

Maria Lind Is New Recipient of the Menil's Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement

HOUSTON, January 7, 2009—Menil Director Josef Helfenstein has named Maria Lind as the fourth recipient of the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement. Making the selection was a panel of three distinguished arts professionals: Lynne Cooke, curator, Dia Art Foundation, New York, and chief curator, Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Susanne Ghez, director, Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago; and Udo Kittelmann, director of Berlin's Nationalgalerie.

The biennial prize carries a stipend of \$15,000. Established in 2001 in honor of the renowned curator and the museum's founding director, Walter Hopps (1932-2005), the award recognizes curators in early to mid career who have made significant contributions to the field of contemporary art.

Said Lind: "To receive an award named after the curator of Marcel Duchamp's first museum exhibition is humbling. I like to think that it means recognition for a curatorial approach and sensibility that rethinks formats while walking hand-in-hand with art and artists."

Born in Stockholm in 1966, Lind currently is director of the graduate program at the Bard College Center for Curatorial Studies. Prior to this post she was director of Iaspis (International Artist Studio Program in Sweden). From 2002-2004 she was director of Kunstverein München, where her curatorial team ran a program that involved artists such as Deimantas Narkevicius, Oda Projesi, Bojan Sarcevic, Philippe Parreno, and Marion von Osten. Lind served as the commissioner for Sweden's participation at the São Paulo Bienal in 2002 (Annika Eriksson) and in 1998 (Ann-Sofí Sidén). From 1997-2001 she was curator at Moderna Museet in Stockholm and, in 1998, co-curator of Manifesta 2, Europe's biennale of contemporary art. Throughout her career she has contributed to numerous exhibition catalogues and other scholarly publications.

Previous recipients of the Hopps Award are Roger M. Buergel, chief curator, Miami Art Museum; Hamza Walker, director of education and associate curator of the Renaissance

Society at the University of Chicago; and Eungie Joo, the Keith Haring director and curator of Education and Public Programs at The New Museum in New York.

“We are delighted to recognize the achievements of Maria Lind in the field of curatorial practice,” said Franklin Sirmans, Menil curator of modern and contemporary art. “The judges and I were impressed by the fact that Maria comes to the field from many different perspectives and posts -- a major international collecting museum, a renowned residency program, and most recently an academic program dedicated to curatorial practice. And she has worked very closely with artists in conceiving programs and projects. Honoring not only curatorial achievement, the Hopps Award also recognizes the curatorial risks associated with extending ideas that are in their formative stages through exhibitions that challenge and provoke.”

Walter Hopps began his career in Los Angeles, where in 1957 he co-founded the Ferus Gallery and was instrumental in bringing the first postwar generation of the city’s artists to international prominence. Among the seminal exhibitions he organized as curator and director of the Pasadena Art Museum were the first retrospectives of Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Cornell; he also mounted the first exhibition devoted to Pop Art, 1962’s “New Painting of Common Objects.” Over the years, as director of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Menil Collection in Houston, and as commissioner and curator of the São Paulo Bienal and Venice Biennale, Hopps presented work by such artists as Barnett Newman, Frank Stella, Robert Irwin, James Rosenquist, and Diane Arbus. In 1997 Hopps organized a Robert Rauschenberg retrospective for the Menil Collection, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (where he held the title of adjunct senior curator of twentieth-century art from 2000 until his death in 2005).

Said Josef Helfenstein: "It is a pleasure and a privilege to have Maria Lind join the ranks of Hopps Award winners. She is a great innovator, as Walter was. Her intelligence, curiosity, and engagement with artists honors his memory and furthers the importance of this award for excellence in the curatorial field."

Maria Lind will deliver a public lecture at the Menil on March 13, 2009 at 7:30 p.m

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