

CRAIG HUGH SMYTH

1915-2006

The Institute of Fine Arts notes with great sadness the death of Craig Hugh Smyth on December 22, at the age of 91.

Craig was a truly towering figure in the history of the Institute of Fine Arts. From 1951 to 1973, he was the Institute's second director. With his outstanding intellect and quiet decisiveness, he built up the Institute's faculty to new heights and oversaw the growth of the graduate program into the largest and most diverse in the country. In 1958 he brought the Institute to its splendid new home in the James B. Duke House, which he had renovated by the young Robert Venturi. Under his direction the Institute inaugurated the first university-based program in conservation. In 1973 he left the Institute to take over the helm at Harvard's Villa I Tatti for twelve years. As trustee, he continued to serve the Institute of Fine Arts with wise counsel and fundamental humanity.

Craig had had an eventful career even before joining the Institute. He was trained in classics at Princeton, where Charles Rufus Morey persuaded him to switch disciplines. He eventually earned his PhD there in 1956, having already risen to more leadership tasks than most will meet in a lifetime. He joined the new National Gallery of Art in 1941, where one of his first assignments was the transfer of the most important paintings to Biltmore in Asheville, NC. The following year he was called up for duty in the US Naval Reserves. In 1945, as a naval lieutenant with an unparalleled eye and a knack for logistics, he became the first director of the Central Collecting Point in Munich for purloined works of art. There, in the former Nazi headquarters, he oversaw the return of hundreds of works and assembled a staff of European art historians that lay the foundation for the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, still housed in the same building today. His vivid recollections of this period are recorded in his *Repatriation of Art from the Collecting Point in Munich after World War II* (1988).

From 1948 to 1949 Craig was a Fulbright Fellow in Florence, where he began his work on Bronzino drawings. His connoisseurship of 16th-century drawings found its way into numerous articles and, eventually, into *Bronzino as Draughtsman* (1971). Throughout his scholarly career, Craig contributed to the recovery of Italian mannerism from the ignominy of the 19th and early 20th centuries. His *Mannerism and Maniera* (1963) became an instant classic. After retiring from I Tatti, Craig continued to work with his friend Hank Millon on Michelangelo's architecture. Their series of articles between 1969 and 1983 essentially reshaped our understanding of Michelangelo's contributions to the design of St. Peter's. It is fitting that this leader in the institutional development of art history in America should have edited, with Peter Lukehart, *The Early Years of Art History in the United States*, a fine collection of essays on the topic (1993).

At the Institute, Craig was revered for his warm, open-minded person and his uncanny memory for anyone's scholarly interests and strengths. Students and junior scholars marveled at his ability to recall the dissertations, articles, or books they were working on—no matter what institution they called their own. Many Institute alumni recall his encouragement of unconventional students: the ones without traditional undergraduate training or with family obligations, the ones who come late to art history or displaced by war. For Craig, art scholarship was a broad church, inclusive of anyone with dedication and talent. A true gentleman and engaged conversationalist, Craig fostered esprit de corps without ostentation.

The Institute of Fine Arts and the discipline of art history will remember Craig Hugh Smyth with tremendous admiration and gratitude. We extend deepest sympathy to Barbara Linforth Smyth, his dear wife for more than 65 years, to their children Alexandra and Ned, and to their grandchildren.

Mariët Westermann
Judy & Michael Steinhardt Director
Institute of Fine Arts – New York University