

## David Grainger Whitney: A Curated Life and An Extraordinary Eye

By Irene Shum Allen

He was an eighteen-year-old or something. He was a student up at RISD [Rhode Island School of Design].... We met because of [Jasper] Johns' flag painting. He said, "Why did you buy that flag?" It was his first question to me in the world. He just came up to me after a lecture [at Brown University] and said, "Why did you buy the flag?" I said, "Because Alfred Barr told me to." I told the truth too soon, as usual. So then we got started.

Philip Johnson on meeting David Whitney, *The Philip Johnson Tapes: Interviews by Robert A.M. Stern*, Edited by Kazys Varnelis, The Monacelli Press, New York 2008

I'll make decisions about our daily life. It could look like I was pushing him around, but in fact he wants to be pushed around. ...I like everything about Philip. Einstein once said, "My wife takes care of all the little things and I take care of all the big things." I think I take care of all the little things.

David Whitney on his relationship with Philip Johnson, *Couples: Speaking from the Heart* by Mariana Cook, Chronicle Books, San Francisco 2000

David has been a mainstay of my life since 1960.... It's hard to imagine a life alone.... It's a very happy life.... He takes the lead a good deal. It's a wonderful feeling.

Philip Johnson on David Whitney, *Couples: Speaking from the Heart* by Mariana Cook, Chronicle Books, San Francisco 2000

Although Philip Johnson's biographer Franz Schulze referred to him as a "wife"<sup>1</sup> and he identified himself as the homemaker, David Grainger Whitney was an accomplished curator and editor, an avid art collector and gardener, a loyal friend to many artists, an art adviser to New York's powerful elite, and an advocate of contemporary art. In contrast to his outspoken partner of forty-five years, Philip Johnson, Whitney was an *éminence grise*, an art world insider who preferred to maintain his privacy.<sup>2,3,4</sup> Whitney's circle of friends included Modern masters such as Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, Cy Twombly, Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg, Frank Gehry, Frank Stella, Ken Price, among others. Whitney described the development of these relationships simply as "I became close to these people who are now all gods. But they weren't then."<sup>5</sup> However, from a historical perspective, this attests to his keen eye for emerging talent, as well as his deep understanding of and appreciation for the creative mind and artistic expression.

### Portrait of a Curator as a Young Man

A New England native, David Whitney was born in Worcester, Massachusetts on March 29, 1939. He attended The Loomis Institute (now Loomis Chaffee School) in Windsor, Connecticut and the Woodstock Country School in South Woodstock, Vermont before enrolling in the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence for Interior Architecture. During his junior year in 1960, he attended a lecture at Brown University given by Philip Johnson. Following the lecture, he approached Johnson with questions about his art collection, requested an invitation to the Glass House, and visited Johnson in New Canaan the following weekend.<sup>6</sup> In an article in *W* magazine in 2002, "The Golden Boys" by James Reginato, Whitney shared, "He [Philip Johnson] was gorgeous, he was bright, he was glamorous—what's not to like?" Whitney continued, "I always get what I want.... I was just legal," to which Philip Johnson humorously added, "It seemed like a good idea at the time."

Upon graduation, Whitney moved to New York and held a series of jobs as a Department Assistant in the Department of Exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1963); a Gallery Assistant at Green

Gallery (1964-65) and Leo Castelli Gallery (1965-66); and a studio assistant for Jasper Johns (1965-66). His next and last documented staff position was as an Adjunct Curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1984-85), although he pursued independent projects as a guest curator, editor, and publisher from 1966 until his untimely and unexpected death on June 12, 2005 at age 66. Regarding his career, Whitney said, "I always did what came up if it interested me. I never worried whether I had a job or not."<sup>7</sup>

Through his book and exhibition projects, Whitney showcased contemporary art of his time, contributing to the career development and public recognition of numerous artists and designers. His first independent project as a curator and editor was *Leo Castelli: Ten Years*, a group show of works by Richard Artschwager, Lee Bontecou, John Chamberlain, Nassos Daphnis, Edward Higgins, Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Morris, Larry Poons, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Salvatore Scarpitta, Frank Stella, Cy Twombly, and Andy Warhol in 1967. In addition to Castelli's anniversary project, Whitney organized a special exhibition, commissioned by Nelson A. Rockefeller for his wife Happy's birthday. Only exhibited for one-week, the exhibition included 35 artworks by artists Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, and Frank Stella. Following the exhibition, Rockefeller bought many of the pieces.<sup>8</sup>

In 1967, Whitney also published *Marilyn Monroe (Marilyn)* for Factory Additions, printed by Aetna Silkscreen Products, New York. This was the first of four print portfolios that he would produce consecutively of Andy Warhol's artwork. Each portfolio contained ten prints, signed by the artist. The other portfolios were *Campbell's Soup I* (1968) and *Campbell's Soup II* (1969), both printed by Salvatore Silkscreen Company, New York. He next published *Flowers* (1970), printed by Aetna Silkscreen Products.<sup>9</sup>

After acquiring *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten Inch Intervals* (1966) from Richard Bellamy in 1967, Whitney organized Bruce Nauman's first solo exhibition at Leo Castelli Gallery, launching the artist's long international exhibition history at major museums. In a review by Grace Glueck, Nauman said of his work, "I guess my work has to do with the way a lot of people are thinking.... What I turn out has everything to do with the way art is made — what the artist does in his studio.... On the West Coast, no one buys art. You get out of school and you have a studio and you sit around and drink coffee. So you have to sort of inquire what it is you're doing — what, as an artist, you're really about."<sup>10</sup> *Neon Templates* was exhibited in this show and remains a part of the Philip Johnson Glass House Collection.

From 1969 to 1971, Whitney operated his own gallery, located at 53 East 19<sup>th</sup> Street, a short block-and-half walk to the legendary artist hangout, Max's Kansas City<sup>11</sup> on Park Avenue South and three-and-half blocks from Andy Warhol's Factory<sup>12</sup> on Union Square West. Whitney's primary interest was the creative process: the artist's thinking and making. (To this extent, early in his career, he participated as a performer biting balloons while naked in a pool for *Washes*, a performance piece by Claes Oldenburg at Al Roon's Health Club, New York City on May 22, 1965.<sup>13, 14, 15</sup>) Regarding his gallery, he said to *The New York Times*, "I came downtown because it was the only space I could afford. And also I wanted to get away from the money scene. I'd like to encourage people to look at pictures again."<sup>16</sup>

The David Whitney Gallery specialized in "lyrical abstraction."<sup>17, 18, 19</sup> Artists represented by his gallery included Neil Jenney,<sup>20, 21</sup> Jasper Johns,<sup>22, 23</sup> Ronnie Landfield,<sup>24, 25</sup> Ken Price,<sup>26</sup> Ken Showell,<sup>27, 28</sup> Lawrence Stafford,<sup>29</sup>

Lewis Stein,<sup>30, 31, 32, 33</sup> Gary Stephan,<sup>34</sup> John Tweddle,<sup>35</sup> and Philip Wofford.<sup>36, 37, 38</sup> Ken Price reflected, “[In] the early '70's, [David] had a beautiful show of my work. That is when we became good friends. I often over the years would turn to him for advice because I trusted what he thought and said. He loved my work, we were very closely connected.”<sup>39</sup>



Photograph courtesy of David McCabe  
David Whitney, 1965

“David was a perceptive, generous person with a good sense of humor, fun to be with. I shall always be grateful to him for his participation in the performance Washes in 1965. The performance took place in the swimming pool at Al Roon's. David's roles in parts 1 and 9 is marked in the attached script.”


- Claes Oldenburg, April 29, 2011



Claes Oldenburg  
 Washes, performance, May 22 and 23, 1965  
 Al Roon's Health Club, New York

Photographs provided by the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York  
 Photo © Robert R. McElroy/Licensed by Visual Arts and Galleries Association (VAGA), New York  
 Art © Claes Oldenburg, 1965

Master Drawings, to March 7,  
 Tues.-Sat.  
**LEO CASTELLI GALLERY, 4 E. 77 St.,**  
 Tenth Anniversary Exhibition, to  
 Feb. 28, Tues.-Sat.  
**DAVIS GALLERIES, 231 E. 60 St.,**  
 "Animal Studies" 10th & 20th Cc  
 Tenth Anniversary Exhibition, curated by David Whitney, Leo Castelli Gallery  
 The New York Times, February 12, 1967



**ART DEALERS  
 ASSOCIATION  
 OF AMERICA**

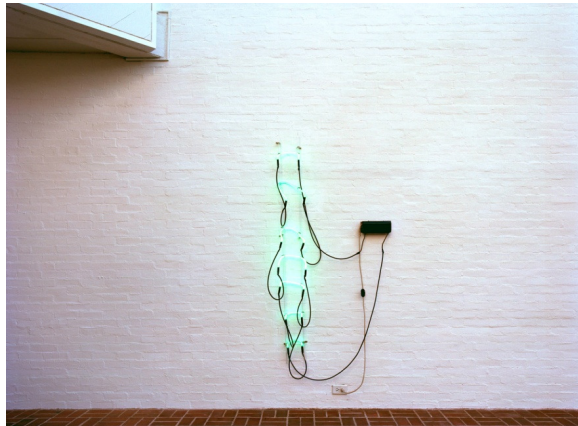
575 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK 10022

*The Art Dealers Association of America, Inc., is a national non-profit organization. Its members are selected on the basis of their experience, responsibility, expertness and their contributions to the cultural life of their communities. A handbook describing the Association's purposes and activities and listing its members and the fields in which they are active will be mailed upon request. The following is a partial list of exhibitions by Association members.*

