THE JOYS AND ADVENTURES IN COLLECTING AND GIVING ART

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President Emerita of the Museum of Modern Art,
collector and philanthropist

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I am so impressed by the mission of the Fundación Arte y Mecenazgo, and I am glad to share my ideas about collecting, and about the public benefits that it can make possible. The commitment of my life as a collector has been to celebrate and preserve and to share the work of artists.

I'd like to begin by showing a piece I own, one of my favorites, a mirror by Antoni Gaudí from 1910 [carved guilded frame, 48 x 64 inches] that I bought years ago from the wonderful dealer Allan Stone. It came from the Casa Milà here in Barcelona. I bought it in 1986. By then, I had already been collecting art for about twenty years.

My interest in collecting art began very early. As a girl, I loved the art at home, much of it scenes of the American West and paintings by the Spanish artist Joaquín Sorolla, which my father collected. My brother showed some of those works at the Spanish Institute on Park Avenue when they had a show of his collection about twelve years ago. I spent a lot of time in the marvellous Cleveland Museum of Art – in its programmes, its Saturday classes. I loved the Egyptians, the Renaissance, the armour, and recall a memorable Van Gogh show I attended with my mother, who was very interested in music. She was a pianist and loved the opera. We used to sort and roll socks, because there were six of us in the family, while she talked to me about the libretto of the opera we were going to see when the Met came to Cleveland. I loved it all.

My family is all very connected with art. My brother Graham is an architect and a contemporary art collector; my brother Gordon, who is blind, is an artist. My sister collects important Asian art, some of which she has given to the newly renovated Berkeley Art Museum in California. My brother Geoff is president of the Gund Foundation, which supports the arts in Ohio. My late brother George was best known for his collection of Japanese art and calligraphy, now at the Cleveland Museum of Art. This work by Bokkei Saiyo is one of George's pieces [*Fish-Basket Kannon,* Japan. Muromachi period, late 15th Century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 118.5 x 36 cm].

Gordon Gund, *Blue Heron ("Big Cranky")*, 2015.
Painted bronze, 34 inches high, 39 inches deep, wing span of 72 inches
Photo courtesy Agnes Gund

Here is an example of a work by my brother Gordon, a sculpture of a blue heron. Gordon, who is blind, feels the object – in this case a taxidermied bird from a friend – and then sculpts the object. It's usually cast in bronze.

At boarding school, I was greatly influenced by an art teacher, Miss MacLennan, who would often send me a postcard from small museums she visited like the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, the Frick Collection, the Morgan Library and Museum, or the Phillips Collection, which is a little more contemporary. She would say, "You must come see this work of art." That meant a lot to me. Years later, I served on the board of the Frick and am now on the Morgan board.

I began serious collecting in the late 1960s. My earliest interest was in prints, drawings, even sketches and notebooks. For me, drawings capture the very personalities of their makers, in immediate and intimate ways – sometimes more so than more formalized work. Drawings are still at the heart of my collecting. These are examples of the earlier works I collected.

This is a drawing by Arshile Gorky [*Apple Orchard*, 1943–46. Pastel on paper, 42 x 52 inches]. It's a very joyous picture. As many of you may know, Gorky had a very agonized life and most of his work isn't as joyous as this work.

This is Mark Rothko [*Untitled*, 1941. Watercolor on paper, 21 x 15 inches] in his surreal period before he did the more well-known works.

Agnes Martin [*Story*, 1960. Ink on paper, 8 x 8 inches], who was an artist who lived in Taos, New Mexico, is someone I had a chance to meet and get to know somewhat. I think she has done some beautiful work, and the newly renovated San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has a spectacular room of Martin paintings.

At the same time I also collected paintings. An example here is *Number 15* [1953. Oil on canvas, 54 x 72 inches] by Bradley Walker Tomlin.

This is one of the first in my collection [Willem de Kooning, *In the Time of Fire*, 1956. Oil and enamel on canvas, 59 1/4 x 79 inches].

A man called Ben Heller begged Jasper Johns to create this wonderful map for his wife [*Map*, 1963. Encaustic and collage on canvas, 60 x 93 inches]. Jasper responded, "I don't do commissions", but finally he gave in because Heller said his wife was very sick in the hospital and this was what she wanted most. So, this is signed Johns '63 Hell. He left the "er" off Heller because he said it was hell to paint a piece on commission.

This is a Franz Kline I purchased early on [*Painting Number One*, 1954. Oil on canvas, 28 x 20 inches].

And this is the first major work that I purchased, a maquette of a Henry Moore sculpture [*Three Way Archer*, 1964. Bronze, with base, 35 x 22 x 35 inches (given to the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1970)], which was for a larger piece in front of Toronto City Hall. This maquette is now in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art because my children when they were younger used to get on it and ride it, and I thought that wasn't the best thing for this work.

