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BARD GRADUATE CENTER ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL IRIS FOUNDATION AWARDS

New York, January 25, 2019—**Dr. Susan Weber**, founder and director of Bard Graduate Center, has announced the recipients of the **Twenty-Third Annual Iris Foundation Awards for Outstanding Contributions to the Decorative Arts**.

This year's awardees are **Marina Kellen French**, **Jeffrey Munger**, **Dr. Laurie Wilkie**, and **Alessandra Di Castro**. The awards will be presented at a luncheon in New York City on April 17, 2019.

Past Iris Foundation Award recipients include many of the most influential patrons, scholars, and dealers in the field of decorative arts. Patrons such as John C. Waddell, Sir Paul Ruddock, Jayne Wrightsman, Lord Rothschild, Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Richard Jenrette, and Iris Cantor have received the award for their visionary support of museums, galleries, and educational institutions. Among the distinguished scholars who have been honored are Harold Koda, Paola Antonelli, Barry Bergdoll, Morrison H. Heckscher, Dame Rosalind J. Savill, and Finbarr Barry Flood. Outstanding dealer honorees include Adrian Sassoon, Deedee Wigmore, Eric Shrubsole, Martin Levy, Michele Beiny-Harkins, and Benoist F. Drut. In 2008, Philippe de Montebello, retired director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, received a special award for his contributions to the artistic life in this country.

2019 Honorees

Marina Kellen French, Outstanding Patron

An avid supporter of the arts and humanities, both in the United States and abroad, Marina Kellen French is vice president of the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation; president of the Marina Kellen French Foundation; a managing director of the Metropolitan Opera; a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, Carnegie Hall, Hospital for Special Surgery, and the American Academy in Berlin; and a life trustee of the Morgan Library and Museum and WNET Channel 13. In 2014, Ms. Kellen French received the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit (First Class) of the Federal Republic of Germany for her outstanding work in German-American relations.

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Jeffrey Munger – Outstanding Lifetime Achievement

From 2000 to 2017, Jeffrey Munger served as curator in the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he curated a number of exhibitions including *Global by Design: Chinese Ceramics from the R. Albuquerque Collection* (2016) and *Imperial Privilege: Vienna Porcelain of Du Paquier, 1718-44* (2009). His articles have appeared in *The French Porcelain Society Journal*, *Quaderni: Amici di Doccia*, and the catalogue for the Met's exhibition *Watteau, Music, and Theatre*. Through the Met, he was a visiting scholar at the American Academy in Rome and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles and an exchange curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Munger has served on the faculty of the Cooper Hewitt and Smithsonian Design Museum and is a past president and chairman of the board of the American Ceramic Circle.

Dr. Laurie Wilkie – Outstanding Mid-Career Scholar

Dr. Laurie Wilkie, professor of archaeology at the University of California, Berkeley, explores how nineteenth- and twentieth-century expressions of social difference, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, socioeconomics, and politics can be understood through the materiality of everyday life. Her books include *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African-American Midwife's Tale* (2003), *The Lost Boys of Zeta Psi: A Historical Archaeology of Masculinity in a University Fraternity* (2010), and *Strung Out on Archaeology* (2014). Her current research focuses on the ways black soldiers navigated the racialized landscapes of the western frontier and military life and the ways they deployed material items to express their status as United States citizens.

Alessandra Di Castro – Outstanding Dealer

Alessandra Di Castro hails from a family of highly regarded Italian antique dealers whose eponymous gallery in Rome specializes in Italian decorative and fine arts that evoke the grandeur of Roman classicism throughout history. As a complement to her family's traditional spheres of interest, she also exhibits twentieth-century Italian avant-garde art and design. The director of Museo Ebraico di Roma (Jewish Museum of Rome) for many years, she was recently named president of the Board of Directors for its foundation. She also serves on the boards of the Italian Antique Dealers' Association and Biennale Internazionale dell'Antiquariato di Firenze. Ms. Di Castro shows annually at TEFAF (New York and Maastricht) and the Masterpiece Fair in London. In partnership with Paris-based Galerie Kugel and Galerie Brimo De Laroussilhe, she holds several exhibitions in New York each year.

About the Awards

The Iris Foundation Awards were created in 1997 to recognize scholars, patrons, and professionals who have made outstanding contributions to the study and appreciation of the decorative arts and thereby help to sustain the cultural heritage of our world. The Awards are named for Bard Graduate Center Founder and Director Susan Weber's mother, Iris Weber. Proceeds from the luncheon fund graduate student scholarships and fellowships. For more information or to make a reservation, call 212-501-3058 or email support@bgc.bard.edu.

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About Bard Graduate Center

As the leading research institute in the United States dedicated to the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture, Bard Graduate Center and its Gallery have pioneered the study of objects as a means to better understand the cultural history of the material world. Offering experiences for scholars, students, and the general public alike, Bard Graduate Center is built on multidisciplinary study and the integration of research, graduate teaching, and public exhibitions. Since its founding in 1993, it has established a network of more than 400 alumni who work in leading museums, universities, and institutions worldwide to advance new ways of thinking about material culture.

In celebration of its 25th Anniversary, Bard Graduate Center is presenting a series of exhibitions and events that showcase the institution's groundbreaking research and approach to the study of tangible "things." Beginning in fall 2018 and continuing through 2020, the 25th Anniversary celebration includes exhibitions on a diverse range of subjects, such as *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*, which examined sacred objects and the practice of votive offering (fall 2018); *French Fashion, Women, and the First World War* (fall 2019); and *Eileen Gray: Creating a Total Work of Art*, an in-depth examination of the work and contributions of the iconic modernist designer and architect, presented in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou, Paris (fall 2020). Other initiatives during the anniversary years will also advance research and scholarship, recognize leaders in the field, present engaging programs for the public, and foster a new generation of students and scholars. bgc.bard.edu.

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