brass
Lisbon, Fundação Oriente - Museu do Oriente

This paravent creates a tale of two cities and cultures: lacquered in black and red, one side depicts the city of Macao with many landmarks built under Portuguese influence, while the other side features Canton in flat and embossed decoration in silver and gold with three buildings identifiable—the Lui-rong pagoda, the minaret of the Mehammedan mosque, and the triumphal arch. The paravent was likely commissioned to document the Portuguese influence, first established in 1557 in this region.

5 *Kurofune, the 'Black Ship,'* Japan, 18th century

Ink and color on paper, golden leaf

Estoril, Portugal, Private collection

This *nanban* folding screen depicts a Western vessel traversing a sea, documenting how such artifacts were imported to Europe from Japan from the 17th century onwards. The 'Black Ships' was the name given to European vessels painted black with pitch arriving in Kyushu, Japan from 1543 onwards, when the Portuguese first established a trading route with the West. A potent hybrid of East and West was created, one fusing Japanese styles and painting techniques with Western subjects.

6 Luc Tuymans, *La corrispondenza*, 2023

Digital print on synthetic silk and wooden frame

Courtesy Studio Luc Tuymans, Antwerp

The transparent paravent by Luc Tuymans is based on his

painting *La Correspondance* (1985), which also embodies porosity between painting and film. As he comments, "I stopped painting from 1981 to 1985 because it became too suffocating and too existential. And somebody by accident shoved a Super-8 camera in my hands and I started to film. And then I came back. Making images is important in the sense that you need distance. This was the first painting made after the film adventure. And it's one of my most conceptual works."

7 John Stezaker, *Screen-screen*, 2023

Silkscreen on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Screen-screen by John Stezaker evokes cinematic imagery by introducing an idealized Hollywood domestic scene within a real space that retains the elements of a private home. In this new work, Stezaker moves between the tangible dimension of a screen and the imaginary space of a movie screen. In this way, the artist pursues a film-like temporal unfolding within the structure of the screen that develops in the paravent structure.

8 Wu Tsang, *Rebellious Bird*, 2023

Fabric and aluminum, video projection and sound

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin

Wu Tsang continues her ongoing practice of working with curtains as a performative boundary or passage between reality and fiction, using the curtain as a sculptural surface to 'unfix' the projected image. Inspired by her research into the opera *Carmen* (1875) by Georges Bizet, the video depicts a performance by Tosh Basco, whose gestures almost frame the space in the process.

9 Joan Jonas, *Double Lunar Rabbits*, 2010

Wooden and paper curved screens, videos; color, sound, 4', looped

Courtesy Joan Jonas and Amanda Wilkinson, London

The artist explores the theme of the rabbit on the Moon, a familiar Japanese story. The footage is projected onto paper and wood screens inspired by traditional *sho-ji* (room dividers or screens), while the two curving screens make the images recede from view as one walks past. The story is derived from a fairytale about a rabbit who sacrificed itself as food for others and was rewarded by the gods for doing so by being saved and having its image traced on the surface of the Moon.

10 Jim Dine, *Landscape Screen (Sky, Sun, Grass, Snow, Rainbow)*, 1969

Acrylic on canvas, wood panel screen print with hand painting

Collection of Nina Dine

The five panels are inspired by Pierre Bonnard's screen, *Promenade, Frieze of Carriages*, of 1897. Preoccupied by printmaking at the time, Jim Dine emulated Bonnard's lithographic screen by producing a double-sided screen, where recto and verso mirror each other, but Dine's gestural brushstrokes in acrylic paint are allowed to become unique and individual. The five sequential vertical landscapes, akin to film strips, conjure landscape as a cinematic montage, ever in flux.

- 11 **Chen Zhifo, *Seasonal Flowers and Birds*, China, 1947**
Ink and color on paper
Asia, Private collection
The delicate work by Chen Zhifo revives the traditional *gongbi* painting technique of flowers and birds. In 1918 he became the first Chinese artist to travel to Japan to study pattern design, and his works forged a unique marriage between this and the meticulousness of Chinese *gongbi* technique.
- 12 **Carrie Mae Weems, in collaboration with The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, *The Apple of Adam's Eye*, 1993**
Pigment and embroidery on sateen, Australian lacewood frame
Philadelphia, Collection of The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Bequest of Marion Boulton Stroud
Carrie Mae Weems recounts the biblical story of Adam and Eve, gender roles and differences, and the unequal power that comes with them. Here a silkscreen image of what appears to be a naked woman save from a shroud (and don't the shroud and the veil have something in common with the screen?) is the central panel of the triptych. There is sexual tension in the simultaneous shielding and revealing of the central figure, as Weems acknowledges: "There is great desire, seduction, sexual charge," and "Both men and women are accomplices in their own downfall, in their own oppression, in their own victimization."
- 13 **Lisa Brice, *Untitled*, 2022**
Ink, flashe (synthetic tempera), distemper, pigment, neopastel, and conte on linen, mounted on wooden panels with wooden frames and hinges
Vancouver, Rennie Collection
This work takes an all-female realm to the level of an artists' colony of Amazonians, refusing the common patriarchal perspective. Nude women artists are busy in a dark and claustrophobic interior, painting, drinking, and relaxing amidst references to male painters of the European tradition. These include Gustave Courbet's *The Origin of the World* of 1866, of which one of the women is painting a new version while standing at an easel and looking down at a mirror on the floor between her legs in order to paint her own vulva, thus reclaiming the male gaze through the act of repainting. In case this message was not clear, a female figure behind is contorting herself in the same elaborate pose, arching her back over a chair, in a direct quotation from Balthus.
- 14 **William Morris (designer), Jane Morris, and Elizabeth Burden (manufacturer), *Screen with Embroidered Panels Depicting Lucretia, Hippolyte, and Helen*, 1860–61 (embroidered panels), 1889 (screen)**
Wood frame; linen, wool with wool and silk threads
Yorkshire, Castle Howard Collection
This folding screen depicting the three heroines Lucretia, Hippolyte, and Helen, recalls the original functions of the paravent to give intimacy in the domestic realm. Designed by William Morris circa 1860, it was worked by the

