

# THE RONALD S. LAUDER COLLECTION

SELECTIONS FROM THE 3RD CENTURY BC TO THE 20TH CENTURY

GERMANY, AUSTRIA, AND FRANCE

**10**  
ANNIVERSARY

**NEUE  
GALERIE**  
MUSEUM FOR GERMAN  
AND AUSTRIAN ART  
**NEW YORK**

**PRESTEL**

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## **SELECTIONS FROM THE 3RD CENTURY BC TO THE 20TH CENTURY GERMANY, AUSTRIA, AND FRANCE**

With preface by Ronald S. Lauder,  
foreword by Renée Price,  
and contributions by Alessandra Comini, Stuart Pyhrr, Elizabeth Szancer Kujawski,  
Ann Temkin, Eugene Thaw, Christian Witt-Döring, and William D. Wixom

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FRONTISPICE: Ronald S. Lauder in his home, autumn 2008, standing between a knight and charger in German armor, 1515–30 (left), and an Italian suit of armor, circa 1600–10. Also on the right is a detail of the *Les Bûcherons* tapestry, third quarter fifteenth century. Photograph by Mark Heithoff

PAGE 6: Ronald S. Lauder, Paris 1992. Photograph by Lillian Birnbaum

IN MEMORIAM

I would like to dedicate this publication  
to the curators and dealers  
who helped me develop my collection.

Ronald S. Lauder

Thomas Ammann  
Alfred H. Barr, Jr.  
Heinz Berggruen  
Ernst Beyeler  
Leo Castelli  
Marianne Feilchenfeldt  
Stephen Grancsay  
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Kirk Varnedoe

and especially  
Serge Sabarsky

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Tom Zoufaly, New York



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1. Ronald S. Lauder with his parents, Estée and Joseph Lauder, Paris, 1959

## PREFACE

Passion. That is the one word that captures the absolute love and dedication I have had for collecting art throughout my life. A long time ago, I read a book by Pierre Cabanne about great collectors in which he describes collecting as a kind of addiction. And although he meant that in the most benign sense, I immediately recognized that I was afflicted with that addiction right from the start. It is impossible for me to imagine my life without my works of art.

People have always assumed that I inherited this trait from my family. Although my parents had many wonderful qualities as well as their own passions, collecting art was not one of them [Fig. 1]. But we tend to find like-minded people as we move through our lives—people who influence us, teach us, and guide us. These are people, I believe, who recognize in a younger person the same qualities they see in themselves. Mentoring comes naturally to them. I have been a very fortunate man, indeed, for I have had many extraordinary mentors in my life.

When I was a young teenager, I was invited to dinners at the home of Florence Gould [Fig. 2] in the south of France. Florence,

along with her late husband, Jay Gould, had assembled a great collection of French Impressionist art. That was really the first time I understood the sheer joy that comes from living with pieces of extraordinary art around you every day. Their home, with all of its wonderful paintings, simply fascinated me. Florence spotted that interest and guided me as a friend and mentor.

Another life-changing experience occurred when I went to visit Lawrence Herring [Fig. 9], the father of my schoolmates, John and Paul Herring. Lawrence had arranged an entire wall filled with nineteenth- and twentieth-century drawings. That wall mesmerized me. It was the first time I realized just how wonderful drawings could be on their own and that one could be quite satisfied collecting just drawings. (Of course, someone could be satisfied collecting only drawings, but not me.)

The late 1950s and early 1960s in New York was one of those unique moments in time—a period when art and creativity simply explode. Vienna was like that fifty years earlier. That's the environment I was raised in—this is my New York. One glittering night, my parents brought me to a dinner at the



2. Florence Gould, 1936. © Laure Albin-Guillot / Roger-Viollet

3. Bottom left: Jo Carole Lauder with Constantin Brancusi *Fireplace* and 1917 painting, *Suprematist Composition (No. 31)*, *Black Trapezoid*, by Kasimir Malevich

4. Bottom right: Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Dorothy C. Miller, and James Thrall Soby, The Museum of Modern Art, New York



Metropolitan Museum of Art on the occasion of a Pierre Bonnard painting being gifted to the museum by Florence Gould. I sat at a table filled with the great collectors from 1950s New York. Their donations grace the walls of the Metropolitan, the Modern, and the National Gallery today. Just try to imagine a wide-eyed teenager sitting with that high-powered group and taking it all in. That night in that great museum, I just sat there and dreamed of being either a great art collector, a great drawing collector, or a great medieval collector. The next day, I ran into Florence Gould and told her my dream. I still remember her response. She freed me from my own self-limitations by simply asking, "Why not be all three?"

My one guiding principle to buying art is actually quite simple. I always purchase what I consider to be an artist's best work. This is my formula: I divide all art into three categories: The *Oh ...* the *Oh my ...* and the *Oh my God*. My goal from early on was to only buy the *Oh my God*.

But how do you know what is the best? Everyone talks about having a great eye but that's not a gift given out at birth. It is simply a combination of knowledge and passion—but still, you have to be willing to do the work. My method is to buy all the books about an artist that are available, including a catalogue raisonné, look at all the pictures, see the works in museums, and research the auction catalogues. Today, my art library is huge, but without it, I would never have been able to distinguish the *Oh my God* from the merely *Oh*. I have never gone wrong in buying the best. All of the mistakes I have made came when I thought that a work's rarity would make up for its not being great.

Regret is also unavoidable. Financiers look back at companies they should have bought. Stockbrokers think about IBM in the 1950s or Apple in the '70s. I wish I knew then what I know now, as I would have surely acquired many more masterpieces. But money and art are always intertwined. Growing up, I was always short of money because of my pas-





5. Ronald S. Lauder and William (Bill) S. Rubin at the opening for *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, April 24, 1996. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Photograph by Patrick McMullan

sion to pay any price to obtain a work that I wanted. But this had its pluses and minuses. I always paid top prices, but at the same time, dealers knew that if they had the *Oh My God* piece, they would offer it to me first.

I will admit that, as a teenager, I was out of step with many of my friends. I spent many hours after school learning to recognize great works of art and the prices they were selling for. When everyone else went off to the movies or sports events, I spent most of my time at The Museum of Modern Art. I loved wandering through the galleries, looking at the great works, and trying not just to take it all in but to understand it. I developed my own system of educating myself. I would concentrate on one piece and one piece only during a visit—looking at it from all sides, studying it, knowing it. Even at that young age, I realized that everything I was viewing in that building was in the *Oh My God* category. I knew the galleries, the hallways, even the stairwells at MoMA as well as I knew

my own home. Spending time there was like visiting friends, except that the paintings spoke to me in a way that no human being could. It was at that institution that I was destined to spend the next fifty years of my life—first on committees, then as a young Trustee, and eventually as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and now as Honorary Chairman, with David Rockefeller.

I had the honor of meeting some of the Modern's giants—Alfred Barr, the museum's brilliant first director; Dorothy Miller, one of the its great curators [Fig. 4]; Blanchette Rockefeller, who served as president and was the daughter-in-law of one of the three founders, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller; and the legendary Bill Rubin, the Chief Curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, who taught me so much [Fig. 5]. Later, I worked closely with his successor, Kirk Varnedoe [Fig. 6], especially on a great show of Viennese art.

Today, when I walk through the rooms of the

6. Kirk Varnedoe at the opening of *Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture, and Design*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1986





7. Eugene Victor Thaw. Photograph by Sari Goodfriend, October 2010. © Sari Goodfriend Photography

Modern, I see old friends, and I am transported back to my first glimpse of an Alberto Giacometti sculpture, an Edward Steichen photograph, a Paul Klee drawing, or the magic of Matisse and Picasso. I used to imagine what my ideal collection would be, and it was The Museum of Modern Art that set the standard.

Eugene Victor Thaw [Fig. 7] was not only a fabulous collector but also the first private art dealer I ever knew. He had a wonderful collection of Old Master and nineteenth-century drawings. Shortly after we met, Gene offered me a 1923 Vasily Kandinsky painting entitled *Black Form*. It had everything one could want in a Bauhaus Kandinsky. That was also the first work of art I purchased for my parents [Fig. 8].

