



ARTHOUSE  
FILMS

Presents

## HERB & DOROTHY



**A film by Megumi Sasaki**

**RELEASE DATE:** June 5, 2009 at Cinema Village and Beekman Theatre in New York City and July 10 at Landmark Nuart in Los Angeles

**RUNNING TIME:** 87 minutes

**RATING:** Unrated

**OFFICIAL WEBSITE:** [www.arthousefilmsonline.com](http://www.arthousefilmsonline.com), [www.herbanddorothy.com](http://www.herbanddorothy.com)

**\*\*WINNER Golden Starfish Award - 2008 Hamptons International Film Festival\*\***

**\*\*WINNER Audience Award– 2008 Hamptons International Film Festival\*\***

**\*\*WINNER Audience Award – 2008 SILVERDOCS Film Festival\*\***

**\*\*WINNER Audience Award – 2009 Philadelphia CineFest\*\***

**Distributor Contact:**

Erin Owens  
Arthouse Films  
80 Greene Street c/o HASTENS  
New York, NY 10012  
[erin@arthousefilmsonline.com](mailto:erin@arthousefilmsonline.com)  
212.966.1760

**Publicity Contact:**

Emma Griffiths  
Emma Griffiths PR  
449 Court Street #2L  
Brooklyn, NY 11231  
[emma@eg-pr.com](mailto:emma@eg-pr.com)  
917.806.0599

## **FILMMAKERS**

Director **MEGUMI SASAKI**  
Producer **MEGUMI SASAKI**  
Executive Producer **KARL KATZ**  
**CATHERINE PRICE**  
Associate Producer **TAKESHI YAMASAKI**  
Cinematographers **AXEL BAUMANN**  
**RAFAEL DE LA UZ**  
Editor **BERNADINE COLISH**  
Composer **DAVID MAJZLIN**  
Associate Editor **JOSEPH RUSCITTO**  
Cameramen **IAN SALADYGA**  
**ERIK SHIRAI**  
**MORGAN FALLON**  
**VLADIMIR SUBOTIC**

## **SYNOPSIS**

HERB & DOROTHY tells the extraordinary story of Herbert Vogel, a postal clerk, and Dorothy Vogel, a librarian, who managed to build one of the most important contemporary art collections in history with very modest means. In the early 1960s, when very little attention was paid to Minimalist and Conceptual Art, Herb and Dorothy Vogel quietly began purchasing the works of unknown artists. Devoting all of Herb's salary to purchase art they liked, and living on Dorothy's paycheck alone, they continued collecting artworks guided by two rules: the piece had to be affordable, and it had to be small enough to fit in their one-bedroom Manhattan apartment. Within these limitations, they proved themselves curatorial visionaries; most of those they supported and befriended went on to become world-renowned artists including Sol LeWitt, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Richard Tuttle, Chuck Close, Robert Mangold, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Lynda Benglis, Pat Steir, Robert Barry, Lucio Pozzi, and Lawrence Weiner.

After thirty years of meticulous collecting and buying, the Vogels managed to accumulate over 2,000 pieces, filling every corner of their tiny one bedroom apartment. "Not even a toothpick could be squeezed into the apartment," recalls Dorothy. In 1992, the Vogels decided to move their entire collection to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. The vast majority of their collection was given as a gift to the institution. Many of the works they acquired appreciated so significantly over the years that their collection today is worth millions of dollars. Still, the Vogels never sold a single piece. Today Herb and Dorothy still live in the same apartment in New York with 19 turtles, lots of fish, and one cat. They've refilled it with piles of new art they've acquired.

HERB & DOROTHY is directed by first time filmmaker Megumi Sasaki. The film received the Golden Starfish Award for the Best Documentary Film and Audience Award from the 2008 Hamptons International Film Festival. It has also received Audience Awards from the 2008 SILVERDOCS Film Festival and the 2009 Philadelphia Cinefest. Palm Springs International Film Festival named HERB & DOROTHY one of their "Best of Fest" films in 2009.