embroiderer Elizabeth Burden, a member of the Arts and Crafts Movement and the sister of Jane Morris and sister-in-law of William Morris, the textile designer, poet, artist, and socialist activist, who was hugely influential in the 'medieval revival' in 19th-century Britain. The screen was inspired by Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th-century poem in the form of a dream vision, *The Legend of the Good Women*.

15 Anthea Hamilton, *Shame Paravent*, 2023

Oak, oak burr, hand cane rattan, goat yarn, webbing, fixings

Courtesy of the artist

Shame Paravent puts the concept of shame itself on display, using materials such as horsethair that are traditionally associated with abnegation and self-punishment. As she says: "For me there is an implicitness of shame when thinking of the paravent, it is always—in scale and use—in relation to the body. Shame develops within the self and is visual, guilt depends on the external judge and is aural." As she observes in a quote from Karl Marx: "Shame is a revolutionary sentiment!"

16 Lorna Simpson, *Screen 4*, 1986

Wooden accordion screen, silver gelatin prints, vinyl lettering

Andover, MA, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, museum purchase

Screen 4 is one of several screens in which Lorna Simpson accompanies black-and-white photographic images with a text to form a narrative. As Bonita McLaughlin writes: "Simpson calls attention to the emphasis on sexuality so often found in representations of black women by simply omitting it. Standing with arms crossed, or at her sides, or on her hips, and wearing the ubiquitous white shift, here baggy and wrinkled, Simpson's model chooses neither to please nor attract. The gap between her reality and the desire for pleasure inherent in the male gaze is also alluded to in the words inscribed on one of the panels: 'She was no more exotic than the sparse room she posed in'."

17 William N. Copley, *Konku*, 1982

Acrylic and marker on canvas in wood frame

Cologne, Private collection

The patriarchal and stereotypical distinction between 'good' and 'bad' women and a sense of both a female and a male realm is evident in *Konku*, one of several folding screens the artist made. The figure of the prostitute recurred in Copley's work, and, indebted to Surrealism, the artist used humor to subvert, in this case the idealized female figure and the sense of 'modesty' that stereotypically accompanied that role. The deliberate flatness of the image, with a body devoid of shadow or modeling and featuring a composition seemingly more related to sign painting in its pictorial depth, or lack thereof, shows Copley's multifaceted influence from cinema, pinups, and cartoons.

18 Francesco Vezzoli, *The Assassination of Trotsky*, 2023

Dressing mirror designed by Alain Delon for Maison Jansen (1970s: glass, wood, cipria fabric, gilt brass inserts),

inkjet print, acrylic painting

Courtesy of the artist

Francesco Vezzoli's found object screen is named after the 1972 film starring Alain Delon and Romy Schneider. As the artist explains: "It is actually a screen designed by Alain Delon at a moment in his career when he must have thought that his sex appeal was so universal that it could be applied even to interior decoration. Given the tormented love life of Delon himself, I deemed it appropriate to reproduce an image of Romy Schneider on the mirror. As if Delon could never get over the sense of guilt for the way he treated her or for the way their love ended."

19 Elmgreen & Dragset, *Paravent*, 2008

Folding screen, glory holes, two pair of Levi's 501 jeans, toilet paper holder, toilet paper

Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne / Centre de création industrielle

"My favorite piece of sculpture is a solid wall with a hole in it to frame the space on the other side." Humor, along with Andy Warhol's sculptural predilection, comes to pass in Elmgreen & Dragset's work, which consists of a folding screen with two glory holes, and, in a neat twist, of some product (dis)placement—two pairs of discarded Levi's 501 jeans and toilet paper, in overt queer references.

