

# NEWS

## WALKER ART CENTER TO PRESENT INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION THAT PROMPTS VISITOR FEEDBACK ON THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

### *Make Sense of This: Visitors Respond to the Walker's Collection* Explores Important Works in the Collection and Seeks to Better Understanding Audience Motivations

On View February 18 – November 19, 2023



Abraham Cruzvillegas, *Autorretrato jacarandoso con las manos ocupadas (Merry Self Portrait, with My Hands Busy)*, 2010. Courtesy Walker Art Center, Photo: Bobby Rogers.

**MINNEAPOLIS, February 6, 2023**—On February 18, The Walker Art Center will open an exploratory exhibition that invites visitors to share feedback about their in-gallery experiences, fostering a dialogue about visitor preferences and testing curatorial assumptions about public opinion. *Make Sense of This: Visitors Respond to the Walker's Collection* is organized in four concise thematic chapters that will unfold over a period of nine months. Each chapter is anchored by a significant recent acquisition and features a diversity of works—spanning different media and time periods—drawn from the Walker's collection. Visitors to the exhibition will have the opportunity to participate in a short, anonymous survey—offered in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong—about the artworks on view, the gallery texts, and additional content of interest. Large-scale monitors in the exhibition and in the Walker lobby will capture the accumulating responses through the run of the show, revealing a composite of the varying ideas and perspectives.

The first chapter of the exhibition is titled *Portrait and Lived Experience* and will be on view from February 18 – April 16, 2023. Through a selection of paintings, photographs, and sculptures, the presentation explores the range of approaches taken by artists to capture a person's likeness as well as how portraits communicate social, political, and cultural histories. *Portrait and Lived Experience* is anchored by  *Holding Pattern* (2021), a painting by contemporary artist Jennifer

Packer that the Walker acquired in 2022. The work reflects Packer's innate ability to convey both a sense of intimacy with her sitter and to engage more broadly with the politics of representation. Other works in this chapter include photographs by Catherine Opie and Kwong Chi Tseng and a sculpture by Abraham Cruzvillegas.

Among the forthcoming chapters is *Minimal Art and the Measure of the Body* (April 22 – June 25, 2023), which will examine artists pushing the boundaries of the Minimalist movement. The presentation includes Constantina Zavitsanos's 2016 sculpture *Specific Objects (stack)*, which

the Walker acquired last year, as well as works by Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Theaster Gates, and Tom Burr. This will be followed by *Remembrance and Commemoration* (July 1 – August 27, 2022), which deals with notions of memory, and *A Piece of Music* (September 2 – November 19), on the connections between music and the visual arts.

*Make Sense of This* is a joint effort between the Walker's Visual Arts; Public Engagement, Learning and Impact; and Content and Communications teams. The collaborative approach reflects the range of voices and perspectives involved with developing exhibitions and captures the different viewpoints from which the public is considered. It is envisioned to open the curatorial process and create a pathway to learn more about how the public both engages with contemporary artwork on view and what else they might like to experience in the galleries. Wall texts will be presented in two forms: one written in a more formal manner with a focus on art history and another written in a more casual tone that encourages the public to think about their sensory and emotional responses. The brief survey will ask for feedback on these different approaches along with a series of other related questions. In addition to the digital information-gathering, the Walker will host a series of in-person workshops with invited groups to further foster direct conversation on the topic. At the conclusion of the exhibition, the Walker will explore the learnings as part of a broader set of efforts to enhance the visitor experience.

"Over the past several years, the Walker has been actively reflecting on how we connect with our communities and considering new approaches to the gallery experience that embrace different audience needs and interests. Examining and testing our own assumptions is an essential aspect of this work and *Make Sense of This* was born out of a genuine curiosity about audience opinions about our exhibition concepts, the installation of works, and the didactic materials," said Henriette Huldish, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs.

Amanda Hunt, Head of Public Engagement, Learning and Impact, added, "We are looking forward to this learning process and to seeing the similarities and divergences in perspective



Catherine Opie, Norma & Eyenga, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1998. Courtesy Walker Art Center, Photo: Cameron Wittig.

evolve in near real-time through our digital system. We have an opportunity to learn more about how people are responding to the Walker's storied collection."

The exhibition is curated by Walker staff Henriette Huldish, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs; William Hernández Luege, Curatorial Assistant, Visual Arts; Erin McNeil, Program Manager, Curatorial Affairs; Jake Yuzna, Content Producer; and Simona Zappas, Youth & Community Programs Associate, Public Engagement, Learning, and Impact.

### **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 multiacre 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.

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