

The Courtauld

Press Release

22 February 2021

LINDA KARSHAN MAKES MAJOR GIFT OF THE HOWARD KARSHAN COLLECTION TO THE COURTAULD

INCLUDING WORKS BY CÉZANNE, KANDINSKY, KLEE, BASELITZ & RICHTER



Louis Soutter, *Beat [Frappier]* (verso), circa 1937-1942 © The Courtauld
Georg Baselitz, *Untitled*, 1965 © Georg Baselitz, 2021

Sam Francis, *Red, Black & Blue; Composition*, 1985 © Sam Francis Foundation, California / DACS 2021

Soutter and Baselitz works, The Courtauld, London, (Samuel Courtauld Trust), Gift by Linda Karshan in memory of her husband, Howard Karshan.
Francis work, Private Collection. Promised gift by Linda Karshan in memory of her husband, Howard Karshan. On long-term loan to
The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust)

To download high-resolution images: <https://bit.ly/3rDhwvl>

An outstanding group of modern drawings by European and American masters assembled by the late collector Howard Karshan has been presented to The Courtauld Gallery in London by his wife, the artist Linda Karshan. It is one of the most significant gifts of art to The Courtauld in a generation.

Living between London and New York, Howard and Linda formed a preeminent collection of modern drawings. Collecting with great discernment and passion, the drawings were an essential part of their lives for more than half a century. A carefully chosen group of 25 works on paper by leading artists of the modern and post-war period, which lay at the heart of their collection, forms this generous gift.

The works being given to The Courtauld demonstrate Howard and Linda's sensibility for the expressive power and rich variety of drawing as an art form. The works are characterised by innovative mark-making and distinctive use of line. Examples range from radical watercolours by Cézanne and highly expressive finger drawings in ink by Louis Soutter, to abstract compositions made by Henri Michaux whilst experimenting with Mescaline to explore the subconscious, and on to works by Twombly that further broadened the possibilities of draughtsmanship.

The Karshan gift will transform The Courtauld's collection by extending its major historical holdings fully into the twentieth century. It will join the gallery's internationally renowned collection of 7,000 drawings, including masterpieces from the Renaissance onwards. Aside from Cézanne, none of the artists included in the gift has previously been represented in the collection.

The Karshan collection will be a major springboard for a wide range of future activities at The Courtauld, including exhibitions, displays, research projects, teaching and schools programmes.

Linda Karshan said: “Howard was as passionate about studying his drawings as he was about collecting them. He carefully positioned them on the walls around him, so as to be able to have his favourites within sight.

These are the drawings that make up the Karshan Gift. At The Courtauld, they will find their natural home, where they can be in the public eye while being studied for generations to come, echoing the role these drawings played within our family for over 50 years.”

Professor Deborah Swallow, Märit Rausing Director of The Courtauld, said: “Howard and Linda Karshan have been close friends of The Courtauld for many years. We are deeply honoured that Linda has chosen to give this outstanding group of drawings to us in memory of Howard, who assembled such a remarkable collection of modern works on paper with her over many years. Gifts and bequests from major collectors have always been fundamental to the growth of our collections and these works from the Howard Karshan Collection will truly transform our holdings. Howard and Linda, herself a distinguished artist, always cherished the particular role The Courtauld undertakes as a public gallery and as a centre of education. We are hugely excited by the prospect of making these drawings a vital part of our collection and activities to inspire future visitors, scholars and students alike.”

The gift of 25 drawings from the Howard Karshan Collection features works by Georg Baselitz, Joseph Beuys, Paul Cézanne, Otto Dix, Jean Dubuffet, Sam Francis, Alberto Giacometti, Philip Guston, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Willem de Kooning, Henri Michaux, Gerhard Richter, Louis Soutter, Wayne Thiebaud, and Cy Twombly.

The works will be exhibited at The Courtauld Gallery when it reopens in late 2021. This follows a major transformation project to restore its grandeur and create state-of-the-art facilities, which is supported by £9.5 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and generous donations from foundations, individuals and supporters.

The modernisation project is the most significant in The Courtauld’s history, since it moved to the North Wing of Somerset House in London in 1989. Designed by Stirling Prize-winning architects Witherford Watson Mann, the Gallery redevelopment revitalises and opens up the magnificent building conceived by Sir William Chambers in the 1770s and celebrates its fascinating heritage.