One day, Gene called me and said he had a great painting to show me; he would not tell

me what it was. After going to the theater, Jo Carole [Fig. 3] and I went to Gene's apartment and saw Paul Cézanne's *Man with Crossed Arms* [Fig. 1, p. 24]. I thought I had seen it originally at the Guggenheim Museum, as well as in Bill Rubin's great exhibition at the Modern about Cézanne's great late works. But Gene explained that this was a different painting. Cézanne apparently liked the subject so much, he painted two versions of it, each time solving different problems. The painting had once been called *The Clockmaker*. It was bursting with color, and the man it portrays seems to signify France, with all its layers of complexity. His face, although not broken into cubes, had five different planes. I was mesmerized, and of course bought it on the spot. Today, although there are several great Cézannes in my collection, *Man with Crossed Arms* still holds a certain mystery for me.



8. Joseph Lauder and Estée Lauder with Vasily Kandinsky's *Black Form*, New York, 1982

picture  
cropped



Harold Joachim at the Art Institute of Chicago, and Bill Lieberman, who was first at MoMA as Curator of Drawings and later at the Met, taught me how to look at drawings. Through them, I realized that drawings really allowed you to see what was in the artist's mind. They helped me to understand my works by Seurat, Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Edgar Degas, as well as modern masters such as Klee, Kandinsky, Picasso, and Matisse. I've never regretted any of the drawings I purchased.

The Middle Ages is another period that has always fascinated me. There is an interesting connection between the ancient world and the Renaissance. But to me, there is something unbelievably exciting about finding ivories from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or bronzes or aquamaniles or works in gold or beautiful colored windows or parts of churches. These objects had a long history and were some of the greatest works ever made, done by nameless artists with a sense of beauty and timelessness. Ed Lubin was a private dealer who found me some of the greatest works of art of the last thousand years. Bill Wixom [Fig. 10], then Chief Curator of Medieval Art at the Metropolitan and at the Cloisters, taught me about this subject and made it come alive with all its excitement and history.

I received my first antique pistol and sword from a friend of my father when I was twelve. I was fascinated by all types of arms and armor, but it wasn't until Stephen Grancsay, Curator of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum, came to my office with Prescott Andrews to tell me about the Otto von Kienbusch Collection that was going to the Philadelphia Museum of Art that my interest was fully aroused. Howard Ricketts, a Lon-

don dealer, started finding me helmets and suits of armor from some of the finest craftsmen of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. They told me that there were still a few pieces in private hands and that, although I would not be able to have as great a collection as von Kienbusch, there were still great helmets and suits of armor. Although I find parade armor very beautiful, the armor that was used in battle is more striking in its simplicity.

Today, it is very rare to find great pieces of armor. Stuart Pyhrr [Fig. 11], who is now Curator of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum, has been an invaluable source of information about many of my pieces, and has done an amazing job at the Metropolitan displaying this work.

At the same time that I started collecting drawings and paintings, I also began to collect decorative arts. At first, it was Art Nouveau, and along with my acquisition of Toulouse-Lautrec posters, there were design examples by Hector Guimard. This was soon followed by my then developing interest in turn-of-the-century Vienna, especially in the works of Josef Hoffmann, Otto Wagner, Koloman Moser, and Adolf Loos. In this realm, I was fortunate to meet Paul and Stefan Asenbaum and Christian Witt-Döring, all of whom continue to advise me on the Viennese additions to the collection. Concurrently, I became interested in Art Déco; the art of Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann; Jean Prouvé; and the Bauhaus masters. In recent years, key works by more contemporary designers such as Isamu Noguchi, Shiro Kuramata, and Alvar Aalto have entered the collection. I followed my instincts and collected each designer in depth, trying to get every great example they produced.



9. Lawrence (Larry) Herring and his wife Gladys Herring, Majorca, 1976



10. William D. Wixom



11. Stuart Pyhrr, Curator and Head of the Arms and Armor Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photograph courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Although there were many people who collected Matisse and Picasso paintings, there were very few who collected their drawings and sculptures. I have always looked for their drawings and sculpture made between 1904 and 1939. I feel that Constantin Brancusi [Fig. 12] was the greatest sculptor of the twentieth century. Over the last thirty years I have taken advantage of every opportunity I could afford to buy his works. I never tire of seeing his creations and each time I see something new.

One of the defining moments in my life came one afternoon when my brother, Leonard, brought me to meet Serge Sabarsky [Fig. 13]. I was only 25 and Serge was 56, but the two of us became immediate friends. Through Serge, there was a direct connection with a period of time that fascinated me the most—early twentieth-century Vienna, when the Expressionists cut the bonds that tethered art to the earth. Serge also had a breadth of knowledge that he was delighted to pass on to me. We became such close friends, spending many, many hours together talking about Schiele, Klimt, and Oskar Kokoschka. We would sit and debate about whose collection was better and whether a piece he had just purchased should be kept for him, made available to me, or sold. Many pieces in my collection bring back wonderful memories of those long afternoon discussions. The museum that bears this book's name was born of that friendship.

There were others, too. I found my way to the Galerie St. Etienne and its owner, Otto Kallir and his assistant, Hildegard Bachert, and later, his granddaughter, Jane Kallir. From them, I bought some of my finest Schiele paintings and Klimt drawings, as well as Oskar Kokoschka works. These artists

still give me the same thrill today as they did when I first laid eyes on them [Fig. 14].

Sometimes, when we take our steps in life, we don't always know why or where they are leading us. For me, this entire focus—from my education in art and my first purchases to my friendship with Serge Sabarsky, as well as my rekindled interest in the Jewish world—all came together with one painting, *Adele Bloch-Bauer I* by Gustav Klimt. This towering work carries with it the tortured history of Europe throughout the entire twentieth century—completed in Vienna in 1907 with its own personal intrigue, stolen by the Nazis, kept from its rightful owner, Maria Altmann, by the Austrians and, after decades of legal wrangling, finally repatriated. Adele Bloch-Bauer now resides as the crown jewel of the Neue Galerie, a fitting home for this enchanting woman.

In the last ten years before Serge Sabarsky died, we shared the dream of combining our two collections and creating a museum of German and Austrian art. Serge saw the ac-



12. Constantin Brancusi, Self-Portrait in his studio, Paris, 1933–34. Photograph by Georges Meguerditchian. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France



Most private collections are never seen in their entirety during the lifetime of the owner. If they are, it is limited to auction catalogues and magazine articles. But there is rarely the chance to actually see the collection as a whole. Although there are parts of my collection that are not on display here, most of the key works in every field are represented. It is my hope that a young collector out there will stroll into the Neue Galerie during this show and will be inspired as I was, such a long time ago in this great city .

13. Left: Serge Sabarsky in his apartment at 110 Riverside Drive, ca. 1960

Ronald S. Lauder  
President, Neue Galerie New York

14. Below: Ronald S. Lauder with Egon Schiele's *Portrait of the Painter Karl Zakovsek*, New York, ca. 1995

quisition of the building that was to become the Neue Galerie, but sadly, he did not live to see the realization of our dream: the opening of the museum ten years ago. I know that what the Neue Galerie has become, with its quality and excellence, would fulfill his expectations and make him happy .

And none of this would have happened without the devotion of the Neue Galerie's first and only director, Renée Price, whom I first met in the 1970s when she worked as gallery director for Serge Sabarsky . Renée was there during those early discussions and has a clear understanding of the foundation of this institution like no one else.

A special thank you goes to Elizabeth Szancer Kujawski, who came to me first to catalogue my collection over two decades ago and has remained with me all this time as my curator. Her husband, Tom Zoufaly, and his loyal crew have moved these works a total of what must now be hundreds of miles. Their hard work and expertise brings this show to the public.







