

Harvard / News Release Art Museum

Major Collection of Modern and Contemporary German Art is Given to Harvard Art Museum

Friends of the Busch-Reisinger Museum Contribute Works to Strengthen the Museum's Holdings



Georg Baselitz (German, b. 1938), *Male Nude (Self-Portrait)*, 1973/74. Oil on canvas, 200 x 169 cm (78 3/4 x 66 9/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/ Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, TL40664.3. Photo: Friedrich Rosenstiel.

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The Harvard Art Museum today announced a major gift of German art primarily since 1960 donated by the Friends of the Busch-Reisinger Museum. The gift comprises 50 to 75 works by contemporary artists and is being assembled under the guidance of art historian Siegfried Gohr in Germany. It celebrates the 25th anniversary of the German-based Friends group and will be donated over the coming years, with the first installment of 26 works this fall. The works of art will enter the permanent collection of the Busch-Reisinger Museum and will be known as the "Friends Anniversary Collection." The Busch-Reisinger Museum is the only museum in America devoted to promoting the arts of Central and Northern Europe of all periods, with a special emphasis on the German-speaking countries. Among the handful of museums in this country to have world-class collections from this region, it is the only such collection within a university.

Founded in Germany in 1983, the Friends of the Busch-Reisinger Museum/Verein der Freunde des Busch-Reisinger Museum now has more than 240 members, based mainly in Germany, but also in other countries including Austria, Switzerland, and the United States. This dynamic and internationally-minded group supports the multi-faceted work of the Busch-Reisinger Museum, with special emphasis on teaching and research activities. The works of art in the Friends gift are organized in four categories: individual major paintings; representative groups of 8–10 major drawings by significant artists; photographs by members of the so-called Düsseldorf School; and groups of multiples by artists for whom work in that medium is important.

"The Friends have an extraordinary tradition of generosity to the Busch-Reisinger Museum, and we are enormously grateful to Siegfried for initiating, organizing, and contributing to this important project," said Peter Nisbet, Daimler-Benz Curator of the Busch-Reisinger Museum. "The addition of this splendid collection, generously donated by a range of German collectors and artists, will strengthen the Busch-Reisinger Museum's prominence as a center for the study of German art. It will be the capstone of two-and-a-half decades of sustained support of the Museum by the Friends."

Among the works being donated in the first installment is a major painting by Georg Baselitz, *Male Nude (Self-Portrait)*, (1973/74; on view through January 4, 2009 at the Arthur M. Sackler Museum), and another early work by Baselitz, *Saxon*

Motif (1964), as well as two paintings by A. R. Penck; multiples by Rosemarie Trockel; photographs by Candida Höfer and Boris Becker; and groups of drawings by Ernst Wilhelm Nay and Markus Lüpertz.

“Since the 1960s, German artists have developed provocative and exciting positions that have influenced the direction of contemporary art,” said Thomas W. Lentz, Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard Art Museum. “This gift from the Friends of the Busch-Reisinger Museum will significantly enhance our ability to offer scholars, students, and visitors the chance to engage with and learn from fine examples of work by a wide range of prominent modern and contemporary artists.”

“Our mission at Harvard is to foster teaching and research with objects,” said Nisbet, “and I am especially gratified by the sensitive selection of works in the Friends Anniversary Collection to complement and amplify our existing holdings.”

The works in the first installment, by seven different artists from five different donors, effectively showcase the ambition of the Collection.

A. R. Penck is one of the great unclassifiable individualists in postwar German art, and the two paintings in the donation document two very different sides and moments of his career, one (the figurative, anecdotal, and surrealist Venus and Mars of 1977) from the time when he was still living in East Germany, and the other (Rock II of 1984, deploying his more familiar language of signal-like stick figures, mathematical symbols, and schematic composition) from after his move to the West in 1980. A group of drawings by Penck, including a cartoon-like 1967 watercolor of a nude and a bird, is part of the promised future gifts to the Collection.

