



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

# Four Decades Of Collecting: Selections From The Permanent Collection March 13 - April 18, 2015

Missoula, MT / December 17, 2014 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) // This eclectic selection of artworks showcases a 40-year tradition of giving art to the Missoula Art Museum's permanent collection. Artists, individuals, and estates have contributed over the years to developing a body of painting, sculpture, print, ceramic, photography, and textiles that capture the variety, dynamism, and genius of contemporary art in Montana. *MAM's Collection Mission: The Missoula Art Museum collects, preserves, exhibits, and researches art that is relevant to the culture of the American West, with an emphasis on contemporary Montana artists.*

MAM's Permanent Collection was founded in 1973, when the Missoula Festival of the Arts purchased an artwork each from Montana masters Walter Hook, Gennie DeWeese, and Jessie Wilber. Two years later the Festival of the Arts would also spearhead the community efforts to raise funds establishing the Missoula Museum of the Arts in Missoula's Carnegie Library. The museum doors opened for the first time in 1975 as a Missoula County-run organization.

### **Missoula County Art Collection: 1973 to 1994**

The Missoula Museum of the Arts' exhibition planning and art collection continued to expand and thrive over the next 20 years. In 1995 the museum converted to an independent nonprofit called the Art Museum of Missoula, today's MAM. The 192 artworks collected between 1973 and 1994 remain the property of Missoula County and are cared for and presented to the public by MAM. These original collected works reflect MAM's long-standing commitment to supporting Montana artists who pursue contemporary themes and modes of expression. A short list of the Missoula County Collection includes the art of Nancy Erickson, Bob and Gennie DeWeese, Rudy Autio, George Gogas, Ted Waddell, Jessie Wilber, Winnie Lloyd, Dana Boussard, and many other artists who are today considered well-established masters.

### **MAM Permanent Collection: 1995 To Present**

Since MAM's move to nonprofit status in 1995, more than 1,300 artworks have been added to the permanent collection. Artworks often enter the collection one-by-one or two-by-two, but large gifts have also served to grow the collection. Artists are a vital source of such donations, with artworks often gifted out of their museum exhibits. Artists such as Lela Autio, Corwin Clairmont, Jay Rummel, James Todd, Mark Abrahamson, and most recently Jeneese Hilton, have made donations of entire bodies of work to the collection. Legacy gifts have also contributed large numbers of artworks to the collection, such as gifts from the estates of collectors Joyce Folsom and Gilbert Milliken, and from artists Gennie DeWeese and Freeman Butts. Members of the Contemporary Collectors Circle, a membership group for art collectors and appreciators, have added seven artworks to the permanent collection since 2008.

### **Contemporary American Indian Art Collection**

An outstanding feature of the MAM Permanent Collection is the Contemporary American Indian Art Collection. Salish artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith made significant donations of her artwork and artwork

from her collection to serve as an anchor for the CAIAC. Corwin Clairmont, whose work is represented in this collection, says, “Contemporary art captures the current values, politics, beauty, and ugliness found in our lives. Today’s modern Indian artists have important statements to be made and a rich culture to draw from, emanating from over 10,000 years of living on the North American continent.” In this spirit MAM has built a collection of more than 130 artworks by a growing group of talented artists, resulting in one of the largest bodies of contemporary American Indian art in the United States. Luminaries such as David Dragonfly, Fritz Scholder, George Longfish, Ernie Pepion, Kevin Red Star, Kay WalkingStick, and Melanie Yazzie are just a few of the incredible artists found in the CAIAC.

Today MAM holds in trust more than 1,500 artworks representative of the hard-working and talented people who make up our region’s vibrant and diverse arts community. Community members are already planning on leaving substantial legacy gifts to the collection, which will add even more depth and breadth to the existing collection.

Contact: For more information, please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406.728.0447, visit the MAM website at [www.missoulaartmuseum.org](http://www.missoulaartmuseum.org) or contact Ted Hughes, Registrar, [ted@missoulaartmuseum.org](mailto:ted@missoulaartmuseum.org), 406.728.0447 x222.

- END -

About MAM: FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. The Missoula Art Museum strives to engage artists and audience in the creative exploration of contemporary art relevant to our community, state and region. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Tuesday- Saturday, 10 AM - 5 PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.