

## Art World

## Joseph Stella, Master of Order, Made Collages That Revel in Mess

THE DAILY PIC: At Michael Rosenfeld, do Stella's conceptual collages foreshadow Robert Rauschenberg?

Blake Gopnik, March 27, 2017



**THE DAILY PIC** (#1759): I think most art lovers who know anything at all about the American modernist Joseph Stella know him for his crystalline, hard-edged, almost Art Deco images of the modern world. That's why I was so surprised to discover a wall of soft-edged, trash-y, outsider-ish collages by Stella in a group show at Michael Rosenfeld Gallery in New York. The two I'm Pic-ing today are numbers 24, (at left, from about 1926) and 11 (1942) in a series titled "Macchina Naturale." Amazing how in 1942 Stella already has the courage to make a work that is all about asking us to compare and contrast two similarly filthy pieces of paper, from different sources.

The collages, which Stella never showed during his lifetime, seem worthy of Jean Dubuffet's art brut or of Robert Rauschenberg in his earliest, most conceptual phase – except that Stella got to his crude style well before either of those more famous artists. (Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY)

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In an earlier version of this post, the image at left was incorrectly titled and dated.