



The John L. Marion Chair in Art History, Painting and Sculpture

John L. Marion, FCRH '56

The John L. Marion Chair in Art History, Painting and Sculpture was established in 2006 in honor of John Marion, former chairman of Sotheby's Auction House, by the Burnett Foundation.

The position brings a distinguished scholar to Fordham University to instruct students in the history of painting and sculpture and to facilitate direct contact with art objects through the organization of exhibitions. Fordham's inaugural holder of the Marion Chair is Jo Anna Isaak, Ph.D., a specialist in the art of the second half of the 20th century and the contemporary era.

Following his graduation from Fordham in 1956, John L. Marion entered the Navy, earning the rank of lieutenant. In 1960, he joined Sotheby's, where he became a notable auctioneer and held several executive positions, including president and chairman, until his retirement in 1994.

Marion currently serves as a trustee of the Burnett Foundation, which was founded by his wife's parents, Anne Valliant Burnett Tandy and Charles Tandy. His wife, Anne Windfohr Marion, serves as president of the foundation. The Burnett Foundation supports a number of major museum projects, cultural institutions, social service agencies, community development groups and educational institutions. The foundation offers grants to nonprofit organizations to help them become more effective, responsive and creative in their missions.



The John L. Marion Chair in Art History, Painting and Sculpture

Jo Anna Isaak, Ph.D.

Jo Anna Isaak, Ph.D., specializes in the art of the 20th century, focusing on the history of modernism, the art of the Soviet Union, feminist practice and critique, and the intersection of art and ecological concerns. Her first book, *The Ruin of Representation in Modernist Art and Texts* (UMI Research Press, 1986), stems from her doctoral dissertation (University of Toronto, 1982) and examines the influence of modernist art movements on the writings of James Joyce, Gertrude Stein and the Russian futurists.

Her next study, *Feminism and Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter* (Routledge, 1996), while exploring the theme of laughter as a revolutionary strategy, argues that contemporary art under the influence of feminism provides the momentum for a critique of key assumptions about art, art history and the role of the artist.

Dr. Isaak has also published exhibition catalogs for shows that have toured the United States and Canada. Her exhibition *Laughter Ten Years After* (1995–1998) drew upon her second book project and featured the work of 20 women artists from Ireland, England, France, Russia and the

United States. *Looking Forward, Looking Black* (1999–2003) examined representations of African Americans in art and popular media. And *H2O* (2002–2003) focused on water and the human body.

This semester, Dr. Isaak and her students at Fordham University have organized *And For All This, Nature Is Never Spent*, an exhibition of works by contemporary artists grappling with ecological problems, on view at the Pelham Art Center beginning in March 2009.

Before joining the Fordham academic community in 2006, Dr. Isaak taught at Hobart and William Smith Colleges for more than 20 years. She has also taught at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, the University of California at Santa Barbara and Washington College in Maryland.

Dr. Isaak's research has been supported by the Hewlett-Mellon Foundation and the J. Paul Getty Foundation, among other institutions. In addition to curating exhibitions, organizing key scholarly symposia and writing books, reviews, articles and catalog essays, she lectures internationally and serves on the board of the Bogliasco Foundation.

The Reverend Joseph M. McShane, S.J.,
President of Fordham University,
is pleased to announce the appointment of

**Jo Anna Isaak, Ph.D., as the inaugural holder
of the John L. Marion Chair in Art History,
Painting and Sculpture,**

and requests the pleasure of your company
at her installation and inaugural lecture.

“And for all this, nature is never spent.”

MONDAY, 6 APRIL 2009 | 5:30 P.M.
12TH-FLOOR LOUNGE | LOWENSTEIN CENTER
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY | LINCOLN CENTER CAMPUS

A reception immediately follows the lecture.

R.S.V.P. by 31 March 2009 to (212) 636-6575.



The John L. Marion Chair in Art History, Painting and Sculpture



The Inaugural Marion Lecture

“And for all this, nature is never spent.”

Presented by Jo Anna Isaak, Ph.D.

In *Postmodernism* (1991) Frederic Jameson says, “Postmodernism is what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good.” Modernism’s long goodbye to nature is part of the standard narrative of the evolution of modern art. There was, however, a concomitant and contrary impulse at play in modernism. In this lecture, Jo Anna Isaak, Ph.D., traces modern art’s sustained connection with nature and its subsequent role in environmental reform. She presents the work of a number of contemporary artists working in a variety of nontraditional media, who are engaged in what she terms “the greening of the avant-garde”—employing their talents in the service of environmental

*Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
And for all this, nature is never spent. . .*

—from *God’s Grandeur* by Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

awareness, providing innovative approaches and models of participatory engagement, designing solutions to ecological problems, and broadening public concern for what is becoming the most pressing issue of our time: environmental degradation. She suggests that one of the most radical of modernism’s avant-garde gestures may be in art’s reintegration into the praxis of life, and the realization that art may be necessary for our successful stewardship of the environment.

Dr. Isaak’s inaugural Marion Lecture coincides with *And For All This, Nature Is Never Spent*, an art exhibition she and her students organized, on view at the Pelham Art Center from March 13 to April 28.

All photographs by Subhankar Banerjee: front cover, *Snow Geese*; over flap, *Caribou Migration*; inside left panel, *Beluga Whales with Calves*; inside right panel, *Caribou on Sand*; back cover, *Beluga Whales with Calves*.



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