

washingtonpost.com

In the Twin Cities, Double the Art

Sunday, April 17, 2005; Page P04

WHAT: "Quartet: Johns, Kelly, Mitchell, Motherwell" and "Quartet: Barney, Gober, Levine, Walker," parallel exhibits at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

WHEN: Today through July 3 and Nov. 13, respectively.

HOW MUCH: \$8 adults. Free on Thursday nights from 5 to 9 p.m. and on the first Saturday of the month.

WHY GO: Featuring hundreds of works by both pioneers and current stars of American avant-garde art -- Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Joan Mitchell, Robert Motherwell, Matthew Barney, Robert Gober, Sherrie Levine and Kara Walker -- the "Quartet" shows are inaugurating one of the year's most anticipated museum-expansion projects: a new Walker building by the Pritzker Prize-winning architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron. The five-story addition -- a silvery, angular building outfitted with the latest interactive museum technology -- is the first U.S. structure designed by the celebrated Swiss pair, who masterminded London's Tate Modern.

DON'T MISS . . . Johns's "**Flashlight**" (1960), which presents an everyday object cast in bronze and literally placed on a pedestal. Also check out "**Posted**" (1977), Mitchell's refracted, disassembled landscape that was painted in France, near Claude Monet's famous Giverny gardens. **Barney's site-specific installation**, which the artist assembled for this show, incorporates film and sculpture from his splendidly bizarre and much-touted "Cremaster" cycle from the 1990s.

EXTRAS: Also opening today at the Walker are "**Shadowland: An Exhibition as a Film**," an installation of photos and films by such artists as Bruce Nauman and Jeff Wall, and "**Elemental**," which showcases minimalist works by Donald Judd, Richard Serra and others. "Shadowland" runs until Sept. 11; "Elemental" wraps up on July 9, 2006.

For another round of modern art and architecture (for free), go to the Frank Gehry-designed **Weissmann Museum** (333 E. River Rd., 612-625-9494, www.weisman.umn.edu). The shimmering, disjointed funhouse displays works by Georgia O'Keeffe, Marsden Hartley, Andy Warhol and others.

The Twin Cities' homegrown art scene comes together under one roof at the **Northrup King Building** (1500 Jackson St. N.E., 612-363-5612, www.northrupkingbuilding.com). More than 100 painters, photographers, sculptors, printmakers and other artists have studios and galleries in the massive former factory, which also contains dozens of shops selling furniture, decorative objects and more.

EATS: The Walker also brings the art of cooking to the foreground, thanks to two new restaurants by ubiquitous celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck. The lunch-only **Gallery 8** cafe opens this weekend, and the upscale, Asian-tinged dinner restaurant **20.21** premieres April 25. Call 612-253-3410 for reservations.

SLEEPS: Lovers of cutting-edge art seeking a cutting-edge place to collapse should try **Le Meridien Minneapolis**

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(601 First Ave. North, 612-677-1100, minneapolis.lemeridien.com). The first of the chain's Art + Tech properties, the hotel outfits its rooms with sleek contemporary designs, local art photos, plasma-screen TVs and even a bar of Hermes soap. Rack rate for doubles is \$369 per night; rooms booked online start at \$209.

For one of the best deals in town, book the \$89 per night weekend rate at the swanky **Marquette Hotel** (710 Marquette Ave., 800-328-4782, www.marquettehotel.com) in downtown Minneapolis. The rate covers a single or double.

INFO: The **Walker Art Center** (612-375-7600, www.walkerart.org) is at 1750 Hennepin Ave.

-- **Seth Sherwood**

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