

MoMA

A Curator's Guide to *Degree Zero* Exhibition Highlights

Take a close look at 10 essential works from the exhibition, selected by curator Samantha Friedman.
Samantha Friedman // Nov 17, 2020

Modest, immediate, and direct, drawing was the ideal medium for the period of renewal that followed the Second World War. *Degree Zero* features 75 drawings from MoMA's collection made between 1948 and 1961, spanning movements, geographies, and generations. These 10 highlights show some of the myriad ways artists started again from scratch.

Sonja Sekula. *The Voyage*. 1956. Ink and watercolor on paper

"Small size . . . suits my heart best," Sonja Sekula wrote to her dealer Betty Parsons in 1956. "The American public must have bigness. OK. But I stick to my own need and prefer to work small scale." The portable medium of drawing allowed the artist, who struggled with mental illness, to continue to work as she traveled back and forth between New York and her native Switzerland, where she received treatment. This transatlantic journey is alluded to in this work's title and in the ship that appears in one of its interior frames. Together, these jewel-toned zones suggest a narrative, as one might find in the panes of a stained-glass window.

