



מוזיאון ישראל, ירושלים
the israel museum, jerusalem
متحف إسرائيل، أورشليم القدس

press release

Lily Safra Donates Gerhard Richter's *Abstraktes Bild 849-3*(1997) to The Israel Museum, Jerusalem



Abstraktes Bild 849-3 (1997)
by Gerhard Richter

Jerusalem, January 13, 2012 – The Israel Museum announced today that longtime friend and patron Lily Safra has donated Gerhard Richter's *Abstraktes Bild 849-3* (1997) to the Museum in memory of her husband, Edmond J. Safra, a renowned philanthropist and one of the Museum's greatest benefactors. The monumental abstract work, painted in shades of magenta and blue, is now on view in the Spertus Gallery at the entrance to the Museum's Edmond and Lily Safra Fine Arts Wing, which was redesigned and reinstalled through the generosity of the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation as part of the Israel Museum's campus renewal project, completed in July 2010.

"It is an honor to celebrate my husband's memory by presenting this extraordinary work to the Israel Museum, an institution for which he cared so deeply and which now provides an even more remarkable and beautiful setting thanks to its recent renewal," said Lily Safra. "I cannot think of a better home for this painting, and I am gratified that it will inspire visitors from Israel and around the world for generations to come."

"We are deeply grateful to Lily Safra for this generous gift and for Edmond's and her incomparable support for the Israel Museum over a great many years," said James S. Snyder, Anne and Jerome Fisher Director. "*Abstraktes Bild 849-3* represents a major addition to our holdings in contemporary art, and we are thrilled that it is now part of the encyclopedic experience in visual culture that we provide for our audiences. We are also deeply gratified by the way in which this generosity underscores our Museum's tradition of growing its collection through gifts of singular importance."

Considered one of the most important artists of his generation, Gerhard Richter (b. 1932) has, since the 1960s, dedicated himself to painting, exploring the medium in still life, vivid abstract works, and monochromatic figurative paintings based on photography. *Abstraktes Bild 849-3* is the third and final painting in a series that explores abstract gesture and bold coloration and caps an extended period of investigation in the field of abstraction. The 2 x 3 meter painting contains layers of color scraped across a seemingly endless expanse of canvas, demonstrating Richter's unique method of constructing paintings gradually, alternately applying layers of paint and then spreading and scraping them with a squeegee, leaving traces of each of his actions on the canvas. In this set of paintings (849), the artist completed the creative process by peeling portions of the dried outer layer from the surface, creating a damaged look

which also provides a window into his artistic process. The Israel Museum's collection also includes Richter's *Abstraktes Bild (red, blurred) 743-3* (1991), on permanent loan from a private collection.

The longstanding relationship between the Israel Museum and Edmond and Lily Safra extends from the time of the Museum's founding by Teddy Kollek and includes major support for such acquisitions as Albert Einstein's *Theory of Relativity* manuscript, as well as ongoing operating support. In 2009, the Israel Museum announced a \$12-million gift from the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation for the renewal, reinstallation, and endowment of the Edmond and Lily Safra Fine Arts Wing.

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The Israel Museum is the largest cultural institution in the State of Israel and is ranked among the leading art and archaeology museums in the world. Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections ranging from prehistory through contemporary art and includes the most extensive holdings of Biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world, among them the Dead Sea Scrolls. In just over 45 years, the Museum has built a far-ranging collection of nearly 500,000 objects through an unparalleled legacy of gifts and support from its circle of patrons worldwide. In 2010, the Museum completed a comprehensive renewal of its campus led by James Carpenter Design Associates, New York, and Efrat-Kowalsky Architects, Tel Aviv, including the creation of new galleries, orientation facilities, and public spaces, and the complete reinstallation of its encyclopedic collections. The Museum also organizes and presents programming at its off-site locations in Jerusalem at the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, where it presents archaeological artifacts from the Land of Israel, and at its historic Ticho House in downtown Jerusalem, a venue for exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art.

Mrs. Lily Safra, Chairwoman of the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation

Mrs. Lily Safra has carried on the philanthropic tradition of her husband, Mr. Edmond J. Safra, one of the twentieth century's most accomplished bankers and founder of the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation. Since 2000, Mrs. Safra has chaired this Foundation, which supports hundreds of projects related to education, science and medicine, religion, culture, and humanitarian relief in over 40 countries. She is a passionate art collector, and in addition to her support of the Israel Museum, she has provided significant assistance to institutions including the National Gallery of Art (Washington), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Courtauld Institute of Art (London), the Château de Versailles, and the Musée du Louvre, where the "Salle Edmond et Lily Safra" honors the works she and her husband donated.

For more information please contact:

Dena Scher Bartra
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem
denasc@imj.org.il
972.2.670.8935

Juliet Sorce / Leah Sandals
Resnicow Schroeder Associates, New York
jsorce / lsandals@resnicowschroeder.com
212.671.5158 / 5154

For more information on Mrs. Lily Safra and the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation please contact:

Geraldine Igou
Publicis Consultants
geraldine.igou@consultants.publicis.fr
+33 1 44 82 45 43

Karina Galvez
Publicis Consultants
karina.galvez@consultants.publicis.fr
+33 1 44 82 47 02