

IN A NEW LIGHT CAMPAIGN

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Richard Pearlstone and Amy Elias Celebrate “Exciting Time at the BMA”

New gift to the Contemporary Wing builds on an earlier gift that supported the “visionary” purchase of important late works by Andy Warhol for the Wing’s 1994 opening.

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A \$250,000 gift from philanthropist and businessman Richard Pearlstone and his wife, Amy Elias, a Baltimore marketing and public relations executive, continues their long support of arts and cultural institutions in Baltimore. For the couple, the reopening of the Contemporary Wing is “a watershed moment for the BMA, and we wanted to be a part of it,” said Ms. Elias. “We believe that a city is only as vibrant as its assets, and an important museum is an essential asset to a rich fabric of offerings that will keep a city thriving.”

Richard Pearlstone has a long history of involvement with the BMA—he has served as both a Trustee and longtime National Trustee of the Museum. With his father, he made a major memorial gift in honor of his mother, Peggy Meyerhoff Pearlstone, a founder of Center Stage and a longtime supporter of the Museum. The current gift, timed to coincide with the reopening of the Contemporary Wing, has a direct connection with an earlier donation by Mr. Pearlstone that played a key role in the 1994 opening of what was then called the New Wing for Modern Art.

In 1992, Mr. Pearlstone was a key donor in an effort to help the BMA take advan-



Richard Pearlstone and Amy Elias among the BMA's outstanding collection of Warhol paintings in the newly reopened Contemporary Wing

tage of a “once-in-a-lifetime” offering by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, which had invited a select group of museums to purchase works by the artist at 50 percent of their appraised value. Brenda Richardson, the BMA’s Curator of Modern Painting and Sculpture during that time, recognized an opportunity to form a centerpiece for the new contemporary art wing by acquiring a significant collection of works by one of the 20th century’s most influential artists.

The BMA had only 18 months to secure funding and select works from the sale. Richard Pearlstone stepped forward with a gift from the Pearlstone Family Fund, and thanks to his generous support, along with that of other funders, the BMA was able to make the single largest purchase in that sale, selecting

Works by Andy Warhol © 2013 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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15 paintings and three drawings created from 1975 to 1986.

The ability to move quickly to purchase the works during this invitation-only sale to major museums—and Richardson's focus on works from Warhol's later period that at the time were significantly undervalued—positioned the BMA to assemble the world's second-largest collection of late works by Andy Warhol. This created a late 20th-century complement to the Museum's extensive holdings of the early 20th-century master Matisse. Like The Cone Collection, the BMA's Warhol works provided the Museum with national visibility as a key participant in the fascinating investigation of an artist's far-reaching influence.

Today, the BMA's 57 Warhol works on paper and 17 late paintings are a core strength of its Contemporary collection.

Kristen Hileman, the BMA's Curator of Contemporary Art, explains that Warhol is "a pivot point in talking about trends in contemporary art and culture, because he sets the stage for future artists. The Warhols will continue to have a very central place in our galleries and our collection."

"Richard Pearlstone's gift was a critical investment in a historic acquisition that keeps Baltimore on the map as a destination for contemporary art," observes BMA Director Doreen Bolger. "And this second gift by Richard Pearlstone and Amy Elias reinforces their belief in the vital educational and civic role that museums play in their communities."

For Mr. Pearlstone, the Museum's continued focus on the Warhol collection in the renovated Contemporary Wing was reason for celebration: "We acquired

these works for the Museum because we thought it was good for the BMA, and Baltimore, to have them. With the Contemporary Wing, the BMA is adding a significant contemporary presence to the national arts scene among American museums."

Three of the five works funded by the earlier Pearlstone gift—*Camouflage* (1986), *Physiological Diagram* (c. 1984–1985), and *Oxidation Painting* (1978)—are prominently featured in the reopening. A second *Oxidation Painting* (1978) from that purchase is on loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art and then to The Andy Warhol Museum for the exhibition *Regarding Andy Warhol: Fifty Years*.