

HISTORY

Since Contemporary Forum was founded, our members have worked energetically to build the Museum's collection of modern and contemporary art. What follows is a listing of the most important contributions made by CF to the modern and contemporary collection. Many of these works of art were purchased in full by CF; others were purchased in part by CF or its members; and still others were contributions from personal collections.

1979

Bud and Bobbie Haas, early members of the Forum and generous contributors to the Museum, donated **Robert Irwin's, *Untitled***, 1969, a work in acrylic paint on cast acrylic.

1983

Donation by Howard and Jean Lipman of a sculpture by **Donald Judd, *Untitled*** (DSS 68), 1965, a work done in lacquer and enamel paint on aluminum. Unfortunately, the work was slightly damaged, and had to be put into storage. The Judd Foundation would not agree until recently to allow its restoration. The Lipmans were trustees at the Whitney Museum of American Art and Phoenix Art Museum, and they donated several sculptures to us, including the Judd. In the recent words of Brady Roberts, former Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, this is "an important Judd progression. . . [that] typifies Judd's specific objects -- industrially fabricated sculpture composed with rational, mathematical formulas that have no representational or symbolic content." The work has been restored and is now on display in the Ellen and Howard C. Katz Wing for Modern art.

1985

Bruce Kurtz joins Phoenix Art Museum as the Curator of our collection. Carol Smith, CF newsletter editor, said in her column, "We cannot afford to purchase much at the moment, so Mr. Kurtz feels that we should use our resources to emphasize Program, while still encouraging donations." At the time, CF was in its fourth year, and Diane Cummings (now Halle, and later president of the Board of Trustees) was CF president.

1986

CF donates **Gregory Amenoff's, *Sirocco*** (1985), an oil on canvas.

1987

The Museum purchases **James Turrell's, *Crater Site Plan with Major Alignments*** (1996), a photo emulsion on wax and mylar with ink, paint and wax pastels.

Acquisition of **Harmony Hammond's, *Camposanto I*** (1986), an oil on canvas, with funds from CF.

1988

The Lipmans show their generosity again, donating **Lee Bontecou's, *Untitled*** (1988), a work in welded steel and canvas.

1989

This year saw the first investment of major funds by CF for ***Dodge City*** (1961), by **Billy Al Bengston**. Funds were provided for this oil lacquer on masonite work by CF, Sette Publishing Company, the National Endowment for the Arts and other purchase funds.

1991

Bud and Bobbie Haas donate again, this time **Mark Rothko's, *Untitled (Blue and Green)***(1968) a work in oil on paper mounted on canvas.

That year's dinner auction yielded \$13,600 -- not a lot by the standards of later events, but enough to make the final payment that established the \$50,000 Cummings Acquisition Endowment Fund. The event was a spectacular night on the tennis court at the home of Gai and Buzz Williams. Artists created tablecloth and napkin art. CF followed this "theme" approach to the dinner auctions for several years, asking Valley artists to create works suited to the theme of the evening.

1992

Under the leadership of Curator Bruce Kurtz, the Forum made or assisted with several acquisitions in 1992:

Robert Arneson, *Stream-a-Head*, (1974) Terra cotta glazed ceramic. Gift of Mr. Marvin Small, by exchange, the National Endowment for the Arts, Contemporary Forum, G. Peter and Regina Bidstrup, and others.

Ed Ruscha, *High Speed Gardening*, (1961) Oil on canvas. Gift of Mr. Marvin Small by exchange, and others. Bruce Kurtz said, "Along with the Bay Area Figurative artists, these three [Ruscha, Naumann and Baldessari] were among the first California contemporary artists to produce work of international significance, leading to the establishment of Los Angeles as the second most important contemporary art center in the world (next to New York)." This purchase was not participated in by CF.

Bruce Kurtz was working on building a body of contemporary art produced in the Western U.S. *

Also added that year: **Mayme Kratz's *Garden House #6*** and **Robert Adams' *Two Schools of Thought***, "thanks to the generosity of Contemporary Forum members Bill Hardin and Michael Johns."

In the Spring of 1992, Contemporary Forum matched funds donated by the Nathan Cummings Foundation, in two funds. The funds were started in 1988, with \$25,000 in

each from the Foundation. In 1992, CF matched the money donated for the Artists' Materials Fund Endowment, which that year reached \$56,110. We also reached the \$25,000 needed to endow the Acquisition's fund.

1993

Acquisition of **Deborah Butterfield's *Ponder***, (1981), a wood, wire and steel sculpture. It was a gift of Dr. and Mrs. Jay Cooper and with additional funds provided by Mr. David Kluger, Mr. and Mrs. Orme Lewis, Mr. Karl Lilienfield, Mr. and Mrs. S. Kootz, Mr. and Mrs. H. Luce, and Mr. and Mrs. R. Miller, by exchange. It has become one of the most beloved and popular objects in our collection.

