

Walker Art Center Collection

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library

May 2008

300 Nicollet Mall

Minneapolis, MN, 55401

612-543-8200

specialcoll@hclib.org

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Summary Information

Repository	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
Creator	Walker Art Center.
Title	Walker Art Center Collection
Date	1902-2005
Extent	4.17 Linear feet
Language	English

History

The history of the Walker Art Center starts in the 1870s when lumberman and city father Thomas Barlow (T.B) Walker began collecting paintings and other works of art for his house on 8th and Hennepin Ave. In 1879 Walker built a gallery between his residence and his carriage house to display 20 paintings. This was the first public gallery in the Midwest. He collected landscapes, portraits, historical paintings and bronzes, miniatures, classical and Asian art. By 1892 Walker opened three more gallery rooms and also was contributing art to the public library's art gallery its location at 10th and Hennepin Ave. By 1912 Walker's residence, art gallery and offices took up one-fourth of the block. Walker later moved his family and his art to the Thomas Lowry Mansion on Lowry Hill in 1916. In 1920 Walker's compound on 8th and Hennepin was torn down to make way for the State Theater. In the meantime the bulk of the collection was housed at the Minneapolis Public Library while Walker offered to donate land and his collection for a new library and art museum. The proposal was first accepted and then ultimately rejected by the city.

In 1925 T.B. Walker established the T.B. Walker Foundation "to promote educational, artistic and scientific interests. He commissioned a 25 room building on Lyndale Avenue to exhibit his art collection. The museum, a two story structure with a neo-Moorish façade was opened in 1927, a few months before Walker's death. The foundation's legacy was added to by a bequest from T.B. Walker's eldest son, Gilbert M. Walker in 1928 and in 1929, another son, Archie D. Walker was elected the foundation's president. The depression was a period of minimal budgets and growth with almost non-existent income.

Reorganized in 1939 as the Walker Art Center, the museum began to operate in cooperation with the Minnesota Arts Council and the WPA, becoming a community arts center. Large scale public participation came with the museum's new identity as did an art school and program of traveling exhibitions and local artist's shows.

In the 1940s, Susan Rogers Walker, widow of Gilbert, initiated a program to acquire modern art works using her late husband's bequest. Sculptures by Pablo Picasso, Henry Moore and Alberto Giacometti are examples of these early acquisitions. In 1943 the collection was reappraised and many paintings, weapons, gemstones, glass and pottery objects were sold through Gimbel's Hammer Gallery in New York. Works of quality were kept to form the nucleus for the future collection. The last of T.B. Walker's art was auctioned in 1989. The building was refaced in 1944 in a modern style that reflected the museum's new progressive outlook. *Everyday Art Quarterly* began publication in 1946, later became *Design Quarterly* which was published until 1996.

The contemporary art program accelerated during the 1950s under the Walker's new director, H.H. Arnason. Works by Stuart Davis, Joseph Stella, Charles Sheeler, and Georgia O'Keeffe were acquired and the 20th century sculpture collection was systematically developed.

Martin Friedman organized more ambitious traveling exhibits in the 1960s and expanded the permanent collection to reflect the rapidly changing styles of modern art. In addition to collecting works from regional artists, paintings and sculptures by Isamu Noguchi, Anthony Caro, Claes Oldenburg, Louise Nevelson, Frank Stella, Kenneth Noland, Josef Albers, George Segal and Andy Warhol were acquired.

The Guthrie Theater opened in 1963 on land adjacent to the Walker Art Center. The Center Opera Company was also formed and performed at the Guthrie from 1963 to 1985 when it moved to the Ordway. The Guthrie moved to its new building on the Minneapolis riverfront in 2006.

As the museum's programming and activities increased, the 1927 building was deemed insufficient for present and future needs. After examining possible renovation plans, a new building was decided upon. A capital campaign for a new Walker and increased space for the Guthrie was begun in 1968. Construction began in mid-1969.

The new Walker, designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes opened in 1971. The interior of the building was designed to allow maximum flexibility by providing large, white loft-like spaces adaptable to various kinds of exhibitions. An Auditorium was included in the new building allowing for films to be shown on a regular basis. A film retrospective in 1997 featured Tom Hanks, Spike Lee and Peter Greenway. In 1976 the museum became a public institution when the T.B. Walker Foundation gave the museum \$27 million in art, land and investments. With the rapid growth of programs and events, more space was needed by the late 1970s. Another capital campaign began in 1980 and a 23,000 square foot addition was completed in the fall of 1984.

The eighties brought another addition to the Walker, the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. Developed in a partnership with the Minneapolis Park Board, the garden opened in 1988. The centerpiece of the garden is Claes Oldenburg and Cooseje van Bruggen's Spoonbridge and Cherry (1985-1988). The garden became very popular with the public and has hosted annual rock concerts and even a mini-golf course.

The final addition to the Walker Art Center was opened in April 2005. With the addition the Walker has more exhibit space, a restaurant 20.21 which is linked via rooftop terrace with the older Gallery 8 Cafe. With the reopening the museum curators showed off the depth and breadth of the Walker collection, focusing on the second half of the 20th century. Artists in the spotlight were Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Joan Mitchell, Robert Motherwell, Matthew Barney, Robert Gober, Sherrie Levine and Kara Walker.