The two major paintings by Baselitz in the gift also add two very significant aspects of Baselitz’s career to Harvard’s holdings: an early enigmatic scene of abject fleshy fragments towering over a landscape in Saxon Motif (1964), and the Male Nude (1973/74), a self-portrait that uses the artist’s signature technique of inversion to emphasize painterly effects over subject matter. It also uses finger painting to reinforce his questioning of the conventions of high art and the possibilities of representation. Together with two paintings by Baselitz and a wide range of works on paper already in the Museum’s collection, these acquisitions enable an overview of the career of an artist who is Germany’s most consistently searching and provocative painter since 1960. A set of 8-10 drawings from many phases of Baselitz’s career will be added to the Friends Anniversary Collection in the next installment.

The Busch-Reisinger Museum already has extensive holdings of the editioned prints and photographs of Bernd and Hilla Becher, influential teachers at the Düsseldorf Academy from the 1960s and the founders of a school of conceptually inflected “neutral” architectural photography. It also owns a major work by one of their prominent students, Andreas Gursky. The Friends Anniversary Collection builds on this foundation with important large-format works by two other Becher students, Candida Höfer, known for her stunning, evocative interiors of public cultural spaces (in this case, the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York), and Boris Becker, from the younger generation of Becher students, with a haunting view of an abandoned highrise construction project in Poland after the fall of communism, Cracow (1994). A photograph by another student, Thomas Struth, is among the promised future additions to the Friends Anniversary Collection.

By including a category of drawings, the donation is in line with Harvard’s traditional emphasis on this most intimate and revealing of media, which can allow access to an artist’s process in a manner appropriate to a teaching institution. Groups

of drawings by Germany's premier abstract artist of the postwar decades, Ernst Wilhelm Nay, and by a leader of the revival of ambitious figurative painting in the 1960s, Markus Lüpertz, make up this section in the first installment. Paintings by both artists are among the promised future gifts.

The Busch-Reisinger Museum holds one of the world's most comprehensive collections of multiples by Joseph Beuys, the most influential figure in postwar European art. The Friends Anniversary Collection builds on this collection by adding five works by Rosemarie Trockel, whose enigmatic and elusive objects investigate questions of representation, gender, the body, and creativity.

Siegfried Gohr, who is a professor of art history and director of the gallery at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, is coordinating the donation of works in the Friends Anniversary Collection to the Busch-Reisinger Museum by German collectors and artists. Gohr has had a long and distinguished career in the German art world. He has served as director of the Kunsthalle and Ludwig Museum in Cologne and been a professor of art history at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe. Gohr's long association with Harvard and the Friends of the Busch-Reisinger Museum dates back many years. He has visited and taught at Harvard on a number of occasions. In 1995, he was a visiting senior curatorial fellow at the Busch-Reisinger Museum, where he organized an installation titled History, Self, Society: Self-Portraits by Max Beckmann, Joseph Beuys, and Markus Lüpertz, and gave a major lecture on the topic of German artists, museums, and society.

"Given its history and status," Gohr said, "it is essential that the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard have an outstanding collection of recent German art. I hope that my initiative will inspire many others to undertake similar gifts to ensure this important goal."

Founded in 1901 as the Germanic Museum, the Busch-Reisinger Museum has particularly important holdings of Austrian Secession art, German expressionism, 1920s abstraction, and material related to the Bauhaus. Its significant holdings of post-war and contemporary art from German-speaking Europe include a collection of the editioned artworks by artist Joseph Beuys.

About the Harvard Art Museum

The Harvard Art Museum is one of the world's leading arts institutions, comprised of three museums (Fogg Museum, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Arthur M. Sackler Museum) and four research centers (Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, Harvard Art Museum Archives, Archaeological Exploration of Sardis, Turkey). The Harvard Art Museum is distinguished by the range and depth of its collections, its groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of its staff. As an integral part of Harvard and the community, the three art museums and four research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and visitors. For more than a century, the Harvard Art Museum has been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and scholars and is renowned for its seminal role in the development of the discipline of art history in this country.

General Information

In June 2008, the Harvard Art Museum's building at 32 Quincy Street, formerly the home of the Fogg and Busch-Reisinger Museums, closed for a major renovation. During this renovation, the Sackler Museum at 485 Broadway remains open and has been reinstalled with some of the finest works representing the collections of all three museums. When complete, the renovated historic building at 32 Quincy Street will house the three museums in a single state-of-the-art facility.

Hours

Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; Sunday 1:00–5:00 p.m.
The Harvard Art Museum is closed on all national holidays.