1. Neue Galerie New York. Photograph by Hulya Kolabas, 2009

## FOREWORD

In November 2011, Neue Galerie New York [Fig. 1] celebrates its tenth anniversary. I remember well the excitement of installing our collection for the first time, and welcoming visitors into the newly renovated building after four arduous years of planning and construction. In fact, this journey really began in the mid-80s, when the Neue Galerie co-founders Serge Sabarsky and Ronald S. Lauder began to discuss creating a museum for German and Austrian art, with their collections as the foundation. I was honored to be part of those discussions, as I am now privileged to carry out their vision.

Serge Sabarsky played an important role in the development of the Ronald S. Lauder Collection. It started out in 1968 at the Sabarsky residence on Riverside Drive. Ronald and his brother Leonard came to view the large Egon Schiele drawings collection they had heard about and to have a Schiele drawing authenticated. That was the beginning of a thirty-year friendship between Serge and Ronald. Both men shared a passion for collecting art. Hardly a day passed during my seven-year tenure at the Serge Sabarsky Gallery without a phone call from Ronald to Serge. I witnessed Ronald calling

from all parts of the world, even—much to Serge's delight—while airborne [Fig. 2]. Serge, thirty-three years Ronald's senior, felt very proud of their close relationship.

Many a Sunday afternoon, the two men met at the Upper East Side gallery, in Serge's dim back office, to exchange views on works of art, politics, life, love and loss—often peppered with spicy jokes to keep things from becoming too serious [Fig. 3]. Art acquisitions were always a hot topic. After all, Serge was not only a collector, but also an art dealer and a shrewd businessman. He procured the finest works of Austrian and German Expressionism for himself and on behalf of his client and friend.

Among the masterpieces that passed through Serge's hands to the Ronald S. Lauder Collection was Gustav Klimt's *Forester House in Weissenbach on the Attersee* of 1914. In this bright canvas, which depicts the Attersee house where Klimt lodged during the summers of 1914–16, the artist pays tribute to the Post-Impressionist master Vincent van Gogh. Klimt focused on the elaborate painterly surface of the front garden and house façade, with the exception of one

2. Right: Renée Price and Serge Sabarsky, 1986. Photograph by Frederick Elghanayan

3. Far right: Serge Sabarsky and Ronald S. Lauder, Paris ca. 1995. Photograph by Jo Carole Lauder



square inch of impasto on the upper right window. There, the artist teases the viewer's eye to look through the house interior into a patch of green garden beyond. Ronald's mother, Estée, had a great fondness of this painting [Fig. 4].

The large *Jurisprudence* transfer drawing, dated 1902–03 [Fig. 5], from Klimt's doomed commission to decorate the ceiling of the University of Vienna's Great Hall, may be considered the most important Klimt work on paper in Ronald's collection. A naked old man with hands tied behind his back, surrounded by svelte sirens, is being judged, while an octopus menacingly spreads its tentacles. Vienna's conservative art establishment, including nearly ninety professors who signed a petition to thwart the commission, was not ready for Klimt's pictorial candor. After toiling away for ten years, the embittered artist withdrew from the disputed commission, and refrained from accepting further public assignments.

Serge had empathy for the plight of the artists he showed. He maintained a particu-

lar love for the younger Viennese modernists, especially Richard Gerstl, Oskar Kokoschka, and Egon Schiele. Among the many Schiele drawings and watercolors that came from Serge's private collection, three stand out: the 1910 *Portrait of the Painter Max Oppenheimer* [Fig. 6], depicting a fellow artist friend of Schiele, known then as Mopp. The distinct silhouette of Mopp's black coat, the seductive gaze at the viewer—with shadowed

4. Estée Lauder standing with Gustav Klimt's *Forester House in Weissenbach on the Attersee*, 1914, oil on canvas



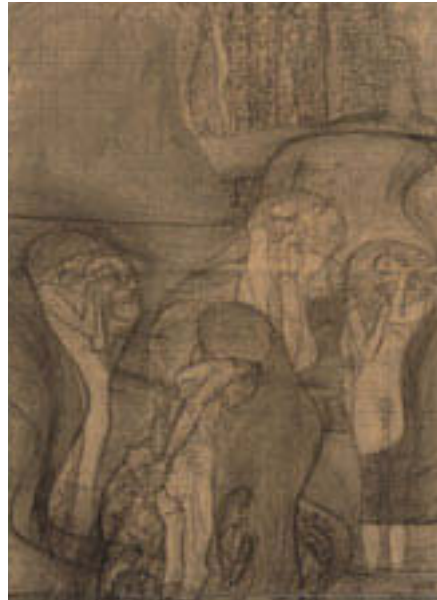


eyelids and proud posture—epitomize the artist's exploration of self, coupled with the decadent attitude of the era. Schiele's 1910 *Reclining Male Nude* [Fig. 7], an emaciated, headless, contorted body—rendered in red and swiftly outlined with black chalk—is, in fact, a self-portrait. The artist made a series of these torsos with flayed skin, in which he excavates his inner core before his floor-length mirror.

Schiele's *Sturm und Drang* had subsided by 1917 in the *Portrait of the Composer Arnold Schönberg* [Fig. 8]. Although recruited into the Austrian army, Schiele had a desk job that allowed him to continue his artistic pursuits. Schönberg was already a prominent avant-garde composer, and Schiele captures the seated man's essence with black chalk outlines, omitting the armrest of the chair that the sitter's fingers are straddling. The cerebral intensity of Schönberg's gaze is eloquently played against the animated ripple of his creased vest and jacket sleeve.

Richard Gerstl was an academically trained painter who met Arnold Schönberg in 1906 and soon became part of the composer's inner circle. His *Portrait of a Man on the Lawn* [Fig. 9] was painted outdoors in 1907 while Gerstl summered with the Schönberg family. Gerstl's break with a naturalistic, academic style and his newly found open painterly technique was considered radical by his contemporaries. His stormy love affair with Schönberg's wife Mathilde, (who eventually returned to her husband and family), and his ensuing rupture with Schönberg and his circle, were contributing factors to Gerstl's suicide in 1908.

Both Ronald and Serge responded to the bold, raw nature of German Expressionist art,



5. Gustav Klimt, Transfer drawing for *Jurisprudence*, 1902–03, black chalk and pencil on paper



6. Egon Schiele, *Portrait of the Painter Max Oppenheimer*, 1910, watercolor, gouache, ink, and black crayon on paper

especially that of the Dresden architecture students who decided to become painters and formed the Brücke (Bridge) in 1905. But the endeavors of the more intellectual Munich-based artist group around Vasily



7. Above: Egon Schiele, *Reclining Male Nude*, 1910, watercolor and black crayon on paper

8. Right: Egon Schiele, *Portrait of the Composer Arnold Schönberg*, 1917, watercolor, gouache, and black crayon on paper

Kandinsky, Franz Marc, and August Macke, known as the Blaue Reiter (Blue Rider) also held their fascination and were often on view in the Serge Sabarsky Gallery. Gabriele Münter's *Kandinsky in Interior*, dated ca. 1912 [Fig. 10], captures the spiritual father of the Blue Reiter standing in the Munich living room he shared with Münter, holding his pipe. Originally the painting was larger and encompassed two couples, the art dealer who gave the Blaue Reiter their second exhibition, Hans Goltz, and his wife, along with Kandinsky and Münter. Dissatisfied with the composition, the artist cut away more than half of the canvas, leaving this fragment. Kandinsky is isolated in front of the table, which is set for *Nachmittagsjause* (afternoon tea). Two paintings hang on the wall behind him, a bold landscape above his head—possibly by Kandinsky—and, to his left, a still-life, probably by Münter. Serge would joke, “You get three pictures for the price of one!” That must have swayed Ronald to buy it.

August Macke, like Franz Marc, had a strong interest in French art, primarily Cubism and Orphism. He also absorbed the Impressionists' subject matter which was taken from daily life—street, café, and park scenes. *Strollers at the Lake II* [Fig. 11], of 1912, observes the lakeside activities of bourgeois burghers on the Bavarian lake Tegernsee. Ronald said he was drawn to Macke's Expressionist palette, combined with the faceless, abstract figures before the horizontal blue of the lake. Macke's heavy use of black and green add a powerful impact to the composition.

