

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum

Collection Development Plan 2020–2030

Strategic Priorities

A GLOBAL AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO COLLECTING

The first art museum west of the Mississippi, the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum opened in 1881 as the St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts, a department of Washington University. Its founding—downtown at Nineteenth and Locust Streets—was part of a nationwide boom in the establishment of metropolitan public art museums. The Museum’s mission was to educate and enlighten audiences in a systematic manner about world civilization. Already in the following decade the Museum changed course focusing primarily on collecting significant contemporary artworks and, to a lesser degree, historical fine art. Through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first the Museum assembled an art collection of remarkable quality, that is distinctive among university museums. Today the Kemper augments this influential history of collecting enduring modern and contemporary art. As we seek to understand and meaningfully contribute to an ever more complex world, we turn to artworks, past and present, to understand how contemporaneous visualizations produce lasting impressions of the significance of individual and collective creativity. It is with this in mind that the Museum intends to carry its legacy of collecting relevant art into an increasingly globalized and diverse future.

In recent years museums worldwide have committed themselves to advancing global and more inclusive perspectives on modernism and contemporary art. This timely effort aims to critically examine the legacy of colonial histories in the Americas and Europe while also focusing attention on historically marginalized positions by African American, Indigenous, African, and Middle Eastern practitioners, among others. As a teaching museum within a major research university, the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum recognizes the importance of this paradigm shift and is committed to expanding and interrogating interpretations of art and culture, past and present. The Museum will actively participate in narrating an art history beyond national borders within a remapped present that challenges assumptions about art world centers and peripheries. Consequently, it must also be the Museum’s goal to adopt an approach to collecting art that is reflective of historically underrepresented artists and cultures, of overlooked geopolitical affinities, and of the increasingly hybrid nature of cultures around the world.

Much of the Kemper Art Museum’s acquisition funds, however, are restricted to the purchase of Western European and US-American artworks. Expanding the Museum’s endowments to facilitate the acquisition of art by historically marginalized and understudied artists, both past and present presents new

opportunities for named endowments and artwork gifts.

Existing collection: The Museum has very limited historical holdings of work by African American and Indigenous artists and artists from beyond the borders of Western Europe. The few notable examples include the early 20th-century Oceanic sculpture known as *Homme Oiseau (Man-Bird)*, midcentury paintings by the Mexican artists Rufino Tamayo, José Clemente Orozco, and Diego Rivera, and paintings and drawings by the Chilean artist Roberto Matta Echaurren. Other significant post–World War II artworks in the collection are those by the African American artist Romare Bearden, the Japanese artist Jiro Yoshihara, and the Chinese artist Zao Wou-Ki. Recent contemporary acquisitions and gifts have advanced efforts to collect more broadly, including works by Black/African American artists Renée Cox, Rashid Johnson, Adam Pendleton, Howardena Pindell, Kara Walker, and Carrie Mae Weems, as well as works by Yto Barrada (France-Morocco), David Goldblatt (South Africa), Shirin Neshat (Iran), Rivane Neuenschwander (Brazil), Valeska Soares (Brazil), and a recent commission by Tomás Saraceno (Argentina).

Goals: A priority for the Museum is to research influential and innovative modern and contemporary positions by a diversity of artists from the United States and North America, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, especially those who have been absent from previous art historical narratives. The strategic acquisition of such works will allow the Museum to tell more complex narratives. Also of interest are contemporary artworks that critically engage with geopolitical subject matter, such as work by Lawrence Abu Hamdan (Jordan), Candice Breitz (South Africa), Hiwa K (Iraq), Amar Kanwar (India), Hassan Khan (Egypt), and Ai Weiwei (China). In addition, the Museum seeks to acquire artworks that deliberately push the boundaries of traditional mediums, such as the work of Nairy Baghramian (Iran) and Haegue Yang (South Korea).

PUBLIC ART

The Museum’s focus on public art is motivated by the need to augment its limited holdings in sculpture and will be accomplished, in part, through the Art on Campus initiative. Established in 2010, this initiative aims to integrate artworks into the everyday experience of people on campus and build an eminent collection of works by internationally recognized artists that represents a wide range of contemporary artistic practices. These include discrete sculptures as well as installation-based works that physically incorporate the landscape or built environment around them.

Existing collection: To date, the Art on Campus program consists of eight installations: by Ayşe Erkmen, Spencer Finch, Tom Friedman, Dan Graham, Katharina Grosse, Ann Hamilton, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, and Jaume Plensa. The Museum also has a modest-sized collection of 19th-century, early 20th-century, and contemporary sculpture from Western Europe and the United States, including works by Auguste Rodin, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Aristide Maillol, Jacques Lipchitz, Alexander Calder, and Dan Peterman.