## **FEATURING ARTISTS**

Lucio Pozzi  
Robert Mangold  
Sylvia Mangold  
Pat Steir  
Robert Barry  
Chuck Close  
Lynda Benglis  
James Siena  
Will Barnet  
Richard Tuttle  
Christo and Jeanne-Claude  
Lawrence Weiner

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

From the beginning, my intention was to make something other than a so-called "art film." I wanted to capture how these two ordinary people accomplished the extraordinary in the field of art collecting. This film is about the power of passion and love, and a celebration of life.

The story of Herb and Dorothy Vogel is unique not only because of their avant garde vision and discernment as collectors, but also because of their love and dedication. It is through their loving partnership that the viewer truly experiences this remarkable story.

The Vogels' message is also about access. Art is not limited to the elite few. You don't have to be wealthy or an art school graduate to enjoy art. If you are interested in collecting art you don't have to follow trends or others' advice. Just listen to your own voice. Trust your eyes and instinct. Simply take the time to look, look and look.

In today's world, where art is treated as another commodity and a work's investment value takes precedence over its artistic value, Herb and Dorothy offers us an important question: What is it to appreciate and collect art?

My fortunate encounter with these beautiful people has truly changed my view of, and appreciation for, art and life. I hope to share the story of Herb and Dorothy Vogel with as large an audience as possible, particularly with those who appreciate the passion of creativity in any of the fine arts. Or to those who are intimidated and discouraged in taking up an interest in art, simply because of their lack of education or money. Or to anybody who is trying to survive day-to-day living. You may not have lots of money. Your job may be boring. Still life can be exciting and fulfilling to the extent that we allow ourselves to follow our passions.

*--Megumi Sasaki*

## **ABOUT THE FILM**

You don't have to be a Medici or a Rockefeller to collect art, according to Herbert and Dorothy Vogel. This documentary film tells the extraordinary story of Herb, a postal clerk, and Dorothy, a librarian - an ordinary couple of modest means who managed to build one of the most important contemporary art collections in history.

In the early 1960s, when very little attention was paid to Minimalist and Conceptual Art, Herb and Dorothy quietly began purchasing the works of unknown artists. Thirty years on, the Vogels managed to accumulate over 4,000 pieces, filling every corner of their living space from the bathroom to the kitchen. Their apartment was near collapse, holding way over its limit. Something had to be done.

In 1992, the Vogels made headlines that shocked the art world: their entire collection was moved to the National Gallery of Art, the vast majority of it as an outright gift to the institution. Many of the works they acquired at modest prices appreciated so significantly that their collection became worth several million dollars, yet the Vogels never sold a single piece to breakdown the collection.

The Vogels' discerning taste and magnanimity changed the face of contemporary art collecting. In 2007, James Stourton, the chairman of Sotheby's UK, included the Vogels in his acclaimed book, *Great Collectors of Our Time: Art Collecting Since 1945*. Stourton placed Herb and Dorothy among the top art collectors in the world, alongside Getty, Rockefeller and Mellon.

While there are countless films that feature artists, there are few about art collectors. Herb and Dorothy provides a unique chronicle of the world of contemporary art from two unlikely collectors, whose shared passion and discipline defies stereotypes and redefines what it means to be a patron of the arts.

## ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

Megumi Sasaki first learned about Herb and Dorothy Vogel while covering a Christo and Jeanne-Claude exhibition for Japanese television. The works came from the collection of Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, names unknown to her at that time. Their story fascinated Megumi, who thought to herself "A world-class collection on a postal clerk's and a librarian's salary? Two thousand works of art in a one-bedroom Manhattan apartment?! How is this possible?" She bought the exhibition catalog to learn more about these unlikely collectors but the book sat on her shelf until a chance meeting some eighteen months later.