Years ago, as a beginning collector, I was offered the chance to purchase a major private collection. I did buy a few pieces, but I failed to acquire this collection. At the time, I regretted the failure. It had some of the best-known Jackson Pollock works in the world, including *Echo*, which we have now at the Museum of Modern Art. I thought at the time it was a shame because I was reminded by the person who led me to be able to purchase it that these works were really beyond belief and I should own them. But in fact, as I explored art more and more, I realised how much it's important to build a personal collection, one that mirrors individual interests and sensitivities. I believe in the power of a personal vision in collecting, and I think some of the most prominent collectors in the field have that vision.

Luckily, I had some wonderful mentors who helped me along the way. They were members of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, which I joined in 1967. Emily Tremaine, Katherine White, along with many other members whom I have known over the years, shared with me their time and knowledge of contemporary art. My collection had been a constant source of joy, insight and inspiration for me, all the more so because these artworks are so important to me personally, and because so many art professionals, colleagues and artists have been part of the collecting process.

I want to specifically talk about the collection as a whole, which contains about two thousend works. Very simply, I collect post-war contemporary works, mostly by living American artists. Here are some examples of work that I own and enjoy. Many are by artists that are well known – but they were less known when I acquired them [Brice Marden, *Epitaph Painting 2*, 1996–97. Oil on linen, 94 x 93 1/2 inches].

This, as you can see, is a Robert Rauschenberg piece [*Rhyme*, 1956. Mixed media on canvas, 122.6 x 104.5 cm]. I served on his foundation board and we became very close before he died. I visited him often in Florida, where there is now a residency program in his name.

This is Richard Artschwager [*Sailors*, 1964. Acrylic on Celotex with Formica frame, 20 x 26 x 8 5/8 inches] who was one of the most interesting artists to listen to. He could talk very eloquently about his art and why he did it.

This is a sculpture by Louise Bourgeois called *Eye to Eye* [1968–70. White marble, 32 x 28 x 28 inches]. She said when she came over from France and married an American art historian that she was very lonely, so she grouped these figures together who represented her friends in France before she came.

Lee Bontecou has done many strong works, including one in the State Theater in New York. If you have visited that, you will have seen a piece of work that is very different from this drawing of hers [*Sea Form*, 1987. Paint on primed plastic paper, 11 1/2 x 10 3/8 inches], because later she used images of the sea, fish and flowers that were very different from her original work.

[Marcel Broodthaers, *Moules sauce blanche*, 1967. Oil and shellac on mussel shells in painted metal casserole, 19 1/2 x 15 1/2 x 13 inches] This mussel pot is something that you may see soon. It will appear in the Marcel Broodthaers show that opens at the Museo Reina Sofía on 4 October.

In this work by Joseph Cornell [*Medici Princess*, 1948. Construction, 17 5/8 x 11 1/8 x 4 3/8 inches] you see an image of a Medici princess in the round room where there are portraits by different artists at the Uffizi that many of you know. People always send me a postcard of this piece because they have seen it in the Cornell.

This is by Sol LeWitt [*21A*, 1989. Painted wood, 100 x 33 5/8 x 14 3/4 inches], who was not only a great artist but collected works of art by trading with other artists, so he is somebody that is very well beloved by other artists. You have a beautiful piece here at CaixaForum by Sol LeWitt [*Spalt. Wall Drawing #1011*, 2001. Acrylic paint on wall] that we just visited today, and I was very excited to see it.

I choose works of art that I respond to personally. I am conscious about the lasting merit of the works I acquire. I own works that capture me immediately when I see them, works that I want to live with. An example here is *Yellow Curve,* 1994 [Oil on canvas, 86 x 72 inches], by Ellsworth Kelly, an artist whose talent has always moved me – his work is direct and dynamic.

This is another Kelly work [*Study for Spectrum*, 1953. Collage on paper, 28 3/4 x 27 3/4 inches], a drawing made of tissue paper for a larger work that was given to the Museum of Modern Art by Irving Blum in 1999.

And here are Kelly's *Orange Green* [1964. Oil on canvas, 67 x 50 inches] and *Black and White* [1977. Oil on canvas, two joined panels, 106 x 144 inches], which was in the hallway of our house. When I was away one time, my daughter had friends over and the piece was damaged. Somebody had run into it and made a dent. Ellsworth very sweetly and nicely repaired it for us.

This is a Kelly piece we have on the farm we own in Connecticut [*Curve XII*, 1974/1979. Cor-Ten or weathering steel, 120 x 13 1/2 x 3/4 inches; base: 3/4 x 10 x 10 inches]. Once I did a calendar of all the works we have at the farm. I called Ellsworth and said, "How did you like the calendar?" And he said, "Well, I didn't like it as much as I would have if you'd used as many pictures of my piece as you did of the Richard Serra."

Respect for artists like Ellsworth has characterised my collecting. I have had important relationships with art scholars and curators, and I have worked with some amazing and committed art dealers. But for me, some of the most intense learning has come from my encounters with the artists themselves.

