

CENTRE POMPIDOU FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2016

CPF CHAIRMAN STEVEN GUTTMAN RECEIVES LÉGION D'HONNEUR



▲ CPF BOARD CHAIRMAN STEVE GUTTMAN, RECIPIENT OF THE CHEVALIER DE L'ORDRE NATIONALE DE LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR. ©JORDAN ELYSE PHOTOGRAPHY



▲ KATHY GUTTMAN, STEVE GUTTMAN, SYLVIA GRADITOR, AND AMBASSADOR GÉRARD ARAUD AT THE RÉSIDENCE DE FRANCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ©JORDAN ELYSE PHOTOGRAPHY

On June 27th, CPF members, supporters, and friends gathered as French Ambassador Gérard Araud conferred the medal and title of Chevalier de l'Ordre nationale de la Légion d'Honneur upon Steve Guttman, Chairman of the Centre Pompidou Foundation. Established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, it is the highest honor bestowed by the French government.

The ceremony took place at the Résidence de France in Washington, D. C. after a beautiful champagne reception in the gardens. Alain Seban, president of the Centre Pompidou until 2015, began the evening's accolades in recalling his time working with Guttman, noting especially his spirit of generosity and his vision with regard to the Centre Pompidou Foundation. "Steve, in a quiet, unassuming way, stepped in, rolled up his sleeves, and started rebuilding everything: the group, its strategy, its organization, its relationship to the museum. What's been achieved in four years is amazing, and it's the reason we're all here today.

"It's a story of commitment, vision, generosity, and friendship as well, and it's even more special for me to be here now that I am no longer president of the Pompidou: I'm here not out of official duty, but as a friend."

Ambassador Araud, before granting the title and medal, addressed Guttman, also remarking on his accomplishments for the Centre Pompidou and the Centre Pompidou Foundation. "As Chairman, you have followed the Foundation's mission while steering it in a direction that is entirely your own. Your artistic expertise and your eye for young talent have helped to infuse the Pompidou's collection with new life. And the relationships that you have cultivated throughout your life, with curators, artist and collectors, have been essential to that project.

"You are a true visionary. Through your tremendous generosity, your vast knowledge, and your remarkable ability to identify emerging talent, you have enriched the Centre Pompidou collection, infusing it with new life. In doing so, you have heightened French-American cultural exchange. It is an honor to confer upon you this award."

Following the ceremony, Steve Guttman, newly-decorated Chevalier de l'Ordre nationale de la Légion d'Honneur, thanked Ambassador Araud, Alain Seban, and the many others in attendance and recalled the path that had led him to the Centre Pompidou Foundation. "[My] interest in art soon became a passion and ultimately led to a business which combined my love of real estate and art.

"Art and architecture have also led me to a love affair with Paris. When Kathy and I traveled to Paris, the Pompidou became a favorite place we visited on almost every trip. When we learned about the Pompidou Foundation, we were excited to become members. I am proud that, while I have been Chairman, the Foundation has been able to make important additions to the museum's collection. (...) From our involvement with the museum, Kathy and I have met many great people, including some who are now among our closest friends, and the museum has enabled us to have experiences we will always remember. Thank you for this great honor."

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS AT CENTRE POMPIDOU

Haegue Yang / Lingering Nous, through September 5, 2016

Beat Generation, through October 3, 2016

The Westreich Wagner Collection, through February 6, 2017

Cher(e)s Ami(e)s : Hommage aux donateurs des collections contemporaines, through February 6, 2017

Nouvelle présentation des collections modernes (1905-1965), through May 22, 2017

2016-2017 CALENDAR

JERUSALEM AND TEL AVIV, ISRAEL NOVEMBER 10-18, 2016 | SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA MARCH 8-11, 2017

CPF CELEBRATES THEA WESTREICH WAGNER AND ETHAN WAGNER OPENING AT THE CENTRE POMPIDOU

Coinciding with the Centre Pompidou Foundation's annual trip to Paris in June, *Collected by Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner* opened at the Centre Pompidou with a celebratory reception and dinner. The exhibition draws upon two generous and transformative gifts, to the Whitney Museum of American Art and to the Centre Pompidou Foundation, and reveals the remarkable vision of two passionate collectors.

Chief curator at the Musée nationale d'art moderne Christine Macel, who has worked extensively with the donors during the preparation of this exhibition, noted that the "great virtue of this collection, the scale of the holdings of each individual artist, means that the career of each can be illustrated through several works. Some of the artists are already present in the Centre Pompidou's collections, and the donated works will fruitfully complement existing holdings. (...) But it is in works by artists not yet represented in the collections that this donation makes its most significant contribution.

