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A CENTURY OF MODERNISM

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A CENTURY OF MODERNISM



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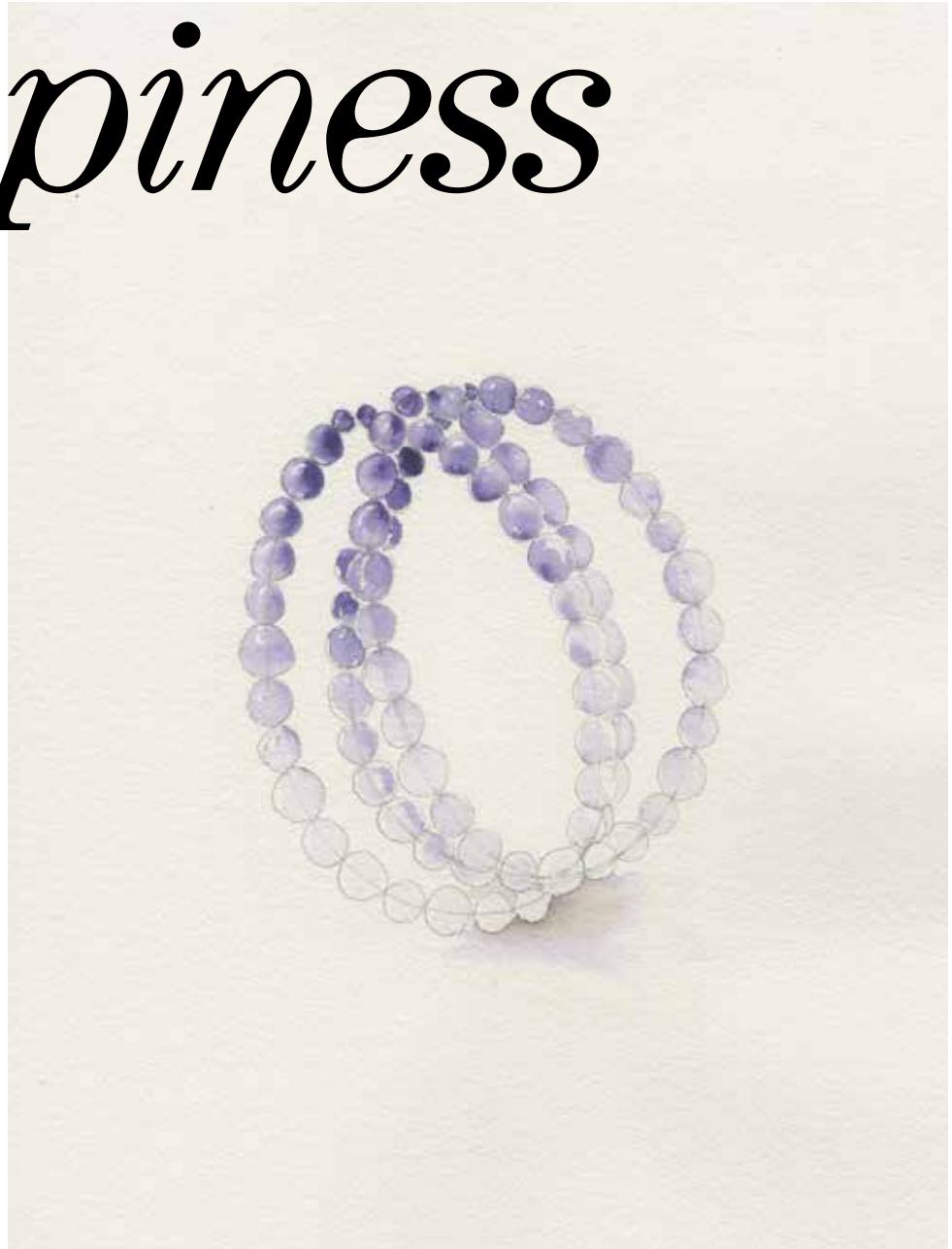
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Diary of *Happiness*



