



Press Release

## **Six works of contemporary art from the D.Daskalopoulos Collection enter the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Collection**

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is pleased to announce that six artworks by international contemporary artists will be incorporated into the museum's collection, thanks to a gift from the D.Daskalopoulos Collection.

Artworks by Matthew Barney, John Bock, Kendell Geers, Guyton/Walker, Martin Kippenberger, and Kiki Smith—sculptures, installations, and paintings—will now enrich the Museum's holdings. In addition to having been shown in many international art institutions, these works were also part of the exhibition of the D.Daskalopoulos Collection at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in 2011, curated by Nancy Spector and Katherine Brinson (Guggenheim Daskalopoulos Curator, Contemporary Art since 2017) titled *The Luminous Interval*.

The donation of these six works to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao strengthens its Collection, not only by introducing new media that combine mixed techniques and ambitious scales but also by expanding its list of internationally renowned artists

In particular, the addition of works by Kendell Geers and Kiki Smith brings a new approach in two areas the Museum aims to strengthen: the decolonial perspective explored by Geers through his critique of power systems, and the integration of female artists like Smith, whose production delves into anatomy, gender, and identity.

This gift also adds the first artwork from the Guyton/Walker collective to the Guggenheim Institutions' global holdings, while the Martin Kippenberger artwork solidifies an already existing group of German postwar artists including Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, Georg Baselitz, and Anselm Kiefer, forging an intergenerational dialogue that explores issues of identity, history, and social criticism. The connection between Kippenberger and John Bock, whose practices share an irreverent, performative approach, adds yet another layer of richness to the Museum's holdings with their playful use of the absurd to challenge the established rules in art.

Finally, the inclusion of Matthew Barney highlights the affinity between his practice and that of Kippenberger and Bock, since all three share an interest in appropriation, assemblage, and a fusion of media. These artworks not only expand the media and themes in the Collection but also reaffirm its commitment to contemporary art as a vehicle for questioning society and promoting a critical dialogue with the public.

### **The Gifted Works**

**John Bock** (b. 1965, Gribbohm) is a sculptor, filmmaker, author, and illustrator who is regarded as one of the most influential artists of his generation. Bock's work takes an unconventional and somewhat chaotic approach to capture his reflection on today's society and social taboos.

In his piece *Palms* (2007), a film recounts the adventures of two German murderers on a trip through southern California in a Lincoln convertible. The large-scale installation accompanying the film features a Lincoln with huge, serpentine red tentacles spilling over the open hood, sweeping away everything in their way.



**Matthew Barney** (b. 1967, San Francisco) reflects on the limits of the body with a very particular vision of human existence. His five-part multimedia series *CREMASTER* (1994–2002) explores the transformation process via an eccentric world filled with fantastical characters.

The title comes from the male cremaster muscle, which controls the testicles' contraction in response to external stimuli. Barney uses this metaphor to explore themes of ascent and descent, as well as sexuality, focusing on biological differentiation processes. *CREMASTER 5* is an allusion to the state of higher sexual differentiation during the embryonic process.

Artist **Kiki Smith** (b. 1954, Nuremberg) addresses issues of gender, feminism, and sexuality in her works through innovative iconography that shifts between the scientific and the technological, yielding a reflective, poetic approach.

Her work *Field Operation* (1994) is comprised of miniature tables holding small organic elements. Its tiny scale leads to a shift in the public's perception of their own bodies, while the organic elements lying on the tables refer to death and the evanescence of life.

The work of **Kendell Geers** (b. 1968, Johannesburg) is the outcome of his own experience as a white citizen in apartheid-era South Africa. As a politically and socially committed artist, his works question politics and the racial and religious stereotypes of today's society.

With the piece *Akropolis Now* (2004), Geers conveys the dichotomy between attraction and repulsion. The work's title refers to the Acropolis of Athens, and specifically the Parthenon, a temple dedicated to Athena, the Greek goddess of war and justice. It also references Francis Ford Coppola's film *Apocalypse Now*, 'exploring the dark potential for violence and cruelty inside every person.'

This artwork appears to be a beautiful object, but it turns dangerous when looked at closely: a shiny wire mesh with sharpened blades that bears heavy symbolism.

The **Guyton/Walker** (2004, New York) is the artist duo of Wade Guyton (b. 1972) and Kelley Walker (1969), whose artistic practices share an exploration of the intersection between art and technology.

In *Untitled* (2008), a group of paint cans with brightly colored labels is stacked in a corner amidst printed canvases. The consumer-themed images and motifs were digitally produced, and their application onto everyday objects transforms the images by giving them texture and a spatial dimension.