20 Marc Camille Chaimowicz, *Folding Screen (Five-Part)*, 1979

Photographs, gelatin silver print on paper, and acrylic paint on wood

London, Tate

Not dissimilar to the projects of Kenneth Halliwell and Joe Orton's flat [21], from 1975 to 1979, Marc Camille Chaimowicz designed the interior of his flat in Approach Road, London, as a total work of art or scenography. Across shifting views and vantage points, and both recto and verso, *Folding Screen (Five-Part)* features black-and-white photographs that document couples in domestic interiors and private moments, a lone man, an empty landscape, and images of the screen itself prior to any decoration, collaged over the painted panels resembling wallpaper, with some of the photographs hand-tinted and decorated with gestural brush marks. Here, as elsewhere in his work, Chaimowicz characteristically collapses the distinctions and boundaries between sculpture, painting, drawing, photography, performance, installation, abstraction, and the decorative arts to instead create a living tableau.

21 Kenneth Halliwell, *Cat Screen*, 1966

Wood, paper, fabric

London, Islington Museum

If decoupage has long been a mainstay of decorating folding screens, the collage from the Islington home of the artist Kenneth Halliwell and his partner, the playwright Joe Orton, adds a very particular twist to this tradition. Decorated with newspaper clippings and hundreds of images of cats, it was created by Halliwell at their home shortly before he murdered the playwright and killed himself in August 1967. During the time they lived together in Noel Road, Halliwell and Orton defaced

books from Islington libraries by pasting in pictures of male nudes, toys, and birds and then returning them for their interventions to be discovered by unsuspecting borrowers, before they were eventually caught and sentenced in 1962 to six months in prison for theft and 'malicious damage.' It is an irony that Islington Museum, in addition to this screen, now owns 43 of the library books 'defaced' by Halliwell and Orton and considers them works of art.

22 Kai Althoff, *Untitled (Screen)*, 2004

Velvet, leather, fabric, and photograph on aluminum on pressboard

Los Angeles, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Gift of Blake Byrne

Made of velvet, leather, and photographs of 1980s male models collaged onto aluminum, this work continues, in a different format, Kai Althoff's investigations into masculinity and sexuality.

23 Duncan Grant, *Omega Screen*, 1913

Painted wooden panels, reverse side repainted by Grant in 1969

Lewes, UK, The Charleston Trust

At the height of World War I, a young Duncan Grant moved to Charleston—a pretty much queer paradise in the East Sussex—with Vanessa Bell, and they began decorating the entire farmhouse in a manner indebted to both Italian fresco painting and the Post-Impressionists. The screen that Grant created for the Omega Workshops in 1913 is borrowed from Vanessa Bell's bedroom at Charleston for this exhibition. The front, with two figures, male and female, carrying a blue pail of milk between them, with a red barn-like building in the background, was begun in 1913, when Grant and Roger Fry co-founded with Vanessa Bell the Omega Workshops, a design company intended to bring Post-Impressionism into the home and to make art and life merge.

24 Hernan Bas, *Decorative Screen for the Solarium of a Homosexual's Home (Fading Sunflowers)*, 2012

Acrylic and genuine gold and silver leaf on linen mounted in a birch-wood and genuine gold leaf frame

Courtesy of the Artist & Perrotin

This work is one of a number of folding screens Hernan Bas had made, often using gold and silver leaf, and explicitly exploring homosexuality identity and aesthetics.

25 Francis Bacon, *Painted Screen*, c. 1929

Oil on plywood with metal hinges

Private collection

One wonders how much Francis Bacon looked to Omega Workshops [23] when he set up his own business as an interior designer, creating from 1928–30 carpets, tables, chairs, and of course *Painted Screen*. The trigger for it was apparently Bacon's encounter with Art Déco in Paris and especially the influence of Eileen Gray, whose showroom, the Galerie Jean Désert, Bacon came across in 1928 at the age of eighteen. By the next year, and around the time this screen was made in London, Bacon opened

his own design studio at 17 Queensberry Mews, with business cards that read: "Francis Bacon – Modern Decoration, Furniture in Metal, Glass and Wood/Rugs and Lights." Compare this pride to his later shame about his decorative origins: "He never mentioned" them, Bacon's biographer Michael Peppiatt explains. "Decoration was one of the foulest words in his vocabulary after that." Indeed, this work remained unseen during Bacon's lifetime, and was only publicly exhibited in 1993, and later on Bacon would describe his painting practice as "clearing away the screens" that obstruct our perception of raw sensation. *Painted Screen* contains the first of his large figures while its triptych format anticipates his later and characteristic adoption of this form for his paintings. The composition has clear references to the work of Giorgio de Chirico, Fernand Léger, and Pablo Picasso. It is worth noting that Bacon saw Paul Rosenberg's 1927 exhibition of Picasso's drawings and that the art dealer had at that time in his stock a folding screen by Picasso from the early 1920s—a possible influence on this screen by Bacon [42].

26 Tiffany Sia, *The Sojourn*, 2023

Video, 32', aluminum alloy divider stand frame with polyester curtain

Courtesy of the artist and FELIX GAUDLITZ, Vienna

Tiffany Sia's video interrogates the notion of the sublime landscape and the way this can be used to underpin national identity, and thus the way that even the pastoral is political, also playing with the double meaning of 'screens' in the process. As she says, "In producing a time-based paravent, I'm proposing to explore the possibilities and double meaning of 'screen culture' and temporality, unfolding the tensions between animate moving image form and inanimate sculptural form of screens." Sia projects a new video of a sublime and timeless landscape as a homage to King Hu, the Beijing-born filmmaker who was exiled in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

27 Screen painted by two different artists on the two sides:

Pedro de Villegas, *The Conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés*, 1718

Unknown Mexican artist, *Chinese scenes*, c. 1718

Oil on canvas and painted wood

Trieste, Italy, Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

Both recto and verso are critical and telling. *The Conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés*, which unfolds across ten panels, is painted on the reverse side of an Eastern screen. This is a prime example among many in colonial Mexico, where folding screens were both luxury objects and sites of experimentation in secular painting.

