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Robert Fishko, *Director*

For Immediate Release

WILLIAM BECKMAN *HEARTLAND*

January 8 – February 28, 2026



Straw Bales (Overcoat Series), 2024, oil on canvas, 86 x 138 inches

Forum Gallery is delighted to announce ***William Beckman: Heartland***, an exhibition presenting eighteen works by **William Beckman (b.1942)**, recognized for more than fifty years as one of the country's leading realist artists. Over his long career, William Beckman's paintings and drawings of family members and the landscape of his youth have been the subject of countless exhibitions across the country and in Europe. Now at 83 years of age, William Beckman has spent the last six years focused on his landscapes and, for the first time, ***William Beckman: Heartland*** presents a cohesive body of work that tells a uniquely American story. The exhibition will be on view at Forum Gallery from January 8 to February 28, 2026.

The fifteen oil paintings and three drawings on view in the exhibition show how closely William Beckman's values and sensibilities are tied to the land where he is from. Beginning in 1970, William Beckman has painted the landscape he knows as he knows his own body. Recalling a trip taken in that year, Beckman has said:

The landscapes started when we went to my parents' farm in Minnesota. We went in part for a vacation, but partly because I wanted to do some landscapes. I had never done any—I mean not directly from nature—so I just got on my father's tractor and drove out in the fields and painted what was right in front of me.

The two largest landscape paintings in the exhibition, *Bales #4*, 2018 (73" x 99 ½") and *Blue Straw Bales and Plowed Field*, 2024 (72" x 99") are expansive recollections of the Artist's homeland that bring to life for the viewer the experience of the vastness of the land in painterly expressions commanding the communicative strength and emotional power for which Beckman is known.

Growing up on a working farm left an indelible impression on the Artist, and the plowed fields, granaries, and machines that make the farm so active and compelling have long been an artistic preoccupation for William Beckman. Additionally, Beckman remarks:

I wanted that hassle between the environmentalist and the farmer. It doesn't surface very often in the eastern press, but you get it endlessly in the mid-west—the chemical fertilizers they put on the ground, the way they push down every tree or use a bulldozer to straighten out a stream that meanders through a field, the way they run a power line directly through otherwise productive land if they want electricity. And I fell in love with the big Harvester silos that are all over the area.

Couples and landscapes have long been dominant ideas in William Beckman's work, but in this exhibition, a new evolution of these themes is unveiled in the monumental oil, *Straw Bales (Overcoat Series)*, 2024 (86" x 138"), a remarkable portrait of the Artist and his wife. For the first time in a figurative painting by William Beckman, the defiant husband and wife stand against the backdrop of the seemingly endless farmland of the Artist's western Minnesota childhood home.

William Beckman is well known for his self-portraiture, and included in the exhibition is the large-scale painting, *Overcoat with Plowed Field*, 2018-2021 (100" x 73"). The work is an imposing self-portrait in which the Artist stands steadfast wrapped in the iconography of the "overcoat," a recurring symbol of survival for Beckman. With the farmland and silos behind him, he renders himself immovable, evoking the work of Grant Wood, painter of *American Gothic* who, like Beckman, sprung from America's heartland.

An exhibition of William Beckman landscapes was presented by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in the Spring of 2025. Writing about the exhibition in a feature article for *American Art Collector*, David Massello observes:



Beckman is a decided realist painter, but there is still an enigmatic, mysterious current that infuses his scenes...there is a storyline not quite discernible or fully told. His Home (11 ¾" x 11 ¾")... is among the most moving of the works in the show, and the most minimalist in composition. The viewer can't help but conclude that he is reimagining his home of youth and metaphorically depicting, from foreground to background, the course of his life. All of his works are thematically accessible, no matter whether they are massive or diminutive in scale, and outright beautiful. What he paints is like no other painters.

Home, 2011-23, oil on panel, 11 ¾" x 11 ¾"

Forum Gallery has represented William Beckman since 1993. Works by William Beckman are included in the collections of National Portrait Gallery (Washington, D.C.), Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the Smithsonian American Art Museum (Washington, D.C.), Museum Moderne Kunst (Vienna, Austria), The Art Institute of Chicago (IL), The Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh, PA), Flint Institute of Arts (MI), Milwaukee Art Museum (WI), Columbus Museum (GA), Des Moines Art Center (IA), and Frye Art Museum (Seattle, WA), among others.



Blue Straw Bales and Plowed Field, 2024, oil on canvas, 72 x 99 inches

There will be a reception at Forum Gallery on Thursday, January 15, 2026, 5 – 7pm. The Artist will be present.

For a preview of the exhibition, you are invited to visit the Online Viewing Room for **William Beckman: Heartland** here: viewingroom.forumgallery.com/viewing-room/william-beckman-heartland

William Beckman: Heartland opens on Thursday, January 8, 2026, and continues through Saturday, February 28, 2026.

Forum Gallery is located at 475 Park Avenue at 57th Street, New York, NY 10022. The gallery is open to the public Monday through Saturday from 10am to 5:30pm, closed Sundays and holidays.

For all inquiries, please contact **Nicola Lorenz**, Executive Director or **Marjorie Van Cura**, Associate Director, 212-355-4545; gallery@forumgallery.com



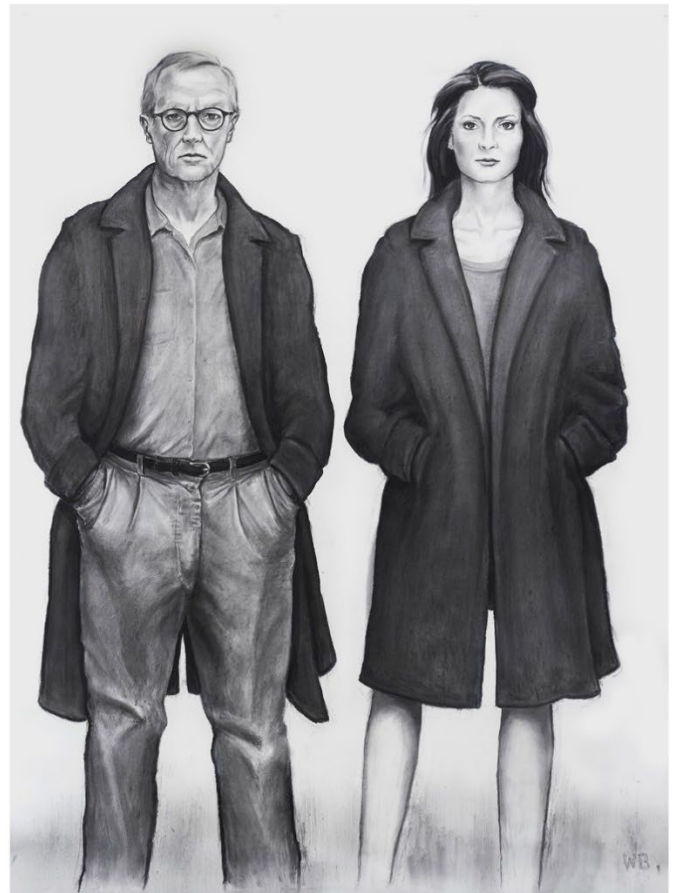
Overcoat with Plowed Field, 2018-21, oil on canvas
100 x 73 inches



Wheat Field, 2023, oil on panel, 8 1/2 x 22 3/4 inches



Bel Air Farm Summer, 2020, oil on panel, 9 3/4 x 23 3/4 inches



Overcoat 4, 2020, charcoal on paper, 96x72 inches