In September 2004 at a Gracie Mansion event for Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Megumi eventually met Herb and Dorothy Vogel. Drawn by their warm, unassuming charm, and fascinated by their "modern fairy tale" experience, she decided that day that their story was one she had to tell.

A week later, she visited their apartment to propose the idea of a documentary film. Looking back on it, Megumi said "I was so naïve at that time. I believed it would be a small film about these beautiful small people, made quickly and easily. I would drop by with a digital camera, be a fly-on-the-wall, conduct some interviews and meet a few artists. I thought it could be done within one year."

As it turned out she spent the next four years shooting 120 hours worth of footage, unearthing more than 1000 archival photos and videos, filling two cabinets with articles, and selecting images from over 4000 artworks by 200 artists. After all that work, Megumi realized that Herb and Dorothy are not "small people," but *giants*.

Six months into the production Megumi hit a wall. She was failing to capture Herb and Dorothy's thinking as collectors. Whenever she asked them why they liked certain artists or artworks, they answered only, "because we liked them," or "because they are beautiful." It became a major challenge for Megumi to make a film about art collectors who could not articulate their approach to art.

Then Lucio Pozzi, the very first artist Megumi interviewed, opened her eyes. His response to her dilemma was, "That's why the Vogels are very special. Why should you explain art? What's the need to verbalize art? Herb and Dorothy only look, look and look. That's their way of communicating with art and artists." This breakthrough in Megumi's thinking about them allowed one of the deep themes of the project to emerge. She started paying attention to how they *look* at art, instead of how they *talk* about it. Herb in particular doesn't talk much, but she realized that his eyes do the talking, when they look at art with great intensity.

Herb and Dorothy's accomplishment also owes a great deal to finding freedom in restriction. Because income and space were limiting factors, they could only buy small and affordable artworks. In nature one is reminded of how a small stream can, over many patient years, cut a gorge into the landscape. Without these limitations, Herb and Dorothy might not have built one of the most important collections in our time.

## **ABOUT VOGEL 50/50**

With the help of the National Gallery of Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Dorothy and Herbert Vogel are launching a national gift program entitled *The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States*. It will distribute 2,500 works from the Vogels' collection of contemporary art throughout the nation, with fifty works going to a selected art institution in each of the fifty states.

The best-known aspect of the Vogels' collecting focus is minimal and conceptual art, but the donations as a group encompass numerous directions explored by more than 170 contemporary artists, including Will Barnett, Robert Barry, Lynda Benglis, Dan Graham, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Edda Renouf, Pat Steir, and Richard Tuttle.

With the assistance of Ruth Fine, National Gallery of Art curator of special projects in modern art, the Vogels, as trustees of the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection, have finalizing the lists of works they will offer to each of the fifty museums. Thirty museums received gifts by the end of 2008 and the final twenty will receive them in 2009.

The National Endowment for the Arts is funding the late-2008 publication of a book, *The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States*. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is providing funds for packing and shipping the works of art (under the supervision of the National Gallery of Art) to the fifty institutions and for the development of a Web site to serve as both an information center and exhibition area for this project.

### **The Vogel Collection and the National Gallery of Art**

The National Gallery of Art has worked closely with Dorothy and Herbert Vogel since 1991, when the first of several groups of works from their holdings entered the Gallery's permanent collection. "The generosity of Dorothy and Herb has enhanced our collection of contemporary art immeasurably," said Earl A. Powell III, Gallery director. "Of the five wonderful wall drawings by Sol LeWitt, two are currently on view in the East Building, along with two sculptures by Lynda Benglis, and two sculptures by Richard Tuttle."

In 1992, the National Gallery announced the acquisition of a portion of the Vogel Collection through partial purchase and gift from the Vogels. Since forming its association with the National Gallery, the Vogel Collection has grown to include some 4,000 works, primarily by artists working in the United States—it is far more than can appropriately be placed in a single institution. Currently, 832 accessioned works from the Vogel Collection are in the Gallery's holdings, and another 268 are promised gifts.