28 Tony Cokes, *Untitled (Sol LeWitt 1967, 1968, 1989)*, 2023

LED video walls, sound

Courtesy of the artist, Greene Naftali, New York, Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles, FELIX GAUDLITZ, Vienna, and Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

Tony Cokes meditates on a folding screen made in 1989 by Sol LeWitt that begs the question of form: is it a painting,

a sculpture, or neither?" . As the artist says, "My ongoing concern with certain tropes of minimal form is to think about how such forms might interact with social critique as explicit content. I fully understand that these forms historically could be read as relatively separate from direct reference to the political or social."

29 Goshka Macuga, *in time or space or state*, 2023

Piles of bookshelves, divider made of 3 sections

Courtesy of the artist

Partitions, now not just spatial and functional, but national, geographical, and cultural, form the contours of *in time or space or state*. The artist examines how these different identities can coexist (or not) and probes the fault line between them by creating a folding screen comprised of bookshelves filled with books from six countries—covering a range of topics, such as politics, economics, and history—each of which are either in conflict with another or with significant tensions between them: Israel and Palestine, Russia and Ukraine, and China and Taiwan, with the divide between each pair underscored by the fact that the countries are on opposite sides of the screen. However, some of the books are paired, showing how slippery a rigid distinction between 'them and us' can be and how illusory a monolithic idea of national identity is.

30 Mona Hatoum, *Grater Divide*, 2002

Mild steel [AP]

Courtesy of the artist

Parody is another strategy to question the unsettled status of folding screens. Mona Hatoum takes wordplay and an almost Surrealist displacement of an object by creating an oversize, human-scale cheese grater, that here morphs this commonplace kitchen utensil into a freestanding folding screen to create something humorous yet menacing.

31 Isa Genzken, *Paravent*, 1990

Reinforced concrete, aluminum, hinges

Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, KiCo Foundation

Isa Genzken's *Paravent* is one of a large number of ironic folding screens that she executed in concrete between 1986 and 1992. She then switched to using epoxy resin to create architectural structures, such as windows and paravents, some of them quite monumental. Here the distinction between the two functions—a window or a folding screen—is collapsed by being seemingly an empty armature that frames the view beyond.

PODIUM+1

32 Jean Prouvé, *Panneau séparatif insonorisé, créé pour le Centre national d'enseignement technique de Cachan*, 1955

Bent steel and perforated aluminum

Private collection

As of 1924, Prouvé began producing modern furniture in metal and wood with leading designers, including Le Corbusier and Charlotte Perriand. Inspired by the linear

aesthetics of airplanes, he developed a style based on clean, streamlined forms and produced his experimental designs in aluminum and steel. Believing in the political and social power of design, he worked enthusiastically on the development of prefabricated products. In 1947 Prouvé opened a factory in Maxéville that specialized in prefabricated buildings and furniture based on the use of folded or stamped metal sheets. This soundproofed panel board was designed for the Centre national d'enseignement technique de Cachan in 1955.

- 33 **Folding screen, China, 2nd half of the 17th century**
Wood covered in carved and colored lacquer with oil paint, gilt copper mounts and leather binds
Lisbon, Fundação Oriente - Museu do Oriente
In 1543, according to 16th-century Portuguese sources, a trading boat in the South China Sea was thrown off course by a typhoon and ended up in the Japanese islands. Having survived the storm, the ship's crew anchored in an archipelago embroiled in a civil war. Piracy along the coast of China had led the government in Beijing to break off relations with Japan. This circumstance provided the Portuguese merchants with an opportunity, as they were aware of the Japanese lords' willingness to pay for Chinese silk in silver, great quantities of which were mined in the country. An agreement was thus secured, by which the Portuguese were allowed to play an active role in the trade between China and Japan, resulting in the settlement of the Portuguese on the coast in Guandong, thereby creating a port of call on the route from Malacca to Japan. In a few years, Macao became one of the South China Sea's largest and busiest ports.
- 34 ***Six scenes from the story of Prince Genji (Genji monogatari)*, Japan, early 17th century**
Ink, colors, and gold on gilded paper
Neuss, Germany, Viktor and Marianne Langen Collection
This Japanese Edo-period screen, one of a pair, depicts the *Six Scenes from the Story of Prince Genji*, based on *The Tale of Genji*, written by Murasaki Shikibu, a female courtier, around the 11th century. Set in Kyoto, this romantic novel charts the relationships of Prince Genji across fifty-four chapters.
- 35 **'Coromandel' screen, China, late 17th century**
Lacquer, oriental wood, paper
Lisbon, Museo Calouste Gulbenkian
This fine example of a 'Coromandel' screen was a birthday gift to a dignitary such as a marshal or general and was therefore, and importantly, not for export, as was the case with most pieces depicting both Eastern and Western scenes. This screen is also distinctive and unusual for its complex, interlocking, and multi-layered composition. Below and across ten of the panels, the dignitary is depicted sitting and watching a performance in one of the pavilions of what we presume is his palace, while other scenes around him show guests arriving and servants preparing his birthday celebrations.

