YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
February 25, 2021

YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY RECEIVES MAJOR GIFT FROM FRIDAY FOUNDATION

Gift honors the lives and legacy of Jane Lang Davis and Richard E. Lang

February 25, 2021, New Haven, Conn.—The Yale University Art Gallery has received an extraordinary gift from the Friday Foundation honoring the legacy of late Seattle philanthropists Jane Lang Davis and Richard E. Lang. The Lang collection is one of the most important private collections of 20th-century art in the country, with masterworks by renowned postwar American and European artists and incredible examples of Abstract Expressionism.

The gift from the Friday Foundation includes six artworks by Franz Kline (1910–1962) and Mark Rothko (1903–1970). It augments the Gallery's collection of midcentury European and American art and brings increased attention to these two remarkable artists and their range of artistic output. With this gift, the Gallery's holdings of Kline's and Rothko's paintings and drawings have broadened significantly and now provide a more nuanced view of the artists' styles, techniques, and overlapping interests—for example, in psychology and the theater.

Franz Kline, Untitled, 1961. Oil and brush on paper. Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of the Friday Foundation in honor of Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis. © 2021 The Franz Kline Estate/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Kline's *Portrait of Nijinsky* (1942) and Rothko's untitled painting from 1941–42, both of which address such subjects, are the earliest paintings by these artists to enter the Gallery's collection, and Rothko's *No. 11 (Yellow, Green, and Black)* (1950) is now the earliest of his famous Color Field paintings in the museum's collection. The works on paper from the Friday Foundation, such as an untitled drawing by Kline from 1961, hint at the human figure, revealing how its presence endured well after the artist had seemingly abandoned representation for large-scale abstractions featuring gestural brushwork.

"I am deeply grateful to the Friday Foundation for this incredible gift. The Lang collection was assembled with passion, intelligence, and remarkable vision, and it shows," says Stephanie Wiles, the Henry J. Heinz II Director of the Gallery. "The gift aligns with our mission to present the creative work of artists in multifaceted ways, whether by collecting art from different stages of their careers or representing the varied media they used. We are thrilled to receive these stellar works for the Gallery's permanent collection and to share the Langs' legacy with future generations of students, scholars, and visitors."

In recognition of the gift, the Gallery will present the six paintings and drawings from the Lang collection in a small, focused installation that opens later this year. The installation will illuminate the story of this exceptional private collection and provide details about the contexts

of the artworks' creation. It will be followed by a larger exhibition in February 2022, which will present the works in conjunction with paintings, drawings, and sculpture from the Gallery's celebrated collection of mid-20th-century art.

"This gift expands the Gallery's collection of midcentury art and strengthens its position as an innovative place for teaching with art. I am excited to have the opportunity to study these artworks firsthand and with students. With these newly donated artworks, audiences can explore and understand Kline's and Rothko's oeuvres more thoughtfully and comprehensively, an opportunity rarely afforded elsewhere," says Pamela Lee, Carnegie Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at Yale University.

Mark Rothko, *No. 11 (Yellow, Green, and Black),* 1950. Oil on canvas. Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of the Friday Foundation in honor of Richard E. Lang and Jane Lang Davis. © 2021 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The Friday Foundation also announced that the Seattle Art Museum received 19 objects from the Lang collection to enrich their contemporary art collection. Last fall, during a critical period in the COVID-19 pandemic, nine arts organizations in Seattle also received philanthropic gifts from the Friday Foundation, totaling more than $9 million.

"Passionate about Abstract Expressionism and modernism, Jane and Dick Lang were discriminating collectors who loved to share their exceptional artworks with fellow collectors, curators, and everyone interested in art. At the Yale University Art Gallery, a preeminent university art museum, these important paintings and works on paper by Rothko and Kline will be researched and used for teaching for generations to come. I cannot think of a better way to honor the Langs' legacy than by providing audiences on both sides of the country access to these artworks," remarks Mimi Gardner Gates, director emerita of the Seattle Art Museum and former director and current Governing Board member of the Gallery.

The Langs' extended family has deep ties to Yale, with multiple alumni among its members. Yale's storied art collection, combined with its renowned studio art school and strong mission of connecting all students to the visual arts, made it the perfect choice for these works.

Yale University Art Gallery

Founded in 1832, the Yale University Art Gallery is the oldest college art museum in America. Today, it is a center for teaching, learning, and scholarship and a preeminent cultural asset for Yale University, the wider academic community, and the public. The museum collects, preserves, studies, and presents art in all media, from all regions of the globe and across time, with a collection numbering nearly 300,000 objects.

General Information

The Yale University Art Gallery is located at 1111 Chapel Street, New Haven, Connecticut. In accordance with Yale University's revised COVID-19 protocols, the Gallery is closed to the public until further notice. For general information, please call 203.432.0600 or visit the website at artgallery.yale.edu.

Press Contact

Janet Sullivan, Communications Coordinator, Yale University Art Gallery, 203.436.4666, yuagpress@yale.edu.