

# PRESS RELEASE

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## ***BIG PICTURE: ART AFTER 1945* OPENS AT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM JULY 23**

Significant modern artworks from SAM's collection including recent gifts from the Virginia and Bagley Wright Collection



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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum presents *Big Picture: Art After 1945*, featuring significant works of abstract painting and sculpture from SAM's collection. Held in the museum's third floor galleries, it opens July 23, 2016, and will stage additional installments throughout the summer and fall. Tracing landmark artistic developments in the decades following World War II, *Big Picture* reveals how abstraction established itself as a dominant force to be reckoned with.

The installation will highlight works from the Virginia and Bagley Wright Collection given to the museum, such as Mark Rothko's *No. 10* (1952), Jasper Johns' *Thermometer* (1959), and Eva Hesse's *No Title* (1964). It will also feature key loans from other local collections, reflecting the depth and commitment of private collectors in Seattle.

Virginia and her husband, Bagley Wright, who passed away in 2011, are longtime visionary leaders and legendary arts patrons of SAM and Seattle. The Wrights have donated extraordinary works to the museum for decades but within the past two years, Virginia Wright gave a large part of her and her husband's collection to the museum. These works have transformed SAM's modern and contemporary collection, elevating it to national status.

In addition, *Big Picture* includes select contemporary works that point to the continuity and resonance of these ideas today, such as *X* (2015)—a painting recently acquired by the museum—by Gwendolyn Knight | Jacob Lawrence Prize-winner Brenna Youngblood. Also on view will be five videos that highlight the physical act and process of painting; the selection includes works by Kazuo Shiraga, Yvonne Rainer, and Margie Livingston—as well as Hans Namuth's famed work that shows Pollock performing his drip-painting technique.

SAM



Following the opening on July 23, additional installments are planned for August 20 and then again on November 19. The August installment addresses varying modes of portraiture, while November introduces works by European artists such as Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer and Katharina Fritsch. In subject and materiality, these works are grounded in the post-war European experience and address different concerns from the American works.

“The initial spotlight will be on the pioneering American artists whose groundbreaking ideas continue to reverberate today. We can’t think of the history of American art without them,” says Catharina Manchanda, Jon & Mary Shirley Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art. “Come November, a look across the Atlantic to more somber works will provide a counterpoint to the great optimism of the American experiments. This changing dynamic will greatly reward repeat visits to the museum.”

#### THE ARTISTS:

Jo Baer, William A. Baziotes, Max Beckmann, Joseph Beuys, Mark Boyle, Alberto Burri, John Cage, Anthony Caro, Willem de Kooning, Helen Frankenthaler, Katharina Fritsch, Arshile Gorky, Nancy Graves, Philip Guston, David Hammons, Al Held, Karin Helmich, Eva Hesse, Hans Hofmann, Neil Jenney, Jasper Johns, Lester Johnson, Brian Jungen, Ellsworth Kelly, Anselm Kiefer, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Franz Kline, Jannis Kounellis, Lee Krasner, Alfred Leslie, Margie Livingston, Robert Mangold, Agnes Martin, Robert Morris, Robert Motherwell, Hans Namuth, Alice Neel, Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, Alfonso Ossorio, Jackson Pollock, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Mark Rothko, Robert Ryman, Kazuo Shiraga, David Smith, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol, Dan Webb, Brenna Youngblood

**Image credits:** *#10*, 1952, Mark Rothko, American, 1903 – 1970, Oil on canvas, 81 3/4 x 42 1/2 x 2 1/4 in. (207.65 x 107.95 x 5.72 cm), Seattle Art Museum, Gift of the Virginia and Bagley Wright Collection, 91.98, © Artist or Artist's Estate, Photo: Paul Macapia. *Cross Section*, 1956, Franz Kline, American, 1910 – 1962, Oil on canvas, 53 1/2 x 63 in. (135.9 x 160cm), Seattle Art Museum, Promised gift of the Virginia and Bagley Wright Collection, in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum, T98.84.34, © Artist or Artist's Estate, Photo: Paul Macapia. *No title*, 1964, Eva Hesse, American, (born in Germany), 1936 – 1970, Oil on canvas, 61 x 41 1/2 in. (154.9 x 105.4cm), Seattle Art Museum, Gift of the Virginia and Bagley Wright Collection, in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum, 2014.25.30, © Estate of Eva Hesse, Photo: Elizabeth Mann. *Thermometer*, 1959, Jasper Johns, American, born 1930, Oil on canvas with thermometer, 51 3/4 x 38 1/2 in. (131.5 x 97.8 cm), Frame 53 1/4 x 40 1/4 x 2 in., Seattle Art Museum, Gift of the Virginia and Bagley Wright Collection, in honor of the museum's 50th year, 91.97, © Jasper Johns/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY, Photo: Paul Macapia. *Felt Suit*, 1978, Joseph Beuys, wool felt, jacket: 32 x 33 1/2 in. (81.3 x 114.3 cm), trousers: 45 x 18 in. (85.1 x 45.7 cm), gift of Joan and Roger Sonnabend, 97.48 © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. *Mann und Maus*, 1991-92, Katharina Fritsch, German, born 1956, Polyester resin and paint, 90 1/2 x 51 1/2 x 94 1/2 in. (229.9 x 130.8 x 240cm), Seattle Art Museum, Gift of the Virginia and Bagley Wright Collection, in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum, 2007.118, © 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, Photo: Susan Cole.

#### **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 Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum. 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.

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 more than 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.