1994

CF visited the Rodin Crater, where James Turrell gave them a tour of his work, scheduled to be completed by the year 2000!

1995

Modern and Contemporary Curator David Rubin oversaw the additions of: **George Herms, *Kethor***, (1965-81). Assemblage; **Jay DeFeo, *Untitled***, (1972-73). **Photocollage and tape**; **Wally Hedrick, *Blank Cartridge Pistol***, (1974). **Ink on canvas**; **Wallace Berman, *Untitled (Griffin)***, (1965). Verifax collage. . .all with funds provided by CF.

David Rubin encouraged our purchase of these works to fill out our collection of Bay Area Figurative School of Art and the Southern California Light-and-Space genre. Works of this type were at the time being featured in a retrospective at the Whitney Museum of Contemporary Art and SFMOMA.

1996

The Museum acquires **Hans Burkhardt's, *Lime Pit***, (1990), an oil and assemblage on canvas. Purchased with funds provided by Contemporary Forum, this work is a memorial to those who died during the Persian Gulf War.

CF also purchased **Mr. Kurtz**, in honor of Bruce Kurtz, by Texas artist **Vernon Fisher**, with funds provided by CF and a large group of appreciative CF members.

1997

This year saw the addition of a number of purchases and donations:

Nancy Dwyer, *Wall of Desire (Desire, Despair, Destroy, Destiny)*, (1996). Glass. Museum purchase with funds provided by CF.

Petah Coyne, *Untitled #789*, (1995). Mixed media, including chicken wire, ribbons and candle wax. According to the artist, the work alludes metaphorically to "the complexity, will, strength, and endurance of the female spirit." She says it was inspired, in part, by the

character from Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Miss Havesham.

Carol Hepper, *Lariat* -- approved by the Board in December of 1996.

Faith Ringgold, *Bitter Nest Series, Part I: Love in the Schoolyard*, 1988. Acrylic on canvas, printed, tie-dyed and pieced fabric. Featured in David Rubin's *Old Glory: The American Flag in Contemporary Art* exhibition. Purchased with funds from CF, Stanley and Mikki Weithorn and a Consortium of Black Organizations and Others for the Arts; gift of Dr. and Mrs. Lorenz Anderman, Mr. and Mrs. David K. Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Neuberger by exchange. This was the first story-quilt painting in a five-part series, motivated by the artist's relationship with her mother and based on a performance art work from 1985. The work depicts generational conflict within a black middle class family, from 1915 to the 1950s.

1998

Jay and Joyce Cooper, whose collection focused on the art of the SF Bay area, donated a work by **Joan Brown, *Girl with Green Negligee*** (1971). Brown was a student of Richard Diebenkorn at the San Francisco Art Institute, one of the younger members of the Bay Area Figurative School.

Upon the death of her husband Bud, Bobbie Haas donated the work of **Jean Dubuffet, *Chale Epaulier/Chapeau au Plume (Shawl/Plumed Hat)*** (1972), in his memory. Bud had been a Museum Trustee, a docent and member of the Museum collection committee, and Bobbie is currently a member of CF. The Dubuffet was Bud's favorite work in their collection.

Also donated that year: **Harry Fritzius, *Untitled***, (1987). Oil on canvas with assemblage. Gift of Howard and Dilys Popper. One of the artists of the Beat generation. This piece mimics the writing of William Burroughs, who created cut-up passages of text, out of sequence.

Michael Cajero, *Defend Yourself, Cabron*, (1995). Gift wrap and aluminum wire. Gift of Betsy and Bruce Stodola. Cabron's work is made of unconventional materials such as masking tape and gift wrap, structured around wire armatures.

Pat Steir, *Turbulent Mountain Waterfall*, (1991). Oil on canvas. Funds provided by CF.

Raymond Saunders, *Black Men, Black Male, Made in the U.S.A.*, (1994). Mixed media on wood and objects.

Ed Moses, *Glow #11*, ----- . Acrylic on mylar.

But the triumph of the year was the acquisition of **Louise Nevelson's *Royal Tide V*** (1960), purchased entirely with funds provided by CF. This was the first really major purchase (with many more to follow) with proceeds of the annual dinner auction, which by then had become a major fundraiser, garnering over \$100,000 per year.

2002

After the arrival of Brady Roberts as the Curator of Modern and Contemporary art, the mission of Museum shifted, directing Curators to purchase one *major* work per year to add to the collection. Fortunately, the Forum was now raising significant amounts through its fundraising activities. And we were attracting members who took it as *their* mission to donate significant works to the Contemporary collection as well.

The first very generous gift came from Howard and Jan Hendler. It was **Cornelia Parker's, *Mass (Colder, Darker Matter)*** (1997). This large, dramatic work in charcoal, wire and string became an immediate favorite of CF members and an example for others, whose gifts would follow.

