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Press Contact:
Karen Gysin
612.375.7651
karen.gysin@
walkerart.org

PAST THINGS AND PRESENT: JASPER JOHNS SINCE 1983
FEATURES A WIDE RANGE OF ARRESTING NEW IMAGERY

WORKS FROM JOHNS' PRIVATE COLLECTION INCLUDED

American painter Jasper Johns' now-iconic images of flags and targets of the late 1950s brought him critical acclaim and instant celebrity in the vigorous art scene of postwar America. Those images, depicted in an intentionally uninflected way, were radically different from the emotionally charged works of the Abstract Expressionists, and they offered a new way to think about the function and practice of art. In the 50 years since his first flag painting, Johns has continued to astonish viewers with the beauty and intelligence of his work. The Walker Art Center exhibition ***Past Things and Present: Jasper Johns since 1983***, on view November 9–February 14, features nearly 100 paintings, prints, and drawings exploring his art of the past two decades—a period in which he has applied his virtuoso technique and incisive intelligence to a wide range of arresting new imagery, much of it intensely personal, melancholic, and even surreal. Following its premiere in Minneapolis, the exhibition travels to Greenville, South Carolina, Edinburgh, Scotland, and València, Spain. A Walker After Hours Preview Party celebrates the opening on Saturday, November 8, and an Opening-Day Talk with art historian/poet David Shapiro on Sunday, November 9, features a slide-illustrated afternoon of poetry, anecdotes, and personal explorations of Johns' work. (See below for a complete listing of related events.)

Jasper Johns was born in 1930 in Augusta, Georgia, and raised in South Carolina. He moved to New York in the early 1950s and became friendly with a number of artists—notably Robert

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Rauschenberg, John Cage, and Merce Cunningham—who were inventing ways to introduce the experiences of daily life into their art, music, and dance works. Early on, Johns' images included what he called "things the mind already knows": commonly seen symbols such as the U.S. flag, alphabet letters, and numerals; household or studio objects such as paintbrushes, brooms, tableware, and clothes hangers; and "found" images that he encountered by chance and then incorporated into his work. Personal content, while present, was often hidden within these impersonal images or buried beneath their highly tactile surfaces.

During the early 1980s his approach shifted, and viewers began to see a much more personal iconography in his work. There were depictions of things present in his studio or home, allusions to his childhood and souvenirs of his family, evocations of the spaces in which he lives and works, and quotations from artworks—his own and others'. He acknowledged this change in 1984: "In my early work I tried to hide my personality, my psychological state, my emotions. . . . I sort of stuck to my guns for a while, but eventually it seemed like a losing battle. Finally, one must simply drop the reserve."

Past Things and Present: Jasper Johns since 1983 is an opportunity to study this recent material on its own. It focuses on motifs introduced into the artist's work since 1983, and has at its core nearly all the prints made during the period, which are drawn from the Walker's complete archive of his graphic works. The balance of the exhibition is comprised of paintings and drawings that expand the conversation around these motifs and weave in imagery familiar from his earlier work. Visitors will find several works based on the important 1983 canvas *Ventriloquist*, which is on loan to the exhibition from the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. The Seasons paintings of 1985–1986 are represented by the beautiful *Winter* (1986) as well as several prints and drawings that treat the overall theme, including four new etchings inspired by poems written by Andrew Shapiro. Johns' use of traced outlines of works by Holbein, Grünewald, and others is explored in numerous objects, including the encaustic-and-sand painting *Green Angel* (1990) from the Walker's collection. Gorgeous monochromatic images from the so-called Catenary series of the late 1990s and early 2000s are included, as well as several very recent works that incorporate the outlines of a painting by Manet. Paintings and drawings have been loaned from many important public and private collections—including Johns' own collection—and several of the works in the show have never before been publicly exhibited.

Catalogue

A beautifully illustrated volume with full-color reproductions of all the works on view contains a foreword by Walker director Kathy Halbreich and essays by exhibition curator Joan Rothfuss. Curator, Permanent Collection; art historian Richard Schiff, a noted Johns scholar and director of the Center for the Study of Modernism at the University of Texas; and scholar Victor Stoichita, professor of contemporary art history at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. The catalogue is distributed by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., 155 Sixth Avenue, Second Floor, New York, NY 10013, 800.338.2665 (phone), 212.627.9484 (fax), and is available at the Walker Art Center Shop, 612.375.7638 (phone), 612.375.7565 (fax). Available in November; \$34.95 (\$31.46 Walker members).

Commemorative Poster

To mark the show and celebrate the Walker's print archive, Jasper Johns created a poster that incorporates an old family photograph—a motif he has used in several recent prints and paintings. The poster, an offset lithograph, was printed at Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), the legendary workshop that published Johns' first prints in the 1960s. \$30 (\$27 Walker members). All proceeds support the artistic and educational programs of the Walker Art Center in the visual, performing, and media arts.

Funding

Past Things and Present: Jasper Johns since 1983 is made possible by generous support from Judy and Kenneth Dayton, Martha and Bruce Atwater, Margaret and Angus Wurtele, The Broad Art Foundation, and the Fifth Floor Foundation. Promotional assistance provided by *MPLS.ST.PAUL* Magazine.