Serge, a Viennese émigré, related to the fact that Lyonel Feininger was considered an American in Europe and a German in America. Feininger, of German descent, was born and died in New York. But his formative artistic years, spent in Germany included visits to Paris, where he studied the work of the French Cubists. By 1906, Feininger had dis-



covered the small village church of Gelmeroda, a town outside of Weimar, which held an obsessive fascination for him for years to come. Feininger created a highly individual synthesis of Cubist and Expressionist pictorial language. The predominately yellow *Gelmeroda II* of 1913 [Fig. 12] is exemplary for this crystalline style, and was originally part of the Stadt Museum Dresden collection, until it was confiscated during the Third Reich. Serge relished the notion that the canvas was included in the *Entartete Kunst* (*Degenerate Art*) exhibition that toured Nazi Germany in 1937, yet survived the scorn and derision it endured and was placed into New York's finest private collection.

Of course, the Ronald S. Lauder Collection extends well beyond the realm of German and Austrian art, the areas in which Serge Sabarsky worked. As this tenth anniversary of the Neue Galerie approached, we began to wonder how we could do justice to the moment, and whether we ought to go beyond our core mission for the occasion. To date, we have mounted large-scale exhibitions devoted to Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, perhaps the two leading lights of our collection. We have shown the decorative arts of Josef Hoffmann and Dagobert Peche, as well as thematic exhibitions such as *Comic Grotesque: Wit and Mockery in German Art, 1870–1940* and our first photography survey, *Portraits of an Age: Photography in Germany and Austria 1900–1938*. We have traced entire art movements in *Brücke* and *Van Gogh and Expressionism*, and created shows focused on individual works, such as *Adele Bloch-Bauer I* by Klimt, *Self-Portrait with Horn* by Max Beckmann, and *Berlin Street Scene* by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. We have also shown the collection of our late co-founder, Serge Sabarsky.



9. Richard Gerstl, *Portrait of a Man on the Lawn*, 1907, oil on canvas

In the end, we did decide to go beyond our stated mission for this occasion, and turned to the entire collection of our other co-founder, the driving force behind the museum, Ronald Lauder. Having consistently displayed his German and Austrian art and design, we decided to show the broad spectrum of his collecting interests. Capturing this range is quite a challenge, as Ronald maintains a passionate interest in so many different kinds of art: arms and armor, medieval and renaissance painting, master drawings, and modern and contemporary art. We pay homage to our original mission by focusing on German and



Austrian art and design in the modern and contemporary sections of the exhibition.

The main principle uniting all these broad collecting interests is an absolute, instinctual dedication to quality. Ronald has the vision and temperament to identify greatness in art very quickly, and he has the conviction and courage to follow through and acquire masterworks. The result is no less than one of the finest private art collections in the world. Ronald joins me in expressing our deep gratitude to special friends and colleagues who played important roles in helping the Neue Galerie reach this milestone occasion. Thanks go to our esteemed advisory board members—Reinhold Heller, Max Hollein, Jill Lloyd,

Ernst Ploil, Olaf Peters, Carl Schorske, Peter Selz, Eduard Sekler, and Christian Witt-Döring—who have all contributed so much to setting the direction for our museum; five from this group have also organized exhibitions for the Neue Galerie. From the outset the brothers Paul and Stefan Asenbaum have been our valued Viennese partners. Wilfried Utermann remains a most loyal German confidant. Kurt Gutenbrunner has made the Café Sabarsky a sought-after destination through his rigorous dedication to Austrian cuisine. Special thanks are due to Alessandra Comini for her friendship and guidance.

Architect Annabelle Selldorf oversaw the magnificent building renovation with her team. It has been an honor to collaborate with guest curators Monika Faber, Josef Helfenstein, Annegret Hoberg, Pamela Kort, Roland März, and Tobias Natter. Every installation from the past ten years has been carried out under the guiding hand of Tom Zoufaly. He has expertly worked with our exhibition designers: John Vinci, Lawrence Kenney, Peter de Kimpe, Jerry Neuner, and Federico de Vera. We take our hat off to them all and thank them for their keen vision. For the tenth anniversary show in particular, exhibitions designers Peter de Kimpe and Tom Zoufaly discovered a way to present a tremendous amount of a material in a very elegant manner. Curator Elizabeth Szancer Kujawski used her extensive knowledge of the Lauder Collection to help cull the finest works from it, and to place them in a broader context. The designers of this catalogue, and in fact our entire graphic identity program, Richard Pandiscio and Bill Loccisano, brought their brilliant creativity to bear. The entire Neue Galerie family, including Scott Gutterman, our steadfast deputy director; Sefa Saglam, director of exhibitions and registrar; Janis Staggs,



10. Gabriele Münter, *Kandinsky in Interior*, ca. 1912, oil on canvas on panel. Private Collection



11. Left: August Macke, *Strollers at the Lake II*, 1912, oil on canvas. Private Collection

12. Right: Lyonel Feininger, *Gelmeroda II*, 1913, oil on canvas. Private Collection. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

associate curator; Michael Voss, preparator; and Leah Ammon, communications manager helped bring this exhibition to life.

We have been fortunate to receive gifts of artwork from several important individuals: Leonard Lauder, who donated a complete set of Wiener Werkstätte postcards; the late Maria Altmann, who presented the museum with two George Minne sculptures, which proudly flank the portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer; and the Manley family, which graciously donated to the museum a magnificent Egon Schiele landscape. All have contributed greatly to the legacy of the Neue Galerie.

My most profound thanks, though, are reserved for Ronald Lauder himself. I consider myself privileged to be a close friend of and to work with this fascinating, complex, and most generous man. In presenting his collection, we honor the endless quest to assemble and share works of art that exude strength and beauty. They give comfort and speak to the best qualities of human en-

deavor. They represent a gift and an inspiration beyond all measure.

The warmth with which the Neue Galerie has been embraced by the public is a blessing to all who have been involved in giving it shape. May it thrive for decades to come.

Renée Price  
Director, Neue Galerie New York







1. Paul Cézanne, *Man with Crossed Arms*, ca. 1899, oil on canvas

## ELIZABETH SZANCER KUJAWSKI

### From Wish List to Collection

The memory remains incredibly vivid of that November morning, some twenty-eight years ago. It was a Saturday, and Ronald Lauder had invited me to his family home to view his already notable art collection. I had been familiar with some of the extraordinary works, and we had been discussing the possibility of cataloguing the collection with a view to eventually writing and publishing a catalogue for scholarly purposes.

When I entered, I was introduced to Jo Carole Lauder and led past the imposing vitrines of medieval objects and a salon-style installation of Picasso drawings. I entered into the library, a room so visually engaging that I would remain forever awestruck. It was an art historian's dream. The works, spanning the centuries, encompassed early Netherlandish drawings, eighteenth-century works on paper by David, Géricault, and Delacroix, Cézannes and other major nineteenth-century artists, as well as arms and armor and furnishings, all brilliantly presented. A variety of European helmets were lined up on a shelf, opposite full suits of armor and horse helmets, or shaffrons. The mid-eighteenth century Combe Abbey Library Table, attributed to Thomas Chippendale, was placed upon an intricately designed Louis XIII Savonnerie carpet. As I toured the room, I was welcomed by Ronald's declarative statement, "I guess I don't have to tell you what you are looking at—you know these artists." A lively dialogue ensued, the first of what would soon grow into an ongoing daily exchange of ideas and rapport that we still share today.

Animatedly, Ronald introduced me to the latest addition to the collection, a magnificently rendered Cézanne, *Apples and Inkwell* (ca. 1902–06) [Fig. 2], a gift that he had recently received to mark the occasion of his fortieth birthday. This colorful watercolor and pencil drawing of Cézanne's last years hung in the library below a beautifully drawn work *Full-Length Portrait of The Artist's Son*, (ca. 1885–86) [Plate 172], executed during a period when the artist focused more on the contrasts of black and white rather than on a line as a definition of form. These were surrounded by a group of other equally significant works on paper by Degas, Seurat, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec. Today, this same wall, where I had gotten my first view of ten stellar pieces, displays twice as many works, and overall, the collection has grown twentyfold.