Goals: Art on Campus will continue to commission site-specific installations and sculptures representing a diversity of significant contemporary artistic perspectives, both nationally and internationally. Important

artists to consider in the area of sculpture and conceptual assemblage include Huma Bhabha (Pakistan), Brian Jungen (Dane-zaa Nation), Alicja Kwade (Poland), Glenn Ligon (US), Yaw Owusu (Ghana), and Danh Vo (Vietnam). Of additional interest are artworks that incorporate the vernacular language of architecture and design to explore social, cultural, and political relationships to the built environment, such as Jose Dávila (Mexico), Walter Hood (US), and Monika Sosnowska (Poland). The collection would also be enriched by large-scale, site-specific paintings, such as practiced by Julie Mehretu (Ethiopia), and multimedia approaches that expand on traditional Native American forms of art-making to incorporate contemporary narratives, such as conveyed by Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Choctaw-Cherokee).

CONTEMPORARY ART

Existing collection: The Kemper Art Museum has a strong history of collecting important art of the time, dating back to its foundation. The Museum has continued this tradition by acquiring artworks by international contemporary artists, both emerging and established, engaged in painting (Franz Ackermann, Rashid Johnson, Seth Price, Amy Sillman, Gary Simmons, Corinne Wasmuht), photography (Thomas Demand, Catherine Opie, Trevor Paglen, Wolfgang Tillmans), sculpture (Olafur Eliasson, Isa Genzken), printmaking (Nicole Eisenman, Analia Saban), and installation art (Katharina Grosse, Andrea Zittel). These acquisitions reflect the Museum's strategic goal of acquiring a range of approaches by practitioners whose work variously engages, challenges, and broadens the existing collection. Due to limited acquisition funds, prescient purchase of contemporary art is essential. Many of these works were acquired shortly before their market value significantly increased. The Museum's holdings of contemporary art have also been greatly enhanced through generous gifts of works by Sophie Calle, Renée Cox, Alfredo Jaar, Mike Kelley, Carolee Schneemann, Kara Walker, and Carrie Mae Weems.

Goals: A priority for the Museum is to continue acquiring significant national and global positions in contemporary art. In the area of painting, compelling practices include those of Michael Armitage (Kenya), Njideka Akunyili Crosby (Nigeria), Kerry James Marshall (US), Christina Quarles (US), Dyani White Hawk (Sicangu Lakota Nation), Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (Britain). Noteworthy approaches to photography include Rebecca Belmore (Anishinaabe), Gauri Gill (India), Leslie Hewitt (US), and Zanele Muholi (South Africa). The Museum also seeks to broaden its limited holdings in sculpture by acquiring important works by such artists as Wangechi Mutu (Kenya), Marie Watt (Seneca Nation), and Anicka Yi (South Korea).

Video and installation art are underrepresented compared to peer institution collections. The purchase of works in this reproducible, often prohibitively expensive medium could be facilitated through shared purchases with other institutions. Significant practices to consider include video and sound-based installations by, for example, Arthur Jafa (US), Bouchra Khalili (Morocco-France), and Anri Sala (Albania); hybrid approaches that incorporate documentary and cinematic strategies as realized by John Akomfrah (Britain) and Omer Fast (Israel); and works that address the impact of the internet, social media, and video games by Ian Cheng (US) and Martine Syms (US).

POSTWAR TO LATE 20TH-CENTURY ART

Existing collection: The collection of postwar to late 20th-century art is remarkable in its strength of European and American abstraction, represented through works by Karel Appel, Alberto Burri, Alexander Calder, Eduardo Chillida, Jean Dubuffet, Sam Francis, Philip Guston, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, and Pierre Soulages, among others. Paintings by Pablo Picasso demonstrate the continued relevance of figurative painting in the postwar period. Over the past decade the Museum has acquired several significant works of historical avant-garde practices, including by Arman, Allan McCollum, François Morellet, Charlotte Posenenske, Daniel Spoerri, and Jacques Villeglé, as well as added to the growing collection of early video art from the 1970s and 1980s with works by Vito Acconci, Dara Birnbaum, Valie Export, Harun Farocki, Howardena Pindell, Robert Smithson, and Hannah Wilke, among others.