This is a piece that's very dear to me. It's an early work by Roy [Lichtenstein. *Masterpiece*, 1962. Oil and magna on canvas, 52 x 52 inches], who was a friend for many years as well as a supporter and trustee of Studio in a School, which I will talk about in more detail a little later. Dorothy, Roy's wonderful wife, is a close friend who also serves as a trustee of Studio in a School. Recently, this painting went on loan from my dining room to a major retrospective of Roy's work, and was gone for almost two years. We missed it enormously because, as you can see, it really belongs to New York.

The collection includes work in all genres and in all materials: paintings and sculptures; objects, often usable objects, like furniture; collages and drawings; photographs; fabric, glass, wood and plastic pieces; and works made of found materials. I find it difficult to segregate fine art from folk art, or from design or from popular or street art. When a work is stunning, and sincere, and original, the material or the label or school of art barely matters, I think.

Though I have seldom commissioned art, I have had much pleasure from a commission by the artist Claes Oldenburg [*Standing Mitt with Ball*, 1973. Steel and lead mitt, cypress wood ball. Mitt: 12 x 8 x 5 feet; ball: 3 feet diameter], who I came to know and really like so well. This stood initially in our garden in Greenwich, Connecticut, and has moved to several different places over the years. It is currently at the Cleveland Museum of Art in celebration of their centennial year.

From left to right: installation view of the works *21A* (1989) by Sol LeWitt and *Ghost, Ghost II* (2009) by Rachel Whiteread at Agnes Gund's residence in New York. Photo by Garrett Ewald. Courtesy Agnes Gund

From left to right: installation view of the works *Cloudy.presentdistance* (2015) by Paula Crown and *Untitled (Rome)* (1961) by Cy Twombly at Agnes Gund's residence in New York.
Photo by Javier Bosques-Meléndez. Courtesy Agnes Gund

This is a piece by Richard Serra at the Connecticut farm [*Iron Mountain Run*, 2002. Weatherproof steel, seven plates, 15 feet x 15 feet x 3 inches each]. It's very hard to see from this angle, but it comprises seven panels sloping down a meadow. The farm cows used to use it in the summer as a sort of shield from the wind and the sun. This piece has a life of its own, I think.

Finally, we commissioned a piece by the artist Paula Crown [*Cloudy. presentdistance*, 2015. Laser etched mirrored glass, 118 x 169 1/3 x 3/8 inches], who is also a trustee at the Museum of Modern Art, and she has a show up now at Marlborough. This has been a delight for us to have. It changes in all kinds of weather and light.

Many works that I choose for the collection have a narrative quality. They don't necessarily tell a specific story, although that Lichtenstein you saw certainly does! But often there is a life, a tale, implicit in a work that makes it all the more significant.

Here, for instance, is a Jasper Johns painting [*Untitled*, 1992-95. Oil on canvas, 78 x 118 inches] that references places, objects and experiences that mean a lot to Jasper. You can see the actual geography of life in the marks and colors, from living with his grandfather as shown in the floor plan here to his studio life in New York City.

Here are other works that also carry stories [Neil Jenney, *Cat and Dog*, 1970. Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 111 inches; Mark Rothko, *Two Greens with Red Stripe*, 1964. Oil on canvas, 93 x 69 inches; and Louise Bourgeois, *Femme maison*, c. 1945–47. Oil and ink on canvas, 36 x 14 inches].

This Louise Bourgeois is one of the triptych *Femme maison*. This again is all about her moving as a woman to another country. As many of you may know, she really was very upset by her father having an affair with her nanny, and she created a lot of artwork about that very happening in her life.

This is a Cy Twombly piece that is narrative [*Untitled (Rome)*, 1961. Oil, crayon, and graphite on canvas, 49 1/2 x 57 1/4 inches]. Cy, as many of you know, lived in Italy. If any of you have read the book by Sally Mann, it's a wonderful biography. She also lived in Lexington, Virginia, where Cy grew up and took many pictures of his studio now showing at Gagosian Gallery in New York City.

This is a drawing by Roy Lichtenstein [*Study for Artist's Studio with Model*, 1974. Pencil, colored pencils, and paper collage on paper, sheet: 19 1/2 x 24 1/4 inches], again very autobiographical.

Installation view of a group of works at Agnes Gund's residence in Nueva York.
From left to right:
Jackie Winsor, *Inset Wall Piece with Stepped Black Interior*, 1988–89.
Cement and pigment, 19 x 19 x 6 1/4 inches.
Dorothea Rockburne, *Egyptian Painting, Seti*, 1980.
Contepencil, oil on gessoed linen, glue, 95 x 51 1/4 inches.
Louise Bourgeois, *Pillar*, 1949–50. Painted wood, 64 1/2 x 3 5/8 x 2 3/8 inches.
Above: Bryan Hunt, *Here and There*, 1990.
Synthetic fiber over spruce and balsa, 8 3/4 x 63 x 7 1/8 inches.
On floor: Djenne, Mali Mythical Animal, c. 1500 A.D. Terracotta, 24 inches high.
Photo by Garret Ewald. Courtesy Agnes Gund

This is a piece by James Rosenquist [*Sheer Line*, 1977. Oil on canvas, 81 x 147 inches], another person who uses objects to sort of explain what he means in a work of art.