2. Paul Cézanne, *Apples and Inkwell*, ca. 1902–06, watercolor and pencil on paper



The tour continued into a small study, filled with prime examples of twentieth-century German and Austrian works on paper, complemented by Austrian furnishings of the Wiener Werkstätte. A tightly installed group of some twelve Schieles, including the highly emotive charcoal and wash of 1910, *Self-Portrait with Arm Twisted above Head* [Plate 223], surrounded by Klimt drawings on one wall, was juxtaposed with carefully chosen pieces by Klee, Grosz, and Heckel on another.

I have been asked many times if Ronald's interest in this area was borne out of his experience as the American Ambassador to Austria in the late 1980s, but it was in fact an early focus developed during his teenage years. With a passionate and instinctive appetite for art, Ronald Lauder had already concentrated on specific areas of collecting as a very young man. Not having descended from a family of collectors, as was the case with many other earlier art enthusiasts, inspirations about art came from his studies, as well as an interest in foreign languages and his frequent travels abroad, which included museum and private collection visits. Early on, he was aware of historically known collections as well as those of the later twentieth century formed by Florence Gould (1895–1983), Germain Seligman (1904–1978), and Nelson A. Rockefeller (1908–1979), to name just a few; he had even had the distinct privilege of viewing some of them. It has often been mentioned how Ronald purchased his first works of art as a teenager. It is true that, at age 14, he purchased a work by Schiele and another by Klimt, against his parents' wishes. The Schiele watercolor, of a girl with striped stockings, now belongs to The Leopold Museum; he still owns the Klimt drawing.

We proceeded to the living room, where Constantin Brancusi's marble *Bird in Space*, [Fig.

3] had recently been installed. The first of Ronald's ten Brancusi sculptures, including a mantelpiece, and the only one that he owned at that time, it had been familiar to him and to me from the collection of Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller. I had worked for Governor Rockefeller as an assistant curator and had long been inspired by this extraordinary sculpture, which I had seen earlier in the 1969 exhibition, "Twentieth-Century Art from the Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller Collection."<sup>1</sup> Its fascinating history has become part of the piece itself. Carved from a single block of white marble, and among the tallest of Brancusi's forty-one *Birds*, a theme that preoccupied the artist from 1908 through the 1950s, it captures the essence of flight in endless space. From 1923 on, Brancusi depicted his birds soaring in flight, and the concept of a solid weighty mass defying gravity, ascending upward, allowed for limitless possibilities.<sup>2</sup> Brancusi sold this sculpture directly to the collector, Mrs. Charles C. Rumsey, in 1929–30; it then went by descent to her son, Charles C. Rumsey. It was purchased by Lee A. Ault, the collector and art dealer, in 1948. In 1952, Nelson A. Rockefeller acquired this dynamic statuesque masterpiece through the dealer Curt Valentin and installed it at Kykuit, his home in Pocantico Hills. Later deaccessioned, it eventually found its way to the Lauder collection in 1982 through the art dealer and collector, Eugene Thaw.

Another vivid recollection from this first visit is the Cézanne, *Man with Crossed Arms* (ca. 1899) [Fig. 1], whose companion painting of the same subject, *The Clockmaker*, I had known well from the Guggenheim. In this portrait, which entered the collection in 1979, Cézanne presents a figure of contrasts and distortions, resulting in an expressive quality that has been likened to that of El Greco. In the facial features, there are upward movements on the right counteracted by downturned pulls on the left. Cézanne has created a spatial illusion as well. The head seems to rotate away from the background, allowing us to view it from several angles—an idea fully explored by the Cubists.<sup>3</sup> The man's pose, centralized and simple in manner, his wavy hair, parted and glowing in opposite directions, suggests a restlessness and tension in the figure.<sup>4</sup> There is also, however, a contrasting restraint in the figure's folded arms, a recurring theme in Cézanne's work. The crossed arms appear in Cézanne's work as early as the 1860s and later in works such as *Standing Peasant* (ca. 1895), and in the standing figure of the larger version of *Cardplayers*, (1890–92), both in the Barnes collection. They suggest, perhaps, a melancholy resignation or a posture of self-restraint.<sup>5</sup> The symmetry and frontality of the figure are reminiscent of other Cézanne portraits such as *Portrait de M. Ambroise Vollard* (1899), Cézanne's dealer, in the Petit Palais, Paris. The unassuming attitude of the sitter is a quality that the artist also valued in himself.<sup>6</sup>

Cézanne depicted this sitter twice, a model who has never been identified. Although they are not identical, there is a great similarity in the portraits. The sitter may have been a farm worker at the Jas de Bouffan. Similar subjects served as models of other works by the artist.<sup>7</sup>

Ronald had been captured by this portrait when it was included in the 1977 exhibition, "Cézanne: The Late Work," and recalls that the owners had been noted on the label. A few months later, Eugene Thaw called to say that it was for sale, and that evening Ronald went



3. Constantin Brancusi, *Bird in Space*, ca. 1925, marble. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



to see it. At the time, the price was the highest that Ronald had ever paid for a work of art, but he knew that it was a must for his collection.

As we slowly moved on to look at the arms and armor, Ronald took a moment to share his own personal grading system for works of art: *Oh...*, *Oh my...*, and *Oh my God*. He emphatically let me know that he was only interested in acquiring art that is in the *Oh my God* category, a philosophy and a passion that have guided him to this day. Before leaving, Ronald handed me the catalogue of the collection of Germain Seligman. The limited edition privately printed publication, with its full-page photographs, in-depth cataloguing details of historical significance, and aesthetically appropriate paper stock, was to serve as a reference guide for our endeavor. Ronald felt akin to this exemplary collector, with his broad range of interests, and over the years, he acquired two Seurat conté crayon drawings, a David drawing, and a late sixteenth century horseman's saddle ax from this collection.<sup>8</sup>

With Ronald's grading system in mind, I understood that I was about to embark on an exciting and challenging task to which I would be applying the same standards of excellence. We formulated our strategy, and I began by gathering and carefully researching whatever information and documentation was available on the collection. I would have access to the key figures who had influenced or mentored him on the acquisitions across multiple disciplines, including William D. Wixom and Edward R. Lubin, for Medieval art; Stuart Pyhrr and Howard Ricketts for arms and armor; William Rubin, Eugene Thaw, Ernst Beyeler, and John and Paul Herring for Modern Masters; and for German and Austrian works, Jane Kallir and Hildegard Bachert of the Galerie St. Etienne and, of course, Serge Sabarsky. Shortly thereafter, Christian Witt-Döring and Paul and Stefan Asenbaum would begin to provide important advice regarding Austrian furnishings and decorations. Each work was studied, catalogued, and photographed, and we met on a regular basis to review the progress, whether in New York, Washington, or Vienna. Inevitably, our discussions would turn to pertinent exhibitions, upcoming auctions, recently received offers, and the wish list.

As I proceeded, an awareness of Ronald Lauder's discerning eye became increasingly apparent, though the distinct thread that has always run through his collections was also evident from the start. From our first discussions, I was captivated by Ronald's connoisseurship and keen visual memory and recognized his intellectual ability, as he possessed the knowledge to discuss and debate a work of art or concept with any art historian, artist, or critic. He only needed to view something once for it to become indelibly ingrained in his memory, and he could instantly recall when and where it had been seen. This kind of relationship to art—the ability to exist comfortably and knowledgeably in the past as well as the present—is rare. His desire to work in a collaborative manner was a special opportunity for me, and I have been extremely fortunate to have participated in the development and expansion of one of the most important collections of our time. Through the years, we have created fine-tuned, synchronized methods of integrating the collection in terms of philosophy and growth.