NEW YORK CITY		KENNEDY	
<b>ASSOCIATED AMERICAN ARTISTS*</b> Art Nouveau and Its Time to Feb. 17 605 Fifth (49)		John La Farge to Feb. 14 20 E 56	
<b>BABCOCK</b> E. Ambrose Webster to March 1 805 Madison (68)		<b>KRAUSHAAR*</b> Marguerite Zorach, Paintings to Feb. 24 1055 Madison (80)	
<b>BODLEY</b> Paul Takacs Rec. paintings to Feb. 17 787 Madison (67)		<b>ALBERT LOEB &amp; KRUGIER</b> 20th Century Masters thru Feb. 12 E 57	
<b>BONINO</b> Fletcher Benton to March 9 7 W 57		<b>PERIDOT</b> The American Landscape to Feb. 24 820 Madison (69)	
<b>LEO CASTELLI</b> Bruce Nauman to Feb. 17 4 E 77		<b>PERLS</b> Calder, Braque, Bombois, others to Feb. 24 1016 Madison (79)	
<b>PETER DEITSCH*</b> George Grosz—50 Early Drawings to March 2 24 E 81		<b>POINDEXTER</b> Michael Snow to Feb. 15 21 W 56	
<b>DWAR</b> Sol LeWitt to Feb. 28 29 W 57		<b>FRANK REHN*</b> Henry Strater, Paintings to Feb. 24 655 Madison (60)	
<b>DOWNTOWN</b> Amer. Folk Art Selections from Gallery Roster 465 Park (57)		<b>PAUL ROSENBERG*</b> Group Show: Contemp. Paintings & Sculpture to March 9 20 E 79	
<b>ROBERT ELKON</b> 20th Century Masters to Feb. 28 1063 Madison (80)		<b>SAIDENBERG</b> Picasso: Drawings & New Graphics to March 9 1035 Madison (79)	
<b>ANDRE EMMERICH</b> Art of the Ancients: Greek/Roman to March 14 41 E 57		<b>ROBERT SCHOELKOPF*</b> William Bailey, Paintings to Feb. 17 825 Madison (69)	
<b>ROSE FRIED</b> Adja Yunkers recent work to March 9 40 E 68		<b>CHARLES E. SLATKIN</b> Signac, Watercolors & Drawings to March 9 115 E 92	
<b>GRAND CENTRAL ART*</b> D. Wu Ject-Key, Oils, Watercolors to Feb. 24 40 Vanderbilt (43)		<b>STABLE</b> Lowell Nesbitt to Feb. 29 33 E 74	
<b>GRAND CENTRAL MODERNS</b> Jeanne Miles, Painting & Sculpture to Feb. 22 8 W 56		<b>HOWARD WISE</b> Earl Reiback: Lumia Composition to March 2 50 W 57	
<b>STEPHEN HAHN</b> Impressionist & Modern Masters to March 30 960 Madison (75)		<b>PHILADELPHIA</b>	
<b>LEONARD HUTTON</b> German Expressionists & Sculpture 787 Madison (67)		<b>MAKLER*</b> Sculpture: Bury to Smith to Feb. 29 1716 Locust	
		<i>*Open Mon.-Sat. Other galleries open Tues.-Sat.</i>	

Bruce Nauman, curated by David Whitney, Leo Castelli Gallery, 1968  
 The New York Times, February 11, 1968





Philip Johnson Glass House Collection

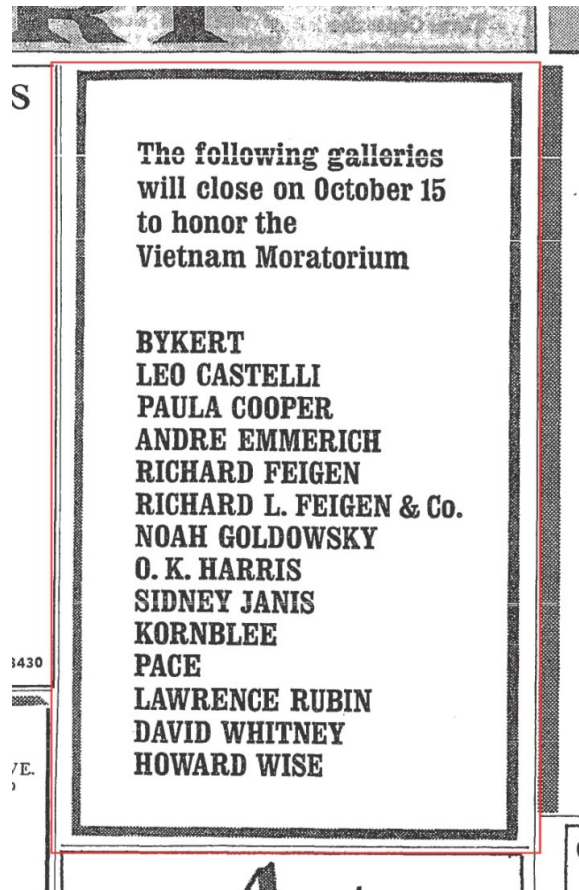
Bruce Nauman, *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body at Ten Inch Intervals*, 1966  
Neon tubes, electrical wire, transformer, glass rods, and wall connectors  
H 70" x W 9" x D 6"

Photograph courtesy of Dean Kaufman, 2007

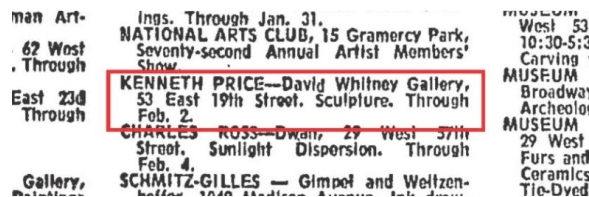
Art © Bruce Nauman and Artists Rights Society (ARS), 1966



*Jasper Johns: Lithographs and Etchings*, inaugural exhibition of David Whitney Gallery  
*The New York Times*, April 27, 1969



Vietnam Moratorium gallery closing  
*The New York Times*, October 11, 1969



Ken Price, David Whitney Gallery  
*The New York Times*, January 24, 1971

## A Prolific Career

After closing his gallery, Whitney organized two exhibitions for the Art Museum of South Texas. Designed by Philip Johnson and completed in 1972, the museum's inaugural exhibition, *Johns, Stella, Warhol: Works in Series* was curated by David Whitney. Both the building and exhibition received an uncharacteristically positive review by conservative art critic Hilton Kramer, "Museum Puts Corpus Christi on Art Map" in *The New York Times*. For this exhibition, Johnson loaned his paintings, Andy Warhol's nine panel portrait *Philip Johnson* (1972) and *Darabjerd I* (1967) by Frank Stella, that are now part of the fine art collection at the Philip Johnson Glass House. In 1974, he curated *Eight Artists: Dan Christensen, Neil Jenney, Don Judd, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, Gary Stephan, Cy Twombly, Peter Young* that travelled to the Miami Art Center. Philip Johnson's *Empire II* (1961), an early combine by Robert Rauschenberg, was shown at this exhibition and may be viewed in the Sculpture Gallery at the Glass House.

Reflective of his broad interests which included antiques and cultural objects, Whitney installed *Early Tin Toys: Collection of Bernard Barenholtz*, a small exhibition at the Hurlbutt Gallery at the Greenwich Library, Greenwich, Connecticut for friend and organizer Sandy Brant, art magazine publisher Peter Brant's first wife, in 1977.<sup>40</sup>

However, it was another exhibition in 1977, *Jasper Johns* at the Whitney Museum of American Art (no family relation) that would mark his arrival as a curator. *Jasper Johns* was the artist's first mid-career retrospective. David Whitney received praise and acknowledgement in two separate *New York Times* articles. According to art critic John Russell, "[The exhibition] has been directed and installed (ideally well) by David Whitney,"<sup>41</sup> and Grace Gluck, reported, "with the aid of David Whitney the exhibition organizer and former assistant to Johns who put the show together, the illustrious Johns icons that are now enshrined in the pages of art history have been assembled."<sup>42</sup>

Extremely popular with the public, long lines formed to view the exhibition.<sup>43</sup> Novelist Michael Crichton wrote the exhibition catalog. And, like a rite of passage or a badge of honor, the exhibition received a scathing review from Hilton Kramer, who criticized the fact that neither Whitney nor Crichton were staff and questioned why the museum used "amateurs"<sup>44</sup> to organize a major exhibition. Kramer went on, "They have done [Jasper Johns] more damage than they realize, Mr. Whitney by making Johns look like a bore and Mr. Crichton by making him sound like an ass."<sup>45</sup> The exhibition traveled domestically and abroad to the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, West Germany; Centre George Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France; the Hayward Gallery, London, United Kingdom; Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

One successful exhibition followed another, and in 1979, Whitney organized *Cy Twombly: Paintings and Drawings 1954-1977* at the Whitney Museum. Art critic John Russell emphatically opened his review, "When is 'the writing on the wall' not bad news? When it's by Cy Twombly." Toward the end of his article, he wrote, "organized and installed by David Whitney, and it could hardly look better."<sup>46</sup> Also at the Whitney Museum later in the year, *Andy Warhol: Portraits of the 70s* opened. Featuring celebrities, politicians, and members of society, the exhibition is remembered for its dramatic installation of "three giant versions of Mr. Warhol's *Mao*... housed in a special chapel-like pavilion in the main space of the exhibition."<sup>47</sup> Kramer described the exhibition as "gaudy" and Warhol's portraits as "ugly and a shade stoned, if not totally repulsive and grotesque,"<sup>48</sup> but with seeming resignation, he concedes, "*Portraits of the 70s* will, all the same, be a very popular exhibition."<sup>49</sup>

In 1980, Whitney installed another Warhol exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York, *Andy Warhol: 10 Portraits of Jews of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. About this exhibition, Hilton Kramer damningly opened: "To the many afflictions suffered by the Jewish people in the course of their long history, the new Andy Warhol show at the Jewish Museum cannot be said to make a significant addition. True, the show is vulgar. It reeks of commercialism, and its contribution to art is nil."<sup>50</sup> In 1982, Whitney curated his second exhibition of artwork by Jasper Johns at the Whitney Museum, *Jasper Johns: Savarin Monotypes*, and in 1984, he directed the large

monograph *Jasper Johns: Drawings 1954-1984*, published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. For the book, he invited Daniel Shapiro to author the text and Christopher Sweet to edit.

In the mid-1980s, Whitney turned his attention to younger artists, organizing *Michael Heizer: Dragged Mass Geometric* in 1984 at the Whitney Museum. The exhibition was a large installation occupying the entire fourth floor gallery from floor to ceiling. It was the artist's reinterpretation of his early earthwork at the Detroit Institute of Arts, when tractors dragged a 30-ton stone back and forth, creating 40 foot long and eight foot high dirt piles. At the Whitney, "[the sculpture's] huge, looming bulk, with its rambling geometric forms and angles, its tight containment in the gallery's space (so that the viewer can never "read" it as a whole), and its impressive engineering [gave] it considerable impact as an architectural environment."<sup>51</sup> In gratitude, after the exhibition closed, the artist gave Whitney the large mixed-media drawing *Dragged Mass (Iso/Planar/Section)* (1983), which Whitney framed and displayed in the entrance vestibule of the Painting Gallery.

