



# WILLEM DE KOONING





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# WILLEM DE KOONING (1904-1997)

## *Woman in a Rowboat*

Signed lower left, "de Kooning"

1964

oil on paper laid on masonite

47 ½ x 36 ¼ in. (120.6 x 92 cm)



WATCH VIDEO

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### PROVENANCE

Allan Stone Gallery, New York  
Private Collection, New York  
Private Collection, United States

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### EXHIBITION

North Hampton, Smith College Museum of Art; Cambridge, The New Gallery, Charles Hayden Memorial Library, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *Willem de Kooning: a Retrospective from Public and Private Collections*, April – June 1965 (Cambridge only)  
New York, Allan Stone Gallery, *De Kooning/Cornell*, February – March 1965  
Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, *American Paintings*, September - October 1966, cat. no. 26  
Dublin, The Royal Dublin Society, *Rosc'67: The Poetry of Vision*, November – December 1967, p. 201, illustrated  
Detroit, J.L. Hudson, *Willem de Kooning: Three Decades of Painting*, March – April 1968, no. 31 (exhibition checklist)  
East Hampton, Guild Hall, *Works from 1951 – 1981*, May – July 1981, cat. no 21 (exhibition checklist)  
West Palm Beach, Florida, Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens, *Figurative Masters of the Americas*, January 4 - February 12, 2023

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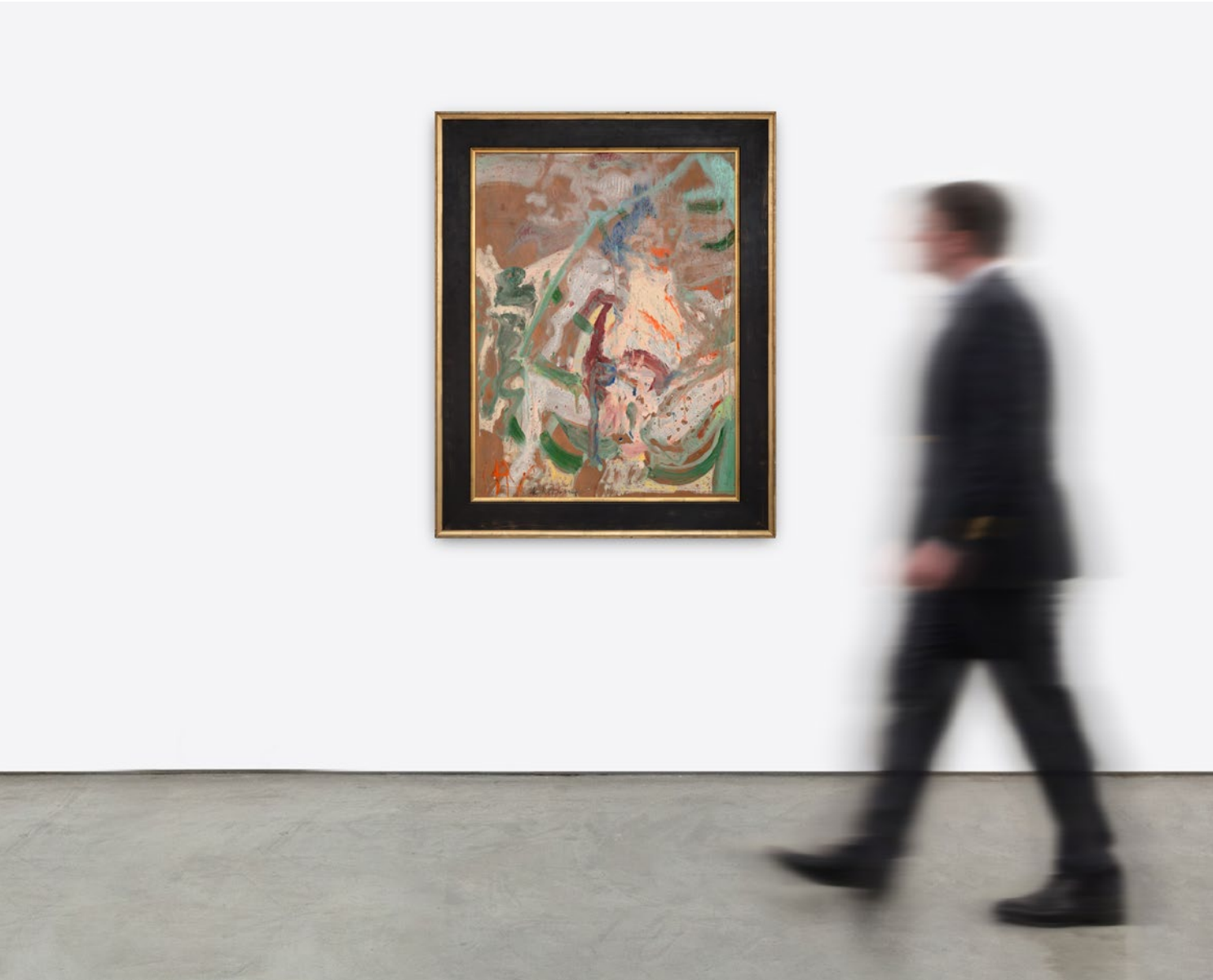
### LITERATURE

