A note on the Core Tenets: The main priority of the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation is fostering and facilitating individuals' direct experiences with the work, in keeping with Gonzalez-Torres's primary intention. The Foundation also provides language around the structure and nature of the works, following the type and forms of language developed by Gonzalez-Torres that has been provided to owners and exhibitors on an ongoing basis. One of the ways the Foundation provides access to such language is through a format referred to as the 'Core Tenets,' which describe those works/bodies of works that have specific, yet sometimes open-ended parameters.

CORE TENETS FOR FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES'S PORTRAIT WORKS

While each body of work follows its own set of rules, Gonzalez-Torres's practice includes purposeful variations, within a body of work and between bodies of work, in order to foster engagement and questioning.

The 'Works' section of the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation website is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of all portrait works, as well as in-depth illustrations/depictions of each work from varying installations. The pages in this section help demonstrate how the Core Tenets play out across manifestations of different portrait works. It may be helpful to look at the entire portrait works section, as different aspects of the Core Tenets are illustrated in images of different works. It may also be informative to consider the Core Tenets for different works/bodies of work to reflect on how they differ and align with one another.

A specific note on portraits: Portraits are the only works in Felix Gonzalez-Torres's oeuvre that were made with the involvement of the initial owner.[1] In the process of making each portrait, Gonzalez-Torres asked the subject to provide a list of events/dates which they considered formative. Gonzalez-Torres deliberated extensively on the provided content before proceeding to select, edit (e.g. reword and/or renumber), remove provided events/dates, contribute additional events/dates, and arrange a sequence of the events/dates, thereby determining the initial version of the portrait.[2]

- Each of the portrait works is a unique artwork.

- The portrait works exist regardless of whether they are physically manifest.

- It is integral that the portrait works have the capacity to change over time.[3]

- The owner has the right to make a new version of a portrait at any time, including each time they manifest the work.[4]

- The owner has the right to choose to manifest the work at any time.

- The owner has the exclusive right to choose to lend the work, and in doing so is thereby extending to an authorized borrower for the term of the loan certain rights and responsibilities to make decisions about a manifestation of the work, within the borrower's interpretation of the specific, yet open-ended parameters of the work.[5] [6]

- When lending a portrait work, whereas certain rights are automatically extended through the lending process, the owner can choose whether or not to extend the right to make a version of the portrait within the open-ended parameters of the work. If the right to make a version is loaned, the borrower is in the position to make all decisions around that particular version, including choice of text(s) and installation(s).

- Decisions about a particular manifestation of the work may shift each time the work is installed, and potentially throughout each manifestation.

- Each portrait work can exist in more than one place at a time without impugning the work's uniqueness; the uniqueness of the work is linked to ownership.

- The portrait works are installed directly on the wall(s)[7] at what would be considered "frieze" height, in a modest but readable scale, in a continuous horizontal line(s).[8] [9]

- The typeface of the text for all portrait works is Trump Medieval Bold Italic.

- The color of the text, and in some cases the optional band of background color, is specified in the *Certificate of Authenticity and Ownership* for each portrait work.[10]

- Gonzalez-Torres considered a recording of every version of each portrait to be conceptually important. New versions of a portrait work do not eliminate any other version of that work.[11]

- While the rights of ownership transfer from one owner to the next owner, the title of a portrait work always remains the same as specified in the original caption.

- Gonzalez-Torres used each element of the artwork's caption as a vehicle for conceptual information; if and when the title,[12] date, medium and/or dimensions are listed, each element of the caption remains consistent regardless of any given manifestation or how the work may change throughout a manifestation.[13] [14]

- Each authorized manifestation of a portrait work is the work and should be referred to only as the work.

- Portrait works are accompanied by Certificates of Authenticity and Ownership.[15] [16]

In furtherance of its educational mission, the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation is available to be in dialogue about the Core Tenets and provide further information.

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[1] There was one additional artwork in another body of work that was made in dialogue with the initial owner. [FGTF# GF1992-009]

[2] The portrait subjects provided events/dates to Gonzalez-Torres in a range of formats, and he engaged with the material provided in various ways. There are throughlines that can be discerned in the formats of the initial versions of each portrait work (e.g. in the initial version of each portrait, the events/dates took the form of one or a few words followed by a numerical year [in almost all cases]). That said, in his process of creating the initial versions of portrait works, in addition to adding completely new events/dates and ultimately sequencing all of the events/dates, Gonzalez-Torres's treatment of what was provided included: shortening provided events/dates into one or two words; lengthening provided events/dates; keeping provided events/dates verbatim; eliminating

provided events/dates; and choosing completely different language and/or dates to represent what was provided. The varied strategies Gonzalez-Torres employed across the initial versions of portrait works suggests that he sought to impart both a complex questioning of how a subject might be represented, and to evoke how one might continue to create future versions of portrait works. (See also footnote 3.)