This is a Rosenquist piece that resides at the Museum of Modern Art [*F-111*, 1964–65. Oil on canvas with aluminum, twenty-three sections, 10 x 86 feet]. It's very large and a major masterpiece of the Museum.

As a collector, I look for light and beauty. At one time, I wanted to own old master drawings, but I realised that I couldn't live in the darkness that such fragile works require. I most often choose works that are colourful, cleanly shaped, illuminating – works that are rich in tones and texture, clear to the eye, with immediate visual impact.

Here are examples of that. These are pieces by Rachel Whiteread, one of the young British artists coined "the YBAs." She is a wonderfully inventive artist. The piece *Ghost, Ghost II* [2009. Polyurethane (fourteen parts), 30 3/8 x 33 1/2 x 24 5/8 inches] is in our collection, and *Cabin* [2016. Concrete cast from a New England-style shed] is an installation on a hill on Governors Island that we helped support.

As a collector, I am always aware of how the works resonate with each other when I hang art. I mix works, not by type or school or date, or by a chapter in a book, but by their mutuality as they share spaces and places. Sometimes art is in locations where it echoes another piece. Sometimes they challenge each other. Sometimes they have conversations that are truly surprising and unexpected. Here is an example of such a group.

This is the doorway to the library, where the Paula Crown installation is located. From the left you have the Jackie Winsor [*Inset Wall Piece with Stepped Black Interior*, 1988-89], coming up to the Djenne Mythical Animal from Mali [c. 1500 A.D], to the Dorothea Rockburne painting [*Egyptian Painting, Seti*, 1980], to the Louise Bourgeois *Pillar* [1949–50], and then to Bryan Hunt's airship [*Here and There*, 1990]. Bryan had seen a postcard of a dirigible landing at the Empire State building and he thought it would be fun to mimic that with these pieces.

The Djenne animal was a work I acquired with my former husband Daniel Shapiro, who amassed works of Chinese Shang bronzes and African terracotta antiquities from Mali, Nigeria. These works complement the contemporary work so beautifully and give me a new appreciation for my own art. They really have had an influence on what I like.

Interestingly, three of these pieces are by women. In fact, I have a particular commitment to women artists. Linda Nochlin, a scholar and friend, wrote a famous essay 40 years ago titled "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" The article shocked us into realizing that women had been ignored, even disallowed, in art. Nochlin wrote that our institutions and our educations, our very expectations, had long privileged male artists and ignored women. Today the situation has changed notably, although not thoroughly. In 2013, a follow-up study was titled not "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" but "Who Are the Great Women Artists?" But even today, we know that women are still exhibited less, purchased less, and purchased for less money than their male counterparts. I have collected women artists and helped their careers for several years.

This Jackie Winsor piece called *Burnt Piece* [1977–78. Cement, burnt wood, wire, 36 x 36 x 36 inches] had a whole fire started around it. It was wood that was put over cement and turned out this way. It's an absolutely beautiful piece that I wish I hadn't given away, but it weighs so much that I could never have it in my apartment because it would have gone through the floor.

Alice Aycock had this wonderful show of her work along Park Avenue, a series of seven sculptures ranging in size from 12 to 27 feet in height, 18 to 70 feet in length. The aluminum and fiberglass works in this temporary installation formed an arresting presence in the heart of midtown Manhattan. *Park Avenue Paper Chase* was thought to be, by many people, one of the most important shows they've had of sculpture on Park Avenue. I have some smaller works by her in the collection.

This is by an artist, Mary Miss, I knew when she was realizing her installation [*Battery Park Landfill*, 1973], a temporary environmental sculpture in New York, consisting of five elements spaced 50 feet apart. In this land work, in the middle of each billboard-like panel a bit of an empty circle is diminished, so that the sculpture visualizes something like a column of air being slowly driven into the ground. Time is a necessary element of the experience of this piece.

This is a sculpture by Lynda Benglis [*Lagniappe II Glitter*, 1979. Cast paper, pigment, paint, glitter, 37 x 11 x 8 inches], who is an artist who has had a varied career starting with a nude photograph that was an advertisement in a magazine promoting her gallery show at the time. It took the art world by storm. She's very much not about that any more.

And finally, here is an Elizabeth Murray work [*Keyhole*, 1982. Oil on canvas, two panels, 99 1/2 x 110 1/2 inches] that has a curious story about it because another

collector, Vera List, was also interested in acquiring it. Vera was a very special collector who did an incredible job in bringing art to students at Brown, MIT and the New School for Social Research.

