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INTO THE LIGHT JAMES TURRELL

WITH GALLERIST MAGGIE KAYNE



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EYES

ON

THE

PRIZE

Catherine Marcus Rose and Jennifer Eagle usher
in the Nasher Sculpture Center's new prize.

BY SARAH THORNTON PORTRAIT BY ALLISON SMITH



Jennifer Eagle and Catherine Marcus Rose

"Sculpture lives in our space, feels more interactive and can exist outdoors and be in dialogue with nature."

—Catherine Marcus Rose

"We don't want this to be just another frou-frou party. It'll be a thoughtful event to honor the winner," says Jennifer Eagle, co-chair of the recently inaugurated Nasher Prize. "We're calling it a celebration rather than a gala." On April 2, the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas' gem of a museum and art-filled garden, will give Colombian artist Doris Salcedo a prize designed by Renzo Piano and a check for \$100,000. "Salcedo's win was a nice surprise," says Catherine Marcus Rose, Eagle's co-chair. "Her work feels timely in Texas, given our border with Mexico, connections with Latin America and immigration issues."

Eagle and Rose share a keen interest in art and commit their spare time to philanthropy. Eagle, whose father was a pediatrician and whose mother hails from West Texas cattle dealers, studied business at Baylor University. She relishes the fact that she and her family are "not golfers, so every vacation is an opportunity for art." She concedes, "Art is a great passion and way of life." Rose, whose great-grandfather co-founded Neiman Marcus, studied art history at Harvard and is now the president of the board of trustees of the Dallas Museum of Art. The mother of three boys who once "jumped rope" over a minimalist yarn piece by Fred Sandback, she collects art, photography and contemporary jewelry, which she appreciates as "personal small sculptures."

Having co-chaired Dallas' TWO x TWO, a fundraiser for the Dallas Museum of Art and The Foundation for AIDS Research, Eagle and Rose are now spearheading the development of the Nasher Prize. "Neither of us are extroverts, but we love people," says Rose. Indeed, good causes can bring welcome structure and purpose to social interaction. "The Prize is not just an event but a year-long initiative to promote the discussion of sculpture," she adds.

In an art world seemingly cluttered with awards, the Nasher Prize is a clever addition. Remarkably, it is the only international prize for contemporary sculpture, a medium that has, since Marcel Duchamp's urinal, arguably led the way in

conceptual art. In the 1990s, medium specificity became unfashionable and artists worth their salt were supposed to be able to make two and three-dimensional works with equal ease. Nowadays, the reality that many great painters are only mediocre sculptors (and vice versa) is acknowledged and a prize dedicated specifically to sculpture is relevant and opportune.

Rose loves sculpture because it "lives in our space, feels more interactive and can exist outdoors and be in dialogue with nature." Eagle concurs, emphasizing that the physicality of sculpture and its relationship to our bodies leads to "powerful emotional reactions and another level of engagement." Arguably, the reduction of our culture—our books, music, movies, singles bars even—to small screens means that sculpture is poised to increase in importance by offering an irreducible, real-world antidote to digitization.

The Nasher Prize has been conceived and conducted with particular intelligence. Jeremy Strick, the director of the Nasher Sculpture Center since 2009, understood that the success of the prize depended to a large extent on the credibility of its process. The museum initially sought nominations from 100 experts consisting of artists, art historians, curators and museum directors. They were asked to nominate people in response to one question: "Which artist, with a substantial body of work, has influenced our understanding of sculpture?" Strick's staff then prepared dossiers on each nominee, which were given to a distinguished jury that included the likes of Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate; Okwui Enwezor, curator of last year's Venice Biennale; and Lynne Cooke, senior curator at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The jury convened in London, a practical location for a high caliber group of jetsetters, but also a symbol of the international ambitions of the award. Eagle and Rose are quick to praise Strick's steering of the prize. "I am a card-carrying member of the Jeremy Strick fan club," says Rose. "He is deliberate and inclusive; he develops ideas in a way

that gets you invested."

The Nasher Sculpture Center was set up in 2003 by the late Ray Nasher, owner of NorthPark Center, an upscale shopping mall with the added distinction of containing sculptures by major 20th century artists. Patsy, Ray's wife, had studied art history and was knowledgeable and passionate about the subject. Opened in 1965, the mall provided many Dallas residents with their first encounter with art. "I used to go there as a little girl," explains Eagle, "and was amazed by pieces such as Claes Oldenburg's giant safety pin." Neiman Marcus was and still is the anchor department store in NorthPark, so Ray Nasher and Stanley Marcus, Rose's grandfather, were steadfast business associates. "Our families have a long history here," says Rose.

The Sculpture Center, which enjoys a collection of more than 300 works by the likes of Brancusi, Calder, Giacometti, de Kooning, di Suvero, Hepworth, Matisse, Moore, Picasso, Rodin and Serra, was an extension of the Nashers' desire to share art with the broadest possible audience. "It's a real gift for the city of Dallas," says Eagle. The Prize further seeks to "elevate the Nasher and elevate the city," explains Rose.

In addition to catapulting the Nasher from a local initiative into an international art brand, the Prize is also the vehicle by which a private, single-source foundation is shifting into a museum supported by a larger community of collectors. Until recently, the Nasher had never done any significant fundraising (half of the museum was underwritten by Ray Nasher). However, this year, Eagle and Rose are hoping to raise \$1 million for the Prize to put it in a strong position for years to come. Not surprisingly, Nancy Nasher, Ray and Patsy's daughter, is hugely grateful for their work. Rose and Eagle "are tireless art advocates who have taken on invaluable leadership roles," she says. "As philanthropists and art collectors of the highest order, they bring unique perspectives characterized by graciousness, style and wit."



The Nasher Sculpture Center—one of the most comprehensive collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world—includes Richard Long's *Midsummer Circles*, among other large-scale installations.



Landscape architect Peter Walker designed the Nasher's outdoor gallery, featuring Mark di Suvero's 22,500-pound sculpture, *Evviva Amore*.