

PRESS RELEASE

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SEATTLE ART MUSEUM RECEIVES TRANSFORMATIVE GIFT OF ART AND FUNDS FROM THE FRIDAY FOUNDATION

A significant collection of 20th century art and dedicated funds will support the museum's mission



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SEATTLE - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) announced today that it has received a landmark gift of 19 artworks and \$10.5 million in dedicated funds from the Friday Foundation, which celebrates the legacy of Seattle collectors Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis. In little more than a decade, they assembled one of the most significant private collections of Abstract Expressionist paintings and sculptures, augmented by two towering artists of post-war Europe.

The 19 works joining SAM's collection are either leading examples from each artist's mature work or mark important moments of artistic development; taken together, they represent a formidable archive of innovation that transforms the possibilities of SAM's artistic program. The major gift of artwork is supported by dedicated funds that support care and conservation efforts that will benefit the entire SAM collection.

"This is a transformative moment for the Seattle Art Museum, and we are very grateful to the Friday Foundation," says Amada Cruz, Illsley Ball Nordstrom Director and CEO of the Seattle Art Museum. "This gift to SAM, to Seattle, and the Pacific Northwest, reflects Richard's and Jane's lifelong passion and support for the arts. We are honored to be the stewards of this extraordinary collection and to share these artworks with the community."

A TRANSFORMATIVE COLLECTION

The Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis Collection at the Seattle Art Museum comprises 19 exceptional artworks by 13 influential American and two European artists of the post-war period. It includes 16 paintings, one drawing, and two sculptures, spanning the years between 1945 and 1976. The collection is particularly strong in works by defining members of New York's Abstract Expressionist circle, made at pivotal moments in their careers.

Many of the artworks donated represent a first for SAM's collection:

- The first paintings by Francis Bacon (*Portrait of Man with Glasses I*, 1963 and *Study for a Portrait*, 1967); Adolph Gottlieb (*Crimson Spinning #2*, 1959); Lee Krasner (*Night Watch*, 1960); Clyfford Still (*PH-338 (1949-No. 2)*, 1949); and Ad Reinhardt (*Painting*, 1950)



- The first artwork by Alberto Giacometti, the highly significant sculpture *Femme de Venise II* (1956)
- The first major painting by Joan Mitchell (*The Sink*, 1956)
- The first iconic *Elegy* composition of Robert Motherwell (*Irish Elegy*, 1965)

Other highlights of the collection include:

- *Cubi XXV* (1965), by David Smith from the celebrated *Cubi* series
- A seminal Color Field painting by Helen Frankenthaler (*Dawn Shapes*, 1967)
- A rare, early Mark Rothko painting (*Untitled*, 1945) and a pivotal, late composition (*Untitled*, 1963)
- *The Painter* (1976) by Philip Guston, an epic self-portrait from his late figurative work

“This gift of all-star works will transform SAM’s collection of post-war artists from a beautiful collection of soloists into a symphony,” says Catharina Manchanda, Jon & Mary Shirley Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art. “In addition, the soaring paintings by Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, and Joan Mitchell will allow us to put the achievements of female artists of this generation front and center, while the paintings of Francis Bacon and the iconic sculpture by Alberto Giacometti are nothing short of game changers for SAM.”

SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF SAM

Today, the museum announces gifts totaling \$10.5 million, including funds to support SAM’s post-war and contemporary art conservation programs, purchase technical equipment for art conservation, and fund costs related to maintaining, presenting, and documenting the Lang Collection. In addition, through an endowment, the chief conservator position held by Nicholas Dorman will now be named after Jane Lang Davis.

Previously announced were gifts of \$2 million to SAM’s Closure Relief Fund and \$2 million to endow the Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis Acquisition Fund for Global Contemporary Art. Included in today’s gift announcement is \$200,000 to inaugurate this acquisition fund so the museum can begin acquiring artworks without waiting for endowment distributions. Altogether, the Friday Foundation has donated a total of \$14.5 million to SAM over the last year.

LANG COLLECTION SHARED WITH THE PUBLIC

In fall 2021, SAM will present all 19 works in *Frisson: The Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis Collection* in the museum’s third floor galleries. Also on view will be portraits of the collectors, *Jane Lang* (1976) by Andy Warhol and *Richard Lang* (1978) by Alice Neel, which were previously gifted to the museum, as well as photomurals showing the artworks’ original contexts in the Lang home. *Frisson* will be a celebration of the interrelated artistic positions spanning the years 1945 to 1976.

For the exhibition, SAM will produce a 200-page catalogue featuring newly commissioned scholarly essays by leading experts in their fields. Also titled *Frisson: The Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis Collection*, it is edited by SAM curator Catharina Manchanda. Notable contributors include Bruce Guenther (Curator of Contemporary Art at the Seattle Art Museum from 1979-87 and curator of *The Richard and Jane Lang Collection* exhibition in 1984), David Anfam, Michael Brenson, John Elderfield, Jack Flam, Carter Foster, Catherine Grenier, Martin Lewis Harrison, Sanford Hirsch, Norman Kleeblatt, Eleanor Nairne, Amy Rahn, Elizabeth Smith, Robert Storr, and Jeffrey Weiss.

Image credits: *Study for a Portrait*, 1967, Francis Bacon, British (born in Ireland), 1909-1992, oil on canvas, 61 x 55 in. Seattle Art Museum, Gift of the Friday Foundation in honor of Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis, 2020.14.7 © The Estate of Francis Bacon. Photo: Spike Mafford / Zocalo Studios. Courtesy of the Friday Foundation. *Night Watch*, 1960, Lee Krasner, American, 1908-1984, oil on canvas, 70 x 99 in. Seattle Art Museum, Gift of the Friday Foundation in honor of Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis, 2020.14.4 © The Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Photo: Spike Mafford /

Zocalo Studios. Courtesy of the Friday Foundation. *PH-338 (1949-No. 2)*, 1949, Clyfford Still, American, 1904–1980, oil on canvas, 91 3/4 x 68 7/8 in. Seattle Art Museum, Gift of the Friday Foundation in honor of Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis, 2020.14.17 © City & County of Denver, Courtesy Clyfford Still Museum. Photo: Spike Mafford / Zocalo Studios. Courtesy of the Friday Foundation.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020, following a three-year closure for an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.

ABOUT THE FRIDAY FOUNDATION

The Friday Foundation is dedicated to supporting arts organizations following the passion and philanthropy of Jane Lang Davis and Richard E. Lang during their lifetimes. Visit fridayfoundationarts.org for more information.