T. Hess, "De Kooning's New Women," *Art News*, March 1965, p. 37 (text reference)  
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, *Willem de Kooning: Paintings*, 1994, fig. 15, p. 15, illustrated  
Allan Stone Gallery, *Willem de Kooning: Liquefying Cubism*, 1994, p. VII, illustrated (installation photograph from the 1965 *De Kooning/Cornell* exhibition)  
Museum of Modern Art, *Willem de Kooning: A Retrospective*, 2011, fig. 7, p. 356, illustrated.  
J. Elderfield, *De Kooning: A Retrospective*, Museum of Modern Art – New York, 2011- 2012, p. 356

# IMPORTANT FACTS

- Of the six paintings that made up the core of the original series, the first two are housed in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Museum of Modern Art acquired *Woman I* in 1953, one year after its completion
- De Kooning returned to the *Woman* series at different stages, as with *Woman in a Rowboat*. With each painting in the series, the women on the canvas became more abstracted as they melted into lines and colors.
- *Woman in a Rowboat* represents a rare opportunity to acquire an important work of art, which is part of a landmark series that shifted the course of art history and is proudly part of the world's foremost museums.
- Works from de Kooning's *Woman* series are his most desirable. The auction record for de Kooning stands at \$68 million for a work from the series *Woman as Landscape*. Other works, which are more similar in composition and medium to *Woman in a Rowboat*, have sold for between three and six million dollars.