- 36 Watanabe Shikô, *Handing over a Horse*, Japan, 18th century
Ink and light colors on paper
Neuss, Germany, Viktor and Marianne Langen Collection
This screen, one of a pair, depicts an ancient custom celebrated annually at the imperial court. On August 16 each year, the emperor used to choose a number of horses from different parts of Japan. To prepare the event, an imperial official would meet the people responsible for selecting and transporting the horses to a location close to Kyôto. The image shows the people who brought the horse paying tribute to the imperial official. Apart from the pale gold applied by brush to form the background and the pale colors of the garments and leaves, the painting is mainly depicted in ink.
- 37 Folding screen with painted scenes on red background, Southern China, 18th century
Wood, kaolin paste, lacquer, gold, and oil painting
Private collection
The iconography in the screen references the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* attributed to Luo Guanzhong (c. 1315–1400). The story takes place between the years 169 and 280, the time between the disintegration and fall of the Han dynasty, the division of the empire into three kingdoms (Wei, Shu, and Wu), and the final unification under the Jin. About a thousand characters appear in the romance and provide an insight into the diversity of Chinese culture, with an emphasis on social and religious practices. The use of perspective and chiaroscuro creates a hybrid pictorial style that combines Western realism with Chinese stylistic characteristics.
- 38 *Folding Screen with Scenes in and around Kyoto*, Japan, 18th/19th century
Ink, color, crushed shell, and gold on gilded paper, mounted on brocade
Portugal, Private collection
The painting offers a detailed view of Japan's ancient capital, Kyoto, in gold and colored ink, surrounded by edging in black and gold brocade. Bands of golden clouds executed using the *okiage* technique (gold leaf over a relief formed by seashells) separate buildings and busy streets. The aerial view centers on the eastern part of the capital, with the north to the left, including the Kamo River and Imperial Palace. Set among the many stores and businesses shown, the names of places and temples are given with a small written label (*harifuda*).
- 39 Folding screen, Japan, 18th century
Ink, color, paper, and gold on paper
Vienna, MAK – Museum für Angewandte Kunst
Invented in Japan, the fan was a popular product exported to China and Korea as early as the 15th century. Painters of different schools and origins produced these objects in monochrome ink or in polychrome styles. As fans were generally replaced at the end of the year, demand was continuous for both daily use and decoration. It soon became customary to glue used fans onto the panels of folding screens, due in part to the wish to hold onto those that were particularly beautiful or precious.

- 40 **Folding screen, Japan, 18th–early 19th century**
Gouache and gold on silver leaf applied on paper, reverse with painted silk on paper, wooden structure and fittings lacquered in black
Rotterdam, FENIX Collection
In the 16th century, after accidentally anchoring off the coast of Tanegashima Island, off southern Kyushu, the Portuguese were associated with the geographic south and began to be referred to by the collective term *nanbanjin*, derived from the ancient Chinese expression for foreigners living in southern China. The influence of *nanban* culture during this period was extensive, especially in relation to artistic representations. The arrival of the Portuguese in Japan inspired a new genre of painted screens, known as *nanban byōbu* (“screens of the southern barbarians”). *Nanban* screens reveal the fascination of the Japanese with the strange physical features, curious customs, and habits of Europeans, and a desire to learn about the outside world. In this 18th-century, two-panel Japanese screen, the artist has shown a group of Europeans accompanied by a dog in colored ink and gold, on sheets of metal alloy or silver applied on paper.
- 41 **Josef Hoffmann, *Three-Panel Screen*, c. 1899**
Gilded incised leather panels with ebonized wood frame and brass detailing
Brighton, UK, Brighton & Hove Museums
Josef Hoffmann’s *Three-Panel Screen* stands for the marked revival of interest in folding screens in Western Europe during the 19th century by an extraordinary array of architects and artists, especially those associated with Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, and in this particular case one of the founders of the Vienna Secession and Wiener Werkstätte.
- 42 **Pablo Picasso, *Paravent*, c. 1915–16 /1922**
Oil on canvas and enamel paint
Madrid, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso
Consider the Cubist collision of two screens from the early 1920s, which cut across both painting and architecture: Pablo Picasso’s *Paravent*, a three-panel screen painted in a late Cubist style on both sides, made during the period when he was oscillating between Cubist and Neoclassical styles, and was presumably the same folding screen that Francis Bacon saw in 1927 [25].
- 43 **Eileen Gray, *Brick Screen*, c. 1925**
Black lacquered wood, steel, brass
Paris, Collection of J. & M. Donnelly
Brick Screen is part of a series beginning with one she designed for the Paris apartment of Madame Juliette Lévy. Made of horizontal rows of black urushi lacquered wood ‘bricks’ joined by steel rods, creating columns and ultimately a wall that plays with solid and void, the latter creates a porous partition without blocking sightlines and straddles the boundaries between furniture, sculpture, and architecture. Gray’s characteristic use of lacquer is a nod to Japanese decorative arts. As Gray explained, “The screens are a revolt,” a riposte to the taste of that time.