Admission

Paid admission includes entrance to the museum, public tours, and gallery talks. General admission is \$9; \$7 for senior citizens; and \$6 for students. Admission is free for Harvard University ID holders, Members of the Art Museum, Cambridge Public Library cardholders, visitors under 18 years of age, and is free to all on Saturdays before noon. More detailed information is available at 617-495-9400 or www.harvardartmuseum.org.

The Harvard Art Museum receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

For more information about the Harvard Art Museum, please contact:

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Works of Art in the Current Gift from the Friends of the Busch-Reisinger Museum

1. Georg Baselitz, Male Nude (Self-Portrait), 1973/74. Oil on canvas, 200 x 169 cm (78 3/4 x 66 9/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/ Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.208. [On view through January 4, 2009 at the Arthur M. Sackler Museum]
2. Georg Baselitz, Saxon Motif, 1964. Oil on canvas, 195 x 130 cm (76 3/4 x 51 3/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Dorette Hildebrand-Staab, 2008.207.
3. Boris Becker, Cracow, 1994. Chromogenic print, face mounted to acrylic; 200 x 160 cm (78 3/4 x 63 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of the Artist, 2008.227.
4. Candida Höfer, Pierpont Morgan Library New York IV, 2001. Chromogenic print, 152 x 186.5 cm (59 13/16 x 73 7/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of the Artist, 2008.226.
5. Markus Lüpertz, Factory-dithyrambic, c. 1970. Gouache, crayon, watercolour, and charcoal on paper; 44.6 x 62.3 cm (17 9/16 x 24 1/2 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.218.
- 6-12. Markus Lüpertz, Untitled (Style), c. 1977. Seven drawings: graphite, watercolor, and ink on paper; each 105.9 x 78.6 cm (41 11/16 x 30 15/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.219-225.
13. Ernst Wilhelm Nay, R-2-67, 1967. Watercolor on paper, 62.1 x 41.4 cm (24 7/16 x 16 5/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.211.
14. Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Study for "Cythera," 1947. Tusche and graphite, 43.9 x 61.1 cm (17 5/16 x 24 1/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.217.
15. Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Study for female nude, 1945-46. Graphite, 32.4 x 24.9 cm (12 3/4 x 9 13/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.215.
16. Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Study for "Femme Rose," 1947. Graphite, 21.5 x 30.2 cm (8 7/16 x 11 7/8 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.214.
17. Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Study for figure composition, 1947. Graphite, 20.5 x 30.5 cm (8 1/16 x 12 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.212.
18. Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Two Studies, 1950. Graphite, each 14.5 x 21 cm (5 11/16 x 8 1/4 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.213.1-2.

19. Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Untitled, 1954. Brush and ink, 48.7 x 62.9 cm (19 3/16 x 24 3/4 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.216.
20. A. R. Penck, Rock II, 1984. Oil on canvas, 200 x 130 cm (78 3/4 x 51 3/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.210.
21. A. R. Penck, Venus and Mars, 1977. Oil on cloth, 180 x 140 cm (70 7/8 x 55 1/8 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of Siegfried Gohr, 2008.209.
22. Rosemarie Trockel, Alice in Wonderland, 1995. Silkscreen on Rives paper, 101 x 80 cm (39 3/4 x 31 1/2 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of the Artist, 2008.228.
23. Rosemarie Trockel, Cutting Pattern, 1994. Color etching on Rives paper, 50.1 x 50.9 cm (19 3/4 x 20 1/16 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of the Artist, 2008.230.
24. Rosemarie Trockel, Dream, 1989. Wood, metal, paper; 38.7 cm (15 1/4 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of the Artist, 2008.231.
25. Rosemarie Trockel, She Came to Stay, 2001. Offset and fluorescent silkscreen on paper, 52 x 40 cm (20 1/2 x 15 3/4 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of the Artist, 2008.229.
26. Rosemarie Trockel, Untitled (Mouth Sculptures), 1989. Silver-plated chewing gum mounted on board, brochure; chewing gum: 3.1 cm (1 1/4 in.), brochure: 5.5 x 5.5 cm (2 3/16 x 2 3/16 in.), board: 4 x 6 cm (1 9/16 x 2 3/8 in.). Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Friends Anniversary Collection, Gift of the Artist, 2008.232.