

NEWS

Walker Art Center to Open Most In-Depth Museum Exhibition of Artist Walter Price

Walter Price: Pearl Lines Features Wide Selection of Works, Capturing Price's Distinct Visual Language and Conceptual Approaches

On View August 8 – December 8, 2024

MINNEAPOLIS, March 21, 2024—Brooklyn-based artist Walter Price (b. 1989) isn't afraid of color. Instead, he sees freedom and joy in its endless possibilities. One glimpse at his exuberant canvases, which burst with lush, vivid hues, make this perspective abundantly clear. In August, visitors to the Walker Art Center will have an opportunity to experience nearly 25 of Price's evocative paintings, which blur the boundaries between figuration and abstraction and draw viewers into his singular visual world. Titled *Walter Price: Pearl Lines*, the exhibition represents the most in-depth museum exploration of the artist's practice to-date, and features selections from significant bodies of work produced between 2017 and 2023, including a painting acquired by the Walker in 2020 that will be on public display for the first time.

Walter Price: Pearl Lines will be on view from August 8 - December 8, 2024. It is curated by Rosario Güiraldes, Curator of Visual Arts at the Walker Art Center, in close collaboration with the artist with whom Güiraldes has a longstanding relationship. The exhibition also marks the first major presentation by Güiraldes since she joined the Walker Art Center from The Drawing Center in New York in May 2023.

"Walter is one of the most exciting voices to have emerged in contemporary painting. He has a boundless love of painting, and his work explores the full gamut of painting's communicative possibilities through color, line, form, and composition," said Güiraldes. "We are thrilled to present an in-depth exploration of Walter's practice at this critical moment in his career and to engage our community with his expansive and incisive approach. As an important interlocutor of mine over the years, it is an honor to begin my tenure at the Walker with an exhibition of his work. I believe that it will deeply resonate with our many visitors."

Price began his journey to art in the U.S. Navy. Like generations of artists before him, Price's military service allowed him to pursue an arts education through the G.I. Bill. Practicing his skills in his Brooklyn studio where he relocated in 2013, Price focused on interior spaces depicted at a small scale, which have continued to serve as a platform for his wide-ranging formal and conceptual explorations. His fluid compositions feature everyday objects, figures, and domestic motifs emerging from and obstructed by rich swaths of color, tangles of lines, and abstract marks and symbols. This

distinct fusion of figuration and abstraction gives his work the aura of a surreal dreamscape, both familiar and foreign. The open-endedness of his visual language is precisely the point, as he creates the framework for viewers to complete the narrative possibilities from their own experiences and viewpoints.

This sensibility also manifests in his many drawings, which he creates as studies for his paintings and as discrete works for art. While the exhibition does not include any examples of his works on paper, this aspect of his practice is also invoked in the exhibition title, alluding to the beauty of drawing and its importance to his artistic vision. The same exhibition title has been used by Price for the majority of his solo exhibitions since 2016. It points to the continuity between his paintings and drawings, which he often creates as ongoing series with subtle formal and conceptual variations between the featured works, as well as to the repetitive, ritualistic qualities of his practice.

Price's work also often engages with history, race, and cultural consciousness. Many of his paintings reference socio-political and cultural happenings—past and present—while also denying the viewer any clear articulation of particular events. In this way, Price rejects simple representation in favor of a more complex network of evocations that communicate both tangible experience and broader emotional and sensorial expressions. His work is at once specific and open-ended; representational and abstract; individual and communal. This approach builds on the legacies of such artists as Henry Taylor and Jacob Lawrence, and also gives Price the freedom to pursue formal experimentation. It also reflects how Price sees himself as an artist: a painter first and foremost, exploring the possibilities of paint and painting. This is an important facet of his vision, which pushes against a common notion that Black artists should focus on narrating or expressing the Black experience.

Pearl Lines includes a broad spectrum of works, capturing Price's prolific practice. Among the works are a selection of smaller-scale paintings, produced in 2020, including ***Hold the umbrella tight while viewing my rain; They don't LOVE you, Yet; Square. Box. A foundation of Intellectualism; Swoosh;*** and ***So much intellectual work to remain wrong***. The works were made, in part, during a residency at Camden Art Center and represent a rare engagement with the color white, which creates a rhythmic throughline across the paintings. These works also highlight Price's ability to work at a smaller scale without losing the potency of his visual vocabulary and formal style. The exhibition also includes works produced at a monumental scale, such as ***Global Outcry*** (2018-2020) and ***"It got uncomfortable, immediately!"*** (2022), among numerous others. Both paintings emerged from darker imagery, including the perils of fake news cycles in the former and the greed elicited by pandemic in the latter. In each instance, Price used the subjects to engage in a painterly exploration of color, line, and form to work through these ideas and the sensations that they evoke.

Pearl Lines also includes ***Step into the Spotlight*** (2018), a painting from the Walker's collection that will be shown for the first time alongside ***Earth mother*** (2018) and ***Pleasure the false God*** (2018). Price began this series of paintings when he was experimenting with transitioning from smaller to larger formats, seeking to infuse elements from his smaller compositions into pieces centered around a single figure. The creation of the works also coincided with a media controversy stemming from comparisons between US tennis icon Serena Williams and a male counterpart. Perplexed by society's tendency to equate femininity with weakness, Price was inspired to create this series of

large-scale paintings reminiscent of statues and sports trophies. The series, featuring figures suggestive of running, marching, or poised to leap out of the canvas, was meticulously constructed from the bottom-up, deliberately distorting perspectives to approach figuration through painterly abstraction.

“I’m very grateful for each opportunity that I get to express my ideas,” said Price. “All of this feels just like a dream. Thank you to everyone who has supported me and continue to appreciate what I do. I’ll continue to bet on myself and share my joy of painting.”

ABOUT WALTER PRICE

Walter Price was born in Macon, Georgia, and now lives and works in Brooklyn. His work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including at Greene Naftali, New York (2022; 2020); Camden Art Centre, London (2021); Aspen Art Museum (2019); MoMA PS1, New York (2018); and Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2018). His forthcoming solo exhibition at the Walker Art Center (2024) marks his largest institutional solo exhibition to-date. His work was included in the 2019 Whitney Biennial, and is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Tate, London; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo; and Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; among numerous others.

ABOUT THE WALKER ART CENTER

The Walker Art Center is a renowned multidisciplinary arts institution that presents, collects, and supports the creation of groundbreaking work across the visual and performing arts, moving image, and design. Guided by the belief that art has the power to bring joy and solace and the ability to unite people through dialogue and shared experiences, the Walker engages communities through a dynamic array of exhibitions, performances, events, and initiatives. Its multiacre campus includes 65,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, the state-of-the-art McGuire Theater and Walker Cinema, and ample green space that connects with the adjoining Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. The Garden, a partnership with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, is one of the first urban sculpture parks of its kind in the United States and home to the beloved Twin Cities landmark *Spoonbridge and Cherry* by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Recognized for its ambitious program and growing collection of more than 15,500 works, the Walker embraces emerging art forms and amplifies the work of artists from the Twin Cities and from across the country and the globe. Its broad spectrum of offerings makes it a lively and welcoming hub for artistic expression, creative innovation, and community connection.

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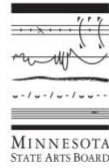
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