- 44 René Magritte, *Paravent décoratif*, 1928–30
Oil on wood in 3 parts
René Gaffe collection
Private collection. Courtesy Philip Serck. In temporary loan at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels
At first glance, René Magritte's *Paravent décoratif* seemingly departs from his enigmatic thought-provoking signature style that features ordinary objects placed in unusual or unexpected contexts. However, in line with Magritte's common exploration of illusion and the subconscious mind, with *Paravent décoratif*, the painting itself becomes the object. As the title suggests, the screen stays true to one of its primary functions. The decorative 3-panel screen contains three looping figures in a faded blue that fade into a pitch-black background.
- 45 Giacomo Balla, *Paravento - Forme compenetrare + balfiori*, 1932
Oil on board
Rome, Private collection
Paravento - Forme compenetrare + balfiori is one of many screens that Giacomo Balla made as part of all-enveloping artistic vision that often extended beyond the picture plane to encompass fashion and design.
- 46 Le Pho, *Paysage du Tonkin (Landscape of Tonkin)*, 1932–34
Laquer on panel
Collection of the Lam Family
Paysage du Tonkin (Landscape of Tonkin) is the largest known Vietnamese lacquer painting executed by Le Pho, and one of very few. There is a marked asymmetry across the three panels, with foliage offset against geometric elements inspired by Jean Dunand, whom Le Pho had met at the Colonial Exhibition in Paris in 1931, who had in turn been influenced in his adoption of Asian lacquer techniques by Eileen Grey's mentor Seizo Sugawara, showing this reciprocal series of influences and exchanges across cultures.
- 47 Man Ray, *Les yeux fertiles (Dédié à Falil Elliard)*, 1935
Oil on board
Private collection
Man Ray drew inspiration for this screen from the lines that the poet Paul Éluard, his close friend, dedicated to him in *Les yeux fertiles*, published in 1934. The young woman in the central panel, a reinterpretation of Botticelli's *Venus*, lifts her dress to cover her face and hands; she stands between a row of hypnotic red eyes and a three-story fountain from which bodiless hands holding each other sprout. The work is pervaded by an erotic atmosphere, as in the maiden's nudity and the falling star in the background, a veiled sexual innuendo.
- 48 Yves Klein, *Paravent [Screen] (IKB 62)*, 1957
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on wooden panels
Private collection
In his text *Remarques sur quelques œuvres exposées à la galerie Colette Allendy* on folding screens, written in 1957, Yves Klein stated that "Screens allowed the blue

to be confined. They could be arranged in a semicircle so that the observer could view the work while standing at the center point of the diameter." In this work of the same year, Klein applied pure saturated and luminous IKB 62 pigments mixed with synthetic resin on the five-panel structure of the screen, continuing his pursuit of an intimate correspondence with the human scale.

- 49 **Le Corbusier, *Paravent for la Cité Radieuse, Marseille, France, 1950***
Oak, polychrome vinyl, gold metal
Private collection
Paravent for la Cité Radieuse, Marseille, France should be seen within Le Corbusier's broader architectural vision for the Unité d'habitation. The Unité d'habitation was a modernist urban housing concept developed by Le Corbusier embodying his ideas about efficient living spaces and communal living within urban environments. The paravent is an element that plays a part within this larger construct. It efficiently helps define interior spaces, providing privacy while allowing for flexibility within the spaces designed for human proportions using the Modulor.
- 50 **Pierre Jeanneret, *PJ-DIVERS-01-A, 1957-58***
Teak and cotton fabric
Zurich, P!Galerie
Pierre Jeanneret made *PJ-DIVERS-01-A* for the Indian city of Chandigarh, which he undertook in 1947 as part of a commission to design, build and furnish the city along the lines of a utopian vision.
- 51 **Alvar Aalto, *Screen, Model nr. 100, 1940***
Wood
Private collection
- 52 **Charles and Ray Eames, *Folding Screen FSW 8, 1948***
Plywood, woven polypropylene mesh
Private collection
Materiality, in this case wood, comes to the fore with Alvar Aalto's *Screen, Model nr. 100* [51], produced by Artek, and Charles and Ray Eames' *Folding Screen FSW 8*, made of their pioneering molded plywood and a landmark of mid-century design.
- 53 **Carla Accardi, *Paravento, 1972***
Wood and acrylic on Sicofoil
Dunkerque, France, Collection Frac Grand Large — Hauts-de-France
Carla Accardi's *Paravento* is one of her paintings of calligraphic and repetitive gestural marks on transparent Sicofoil. Here, it is turned into a folding screen and continues her works that merge the organic and the inorganic, painting and sculpture, including those that created habitats, such as tents.
- 54 **Marlene Dumas, *Paravent, 1984***
Oil on plywood in beech frame
Private collection
Marlene Dumas' screen is representative of the intense

emotional content of her figurative paintings at the time. Bold, expressive brush strokes make up eight nude figures on either side of the four-panel screen. Perhaps at first glance genderless, the figures on one side of the screen are depicted with male organs, the other female in an evocation of the themes strongly present in Dumas's work related to identity, sexuality, desire, and the complexities of the human experience.

