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# Lists: To-dos, Illustrated Inventories, Collected Thoughts, and Other Artists' Enumerations from the Collections of the Smithsonian Museum

*Liza Kirwin*

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From the weekly shopping list to the Ten Commandments, our lives are shaped by lists. Whether dashed off as a quick reminder, or carefully constructed as an inventory, this humble form of documentation provides insight into its maker's personal habits and decision-making processes. This is especially true for artists, whose day-to-day acts of living and art-making overlap and inform each other. Artists' lists shed uncover a host of unbeknownst motivations, attitudes, and opinions about their work and the work of others. Lists presents almost seventy artifacts, including "to do" lists, membership lists, lists of paintings sold, lists of books to read, lists of appointments made and met, lists of supplies to get, lists of places to see, and lists of people who are "in."

At times introspective, humorous, and resolute, but always revealing and engaging, *Lists* is a unique firsthand account of American cultural history that augments the personal biographies of some of the most celebrated and revered artists of thelast two centuries. Many of the lists are historically important, throwing a flood of light on a moment, movement, or event; others are private, providing an intimate view of an artist's personal life: Pablo Picasso itemized his recommendations for the Armory Show in 1912; architect Eero Saarinen enumerated the good qualities of the then *New York Times* art editor and critic Aline Bernstein, his second wife; sculptor Alexander Calder's address book reveals the whos who of the Parisian avant-garde in the early twentieth century. In the hands of their creators, these artifacts become works of art in and of themselves. Lists includes rarely seen specimens by Vito Acconci, Leo Castelli, Joseph Cornell, Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, H. L. Mencken, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Richard Pousette-Dart, Robert Rauschenberg, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, and Andrew Wyeth.

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