Exhibition

10.04 - 04.10.2026



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Boghossian Foundation

Villa Empain

Purple Lotus, 2015 - Aquarelle sur papier, encadrement - 36 x 26 cm



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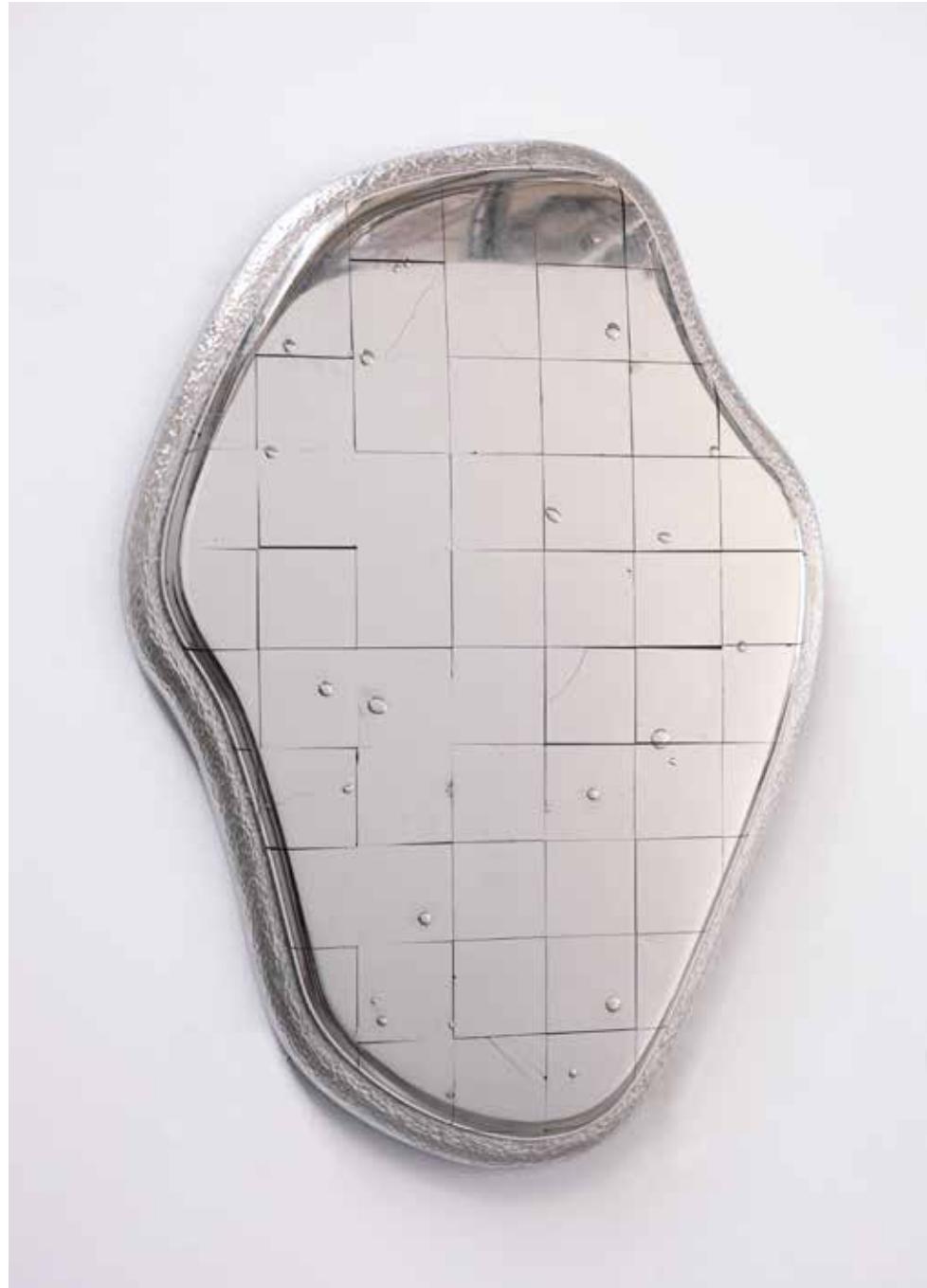
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BESPOKE METALWORKS



Quentin Vuong
Mercure Mirrors Collection
Exclusive for Spazio Nobile
Requests for bespoke project: info@spazionobile.com



Courtesy of the Artist & Spazio Nobile

Quentin Vuong, *Mercure Mirror #25*, Handcarved massive beech and oak, epoxy resin, brown & 10cc white gold