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Tour Schedule

Greenville County Museum of Art, Greenville, South Carolina
March 7–May 30, 2004

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, Scotland
July 10–September 19, 2004

IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, València, Spain
October 7, 2004–January 2, 2005

RELATED EVENTS

Past Things and Present: Jasper Johns since 1983

Walker After Hours Preview Party

Saturday, November 8, 9 pm–12 midnight, \$14 (\$7)

Preview the exhibition, enjoy the intensely energetic and globally infused improv of C.A.B., and attend a screening of the documentary films *USA Artists: Jasper Johns* and *Decoy*. The Martini of the Month: Old Glory.

Tickets are available in advance by calling the Walker box office at 612.375.7622: 612.375.7595 (fax). \$1 discount for online purchases (www.walkerart.org/tickets).

ART ACTIVITY: Past to Present

9–11:30 pm, Art Lab

Scratch your icons. Like Jasper Johns, use copies of famous source materials and transfer images onto your memory boards.

SCREENING: Two for Jasper Johns

10 and 11 pm, Lecture Room

USA Artists: Jasper Johns

The artist discusses his influences and process in the early years of his career. 1966, U.S., color, video, 25 minutes.

Decoy

Seven years later, Johns works on the lithograph *Decoy* over two days at Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) in Long Island. 1973, U.S., color, video, 18 minutes.

MUSIC: C.A.B.

10:30 pm, Gallery 8 Restaurant

Hear the energetic and percussive jazz of the locally based and internationally acclaimed trio C.A.B, blending improv and global rhythms. James Anton (bass, mbira); Aaron Barnell (percussion, balaphone); Chris Cunningham (guitars, vocals)

MARTINI OF THE MONTH: Old Glory

Walker After Hours is sponsored by Target Corporation.

Opening-Day Talk: David Shapiro

Two or Three Things I Don't Know About Jasper Johns

Sunday, November 9, 2 pm, \$6 (\$4), Walker Auditorium

The work of Jasper Johns is the subject of numerous art-historical investigations, none of which will be addressed during this one-of-a-kind event. Join us for a slide-illustrated afternoon of poetry, anecdotes, and personal explorations of Johns' work by one of his friends and collaborators, art historian/poet David Shapiro. Inspired by Johns' work since the age of 15, Shapiro has written numerous poems inspired by the artist's oeuvre as well as the first critical book on Johns' drawings, *Jasper Johns Drawings, 1954–1984*. His poetry volumes include *Lateness, To an Idea, House (Blown Apart), After a Lost Original, and A Burning Interior*. He has authored books on artists Jim Dine and Piet Mondrian, and edited *Uncontrollable Beauty*, a book on aesthetics. Shapiro's poetry, translations, and art and literary criticism have appeared in *The New Yorker, The Partisan Review, and The Paris Review*. He is a tenured faculty member in the art history department of William Patterson University.

Free Thursdays

Gallery Talk: What Do YOU See? Visual Perception and Jasper Johns

January 15, 6:30 pm, Meet in the lobby.

Much of the work of Jasper Johns revolves around notions of perception and "seeing." As an artist he is curious about how we see what we see, and why we see it that way—as a result of our own biology, psychology, and memory. Learn about the psychological aspects of seeing and the ways that Johns approaches these questions at this talk led by psychoanalyst Judith Vida and exhibition curator Joan Rothfuss.

Tours

December 11, 6 pm

January 8, 1 and 6 pm

January 22, 1 pm

January 29, 6 pm

February 5, 6 pm

Free Thursdays are made possible by generous support from The Wallace Foundation.

Free First Saturdays

Do You See What I See?

Saturday, December 6, 11 am–4 pm, Free

This daylong family event includes a tour of the exhibition and an art-making workshop to create trick silhouettes inspired by Johns' work.

Connect the Dots

Saturday, January 3, 11 am–4 pm, Free

This daylong family event includes a tour of the exhibition and an art-making workshop to create a catenary painting.

Free First Saturdays are made possible by Coldwell Banker Burnet. Saturday family programming is made possible by Target Stores.

Saturday and Sunday Tours

2 pm. Free with gallery admission. Meet in the lobby.

Saturday, November 15

Sunday, November 16

Saturday, November 29

Saturday, December 6

Sunday, December 14

Saturday, December 27

Saturday, January 10

Saturday, January 17

Saturday, January 31

Sunday, February 8

Walker information/box office: 612.375.7622.

**The Walker Art Center is located at 725 Vineland Place,
at Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis, one block off Highway I-94.
For public information, call 612.375.7622.
Gallery hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 10 am–5 pm;
Thursday, 10 am–9 pm; Sunday, 11 am–5 pm; closed Monday.
<http://www.walkerart.org>**

**Gallery admission is \$6 adults; \$4 young adults 12–18, students with I.D., seniors, groups of 10
or more. Free to Walker members and children under 12,
Free to all every Thursday and the first Saturday of each month.
(Free First Saturdays are made possible by Coldwell Banker Burnet.)**