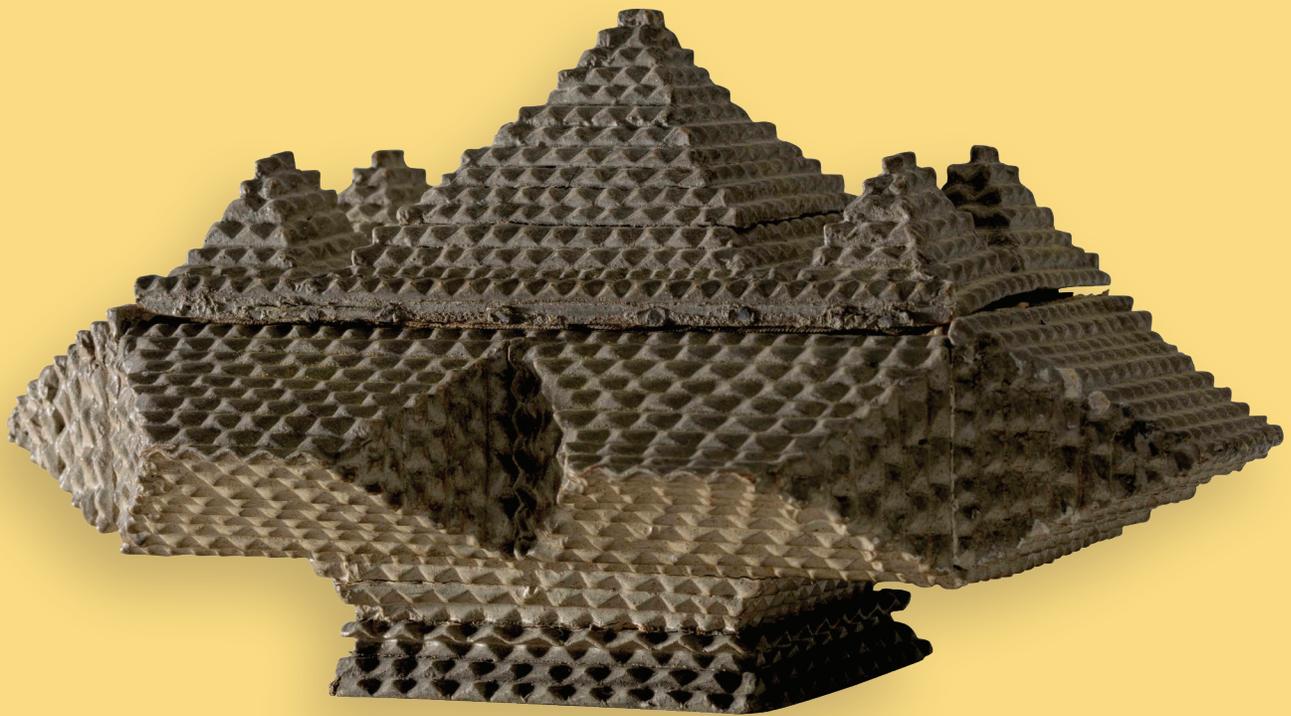


Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?

March 25–July 10, 2022



Tramp art box, ca. 1870.
Wood, gesso, velvet.
Collection of Richard
Tuttle. Photograph:
© Bruce M. White/
Christina Clare Ewald.

Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?

March 25–
July 10, 2022

Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object? features 75 objects from the contemporary artist's personal collection, displayed on furniture he designed especially for this exhibition, along with a series of nine new works he created that are on view for the first time. This unique exhibition invites visitors to a multi-sensory engagement with Tuttle's objects and provides a rare glimpse at the relationship between an artist's collection and his work. Visitors are encouraged to look closely at objects, unimpeded by glass cases or frames; to pick them up, hold them, explore them through touch, and view them from all sides; and even to listen to them, imagining their origins, how they were designed and crafted, and how they were intended to be used.

Tuttle has assembled his collection over five decades. It includes a hand tool that is more than a million years old, ancient coins that date from 350 BC, and a 2020 Issey Miyake-designed scarf. The collection is idiosyncratic and very personal, featuring objects as diverse as a chiffon pineapple hat, an Islamic copper bowl, a Nikon camera, Navajo shears, Kenta cloth from West Africa, Japanese woven horsehair spats, a bear trap, and a gentleman's cane. An index card created by Tuttle accompanies each object, outlining his original encounter with it, how it entered his collection, and his thoughts about it. Tuttle himself curated the exhibition along with Peter N. Miller, dean and professor at Bard Graduate Center.



