

THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION

MISSION, OVERVIEW, DIRECTOR

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation: Mission Statement

The mission of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is to promote the understanding and appreciation of art, architecture, and other manifestations of modern and contemporary visual culture; to collect, preserve and research art objects; and to make them accessible to scholars and an increasingly diverse audience through its network of museums, programs, educational initiatives, and publications.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation: Overview

From the time of its founding in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation has posited the most international outlook among New York City's great cultural institutions. It was created by Solomon R. Guggenheim, scion of a wealthy American family, in order to preserve his private collection of European and American abstract (or non-objective) paintings and make it available to the public. The Foundation, chartered by the Board of Regents of New York State, set out "to provide for the promotion of art and for the mental or moral improvement of men and women by furthering their education, enlightenment, and aesthetic taste." Throughout its history, the Foundation has owned and operated several museums in various countries, and has amassed one of the world's leading collections of modern and contemporary art. It creates and organizes approximately 15–20 exhibitions each year, which have been shown in scores of museums around the world, and its associated publishing program has resulted in scholarly volumes appearing in more than a dozen languages.

Currently, the Foundation owns three museums: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, and the Guggenheim Hermitage Museum in Las Vegas. It provides curatorial direction and management services to two museums with which it shares collections and programs: the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin. Each year, the total attendance at the five institutions surpasses 2.5 million visitors.

In June of 2000, the Guggenheim entered into a partnership with the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, and seven months later with the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria. The purpose of this trilateral alliance is to share collections, jointly develop exhibitions and educational programs that will benefit a wide international audience, and cooperate on the construction of new museums, primarily in Asia and Latin America.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation: Director Thomas Krens

Thomas Krens was named Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in 1988. He graduated from Williams College with a B.A. in political economy in 1969. He holds a M.A. in art from the State University of New York, and a M.B.A. from Yale University. From 1971 to 1988, he was an Assistant Professor in the Art Department at Williams College; in 1981 he also became Director of the Williams College Museum of Art. Through his position at Williams in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Mr. Krens was the originator and founding chairman of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), one of the largest museums of contemporary art in the world.

Under Mr. Krens's leadership, the Guggenheim Foundation has built an unprecedented international network of cultural facilities and alliances with major museums. Beginning in 1990, the Guggenheim

Foundation has developed a series of buildings contiguous to the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, home of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, more than doubling the size of the Venice museum. In 1991, Mr. Krens negotiated the unique partnership between the Basque Regional Government and the Guggenheim Foundation that produced the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, designed by Frank O. Gehry. The Guggenheim in Bilbao opened to wide public acclaim in October 1997. In November 1997, the Deutsche Guggenheim — a museum space and exhibition facility designed by American architect Richard Gluckman and located in the former East Berlin — was opened as the result of joint venture between the Guggenheim Foundation and Deutsche Bank A.G. and has since then presented more than 30 highly acclaimed exhibitions and single artist commissions to the Berlin public. In October 2001, the Guggenheim opened another small, but architecturally important museum, the Guggenheim Hermitage Museum in Las Vegas, designed by Rem Koolhaas.

Under Mr. Krens's direction, the Guggenheim Foundation has been a leader in establishing international collaborations among major museums. In June 2000, the Guggenheim entered into a partnership with the State Hermitage Museum (SHM) in St. Petersburg, Russia, and seven months later with the Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM) in Vienna, Austria. The purpose of the Guggenheim-SHM-KHM alliance is to share collections, jointly develop exhibitions and educational programs that will benefit a wide international audience, and cooperate on the construction of new museums, primarily in Asia and Latin America. Combined, the collections of the Guggenheim, Hermitage, and Kunsthistorisches Museums are the largest in the world organized under one cooperative programming entity.

As the chief artistic officer of the Guggenheim Foundation, Mr. Krens is responsible for exhibitions and programming for all Guggenheim museums worldwide. Since 1992, the Guggenheim has produced more than 250 major exhibitions. These projects have encompassed definitive retrospectives of major American and international artists, including Matthew Barney, Georg Baselitz, Francesco Clemente, Dan Flavin, Jenny Holzer, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Mario Merz, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Nam June Paik, Robert Rauschenberg, and James Rosenquist; historical surveys of 20th-century art such as *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915–1932* (1992), *Picasso and the Age of Iron* (1993), *The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943–1968* (1994), and *Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline* (1996), and *Kazimir Malevich: Suprematism* (2003); and exhibitions that have presented the artistic heritage of many countries and regions: *Africa: The Art of a Continent* (1996), *China: 5,000 Years* (1998), *Brazil: Body & Soul* (2001), *The Aztec Empire* (2004), and *RUSSIA!* (2005).

Likewise, the collection has greatly expanded under Mr. Krens's leadership. Approximately 60-percent larger than it was in 1988, the Foundation's permanent collection has also increased greatly in depth and breadth. Under Mr. Krens, the Foundation has made such major acquisitions as the Panza Collection of Minimalist and Conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s, the finest collection of vintage photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe, and the Bohen Collection of multimedia art. The Guggenheim's holdings are now among the world's most esteemed in the area of contemporary photography and multimedia art.

Among Mr. Krens's major accomplishments at the Guggenheim in New York has been the multi-phased restoration and expansion of the Frank Lloyd Wright building. The first phase, completed in 1992, encompassed the restoration of the interior of the landmark Frank Lloyd Wright building, the construction of a 10-story tower gallery and office building designed by Gwathmey Siegel and

Associates, and the addition of a new storage and technical services facility on New York City's West Side. In 2004, the Guggenheim successfully completed a campaign to raise \$27 million for the second phase of the capital project, to restore the exterior facade of the Wright building, upgrade the security and climate control systems, and provide public access to the roof terrace of the main building; work is currently underway, with completion scheduled before 2009, in time for the 50th anniversary of the building.

Mr. Krens is a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors, the Réunion des Musées, the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, and the Société Kandinsky, Paris. He has received Honorary Doctorates from Williams College, Yale University, and the State University of New York at Albany and in 2000 was awarded the Special Prize for Architectural Patronage at the Venice Architecture Biennale.

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FOR INFORMATION:

Public Affairs Department
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
1071 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10128
212 423-3840
publicaffairs@guggenheim.org