

December 14, 2016 | By Jackie Carr

Art's Content: Jacobs Medical Center Captures Curative Power of Creativity

Paintings, photos and sculptures are medicine for mind, body and soul

Modern hospitals are designed to aid healing in every possible space, from operating rooms and recovery areas to cafeterias and lobbies. One way is through art, and the new Jacobs Medical Center at UC San Diego Health reflects this with an extraordinary collection of paintings, photographs, sculptures, and other mediums, by renowned artists that are featured on every floor and inside every patient room throughout the 10-story hospital.

“Research shows art has the ability to heal and de-stress,” said Joan Jacobs, arts advocate and philanthropist whose family donated more than \$100 million for UC San Diego Jacobs Medical Center.

A [2011 University College London study](#), for example, found that blood flow increased 10 percent in the “joy response” circuit of the brain when persons saw a beautiful painting. A [2009 report by the Arts & Health Alliance \(PDF\)](#) describes a growing body of evidence indicating art, carefully curated, benefits not only patients, but caregivers, visiting family, friends and healthcare providers.

“What we hope to create with the artwork is an uplifting environment inside the medical center that fosters warmth, comfort and inspiration. The goal is to increase feelings of well-being while promoting healing,” said Jacobs.



Big Yellow Poppies, by Donald Sultan (2016) is featured on an exterior walkway at Jacobs Medical Center at UC San Diego Health.

The therapeutic arts collection was conceived by Joan Jacobs at the same time blueprints for the \$943 million hospital were being drawn up. Her appreciation of the intersection of art and healing is incorporated into every space within the 245-bed hospital. It is represented by more 150 individual pieces, a collection that complements the overall architectural design narrative emphasizing views of nature, natural light and closeness of family.

“It was an honor to help curate this distinctive collection,” said Kathryn Kanjo, The David C. Copley Director and CEO of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD.) “It is farsighted of the Jacobs Medical Center team to include art in its program of environmental healing. Collections of art are seen in other leading medical centers, such as Cedars-Sinai and Cleveland Clinic, but the collection at Jacobs Medical Center specifically highlights artwork that resonates with the region.”

Many of the artists in the collection have a connection to other institutions in San Diego. Artists such as Manny Farber and Kim MacConnel are known locally for their time as faculty at UC San Diego. A public sculpture by Kiki Smith is part of The Stuart Collection, part of UC San Diego’s long-standing commitment to art in public spaces. Jennifer Steinkamp, known for her video installations, has been exhibited at MCASD and is part of their collection as well.

Kanjo said the art collection is also pragmatically integrated into the hospital’s interior design concept: “The art has a memorable visual personality, which will help people orient themselves to a place as they move from floor to floor. Visitors will recognize works, whether for their imagery or even their color, providing a sense of comfort as they navigate the hospital and understand where they are located.”

The collection offers moments of discovery throughout the public areas of Jacobs Medical Center, including waiting rooms and corridors. Works in the collection include prints by notable artists such as Damien Hirst, Beatriz Milhazes, and Julian Schnabel as well as works by Donald Sultan and Ryan McGinness. There are paintings by California artists Yunhee Min, Whitney Bedford and Eva Struble and work by local photographers such as Philipp Scholz Rittermann and Erik Jepsen.



Selections from The Souls III, by Damien Hirst (2015) is a set of four foil block prints featured in the Advanced Surgical Care area on floor 3 of Jacobs Medical Center at UC San Diego Health.

In patient rooms, photographs present the beauty of San Diego, from its canyons and mesas, ocean and sky to its iconic features and structures. Patients and families will recognize local views and panoramas encompassing, for example, La Jolla Shores, Balboa Park and UC San Diego.

“This is a vibrant, beautiful collection that will have a positive impact upon everyone who sees it,” said Patty Maysent, CEO, UC San Diego Health. “We are deeply grateful to the Jacobs Family, The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Iris Strauss and committee members who have made this art collection possible for our employees, patients and visitors.”

In 2010, Joan and Irwin Jacobs with their family pledged \$75 million to UC San Diego Health toward construction of the Jacobs Medical Center on UC San Diego’s campus in La Jolla. The pledge was followed by a \$25 million matching challenge grant.

The 10-story, 245-bed facility is dedicated to the care of new mothers and babies and patients with complex medical conditions such as cancer, neurological diseases, liver failure, obesity, diabetes and inflammatory bowel disease. Jacobs Medical Center opened for patient care on November 20, 2016.

CannonDesign served as the award-winning architect for Jacobs Medical Center.

MEDIA CONTACT

Jackie Carr, 858-249-0456, jcarr@ucsd.edu

Scott LaFee, 858-249-0456, slafee@ucsd.edu

UC San Diego’s [Studio Ten 300](#) offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via studio@ucsd.edu. To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.