I also have a special interest in minority artists. Many of them are now firmly established and admired, and more and more talents are being recognized. This was certainly not true in the recent past, when minority artists in our country were neglected, as women were. The works of these artists often reflect the experiences of minorities in the diverse and changing United States, dramatically or emblematically. The work is often inescapably narrative.

This piece by Kerry James Marshall [*Untitled (Club Scene)*, 2013. Synthetic polymer paint and glitter on unstretched canvas, 119 x 216 inches] belongs to the Museum of Modern Art [Given to the Museum by Mr. and Mrs. Martin Segal in honor of Agnes Gund]. Unfortunately, I don't have any of his work. He has a show now in Chicago and will have one at the Met soon. He's a very important black artist.

This is a work by a man named Martin Puryear [*Deadeye*, 2002. Pine, 58 x 68 x 13 inches] who uses wood especially beautifully in making his pieces.

Here are other examples by Carrie Mae Weems [*Moody Blue Girl*, 1997. Silver print with text on mat, 16 inches x 16 inches] and Lorna Simpson [*Head 2Y*, 2008. Graphite and ink on paper, 11 inches x 8.5 inches].

This is a piece by Glenn Ligon [Double America, 2012. Neon and paint], which I gave to the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.

Finally, this is a piece by Stanley Whitney [*By the Love of Those Unloved*, 2004. Oil on canvas, 54 inches x 54 inches], who had a marvellous show at the Studio Museum in Harlem. The museum's wonderful director, Thelma Golden, has done a lot to forward the art of black artists in particular.

This very popular piece by Kara Walker was located at the Domino Sugar Factory in Brooklyn and was all made of sugar [*Marvelous Sugar Baby from the Domino Sugar Factory, Brooklyn*, 2014. Temporary installation of a massive, sugar-coated, sphinxlike woman, 75.5-feet long, 35.5 feet high, and 26 feet wide]. Kara made other pieces that accompanied it. It was really a big hit. I think more people went to this than have gone to any temporary installation before. This is another Walker work [*Bureau of Refugees, July 18, 'threatened to kill a black man who saw him do it'*, 2007. Cut paper on paper, 24.875 x 19.125 inches].

Collecting is a personal pleasure in so many ways. But I also believe in sharing art, and in ensuring its place in public life. As this Fundación stresses, collectors have opportunities to strengthen public collections, to provide the pleasures and lessons of art to museum goers, to students and scholars and to that increasingly vast public that learns through media and the new technologies. The sharing of art has been one of the purposes of my collecting. Loaning works to museums and to particular exhibitions is a way to share. I do a lot of that, as many of you do, I know. But far beyond loaning, my life as a collector is constantly enriched by my relationships with museums. Many American collectors have created museums of their own – wonderful museums – like The Broad in Los Angeles, Mitchell and Emily Rales' Glenstone in Maryland, the Bass Museum of Art in Miami, the superb Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas and the Neue Galerie in New York, which was established by Ronald Lauder. My intent is to enhance the great public museums in our country – large and small – by making gifts to them of pieces.

When I make gifts, my ideal is to help an institution fill a gap in its collection. I ask certain questions: What does a particular museum need? What does the public need to see? Which individual artists are missing in a particular museum collection? Ideally, when I transfer a work of art to a museum it will fill a need and a space in the institution's holdings. Here are some works that have gone from my collection to museums.

The Museum of Modern Art had no sculpture by Jasper Johns, so I went to Jasper asked if he would let me buy a piece from his own personal collection housed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He said, "What do you mean? That's my collection, but I could make you something. There are a couple of casts of works that I haven't made yet." He loaned me a sculpture of a flashlight and then he did this piece [*Flashlight III*, 1958. Bronze, glass and aluminum paint, 5 1/8 x 8 1/8 x 3 3/4 inches], which I have since given to the Museum of Modern Art.

We gave this piece by Ursula von Rydingsvard [*Bent Lace*, 2014. Bronze, 112 x 69 x 40 inches] in honor of David Rockefeller's 100th birthday to the Museum of Modern Art. Ursula also happens to be a close friend of David because her husband, who is a Nobel Prize winner, works at the Rockefeller University in New York.

These are two works by Sarah Sze, the United States representative to the Venice Biennale. This first piece looks very hard to understand [*Plywood Sunset Leaning (Fragment Series)*, 2015. Acrylic paint, wood, archival prints, ladder, mirror, paper cups, stone, lamp, tools, pen, tape, paint brush, newspaper, 137.99 x 115 x 75 inches]. You really have to see her work in person. I gave that one to the

Cleveland Museum of Art in 2015. I was part of a group of people that gave this other work to the Museum of Modern Art in 2013 [*Triple Point (Pendulum)*, 2013. Salt, water, stone, string, projector, video, pendulum, and other materials, dimensions variable, approximately 150 x 210 x 200 inches]. And this was in the Venice Biennale.