Carved playing
elephants, 1880s.
Maple, paint.
Collection of Richard
Tuttle. Photograph:
© Bruce M. White/
Christina Clare Ewald.

- Think of Rudyard Kipling and
the Victorian
- The great love of carving wood +
- curiosity: fighting, nuzzling,
playing?
- the "aggressor's" trunk is on
the ground
- best, back against wall, captures action

Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?



Lemington for
Marshall Field &
Company, Pineapple
hat, 1950s. Chiffon.
Collection of Richard
Tuttle. Photograph:
© Bruce M. White/
Christina Clare
Ewald.

What Is the Object?

“What is the object?” is a question that drives Tuttle’s art. Through this exhibition, he invites visitors to explore the objects in his collection, think about what they mean, how that meaning is assigned, and then apply these questions to any object they encounter, including their own. In addition, Tuttle sees the exhibition as a way to reflect on and learn about his own work. As he explained, “Where a piece from the collection enters the art work is a big moment. It is a way of asking myself, ‘Why do I collect these things?’ I know them deeply and they can go into my work. And they can be there for another person.”

Nikon. Camera,
20th century. Metal.
Collection of Richard
Tuttle. Photograph:
© Bruce M. White/
Christina Clare Ewald.



For Tuttle, the object, and his work, is intended for communication. He believes that the energy we get from learning about ourselves can give energy to another person. “I collect to find something beautiful in myself,” Tuttle explained. “Art is finding that beautiful thing inside us (the beauty that is us). And once one sees this in and for oneself, one is going to look for and accord the same thing to others. That’s the politics in this.” According to Tuttle, the way we treat objects is the way we treat people. Objects open a window to a new “ethics”—an ethics from the object.

Tuttle deliberately chose to display his collection in the academic setting of Bard Graduate Center’s gallery. He felt that was the best environment in which to explore the relation of distant objects and how that can be a model for the relation of distant people.

Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?



Exhibition furniture
by Richard Tuttle.
Photograph: © Bruce
M. White.

His exploration extends to include exhibition furniture, which resembles the sculptures he has made throughout his career. Is this the object? Or are objects limited to those things that rest upon it? According to Tuttle, “There are eight examples which can be read chronologically as one theme of the content of the exhibition, or, one could say, parallel to the development of content. John Piergallini, a master craftsman working in Mount Desert, Maine, made the furniture from drawings and models I supplied.”

The Collection

Many objects in Richard Tuttle’s collection will be donated to Bard Graduate Center. They will form the “Richard Tuttle Study Collection” to be used for teaching and exploration by students, faculty, and staff.



Photograph: ©
Bruce M. White.

About the Book

Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object? is the first publication to explore the influential American artist’s object collection and the cards on which he has recorded his thoughts about these items over the past five decades.

This volume, designed by the Belgian book artist Luc Derycke as a ‘book as object,’ explores the challenging question of the meaning of objects. Edited by Peter N. Miller, dean and professor of cultural history at Bard Graduate Center, it includes an interview with Tuttle, an analysis of objects in poetic non-fiction by Renée Gladman, an essay by Miller about Tuttle’s art as the pursuit of a kind of philosophical exploration, as well as poems and a short, surrealist tale about his objects by Tuttle. Bruce M. White’s beautiful photography of Tuttle’s collection and his index cards, shot in collaboration with Tuttle himself, appear throughout this lavishly illustrated volume. The book is also available exclusively from Bard Graduate Center as a deluxe limited edition with silk ribbons, signed by Richard Tuttle.

Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?

Exhibition Tours

Free exhibition tours will be offered for students, seniors, and those with disabilities and their caregivers on Tuesdays, April 5–June 21, 2022, at 2 pm and 5:30 pm. Others may join these tours at a cost of \$15 per person. Space is limited; advance purchase or reservation is recommended.

Private group tours of the exhibition can be organized for a fee of \$110. Call 212.501.3023 or e-mail tours@bgc.bard.edu to schedule.

For all in-person tours, guests are invited to share their accessibility needs in advance.

