

## Two Upcoming Bard Graduate Center Exhibitions

### Richard Tuttle's Collection of Objects And New Work by the Artist

#### Exploration of the History and Future of Object Conservation

***Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?***  
March 25–July 10, 2022

*Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?* grows out of the artist's lifelong curiosity and fascination with objects, and how humans use tangible things to make meaning. Reflecting the artist's inquisitive and playful approach to his practice, visitors will be invited to engage with over 70 items drawn from Tuttle's personal collection of objects. Visitors can lift these objects, touching and interacting with items ranging from ceramic teacups and decorative objects to vintage fabrics and antique curios.

In addition to Tuttle's personal collection of objects, the exhibition features a series of never-before exhibited artworks created by Tuttle. Tuttle designed the exhibition furniture that will be used to display the objects from his collection, and he collaborated with Belgian book designer and publisher Luc Derycke on the illustrated catalogue that accompanies *Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?*

Each object from Tuttle's collection will be accompanied by an index card outlining the piece's "biography" --encompassing both objective details (including material, provenance, price) and subjective narratives (e.g., Tuttle's first encounter with the object, his impressions of it, and other observations). These writings hint at Tuttle's own relationship with his collection, and the role of each object in his life and artistic practice. This information is a springboard for the visitor's own experience of the collection: in holding the objects in their own hands, visitors plumb the layers of meaning that they assign to the objects, and themselves answer the question, "What Is the Object?"

The exhibition catalogue will feature photography of Tuttle's collection, an interview with Tuttle, and essays by Renee Gladman and Peter N. Miller.

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***Conserving Active Matter***  
March 25–July 10, 2022

*Conserving Active Matter* explores the science, philosophy, and art of conserving objects. The exhibition examines four central questions: "What is Conservation?" "How are Things Active?" "Who Acts on Objects, When and Why?" and "Where is the Future of Conservation?" The exhibition provides visitors with an appreciation for conservation as a subjective practice that has been performed in different ways across time periods and cultures, but remains a common thread throughout human history.

Featuring more than 100 objects from five continents, *Conserving Active Matter* looks at different philosophies and traditions of conservation, and the variety of ways that objects change over time, whether by natural or human intervention. Objects examined include items such as: a Korean shaman painting, a paleolithic hand axe, baseball cards, the IBM Leapfrog (a prototype for a touchscreen tablet dating from the 1990s), works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Neri Oxman, and Hopi "living clay" ceramic canteens. With objects that display the conservation efforts of prior generations, the exhibition examines how scientists, curators, and collectors value--or resist--changes in objects.

The exhibition offers insights into new scientific and philosophical questions that are emerging in the field as conservators wrestle with threats to cultural heritage, the properties and life spans of new materials, the surprising impacts of climate change on conservation, and evolving conceptions of the very definition of preservation. Ultimately, the exhibition asks visitors to reflect on their own practices of preservation of their everyday possessions.

*Conserving Active Matter* is the culmination of BGC's ten-year-long "Cultures of Conservation" initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Since 2012, the initiative has been connecting the perspectives of conservation to an interdisciplinary notion of the "human sciences." The exhibition is a collaborative curatorial effort among BGC faculty members Peter N. Miller (dean), Ivan Gaskell (professor), Aaron Glass (associate professor), Meredith Linn (assistant professor and director of master's studies), Jennifer Mass (Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Cultural Heritage Science), Soon Kai Poh (project director and Conservation as a Human Science Fellow), and Ittai Weinryb (associate professor).

*Conserving Active Matter* is part of Cultures of Conservation, a multi-year initiative generously supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. More information about the initiative can be found at [bgc.bard.edu/cultures-of-conservation](http://bgc.bard.edu/cultures-of-conservation).



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### **About Focus Projects**

*Richard Tuttle: What is the Object?* and *Conserving Active Matter* are part of Bard Graduate Center's Focus Projects series, exhibitions that are curated by faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students and emerge from their research and teaching. These exhibitions form part of an innovative program that promotes experimentation in display and interpretation, provides graduate students the opportunity to be involved in every aspect of exhibition development, and engages the public with new ways of understanding the material world. Past Focus Projects include *The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt and the Making of Anthropology*; *Jan Tschichold and the New Typography: Graphic Design Between the World Wars*; and *The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity*.

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 has pioneered the study of objects 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, Bard Graduate Center 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. For more information, visit [bgc.bard.edu](http://bgc.bard.edu).

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