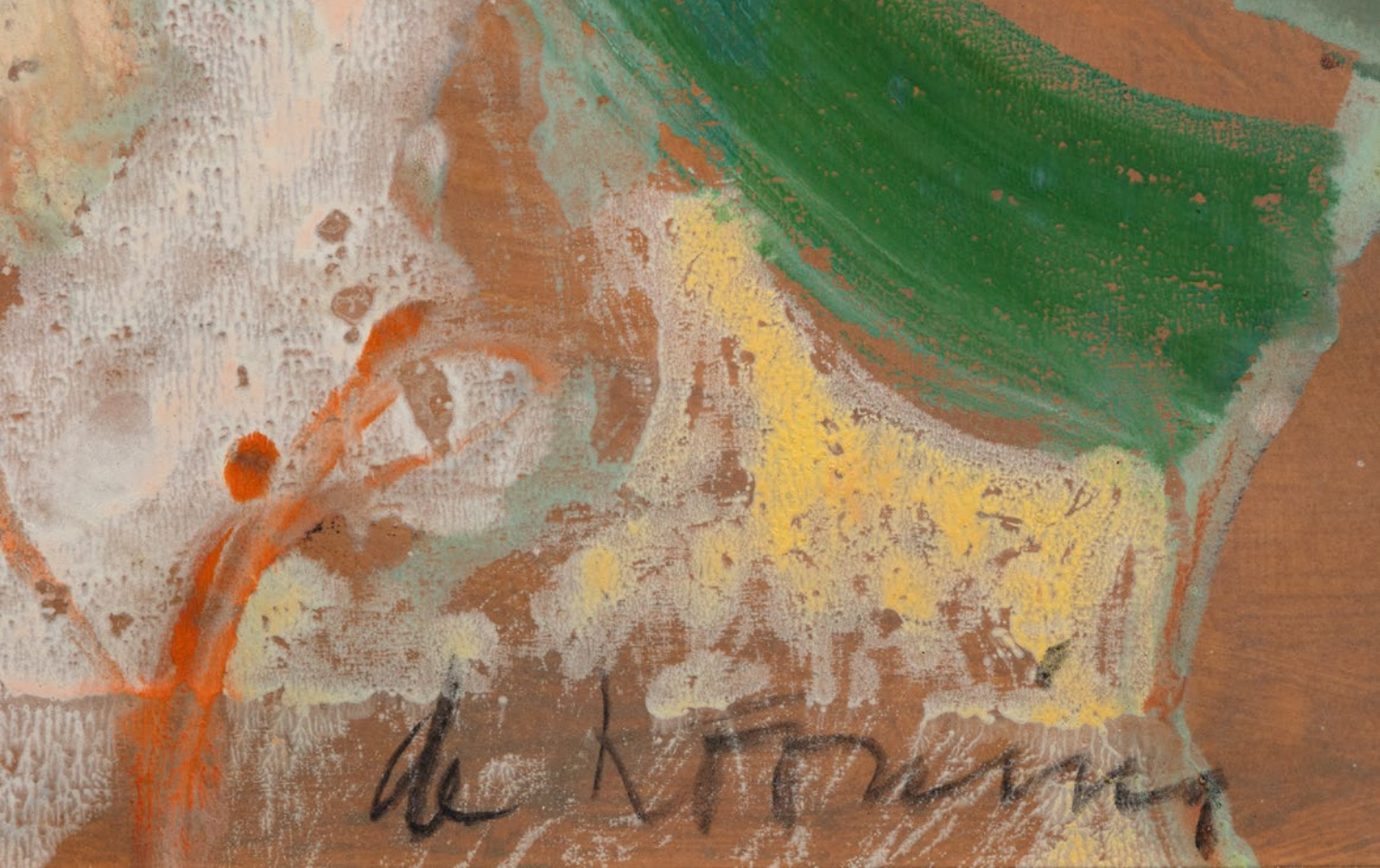
# DETAIL IMAGES













# MARKET ANALYSIS

## Willem de KOONING

### Statistical Analysis

Number of lots	1274
Change from 1/1976 - 3/2024	+18918.4%
Compound Annual Growth Rate	11.3

### Revaluation

Input value	0 USD
Revalue date	01/1976
Revaluation	0 USD

100% (median)-USD (Nominal terms)

AMR | Art  
Market  
Research



Works from de Kooning's *Woman* series are his most desirable. The auction record for de Kooning stands at \$68 million for a work from the *Woman* series, *Woman as Landscape*. Other works, which are more similar in composition and medium to *Woman in a Rowboat*, have sold for between three and eight million dollars.

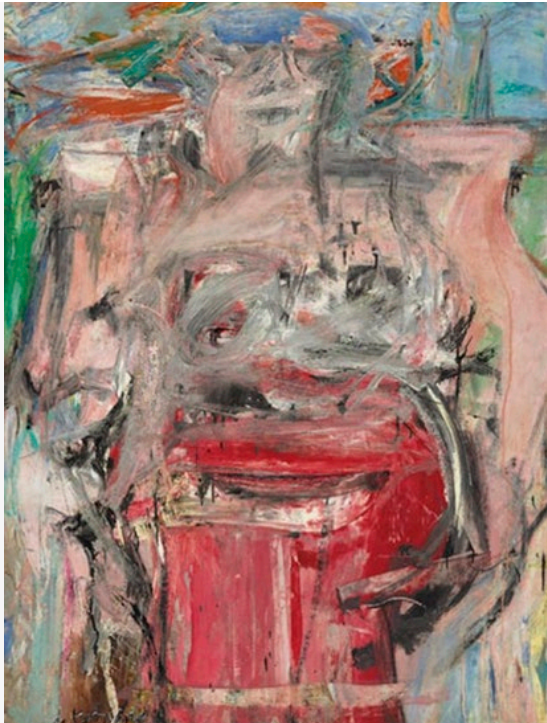
In 2016, a private collector paid \$300 million for Willem de Kooning's *Interchange* (1955).

Drawings and preparatory sketches for the *Woman* series have also done incredibly well at auction, selling for between 2.5 and 3 million dollars.