Eclectic is a term often applied to this formidable collection. However, it is more a garner-

ing of collections across multiple disciplines to create something larger: a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Ronald Lauder has successfully combined various art forms into a carefully orchestrated synthesis, resulting in a total artwork. Each personal space, from home to office, is like a declarative statement and understanding of art, design, and style, comprised of incredible art works complemented by specifically selected furnishings and decorations. He is the only person I know who has collected in so many different fields, amassing a collection spanning the centuries. From the earliest ivory or enamel medieval works to grand-scale contemporary examples by Bruce Nauman, Brice Marden, Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke, to work by the most contemporary video artists, it is a collection that rivals many that are housed in our most prominent institutions. Its furnishings are not only those of the Wiener Werkstätte or of the Bauhaus, but there are numerous examples of other noted designers in various media, including Alvar Aalto, Alberto and Diego Giacometti, Jean Prouvé, Jean-Michel Frank, Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, Carlo Mollino, Gio Ponti, Carlo Scarpa, Isamu Noguchi, Shiro Kuramata, Fernando and Humberto Campana, Ron Arad, and many more.

Aside from a brief foray into the ancient world of Archaic Chinese bronzes, there has been, from the beginning, a devoted and consistent concentration in the collecting areas that we see today. Medieval art, arms and armor, the modern masters, the decorative arts, and German and Austrian works of art have been the main collecting areas for him. Each of the aforementioned areas has been approached with further qualification and specificity. The Medieval works are some of the finest in private hands; the arms and armor focus on European examples; the paintings of the Modern masters are supported by seminal drawings. According to Ronald, every artist has a special time in his or her career, especially in the case of the modern artists, and according to him, Picasso created his best works before 1935; therefore, there are no later works by him in the collection.

When we meet, I am usually greeted with the question, “OK, what’ve you got?” On any given day, we review auction catalogues that we have both marked, as well as any relevant offers. We compare and debate what lots should be researched and pursued. The follow-up steps have been performed countless times and do not have to be reviewed by us. New acquisitions is a topic that dominates many of our discussions, but there are other subjects that also come to the fore and typify how we interact: where to install newly purchased or framed pieces; conservation and storage issues; and how to respond to loan requests, to name just a few. From this range of details, there have been numerous outstanding memories and defining moments. What follows is a recounting of some of the most extraordinary experiences.

It was the fall of 1990. Ronald had been spending a good deal of time in Germany and Eastern Europe, focusing on various projects and aspects of The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation. Following our usual format, we each had reviewed the upcoming auction catalogues for the November sales. Having both targeted the extraordinary 1910 Kokoschka portrait of *Dr. Rudolf Blümner* [Fig. 4], we agreed that it was something to pursue. This painting of the lawyer turned actor had first been owned by Herwarth Walden, founder of *Der Sturm*, the Expressionist magazine and an art gallery that promoted young and unknown artists, Oskar



4. Oskar Kokoschka, *Dr. Rudolf Blümner*, 1910, oil on canvas. Private Collection. © 2011 Fondation Oskar Kokoschka / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ProLitteris, Zürich

5. Vasily Kandinsky, *Composition V*, 1911, oil on canvas. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



Kokoschka among them. (Note the bronze *Portrait of Herwarth Walden* designed by William Wauer in 1917 is also in the collection. [Plate 130]) I proceeded to follow up on this pursuit with all of the required due diligence prior to the sale date, and knowing that there would be great competition for this lot, we also discussed the estimate and assessed how high to bid in the hopes of being successful. After the sale, I phoned Ronald in Berlin to relay the positive results; however, I had concerns about how to convey that I had determined to go one bid above our agreed-upon price. I knew that ultimately Ronald wanted the work and would have been disappointed had he been the underbidder. I can still hear his silence on the other end of the line when I explained what I had done. And then his words: "I think that it's a great picture, don't you?"

The painting of Dr. Blümner was well-placed into the collection, which already featured other prime examples of Austrian art. Kirk Varnedoe's 1986 exhibition, at the Museum of Modern Art, "Vienna 1900, Art, Architecture and Design," included several of the earlier acquired works and a number of loans from other sources that would later join them. So, in 1990 when Ronald Lauder and Serge Sabarsky had begun to seriously discuss the idea of a German and Austrian museum of art for New York City, it was already with a certain vision in mind. From the 1960s, Serge had mounted monumental exhibitions in his Madison Avenue gallery, as well as traveling shows of German and Austrian Expressionist artists, so the concept of an American cultural institution that would promote scholarship in this field was something that they decided to make a reality. It was one of the usual phone calls from Ronald, but this time, in 1993, the request was quite different. "Elizabeth, I need to find a building. Serge has finally agreed to the museum project. Can you call a couple of brokers and find out

what's on the market?" By the end of the week, the three of us were headed on an expedition to find the perfect building. Up and down, as close to Museum Mile as we could explore, we visited a variety of available properties. 1048 Fifth Avenue had come to the market. This splendid 1914 edifice, designed by Carrère and Hastings, belonged to YIVO, the Institute for Jewish Research. The director gave us a tour of the building, explaining that it no longer fit the needs of his organization. We ascended to each floor, and by the time that we had exited onto the roof, I could see that Ronald and Serge both knew that this was to be their museum's future home, and the purchase was finalized in 1994. Serge's concepts have been thoroughly integrated into the Neue Galerie's design and exhibition programming. Although it is unfortunate that he was not able to experience the museum's final creation, as he passed away in 1996, Ronald Lauder has certainly made it a tribute to his memory .

The interest in post-war German and Austrian art developed as a parallel pursuit in the late 80s and early 90s. During those years, it was possible to acquire exemplary works in a variety of media by key artists of a certain generation: Georg Baselitz, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Markus Lupertz, Jörg Immendorff, Arnulf Rainer and Hermann Nitsch. These would soon be followed by additions from Martin Kippenberger and Albert Oehlen, among others. As it became more widely known that Ronald was now actively collecting in the realm, numerous offers came his way, and the selection was his.

Pursuit of the most sought-after pieces on one's wish list is the constant quest of a passionate collector, who keeps a steady eye on stellar works that could become available. The words "private collection" on an exhibition label or illustration reference engender hope that an acquisition might still be possible. For Ronald Lauder, some of these dreams have become realized through the years. Vasily Kandinsky's *Composition V* [Fig. 5] of 1911 was one such work on the wish list. Having first seen this extraordinary painting in 1983 in the collection of Josef Müller (1887–1977) in Solothurn, Switzerland, he knew that it was something to be

6. Henri Matisse, *The Backs I–IV*, 1909–30, bronze. © 2011 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York







7. Max Beckmann, *Galleria Umberto*, 1925, oil on canvas. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

coveted. By the time that Müller was in his early 20s, he had already amassed a number of significant works of art, and in 1913, he purchased *Composition V* directly from the artist. This painting, the most controversial of Kandinsky's oeuvre, had been rejected for inclusion in the 1911 exhibition of Neue Künstlervereinigung Munich, or Munich New Artist's Association, on the grounds that its dimensions were larger than the acceptable scale. Perhaps it was Kandinsky's experimentation with abstraction and pure painting that was the fundamental issue. Influenced by the Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg's (1874–1951) expressionistic music, specifically the Second String Quartet of 1908, Kandinsky discovered a new way to approach his developing aesthetic. Also known as *The Last Judgment*, *Composition V* is one in a series of seven compositions, but it is this composition in which the artist's transition from figurative painting to abstraction is most clearly evident. Although it continues the theme of the Resurrection, with its ethnographic motifs and symbolic references, the theme is veiled in abstracted forms and a dynamic color palette.<sup>9</sup>

In 1995, The Museum of Modern Art mounted the exhibition "Kandinsky Compositions," curated by Magdalena Dabrowski, and *Composition V*, then in a collection in Switzerland, was sent to New York for inclusion. Some four years later, Ronald was able to acquire this masterpiece, and soon after, I was on my way to Switzerland to accompany it to New York. Once again, its size posed a challenge, and in order for it to be installed, it had to be hoisted. We also used this opportunity to rig two acquired bronze states of *Nu du dos*, or "The Backs" by Henri Matisse [Fig. 6]. Numbers II and III, of 1913 and 1916–17 respectively, they had been in storage awaiting installation. The ultimate goal was to be able to acquire the two other backs in this series of four, and luckily, within two years, Numbers I and IV were offered to Ronald Lauder. Now, the viewer was able to experience Henri Matisse's manipulation of the female figure, from the more figurative depiction in *Back I* to its abstracted portrayal in *Back IV*. This monumental group of four Matisse *Backs* still remains as the only complete set in private hands. The others can be seen together in public institutions fortunate enough to have this sculptural group.