In 1986, Whitney installed two exhibitions, *Eric Fischl* and *David Salle*, at the Whitney Museum. Organized by the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, Canada and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia respectively, Whitney revamped the checklists, expanding both exhibitions to include new and additional work. Reminiscent of his enthusiastic review for Whitney's 1979 Twombly exhibition, John Russell opened his review of *Eric Fischl*, "If the paintings of Eric Fischl get people hot and bothered, it is for a very good reason. He presses down hard upon the exposed nerve of our time. Where others amuse and flatter, he bites.... Such is the impact of these paintings that for the moment they throw art history down the chute."<sup>52</sup> To which Fischl added, "America's not Disneyland. Things smell, things have edges, people can get hurt."<sup>53</sup> Russell closed, "This remarkable exhibition has been installed by David Whitney and is an enlarged version of a show organized by, and first seen at, the Mendel Art Gallery...."<sup>54</sup>

In a follow-up *New York Times* interview, "Probing Society's Taboos - On Canvas" by Douglas C. McGill, Fischl stated openly, "I wanted to make a shocking picture, something taboo. In looking back, it was a way to infuse the painting with a kind of power that I wasn't going to be able to get with the way I painted. Taboos have power. You call up the things that you're afraid of." The artist continued, "The pictures become more social and political as they move out into the world and as I examine my relationship to other races and cultures. But it stems from the same sort of meditation on the self."

As per *David Salle*, respected art critic Roberta Smith wrote, "The exhibition of David Salle's work that has just opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art... is a sobering, exhilarating event, full of handsome, intelligently made paintings that mirror contemporary life in ways we cannot help but find poignant, jarring and sometimes offensive. In addition, they do this to great decorative effect."<sup>55</sup> Two works then owned by Philip Johnson were loaned in the show, *Common Reader* (1981) and *Miner* (1985), and are still part of site's collection.

Whitney's followed these exhibitions with two publication projects: In 1988, he edited *Eric Fischl* by Peter Schjeldahl, published by *Art in America* and Stewart, Tabori & Chang, New York; and in 1990, he published *In*

*the Manor of Nietzsche: Aphorisms around and about Architecture* by architecture critic and curator Jeffrey Kipnis through Calluna Farms Press, aptly named after his New Canaan residence, Calluna Farms.

In 1990, David Whitney also contributed an interview with the artist to the exhibition catalog of *Michael Heizer* at Waddington Galleries in London; and in 1991, he installed *The Drawings of Jasper Johns*, his third exhibition of the artist at the Whitney Museum. The following year in 1992, Whitney curated *Ken Price* at The Menil Collection and edited *Brice Marden: Paintings and Drawings* by Klaus Kertess, published by Harry N. Abrams.

With Jeffrey Kipnis, he edited *Philip Johnson: The Glass House*, a collection of important essays about the Glass House, published by Pantheon Books in 1993. In reviewing the book, *New York Times* architecture critic Herbert Muschamp reviewed, “[Johnson] challenges us to rethink the prospects for architecture as a social art.”<sup>56</sup> Also, during the year, he contributed an interview with the artist for the exhibition catalog of *James Rosenquist: Serenade for the Doll After Claude Debussy or Gift Wrapped Dolls/Masquerade of the Military Industrial Complex Looking Down on the Insect World* at Leo Castelli Gallery.<sup>57, 58</sup>

In 1994, Whitney curated what would be his last museum exhibition, *Franz Kline: Black & White*, the first survey of the artist’s work in twenty-five years. *The New York Times* art critic Michael Kimmelman reported, “the current exhibition of [Kline’s] signature paintings and drawings is, as you would expect, extremely handsome. It didn’t take a big leap of imagination to conceive a medium-size show based on them. Which is not meant to diminish what has been done by David Whitney, the curator who organized this exhibition for the Menil Collection in Houston and sensitively installed it here [Whitney Museum of American Art]. The show is good. It’s merely to underscore that Kline has tended to slip through the cracks.”<sup>59</sup> Also, that year, Whitney edited *David Salle: 1979-1994* by Lisa Liebmann published by Rizzoli, the artist’s first monograph.

Following the completion of these projects, Whitney slowed the pace of his work schedule, and five years would pass before editing *Monument* by close friend, art photographer Lynn Davis. Another five years would pass, before his last but highly acclaimed gallery exhibition, *Willem de Kooning: A Centennial Exhibition*. About the exhibition, Roberta Smith wrote, “This selection of 39 paintings, many on loan from prominent museums, was made by the independent curator David Whitney to celebrate the centennial of de Kooning’s birth in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, in 1904. With an emphasis on abstraction, the show covers a good deal of his career with a remarkable clarity, which is aided by Mr. Whitney’s superb installation.”<sup>60</sup> The exhibition culminated with two paintings created in 1988 and displayed publically for the first time. For this exhibition, Whitney also edited the catalog, which included essays by Edy de Wilde, Tom Ferrara, Richard Shiff, and previously published interviews with the artist.

Released posthumously in 2005, Whitney’s final completed project was the book *Mattia Bonetti: Drawings*, co-published by Calluna Farms Press and Luhring Augustine Gallery. Bonetti recalled, “[David Whitney] started to collect my works before we met. Later, I would send him drawings, and he would comment on them. He had a very sharp eye for art.”<sup>61</sup> Bonetti continued:

I worked with David, as one would work with a patron.



One day he told me that he loved my drawings and thought it was pity that people were not aware of them. He proposed to publish a selection of my drawings.

It was a real pleasure to work with David on the book. He always encouraged my ideas and dreams. He always pushed me to further develop my ideas and their details and to not worry about the consequences. In short, he supported me so that I would be and do my best.

He is irreplaceable and unforgettable.<sup>62</sup>

Although Whitney was diagnosed with lung and bone cancer, his death was sudden and unexpected. He died at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Hospital, where he was receiving treatment. In addition to the book of drawings by Bonetti, at the time of death, Whitney had begun to organize the inaugural exhibition of the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi, designed by architect Frank O. Gehry. About Whitney's Ohr exhibition, former Executive Director Marjie Gowdy recalled, "The concept is a simple one – entirely visual, as opposed to didactic: One hundred of Ohr's greatest pots. In the last months of his life, David would call frequently to report on which Ohr collectors he had called and secured promises of pots for the Inaugural Exhibition. ...[The] plans for this exhibit and his 'hunt' for the great pots was a source of happiness for him at that time."<sup>63</sup>

Scheduled to open in July 2006, this exhibition was unfortunately unrealized due to both Whitney's death in June 2005 and the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina two months later in late August 2005. In response, at the suggestion of Judith Goldman,<sup>64</sup> friends of David Whitney rallied and launched the David Whitney Memorial Building Fund, raising approximately \$300,000 specifically to reconstruct the George Ohr Gallery, now scheduled to open in 2012.<sup>65,66,67</sup> Also, in response to Hurricane Katrina, The Andy Warhol Foundation established an emergency fund for art and cultural organizations impacted by the storm, and a \$100,000 grant was given to the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum specifically in honor of David Whitney. "David was a great friend," said Gehry, standing by an architectural model of the complex at the [David Whitney Memorial Building] Fund launch [held at Larry Gagosian Gallery, New York]. "I will do whatever it takes to get this institution back on its feet."<sup>68</sup>

(In November 2010, Phase I of the museum complex opened with the exhibition *George Edgar Ohr: Selections from Gulf Coast Collections*, curated by Anna Stanfield Harris and displayed in the Gallery of African American Art/Star Gallery.<sup>69</sup> David Whitney's Ohr exhibition will be installed in the John S. and James L. Knight Gallery (the "Pods"), when the building is completed in 2012.<sup>70</sup>)

In addition to his independent projects, David Whitney actively served on several museum and arts organization committees. Whitney's 1978 retrospective *Jasper Johns* was the first solo artist exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, and three years after its close, he was invited onto the Board of Directors of the George Pompidou Art & Cultural Foundation (Los Angeles, 1981-2005), a fundraising organization based in America to benefit the Pompidou Center. In 1983, Whitney was a member of the Professional Advisory Committee for Miami-Dade Art in Public Places.

“A collector, curator, publisher, Whitney wore many hats – all of them with panache and authority, but he was, above all, a friend to artists.”<sup>71</sup> After the death of his close friend and confidante Andy Warhol, Whitney served on the Advisory Committee from 1993 to 1994 for the planning and opening The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. Unfortunately, also after Warhol’s death, works purportedly published by Factory Additions entered the art market. This, among other persistent fraudulent practices, prompted David Whitney to involve himself as President of the Andy Warhol Authentication Board from its inception in 1995 until his own death in 2005, to protect Warhol’s work and legacy. David Whitney also was a Trustee of The Menil Collection (Houston, 1997-2004) and the Chairman of the National Council for the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art (Biloxi, Mississippi 2002-05).

David Whitney’s contribution to the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art and design cannot be understated, especially his role advising Philip Johnson on art acquisitions for his private collection, many of which were subsequently donated to The Museum of Modern Art. A Lifetime Trustee since 1958, Philip Johnson donated over 2200 works to the MoMA.<sup>72</sup> Many of these works are now considered masterpieces of Modern art, such as Oskar Schlemmer’s *Bauhaus Stairway* (1932), Jasper John’s *Flag* (1954-55), Roy Lichtenstein’s *Girl with Ball* (1961), and Andy Warhol’s *Gold Marilyn* (1962). In 1996, on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, the museum organized a special exhibition, *From Bauhaus to Pop: Masterworks Given by Philip Johnson*. For this occasion, the museum also published, *Studies in Modern Art, vol. 6: Philip Johnson and The Museum of Modern Art* (1998), and in his essay “Philip Johnson as Donor to the Museum Collections: An Overview,” Curator Kirk Varnedoe wrote:

[It] was through the art of the 1960s that Johnson would play his strongest role in shaping the Museum’s collection of painting and sculpture, beginning with his gift of Andy Warhol’s unrivaled *Gold Marilyn Monroe* in the year it was painted, 1962. This must have seemed a radically new, if not subversive work to most of Johnson’s fellow trustees at the date, and those who were present at the board meeting when the work was first presented for accession still remember [Alfred] Barr’s advocacy of the gift – conjuring its kinship to ancient imagery of “love goddesses” – as one of his finest, most inventive and persuasive, moments of rhetoric.