Description of the Collection

Eleven boxes of materials from 1902 to 2002. Included are catalogs of the Walker collection that was housed on Walker's property at 8th and Hennepin and at the Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church. Catalogs cover up until 1927 when the Walker Art Gallery building opened. There are also four boxes of clippings on the Art Center building, its events and exhibitions. There is a box on the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and four boxes of brochures, news releases and *Centergrams*.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library May 2008

Revision Description

Additional boxes of brochures were added to the collection along with annual reports and exhibition programs. August 2013

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. (Minneapolis Minn.)
- Walker Art Center.
- Walker Art Galleries. (Minneapolis, Minn.)

Subject(s)

- Art museums -- Minnesota.

Clippings

Collection Inventory

Clippings		
	Box	Folder
General Clippings 1940-1949	1	1
General Clippings 1940-1970	1	2
General Clippings 1970-1977	1	3
General Clippings 1978-1981	1	4
General Clippings 1982-1984	1	5
General Clippings 1985-1988	1	6
General Clippings 1989-1990	1	7
General Clippings 1991-1992	1	8
General Clippings 1993-1997	1	9
General Clippings 1997-2002	1	10
Acquisitions 1950-1969	1	11

Clippings

Acquisitions 1970-1982	1	12
Acquisitions 1983-2002	1	13
Architecture 1971	1	14
Building 1960-1970	1	15
Building 1968-1972	1	16
Building 1971-1972	1	17
Building 1983-1984	1	18
Building 1999-2001	1	19
Building 2002	1	20
Central Arts Council 1953-1965	1	21
Concerts and the Dance 1962-1976	1	22
Concerts and the Dance 1976-1979	1	23
Concerts and the Dance 1982-1994	1	24
Concerts and the Dance 1995-2002	1	25

Clippings

Concerts and the Dance and Film/Video 1995-2002	1	26
Exhibitions 1940-1949	2	1
Exhibitions 1950-1959	2	2
Exhibitions 1960-1965	2	3
Exhibitions 1966-1968	2	4
Exhibitions 1969-1973	2	5
Exhibitions 1973-1976	2	6
Exhibitions "Calder's Universe" June-August, 1977	2	7
Exhibitions 1977-1980	2	8
Exhibitions 1980	2	9
Exhibits 1981	2	10
Exhibits 1982-1983	2	11
Exhibits 1984-1985	2	12
Exhibits 1986-1988	2	13

Clippings

Exhibits 1989	2	14
Exhibits 1990	2	15
Exhibits 1991	2	16
Exhibits 1992-1993	2	17
Exhibits 1993-1997	2	18
Exhibitions: Advance Exhibition Schedule 1993-1995	2	19
Exhibits 1998-2002	2	20
Expansion 2001	3	1
Expansion 2001	3	2
History 1918-2002	3	3
Minneapolis Sculpture Garden 1988	3	4
Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and Exhibits 1988	3	5
Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and Exhibits 1989	3	6
Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and Exhibits 1990-1994	3	7

Promotional material, brochures, calendars

Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and Exhibits 1998-2002	3	8
Music 1953-1969	3	9
Women in the Director's Chair film series 1998-2002	3	10
Walker Art Gallery 1902-1939	3	11
Walker Art Gallery 1902-1939	3	12
Promotional material, brochures, calendars		
	Box	Folder
Walker Art Center 1926-1927	4	1
Walker Art Center proposal 1939	4	2
Walker Art Center Brochures 1940-1944	4	3
Walker Art Center <i>Centergrams</i> , brochures 1945-1949	4	4
Walker Art Center Calendar, articles 1950-1959	4	5
Walker Art Center Brochures 1960-1969	4	6
Walker Art Center new building opening 1971	4	7

Promotional material, brochures, calendars

Walker Art Center Brochures 1970-1979	4	8
Walker Art Gallery correspondence, articles 1926-1927	4	9
Walker Art Center Brochures 1940	5	1
Walker Art Center Brochures 1942-1974	5	2
Walker Art Center Brochures 1975-1978	5	3
Walker Art Center Brochures No Dates	5	4
Walker Art Center Brochures 1980-1984	6	1
Walker Art Center Brochures 1985-1989	6	2
Walker Art Center Brochures 1990-1994	6	3
Walker Art Center Brochures 1995-2000	6	4
Walker Art Center Brochures 2000-2002	6	5
Walker Art Center Brochures 2002	6	6
Walker Art Center Brochures 2003	7	1
Walker Art Center Brochures 2003	7	2

Minneapolis Sculpture Garden

Walker Art Center Brochures 2005-2006	7	3
Minneapolis Sculpture Garden		
		Box
Walker Art Center Minneapolis Sculpture Garden		8
Exhibition Catalogs and Programs		
	Box	Folder
Exhibition Catalogs Undated	9	1
Exhibition Catalogs 1902-1909	9	2
Exhibition Catalogs 1912-1919	9	3
Exhibition Catalogs 1913	9	4
Exhibition Catalogs 1923-1927	9	5
Exhibition Catalogs 1927	10	1
Exhibition Catalogs 1927	10	2
Exhibition Catalogs and Programs 1935, 1940-1948	10	3
Exhibition Catalogs and Programs 1951-2003	10	4

Annual Reports

Scope and Contents note

Includes programs of music performances held at the Guthrie Theater, sponsored by the Center Arts Council of the Walker Art Center, 1964-1967.

Annual Reports

	Box	Folder
Annual Reports 1979-1988	11	1
Annual Reports 1991-1993	11	2
Annual Reports 1994-2001	11	3

Posters Undated, 1966-2003

Oversize
Posters

Scope and Contents note

80 posters