In curating this exhibition, I have researched my records of the last twenty-plus years. I also realized that we have made a number of yearly purchases in the "Oh my God" category and that Ronald has been able to regularly check off works from his wish list. For example, in 1991, a smaller auction house in France was selling the Brancusi *Fireplace* that the artist had created for Maurice Reynal, the art historian and critic. He had only made two examples of this sculpture. One of these is currently installed in the Atelier Brancusi, designed by Renzo Piano and located outside the Pompidou. Made of three very simple but weighty plinths of soapstone in 1933–34, this new purchase found no designated spot for installation. It remained in storage until 1996, when architectural changes in the Lauder home made it possible for it to be placed there among the other Brancusi sculptures that had been acquired by that time. For a collector to recognize a great work of art and to purchase it without having a designated placement, as in this case, takes determination and courage.

During this same five-year period, other key wish list pieces were acquired, including the

following paintings: Max Beckmann, *Galleria Umberto* (1925) [Fig. 7]; Joan Miró, *The Table (Still-Life with Rabbit)* (1920), exhibited in Miro's first one-man show in Paris in 1921 and well known from the Gustav Zumsteg collection in Zurich until its deaccession in 1995; Egon Schiele *Man and Woman I (Lovers I)* (1914) as well as the following sculptures: Marcel Broodthaers, *White Cabinet and White Table* (1965) [Fig. 8]; Picasso's unique plaster bas-relief of Marie-Thérèse, *Head of a Woman* (1931) [Plate 107], and Richard Serra's *Intersection II* (1992) [Fig. 9], constructed of four Cor-ten steel massive curves, each 55 feet long and 13 feet high. Shown in 1993 at the Gagosian Gallery in SoHo, it has since been donated to The Museum of Modern Art and was installed in the museum's garden for a recent Serra exhibition.

The next five years brought the first two Matisse *Backs* and the Kandinsky *Composition V*, which were mentioned earlier. The amazing still life by Cézanne, *Still-Life with Drapery and Fruit* (1904–06) [Plate 101], where the artist clearly transitions to abstraction, had been a principal target on the wish list, and when it became available, we immediately entered negotiations. Soon afterward, Brice Marden agreed to sell his *Muses (Hydra Version)*, 1991–97, with the intention that it go to a collection such as this. A mural-size canvas that the artist had reworked over a number of years in New York and in Hydra, it belongs to a body of work drawing on the theme of the Greek muses abstractly depicted with colorful lines and references to figures and places. Also acquired were the 1904 Picasso gouache and pastel on paper, *Woman*



8. Marcel Broodthaers, *White Cabinet and White Table* 1965, wood, oil, and egg-shells. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fractional and promised gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SABAM, Brussels



9. Richard Serra, *Intersection II*, 1992, four plates of Cor-Ten steel. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder. © 2011 Richard Serra / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

*with a Raven* [Plate 190], which clearly bridged the artist's evolution from the Rose period to the Blue, and the sofa with gilded feet by Jean-Michel Frank from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson A. Rockefeller.

Future additions included the exemplary Lighting Table (ca. 1953) by Jean Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand; an important group of arms and armor from the renowned Gwynn Collection; Alberto Giacometti's *Disagreeable Object*, an early Surrealist sculptural wood form from 1931 [Plate 115]; and Robert Rauschenberg's monumental painting, *Rebus*, of 1955 [Fig. 10]. Of all of the highlights that I could describe, and there are many, the acquisition of the restituted portrait painting *Adele Bloch-Bauer I* of 1907 by Gustav Klimt [Plate 116] was one that has no rival.

The most exciting thing for me now is to look ahead as to what might be added during these next 10 to 20 years. We have a wish list that, unfortunately, grows smaller each year, as more and more pieces become part of public collections, but just as this wish list seems to shrink, new works are added to it in more unusual fields. As I look back on the last twenty-eight years, with a realization of the fulfillment of so many objectives, I also look forward to the possibilities that lie ahead.

Most great collectors only come to light after they die and their collections are bequeathed to museums. Sometimes, the public has to wait for decades to see these extraordinary works of art. Through the years, we have shown many pieces in one exhibition or another, but it was Ronald's typically generous decision to share his collection all at one time on this special celebratory occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Neue Galerie. It is not only a question of what is in this collection, but also the philosophy behind it, as well as the relationship among the pieces. The works certainly speak for themselves, but the man whose collecting philosophy established this extraordinary melding of artistic disciplines is also a creative participant in the dialogue.

Every collector has a philosophy of what to acquire. Some buy only in one area; others are driven by monetary value. Still others reflect the contemporary art of their time. Some collections are inherited and then augmented as a means of having instant visual culture or a demonstration of wealth. It is extremely rare, however, that a true connoisseur's collection is created. In the French meaning of the word, Ronald Lauder is a true "amateur" in that he has assembled such an outstanding and diverse collection driven only by his passion for great art.

To work so closely with this extraordinary collection has been a unique adventure. To have been involved with some 4,000 objects covering a broad range of collecting areas, across a multitude of cultures, and dating from the 3rd century BC to the present, is a rare opportunity that few curators have. As I reflect on these years filled with a broad range of exciting experiences and interactions that have marked my career, it is the relationship with Ronald and Jo Carole Lauder that I most appreciate and for which I am forever grateful.

## NOTES

- 1 William S. Lieberman, *Twentieth-Century Art from the Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller Collection*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Distributed by New York Graphic Society Ltd., Greenwich, Connecticut, 1969, p. 15, illus. p. 61.
- 2 Radu Varia, *Brancusi*, Rizzoli, New York, 1986, pp. 221–222.
- 3 E. Loran, *Cézanne's Composition*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1943, pp. 90–91.
- 4 William Rubin, ed., Theodore Reff, "Painting and Theory in the Fine Decade," *Cézanne The Late Work*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Distributed by New York Graphic Society, Boston, 1977, p. 21.
- 5 *ibid.*
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 22.
- 7 *ibid.*, p. 21.
- 8 John Richardson, ed., *The Collection of Germain Seligman, Paintings, Drawings, and Works of Art*, privately printed, 1979, nos. 16, 71, 72, 119.
- 9 John Golding, *Paths to the Absolute: Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollock, Newman, Rothko, Still*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2000, pp. 96, 98, illus. p. 66.



10. Robert Rauschenberg, *Rebus*, 1955, combine painting: oil, paper, fabric, pencil, crayon, newspaper, and printed reproductions on canvas (three panels). © 2011 Estate of Robert Rauschenberg / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Partial and promised gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder and purchase





1. *Head of an Apostle*, Northeastern France, Thérouanne, ca. 1235, limestone

## **WILLIAM D. WIXOM**

### Medieval Art

The formative period during the youth of any major collector is not always known. In conversation with Ronald Lauder, my inquiries brought to light several significant facts in this regard. The cultural milieu of his parents led to his introduction in about 1964 to the collector Florence Gould (1895–1983). This occasion, at a dinner at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, led to an invitation to Mrs. Gould's home in the south of France near Cannes. Mr. Lauder acknowledges the major impact on him of this visit. The breadth of his host's collecting interests included Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and early modern paintings and drawings, as well as French book bindings, period furnishings, jewelry, and a series of medieval works of art; some of the latter were clustered in a gothic room [Fig. 2].<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Gould's ensembles were a catalyst to learn more, and an extensive reading program ensued.

Perhaps a less dramatic formative influence, also cited by Mr. Lauder, were his visits to museums here and abroad. The Metropolitan, the Walters, the Wallace Collection, and the Belvedere each played a special role.

