



PRESS RELEASE

from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

1 EAST 70TH STREET • NEW YORK • NEW YORK 10021 • TELEPHONE (212) 288-0700 • FAX (212) 628-4417

FRICK'S CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF COLLECTING NAMES

GET THERE FIRST, DECIDE PROMPTLY: THE RICHARD BROWN BAKER COLLECTION OF POSTWAR ART

WINNER OF ITS BIENNIAL \$25,000 BOOK PRIZE



The Frick's Center for the History of Collecting has awarded its Sotheby's Book Prize for a Distinguished Publication on the History of Collecting in America to *Get There First, Decide Promptly: The Richard Brown Baker Collection of Postwar Art* (Yale University Art Gallery, 2011). The book's general editor, Jennifer Farrell, shares the prize with essayists Thomas Crow, Serge Guilbaut, Jan Howard, Robert Storr, and Judith Tannenbaum. The Frick's Director, Ian Wardropper, commented, "Within recent years, the history of collecting art has found acceptance as an academic field, and we are very proud of the role that the Center for the History of Collecting has played in that development. Established at the Frick Art Reference Library six years ago, the center has fostered a high level of discourse through symposia, oral histories, publications, and fellowships. Furthermore, its book prize, generously supported by Sotheby's, strengthens this area of study by acknowledging—and perhaps inspiring—new publications. We offer congratulations to Jennifer Farrell and her colleagues for this wonderfully researched publication and look forward to presenting the award to her formally at a reception hosted at Sotheby's in January."

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

Richard Brown Baker (1912–2002) began acquiring works by emerging artists in the 1940s, becoming one of the first collectors to actively embrace both Abstract Expressionism and Pop art. He eventually amassed more than 1,600 works from the postwar period, including works by such groundbreaking American artists as Jean-Michel

Basquiat, Chuck Close, Franz Kline, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Morris, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, and James Rosenquist, as well as European and Asian artists such as Alberto Burri, Jean Dubuffet, Georges Mathieu, Kurt Schwitters, and Jirō Yoshihara. Baker bequeathed the majority of his holdings to the Yale University Art Gallery, and the balance to the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, in Providence. Highlighting 130 works, *Get There First, Decide Promptly* is the first complete history of Baker's important collection. Essays by Farrell, renowned art historians Thomas Crow, Serge Guilbaut, and Robert Storr, and curators Jan Howard and Judith Tannenbaum contextualize each of the five decades of Baker's collecting efforts. Entries on individual artists, contributed by **Jennifer Farrell**, **Ágnes Berecz**, **Susan Greenberg Fisher**, **Jennifer R. Gross**, and **J. Fiona Ragheb**, as well as a chronology by **Elise K. Kenney** with **Gabriella Svenningsen Omonte**, illustrate the remarkable scope of Baker's holdings. Throughout the publication, firsthand accounts from Baker's extensive personal journals describe his activities within the dynamic New York art scene of the day. Many selections from the Gallery's Baker Collection are currently on view in the Yale University Art Gallery's recently reinstalled modern and contemporary art galleries.

Adds Inge Reist, Director of the Center for the History of Collecting, "I found this book exceptionally interesting and a model approach for the study of art through the history of collecting that we want to encourage with this prize. The editor has assembled a team of highly distinguished scholars—a veritable who's who of late-twentieth-century art scholars including Robert Storr and Thomas Crow—to contribute deeply researched essays on the many facets of Richard Brown Baker's collecting personality. The fact that Baker kept such a rich and complete journal naturally made the authors' collective task simpler, but here too, they use the wealth of archival material available to them judiciously and meaningfully. The catalogue of the collection that follows the six essays is also conceived with Baker's collecting passion as the organizing principle, because the entries are sequenced according to the year of acquisition by Baker, beginning with the earliest, and each richly researched entry focuses the reader's attention as much on the collector's motivations for purchases and his reactions to new acquisitions as it does on the work of art itself. The catalogue, thus, uses the records of the collector to enrich our knowledge of works by artists who are now in the pantheon of post-war art, but whose success was often unknowable for Baker himself at the time of acquisition."



Jennifer Farrell, photo: Cole Geddy

Jennifer Farrell is Curator of Exhibitions and Contemporary Art at the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia. She was previously the Florence B. Selden Assistant Curator in the Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Yale University Art Gallery. She has a Ph.D. from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where she wrote her dissertation on the early work of Daniel Buren; she received her B.A. from Smith College, Northampton, MA. Farrell has lectured and taught extensively at museums (such as the Yale University Art Gallery, the Museum of Modern Art, the Morgan Library, and the Bruce Museum) and universities (including New York University, the School of Visual Arts, the American University of Paris, and the College of New Rochelle). She was a Helena

Rubinstein Curatorial Fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where she co-curated the exhibition *Empire/State: Artists Engaging Globalization* and wrote for the accompanying exhibition catalogue. She has also written essays and reviews for numerous art journals and publications.

