

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART RECEIVES GRANT FROM THE LEON LEVY FOUNDATION TO ESTABLISH P.S.1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER ARCHIVES

Two-year Grant Will Allow MoMA to Organize and Preserve P.S.1's 30-year Written Legacy and Create Oral Histories

NEW YORK, December 23, 2008—The Museum of Modern Art has received a two-year grant from The Leon Levy Foundation, which will allow for the organizing and processing of the institutional records of P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, the Museum's affiliate in Long Island City, Queens, as well as support MoMA's efforts to begin an oral history of P.S. 1. Recognizing P.S.1's primary role in the unfolding of the art of our time, the Museum will survey, preserve, organize, and describe these records to make them available for scholarly research and public access. Under this project, the Museum will also conduct an initial selection of oral histories of key figures closely associated with P.S.1 and its 32-year history. Upon completion of the project, the processed archives will become part of MoMA's rich collection that documents modern and contemporary art and will be available to the many thousands that access the Museum Archives for primary research and scholarship. The public will be able to access the records by appointment at the Museum Archives reading room at MoMA QNS in Long Island City. Also, an on-line, searchable finding aid of the complete inventory of the collection will eventually be on the Museum's Web site, www.moma.org.

The project will be overseen by Michelle Elligott, Museum Archivist, The Museum of Modern Art, with guidance from an advisory group including Kathy Halbreich, Associate Director, and Milan Hughston, Chief of Library and Museum Archives, The Museum of Modern Art; and Alanna Heiss, founding director of P.S.1. An archivist has been hired to process and manage the project, and an outside scholar that specializes in the art of recent decades will conduct the oral histories.

Ms. Elligott says, "With this extraordinary grant from The Leon Levy Foundation, we will be able to safeguard and broaden access to some of the most significant primary resources in contemporary art. What is key about this initiative is that so few contemporary institutions have the resources to mark their history, and P.S.1's history is particularly rich given its close proximity to the working methods of artists and to the change in the way art was made and exhibited beginning in the 1970s. This is a story of New York with connections to the larger art world."

Ms. Halbreich says, "It is heartening to know that the artistic experiments Alanna Heiss made possible during her 30 year tenure will be available to artists and scholars. It's a wonderful tribute to her leadership which resulted in an innovative institutional model for all alternative spaces."

Ms. Heiss says, "The archives of P.S.1 are of legendary fame: they include everything from important photo documentation of the early years to an installation plan by Gino De Dominicis.

Preserving these historical documents has been a decade-long commitment, and I am happy they will now be catalogued and made available to scholars.”

Shelby White, founding trustee of the Leon Levy Foundation, said, “We believe it is important to preserve the documents of our past. The P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center archive is critical for the study of the art of the past few decades. Now our grant will help MoMA make these documents available to the public, as well as to have the resources to preserve the oral histories of many of the leading figures of the period.”

Founded in 1976, P.S.1 is one of the longest surviving alternative spaces with an exemplary history of supporting artists before they become well known, as well as a strong record of producing far-reaching exhibitions that have yielded groundbreaking ideas that shaped contemporary practice. While P.S.1 has focused on the visual arts, it has defined the field broadly to include film, video, and performance. In this sense, it has been a pioneering voice, one closely aligned to the artist's own cross-disciplinary methods.

MoMA and P.S.1 became affiliated in 2000, bringing together two New York institutions with a shared resolve to survey comprehensively all of contemporary art and promote its appreciation to a wide and growing audience. Among the collaborations the institutions have worked on are the Young Architects Program held every summer since 2000; the exhibition *Roth Time: A Dieter Roth Retrospective* (2004); and the *Greater New York* exhibitions (2000 and 2005).

Since P.S.1 does not collect artwork, the archives are the 'collection' of P.S.1 and are the only tangible record of its history. Contents of the archives include a variety of unique primary resources such as correspondence between P.S.1's founding director Alanna Heiss and artists, scholars, and community partners; artist records; and exhibition files such as those related to P.S.1's inaugural exhibition, *Rooms*. The archives must be stabilized and organized, and information about it will be assembled to create an electronic finding aid (pairing original research and historical descriptions of the materials together with a complete inventory of the collection). The finding aid also serves as a preservation measure by reducing the unnecessary handling of the documents. Parallel and integral to this effort will be the creation of several oral histories of the most important individuals associated with P.S.1.

About The Leon Levy Foundation

The Leon Levy Foundation, founded in 2004, is a private, not-for-profit foundation created from the Estate of Leon Levy, one of the most innovative and influential figures in the financial world. The Foundation continues Levy's philanthropic legacy by providing support for programs he started with his wife, Shelby White. The Foundation provides basic, unrestricted support to important cultural institutions in New York City. It also provides programmatic support to institutions in the visual, performing, and literary arts and humanities, with an emphasis on innovative programs that relate to other Foundation priorities.

The two-year grant awarded to MoMA to preserve P.S.1's archives is from The Leon Levy Foundation Archives and Catalogues Program, which helps arts and humanities institutions care for and use the important contents of their archives and storerooms, with the ultimate goal of

making them more available to historians, writers, filmmakers, and other scholars. The Foundation is also supporting MoMA with another two-year grant to help pay for the processing of the archives from the legendary art dealer Paul Rosenberg, who moved to New York from Paris during World War II. Rosenberg handled major works by many of the great artists of the 20th Century, including Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Fernand Léger, and Georges Braque. For more information about The Leon Levy Foundation, visit www.leonlevyfoundation.org.

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Holiday Hours:

December 24: 10:30 to 3:00 (Christmas Eve)
December 25: Museum closed (Christmas Day)
December 26: 9:30 to 8:00 (Target Free Friday Night 4-8 p.m.)
December 27-January 1: 9:30 to 6:30
January 2: 9:30 to 8:00 (Target Free Friday Night 4-8 p.m.)
January 3-5: 9:30 to 6:30

MoMA Monday Nights:

MoMA will remain open until 8:45 p.m. on selected Mondays, giving visitors extended hours to view special exhibitions and the museum's collection. The evenings will include entertainment and a cash bar. Regular admission applies.

The museum will stay open from 10:30 to 8:45 on the following Mondays:

January 12
February 9
March 9
April 6
May 4
June 8

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members.
Admission includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs.
Free admission during Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information. Visit us on the Web at www.moma.org.