**Martin Kippenberger** (b. 1953, Dortmund; d. 1997, Vienna) was the author of a prolific artistic oeuvre in his brief 44-year life. Controversial and sarcastic, his work lies between the conceptual and the controversial.

To Kippenberger, the best jokes were those that only had context but lacked wit, which helps make sense of *Untitled (Invention of a joke)* (1993). This painting shows a scene with no narrative, leaving the joke in the title to the viewer's judgement, as they are forced to recreate its meaning to complete the work.

## Notes for Editors

### About the D.Daskalopoulos Collection

Started in 1994, the D.Daskalopoulos Collection is an extended yet focused collection of contemporary art by leading international and Greek artists. The artworks included in the collection are drawn from the artistic practice of recent decades and focus on the human body as a source of creativity and the vessel of existential, social, and ideological struggle. Many of the most significant names in post-war and contemporary art are represented – figures whose output and ideas have shaped the way in which subsequent generations of artists have developed, and others continue to emerge.

The collection's inner compass is orientated towards the most elemental and universal issues of the human condition. The collection's inner compass is a magnetic orientation towards the most elemental, diachronic, and age-old issue of the human condition. Despite the fact that its holdings chronologically fall within the artistic practice of the last few decades, this orientation distances it away from following the ephemeral artistic or social trends of the moment.

The collection gives particular prominence to large scale installations and sculptures, as well as drawing, collage, film and video.

Exhibitions of the D.Daskalopoulos Collection have taken place at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2010-2011), Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao (2011) and Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2012-2013).

For almost 30 years, the collection has loaned over 200 artworks to more than 120 international institutions in 5 continents and has been utilized by museums to create their own curated exhibitions.

In 2022, it was announced that a major body of important contemporary artworks from the D.Daskalopoulos Collection was donated to 4 museums (EMST, TATE and jointly to Guggenheim and MCA Chicago), in 3 countries over 2 continents to create a pioneering network of collaborations and synergies. A private collection becomes a resource for the public benefit through leading institutions in Athens, Chicago, New York and the United Kingdom.

### About Dimitris Daskalopoulos

Dimitris Daskalopoulos OBE (born 1957 in Athens, Greece) is an entrepreneur, the founder and Chairman of DAMMA Holdings SA, a financial services and investment company. He served as the Chairman of the Board of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV) for 8 consecutive years (2006-2014). He is today SEV's Honorary President. From 2013 to 2015 he served as BUSINESSEUROPE's Vice President and from 1983 to 2007 he was the principal owner, Chairman and CEO of Delta Holdings/Vivartia SA, Greece's largest food conglomerate. He is the founder and Chairman of diaNEOsis (2015), a research think tank in Greece, which commissions studies and makes policy proposals on the major social and economic issues in Greece.

Dimitris Daskalopoulos is a collector of contemporary art, the custodian of the D.Daskalopoulos Collection, Greece, and the founder of the NEON organization. He is a member of the board of Trustees of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and the Tate International Council. Until 2024, he has been a member of the board of trustees and vice president of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Chairman of the Collections Council and the A & M (Art & Museum) Committee of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. He has, also, been a member of the Leadership Council of the New Museum, and a founding partner of Whitechapel Gallery's Future Fund.

At the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Dimitris Daskalopoulos has contributed to a discretionary curators' fund for acquisitions, which he established as a gift to the Foundation. He has also been active in the support of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation (SRGF) acquisitions program through his membership of the International Director's Council. In 2003, Mr. Daskalopoulos and the International Director's Council jointly acquired Matthew Barney's sculpture, Chrysler Imperial (2002), which after 17 years of co-ownership was gifted in its entirety to the museum in 2020.

In 2017, the D.Daskalopoulos Collection created and funded a curatorial post at the museum, Daskalopoulos Curator, Contemporary Art. The position has been created in perpetuity, and is currently held by Guggenheim curator, Katherine Brinson.

Over the years he has contributed funds to facilitate exhibitions and acquisitions at major public art institutions worldwide, including Tate, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, MCA Chicago, the New Museum, Carnegie International, Venice Biennale the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Greece and the Athens Biennale. His contribution to the arts has been recognized on numerous occasions: he is the recipient of the 2014 Leo Award by Independent Curators International; he was honored by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation at the 2018 Guggenheim International Gala for his innovative philanthropy in the arts; in 2022 the Whitechapel Gallery inaugurated the D.Daskalopoulos Gallery; and he was made an honorary fellow of Goldsmiths, University of London in 2023. That year, he was appointed an honorary officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in recognition of his services to the arts and philanthropy.