

NEWS

WALKER ART CENTER TO PRESENT NEW EXHIBITION OF MAJOR WORKS GIFTED TO THE MUSEUM BY JUDY AND KEN DAYTON

Among Friends: The Generosity of Judy and Ken Dayton Will Present Highlights from Their Legacy of Gifts and Pay Tribute to Their Patronage

On View June 10, 2023 – July 7, 2024

MINNEAPOLIS, June 6, 2023 – On June 10, 2023, the Walker Art Center will open an exhibition of major works of modern and contemporary art gifted to the museum by Judy and Ken Dayton, distinguished patrons whose philanthropic legacy over the course of five decades helped to shape the Walker’s collection, with significant works by some of the most groundbreaking artists of our time. Between 1969 and 2022, Ken Dayton, whose family’s business grew into the present-day Target Corporation, and his wife, Judy Dayton, a longstanding member of the Walker’s board, amassed a significant collection of 20th century art. Some of the artists the couple collected became their close friends. Over time, the Daytons gave 550 works of art to the museum as well as important financial gifts to support the Walker’s operations and expansion of its program. The forthcoming exhibition, which honors their remarkable generosity, will feature 25 paintings, sculptures, drawings, and prints gifted over the course of their long engagement with the institution, including works by Sam Gilliam, Philip Guston, Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, Martin Puryear, Cy Twombly, and Andy Warhol, among others.

The Dayton’s contributions to the Walker were second only to the museum’s founder, T.B. Walker, and have been essential to the growth of both the museum’s collection and its program. “Judy and Ken Dayton made an enormous impact on the Walker,” said Siri Engberg, Senior Curator of Visual Arts. “Their generosity and genuine appreciation for art and artists was matched by their love of community—they set the standard for how philanthropy could shape the cultural fabric and life of the Twin Cities.”

Judy and Ken Dayton made their first gift to the museum in 1969—Louise Nevelson’s monumental sculpture *Sky Cathedral Presence*, which will be featured in the upcoming exhibition. Many more gifts would follow, including 8 major outdoor works in the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. In 1988, the Daytons gifted nearly 200 original Jasper Johns prints to the museum, establishing the largest collection of the artist’s prints in the country. The Daytons also made significant contributions to the institution’s endowment in support of the Walker’s operations and programs. Their enduring generosity was critical to the development of the

Walker's robust, and often experimental, contemporary arts programming and helped the museum establish its reputation of championing young and emerging artists as well as those working in new artforms. In 1998, when the couple downsized their home, they gifted 27 works to the museum by artists including Jean Dubuffet, Sol LeWitt, Josef Albers, and Robert Rauschenberg. In 2000, the Daytons announced their intention to gift their personal collection to the Walker, a bequest that was fully realized in 2021 following Judy's passing.

Among Friends will feature key works gifted by the Daytons, including Andy Warhol's iconic *Flowers* screenprint from 1964; a series of Cy Twombly's later drawings on paper; Mark Rothko's *No. 44* (1955), one of the artist's monumental canvases in deep shades of red; striking geometric works by Ellsworth Kelly and Roy Lichtenstein; a serene painting by Agnes Martin from 1980; the bronze *Flashlight* (1960/1988) and *Green Angel* (1990), by Jasper Johns; *Attar* (1953), a painting by Philip Guston; Sam Gilliam's *Lattice* series of lithographs from the eighties; and *On the Great Steeple* (1965), a standing sculpture by Alexander Calder, among others.

Judy and Ken Dayton's philanthropy helped to establish Minnesota as a national hub for the arts. Judy Dayton (1927–2021) became a member of the Walker's Board of Trustees in 1966. She assumed the role of board president in the early 1970s, making her one of the first women to lead the board of a major cultural organization in Minnesota, and ultimately served as a trustee with distinction for 55 years. Ken Dayton (1923-2003) was one of five brothers who inherited Dayton's department store, growing the family company into a retail powerhouse across the country. The Dayton family would revolutionize philanthropic giving across their beloved city of Minneapolis; in the 1940s, they committed their business to a standard of giving 5% of its pretax profits to the community, a philosophy soon adopted by other leading Minnesota corporations. This exhibition celebrates Judy and Ken's generosity of spirit and pays tribute to their impact on the Walker and the cultural legacy of Minnesota at large.

ABOUT THE WALKER ART CENTER

The Walker Art Center is a renowned multidisciplinary arts institution that presents, collects, and supports the creation of groundbreaking work across the visual and performing arts, moving image, and design. Guided by the belief that art has the power to bring joy and solace and the ability to unite people through dialogue and shared experiences, the Walker engages communities through a dynamic array of exhibitions, performances, events, and initiatives. Its multi-acre campus includes 65,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, the state-of-the-art McGuire Theater and Walker Cinema, and ample green space that connects with the adjoining Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. The Garden, a partnership with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, is one of the first urban sculpture parks of its kind in the United States and home to the beloved Twin Cities landmark *Spoonbridge and Cherry* by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Recognized for its ambitious program and growing collection of more than 15,500 works, the Walker embraces emerging art forms and amplifies the work of artists from the Twin Cities and from across the country and the globe. Its broad spectrum of offerings makes it a lively and welcoming hub for artistic expression, creative innovation, and community connection. Visit walkerart.org for more information about upcoming presentations, programs, and opportunities to experience the art of our time.

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For more information, please contact

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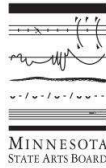
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Acknowledgments

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Technology Partner



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Thank you, Walker members, for your generous support.