

Made of Paper: Robert Motherwell's Collage Materials in the 1940s

The American artist, Robert Motherwell (1915–1991), had a passionate relationship with collage, producing nearly 900 works over the course of his career. He first experimented with the medium following an invitation by Peggy Guggenheim (1898–1979) to participate in her groundbreaking 1943 collage exhibition at her New York gallery, Art of This Century. Motherwell was instantly drawn to collage and continued to experiment with the process, creating a unique and very personal group of early works in the 1940s.

A technical study of Motherwell's early collage materials was conducted in conjunction with a 2013 exhibition, *Robert Motherwell: Early Collages*, organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. This study identifies a refined palette of different papers, paints, and adhesives that Motherwell used extensively during this initial period of discovery. Motherwell's choice of materials and the techniques he used are also discussed in relation to his experiences as a young artist and the growing shift toward Abstract Expressionism in America in the 1940s. In addition, Motherwell's thoughts on visual changes to his work and the potential for conservation intervention are also presented.

This paper is published in: Warda, J. 2013. "Made of paper: Robert Motherwell's collage materials in the 1940s" in *Robert Motherwell: Early Collages*, Davidson, S., Fontanella, M., Taylor, B., and Warda, J. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. 55–67.

JEFFREY WARDA
Conservator, Paper
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
New York, New York
jwarda@guggenheim.org

Presented at the Book and Paper Group Session, AIC's 42nd Annual Meeting, May 27–31, 2014, San Francisco, California.