Over a nearly 50-year period, prices for Willem de Kooning paintings at auction have increased dramatically, earning an 11.3% annual rate of return

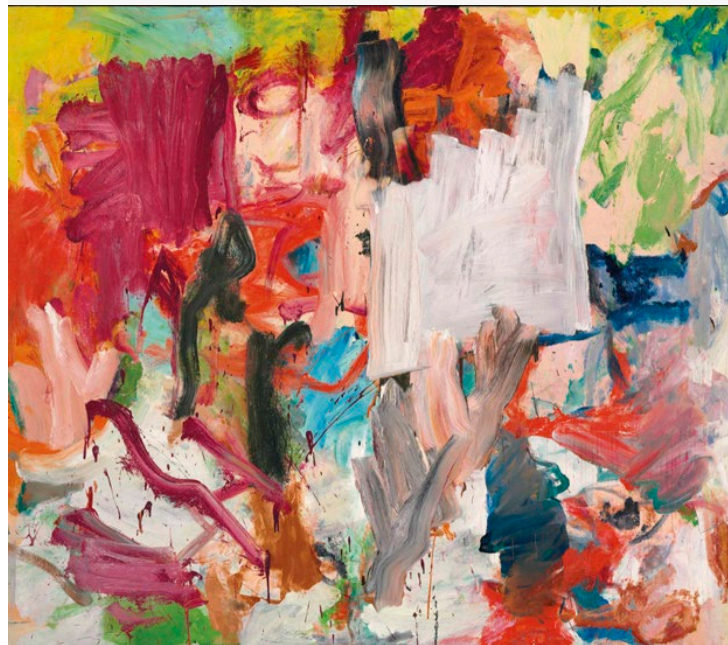


# TOP PAINTINGS SOLD AT AUCTION



*Woman as Landscape*  
c. 1954-1955  
oil and charcoal on canvas  
65 ½ x 49 ¾ in. (148.6 x 148.6 cm)

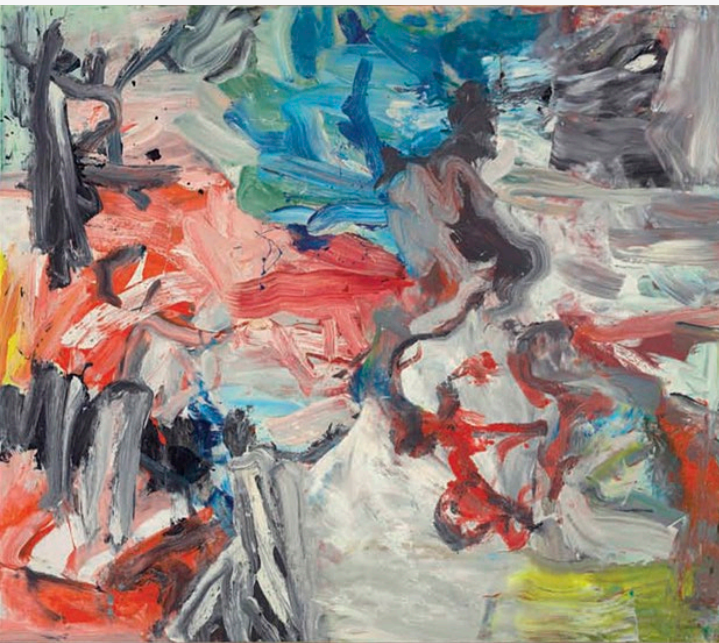
**Sold at Christie's New York:  
November 2018 for \$68,937,500**



*Untitled XXV*  
1977  
oil on canvas  
77 x 88 in. (78.4 x 57.4 cm)

**Sold at Christie's New York:  
November 2016 for \$44,327,500**

# TOP PAINTINGS SOLD AT AUCTION

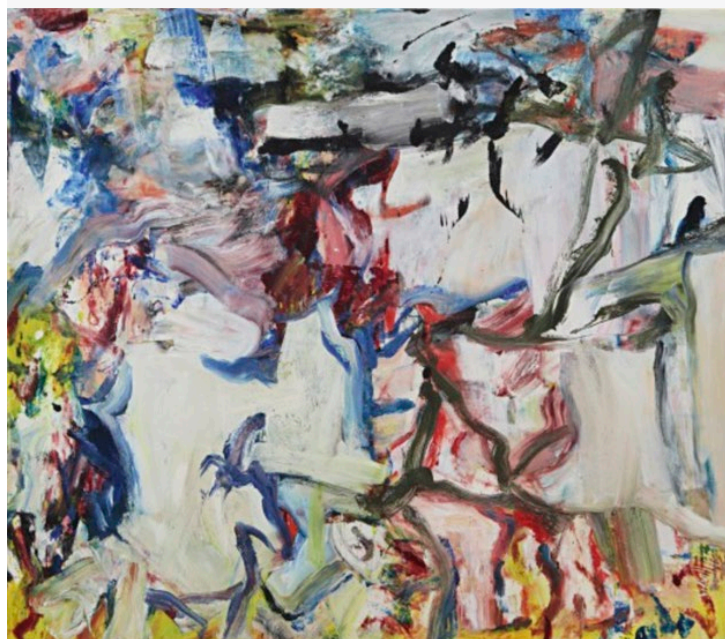


*Untitled VIII*  
1977  
oil on canvas  
70 x 80 in. (93 x 65.1 cm)