Left: Quentin Vuong, *Mercure Mirrors Collection*

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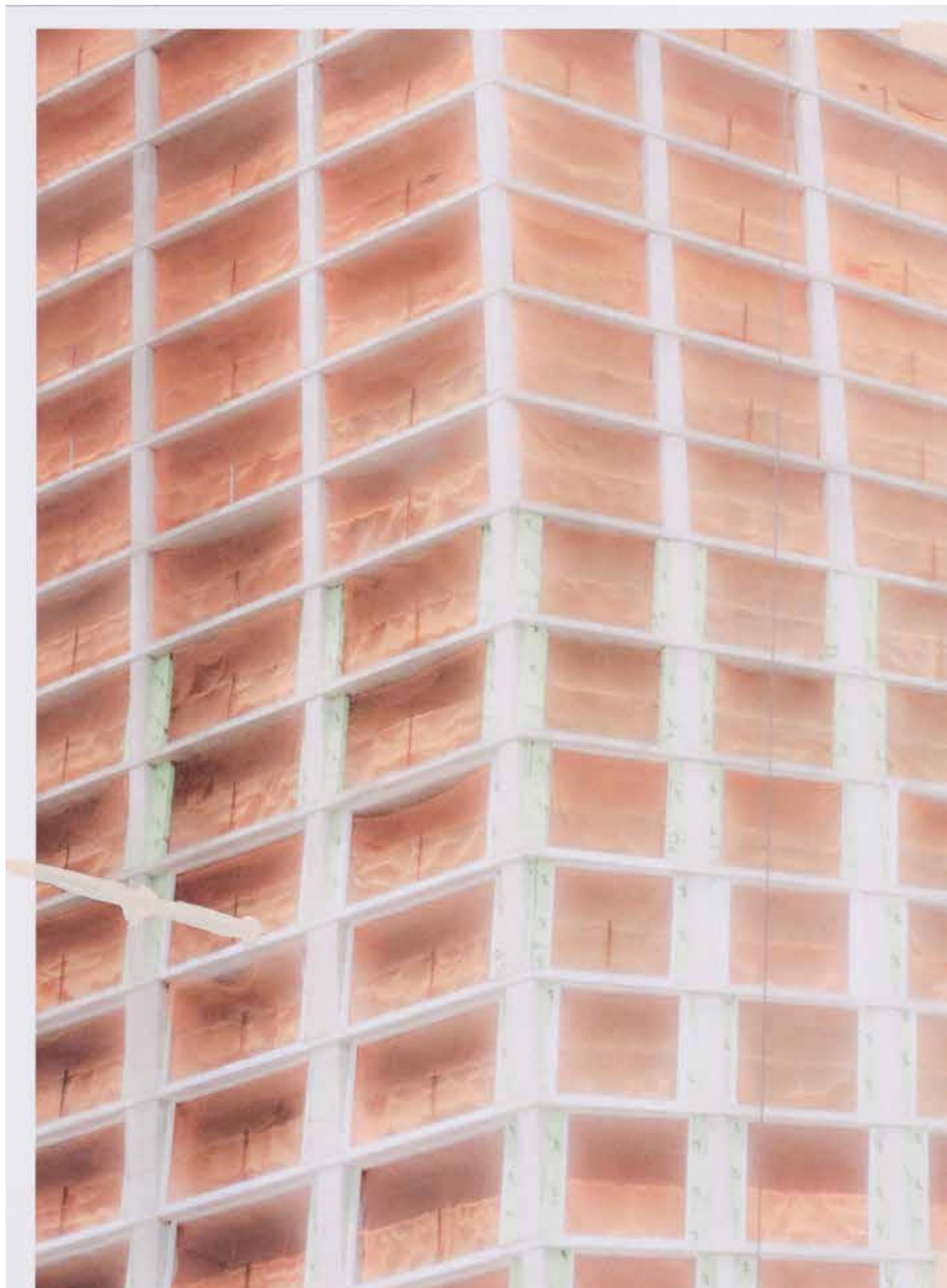
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Tue – Sat, 11–18 & by appointment





alu collection
by muller van severen



Season XXXVII –
Frederik Vercruyse, Solo Show
Panoramic: 15 Years of Art Photography
A Second Chapter
22.1–8.3.2026
In the framework of Photo Brussels Festival

Panoramic is both a title and a lens—a way of seeing that gently widens the horizon of perception. This Second Chapter of *Panoramic* presents fifteen years of work by Belgian photographer Frederik Vercruyse. New, unique overpainted prints are introduced in dialogue with earlier works, revealing a practice shaped by architecture, abstraction, and the quiet resonance of silence and space.



