

THE Current

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UC Santa Barbara Staff

Duke and the Masters: The Sedgwick Collection

Based in the Santa Ynez Valley, Francis “Duke” Minturn Sedgwick (1904–1967) and his wife, Alice Delano de Forest (1908–1988), were known for their love of the arts and civic engagement. Born to wealthy East coast families, both were part of a cultural milieu that celebrated and supported the arts. Duke not only spearheaded the couple’s collecting, but was also a noted sculptor and novelist, and served on cultural and educational boards. During his lifetime Duke witnessed the rise of Modernist Art. This was, in his estimation, a deplorable situation producing terrible works of art such as “junkyard sculpture.” He attributed this decline to the development of photography. He saw Pop Art as especially terrible and blamed museums for not educating the public on the difference between fine art and this bogus art form. This emphasis on education contributed to his involvement in the fledgling University of California, Santa Barbara campus and its newly founded Art Gallery.

In 1960, the Sedgwicks gave the twenty Old Master paintings to the University’s Art Gallery, now the Art, Design, & Architecture Museum. The works were given under the condition the University build a fully-equipped separate museum building, with the expressed purpose of promoting the visual arts and their study. Even after the donation, Duke continued to play a major role in the university and the gallery. He

participated in the acquisition of other works of art such as the celebrated Morgenroth medals and plaquettes, another formative museum collection. The Sedgwick gift is one of the most important donations in the museum's history and remains a testimony to the generosity of Duke and Alice and of their love of art.

"Duke and the Masters: The Sedgwick Collection" opens on Jan. 25 and continues through April 19. An opening reception will take place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 24. Information about the exhibition is available at <http://www.museum.ucsb.edu>.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.