That year also, CF purchased **Thomas Struth's, *Pergamon Museum I, Berlin*** (2001), along with funds provided by the Levitt family, in honor of Norman and Betty Levitt. It was our first acquisition in the realm of monumental photography, at 6.5' x 8'. The large color print recalls European history paintings done in a contemporary medium. It is a photo of the very room visited by CF members on their trip to Berlin.

2003

A group of CF members (Elaine and Sidney Cohen, Bobbie Haas, Richard Kinsler, Patricia Pallas, Dilys and Howard Popper, Beth and Robert Solem, Faith Sussman and Rick Corton) and CF provided funds for the purchase of another large photographic work. We acquired **James Casebere's *Nevisian Underground #1*** (2003).

That year, CF initiated our first *ArtPick*, an evening where CF members are allowed to choose among five or six works selected by the Curator, with the winning work being purchased with the proceeds of the event.

The first work so chosen was **Gregory Crewdson's *Untitled, (House in the Road)*** (2002), another monumental photographic work. It is from Crewdson's *Twilight* series, and explores, quoting Brady Roberts, "the intersection of day and night, the conscious and the sub-conscious realms." Crewdson spends weeks creating elaborate sets that create these monumental photographs.

As a side effect of *ArtPick 2003*, CF also acquired **Tacita Dean's, *Russian Ending*** (2001); **Brian Alfred's *Lobby*** (2001), with funds provided by CF members Susan and Eliot Black; and four color lithographs by Agnes Martin, given in part by **Eric Jungermann**.

2004

Members voted for and bought **Michal Rovner's, *Zalach B*** (2004), and again saw the purchase of one of the evening's contenders by an anonymous donor, **Carsten Nicolai's *Static 3*** (2004) a work in mixed media.

2005

Jan and Howard Hendler purchased a major work for Phoenix Art Museum in 2005, **Yayoi Kusama's** work in light, *You Who Are Being Obliterated in the Dancing Swarm of Fireflies* (2005). It has proved to be one of the most popular works ever put on display in the Museum, word of mouth having spread about the exciting experience it provides visitors.

Joe and Mary Beth Cherskov donated funds for the purchase of **Josiah McElheny's** *Extended Model for Total Reflective Abstraction*.

And, in conjunction with ArtPick 2005, the Museum acquired a work by **Donald Judd**, *Untitled* (1988), a suite of 10 woodcut prints, as a partial gift from anonymous donors.

2006

As a result of *ArtPick 2005*, **Sol LeWitt's** *Sphere Lit From the Top* (2005). This beautiful graphite wall drawing was initially constructed in the Great Hall, and now is on permanent display in the Katz Wing.

And as a result of ArtPick 2006, Jun Kaneko's ceramic monolithic Dango was purchased.

In addition to the works listed above, CF is proud of its record of promoting the cause of modern and contemporary art at the Museum and in the Valley. Among our contributions are funding of the regional Triennial exhibitions held at the Museum; funding of the Matrix series showcasing Arizona artists; origination of the Scult Studio Art Scholarship, funded by CF Board members Arlene and Mort Scult since 1996; annual Artists Grants awards, begun with funding from the Nathan Cummings Foundation; the first Mid-Career artist award presented in 2006; the Acquisitions Endowment, also started with funds from the Cummings Foundation; travel to cities all over the US, plus London, Berlin, Spain and Italy; lectures by renowned artists and scholars; studio visits; architectural and home tours; gallery openings; the Off the Wall children's art project; and much more.

Contemporary Forum dedicates the launching of this new Web site (January 2007) to the phenomenal success of Phoenix Art Museum, and to its Director, James K. Ballinger, for having reached this pinnacle in the Museum's history. In November 2006, we celebrated the completion of the Ellen and Howard C. Katz Wing for Modern Art, the opening of the huge new Heather and Michael Greenbaum indoor and outdoor lobby, and the first viewing of the Jacquie and Bennett Dorrance Sculpture Garden. This wonderful new building provides 25,000 square feet for the display of modern, contemporary, and Latin American art, as well as the Fashion Design collection.

With the inspiration provided by its beautiful new space, Contemporary Forum looks forward to many years of energetic activity on behalf of Phoenix Art Museum. We are proud of the contributions we have recapped here, and we hope to see a list twice as long compiled during the next 25 years! *Congratulations* from all of us to all of those who worked so hard on the capital campaign and the new building, and to those whose generosity has made all of this possible.

*In the early years of CF's existence, the mission of the Museum with respect to contemporary art was stated in these words by the Museum's Board of Trustees: *The contemporary art collection of Phoenix Art Museum centers on art produced in the United States between 1960 and the present, with an established and continuing emphasis on art produced in the western United States. Works by artists of the West Coast, particularly the urban centers of California, have and will continue to figure prominently in the Museum's collecting. The work of Arizona artists, enthusiastically collected in the past, will continue to be an important are of active collecting. -- 1993*

Kathy Shipe 2006