Goals: The Kemper Art Museum's postwar collection up to the late 1960s includes only one work by an African American artist and only singular examples of artists from continents beyond Europe. Expanding the collection of postwar abstraction to include important works by African American and Native American artists, such as Sam Gilliam, Norman Lewis, Al Loving, and Leon Polk Smith, is a high priority. It would also be desirable to broaden the narrative of postwar abstraction and the Museum's holdings of late 20th-century global art positions by acquiring works by artists associated with African modernism (Colette Omogbai, Ibrahim El-Salahi, Ramsès Younan), Middle Eastern modernism (Shafic Abboud, Fateh Al-Moudarres), Gutai in Japan (Kazuo Shiraga, Atsuko Tanaka), and Neoconcrete art in Latin America (Lygia Clark, Gego, Hélio Oiticica).

Additionally, it would be extremely beneficial to add to the Museum's slim holdings in key postwar movements, including Pop art, assemblage, conceptual art, Minimalism, and Postminimalism, along with other experimental approaches by American and African American artists, such as Bruce Conner, Melvin Edwards, Dan Flavin, David Hammons, Eva Hesse, Nam June Paik, Noah Purifoy, and Betye Saar. Collecting important positions developed during the second wave of feminism is also a high priority, including works by such African American and Native American artists as Barbara Chase-Riboud, Senga Nengudi, Lorraine O'Grady, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Faith Ringgold, and Kay WalkingStick.

EARLY to MID-20TH-CENTURY ART

Existing collection: The collection of early to mid-20th-century art excels in paintings, sculptures, and avant-garde objects by Marcel Duchamp, members of the international École de Paris (Georges Braque, Juan Gris, Jacques Lipchitz, Pablo Picasso), Expressionists (Lyonel Feininger, Alexej von Jawlensky), realists (Max Beckmann, Ludwig Meidner), as well as Surrealists (Max Ernst, Paul Klee, Roberto Matta Echaurren, Joan Miró, Yves Tanguy) and Russian Constructivists (Naum Gabo, Antoine Pevsner). The collection also has modest-sized holdings in early American abstraction (Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, Man Ray, Charles Sheeler, Joseph Stella) and midcentury realism and semi-abstraction (William

Baziotes, Arshile Gorky, Philip Guston).

Goals: In order to display a more inclusive and diverse art history of this period, the acquisition of works by such African American artists as Jacob Lawrence, Archibald John Motley Jr., and Charles White would be very desirable. Similarly, counterparts to Western European art by such artists as Ben Enwonwu (Nigeria), Ernest Mancoba (South Africa), and Mahmoud Said (Egypt) would begin to convey a larger story. It would also be desirable to add to our slim collection of new art forms from the 1910s and 1920s in Europe—collages, photomontages, and assemblages—with works by such German artists as John Heartfield, Hannah Höch, and Kurt Schwitters. Examples of collaborative or automatic drawings by French artists André Breton and André Masson would enrich the existing holdings of Surrealism. Additionally, artworks by artists associated with Italian Futurism (Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini), the Russian and Eastern European avant-gardes (Natalia Goncharova, El Lissitzky, Kazimir Malevich), and German New Objectivity (George Grosz, Jeanne Mammen) would greatly enhance the collection.

19TH-CENTURY ART

Existing collection: The collection of 19th-century European painting is strong in artworks of the Beaux Arts tradition. The collection includes notable large-scale works by Julien Dupré, Léon Lhermitte, and Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida. Painters associated with the Barbizon school in France are particularly well represented through works by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Charles François Daubigny, Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña, and Jules Dupré. The Museum’s American collection is rich in landscapes of the first- and second-generation Hudson River school painters (Frederic Edwin Church, Thomas Cole, Sanford Robinson Gifford, John Frederick Kensett) and painters of the American West (George Caleb Bingham, Carl Ferdinand Wimar). Other important holdings include realist paintings by Thomas Eakins and George Bellows; examples of Tonalism (Thomas Wilmer Dewing, George Inness, Dwight William Tryon), and American Impressionism (William Merritt Chase, Childe Hassam, John Henry Twachtman). There are no 19th-century artworks in the collection by African American or Native American artists or from outside Western Europe.