Thomas Crow is an American art historian and critic best known for his influential writing on the role of art in modern society and culture. He has held a number teaching positions, and is currently the Rosalie Solow Professor of Modern Art at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. From 2000 to 2007, he served as director of the Getty Research Institute. **Serge Guilbaut** is Professor Emeritus at the University of British Columbia's Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory. His specialty is postwar American and French history, including the history of post-war Franco-American relations as they relate to art. **Jan Howard** is Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design. Since 2002, she has also served as the Museum's Curatorial Chair. Curator, writer, painter, and teacher **Robert Storr** is Dean of the Yale School of Art. Previously, he was the Rosalie Solow Professor of Modern Art at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and Senior Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art. **Judith Tannenbaum** has organized numerous exhibitions focusing on painting, photography, sculptural installations, and interdisciplinary work. In 2000, she became the first Richard Brown Baker Curator of Contemporary Art at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design.

Nominations for the 2013 Sotheby's Prize for a Distinguished Publication on the History of Collecting were requested from a range of art world specialists, with the goal of recognizing works of scholarly excellence that contribute to this field of research. Volumes were eligible if published in the last ten years and focused on collecting in any category of the fine and decorative arts, Western or non-Western, from Colonial times to the present. Judging criteria included originality of research, contributions to the study of the history of art and culture, and whether the book sets the activity of art collecting within a broader cultural, social, economic, or political context. **For information and inquiries regarding the prize, please contact center@frick.org.**

ABOUT SOTHEBY'S

Sotheby's is a global company that engages in art auction, private sales, and art-related financing activities. The company operates in forty countries, with principal salesrooms located in New York, London, Hong Kong, and Paris. Sotheby's also regularly conducts auctions in six other salesrooms around the world.

ABOUT THE FRICK COLLECTION & THE FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY

Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919), the coke and steel industrialist, philanthropist, and art collector, left his New York residence and remarkable collection of Western paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts to the public “for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a gallery of art, [and] of encouraging and developing the study of fine arts and of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects.” Designed and built for Mr. Frick in 1913–14 by

Thomas Hastings of Carrère and Hastings, the mansion provides a grand domestic setting reminiscent of the noble houses of Europe for the masterworks from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century that it contains. Artists represented include Antico, Bellini, Constable, Corot, Fragonard, Gainsborough, Goya, El Greco, Holbein, Houdon, Ingres, Manet, Monet, Rembrandt, Renoir, Riccio, Titian, Turner, Velázquez, Vermeer, and Whistler. Mr. Frick's superb examples of French eighteenth-century and Italian Renaissance furniture, Sèvres porcelain, and Limoges enamels bring a special ambiance to the galleries, while the interior and exterior gardens and the amenities created since the founder's time in the 1930s and 1970s contribute to the serenity of the visitor's experience.

The Frick Collection also operates the Frick Art Reference Library, founded by Henry Clay Frick's daughter, Helen Clay Frick and located in an adjoining building at 10 East 71st Street. Helen Frick vowed to provide a growing public of art researchers with resources as valuable to them as her father's art collection came to be to the world's art lovers as one of the world's most treasured house museums. The mission of the library was, and remains, to make available to a broad community of researchers materials for the study of art in the Western tradition from the fourth to the mid-twentieth century. With its emphasis on object-oriented research, the library amassed a photo archive that now boasts documented images of more than one million, in many cases still unpublished, works of art. Complementing this are the Library's nearly 300,000 books, periodicals, electronic resources, and annotated auction and exhibition catalogues. The collection is unrivaled in the United States, making it one of the world's most valued art research centers and the most comprehensive resource on the history of collecting and patronage. Today, scholars know that the library's collections afford them unique combinations of images and bibliographic materials that bear witness to specific moments of creation and transfer of ownership, so essential to documenting individual works of art and the impulses of collectors.

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone (Collection): 212.288.0700; **General Information Phone (Library):** 212.288.8700

Web site: www.frick.org; **E-mail:** info@frick.org

Where (Collection): 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue; **Where (Library):** 10 East 71st Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues
Hours (Collection) open six days a week: 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11am to 5pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11am to 5pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Hours (Library): 10:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, and 9:30am to 1:00pm Saturdays. Closed Sundays, Holiday weekends, Saturdays in June and July, the month of August.

Admission (Collection): \$20; senior citizens \$15; students \$10; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11am to 1pm (timed tickets are required for the fall/winter exhibition *Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Hals: Masterpieces of Dutch Painting from the Mauritshuis*. Consult the website for further information.

Admission (Library): use of the Library is free

PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection.

Subway: #6 local (on Lexington Avenue) to 68th Street station; **Bus:** M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street; crosstown M72 stopping eastbound on Madison at 70th Street or westbound on Fifth Avenue at 72nd Street or 69th Street

Collection Tour Information: included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection, provided by Acoustiguide. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

Museum Shop: the shop is open the same days as the Museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

Group Visits to the Collection: Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

Public Programs: A calendar of events is published regularly and is available upon request.

#223 November 1, 2013

For further press information, please contact the Media Relations & Marketing Office

Media Relations Phone:

212.547.6844; General Phone:

212.288.0700

Fax:

212.628.4417; E-mail address:

Mediarelations@frick.org