

# HYPERALLERGIC

## NYU Acquires 200 Works by Prominent Downtown Artists, From Mapplethorpe to Basquiat

A donation of two hundred works includes Jean-Michel Basquiat, Robert Mapplethorpe, Keith Haring, and Donald Baechler.

by [Cassie Packard](#)

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Deborah Kass, *Jim and Joe*, 1993. Silkscreen on canvas, 40 x 55 in. Cottrell-Lovett Collection.

Promised gift, NYU Art Collection (courtesy of Grey Art Gallery, NYU)

Two hundred artworks, predominantly by downtown New York artists including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Robert Mapplethorpe, Keith Haring, and Donald Baechler, have been acquired by the Grey Art Gallery at New York University (NYU). The

works, which will be accompanied by a new named gallery and study center, were donated by collecting couple Dr. James Cottrell and Mr. Joseph Lovett, who have lived in lower Manhattan for over four decades and built personal relationships with artists whose work they acquire.

NYU, which has campuses in Greenwich Village and Brooklyn, is an important research center for scholars of New York City's downtown art scene: the university's Fales Library boasts the [largest archive dedicated to the artistic milieu](#) in SoHo and the Lower East Side from the 1970s into the 1990s. The Grey Art Gallery — which was founded in those critical years, in 1974 — has partnered with the library in the past, for example on the exhibition [The Downtown Show: The New York Art Scene 1974-1984](#), held in 2006.

One notable work in the acquisition is Deborah Kass's "Parisien Gertrude Stein" (1998), a blue and black silkscreen featuring a repeated image of expat writer and luminary Gertrude Stein. Kass was already established as a painter when she embarked upon the "Warhol Project" (1992-2000), in which she flagrantly appropriated the Pop artist's aesthetic but replaced the celebrities that Warhol so adored — Jackie Kennedy, Elvis — with her own icons, who were often Jewish or lesbian. Barbra Streisand prominently featured in the project, along with Stein, who was also the subject of Kass's 1993 "Chairman Ma" series, a riff on Warhol's portraits of Chairman Mao.

The same year, Kass gave donors Cottrell and Lovett the Warhol treatment in "Jim and Joe" (1993). The silkscreen, which is also included in the gift to NYU, depicts a black and white image of the pair that recurs across a series of brightly colored panels. [An essay by Sue Scott](#) reports that Kass and the couple met through mutual friends, and "a rocky start caused by reciprocal dislike of one another's dog transformed into a close friendship and eventually into a collector/artist relationship."

While many of the artists featured in the donation are associated with New York, one exception is British artist David Hockney, whose works on paper are also included. That isn't to say that there is no connection: one of the earliest exhibitions at Grey Art Gallery, held in the spring of 1980, was a show of prints and drawings by Hockney. A prescient show, it was among the first major presentations of the artist's work in New York. Since meeting Hockney through mutual friends, Cottrell and Lovett have acquired not only etchings and drawings but also paintings, fax and Xerox works, and photographs of the Fire Island Pines.

A pick of works from the donation will be on view in spring 2022 as part of Grey Art Gallery's exhibition *Mostly New: Selections from the NYU Art Collection*.

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