

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## The Phillips Collection 2026 Annual Gala Honors Fundació Joan Miró and Pat Steir and Celebrates the Creative Spark

*Leaders in art, philanthropy, and public life gathered in support of the museum’s education and community engagement initiatives.*



WASHINGTON, DC— The Phillips Collection [2026 Annual Gala: \*The Creative Spark\*](#), held on May 8, celebrated the museum’s enduring commitment to education, community engagement, cultural exchange, and the transformative power of modern and contemporary art. Inspired by the spring exhibition *Miró and the United States*, this year’s Gala celebrated two artistic forces: the visionary legacy of Joan Miró and the groundbreaking contributions of artist Pat Steir, whose practice redefined painting through process, intuition, and chance.

“Duncan Phillips believed that art is part of the social purpose of the world—that the creative spark, the force that moves an artist to make something, and a visitor to be changed by it, is one of the most important forces we have. It connects, heals, and reminds us of what we share,” said **Jonathan P. Binstock, Vradenburg Director & CEO of The Phillips Collection**. “Miró’s deep connection to American

artists and culture, alongside Steir’s radical reimagining of abstraction, exemplify the imaginative spirit at the heart of the Phillips, from its galleries to classrooms and across the broader community. Together, their legacies reflect this spark central to the museum’s mission and legacy.”

More than 520 guests attended the sold-out event, including members of the diplomatic corps, artists, philanthropists, community leaders, and friends of the Phillips. Guests enjoyed cocktails throughout the galleries, dinner surrounded by works from the collection, and immersive experiences, including a JS Audio Listening Lounge and curated cocktails by Lucy Mercer Bar. The evening concluded with an After Party featuring live music by Trio Caliente, Spanish street food, and desserts.

The Gala honored two individuals and institutions whose contributions embody creativity and cultural exchange: Fundació Joan Miró, recognized on the occasion of its 50th anniversary as a steward of Miró’s artistic legacy and co-organizer of *Miró and the United States*; and the late artist Pat Steir, honored in tribute to her life and legacy. A pioneering figure in contemporary painting, whose work is held in the Phillips’s permanent collection, Steir reshaped the language of abstraction with her process-driven work and continues to inspire generations of artists.

Raising over \$918,000, the Gala exceeded its fundraising goal and marked the third consecutive year the event has both sold out and surpassed expectations. Proceeds support the museum’s education initiatives, community engagement programs, and partnerships across Washington, DC, including at its historic 21st Street home and at Phillips@THEARC in Southeast DC. Each year, the Phillips serves more than 34,000 participants through programs ranging from Creative Aging for adults living with memory loss to sustained K–12 school partnerships and wellness-centered public programs. Working with more than 50 community partners, the museum continues to serve as a welcoming “experiment station,” in the words of founder Duncan Phillips, where art fosters dialogue, discovery, and joy.

**Special guests included:** Lily Sukoneck-Cohen, the niece of the late Pat Steir; Glòria Rius Olcos, representing the Fundació Joan Miró; Gala Co-Chairs Pam Kaplan and Sarah Mills; Phillips Board Chair Julie Garcia; Phillips Chair Emeritus George Vradenburg; H.E. Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait; H.E. María Isabel Castillo Báez, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic; H. E. Nada Hamadeh, Ambassador of Lebanon; H.E. Jens Hanefeld, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany; H.E. Dr. Ralf Heckner, Ambassador of Switzerland; Mr. Bogdan Klich, Chargé d’Affaires ad interim of the Republic of Poland; H.E. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Ambassador of Brazil; H.E. Sir Christian Turner KCMG, His Majesty’s Ambassador to the United States; Agnès von der Mühl, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of France; H.E. Shigeo Yamada, Ambassador of Japan; H.E. Motaz Zahran, Ambassador of Egypt; Guillermo Corral Van Damme, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Spain; Joel Melchiori, Head of the Office of Culture and Public Diplomacy, Embassy of Italy; Christine Vest, Senior Cultural Affairs Officer, EU Delegation; Kathleen Kennedy Townsend; Kaywin Feldman, Director, National Gallery of Art; Josh and Sarah Eastright; Daniel and Elizabeth Sallick; artists Peter Campus, Phillips Trustee Zoë Charlton, Carol Brown Goldberg, Jane Irish, James Phillips; Diane Rehm.

## 2026 GALA HONOREES

Fundació Joan Miró  
Pat Steir, *In Memoriam*

## DIPLOMATIC COMMITTEE (as of April 1, 2026)

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peter campus  
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#### **2026 GALA SPONSORS**

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**PRESS IMAGES**

High-resolution press images are available [here](#). Please contact Lauryn Cantrell, [lcantrell@phillipscollection.org](mailto:lcantrell@phillipscollection.org) for questions.

**IMAGE:** (L to R) peter campus, Glòria Rius Olcos, James Phillips, Pam Kaplan, Jonathan P. Binstock, Carol Brown Goldberg, Sarah Mills. Photo: Mariah Miranda Photography.

**ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION**

Founded in 1921, The Phillips Collection is a welcoming home for all where the vision and spirit of artists thrive in intimate settings. As the first museum of modern art in the United States, the Phillips houses one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and modern art collections, and continues to grow its permanent collection with the work of important living artists. Its distinctive domestically scaled architecture combines three structures built over more than 125 years, among them the former home of the founders, Duncan and Marjorie Phillips. The Phillips's impact extends nationally

and internationally through its diverse, scholarly exhibitions; award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; and renowned Phillips Music series. Popular and impactful programs include those focused on art and wellness, its festive monthly Phillips after 5 events, and intimate Living Room talks. Through authentic programs and partnerships at Phillips@THEARC, the museum's satellite location in Southeast DC, the Phillips extends its reach into Wards 7 and 8 and Prince George's County, Maryland. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

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