It has been my observation that acute perceptions and deeply felt aesthetic experiences underlie the most personally formed collections, and this applies to the medieval works of art assembled here. As acquisition opportunities are rarely predictable, the elements of choice and resolve are imperative when they do occur. Mr. Lauder has not been shy at these moments. While alert art dealers and experienced auction personnel are of great importance, the direction of interest and actual decisions depended on this collector's developed sense of the artistic integrity and quality of each work of art under review. On occasion, imperative art historical factors have also come into play. Over the years of active collecting, this medieval collection developed almost as a series of extremely worthy representatives and masterpieces of key periods in the evolution of Celtic, Migration, Early Christian, Byzantine, Ottonian, Romanesque, and Gothic art.

An expansion of this collector's taste and knowledge cannot be easily demonstrated because both attributes were highly notable from the beginning. For example, the monumen-

2. Gothic Room in the home of Florence Gould, south of France near Cannes. Photograph Courtesy Sotheby's



tal limestone *Head of an Apostle* [Fig. 1, Plate 34] from Th rouanne Cathedral was purchased in late 1978 when Mr. Lauder was only thirty-four. Just as significant acquisitions have followed during the decades since. As a result, the subsequent remarks will not focus on the dates of purchases, but will instead be framed within broad art historical categories or headings.

### CELTIC METALWORK, THIRD CENTURY BC

The broad periods of Celtic culture, Hallstatt and La T ne, spread over the six centuries before the birth of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Elements of the culture continued during the late Roman period and into the early medieval period. The variety of surviving artifacts derive from a multiplicity of grave finds and other sites across the face of Europe and Britain and from discoveries from shipwrecks scattered across the eastern Mediterranean. A plethora of examples are undocumented.



3. *Military Girdle Clasp or Buckle with Arched Back*, Celtic, third century BC, copper alloy

The two large copper alloy *Military Girdle Clasps* or *Buckles*, third century BC, make a dramatic introduction to the collection. The decoration on the attenuated and arched example [Fig. 3, Plate 4] includes narrowly engraved borders, large and small knobs, and two tapered strengthening ridges. The larger knobs are the terminals for the attachment dowels to the lost leather girdle or belt. The second example [Plate 4], apparently of high tinned bronze, also exhibits engraved borders, in this instance elegant rope twists at their centers. In bold contrast is the balanced orchestration of fourteen large knobs. The two plates of each work are secured together with a broad hook on the underside of one plate fitting into a rectangular open slot in the other. This mechanism is found in clasps from the Andalusian region of the Iberian peninsula.

## ART OF THE GERMANIC MIGRATING PEOPLES, FIFTH THROUGH SEVENTH CENTURIES AD

The earrings, buckles, and radiate-headed bow brooches in worked gold, cast silver gilt and copper alloy are key representatives of the portable art of the migrating tribes of the early middle ages.<sup>3</sup> Colorful inlays of garnet and glass enhance many pieces. The Lauder collection provides a variety of examples, each exhibiting exquisite craftsmanship as well as tribal and geographical range. The Goths, initially from South Russia and northwest of the Black Sea, spread westward, the Ostrogoths (East Goths) to Italy and the Visigoths (West Goths) eventually to the Iberian peninsula.

An Ostrogothic radiate-headed *Bow Brooch* [Fig. 4, Plate 5] initiates a group of garment fasteners, often called fibula. Made of gilt silver and niello<sup>4</sup> and inlaid with garnets, they date from the second half of the fifth century or first half of the sixth century. The center fields of the foot, positioned at the top, and the crescent shaped head below are fine examples of cast, chip-carved<sup>5</sup> design of faceted scroll work.

The Visigoths, having settled principally in the South of France and in the Iberian peninsula, also produced radiate-headed bow brooches as in a copper alloy pair cast with internal chip-carved geometric designs [Plate 7] which date from the first half of the sixth century. Comparable brooches were found in a cemetery of Castiltierra, Spain. Two impressive copper alloy women's buckles with inlays of glass, garnet, and shell [Plates 9, 10], of the sixth century, too, are also characteristic of Visigothic metalwork and thought to have come from the Castilian plateau. The plates of both buckles have cast chip-carved angular designs at their centers. The remains of prongs below the corners of the plates suggest the means of attachment to a leather belt.

From the Frankish people, residing in Gaul, have come another series of radiate-headed *Bow Brooches* [Plates 1, 2], also dating from the sixth century. All are cast silver gilt and some with inset garnets. Chip-work designs occur in the center fields of the crescent shaped heads and on the borders of the bars above the arched bows. Of a different order is a very bold and complete copper alloy Frankish *Buckle* [Plate 11] with two engraved plates bordered by a series of large knobs. This ensemble probably dates from the early seventh century.

## EARLY CHRISTIAN AND BYZANTINE ART

The first of two objects in this section is an Early Christian *Pyxis*<sup>6</sup> [Fig. 5, Plate 12], a nearly circular ivory container cut from a portion of an elephant tusk.<sup>7</sup> The original tight-fitting lid that rested on the recessed lip is missing; the closure at the base is also missing. Such boxes, mostly dating from the fifth-sixth centuries, have been attributed to North Africa or to Syria-Palestine. Their function is unclear. Were they to hold healing medications, the Eucharistic bread or wine, or incense, as have been suggested?<sup>8</sup>

One of more than forty carvings of this kind with Old and New Testament subjects, the principal figures here show Christ healing a paralytic, who carries away his sick bed<sup>9</sup> and Christ



4. *Bow Brooch or Fibula*, Ostrogothic, second half of fifth century, silver alloy, gilt; garnets, niello



5. *Pyxis*, North Africa or Syria / Palestine, fifth to sixth century, ivory



healing a blind man.<sup>10</sup> Flanking apostolic and other witnesses, abbreviated architectural elements, and hanging knotted curtains complete the carving.

Some ivory pyxides had locks, now mostly lost, and many show evidence of frequent re-mountings, as in the present example. The faint remains of the date 1501 may indicate the time of one of the adaptive re-uses. Another change occurred in Paris in the nineteenth century, when the work was used as the sleeve of a tankard.

The imagery on the pyxis is arranged like a continuous frieze with nearly all of the figures of the same size and the heads mostly on the same level. The smooth rounded cheeks of the younger faces, the bald and bearded older ones, the piercing eyes, dramatic gestures, the bold stances of the fully draped figures of Christ, and the gathered witnesses combine to provide an engaging and narrative power. Unrecognized before 1986, this work is a major addition to the corpus of Early Christian ivory carvings.

The bearded apostle heads appearing on the ivory *Pyxis* find a clear echo in the large mosaic *Head of an Apostle* [Plate 17],<sup>11</sup> a Byzantine work that was removed from the late eleventh-century mosaic of the Last Judgment that covered the vast west wall of Torcello's Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta. Despite the alterations of the twelfth century and repairs of the nineteenth century, this powerful image still suggests the majesty of the monumental mosaic mostly preserved at Torcello. The head also demonstrates the continuity of style and physiognomic types continued from the roots of Byzantine art in ancient Greek and Early Christian art.

### **OTTONIAN AND ROMANESQUE ART**

Another ivory carving of great rarity and beauty dates from the Ottonian period about 968–970. This is the relief [Fig. 6, Plate 14]<sup>12</sup> that depicts the Crucifixion flanked by Longinus, the lance bearer, and Stephaton, the sponge bearer, holding a situla or bucket. The figures of Mary and John mourn at each side while facing the cross. Christ, wearing a diadem, turns his head toward Mary. His loin cloth is knotted at the center, while his feet are placed squarely on a projecting shelf. The foot of the cross is encircled by a serpent.<sup>13</sup> Above and behind the cross-arms may be seen the Greek letters for alpha and omega,<sup>14</sup> together with medallions of the sun and the moon and the busts of two angels who tilt their heads toward the head of Christ.

The three-part rectangular frame is comprised of an inner narrow fillet, a regularized series of acanthus leaves, and a beaded strip between another two narrow fillets. This frame, the vertical format, and the subject suggest that the ivory was intended to be the central panel of a Gospel book cover.

It was carved by one of the principal creators of a series of ivory plaques thought to have once formed part of an altar frontal, chancel doors, or a throne in Magdeburg Cathedral.<sup>15</sup> This cathedral was an imperial foundation of Otto I (the Great), who reigned from 962 until his death