55 Sol LeWitt, *Untitled Screen*, 1987

Ink on screen boards

Collection of Lisson Gallery, London

In *Untitled Screen* Sol LeWitt continued his research on modular geometric structures in the context of minimal art, developing the figure on the two sides of the work's five panels. The tendency toward a third dimension, as well as the propensity to go beyond the support, were characteristics already present respectively in his "Structures" and "Wall Drawings" of the 1960s. Referring to the many screens he had executed, in 1969 LeWitt wrote, "In my case, I used the elements of these simple forms—square, cube, line and color—to produce logical systems. Most of these systems were finite; that is, they were complete using all possible variations. This kept them simple."

56 Franz West, *Paravent*, 2010

Metal, wood, acrylic paint

Frankfurt, Museum MMK Für Moderne Kunst

Franz West's pink *Paravent* is typical of his singular and playful approach to the traditional status of sculpture, the importance of social interaction, the division between 'high' and 'low,' and the notion of beauty and utility.

57 Takesada Matsutani, *Paravent*, 1987

Graphite and turpentine on paper

Private collection

Takesada Matsutani's *Paravent* reflects his role as a painter and a member of the Gutai Art Association from 1963 until its dissolution in 1972.

58 Cy Twombly, *Paravent*, 1989

Oil-based house paint, acrylic, on three connected wooden panels

Private collection

Cy Twombly's *Paravent* has never been exhibited, is decorated with the same peony motif of Edo-period screens, and is important in being an influence on his ten later *Untitled* paintings from 2006–07. The main theme of works like this is Japonisme, and it features prominently the 17th-century haiku poetry of Basho. John Cage also had a keen interest in Zen Buddhism and Haiku, and in Fall 1951 he and Twombly attended lectures on these subjects by the Japanese philosopher Daisetz T. Suzuki at Columbia University in New York.

59 Kerry James Marshall, "*Untitled*" *Rythm Mastr Splash*, 2023

Inkjet print on PVC panel in four parts

Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, London

Choosing a frontal view and a purely pictorial approach

for his screen, Marshall here continues his series *Rhythm Mastr*, in which he depicts black superheroes in comic books, from which they were traditionally excluded. Taking his inspiration from Marvel comics, H.G Wells, Ray Bradbury, Ursula Le Guin, Samuel R. Delany, and Octavia Butler, Marshall's organizes his composition by borrowing the spatial logic of comic books, exploiting the narrative potential offered by the structure of the screen.

60 T.J. Wilcox, *Radio City Music Hall*, 2010

Acetate, foil, birch, MDF

Including *The Heir and Astaire*, 2010

HD Video, 9'50", exhibition copy

Courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London

Radio City Music Hall, with its related video *The Heir and Astaire*, is one of a number of folding screens he has made.

This one focuses on the unlikely marriage between the American star Adele Astaire (sister of Fred) and the British aristocrat Lord Charles Cavendish, who made for a very modern couple. In a formal device which also plays with the idea of the cinematic projected image and the glittering aesthetics of the Jazz Age, Wilcox reminds us how important the folding screen was in the 1920s and 1930s due to figures such as Eileen Gray.

61 Laura Owens, *Untitled*, 2023

wood, paper, acrylic paint, oil paint, felt flocking

Courtesy the artist and Sadie Coles HQ, London

Emphasizing the liminal aspect of the screen, which refers to both painting and bookmaking in his practice, in this work Laura Owens employs a variety of techniques, including silkscreen, oils, and acrylics on paper and silk. Owens believes in the dignity of the concept of decoration, which she does by destabilizing the authority of the single-point perspective of paintings made to be hung on a wall. In *Untitled* the plane is broken into a triptych of three equal parts, each offering a different perspective. The different ways of organizing the screen thus alter the viewpoints used.

62 William Kentridge, *Untitled (Bread is Not Cut, Bread is Broken)*, 2023

Indian ink, litho crayon, found paper, watercolor, pencil, colored pencil, and collage on painted canvas

Courtesy of the artist and Galleria Lia Rumma, Milan

William Kentridge emphasizes the text components of the work, superimposed on the image. The drawing originates from a series conceived by the artist for the theater project *The Great Yes, The Great No* about a voyage from Marseille to Martinique in 1941. The image stands for the wildness and lushness of the vegetation in Martinique, while also emphasizing the domestic dimension of the paravents. The front of the paravent is made out of five canvas stretchers with stretched canvas on them, while the back might have notes about it, exhibition histories, different stickers. The front is what one presents to the world, in terms of one's domestic life, and the back represents more private anxieties and fears in the text. The texts all come from the opera's libretto, which is about poets from the Caribbean and the shift from Europe to a different surrealist world.