**Sold at Christie's New York:  
November 2013 for \$32,085,000**

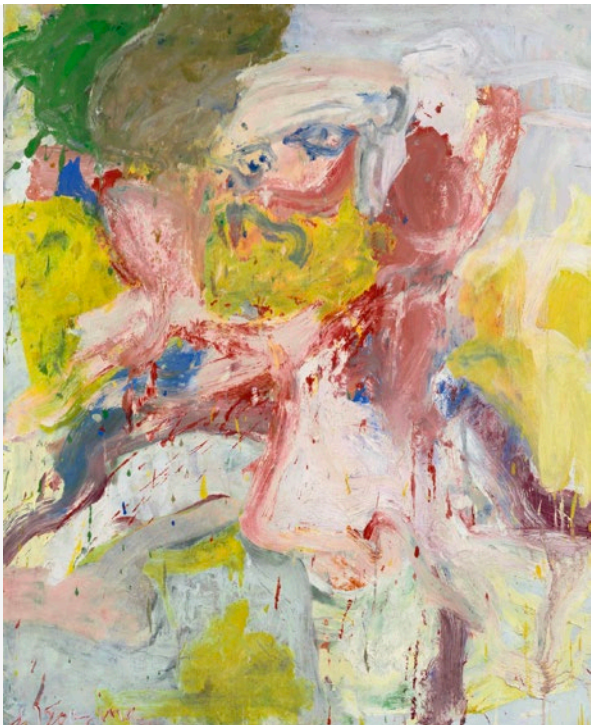
*Untitled XXII*  
1977  
oil on canvas  
30 x 25 in. (76.5 x 63.5 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's New York:  
November 2019 for \$30,105,800**





# COMPARABLE PAINTINGS SOLD AT AUCTION



*Man in Wainscott*

1969

oil on paper and newsprint collage  
mounted on canvas

60 x 48 ¼ in. (152.4 x 122.6 cm)

**Sold at Christie's New York:  
May 2024 for \$8,690,000**

While this is not a *Woman* painting, a similar painting from the same decade, *Man in Wainscott* (1969), sold in May 2024 for nearly \$8.7 million USD.

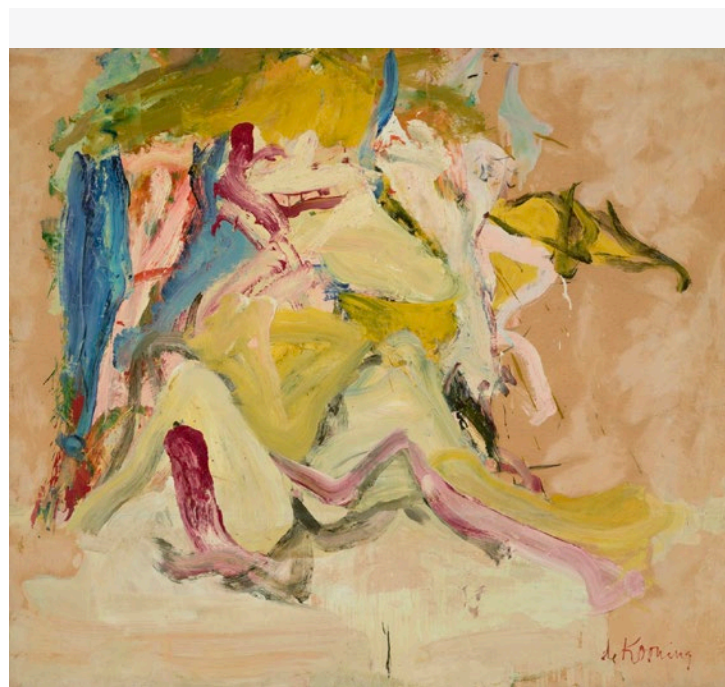
*Woman on the Dune*

1967

oil on paper mounted on canvas  
48 x 54 ¾ in. (121.9 x 138.1 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's New York:  
November 2023 for \$3,317,000**

Also in May 2024, a 1960s work on paper from the *Woman* series, *Woman on the Dune*, sold at Christie's for \$3,317,000 USD. While it's a significant piece, our painting is arguably more aesthetically appealing.