The Karshan gift will be accompanied by a new illustrated catalogue, edited by Coralie Malissard, Bridget Riley Art Foundation Curatorial Assistant and Barnaby Wright, Deputy Head of The Courtauld Gallery and Daniel Katz Curator of 20th Century Art, and published by Paul Holberton, published in late 2021.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Howard and Linda Karshan

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Howard Karshan (1933-2017) studied philosophy and law at New York University before embarking upon a successful career as a firm rights negotiator at CBS, Viacom, MGM and Turner. It was in the early 1960s, while living in Paris, that Howard discovered his collecting passion, catching the “bug for collecting”, as he described it. Howard first bought a Cycladic idol and a drawing of Igor Stravinsky by Giacometti when in the French capital. When he moved to London, the Sam Francis was among the first three works he bought which really marked the beginning of a lifelong passion for collecting. It is then that the floodgate opened. He met his wife Linda travelling from England to New York and lived between New York and London. Howard Karshan held the position of Head of Patrons of New Art at Tate, London, initiating the Acquisitions Committee, and was on the jury for the Turner Prize in 1992. He also sat on jury panels and acquisition committees for the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Linda Karshan (b. 1947) is a distinguished artist and one of the most committed graphic artists working today. Her work is represented in public and private collections internationally. Born in Minneapolis, she was educated at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, the Sorbonne, Paris, the Slade School of Art, University College London, and later earned a Masters in Humanistic Psychology from Antioch Centre for British Studies, London. Her art explores the relationship between the body and the process of drawing; a practice that helped shape the collection. She has previously presented two large-scale drawings at The Courtauld: *Untitled (6.8.2000)* and *Untitled (13.10.06)*, as well as her *Slow Learner* series of prints (2007). The Courtauld also acquired one of her etchings, *N.E.I (2002)*. She has actively participated in The Courtauld’s national partners programme, leading a young people’s workshop at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry in 2019 as part of the *Radical Drawings: Works from Coventry and The Courtauld*.

About The Courtauld

The Courtauld works to advance how we see and understand the visual arts, as an internationally-renowned centre for the teaching and research of art history and a major public gallery. Founded by collectors and philanthropists in the 1930s, the organisation has been at the forefront of the study of art ever since, through advanced research and conservation practice, innovative teaching and research, the renowned collection and inspiring exhibitions of its gallery, and engaging and accessible activities, education and events.

The Courtauld cares for one of the greatest art collections in the UK, sharing these works with the public at The Courtauld Gallery at Somerset House in central London. The Gallery is most famous for its iconic Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces, such as Van Gogh’s *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* and Manet’s *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. It showcases these alongside an internationally renowned collection of works from the Renaissance through to the present day.

Academically, The Courtauld faculty is the largest community of art historians and conservators in the UK, teaching and carrying out research on subjects from creativity in late Antiquity to contemporary digital artforms - with an increasingly global focus. An independent college of the University of London, The Courtauld offers a range of degree programmes from BA to PhD in the History of Art, curating and the conservation of easel and wall paintings. Its alumni are leaders and innovators in the arts, culture and business worlds, helping to shape the global agenda for the arts and creative industries.

Founded on the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to engage with art, The Courtauld works to increase understanding of the role played by art throughout history, in all societies and across all geographies – as well as being a champion for the importance of art in the present day. This could be through exhibitions offering a chance to look closely at world-famous works; accessible and expert short courses; events bringing art history research to new audiences; digital engagement, innovative school, family and community programmes; or taking a formal qualification. The Courtauld’s ambition is to transform access to art history education, by extending the horizons of what this is, and ensuring as many people as possible can benefit from the tools to better understand the visual world around us.

The Courtauld is currently undertaking an ambitious transformation project that will make it accessible to even more people. The Courtauld's permanent home in historic Somerset House – London's working arts centre - is closed for a major programme of renovation. The Courtauld's students and academic staff are based near King's Cross. The Gallery is scheduled to reopen in late 2021.

The Courtauld is a registered charity and relies on generous philanthropic support to achieve its mission of advancing the understanding of the visual arts of the past and present across the world, through advanced research, innovative teaching, inspiring exhibitions, programmes and collections.

About Courtauld Connects

Courtauld Connects is an ambitious transformation programme that will make The Courtauld's world-class artworks, research and teaching accessible to even more people. The first stage of Courtauld Connects will be completed in late 2021, with the reopening of The Courtauld Gallery and the Learning Centre and the construction of the West Wing Conservation Studios.

The biggest development since The Courtauld moved to Somerset House, this visionary project – supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and donations from generous foundations and supporters – will transform the Gallery and spaces for teaching, research and students. It will create new dynamic spaces for temporary exhibitions; enable the sharing of more works from The Courtauld's collection; make the historic building more physically accessible; and create a new Learning Centre.