"Thea and Ethan always stress their passion for the artists and the fact that their collection is, as they put it, "artist-driven." It is indeed uncommon for collectors to be on such close terms with the artists whose work they acquire. Their close relationships with [the artists] testify to their personal engagement."



▲ BERNARD BLISTÈNE, DIRECTOR OF THE MNAM CENTRE POMPIDOU, WITH COLLECTORS THEA WESTREICH WAGNER AND ETHAN WAGNER. ©CENTRE POMPIDOU



▲ VITALI KOMAR AND ALEKSANDR MELAMID, *TRANS-STATE*, 1977 ©MARTIN-GROPIUS-BAU, 2003

GRINSTEIN FAMILY DONATES IMPORTANT KOMAR AND MELAMID WORK, *TRANS-STATE*, TO THE CPF

The Centre Pompidou Foundation is delighted to announce the Grinstein Family's recent donation of *Trans-STATE* by Vitali Komar and Aleksandr Melamid to the Centre Pompidou Foundation. This work will be featured at the MNAM in September. We extend our great thanks to the Grinstein family for this thoughtful, generous donation.

Elyse and Stanley Grinstein were very much affected by a trip they took to Russia in 1976, where, being very active in the contemporary art world, they made a point to meet with a number of dissident artists to discuss their work. These conversations were unsettling to the Grinsteins and left them with many questions about the Soviet Union. They soon felt the regime's oppression personally as they found themselves being followed during their stay in Moscow. Because of the Grinstein's unwavering belief and support of Democracy and Democratic causes, this experience in Russia was particularly chilling.

Moved by the challenges faced by artists during this time, the Grinsteins purchased Komar and Melamid's *Trans-STATE*, at the first exhibition of their work at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in New York in 1977. For the Grinsteins, Komar and Melamid's art, produced in reaction to the oppression they endured and emblematic of the freedom of expression they sought, had great personal meaning.

An excerpt from *The New York Times Magazine's* May 8, 1977 review of Komar and Melamid's exhibition at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, *Dissidence as a Way of Art*, by Grace Glueck, looks specifically at the work that the Grinsteins acquired:

"The most refreshing new style in Soviet dissidence, a type of rebellion understandably not distinguished for its humor, is that of two young artists, Vitali Komar and Aleksandr Melamid, who live and work in Moscow. Functioning as a team, they have made their art the substance of their protest, parodying the propaganda posters and street banners designed for public consumption by Soviet officials, ridiculing the myriad documents carried of necessity by Soviet citizens and taking potshots at such sacred cows as Soviet Socialist art.

"Their work, smuggled out by friends from the West and shown [in the U.S.] for the first time last year, revealed a clever and inventive pair of minds that could range from simple tomfoolery to philosophical fantasy, a subversive gamut not much appreciated by Soviet officials. Now, Komar and Melamid want to emigrate to Israel, and their team endeavor has taken a new and more urgent turn. Forced to hand in their Soviet passports when they requested emigration papers, they have become men without a country. But they have quickly rallied to make art - both formal and conceptual - of their statelessness. They have created a new nation 'Trans-State'. [...]

"Komar and Melamid showed their new work at home to a handful of Soviet intellectuals and foreigners, but they earned a living by designing book and record jackets and teaching art at night school. In 1974, they took part in the outdoor show of Soviet avant-garde work in Moscow that was abruptly terminated by the police. Foreign friends and journalists brought back word of their work to the West, and in 1975 they were 'discovered' by Douglas Davis, art critic for Newsweek, through Aleksandr Goldfarb, a Russian biochemist, who is Melamid's cousin and now lives in Dourlas. Davis in turn introduced Goldfarb to the New York dealer Ronald Feldman, who quickly agreed to give the Soviet artists their first Western show - or, for that matter, their first two-man show - anywhere. [...] Most of the work on display deals with the artists' hoped-for emancipation from the Soviet Union. The physical trappings of *Trans-STATE* are there in the form of documents, money (called *Trans-Mon*), passports, and a life-sized, peripatetic border post ('stupid and artificial, like all borders') executed to the artists' orders in wood."

WITH OUR GREAT THANKS TO ELLEN GRINSTEIN, PEGGY KAPLAN, AND RONALD FELDMAN FOR THEIR INVALUABLE GUIDANCE IN RESEARCHING THIS ARTICLE.