# COMPARABLE PAINTINGS SOLD AT AUCTION



*Woman and Child*

1967-1968

oil on paper laid down on canvas

55 x 36 in. (213.4 x 142.1 cm)

**Sold at Christie's New York:  
May 2011 for \$6,578,000**

Like *Woman in Rowboat* this is a highly desirable Woman subject

Also executed on paper and laid to a support

Comparable size

*Yellow Woman*

1952

oil, tempera, charcoal, and graphite  
on paper

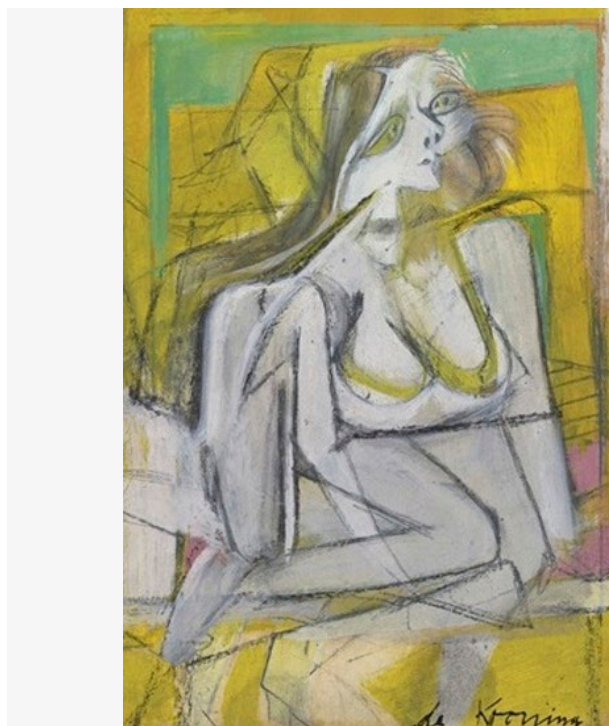
9 x 6 in. (48.3 x 60.3 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's New York:  
May 2015 for \$6,410,000**

This work measures a mere 9 x 6 inches but achieved the staggering sum of 6.4 million USD because of the importance of the Woman subject and period

This painting is quite small, and a work on paper

This result is one of the highest prices paid per square inch for any abstract painting in history





# COMPARABLE PAINTINGS SOLD AT AUCTION



*Untitled*

1972

oil on paper mounted on canvas

60  $\frac{1}{8}$  x 41 in. (152.7 x 104.1 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's New York:**

**November 2023 for \$5,505,000**

In November, another oil on paper from the Woman series sold for \$5.5 million, more than double the low estimate.

*Untitled (Woman in a Forest)*

1963-1964

oil on paper mounted on masonite

29 x 34 in. (73.7 x 86.4 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's New York:**

**November 2011 for \$3,050,500**

A smaller Woman painting, from the same year, *Untitled (Woman in a forest)* (c. 1963-64), sold in 2011 for over \$3 million USD.



# DE KOONING PAINTINGS IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

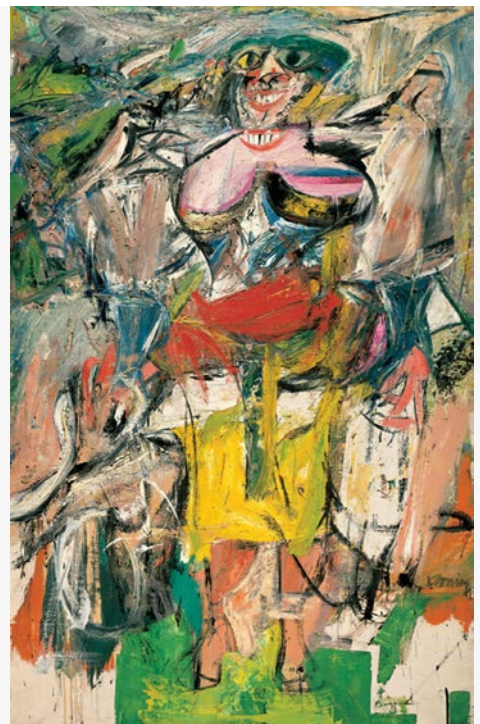


**The Tate  
London**

*The Visit*  
1966-1967  
oil on canvas  
60 x 48 in. (51.1 x 76.2 cm)

