

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**The Museum of Modern Art****RICHARD SERRA'S TORQUED ELLIPSE IV ACQUIRED BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

Richard Serra's *Torqued Ellipse IV* (1998), a monumental sculpture that envelops its space with a sweeping, baroque curve, has been acquired by The Museum of Modern Art, thanks to a fractional and promised gift by Trustee Leon Black and his wife, Debra.

Glenn D. Lowry, Director of The Museum of Modern Art, said, "Following their gift last fall of David Smith's marvelous *Sentinel* (1960), Leon and Debra Black have once again added invaluable to the Museum's holdings of great sculpture of the second half of this century."

Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, noted, "The Museum of Modern Art now represents Richard Serra's artistic progress in all its major phases, with works of singular quality and importance. I am deeply grateful to the Blacks for seizing the opportunity to acquire this superb sculpture, and for committing it to this Museum."

Torqued Ellipse IV joins a collection that includes such classic Serra works as *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)* and *Cutting Device, Base Plate Measure* (both of 1969), extends through early monumental installation works such as the room-sized *Circuit II* (1972), and represents more recent directions with the 120-ton *Intersection II* (1992), a gift of Ronald and Jo Carole Lauder. *Torqued Ellipse IV* is part of a series that is the culmination of Serra's art of the past decade, in which he turned to working with massive plates of hot-rolled steel, shaped into increasingly extreme and complex curves, and grouped or joined to form architectural-scale sculptures that enclose and forcefully activate space. In the *Torqued Ellipse* series, Serra twisted and tilted his forms until he achieved a form that describes one ellipse at the base and another rotated - rather than aligned - ellipse at the top. The resulting structure wraps around an interior space that may be entered by a gap in its "wall."

Torqued Ellipse IV is one of the most dramatic works in this series. It has a form comparable to that of a twisted ribbon standing on its edge, whose top thrusts away from its bottom. Formed of two huge steel plates, its dramatic bending was first conceived in small, hand-manipulated metal models, then realized, by a combination of computer-guided control and massive pressure, on machines normally used in the fabrication of ship hulls.

The *Torqued Ellipse* series was in part inspired by the dynamic spaces created by the Italian sixteenth-century architect Pietro Borromini. The results comprise some of the most sensuous and expressively animated moments in a career that began within the austere tenets of 1960s Minimalism.

Torqued Ellipse IV is part of the exhibition *Richard Serra*, which opened at The Geffen Contemporary at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, in September 1998, and is at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao until

October 17, 1999.

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