Goals: The painting collection would benefit greatly from examples of innovative European modernism such as practiced by the French painters Gustave Courbet and Édouard Manet; works of French Impressionism by Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, and Camille Pissarro; and Postimpressionist works by such painters as Georges Seurat. Works by artists associated with Romanticism, such as the German artist Caspar David Friedrich and the British artists John Constable and J. M. W. Turner, would also be highly desirable. Broadening the collection with works of African American, Native American, and non-Western modernism would be especially important. Examples include the African American artists Robert S. Duncanson, Edmonia Lewis, and Henry Ossawa Tanner; the Puerto Rican Impressionist painter Francisco Oller; the Turkish artist Osman Hamdi Bey; and the Japanese artist Kuroda Seiki. Although not a primary collecting focus, it would also be beneficial to further round out the collection of 19th-century American painting as the opportunity arises with works by such leading artists as William Glackens, Winslow Homer, and John Singer Sargent.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Existing collection: In recent years the Museum has been the recipient of several generous gifts of historical photography from the 19th and early 20th centuries, encompassing a broad array of photographic techniques and processes, including ambrotypes, daguerreotypes and tintypes, stereo cards and photogravures, as well as albumen and platinum prints. Artists of note with photographs in the collection include Anna Atkins, Berenice Abbott, Ansel Adams, Édouard-Denis Baldus, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Harry Callahan, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Edward Sheriff Curtis, John Beasley Greene, and Edward Weston. The Museum's historical collection of photography is still relatively small and has numerous significant gaps. Its holdings of contemporary photography has greatly increased, due to significant donor support, with the addition of works by Moyra Davey, Anna Gaskell, Andreas Gursky, Louise Lawler, Sharon Lockhart, Catherine Opie, Wolfgang Tillmans, and Carrie Mae Weems, among others.

Goals: It would be highly desirable to continue to strengthen the holdings of both contemporary and historical photography. Acquiring experimental photography from the first half of the 20th century, by such seminal artists as Claude Cahun (France), Lotte Jacobi (Germany), Man Ray (US), Lucia Moholy (Britain), László Moholy-Nagy (Hungary), and Alexander Rodchenko (Russia) would be a high priority. The addition of a range of positions by African American photographers from across the 20th century, including Gordon Parks and James Van Der Zee, as well as artists associated with the Black Arts Movement, such as Dawoud Bey and Roy DeCarava, would be an important step in diversifying the existing collection. Representative examples of works by African photographers, including Samuel Fosso (Cameroon) and Seydou Keita (Mali), among others, would also be advantageous. Adding to the Museum's limited holdings in conceptual photography and performance-based practices by such artists as Bernd and Hilla Becher (Germany), Jan Dibbets (Netherlands), Bruce Nauman (US), Senga Nengudi (US), and Lorraine O'Grady (US) would help fill significant gaps. Acquiring work by artists associated with the late 1970s and 1980s Pictures Generation, including the American artists Sherrie Levine and Cindy Sherman, would also be helpful to expand the history the Museum is able to tell.

PRINTS AND DRAWINGS

Existing collection: While the majority of the Museum's extensive collection of prints and drawings dates from the 19th century to the present, the Museum owns approximately 150 late-15th- to 18th-century prints and a small group of related drawings; highlights include works by Albrecht Dürer, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, and Rembrandt van Rijn. The 19th-century prints include works by a number of significant artists who are otherwise not well represented in the collection, such as Paul Gauguin, Francisco Goya y Lucientes, Édouard Manet, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and James McNeill Whistler. Holdings from the early 20th century include a small number of notable works by such artists as George Grosz and Käthe Kollwitz, while works from the latter half of the 20th century are more numerous, primarily due to a number of portfolios by single artists (Max Beckmann, Jackson Pollock) and group portfolios that include Pop art and Minimalism. The collection is rather homogenous (Western European and American); adding work to broaden and diversify the holdings would be welcome. Contemporary printmaking is represented by donated works

from Island Press, the Sam Fox School's collaborative print shop, created by a range of visiting artists such as Radcliffe Bailey, Hung Liu, and Jane Quick-To-See-Smith, as well as by recent acquisitions of works by such artists as Nicole Eisenman, Elizabeth Peyton, and Analia Saban.

Goals: It would be desirable to strengthen this area of the collection, particularly capitalizing on opportunities to acquire prints and drawings by major artists that are often less expensive than work in other mediums. The Museum will also continue to receive contemporary works produced by Island Press and collaborate with the director of the Press on the acquisition of additional prints and multiples.

OLD MASTER PAINTING

Existing collection: The Museum's relatively small collection of Old Master paintings consists of a selection of 17th-century European works, including important paintings by El Greco and Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. It also holds several 18th-century British paintings, among which are individual works of high quality by such artists as William Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds, and George Romney.

Goals: As opportunities arise it is always desirable to add to the holdings of Old Master paintings, but compiling a comprehensive collection is out of reach for the Museum and hence is not a priority.

ANTIQUITIES

Existing collection: The Museum's small but important collection of antiquities includes most notably two Egyptian mummies and approximately 30 ancient Greek vases and other vessels.

Goals: As these works do not comprise a focused collection area, acquiring additional antiquities is not a priority.