

Baltimore Museum of Art's planned sale of Warhol painting causes controversy, loss of donations

BY REBECCA BEASLEY

FOLLOWING THE RECENT SOCIETAL uproar calling for better representation of minorities, the Baltimore Museum of Art announced on October 2 that it would be selling three paintings by popular artists in order to fund a diversity and equity project. The selling of three paintings would bring the museum an estimated \$65 million to spend on art created by a wider variety of artists. The three paintings which would be auctioned or sold privately include *The Last Supper* by Andy Warhol, 1957-G by Clyfford Still, and 3 by Brice Marden.

Not all of the museum's donors are thrilled about this decision, however. Charles Newhall III, a former Baltimore Museum of Art board chairman, claims that he and another former chairman, Stiles Colwill, will revoke their combined donation of \$50 million. Newhall claims that other donors are considering revoking their gifts as well, in response to the museum's planned sale of the three paintings.

The Baltimore Museum of Art's chairwoman of the board of trustees, Clair Zamoiski Segal, says that there is no record of Newhall's promised donation. Newhall responded to this by saying that, "[The board is] denying everything. They lie."

Two board of trustees members, Amy Sherald and Adam Pendleton, chose to resign in light of this conflict

with the sale of the paintings. Neither claimed to have objected to the sale of the three paintings.

Museum director Christopher Bedford says that the Baltimore Museum of Art has a responsibility to diversify their collection and address systemic racism and injustice. He says, "We [the museum] are not seeking any longer the trust of the privileged white few that has enjoyed museums like the BMA historically." Art history professor at Morgan State Lori Johnson says that diversifying the Baltimore Museum of Art is crucial as it will encourage her black art students, who, although a majority in the city of Baltimore, have little representation in the art world.

The funds from the planned sale will be used to acquire art created by people of color, as well as art created by women. Stiles Colwill writes that he "certainly [does] not believe that one sells masterpieces to fund diversity," and states that Bedford is attempting to rewrite history and "rectify the wrongs of the past."

Supporters of the upcoming sale emphasize that the museum acquired *The Last Supper* by Andy Warhol through the selling of a painting by Mark Rothko. Additionally, in 2018, the museum sold seven paintings, one of which was a Warhol painting, in order to fund diversification of their collection. Still, however, a letter signed by more than 200

supporters asks state officials to halt the planned sales. Most critics of the sales say that while they support director Bedford's attempts at diversifying the museum; they simply believe that he is going about it the wrong way, that is, selling major works to fund the program.

As of late October, the museum put a hold on its plan to sell the paintings because of the severe backlash. The museum wrote in an official announcement, "We do not abide by notions that museums exist to serve objects; we believe the objects in our collection must reflect, engage, and inspire the many different individuals that we serve." Within the announcement the museum expresses that it will carry out its plan of diversifying its collection, it will simply be a longer process to do so.

In *150 Glimpses of the Beatles*, bits and pieces make up a poignant portrait

BY REBECCA BEASLEY

WHETHER YOU WERE A fan of the Beatles since their prime or only just discovered a love for them, Craig Brown's *150 Glimpses of the Beatles* is a book that takes a reader back to the 60s. Seasoned fans can chuckle at nostalgic memories brought back to them, and new fans can learn about who the band really was and how they changed music and culture.

One of the first "glimpses" of the Beatles offered in the book describes how the band was structured differently than most bands at the time. Brown writes, "Other groups had a front man; your favourite was pre-selected for you... But with the Beatles there was a choice, so you had to pick a favourite, and the one you picked said a lot about who you were." Brown goes on to describe how each Beatle had a distinct personality, the most vibrant and most unlike personalities being Paul McCartney and John Lennon. With their differences attributed to vastly different childhoods, they provided the balance that made the Beatles' music unique. Paul's upbeat tunes were darkened by John's cynical lyrics. John's depressing melodies were lifted up by Paul's hopeful words. Sometimes, this balance appeared in one song.

The use of narrative, as well as an abundance of quotes from various people like Bruce Springsteen and New Jersey Schoolgirls, brings the prime time of the Beatles

to life—the good and the bad. Brown does not try to make the Beatles look like saints. He even recognizes that some accounts of the glimpses differ from one another and that not every story widely known by fans might be true. Brown tells all possible truths.

The novel analyzes the impact that the "Fab Four" had on fashion, sexuality, religion, and more. Through the recounting of stories such as the band's first experience with LSD (facilitated by their dentist), and how exactly Yoko Ono won John's heart, even fans born long after the Beatles broke up feel the impact the band had. They were a global sensation. Although only Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney remain, the band's grip on society is still prevalent. Fans still obsess, and tours still rake in cash.

For the seasoned fan of the band, *150 Glimpses of the Beatles* will either be a trip down memory lane or a tired repetition of everything you already know. Some stories may have more information to offer, but nothing will be entirely new. However, newer fans,

specifically those born too late to experience Beatle-mania like myself, will be able to enjoy the Beatles' music in a whole new way after reading the novel.

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