

The Museum of Modern Art

KIRK VARNEDOE

Kirk Varnedoe, who organized *Jasper Johns: A Retrospective*, has been Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, since 1988, after having served as Adjunct Curator for the previous three years. Mr. Varnedoe first became affiliated with the Museum in 1984, when he collaborated with William Rubin, then Director (now Director Emeritus) of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, in organizing "*Primitivism*" in *20th-Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and Modern*.

During his tenure at MoMA, Mr. Varnedoe has organized *From Bauhaus to Pop: Masterworks Given by Philip Johnson* (with Robert Storr, 1996), *Masterpieces from the Louise Reinhardt Smith Collection* (1995), *Cy Twombly: A Retrospective* (1994-95), *Masterpieces from the David and Peggy Rockefeller Collection: Manet to Picasso* (1994), *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture* (with Adam Gopnik, 1990), and *Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture, & Design* (1986), all of which were accompanied by catalogues he authored. In 1989 he initiated the series *Artist's Choice*, in which artists select and install temporary exhibitions of works from the Museum's collection. The inaugural exhibition, *Scott Burton: Burton on Brancusi*, was followed by *Ellsworth Kelly: Fragmentation and the Single Form* (1990); *Chuck Close: Head-On/The Modern Portrait* (1991); *John Baldessari: e.g. Grass, Water Heater, Mouths, & etc. (for John Graham)*, (1994); and *Elizabeth Murray: Modern Women* (1995).

-more-

In 1993 Mr. Varnedoe oversaw the expansion and renovation of the Museum's Painting and Sculpture galleries, placing a special emphasis on contemporary work and presenting a major rethinking of the collection and its display. Mr. Varnedoe's installation ranges from Abstract Expressionism to Pop to Minimalism to large-scale European and American art that underscores the expanded space.

Among previous exhibitions Mr. Varnedoe organized for other institutions are *Northern Light: Realism and Symbolism in Scandinavian Painting, 1880-1910* (1982-83), *Gustave Caillebotte: A Retrospective Exhibition* (1976-77), *Modern Portraits: The Self and Others* (1976), and *Rodin Drawings True and False* (with Albert Elsen, 1971-72).

From 1980 to 1988 Mr. Varnedoe taught at The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, first as Associate Professor (until 1984) and then as Professor of Fine Arts. He continues to hold an adjunct teaching post there. In 1992 Mr. Varnedoe held the Slade Professorship in Art History at Oxford University, a visiting professorship that included a series of public lectures. In 1984 he received the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, which resulted in his book *A Fine Disregard: What Makes Modern Art Modern* (Abrams, 1990). He has also written *Gustave Caillebotte* (1987) and *Northern Light: Nordic Painting at the Turn of the Century* (1988), both published by Yale University Press. He has lectured on a wide variety of topics across the country and his articles have appeared in various art journals.

Born in Savannah, Georgia, Mr. Varnedoe graduated from Williams College and received his M.A. (1970) and Ph.D. (1972) degrees in art history from Stanford University. In 1994 he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts by Williams College.