**The Whitney Museum of  
American Art, New York**

*Woman and Bicycle*  
1952-1953  
oil, enamel, and charcoal on linen  
76 ½ x 49 ⅛ in. (27.3 x 30.2 cm)

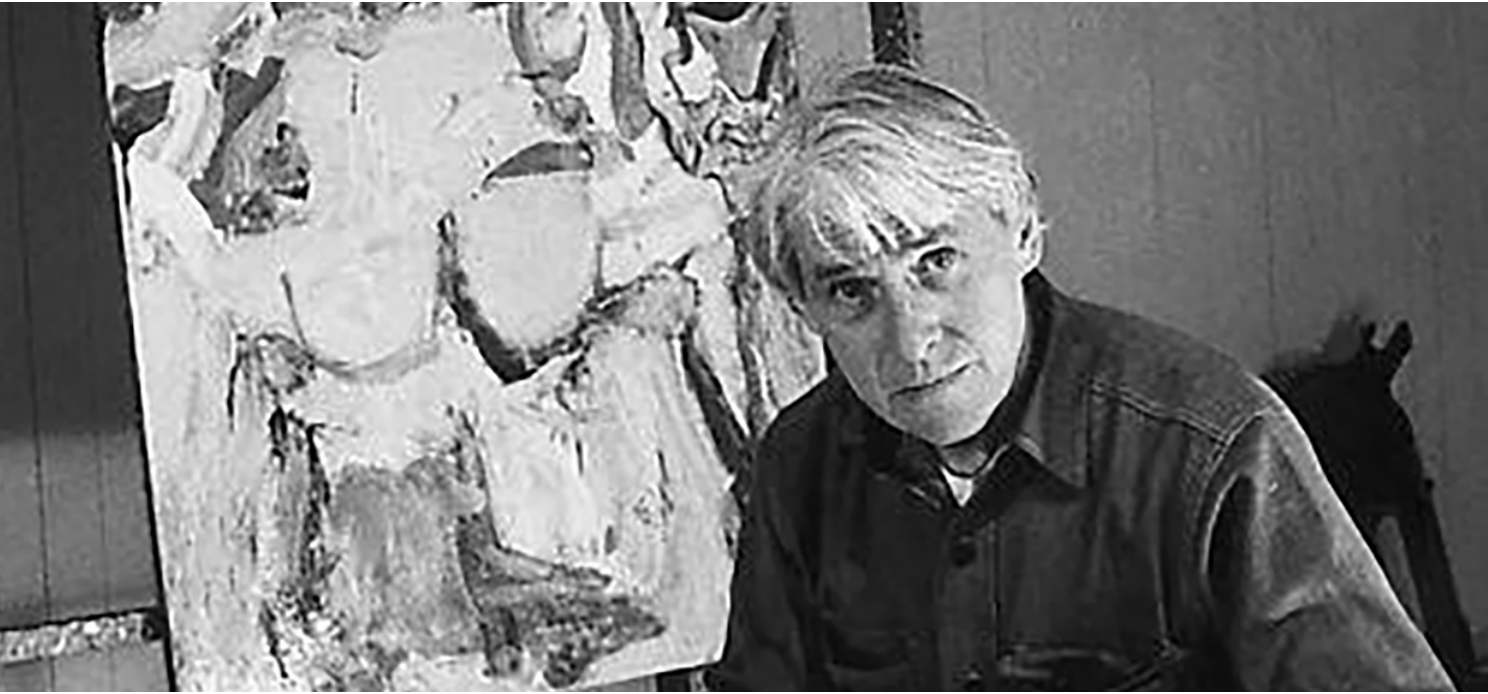




“The figure is nothing unless you  
twist it around like a strange miracle.”

**Willem de Kooning**

# HISTORY



Willem de Kooning

Willem de Kooning is one of the most celebrated American artists, not least for his pioneering work developing the Abstract Expressionist movement. Emerging from the destruction of World War II, the loosely associated movement worked through the trauma of the past and the anxiety of a new present. Along with Jackson Pollock, De Kooning helped to cultivate the action painting branch in which artists appeared to attack the canvas with bold and dynamic brushwork.