This is a sculpture by Martin Puryear I gave to the Cleveland Museum in 2002 [*Alien Huddle*, 1993–95. Red cedar and pine, unique, 53 x 64 x 53 inches], but I wish I had at home because it is such a beautiful, sensuous piece that I would have loved to have lived with it, but I never had the chance.

This is a Martin Puryear piece [*Untitled*, n.d. Cedar and pine, stained black, 68 x 57 1/2 x 51 1/2 inches] I gave to the Museum of Modern Art. It's a head but has all kinds of resonances besides just being a head.

And finally, this is another Martin Puryear work [*Thicket*, 1990. Basswood and cypress, 67 inches x 62 inches x 17 inches] I gave to the Seattle Museum in 1990, because they wanted a piece by that artist, and he is someone that I had followed and been quite friendly with. He has a piece now in New York's Madison Square Park called *The Big Bling*. It's a fabulous piece.

Another form of patronage has been very important to me: the work of foundations in our country. I have been on several foundation boards, including the Rauschenberg Foundation and the Warhol Foundation. I also maintain a modest foundation of my own to fund activities that advance contemporary art in a variety of ways. The foundation makes grants to artist organizations, arts education initiatives, women's issues, and research and scholarship. Through the foundation, I am aware of experiments in the visual arts, of initiatives that help arts reach the public. For instance, the foundation has supported a long-lived public TV series called ART21 that profiles living artists and their work. It showcases artists from their point of view, rather than having a commentator explain what they do. The artist is speaking about what they do. ART21 also reaches a large national audience with its education initiatives.

The foundation also supports the Socrates Sculpture Park and the Queens Art Museum, which both strive to reach families, especially children. And we support the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, created by Jasper Johns and other artists to help support performance, theatre and dance.

Giving art, and giving funds to the arts, are important. Also important in my view is giving time to the arts. I have been a trustee on many museum boards. I often

From left to right and top to bottom:
Jeff Koons, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Teresita Fernández and Sarah Sze
participating in the Studio in a School program.
Photos (1-3) by Mindy Best. Courtesy Studio in a School

write and speak on arts issues, and on the work of individual artists. I am very proud of creating Studio in a School, which is 40 years old now. It is a unique organization that places artists in public school classrooms and community centers to teach and inspire children who would not otherwise have arts education. Over four decades, approximately 800 Studio artist-instructors have taught nearly 900,000 Pre-K to high school students in New York City. Many artists I know and have works of have come to teach in Studio classrooms.

This is Jeff Koons, who many of you must know. The kids just loved hearing from him and having him discuss why he made his Balloon Dog and they kept asking, "Why doesn't this float away like a balloon?" He spoke with them about that.

This is artist Sarah Sze, who also happens to be married to a very well-known writer who has just finished a book on genes and previously published another book on cancer.

This is Ursula von Rydingsvard, whose sculpture, as I mentioned before, we gave to the Museum of Modern Art in honor of David Rockefeller.

Finally, this is Cuban artist Teresita Fernández, who was very good at talking to these students, saying they should assert themselves as artists and could do that as a profession. Her brothers had told her she should be a lawyer or a businesswoman, but she makes more money than they can at their jobs. And the kids loved that. This piece is by Teresita [*Sfumato*, 2005. Glass cubes with metal pins, to be mounted on a wall, 85 inches x 83 inches].

Here is a teacher who has put on a smock and joined in, as most teachers do in Studio in a School.

Studio in a School also houses three internship programs for low-income and diverse college students. Students work in museums, leading them to careers in the arts. And through the new Studio Institute, we are already reaching into other cities. We had a program in Philadelphia this past summer and expect to go to Boston, Cleveland and Providence next summer.

In 2007, I co-founded the Center for Curatorial Leadership (CCL) with Elizabeth Easton, who brilliantly runs that program and she has done so much to bring in students from diverse backgrounds. One CCL alumnus created a film in collaboration with the Ghetto Film School that was made in the Frick Museum. Never before has a movie been made in the Frick. She is in the audience today, and I know she would love to talk to you about her work.

I want to end by talking a bit about what have been, for me, the real rewards of collecting.

First, I find that art – and artists – accompany me everywhere. Art is always with me, companionably, in my home, in each day and season. Like a good companion it comforts me – and it often challenges me.

Second, collecting has enabled me to perceive the world through art. If it weren't for the fact that I have been able to live with very fine art I would not have been able to develop such a keen eye. I have grown to appreciate the artfulness, the beautiful, in every aspect of life: street signs and store windows, buildings under construction, a park meadow, a doorway, a balloon in the air, a smartly angled hat or scarf. Artists know that there are lovely things all around us, and I have learned to appreciate that, too: the importance of the ordinary, the usual, the actual.

Third, I believe that the majesty and wonder of arts help us to accept the conditions of life at an essential level. When Ellsworth Kelly offers stunningly simple drawings of plants, like these [*Three Lies*, 1983. Pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches and *Siberian Iris*, 1989. Ink on paper, 29 3/4 x 23 inches], he is, of course, tracking the precise leaf and flower outlines of the plants that he knew and loved. But in delineating their beauty, Ellsworth is making another kind of truth accessible. For deep inside the joy and delight of these plants, the artist is depicting the fact that they will fade, die and be lost to us. Ellsworth makes the inevitable endurable by, simply, making it so beautiful.