[3] A 1994 letter from Gonzalez-Torres to the subject of one particular portrait work illuminates aspects of the conceptual importance of the portrait works' ongoing capacity for change: "We are *not* what we think we are, but rather a compilation of texts. A compilation of histories, past, present, and future, always, always, shifting, adding, subtracting, gaining. These portraits are an attempt at dealing with the theoretical and limited aspects of portraiture. We are as much a product of the invention of TV as we are the product of our parents, and domestic environments, historical events and accidents, and the social forces that have shaped the so-called 'public' life. [...] Public life is private life. In our culture we live in a network of interrelations. As Lenin said: everything is related to everything. And why so many dates of a time in which you were not even born yet? When you were born you already came into a world that was pretty much decided and organized for you: your language, the language you first learned, and the other languages you later learned. The names of things, of cities, the history of our humanity and our atrocities, the inventions, the viruses, the ways of loving, religion, etc. In other words: when we look at a photo of how we look like it's only that — how we look, and not *what* we are, that is a history too complex to 'represent.' That is one of the reasons why these pieces can, and should, be altered to reflect in the future the fluctuations of 'personal' and/or 'public' developments." [Felix Gonzalez-Torres, letter to Robert Vifian, December 3, 1994. Reproduced in: *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, edited by Julie Ault. Gottingen, Germany: Steidldangin, 2006: 170-171].

[4] Each version of a portrait may include multiple texts and/or installations.

[5] Prior to and throughout the duration of any manifestation, the owner or authorized borrower must ensure that a structure is in place that allows for thoughtful and ongoing decision-making.

[6] The owner should use discretion in accepting or declining the loan of the work for exhibitions. The owner should prioritize borrowers who: understand that by borrowing the work they are taking on rights and responsibilities to make additive decisions about the work; understand the work's capacity to shift over time; and understand that it is their responsibility to leave audiences space to encounter and interpret the work on their own terms.

[7] The medium is specified as 'paint on wall;' alternative methods of applying a portrait work directly to the wall have been used.

[8] Decisions regarding the installation of a portrait in situ may be influenced and/or directed by the architecture and conditions of a given space. While typically "frieze height" may be described as just below the point where the wall meets the ceiling, the interpretation of "frieze height" may vary in response to the scale of the architecture. Accordingly, the size of the text may shift relative to what is considered "modest but readable" at a given height. The form/concept of a "frieze" is also a guideline for other aspects of installation. Depending on the length of a version of a portrait, a priority may be that the portrait span the entire width of a wall or encircle a space (while the spacing between characters, the spacing of the events/dates, the spacing between entries, and the size of the text are consistent throughout each installation, they may be finessed accordingly).

[9] Decisions made when installing a portrait in situ constitute a significant contribution to the content of a particular manifestation of a portrait.

[10] In some cases, the color of the text and the optional band of background color is specified as "to the owner's choosing."

[11] As the content of any given manifestation of a portrait work encompasses not only the version installed, but also decisions made in response to the architecture and the conditions of the installation spaces, the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation requests in-depth archival information about each installation, including: the version of the portrait installed, the ways in which the space impacted or shaped decisions about installation, photographic documentation of each physical manifestation, the location and duration of the installation, etc. (*Please note: the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation may be contacted for current information on the scope and details of its archival requests.*)

[12] The precise wording and punctuation of the title are conceptually significant. The purposeful punctuation of the title includes both the placement of quotation marks around the word "Untitled" and the fact that the parenthetical portion of the title is placed outside of the quotation marks.

[13] Gonzalez-Torres let exhibitors decide whether or not to include artwork captions on the walls of an exhibition, or elsewhere. (In his lifetime, Gonzalez-Torres accommodated certain institutions' stylistic standards of only listing parts of an artwork's caption [e.g. just the title and date; or just the title, date, and medium].)

[14] Gonzalez-Torres typically chose not to include descriptive or interpretive information on wall labels/texts. Should an exhibitor choose to include descriptive or interpretive wall labels/texts – or if including such information is part of an exhibitor's standard protocol – it is suggested that the full artwork caption also be present. In such cases, ideally the caption is displayed on a separate label, or with a separation from any descriptive or interpretive information. (In this way, the language and structure that Gonzalez-Torres chose for the caption can be reflected upon both alongside and independently from text generated by an exhibitor.)

[15] Gonzalez-Torres intended for the Certificates of Authenticity and Ownership for portrait works to be issued anew in the name of the current owner for as long as possible. While there may be works by Gonzalez-Torres which have owners that consist of more than one entity, together they constitute the current owner. The entities are perceived, referred to as, and operate as a single owner. (When the process of Certificate issuance has been discontinued, a record linking the new owner to the chain of previous owners is intended to be in place.)

[16] The language in the Certificates of Authenticity and Ownership has the potential to change over time to reflect nuanced understanding of the work and how language evolves in its capacity to articulate ideas.

COMPLETE LIST OF CAPTIONS FOR GONZALEZ-TORRES'S PORTRAIT WORKS:

"Untitled"
1989
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of the Wongs)
1991
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Michael Jenkins)
1991
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Julie Ault)
1991
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of the Stillpasses)
1991
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Jennifer Flay)
1992
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Andrea Rosen)
1992
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Elaine Dannheisser)
1993
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Ingvild Goetz)
1993
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of the Magoons)
1993
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Robert Vifian)
1993
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Austrian Airlines)
1993
Medium varies with installation
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of the Rosenbergs)
1994
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of MOCA)
1994
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Cincinnati Art Museum)
1994
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of the Fabric Workshop, a gift to Kippy)
1994
Paint on wall
Dimensions vary with installation

PURPOSEFUL VARIATIONS WITHIN THE BODY OF PORTRAIT WORKS:
The work below follows the Core Tenets for Portrait Works with the exception of the variation described here:

"Untitled" (Portrait of Austrian Airlines)
1993
Medium varies with installation
Dimensions vary with installation

"Untitled" (Portrait of Austrian Airlines) is the only portrait work which has a "medium that varies with installation" (as described in the caption for the work). This work may be manifest as either a portrait work or a billboard work.