Ironically, the 1962 Warhol gift marked the beginning of an intense period of Johnson’s collecting in which Barr would no longer be the driving force. Often moving in advance of Barr’s tastes (and certainly well ahead of the dominant pattern of collecting then being followed by the Museum’s acquisitions committee and board), Johnson set out to acquire his own collection of advanced art of the 1960s. In this pursuit, he was informed less by curatorial guidance than by his friendships with artists and dealers, and most especially by the advice of his companion, David Whitney.<sup>73</sup>

During the installation of *From Bauhaus to Pop* for a *New York Times* article, “The Architect of Master Builder’s Store of Art,” Philip Johnson openly stated, “David is my contemporary art. I don’t pretend to have an original eye.”<sup>74</sup> According to close friend architect Robert A.M. Stern, “[David Whitney] deserves more credit. David was the catalyst for building the collection. He had the knowledge, and he had boundless enthusiasm. It is one of the great marriages. Because David and Philip counterbalance each other so well.”<sup>75</sup>



Photographer unknown; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Archive  
Andy Warhol photographing Director of Exhibition David Whitney at opening of inaugural exhibition, "Johns, Stella, Warhol: Works in Series" at Art Museum of South Texas, designed by Philip Johnson (1973)



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Andy Warhol, *Philip Johnson*, 1972  
Acrylic and silkscreen inks on canvas  
96" x 96"

Gift of David Whitney to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1998  
Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Art © Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and Artists Rights Society (ARS)



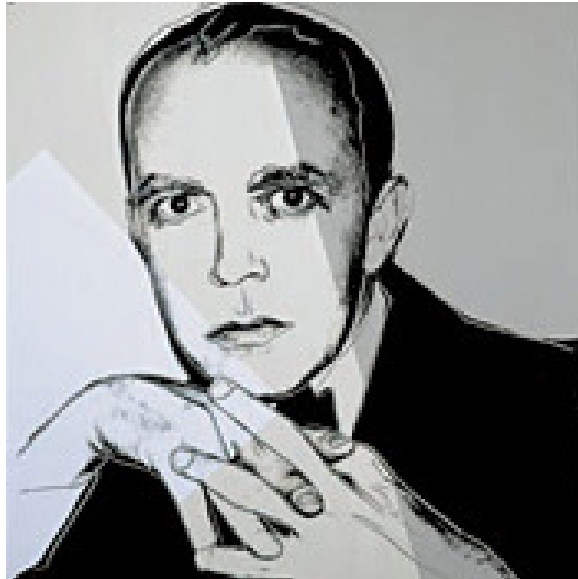
Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Frank Stella, *Darabjerd I*, 1967  
Fluorescent acrylic on shaped canvas  
120" x 180"  
Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Art © Frank Stella and Artists Rights Society, 1967



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Robert Rauschenberg, *Empire II*, 1961  
Wind turbine, ventilation duct, roller skate, paper, wire and electric light fixture on wood mounted on three metal wheels  
60-1/2" x 57-7/8" x 28-3/4"  
Art © Robert Rauschenberg Art/  
Licensed by Visual Arts and Galleries Association (VAGA), New York

"Oh, and David Whitney came by, we're talking to him about maybe redoing the Jewish Museum show and I'm doing a portrait of him because he's been so nice. He brought his tux, he really looked cute in it. He invited me to Thursday dinner with Philip Johnson, he said he'll send a car for me, that anyone as big as I am should have a car - he was being funny."

- Andy Warhol on David Whitney, excerpt from "Tuesday, July 1, 1930," *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, Edited by Pat Hackett, Warner Books, 1989



David Whitney Bequest, The Menil Collection, Houston  
Andy Warhol, *David Whitney* (1980)  
Acrylic and silkscreen on canvas  
40" x 40"

Art © Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and Artists Rights Society (ARS)

“What I can say about working with David Whitney, both on my exhibition and on my monograph, is that he made everything rather easy. He knew the effect he wanted to create - an atmosphere of serious looking without any theoretical or rhetorical blather - and he went about making that happen. Since the focus was always on the art, David trusted his instincts, honed as they were through years of experience. He made it seem kind of matter-of-fact to care that much about art, when in actuality it is quite rare.”

- David Salle, May 15, 2011



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
David Salle, *Miner*, 1985

Diptych; acrylic, oil, wood tables with metal frames, fabric, on canvas  
96" x 162-1/4"

Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006

Art © David Salle/Licensed by Visual Arts and Galleries Association (VAGA), New York





Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
David Salle, *Common Reader*, 1981  
Diptych; acrylic, charcoal, and fluorescent paint on canvas  
86" x 106"

Art © David Salle/Licensed by Visual Arts and Galleries Association (VAGA), New York



Photograph by George Hirose; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Archives  
Jasper Johns and David Whitney at the opening of *The Drawings of Jasper Johns*  
at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 3rd Floor Galleries, February 21, 1991; Organized by the National  
Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. and curated by Nan Rosenthal and Ruth E. Fine; Installed in New York by  
David Whitney



Photograph courtesy of Helaine Messer; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Archives  
 Evening at The Museum of Modern Art (left to right): Barbara Jakobson, David Whitney, and Andy Warhol



Photographs courtesy of Helaine Messer; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Archives  
 Evening the Whitney Museum of American Art  
 Right: (left to right) David Whitney, David White, friend and Jasper Johns  
 Left: (left to right) Jasper Johns, David Whitney, Frank Stella, Philip Johnson, David White



Photographer unknown; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Archives  
 Undated 11" x 14" paper copies of photographs given to Johnson and Whitney by James Rosenquist with inscriptions "Who?" and "What!"  
 Right: Philip Johnson and David Whitney  
 Left: James Rosenquist and Philip Johnson

"In 1962, I met David Whitney when I had my first show at the Green Gallery on Fifty-Seventh Street.... In 1963, I met Philip Johnson, who asked me to do a mural on the New York State Pavilion at the 1963 World's Fair....

Philip and David were very comedic, and I enjoyed their sense of humor. I wish they were both were still with us.”

James Rosenquist on his friendship with Philip Johnson and David Whitney from *Modern Views: Inspired by the Mies van der Rohe Farnsworth House and the Philip Johnson Glass House*, Assouline, 2010

## Lynn Davis

From the early-1990s until his death in 2005, a close friendship flourished between David Whitney and artist Lynn Davis. Whitney first acquired *Library, Pagan, Burma, 1993*, a large Selenium toned gelatin silver print directly from that artist in 1994. Soon thereafter, Whitney acquired two additional works, *Tomb, Palmyra, Syria, 1995* in 1996 and *Minaret, Port of Mokka, Yemen, 1996* in 1997.

Whitney's strong passion for Davis' work inspired him to organize and edit the artist's monograph, *Monument*. Published by Arena Editions, Sante Fe in 1999, musician Patti Smith wrote the preface and novelist and screenwriter Rudolph Wurlitzer wrote the introduction.

All three of his photographs were included in the publication and remain on display in the entrance vestibule of the Painting Gallery. Sensitively installed across from Michael Heizer's *Dragged Mass (Iso/Planar/Section)*, Davis' photographs reinforce Johnson's design reference to the ancient Greek tomb, the Treasury of Atreus. Similar to the tomb, the Painting Gallery was built into a hillside and housed Johnson's and Whitney's earthly treasure, their art collection.

Although the impermanence of life is wistfully recalled in Davis' photographs, the images of the ancient ruins also speak of life's mystery and beauty, best described by Wurlitzer's introduction:

Images of silence. Images of erosion and decay. Images caught stealing time....

No conceptual or cultural agendas support these contemplations. There are no people. No footprints, actual or implied. No literary descriptions or interpretations. As celebrations of emptiness and impermanence, the beauty of these disintegrations cannot resonate without pointing beyond themselves, towards a final collapse of form into the essence of matter: air, earth, fire, and water. Mysteries that cannot be measured or followed, reduced to echos from the sublime rot of history. Until, of course, the whole dance is resurrected and begins once again.

Davis dedicated her next book, *American Monument* to Philip Johnson and David Whitney. Published by Monacelli Press in 2004, the book contains images the Glass House, Brick House, and Doghouse.



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Lynn Davis, *Library, Pagan, Burma, 1993.*, 1993  
Selenium toned gelatin silver print  
H 27-1/2" x W 27-1/2"; framed H 42" x W 41"  
Art © Lynn Davis



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Lynn Davis, *Minaret, Port of Mokka, Yemen, 1996,* 1996  
Selenium tone gelatin silver print  
H 40" x W 40"  
Art © Lynn Davis



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Lynn Davis, *Tomb, Palmyra, Syria; 1995, 1995*  
Selenium tone gelatin silver print  
Edition 1 of 10  
H 42" x W 41"  
© Lynn Davis



Photograph by Fran Lebowitz, courtesy of Lynn Davis  
Lynn Davis and David Whitney with his pet Keeshond dogs, Alice and James





*Doghouse*

*Philip Johnson, 1996 • New Canaan, Connecticut*  
Art © Lynn Davis



*Brick House*

*Philip Johnson, 1953 • New Canaan, Connecticut*  
Art © Lynn Davis



*Glass House*  
Philip Johnson, 1949 • New Canaan, Connecticut  
Art © Lynn Davis

## Frank O. Gehry

Frank O. Gehry's friendship with Philip Johnson is well documented in the media and popular press. Less well known was his friendship with David Whitney, who, in fact, introduced the architect to Johnson.<sup>76</sup> Mutual friends, including artists Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, Ken Price, and Vija Celmins among others, as well as a shared passion for art brought Whitney and Gehry together.

Through the private pottery collections of Jasper Johns and David Whitney<sup>77</sup>, Frank Gehry learned of the work of the self proclaimed "Mad Potter of Biloxi," George Ohr, so when asked by friends Robert Tannen<sup>78</sup> and Jeanne Nathan<sup>79</sup> to design the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum, Gehry accepted the commission. Gehry said of the commission, "The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum may be a small project, but it's every bit exciting as Bilbao to me,"<sup>80</sup>

In different capacities, Frank Gehry, as the design architect, and David Whitney, as the Chairman of the National Committee, actively shaped the newly established museum. Gehry designed the museum campus and its buildings, while Whitney secured long-term loans from private collections.

During their long friendship, the architect visited often and gifted production prototypes to Johnson and Whitney, such as the *Cross Check* armchair (1989) in the Library/Study and *FOG* chair (2000).<sup>81</sup>

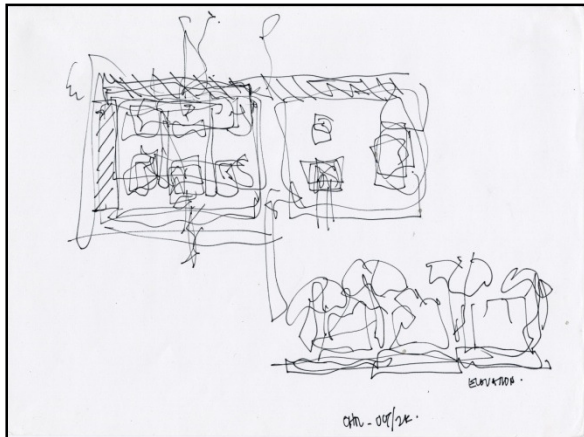
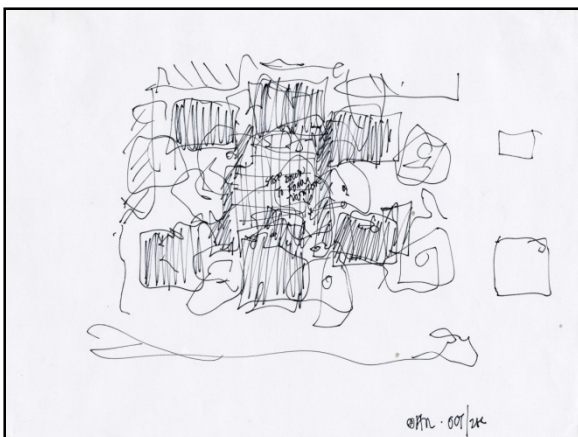


