



**John Michael
Kohler Arts Center**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 5, 2024**

School of the Art Institute of Chicago to Sell its Roger Brown Study Collection to Kohler Foundation

Chicago Imagist's Artworks to be Gifted to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center

CHICAGO—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a leader in art and design education, and the Kohler Foundation today announced the college will transfer ownership of the art and archives in its Roger Brown Study Collection (RBSC) to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center Art Preserve. The dynamic collection, which currently resides in SAIC alum Roger Brown's (BFA 1968, MFA 1970) former residence at 1926 North Halsted Street in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, contains more than 2,000 artworks by Chicago Imagists and non-mainstream artists, folk and indigenous art, objects from material and popular culture, costumes, textiles, furniture, travel souvenirs, and sundry objects.

Brown was a central figure in the Chicago Imagist art movement, and his own work, as well as the objects he lovingly curated, are an integral part of modern art history. The Kohler Foundation will take ownership of the collection in 2025. After the documentation and preservation process is complete, the works will be gifted to the Art Preserve in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where it will be on view to the public late next year. The proceeds from this sale will support graduate student scholarships in the Painting and Drawing department at SAIC.

"For nearly 30 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago has been proud to steward the Roger Brown Study Collection, telling stories about Roger's life and extraordinary creative path and the histories and narratives of the more than 2,000 objects in the collection," said Martin Berger, SAIC's provost and senior vice president of academic affairs. "Moving the collection to the Art Preserve allows the works to be conserved for future generations, as well as studied and experienced by more people, deepening the world's understanding of the creative approach of Brown and his contemporaries."

The Art Preserve's state-of-the-art museum facilities, full-time curators, and conservation staff will ensure that the collection is maintained and broadly accessible to tens of thousands of annual visitors. The Art Preserve has emerged as a leading center for the study of Chicago Imagists. Former SAIC professor and alum Ray Yoshida's (BA 1953) and alum Barbara Rossi's (MFA 1970) home collections are among its holdings, and the museum is adding work by Don

Baum, Glen Davies, and Phyllis Bramson. The Roger Brown Study Collection will deepen this focus, as it documents the network of relationships between the Imagists and the City of Chicago from the 1970s through the 1990s.

"We are honored to become the stewards of this extraordinary collection gifted by the Kohler Foundation, which represents a significant milestone in the ongoing commitment to Ruth DeYoung Kohler's vision of preserving artist-built environments at the Art Preserve," said Jodi Throckmorton, chief curator at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center and Art Preserve. "The Roger Brown Study Collection not only expands our representation of Chicago Imagists, but also deepens our ability to engage with and inspire new audiences and to seed further scholarly engagement. We look forward to sharing it with the public, sparking conversations that celebrate both its historical importance and contemporary relevance."

The Art Preserve's holdings of Yoshida and Rossi, and now Roger Brown, will set the three collections in juxtaposition with each other and illuminate and affirm the omnivorous collecting strategy of the Imagists as an integral and unique part of their practice. Adding the Roger Brown Study Collection in this constellation of Imagist collections allows expanded study, understanding, and ease of access for future generations of scholars.

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For more than 155 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been a leader in educating the world's most influential artists, designers, and scholars. Located in downtown Chicago with a fine arts graduate program ranked number two in the nation by U.S. News and World Report, SAIC provides an interdisciplinary approach to art and design as well as world-class resources, including the Art Institute of Chicago museum, on-campus galleries, and state-of-the-art facilities. SAIC's undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate students have the freedom to take risks and create the bold ideas that transform Chicago and the world, and adults, teens, and kids in our Continuing Studies classes have the opportunity to explore their creative sides, build portfolios, and advance their skills. Notable alumni and faculty include Georgia O'Keeffe, Nick Cave, David Sedaris, Cynthia Rowley, Michelle Grabner, Richard Hunt, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, and Jeff Koons.

John Michael Kohler Arts Center and Art Preserve

Founded in 1967, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) is dedicated to generating creative exchanges between an international community of artists and a diverse public. The JMKAC's collection focuses primarily on works by artist-environment builders, self-taught and folk artists, and works created in the Arts/Industry residency program Central to its mission is promoting understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through original exhibitions, commissioned works of art, performing arts, community arts initiatives, and publications. Its satellite campus, the Art Preserve, opened in 2021 to highlight JMKAC's collection of 25,000 individual works of art by more than 30 art-environment builders.

Kohler Foundation

Kohler Foundation is committed to the preservation of art environments and important collections, as well as Wisconsin culture and heritage. In the past, Kohler Foundation's preservation efforts were focused almost entirely in the state of Wisconsin. However, the Foundation is committed to expanding its preservation efforts nationwide. In some cases, artists have transformed their homes and/or their yards into powerful and unique works of art; some have built chapels and grottos, while others created literally hundreds of life-size or over-life-size sculptures and murals that cover entire buildings.

Kohler Foundation has initiated and completed many major restorations, among them Wisconsin Concrete Park in Phillips, Wisconsin; Nick Engelbert's Grandview in Hollandale, Wisconsin, Hartman Rock Garden in Springfield, Ohio; Kenny Hill's Chauvin Sculpture Environment in Chauvin, Louisiana, the Garden of Eden sculpture park in Lucas, Kansas, Pasaquan in Buena Vista, Georgia, and the Langlais Preserve in Cushing, Maine. Kohler Foundation's most recent site preservation projects include M.T. Liggett's Art Environment in Mullinville, Kansas; the Itasca Rock Garden in Albert Lea, Minnesota; Prophet Isaiah's Second Coming House in Niagara Falls, NY and the Dickeyville Grotto in Dickeyville, Wisconsin. Many Wisconsin sites Kohler Foundation has preserved are included in Wandering Wisconsin, a consortium of art environments in the state. Earlier this year Kohler Foundation began restoration on the Ave Maria Grotto in Cullman, Alabama.

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