Works collected by the Vogels have appeared in numerous exhibitions throughout the world, including two major exhibitions the National Gallery organized and presented that were selected solely from their collection. In 1994, *From Minimal to Conceptual Art: Works from the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection* was on view at the National Gallery of Art. It was also seen in 1997 at the Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery in Austin, and the Portland Art Museum in Oregon. In 1998, the exhibition traveled abroad to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel, and the Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku, Finland. In 2002, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude in the Vogel Collection* was on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego.

### **The Project Book**

*The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States*, which is being co-published by the NEA and the National Gallery of Art, with funds from the NEA, will feature introductory remarks by Earl A. Powell III, Dana Gioia, chairman of the NEA, and Anne-Imelda M. Radice, director of the IMLS; a note by Dorothy Vogel; and an essay by Ruth Fine on the history of the Vogel Collection, the Vogels' relationship with the National Gallery, and the development of the national gifts program.

The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support this ambitious project. The generosity shown by the Vogels in their eagerness to share their marvelous collection with the entire nation is truly inspiring. Part of the NEA's mission is to ensure greater access to the arts. What better way to promote that mission than through *Fifty Works for Fifty States*?" said chairman Gioia.

The volume will also reproduce four works from each museum's gift, including at least one by each of the artists represented in the project. Catalogue information for illustrated works, compiled by Mary Lee Corlett, research associate in the Gallery's department of special projects in modern art, will be published along with a list of the artists included in the individual institutional donations. The book will be available for use as an exhibition catalogue at each of the participating venues and as a way for institutions to make the public aware of the artists represented.

## **CREW BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Megumi Sasaki, Director & Producer**



Originally a freelance journalist, Megumi's first big break came in 1989 covering the Fall of the Berlin Wall. After a 3-month period taking photographs and gathering stories directly from the streets and living rooms of Eastern Europe, Megumi produced a 10-part series portraying the confusion and excitement gripping the life and people of former Iron Curtain nations. This series was selected to run in *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Japan's highest-circulation newspaper.

In 1992 Megumi joined NHK, Japan's sole public broadcaster and equivalent to the BBC, to work variously as anchor, news director and reporter for *Ohayo Nippon*, a popular morning news program.

From 1996, Megumi returned to independent work as a freelance television documentary news director and field producer, developing programs for Japan's premiere documentary series, *NHK Special*, as well as for commercial networks including TBS, TV Asahi, Nippon Television and TV Tokyo. The resulting body of work explores such disciplines as art, science, medicine, business and international affairs. Highlights include examinations of: African small arms proliferation; Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Shoinka; arts education with Christo and Jeanne-Claude; economic globalization; international whaling and environmental disputes; aging societies; organ transplant, assisted suicide and right-to-die controversies; the crisis of nuclear North Korea, and many more.

In 2002, Megumi founded a production company, Fine Line Media, to streamline ongoing commitments to Japanese TV while facilitating her new interest in feature documentary projects. *HERB & DOROTHY* is the first of these, a labor of love for which Megumi has worn hats both as director and producer.

Born and raised in Japan, Megumi has lived in New York City since 1988. In her career as a freelance print and television journalist she has traveled to over 40 countries. She is fluent in both English and Japanese.

### **Bernadine Colish, Editor**



Bernadine Colish is an editor who worked on a number of award-winning documentaries. Recently, *Body of War* (2007), directed by Ellen Spiro and Phil Donahue, was named Best Documentary by the National Board of Review and was on the 2007 Academy Award short-list. *A Touch of Greatness* (2004) aired on PBS and was nominated for a 2006 Emmy Award. *The Buffalo War* (2001) was given a Golden Gate Award for Best Environmental Film at the 2001 San Francisco International Film Festival. Her career began at Maysles Films, where she worked with Charlotte Zwerin on such projects as *Toru Takemitsu: Music for the Movies* and the PBS American Masters documentary, *Ella Fitzgerald: Something To Live For*. Additional credits include *Absolute Wilson* and *Muslims* for PBS Frontline.