Photography courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
David Whitney's personal collection of George Ohr Pottery, Master Bedroom, Calluna

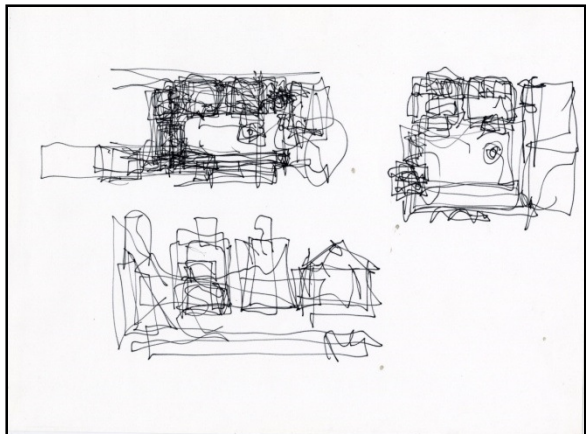
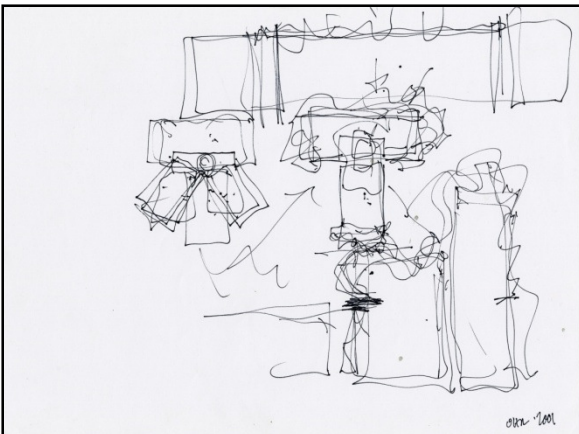
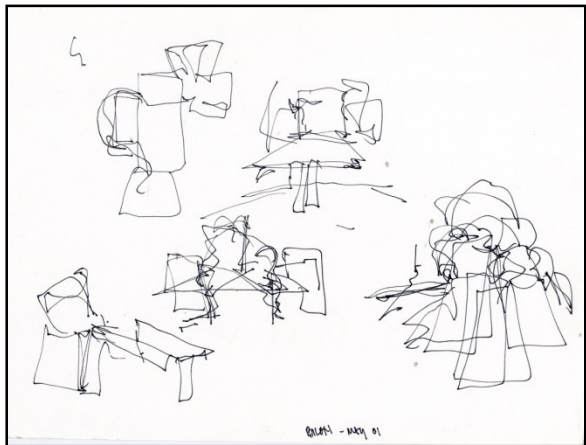
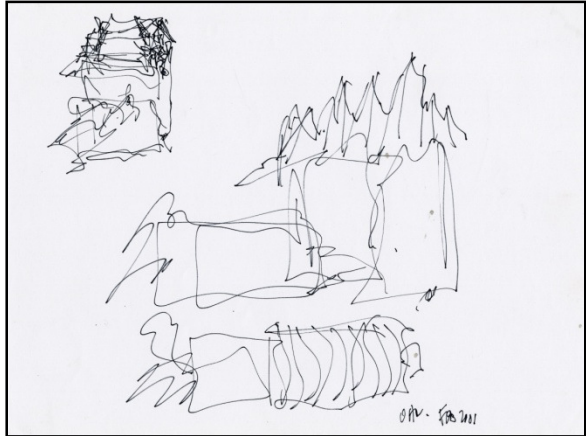
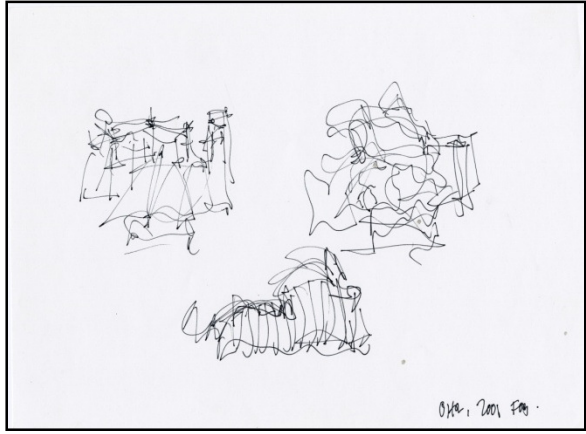
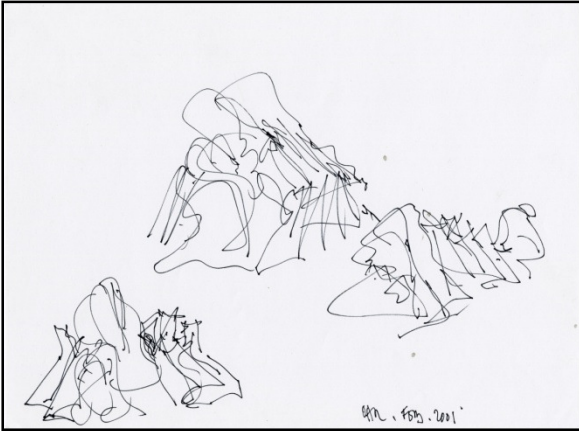


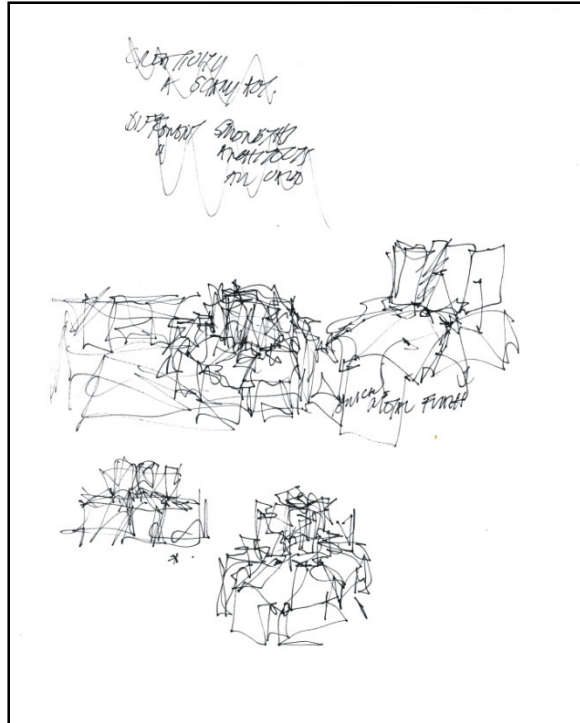
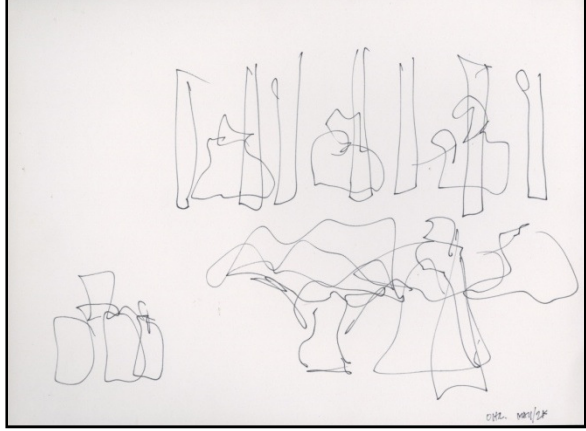
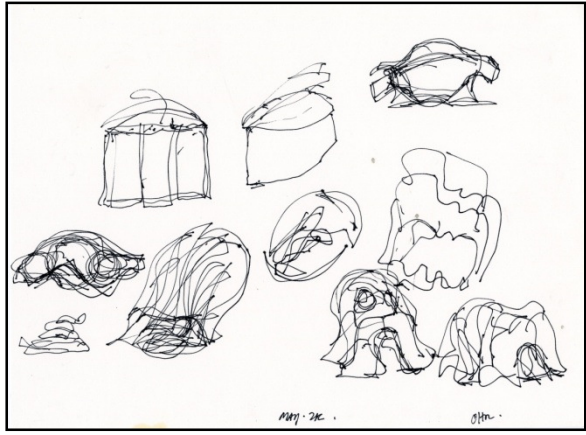
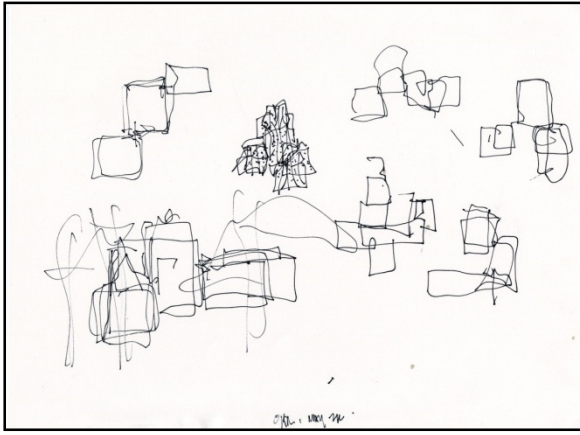
Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art Collection  
George Ohr, *Petticoat Vase*, c. 1898  
Glazed ceramic  
7 3/4" x 4 3/4"

Gift of David Whitney in honor of Frank and Berta Gehry  
Photograph provided by Ohr-O'Keefe Museum, Biloxi, Mississippi









Frank O. Gehry, Preliminary sketches of Ohr-O'Keefe Museum  
Images provided by Gehry Partners, Los Angeles, California  
Art © Frank O. Gehry





Photograph courtesy of Carol Highsmith  
Cross Check armchairs in Library/Study; chair without “Knoll” stamp is the production prototype

### New Canaan with Philip Johnson

In New Canaan, David Whitney’s influence and his impact on Johnson may be seen throughout the 47-acres of the Philip Johnson Glass House in its selection of furniture, objects, art, even plantings within the landscape. It is especially evident in the site’s large collection of work by Frank Stella, and of those pieces, the most poignant artifact is Frank Stella’s *Averroes* (1960) from the artist’s early *Aluminum* series.

*Averroes* was the first artwork that Whitney advised Johnson to acquire. “[The] first thing was a 1961 silver pin-stripe Frank Stella that was hanging in the Four Seasons restaurant. It cost about \$1000.”<sup>82</sup> Johnson bought the painting directly from Leo Castelli Gallery. It still hangs prominently in the Painting Gallery on axis with the entrance doors and is the first painting visitors see when entering the gallery.

