

Look at any inspired painting. It's like a gong sounding; it puts you in a state of reverberation.
—Philip Guston

This exhibition began with a simple idea: rarely seen work from the homes of private collectors would be shown in our gallery in an unprecedented offering to the community.

That idea came to life in the recognition that a work of art, beginning in the artist's impulse, generates *energy* and *movement*, like a gong sounding and resounding through the collector and into the experience of everyone who sees it. That to bring these artists together in a room is to create a visual conversation. And that we could open the conversation into language, into poetry. This was the genesis of *REVERBERATIONS: A VISUAL CONVERSATION*.

Beyond expectation, this exhibition generated a wave of participation and support. The generosity of everyone involved infused our efforts with faith and trust, expertise and synergy, enthusiasm and laughter, friendship and kindness.

The exhibition could not have happened without the incredible generosity of twenty-three collectors. Visiting their homes with Alan Porter, entering their private world, was an intense and rewarding experience, and what a privilege it was to be so graciously guided to the most remarkable work. Reality seemed to blur as we were led to rooms like small museums and introduced to cherished paintings, prints, sculptures that had been adopted like members of the family. As one collector whispered: "This piece hangs in a place where I can watch it every day." Their collections were treasuries of possibility. Ultimately we chose each work in the spirit of Mark Rothko's credo that *a picture lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer*.

The artist Karl Schmidt-Rottluff asserted in 1914 that "you can't talk about art," but he added, "I'll leave it to the poets." Their work is integral and vital to this exhibition, and the decision to exhibit the poems together with the visual art was a radical act of curation. Charlie Pendergast extended an invitation to respected poets, and we were honored by their courageous enthusiasm for a unique creative challenge: to respond to a piece which would be assigned to them—a mystery, then a revelation!—and to translate the reverberative experience into language, with no limitation but the space of a single page. The result is astonishing and profound.

Curation is all about choices. For the curator, as for the artist or the poet, every choice, however small—the space of half an inch on the wall, the space between two words on the page—is intentional and meaningful. Juxtaposition is dynamic. The installation you see here is an invitation to experience Rothko's *companionship*—to enter into conversation.

As an artist who has inspirational masters, so did I have my curatorial guides. Onkwei Enwezor, Jan Hoet, Harald Szeemann, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Marcel Broodthaers—these were innovators who brought to the curating world freedom of speech and the idea that the exhibition is an

artform in itself. The thread of continuity in my own curating is a longing to offer the public art of the highest quality, to create a multimedia experience, to create interaction with and within a group. What better setting for this than the non-profit Sebastopol Center for the Arts? *All* are welcome here—our doors are open to everyone to enter the galleries for free.

Every moment in time shares a thread of congruency with all that precedes it. This exhibition feels like that to me. It unites the visual with the literary in a brilliant collaboration among media, and it creates a dynamic conversation among people who share a common vision of the value and impact of art.

And is this not what art is about?—a way back to a fundamental language which transcends daily conversation and brings us into the expansive realm of the universal.

Thank you for being part of the experience.

Catherine Devriese, Visual Arts Director