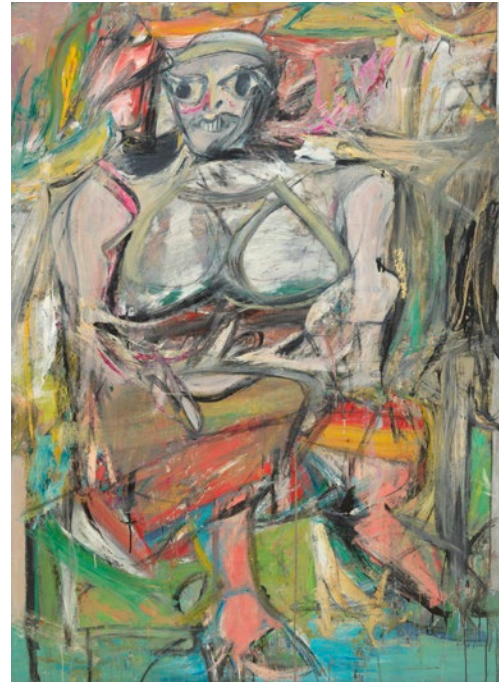
Nevertheless, this label of abstraction never sat well with de Kooning as figuration always played a role in his process, ebbing and flowing at various points in the 1930s and 1940s. Thus, it was his first Woman series in the early 1950s that cemented de Kooning's legacy. With this series, de Kooning fused the techniques of Abstract Expressionism with representative figuration.



Despite this leap in art history, the series was not without controversy. For some, it was a betrayal of the tenets of abstraction. For others, it was the grotesqueness of the women that seemed degrading and violent. But it was Clement Greenberg, the art critic that defined and promoted Abstract Expressionism, who championed this series; for the critic, de Kooning pushed modernism by imbuing abstraction with “the power of sculptural color.” The bold brushstrokes and expressive colors seem to carve out the women on the canvas while conveying a sense of energy that captured the anxieties of the artist and of the times.

Rather than break with art history, the Woman series rooted itself within a lineage of artists painting women (and particularly nude women). For example, both de Kooning and Picasso reimagined the female form and developed new approaches to brushwork, yet maintained a link to the history of female nudes. And like Picasso, de Kooning deconstructed conventional notions of proportion, tossing aside geometry for closer psychological examinations and boundary-pushing technique that explored the possibility of the visual plane.

What was new for de Kooning was his incorporation of popular consumer culture to



Willem de Kooning  
*Woman I*, 1952  
oil and metallic paint on canvas  
Museum of Modern Art, New York

Willem de Kooning  
*Woman II*, 1952  
oil on canvas  
Museum of Modern Art, New York



create his women, using the imagery of pin up models and movie stars. It was one pop artist, Robert Rauschenberg, who would cross paths with de Kooning. Rauschenberg approached de Kooning to request a piece he could erase. Rauschenberg purposely chose de Kooning for his standing as one of the most important artists in the country. Likewise, by granting permission and one of his works, one of his Woman drawings, de Kooning acknowledged the power of art and its possibilities.

It is for these reasons that museums around the world have clamored to include one of de Kooning's Woman series in their collections. Of the six paintings that made up the core of the original series, the first two are housed in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Museum of Modern Art acquired *Woman I* in

Installation View: *de Kooning/Cornell*, February 2-March 13, 1965, Allan Stone Gallery (*Woman in a Rowboat*, far right)





1953, one year after its completion, with its committee stating that they “found the picture quite frightening, but felt it had intense vitality and liked the quality of the color.”

The museum immediately recognized its importance not just to de Kooning’s oeuvre, but to its place in art history, as abstraction and figuration collided and the full possibilities of paint were made visible on the canvas. De Kooning made paint both rough and smooth, and both opaque and translucent. The remaining works are in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Australia, and the Carnegie Museum of Art. Only one is in private hands, having originally been in the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

De Kooning returned to the *Woman* series at different stages, as with *Woman in a Rowboat*. With each painting in the series, the women on the canvas became more abstracted as they melted into lines and colors. This coincides with de Kooning’s move to East Hampton, New York, which he also attributed to his shifting colors. The colors of the canvas that were once garish became earth tones.

A similar drawing is in the Walker Art Center. The drawing underscores De Kooning’s skilled draftsmanship, underlying the abstractions in the painting, which transformed lines into sculptural figures. *Woman in a Rowboat* represents a rare opportunity to acquire an important work of art, which is part of a landmark series that shifted the course of art history and is proudly part of the world’s foremost museums.