In his initial discussions with NTHP, Johnson communicated his intention to leave the Glass House with a permanent collection of works by Frank Stella. The Philip Johnson Glass House Collection now holds sixteen artworks from the period of 1960 to 2004, representing 12 different series in the artist’s career, ranging in scale from a small mix-media drawing to a large free-standing sculpture.

*Averroes* was exhibited in Stella’s first solo exhibition at Leo Castelli Gallery in 1960 and is among his first shaped canvases. The construction of shaped canvases evolved over the artist’s career into elaborate wall reliefs and sculpture, as seen in several artworks in the Glass House Painting and Sculpture Galleries, culminating in architecture projects that would strongly influence Johnson. Upon first glance, Frank Gehry’s architecture is often thought as the progenitor of Johnson’s design of *Da Monsta*; however, according to Gehry, Johnson’s design was conceived after studying Stella’s 1991 design for Dresden Kunsthalle, Germany.<sup>83</sup>

In this context, *Averroes* could be understood as a tangible embodiment of Johnson’s and Whitney’s life together from the earliest days until their last, and the many different series of Stella’s artworks located in several buildings on site as the physical manifestations of different periods within their relationship and shared history. This gains plausibility and significance, when considering the last work acquired by the couple by Stella, only a month before Johnson’s death. Given to the couple by the artist, the model *Ship with*

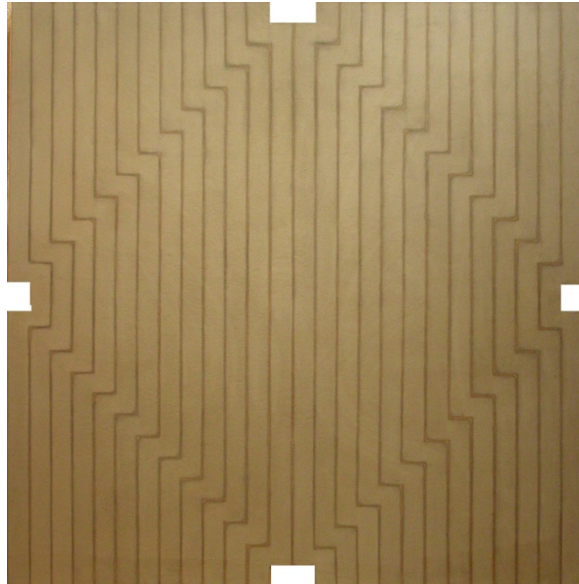
*Walkway* is from his *Moby Dick* series, and it contains two male figures, one of whom is an older gentleman walking with a cane. According to the artist, the figures represent both Johnson and Whitney. Also noteworthy in relation to *Ship with Walkway*, the one book of fiction inside the Library/Study is a large-print copy of *Moby Dick*. It is easy to conjecture that Johnson was rereading Melville's classic late in his life, that the novel (and perhaps its themes of pursuit, courage, and idealism) held special significance to him.

Johnson attributed the success of his long relationship with Whitney to a shared aesthetic, while Whitney attributed the success to his independence within their relationship.<sup>84</sup> According to Johnson, "The eye, that's really the whole thing, the eye. We've always totally agreed on everything in matters of taste."<sup>85</sup> Whereas, Whitney is quoted, "He'd be at the Paleys' and I'd be at the Judson Church at a dance performance... [That's] one of the reasons it worked. - I was always totally independent."<sup>86</sup>

Their living independent lives should not be confused with deliberately hiding their sexual orientation. To this point, Whitney is quoted, "We were never secretive. It was always terrifically open."<sup>87</sup> Regarding homosexuality, Johnson claimed, "I don't see anything different in a homosexual and heterosexual relationship."<sup>88</sup> This is not to suggest that Johnson did not struggle with his homosexuality earlier in his life, or that he flaunted his relationships outside his personal circle. As biographer Franz Schulze suggested in *Philip Johnson: Life and Work*, it took an a challenging conversation with Barbara Walters about changing cultural mores regarding homosexuality before Johnson and Whitney were seen publicly together. One can imagine the hard driving journalist -- at dinner hosted by Kitty Carlisle Hart -- unwilling to change the topic and doggedly impressing on Johnson that public acknowledgement of the existence of homosexuality was gaining acceptability, that a once considered "bachelor" could now appear in public with his partner, if his partner happened to be another man. Discussing this intimate topic over dinner, however, must have been awkward, if not embarrassing, especially with members of society, such as Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, present.<sup>89</sup> -



Photograph courtesy of Paul Warchol, 2007  
Stella's Averroes as seen from entrance to Painting Gallery



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
 Frank Stella, *Averroes*, 1960  
 Aluminum paint on canvas  
 Shaped frame with four cut-outs, 73-3/16" x 71-5/8"  
 Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
 Art © Frank Stella and Artists Rights Society, 1960

at the	acting gallery, 69 West Fifty-	ing,"
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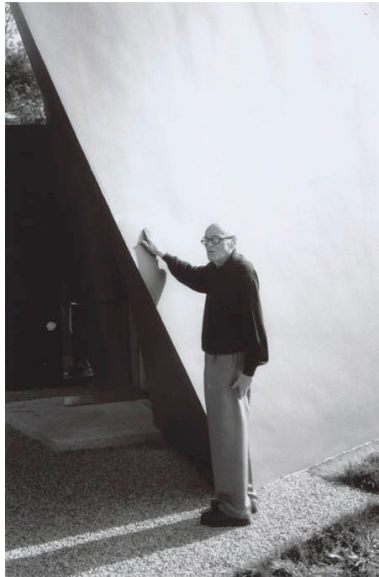
Listing of Frank Stella's first solo exhibition at Leo Castelli  
*The New York Times*, (September 25, 1960)



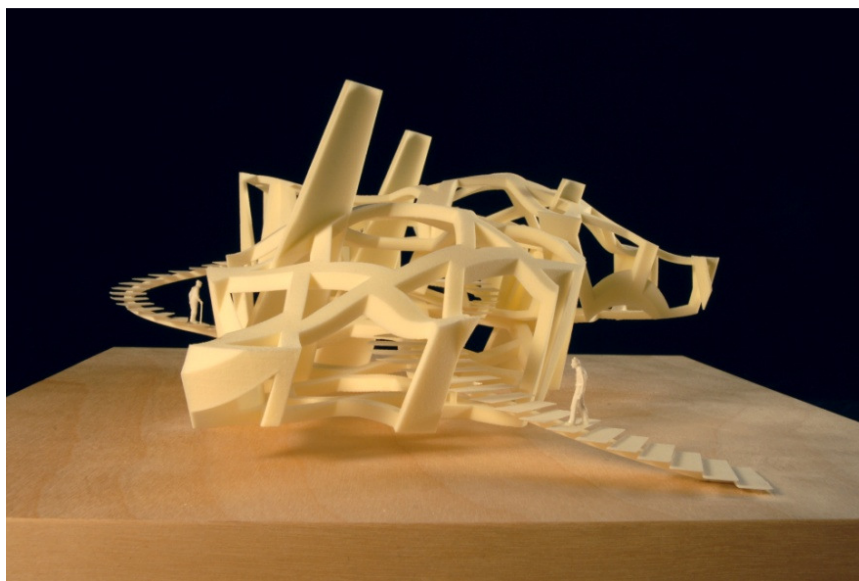
Photograph courtesy of Paul Warchol  
 Philip Johnson, *Da Monsta*, 1995



Photograph courtesy of Paul Warchol  
Philip Johnson, Da Monsta, 1995



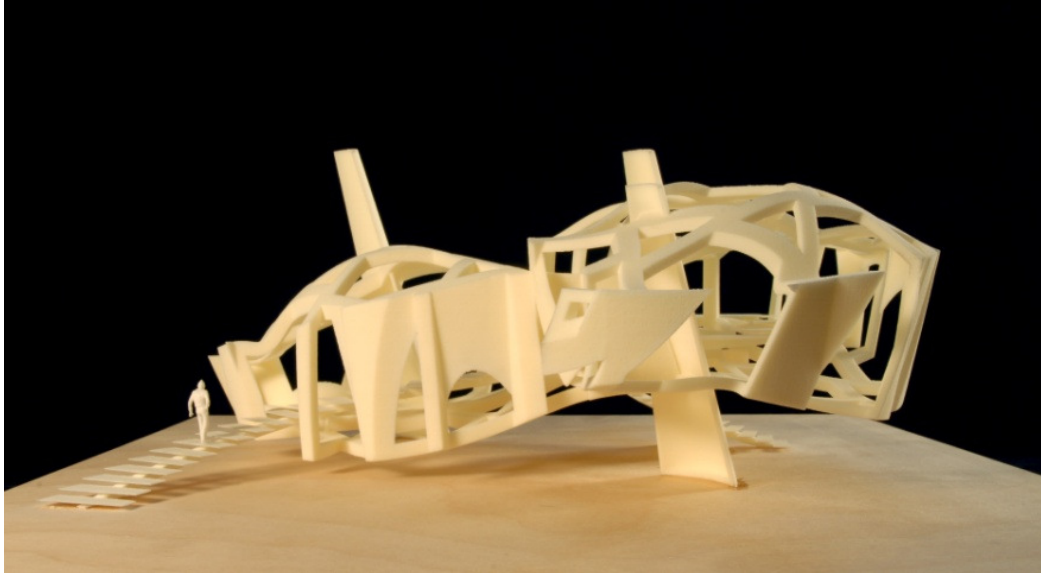
Photographer unknown; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Archives  
Johnson petting Da Monsta



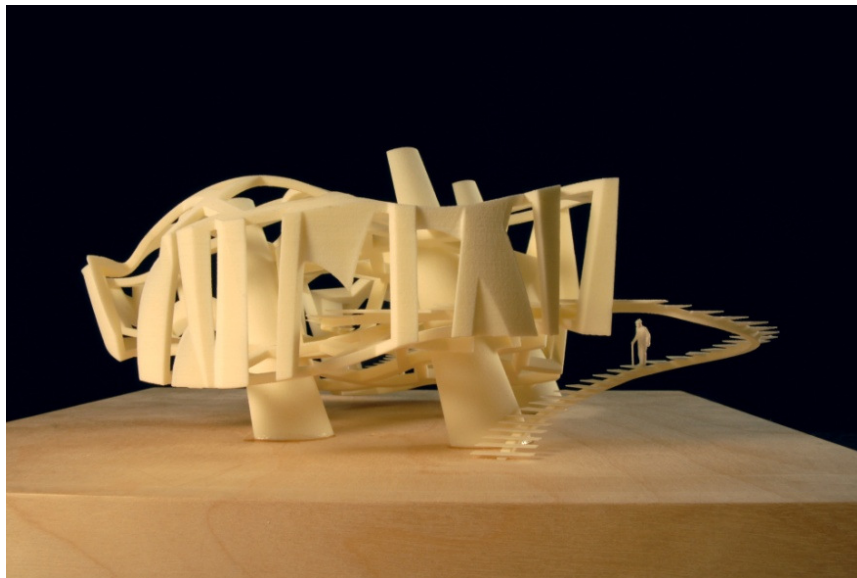
Philip Johnson Glass House Collection,  
Frank Stella, *Model of Ship With Walkway*, 2004