- 63 Keiichi Tanaami, *Utopian Situation by "Guernica,"* 2023
Pigmented ink, acrylic silkscreen medium, crashed glass, glitter, acrylic paint on canvas, wood frame
Courtesy of the artist
Keiichi Tanaami's work features themes from American pop culture combined with stylistic characteristics and techniques typical of Japanese illustration. Characters taken from animated cartoons and films, and placed in surreal or psychedelic settings, meet iconic figures from such artworks as *Guernica*, thereby expressing the rejection of the formal hierarchies of Neo-Dada. Favoring methodology over the medium, Tanaami's practice is derived from various disciplines, including graphic novels, collage, sculpture, painting, and film. His work is produced by the crystallization of moving images, alluding to the use of screens as props in Kabuki theater and Kamishibai, the traditional form of storytelling using paper images, which originated in the Buddhist temples of 12th-century Japan.
- 64 Kamrooz Aram, *Privacy Screen for Public Architecture,* 2022
Oil, oil crayon and pencil on linen, hinged with artist's frame
Courtesy of the artist and Peter Blum Gallery
This monumental screen draws upon two sets of seemingly divergent cultural references, in this case the tessellated patterns of Iranian architecture and decoration, and Natalia Goncharova's *Spring* (1927/28), a painting of similar dimensions.
- 65 Betye Saar, *Snake Screen,* 2023
Watercolor and pencil on 15 sheets of paper, housed in 15 glass panels
Courtesy of the Artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles
The image of the snake or serpent has been recurrent in Betye Saar's artwork, a symbol of many concepts—creation, fertility, temptation, the occult, cleverness. Often present in her assemblages, these figures seem to be moving behind the panes, as if one was viewing them safely through a window.
- 66 Wade Guyton, *Untitled [WG5525],* 2023
Five panels, Epson UltraChrome HDX inkjet on linen
Courtesy of the artist
In his work, Wade Guyton started from his typical painting format of 213 x 175 cm, cutting the paintings in half vertically to a size of 213 x 87.5 cm. His recurrent strategy consists in employing the vertical fold to fit through the printer, an element which in this case marks the structure of the paravent. Images of paintings in process are the subject of the paintings themselves. The iconographic apparatus also includes bitmap files and the view of the installation of Museum Ludwig in Köln, in which the metal scaffolding used to hang the work are visible, conveying the context in which the works were produced. The contamination of painting with design, graphic design, sculpture, and furniture questions the work status.
- 67 Chris Ofili, *Pink Daydream (Ghost),* 2023
Embroidery on silk organza with maple frame in four parts
Courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner

This work is based on images elaborated by the artist in response to Stéphane Mallarmé *L'après-midi d'un faune* (1876), a poem about a faun who, upon awakening from sleep, recalls an erotic encounter with nymphs as he attempts to reconcile what actually happened and what can exist only in his oneiric world.

The images are especially derived by a series of etchings by the artist, *Pink Daydreams of a Faun* (2021), printed on Suminagashi paintings, the Japanese art of paper marbling. In this paravent, Chris Ofili translated the etched linear contours and the free forms of the colored inks and water onto a shimmering silk embroidery, hinting at dreamlike imagery.

68 Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, *Face Value*, 2021

Textile, acrylic, wooden paravent

Courtesy of the artist, Karma International, Zurich, and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

Face Value is emblematic of Małgorzata Mirga-Tas's work that addresses anti-Romani stereotypes and instead proposes a more positive image of Romani cultures. As with this folding screen, this is often done through vibrant textile collages from found materials and fabrics sourced from her family and friends, a patchwork which imbues them with a sense of a multitude of lives lived.

69 Atelier E.B (Beca Lipscombe & Lucy McKenzie), *VIII – Uchiwa-é/Show fantasy escalette*, 2015

Oil on canvas mounted on wood, silkscreen on cotton calico earl grey dip-dyed on wood, steel frame
Berlin, Galerie Buchholz

A double-sided screen in six parts, of which the two artists of Atelier E.B each painted one side, charts an unlikely influence of Italian culture and fashion in Scotland in the 1980s. As Lucy McKenzie comments: "The term 'Paninaro' refers to an Italian youth scene that met at the Panino cafe in Milan in the early 1980s. Embraced by the children of middle- and upper-class professionals, these wealthy Italian youngsters distinguished their tribe with designer clothes. Their look and attitude inspired the Euro casual look that my friends and I were so keen to emulate. The 'Paninaro' scene was diffused in Italy through Berlusconi's television channels, that transmitted messages of consumerism and fostered a creative self-affirmation among youth through the acquisition of status symbols."

70 David Hockney, *Caribbean Tea Time*, 1987

Lithograph, screen print, printed paper, and stencil on paper

London, Tate, presented by the artist 1993

Caribbean Tea Time is one of a number of folding screens David Hockney made or referenced in his paintings. The work attests the influence of his designs for the theater and photographic collages during the 1980s, with references in the use of quasi-Cubist shapes and spatial experiments to his set designs for *Parade*, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, a trilogy that premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1981.