



Smithsonian
*Donald W. Reynolds Center for
American Art and Portraiture*
National Portrait Gallery

News

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PHOTO OP with artist Jon Friedman: Tuesday, May 17; 10 a.m.

Portrait of Bill and Melinda Gates Commissioned by the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery has commissioned a portrait of Bill and Melinda Gates by Jon Friedman that will be installed in the museum's "Recent Acquisitions" exhibition May 17. The painting will be on view when the museum opens at 11:30 a.m., and at noon Friedman will give a talk about the portrait and the process he used to create this work.

"I am thrilled to accept this commissioned painting of Bill and Melinda Gates into our collection," said Martin Sullivan, director of the museum. "Jon Friedman created a compelling portrait that tells the story of their foundation's work."

Bill Gates left Harvard as an undergraduate to write software for the earliest personal computers. His company, Microsoft, developed a computer operating system for wide-scale nontechnical use that spurred on the personal computer revolution begun in the 1980s. Microsoft remains a leader in the industry. Melinda French Gates has degrees in computer science, economics and business, and was employed by Microsoft.

The couple created the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2000 with the mission of helping all people live healthy, productive lives. Global priorities include improving health and boosting the productivity of small farms in poor countries; national initiatives include implementing partnerships to make sure students graduate from high school ready for college and helping local libraries provide free computer and Internet services.

"It is an honor to have our portrait joining those of so many outstanding Americans in the National Portrait Gallery," said Bill and Melinda Gates. "Our thanks go to Jon Friedman for creating the portrait in so thoughtful a manner, and for calling out the work of our foundation so evocatively."

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Friedman grew up in Northern Virginia and is currently based in New York City and Truro, Mass. His work has been shown in solo exhibitions and group shows around the country. Many of his portrait subjects are leaders in the worlds of science, medicine and technology, including David Baltimore, Maxine Singer, Harold Varmus and Charles Vest. His work is in many private and institutional collections, including the American Philosophical Society, the Carnegie Institute of Washington, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Institutes of Health, the National Portrait Gallery, the Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Royal Society.

The National Portrait Gallery's Commission (its advisory board) selects individuals who are making a significant impact on American culture for commissioned portraits. The museum has a history of commissioning portraits of Presidents and First Ladies and most recently has presented a commissioned portrait of Eunice Kennedy Shriver.

This portrait was commissioned for the museum through the Marc Pachter Commissioning Fund, which was established in honor of a former director of the museum.

National Portrait Gallery

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery tells the history of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists whose lives tell the American story.

The National Portrait Gallery is part of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture at Eighth and F streets N.W., Washington, D.C. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Website: npg.si.edu.

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Note to editors: Images of the work will be embargoed until 10 a.m. May 17. At that time images and required caption and credit information may be downloaded from newsdesk.si.edu.