Nylon rapid prototype  
H 8" x W 12.5" x D 12.5"  
Photograph courtesy of Steve Brosnahan/RBH Multimedia  
Art © Frank Stella and Artists Rights Society, 2004  
Model of an architectural design with figurines of David Whitney and Philip Johnson



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Frank Stella, *Model of Ship With Walkway*, 2004  
Nylon rapid prototype  
H 8" x W 12.5" x D 12.5"  
Photograph courtesy of Steve Brosnahan/RBH Multimedia  
Art © Frank Stella and Artists Rights Society, 2004  
Figurine of David Whitney entering structure



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Frank Stella, *Model of Ship With Walkway*, 2004  
Nylon rapid prototype  
H 8" x W 12.5" x D 12.5"  
Photograph courtesy of Steve Brosnahan/RBH Multimedia  
Art © Frank Stella and Artists Rights Society, 2004  
Figurine of Philip Johnson with walking cane leaving structure



Photograph courtesy of Mariana Cook  
Portrait of Philip Johnson and David Whitney in New Canaan, in front of newly constructed visitors' pavilion,  
Da Monsta, (November 18, 1995)  
Art © Mariana Cook, 1995



Photograph by Terrence Riley; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Image Archive  
(left to right) Peter Eisenman, John Bennett, Philip Johnson, and David Whitney on pool platform, New  
Canaan, Connecticut 1994



Photograph by Agnes Gund; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Image Archive  
(left to right) Jasper Johns, David Whitney, Philip Johnson, and Daniel Shapiro, Da Monsta



## First Love: Gardening

An avid gardener since childhood,<sup>90</sup> David Whitney's influence is seen throughout the landscape at the Philip Johnson Glass House, especially in the Succulent and Peony Gardens.

Located in front of his New Canaan residence Calluna, the Succulent Garden was designed and constructed in 1989. Similar to Johnson, who cited Kazimir Malevich's *Suprematist Element - Circle* (1913) as "the inspiration for the plan of the glass house,"<sup>91</sup> the composition of the Succulent Garden was drawn from a small pencil drawing, *Suprematist Composition* (n.d.) by Malevich that Whitney acquired earlier in the year.

Rising from the sloping ground, a pink granite cube creates a level planting area. Sourced from Stony Creek Quarry in Branford, Connecticut, it is the same granite that Philip Johnson specified for the AT&T Building (1979-84) in New York. - According to Port Draper of Louis E. Lee Company, the contractor of many of the structures on site, the granite slabs were left over from the building's construction.<sup>92</sup> - A cross, made of large fieldstone pavers, diagonally intersects the square, creating walkways into the garden. This composition is most clearly seen and best appreciated from Calluna's Master Bedroom windows.

A year after purchasing and extensively restoring the Finch House to its original 1783 footprint, Whitney renamed the structure Grainger and designed its Peony Garden in 1991. Surrounded on three sides by a low stone wall, Whitney repurposed the border of the driveway turning area to create a semi-enclosed planting area. Whitney then transplanted his garden that had been located by Popestead (a timber frame farmhouse on the eastern boundary of the property along Ponus Ridge Road that is currently used as the site office) to Grainger. Carefully laid out, each *varietal* is staked with an engraved name plate. Alessandro Twombly's bronze *Nature Amassment #4* (1997) was added to the garden in 1998.

Charlotte Curtis captured Whitney's passion for gardening and his well-known wry sense of humor in her *New York Times* article, "The Woes of Gardening,"<sup>93</sup> in which Whitney recounted an interaction at White Flower Farm in Litchfield, Connecticut:

A woman said, "Something's eating my hostas." I said, "Deer." She asked what you do about them. I said, "Shoot them," She didn't think it was a bit amusing.



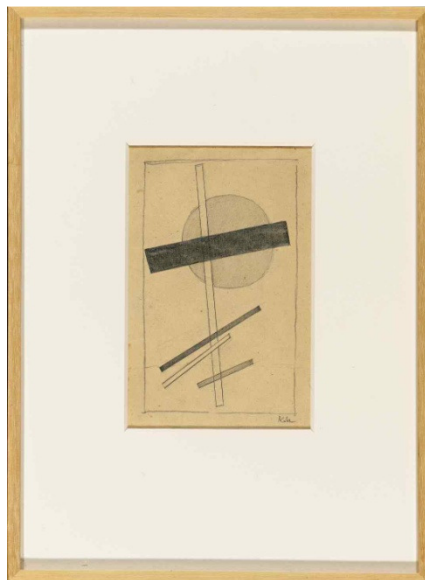
Photograph courtesy of Paul Warchol, 2007  
Calluna, view from Ponus Ridge Road



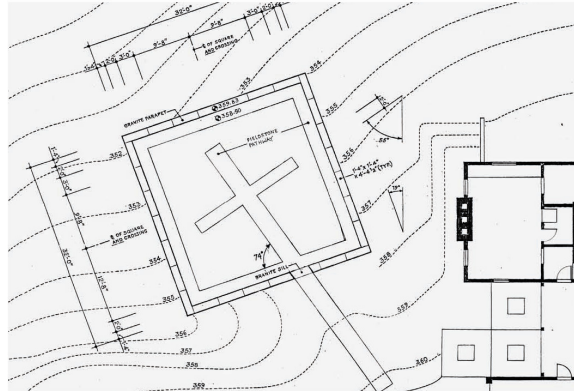
Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Calluna



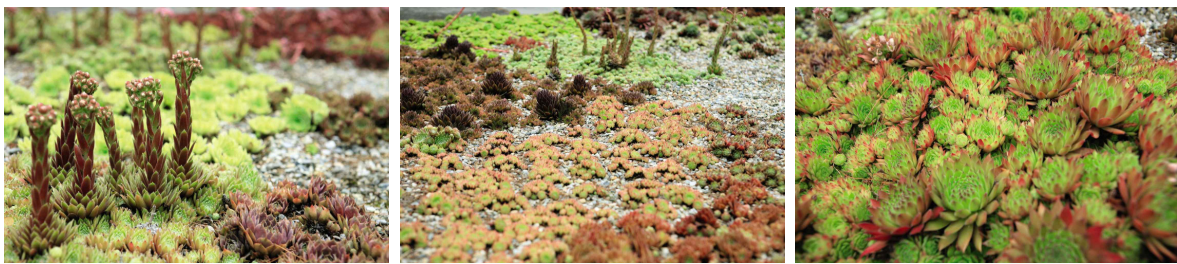
Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Succulent Garden, 1989



Philip Johnson Glass House Collection  
Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematist Composition* (n.d.)  
Pencil on paper, signed lower right "KM"  
H 8-1/2" x W 5-3/8"



Philip Johnson Glass House Archives  
Plan, Succulent Garden, 1989



Photographs courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006



Photography by Brooke Hayward; source: Philip Johnson Glass House Archives  
David Whitney, Popestead 1988





Philip Johnson Glass House Archives  
Popestead Peony Garden, 1988



Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Peony Garden, 1991



Photography courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
*Detail of varietal name plate*



Photograph courtesy of Carol Highsmith, 2006  
Peony Garden in bloom

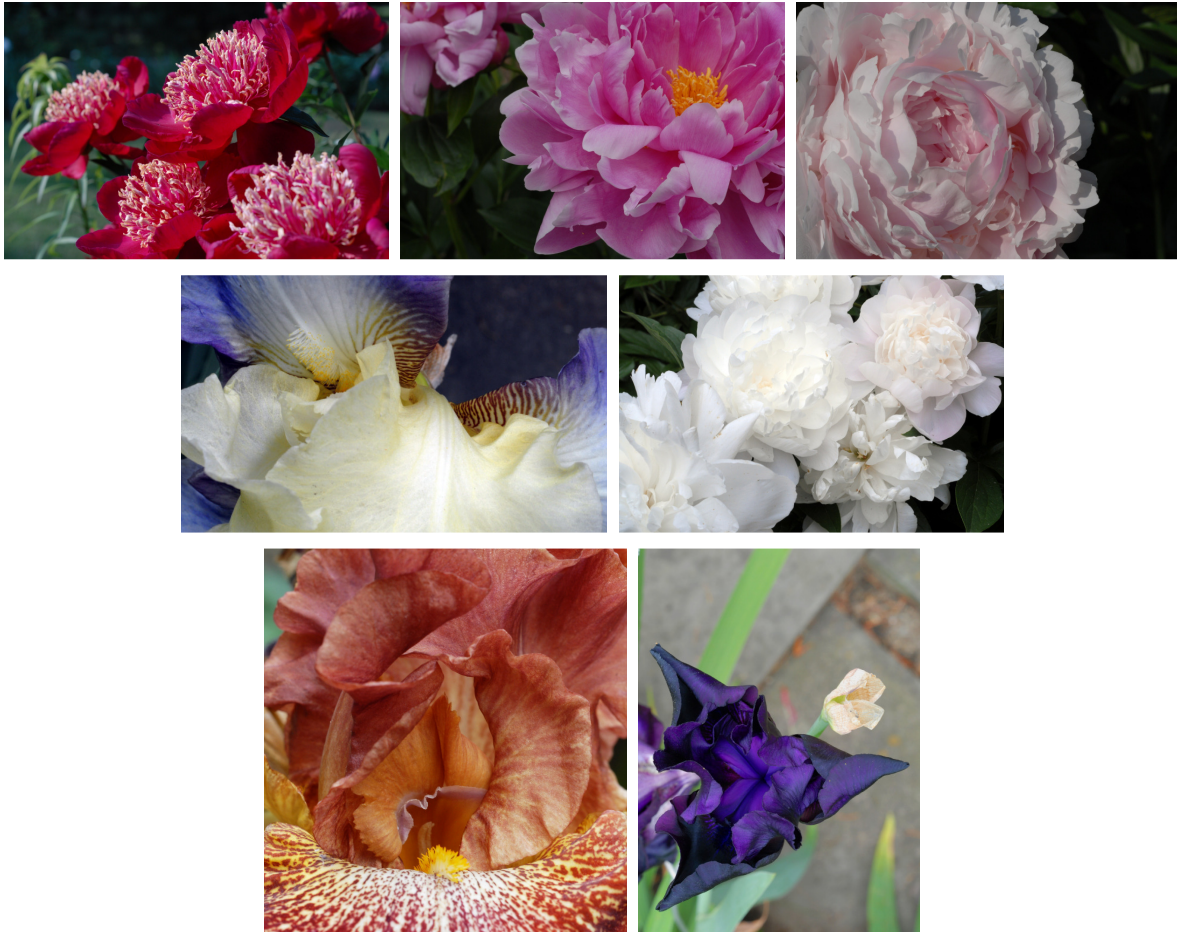


Photography courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Peony Garden seen through Grainger dining room window with untitled window etching by Michael Heizer (1993)



Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Peony Garden, Grainger





Photographs courtesy of Steve Brosnahan/RBH Multimedia, 2007

### Donor, Patron and Design Enthusiast

While Whitney's passion for fine art is evidenced in his publications and exhibitions, he was equally passionate about modern and contemporary design. As mentioned earlier, Whitney's last project was a book of drawings by Mattia Bonetti, a Swiss designer based in Paris. Whitney collected and commissioned furniture and design objects by Bonetti for his three residences in New York, New Canaan, and Big Sur.