The best artists combine their images and their insights to our advantage, over and over again, in their work. Artists make realities visible, and tolerable, even the toughest realities. Collecting has helped me accept such truths.

This is a work by Kerry James Marshall [*Untitled (Policeman)*, 2015. Synthetic polymer paint on PVC panel with plexi frame, 60 x 60 inches] that we've just acquired at the Museum of Modern Art. It juxtaposes a black policeman on the hood of his car, which tells you a lot about the conflict we face in the United States.

Finally, collecting – through the patronage and philanthropy it inspires – has let me offer such wonders as these to others. Art belongs to civilisation. We own it only temporarily and it is in our responsibility to make sure it finds a good home. Giving, to me, is the greatest gift.

I want to tell you one final story. My brother Gordon, who created the beautiful *Blue Heron* sculpture I showed earlier, used to own the Cleveland Cavaliers,

an American basketball team. They had a great player, LeBron James, who left to play for another team, the Miami Heat, to increase his chances of winning a championship – something he thought he couldn't accomplish in Cleveland. He eventually returned to Cleveland and I decided to give a work, *Untitled (Basketball Drawing)*, 2002, by David Hammons, a black artist, to the Cleveland Museum in his honor to welcome him back and say, "He's a star that belongs on the basketball court. Here's a star of another kind that belongs to a museum." I thought it was a fitting thing to give to the Cleveland Museum because Hammons made the piece by throwing a basketball against a canvas, marking the canvas with the basketball in charcoal. It made me very happy to be able to do that with a work by a well-respected artist, and I hope it will help bring attention to the beauty and art in Cleveland, rather than the negative things that have happened there recently.

So, with that I would like to thank you and say I have been so pleased to be here.

Thank you very much.

Questions

Q: Can you get used to missing the pieces you give away?

AG: I'm really lucky to have been friendly with the art I've owned for now nearly 45 years. I really don't like to part with them. A lot of the works we have in the house are promised gifts. The Rauschenberg that I showed you is going to the Tate and will be in the Museum of Modern Art in the winter. That is a promised gift. The Brice Marden too. Almost everything. There are two or three pieces I'm keeping in the hope that I will never have to sell for money and eventually give to museums. Because museums ask me quite often for things, like the Burnt Piece work that was on loan to the Cleveland Museum. The Cleveland Museum will take loans, whereas the Museum of Modern Art won't, because they are afraid it will only enhance the value of the piece if it's in the Modern on loan without being a gift. They have a show at MoMA that includes work that the Museum owns. I really wanted to leave *Burnt Piece* to the Cleveland Museum, but then a MoMA curator, Kirk Varnedoe, said "I really love that piece you have by Jackie Winsor. Will you give it to MoMA?" Sometimes they do show it, but not as often as I'd like. Many museums that have great collections have so much below ground, so much they can't show all the time. That's why they keep expanding their facilities and why I'd prefer to have them not build any more because it's so expensive, but instead arrange to have a foundation that would loan works to other museums. The foundation would pay for the curatorial work because the museum can't loan curators to do loan shows because they have to work so hard on their own shows and keeping different works of art rotating in their own museum. MoMA has run out of space to build, so after we finish this project in 2019, I think we'll look to do something with loaning. People should be able to see the works rather than having them in storage, as many of the works are.

Q: I'm interested in your commitment to women artists. I'm not a collector. I'm a professor of art history and a curator, and I work with a lot of women artists. In this country it is really difficult to convince collectors and museums to buy or to show women artists. Do you have any advice?

AG: I think it's wonderful that you care and it's a steep hill to climb. What I have taken women artists and introduced them to dealers, many times they say they don't bring us the high prices. People won't buy women artists because they don't have a market that will increase so they can park works of art and sell later at a profit. It has changed. I was working on a paper at Bellagio Center, which is a project that the Rockefeller Foundation has in Italy where you can go and work on writing a thesis or conduct research. I was there for two weeks struggling with

