Hirshhorn Announces $1 Million Gift for Acquisitions

Gift from Basil Alkazzi Supports the Purchase of Paintings and Drawings by Contemporary American and British Artists

The Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden has received a gift of $1 million from artist and philanthropist Basil Alkazzi for the acquisition of paintings and drawings by contemporary American and British artists.

“We are grateful for Mr. Alkazzi’s incredible generosity,” said Kerry Brougher, Hirshhorn interim director and chief curator. “His gift will allow the Hirshhorn to significantly enhance its holdings of hand-painted paintings and drawings by key figures in the U.S. and U.K. As we celebrate and highlight our collection this year during our 40th anniversary, we are thrilled that thanks to the public-spiritedness of donors like Basil Alkazzi this collection will continue to grow and be a lasting legacy to the nation.”

Alkazzi (British, b. Kuwait, 1938) commented that he made this substantial donation because of his admiration for the commitment shown by the Hirshhorn to emerging artists. “Works of art are in fact the tangible manifestations of man’s highest aspirations—to create a sort of ultimate beauty and to visually express all intangible and elusive moments,” said Alkazzi. “The Hirshhorn, a small big museum in the heart of America, is the ideal home for my gift.”

Alkazzi is a respected artist himself and is represented in the Hirshhorn’s collection by the gouache “Ezra - With Love II” (1991). His philanthropic contributions to the arts include the endowment of the Basil H. Alkazzi Foundation Awards at the Royal College of Art in London and the establishment of the Basil H. Alkazzi Award for Excellence at the New York Foundation for the Arts.
About the Hirshhorn

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian Institution’s museum of international modern and contemporary art, has nearly 12,000 paintings, sculptures, photographs, mixed-media installations, works on paper and new media works in its collection. The Hirshhorn presents diverse exhibitions and offers an array of public programs that explore modern and contemporary art. Located at Independence Avenue and Seventh Street S.W., the museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). Admission to the galleries and special programs is free. For more information about exhibitions and events, visit hirshhorn.si.edu. Follow the Hirshhorn on Facebook at facebook.com/hirshhorn, on Twitter at twitter.com/hirshhorn and on Tumblr at hirshhorn.tumblr.com. Or sign up for the museum’s eBlasts at hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/social-media. To request accessibility services, please contact Kristy Maruca at marucak@si.edu or (202) 633-2796, preferably two weeks in advance.

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