

The Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection

Raymond (1921-2007) and Patsy (1928-1988) Nasher started their collection more than 60 years ago when they traveled to Mexico and became interested in pre-Columbian art. There, they bought the first works in what would become a sizable collection of objects from ancient Latin America. They soon purchased other ethnographic and archaeological works and also acquired a number of important American modernist works. Mr. Nasher often credited this early involvement with pre-Columbian and other tribal arts as having whetted their appetite for, and appreciation of, modern three-dimensional works.

In the mid-1960s, the Nashers made their first significant purchases of modern sculpture: Jean Arp's *Torso with Buds* (1961); two major bronzes by Henry Moore, *Three Piece No. 3: Vertebrae* (1968) and *Two Piece Reclining Figure No. 9* (1968, no longer in the Collection); and Barbara Hepworth's large and powerful *Squares with Two Circles* (Monolith) (1963, cast 1964). In rapid succession, they went on to acquire works by Joan Miró, Alexander Calder, and Isamu Noguchi, among others. Such purchases set a high standard for acquisitions to follow and excited them about the prospect of surrounding themselves with great art in their home. The Nashers' guiding principle for acquisitions from the beginning was simple: the works had to move them personally. In 1965, when he opened his first retail shopping center in Dallas—NorthPark Center—Raymond and Patsy made a commitment to install art throughout the center. The space was designed inside and out to meet the needs of retailers as well as to provide space for the display of large sculptures from their collection by artists such as Jonathan Borofsky, Mark di Suvero, Henry Moore, Beverly Pepper, and George Segal.

During the 1980s, the Nashers' collection grew at an accelerated pace. Outstanding works by virtually all the great masters of modern sculpture were added. Simultaneously, the Nashers became more deeply involved with work by living artists, exhibiting an eclectic and adventuresome taste. Some of the first major acquisitions in this area include Claes Oldenburg's *Pile of Typewriter Erasers* (1970-74), Richard Serra's *Inverted House of Cards* (1969-70), Donald Judd's *Untitled* (1976), and Roy Lichtenstein's *Double Glass* (1979). Works by younger artists such as Anish Kapoor, Richard Deacon, Jeff Koons, Scott Burton, and Martin Puryear soon followed.

By 1987, the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection had gained international recognition and was shown in one of the first exhibitions in the Dallas Museum of Art's new downtown building. The collection was subsequently presented in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; the Forte di Belvedere, Florence, Italy; and the Tel Aviv Museum, Israel. In October 1996, more than 70 sculptures from the Collection were shown at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. In February 1997, 105 works of sculpture and painting from the Collection were exhibited in *A Century of Sculpture: The Nasher Collection* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City. The critical and popular success of these exhibitions convinced the Nashers that their collection should be kept together and made available to the public. In 1997, Raymond Nasher acquired a plot of land in downtown Dallas across the street from the Dallas Museum of Art and hired architect Renzo Piano to design the Nasher Sculpture Center. The Nasher Foundation funded the entire \$70 million cost of designing and constructing the museum, which includes indoor and outdoor galleries. The Sculpture Center opened in 2003 and features a regularly changing exhibition of works from the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection.

Nasher Sculpture Center

Surveyed as a whole, the Nasher Collection demonstrates considerable balance between early modern works and art of the postwar period, abstraction and figuration, monumental outdoor and more intimately scaled indoor works, and the many different materials used in the production of modern art. Perhaps its single most distinguishing feature, however, is the depth with which it represents certain key artists, including Matisse (with 9 sculptures), Picasso (7), Smith (7), Moore (7), Miró (4), and Giacometti (10). Such well-rounded perspectives on the development of these masters provide, in effect, a series of mini-retrospectives within the collection's overall historical spectrum.

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