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Robert Fishko, *Director*

WILLIAM BECKMAN

(b. 1942)

Study for Diana and Deidra, 1979

charcoal on paper

61 x 49 inches

signed and dated to lower right

“W. Beckman 1979”

Provenance

The Artist

Allan Stone Collection, New York, NY

Forum Gallery, New York, NY



Exhibited

Inside Out: Self Beyond Likeness

Traveled to:

Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA, May 22 - July 12, 1981

Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR, September 8 - October 18, 1981

Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, NE, February 13 - April 4, 1982

William Beckman: Drawings, 1967-2013, The Columbus Museum, Columbus, GA,
May 18 – September 7, 2014; Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, Little Rock, AR,
October 24, 2014 - February 1, 2015

Tête-à-Tête: Portraits in Dialogue, Allan Stone Gallery, New York, NY,
February 25 - April 23, 2016

Draughtsmanship: Selected Drawings from the Allan Stone Collection,
March 1 - April 21, 2018, Allan Stone Gallery, New York, NY

William Beckman | *Gregory Gillespie*, Forum Gallery, New York, NY,
November 16, 2023 – January 6, 2024

Literature

Butler, Charles T. and Carter Ratcliff. *William Beckman: Drawings, 1967-2013*, The Columbus Museum, Columbus, GA, 2014, p. 56, Illustrated.

Note

Beckman overlaid a grid on this drawing in order to scale it up for his large painting, *Diana and Deidra*, 1978-79, oil on canvas, 84 x 60 inches, GUC Collection. It is reproduced in the *William Beckman* catalogue, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA, 2002, p. 24, pl. 14.

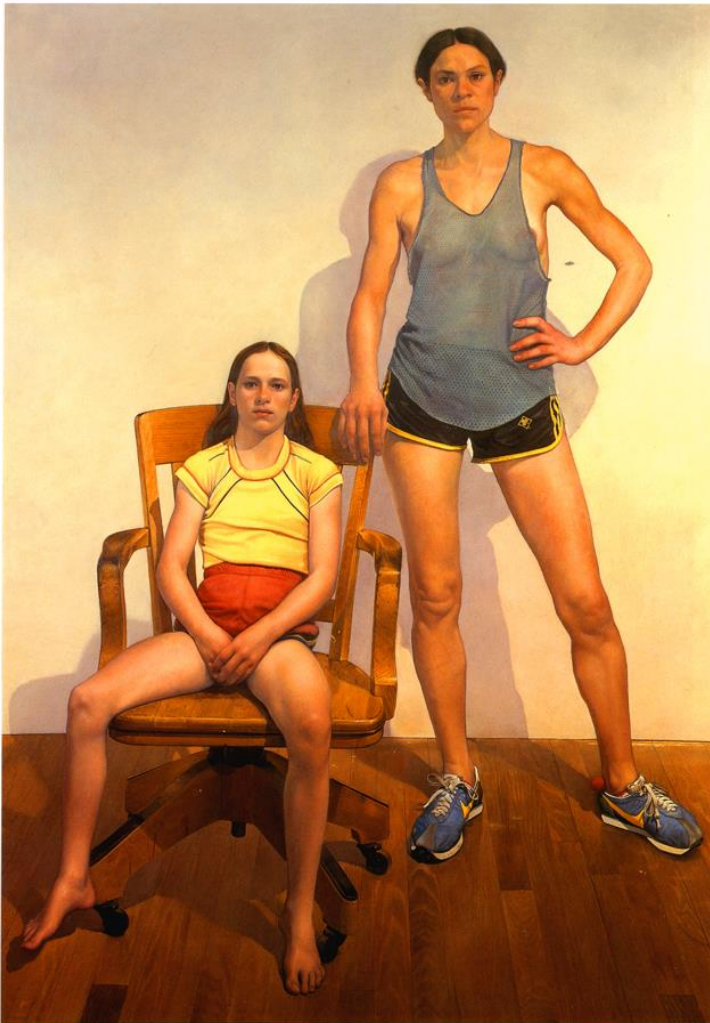


PLATE 14

DIANA AND DEIDRA 1978-1979

Oil on canvas, 84 x 60 in.

GUC Collection

Essay

Over a span of almost 20 years beginning in 1971 and continuing until their divorce in the late 1980s, William Beckman rendered his wife, Diana Moore in multiple paintings and drawings that are each magnetic in their own way and a powerful body of work when viewed together. For this work, *Study for Diana and Deidra*, 1979, Beckman chose to portray Diana together with their daughter who is depicted seated, her weight melting into a chair that is the only object anchoring the space they inhabit.

William Beckman and Diana Moore were long distance runners at the time this drawing was made, each completing both the Boston and New York City marathons by impressive times of under 3 hours. Beckman closely associates the practice of running and being an artist, it being evocative of the physical and mental exertion required of him when executing large-scale drawings and paintings. In *Study for Diana and Deidra*, Beckman depicts Diana dressed in her running clothes, a nod to their shared passion.

Since the outset of his figurative artistic practice in the 1970s, William Beckman has chosen as his subject matter those closest to him – his wife, his children, himself. Focusing on the psychological complexities of his subject, Beckman renders his figures in sparsely defined spaces, sometimes a room in the home they share, at other times in the Artist's studio or set against the rural landscape of Beckman's childhood home in Maynard, Minnesota. Although his subjects are selected for the intimate relationship shared with the Artist, Beckman's portraits are not intended as presentations of "domestic" life in the manner of the Impressionists for example. Beckman's portraits are engaged, realist observations in which the subject is often, unapologetically, looking straight back at the artist and in turn the viewer whom Beckman demands take his viewpoint.

The National Portrait Gallery's artist page for William Beckman quotes art critic Donald Kuspit: "I regard Beckman's self-obsession as the climactic statement of what Baudelaire called 'the cult of the self' that informs modern art." This self-obsession extends in a self-reflexive manner to his immediate relations in a way that sets Beckman apart as a contemporary master of figurative art.

While Beckman's drawings are sometimes intended as preparatory work for an oil painting that follows, works like *Study for Diana and Deidra* are often ends in themselves that challenge our preconceptions of their medium because they are truly major statements.

On his first trip to Europe in 1976, Beckman was struck by an eight-foot square drawing by Leonardo da Vinci on exhibit at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Leonardo's drawing left its impact on Beckman who about drawing at this scale says: "Large works allow body freedom; drawing with my arm, not my fingers...I become more involved."

Beckman's large-scale charcoal drawings are as synonymous with the artistic practice of this contemporary master of figurative art as are his oil paintings. Amongst the many other museum shows to have included his drawings, in 2015 the Columbus Museum in GA organized a retrospective devoted to Beckman's drawings that traveled to the Arkansas Art Center, AR.

William Beckman's paintings and drawings are included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the Smithsonian American Art Museum (Washington, DC), Museum Moderne Kunst (Vienna, Austria), The Art Institute of Chicago, The Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh, PA), Flint Institute of Arts (MI), Milwaukee Art Museum (WI), Columbus Museum of Art (GA), Des Moines Art Center (IA) and Frye Art Museum (Seattle, WA), amongst others.