### **Axel Baumann, Cameraman**



Axel Baumann was born in Saarbrücken, Germany where he grew up speaking German and French. He holds a BA in Political Science and Philosophy. Axel joined the film business in 1992 as a camera assistant. Six years later, he made the transition to Director of Photography via operating. As Director of Photography, Axel has shot four feature films as well as serving as second unit DP, including the film “Pecker”, directed by John Waters. Axel’s work includes documentaries, music videos and commercials. He has shot for Warner Brothers, National Geographic Television, Discovery Channel, The Sundance Channel, BBC, PBS, Real World Records, as well as television commercials for G.E., Sony, IBM, Execjets and Allstate. In 2005, Axel was nominated for an Emmy, for his cinematography on *Liberia: An Uncivil War*, for Discovery Times. His latest project is *Carrier*, a 10-part series on the USS Nimitz on deployment to the Persian Gulf broadcast on PBS.

### **David Majzlin, Composer**



David Majzlin's musical career began at age two with a performance art piece composed by destroying the ivory keys of his parents' piano with a toy hammer. Shortly thereafter he formed Toy Hammer Music and began scoring to picture. David's film composing credits include *Being Reel*, which won the Coca-Cola® Refreshing Filmmaker Competition, *Still(e)*, winner of the Union of Film Music Composers Medal for Best Score (Avignon Film Festival), *Excuses, Excuses*, which was nominated for a Student Academy Award®, *Virgin Larry*, winner of the Coen Brothers Audience Award (Brooklyn International Film Festival), *HERB & DOROTHY* (Fine Line Media), *Welcome to New York* (Showtime), and over 20 independent films.

Television credits include *Tough Crowd With Colin Quinn* (Comedy Central), *Living With Change* (Castleworks), *Looking Back, Moving Forward* (PBS). David's commercial compositions have earned him a Telly, Caddy, finalist placements for the First London International Advertising Awards and the International Monitor Awards. Theater credits include *Manigma*, starring Michael Aronov (Lbs, Hedwig and the Angry Inch), *A Mouthful of Birds*, directed by Rebecca Taylor, and *The Winter's Tale*, a rock musical produced for The Rude Mechanicals Theater Company.

David has written music for choreographers Susan Dodge (Paul Taylor, Dodge Dance Company) and Sasha Spielvogel, as well as artists Lou Reed, Fernando Saunders, Katy vs Evil, Aviva, and Body Temple. While adept at a host of musical styles, his compositional style reflects the unique needs of each project.

### **Karl Katz, Executive Producer, MUSE Film and Television**

Karl Katz has created films on the visual arts and culture for the past 30 years, and he has spent more than 35 years in museum management.

After graduating from Columbia University's Department of Fine Arts and Archaeology in 1953, Katz began his career with The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City as a visiting member of the Education Department. In 1958, he helped create Israel's National Museum in Jerusalem; and in 1969, he was appointed Director of the Jewish Museum in New York.

In 1971, Katz returned to The Metropolitan Museum of Art and became Chairman for Special Projects and, subsequently, the founder and director of the Museum's Office of Film and Television, where he produced nearly 40 films on art. In 1984, Katz assumed the role of Executive Director of *The Program for Art on Film*, The Metropolitan Museum

of Art's joint venture with the J. Paul Getty Trust, The program created the largest database in the world of films on art and produced 15 experimental films.

In 1992, Katz founded MUSE Film and Television, a not-for-profit company that uses film and digital media to create quality films on the visual arts and culture.

**Catherine Price, Executive Producer, MUSE Film and Television**

Catherine Price's experience spans research, marketing, management of political and philanthropic initiatives, and film production. In 1991, Price joined MUSE Film and Television, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating films on the visual arts and culture.

Price is the Managing Director of MUSE and is responsible for all MUSE productions and distribution. She also manages MUSE's film festival of award-winning films on the arts, held annually in New York City.