Virtual verbal description tours for people with low vision or blindness will be offered on Thursday, April 21; Tuesday, May 24; and Thursday, June 16; all at 6 pm. Deborah Lutz, an experienced leader of verbal description tours, will describe details of the form, materiality, and aesthetic nature of objects in *Richard Tuttle: What Is The Object?* Group discussion will take place throughout. Free; advance registration required.

Virtual tours will be offered for school groups, Monday through Saturday, by advance registration only. These student-centered tours are led by graduate student educators who engage young people in lively discussion and activities that promote critical thinking and visual literacy skills. Tours are adaptable to individual school's curriculum and build thoughtful object-based inquiry and powerful learning experiences. Free for public schools; \$110 for other groups.

To schedule a tour, email tours@bgc.bard.edu or call 212-501-3023.



Richard Tuttle. *Depth, no. 9*, 2019. Foam core, canvas, acrylic, straight pins, feathers, and mixed media. Collection of Richard Tuttle. Photograph: © Bruce M. White.

Events

Bard Graduate Center events are inspired by the themes of our exhibitions and BGC's unique, object-based approach to understanding human history.

What Does the Object Say?: Puppetry as Research

Wednesday, April 20, 6 pm

Theater artist and puppeteer Lake Simons and Bard Graduate Center Dean Peter N. Miller discuss the power of puppetry. Accompanied by short puppet performances that make use of objects in *Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?*, directed by Simons and featuring BGC students and Teen Thinkers.

Reading with Objects: Seeking Synthesis of Eye, Mind, and Heart

Thursday, April 1, 6 pm

Wednesday, May 11, 6 pm

Wednesday, June 15, 6 pm

Poet Anselm Berrigan will lead discussions of a curated selection of poetry, prose, and cross-genre writing chosen to help participants reflect on their experiences with objects. Participants may attend one, two, or all three sessions.

Event Admission

Free for people with disabilities and their caregivers; \$12 for seniors 65+ and students; \$15 for all others. Exhibition visit included.

Bard Graduate Center offers complimentary need-based tickets for all exhibitions and events. To make a request, email gallery@bgc.bard.edu.



Event Registration

To register for BGC events, visit bgc.bard.edu/events, call 212-501-3023, or email gallery@bgc.bard.edu. Space is limited; advance registration is required. Programs and dates are subject to change.

Issey Miyake. *Homme Plissé* men's scarf, 2020. Wool. Collection of Richard Tuttle. Photograph: © Bruce M. White/Christina Clare Ewald.

Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?

Exhibition Hours and Admission

Bard Graduate Center Gallery is located in New York City at 18 West 86th Street, between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. Gallery hours are Wednesday, 11 am–8 pm, and Thursday through Sunday, 11 am–5 pm. All admission is via timed-entry tickets, which may be purchased in advance at bgc.bard.edu/tickets.

Gallery admission is free for BGC members, “pay-as-you-wish” for people with disabilities and their caregivers, \$12 for seniors and students, and \$15 for all others.

Bard Graduate Center offers complimentary need-based tickets for all exhibitions and events. To make a request, email gallery@bgc.bard.edu.

COVID-19 Precautions

Bard Graduate Center’s top priority is protecting the health and wellbeing of its students, faculty, staff, and guests. As of March 21, 2022, all visitors to our buildings must show proof of COVID-19 vaccination, photo identification, and wear face coverings that completely cover the mouth and nose.

Support

Support for *Richard Tuttle: What Is the Object?* has been generously provided by Agnes Gund with additional support from David Kordansky Gallery, Scully Peretsman Foundation, and Peter Freeman and Lluïsa Sàrries Zgonc, as well as donors to Bard Graduate Center. Support for the publication has been provided by Pace Gallery.

About Bard Graduate Center

As the leading research institute in the United States dedicated to the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture, Bard Graduate Center and its gallery have pioneered the study of objects as a means to better understand the cultural history of the material world. Offering experiences for scholars, students, and the general public alike, Bard Graduate Center is built on multidisciplinary study and the integration of research, graduate teaching, and public exhibitions. Since its founding in 1993, it has established a network of more than 400 alumni who work in leading museums, universities, and institutions worldwide to advance new ways of thinking about material culture. Bard Graduate Center’s classrooms and library are located at 38 West 86th Street, between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. BGC Gallery is located at 18 West 86th Street. bgc.bard.edu