In addition, Whitney gifted 75 signature designs by Philippe Starck, from chairs to flyswatters and toothbrushes, to the MoMA's Department of Architecture and Design; and in 1999, Philip Johnson installed these objects in the exhibition, *Philippe Starck: Furniture and Objects* at MoMA PS1. Muschamp described Starck's designs as "visually seductive, unusually curvilinear,"<sup>94</sup> and Johnson's design as "beautiful" and "simple."<sup>95</sup> Other furniture and objects that Whitney donated to the MoMA include Clement Meadmore's chair, *Model 248* (1963) and Mort and Beryl Marton's cork ice bucket (1963).

These gifts are only a small example of David Whitney's generosity and patronage. During his life he donated works by Jasper Johns, Marcel Duchamp, and Andy Warhol to several curatorial departments within The Museum of Modern Art; his Jasper Johns Research Papers, 1951-1992, containing 64 notebooks of notes on Jasper Johns' paintings and drawings including photographs and installation photographs to The Menil



Collection; George Ohr's *Petticoat Vase*, c. 1898 to the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi in honor of architect Frank Gehry and his wife Berta; *Meknes* (1964) by Frank Stella to the U.S. State Department's *Art in Embassies* Program, and five ceramic cups by Ken Price to the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts. He also financially supported the Glessner House Museum in Chicago, the grant-making Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

Upon his death, in addition to his bequest to the Trust for Historic Preservation, he bequeathed forty-four artworks to The Menil Collection which included a significant collection of 17 drawings by Jasper Johns, as well as his art library from his New York apartment and his curatorial papers that consisted of engagement notebooks, artist and exhibition files on David Salle, Franz Kline, Michael Heizer, Claes Oldenburg, Frank Stella, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol, and Jasper Johns; his exhibitions at Art Museum of South Texas Corpus Christi; and files about Green Gallery, New York, dating from 1960–1997. His gifts to The Menil Collection and its archives formed the foundation for Jasper Johns' catalogue raisonné,<sup>96</sup> that The Menil Collection is organizing. Whitney's large collection of works by Johns was well known. In his diaries, Warhol drolly wrote:

Wednesday, November 12, 1986

A drawing of Jasper's went for \$800,000. A drawing! And I guess David Whitney must be a multimillionaire, he has so many Jasper Johnses.<sup>97</sup>

Monday, January 12, 1987

David still reminds me that he wants us to get married [after Johnson dies] and now that I hear how many Jasper Johnses he has, it would be really worth it.<sup>98</sup>

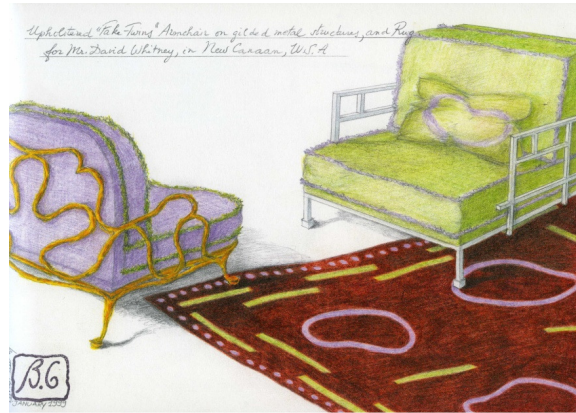
Whitney also bequeathed all of his ceramic pots by Dirk Van Erp to Greene & Greene's Gamble House at the University of Southern California in Pasadena and his residence in Big Sur to the Big Sur Land Trust for the sale and use of proceeds. Following the house sale, the Land Trust established the David Whitney Legacy Fund to support the community and to care for the land of Big Sur.<sup>99</sup>

Similar to the Big Sur Land Trust, Whitney's bequest to the National Trust for Historic Preservation was unrestricted and allowed for an estate sale to raise proceeds. A single owner sale was organized by Sotheby's in November 2006 which raised over \$13 million. NTHP directed these funds specifically to the site's endowment for the maintenance and operations of the Philip Johnson Glass House.

Noteworthy, NTHP did not sell the entire contents of the estate, and in fact, kept and accessioned objects of interpretative value. This included several artworks, including paintings by David Salle and Julian Schnabel, photographs by Lynn Davis and Cindy Sherman and sculptures by Michael Heizer and Alessandro Twombly, among other works. A study collection of antique, modern and contemporary design objects and a wide-ranging library including books on art, architecture, craft, design, gardening and landscape, as well as cookbooks, fiction, and music cd's is currently being organized, as well as an archive of personal papers, clippings, and ephemera. When seen in whole, these objects present an individual with an inquisitive mind and a broad range of interests, who creatively curated his environs to reflect his refined sensibilities. Clearly,

for Whitney, beauty was a virtue to live by that extended from domestic objects into and onto museum pedestals and walls.

Irene Shum Allen  
Curator and Collections Manager



Mattia Bonetti, *Upholstered "Fake Twins" Armchair on gilded metal structures and Rug for Mr. David Whitney, in New Canaan, U.S.A., January 1999*

Published in Mattia Bonetti: Drawings, published by David Whitney, Calluna Farms Press and Luhring Augustine, 2005  
Art © Mattia Bonetti



Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Living Room, New York Residence

Furniture as constructed:

*Fake Twins* Armchairs, 1999

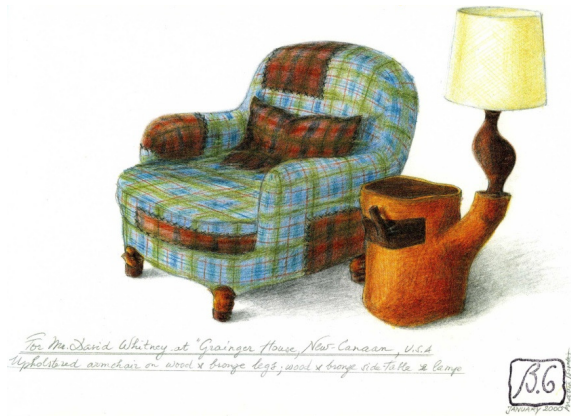
Unique construction, manufactured by BG

Gilt wrought iron, silk velvet fabric and small Aubusson-woven cushions, stamped "BG"  
H 37"

Rug, 1999

Unique construction by St. Jean, Aubusson  
Wool

L 78-1/2" x W 146-7/8"



*For Mr. David Whitney at "Grainger House, New-Canaan, U.S.A.  
Upholstered armchair on wood & bronze legs, wood & bronze side-table & lamp*

B.G.  
January 2000

Mattia Bonetti, *For Mr. David Whitney at "Grainger House, New-Canaan, U.S.A.: Upholstered armchair on wood & bronze legs;; wood & broze side-table & lamp, January 2000*

Published in *Mattia Bonnetti: Drawings*, published by David Whitney, Calluna Farms Press and Luhring Augustine, 2005

Art © Mattia Bonetti



Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, 2006  
Grainger, New Canaan Residence

Furniture as constructed:

*Grainger House* armchairs

Unique construction, manufactured by BG

Oak and bronze feet, upholstered in embroidered Holland & Sherry Tartan, stamped "BG"  
H 36"

*Grainger House* side table and lamp

Unique construction by BG

Oak and bronze with parchment lampshade, stamped BG  
H 41"



Mattia Bonetti

*Belgravia* cabinet

Published in *Mattia Bonetti: Drawings*, published by David Whitney, Calluna Farms Press and Luhring Augustine, 2005

Art © Mattia Bonetti

as constructed:

*Belgravia* cabinet, 1989

Manufactured by BG/Néotu

Limited edition of 8

H 37-1/2 x L 72-1/2" x D 25-1/2"



Bedroom, New York Residence 2006





The David Gill Gallery 2003 Collection  
 "Chinese Ladies" Ceramic Standard Lamps  
 MB  
 November 2002

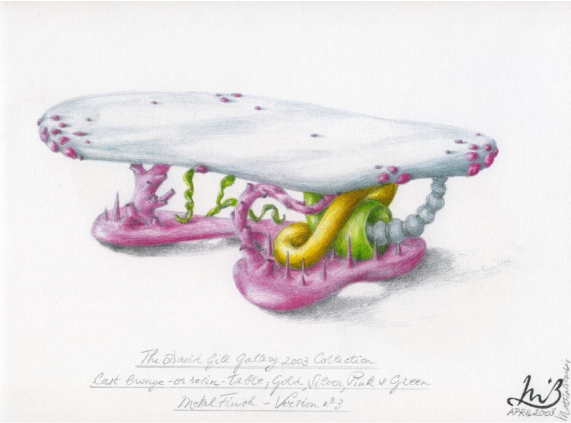
Mattia Bonetti,  
*The David Gill Gallery 2003 Collection, "Chinese Ladies" Ceramic Standard Lamps, November 2002*  
 Published in *Mattia Bonnetti: Drawings*, published by David Whitney, Calluna Farms Press and Luhring  
 Augustine, 2005  
 Art © Mattia Bonetti

Furniture as constructed

*Chinese Ladies* lamps, 2005

Manufactured by David Gill/MB Workshop

Gilt wrought iron and gold and platinum enameled ceramic with silk appliqué shades, impressed "MB"  
 H 87-1/2"



The David Gill Gallery 2003 Collection  
 Cast bronze - or resin - table, gold, silver, pink & green  
 Metal Finish - Version n°3  
 MB  
 April 2003



Mattia Bonetti  
*The David Gill Gallery 2003 Collection, Cast bronze or resin table, gold, silver, pink, & green metal finish -*  
*Version n°3, April 2003*  
 Published in *Mattia Bonnetti: Drawings*, published by David Whitney, Calluna Farms Press and Luhring  
 Augustine, 2005  
 Art © Mattia Bonetti

Furniture as constructed:

*Abyss* table, 2003

Silver-plated and partially colored cast bronze, signed MB

Limited edition of 8

H 29-3/4" x L 95-1/2" x D 54-3/4"

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