

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Anchorage Museum Curator Receives \$100,000 Prize Honoring Art Professionals

The Vilcek Foundation awards Francesca Du Brock the Marica Vilcek Prize in Art History

New York, NY, February 3, 2025 — The Vilcek Foundation is awarding its Marica Vilcek Prize in Art History to Francesca Du Brock, chief curator at the Anchorage Museum in Alaska. The Marica Vilcek Prize honors art historians and museum professionals in the United States whose work exemplifies best practices as curators and cultural stewards.

The \$100,000 prize is an homage to Vilcek Foundation Cofounder, Vice Chair, and Secretary Marica Vilcek’s leadership in the arts, including her philanthropic leadership at the Vilcek Foundation, her career at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and her enduring trusteeship with the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University.

“Art historians and museum professionals bear a profound responsibility,” says Marica Vilcek. “They are tasked with providing context and building connections that make art accessible to all audiences. Truly effective museum professionals not only integrate the past and present, they inspire and create opportunities for future development, scholarship, and engagement. Francesca Du Brock’s programmatic achievements with the Anchorage Museum demonstrate a genuine talent for this work. It’s an honor to present her with this award.”

Du Brock receives the Marica Vilcek Prize in Art History for her holistic and comprehensive approach to exhibition curation, public education, and engagement with art through museum programming. An alumna of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, San Francisco Art Institute, and Bowdoin College, Du Brock is a member of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM) and was recently named a 2025 Fellow of the Center for Curatorial Leadership.

Among Du Brock’s most significant achievements is her development of the Anchorage Museum’s compelling exhibition *How to Survive*. The exhibition presented works of art by 16 women and nonbinary artists, an installation of Alaska Native cultural belongings, and a materials library. *How to Survive* and its forthcoming catalog, edited by Du Brock, consider the idea of survival through collective care and examine ideas of interconnectedness, listening, and caretaking.

“Francesca Du Brock is redefining the role of a curator for our time,” says Vilcek Foundation President Rick Kinsel. “Her philosophy is simple: a curator should care not only for objects but also for people and the community. She excels in creating platforms to place and center voices, communities, and histories that have for far too long been ignored by museum institutions.”

Du Brock’s curatorial approach deeply informed the exhibition. “As a lifelong Alaskan, a strong relationship to people and place animates and inspires all that I do,” says Du Brock. “I lead a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous curators who also have lifelong connections to Alaska. Our work of learning, listening, and discovering is constantly unfurling new avenues of thought—it’s overwhelming and humbling to understand that we could spend our entire lives in this profession and never run out of things to learn about Alaska, its people, and its nonhuman inhabitants.”

Says Julie Decker, director and CEO of the Anchorage Museum, “Francesca is a key team member at the Anchorage Museum, working with colleagues and community members to highlight narratives of place and people. She is driven by the values of collaboration, empathy, and creativity. We are pleased to see her work and vision, as well as that of the Museum, recognized by the Vilcek Foundation and the wider field.”

The Marica Vilcek Prize in Art History was first awarded in 2024. Three Marica Vilcek Prizes were awarded in its inaugural year to Monica Bincsik, Wolfram Koeppe, and Pierre Terjanian. The three curators were honored for their contributions to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the institution that was Marica Vilcek’s professional home for more than 30 years.

The Vilcek Foundation celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2025. In honor of this milestone, the foundation is awarding a record 14 prizes in a single year, totaling \$950,000. The Marica Vilcek Prize is awarded alongside the Vilcek Prize for Excellence in Literary Scholarship and the Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Biomedical Science, Visual Arts, and Curatorial Work.

The Vilcek Foundation

The Vilcek Foundation raises awareness of immigrant contributions in the United States and fosters appreciation for the arts and sciences. The foundation was established in 2000 by Jan and Marica Vilcek, immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia. The foundation's mission was inspired by the couple’s respective careers in biomedical science and art history. Since 2000, the foundation has awarded over \$15 million in prizes and grants.

The Vilcek Foundation is a private operating foundation, a federally tax-exempt nonprofit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3). To learn more, please visit vilcek.org.