Charles Desmarais is new to full-time journalism, and received the Rabkin Prize based on work published in his first year as Art Critic for The San Francisco Chronicle. Though he plans to use the time afforded by the Prize to continue to hone his skills as a writer for a popular news outlet, he is hardly an art neophyte.

His extensive experience as an art writer and critic includes numerous museum publications, as well as articles and essays in Afterimage, American Art, Art in America, California magazine, Exposure, Grand Street, and elsewhere. He was awarded an Art Critic’s Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1979, and authored a regular column, “On Art,” for the Riverside Press-Enterprise from 1987 to 1988.

Desmarais’ primary past work has been as a leader of visual arts institutions, however. He arrived in San Francisco in 2011 as President of the San Francisco Art Institute, after serving as Deputy Director for Art at the Brooklyn Museum from 2004 to 2011, where he oversaw 10 curatorial departments, as well as the museum’s education, exhibitions, conservation and library activities.

He has served as Director of the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (1995-2004); the Laguna Art Museum (1988-1994); and the California Museum of Photography at the University of California, Riverside (1981-1988).