exactly the question you ask. I think the situation is improving gradually. I think people are becoming aware of it. The prices at auction have increased a lot. It is still hard to find major works that are hung regularly like male art, but a lot of women are doing installation works. I was on a committee for Battery Park City in New York to select artists that would create works for a space that was landfill and is now full of buildings, near the World Trade Center. Mary Miss was the only woman in a lot of people being considered at that time. I think if we did the same thing now we would find many more women. I don't know how you increase the interest. I wish I knew. Just get people to buy as much as they can. Keep writing about it. Obviously, teaching helps. I have written a few pieces for the *Huffington Post* in New York, including some on women artists and the lack of attention they get. When I came to write this piece at Bellagio, some of the artists I had interviewed didn't admit to being overlooked, but there were others like Eva Hesse who used to write Sol LeWitt letters about how she was overlooked because she was a woman. There's a show up now of Diane Arbus and people say she is easily recognised because she used different people in her photography. I think it was because she's a good photographer and people are realising it more and more as photography becomes more collectable. Women are doing a lot of documentary films, which I have seen through the film department at MoMA. Women are among the more established and wonderful filmmakers. I have a daughter that has been nominated twice for an Emmy Award for her filmmaking. I wish you luck and wish I had a solution for you. We must continue to advocate for women. Louise Bourgeois is a perfect example. You can't go anywhere now without seeing her work, but when she first came to the United States she was very seldom shown. The wood piece I showed you is now really important, although there are lots of bronze versions. They were never shown. People didn't know her work or she was shown very peripherally. MoMA had the first retrospective in 1982, curated by a woman who was the head of the print department. So the best way to get women out there is to get people to show them in galleries.

Q: How do you program your decisions? Is it just by heart, by impulse, or is it that you look at your collection, the artists that you want to complete.

AG: I do go around a lot to look at studios, especially in my job as chair of MoMA PS1. PS1 has a wonderful director, Klaus Biesenbach. He's very keen at looking, and having me look with him, at artists, so I'm sometimes surprised going to an artist's studio not expecting to buy anything and I'll end up buying something from a very young artist. That happened with a woman named Tauba Auerbach. She's now with Paula Cooper Gallery, but she was recommended to me by Kim Hastreiter, the editor of a magazine called *Paper*. She makes prints and she was recently featured in the Printed Matter Book Fair that we host at MoMA PS1,

where we take everything down and put up floor after floor of printed books. She now makes all kinds of collectable things. Her work went from being $30,000 to $1.5 million at auction. I was glad I bought her work at the time I did. Other times I look for things the museums want, especially MoMA or the Cleveland Museum. I have gone and bought from things like Sarah Sze's show, where I saw a piece I really wanted to donate to the Cleveland Museum. I buy mostly drawings now. Most of the things I would like to buy are too expensive. Take Kerry James Marshall, for example, who I told you I would like to buy. His prices have already gone sky high. I look for things I have maybe missed. If I have prints or drawing or paintings of an artist that also does sculpture, I'll try to fill that in. One example is the Ellsworth Kelly I showed you, which I bought from Leo Castelli, the last show before he moved down to SoHo. I was the only one who bought and now you couldn't find it for love or money. I also listen to curators who come to me and say we'd like to have a piece donated to National Gallery, for example, so sometimes I buy things I wouldn't buy for myself.

Q: Thank you for sharing your experience and knowledge about art collecting. I gather from your works you did a very good job handing on your knowledge and experience about art collecting to your children. Over the years I have met many collectors here in Spain whose children have lost that desire to keep on collecting. What would you tell them in order to enhance that desire?

AG: My children have at various times objected to the art being all over the place, because the art is on every wall and every table. They used to say, "Why do I have to go see another show?" But they appreciate it more now, as they've gotten older, especially my youngest daughter. She received a lot of gifts from artists and she would not necessarily be a collector but she's become fascinated by some of the gifts she's received, both from me and from artists. Her children went to a school called Indian Mountain and she was the one who put together an arts program, so she has learned something. One of my other daughters had a love of horses, which she gave up to be a social worker. So her house is filled with horse images, done by an amazing number of artists. The only one who hasn't collected, but is interested in theatre, is my son. He has received some things from me and he did once tell me that he appreciated living with art because now he knows how to look. I wish I could encourage people to do it more. My daughter that is a filmmaker has gone on to have many artist friends. She tries to help them get shown. But you can't wish for something they don't want. You just have to hope that by example they'll become interested.

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Agnes Gund is president emerita of the Museum of Modern Art and chair of its International Council. She is also chair of MoMA PS1. Ms. Gund joined the MoMA Board in 1976 and served as its president from 1991 until 2002.

She is the founder and board chair of Studio in a School, a non-profit organization she established in 1977 in response to budget cuts that virtually eliminated arts classes from New York City public schools.

A philanthropist and collector of modern and contemporary art, Ms. Gund currently serves on the boards of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, and Chess in the Schools, among others. She is co-founder of the Center for Curatorial Leadership, as well as an Honorary Trustee of the Independent Curators International and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland.

A civic leader and staunch supporter of education, women's issues and environmental concerns, among other causes, Ms. Gund currently serves on the Mayor's Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission of New York City, which she previously chaired, and has served on the boards of such wide-ranging organizations as the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center, the Frick, the Fund for Public Schools, and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

She earned a B.A. in History from Connecticut College and a M.A. in Art History from Harvard University. She has honorary doctorates from Bowdoin College (2012), the CUNY Graduate Center (2007), and Brown University (1996). In 1997, Ms. Gund received the National Medal of the Arts from President Clinton, and in 2016, she was elected Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Arts.

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