© Frederik Vercruyse, Courtesy of the Artist & Spazio Nobile

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Photo
Brussels
Festival

Villa Spazio Nobile, Tervuren

Spring – Summer & Autumn – Winter Exhibitions
& Special Events by invitation



Villa Spazio Nobile, Tervuren © Sébastien Van De Walle
Right : Lise Coirier and Gian Giuseppe Simeone in their villa, Tervuren © Sébastien Van De Walle

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Season XXXVIII – Kiki van Eijk
Memories of A Garden, Solo Show
Spring 2026



Courtesy of the Artist and Spazio Nobile

Kiki van Eijk, *Memories of A Garden*, Woven Jacquard tapestries, mix of yarns, including hemp, paper, mohair, 2025
Left: Kiki van Eijk

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Vera Vermeersch
Artist Studio Showcase, Ghent, Belgium
March 2026



Margaux Nieto, Courtesy of the Artist & Spazio Nobile

Vera Vermeersch in her studio in Ghent
Left: Vera Vermeersch, *L'odore del sole, le voci lontane*, 2022, detail, Handtufted tapestry,
wool, silk threads, fluoacryl, 190 x 225 cm. Unique piece signed by the artist

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Season XXXIX –
Marie Corbin et Benoît Maire
Crush, Duo Show
28.3–13.6.2026

Crush is the first duo exhibition by Marie Corbin and Benoît Maire. For this exhibition, Marie Corbin will present objects she has created since 2013 and Benoît Maire will showcase his furniture and lighting designs, on which he has been working since 2016. The exhibition's title, borrowed from words that Benoît Maire applies in Letraset to various artefacts, evokes the meeting of their two creative worlds.



Marie Corbin and Benoît Maire, Talence, 2025 ©Julien Carreyn
Right : Studio view, Talence, 2025 © Julien Carreyn

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Art Brussels
Pao Hui Kao, *Lunisolar House*
Horizons Section, curated by Devrim Bayar
23–26.4.2026



Studio Mass, CCourtesy of the Artist & Spazio Nobile

Pao Hui Kao in her studio in Eindhoven
Right: Pao Hui Kao, *Paper Pleats* for Spazio Nobile

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brussels



Spazio Nobile Studiolo
Poetics of Materiality, Group Show
Éva Garcia, Åsa Jungnelius, Benoît Maire,
Bela Silva, and Ann Beate Tempelhaug
28.3–13.6.2026
During Art Brussels



© Jonas Lindström

Åsa Jungnelius, *The New Prime Time-Utensil Container*, Mouth blown glass, mirroring, stainless steel
Right: Bela Silva, *J'Adore Venise*, Hand-built glazed stoneware ©Barbara de Vyust

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Season XLI –
Mae Engelgeer & Matsubayashi Hosai XVI
Echoes of Wa, Duo Show
10.9 – 15.11.2026
During Rendez Vous – Brussels Art Week



Matsubayashi Hosai XVI, *Wan geppaku with gold*. A series of experimental works in which he conceptually and physically expands the traditional Japanese tea bowl, exploring the aesthetics and philosophy embedded within the chawan

Right: Mae Engelgeer, *Unintended #127*, Old taima hemp, Indigo dye, Saflower, Non dye around 150 years old, framed in Japanese cedar. This work was part of the textile exhibition at The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto in 2025.

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Contents



— 56 **Cattelan Speak Bonami Listen**
By Maurizio Cattelan and Francesco Bonami



— 58 **Two or Three Things I Know About Collecting**
by Daniella Luxembourg



— 70 **When the Best Work Was Still Available:
Why I Turned to Women Artists**

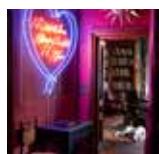
By Christian Levett



— 82 **Collecting as a Family Passion: Mera and Don Rubell**
An Interview Between Simon de Pury and Mera and Don Rubell



— 96 **Jean Pigozzi Has His Own Rules**
A Conversation Between Simon de Pury and Jean Pigozzi



— 106 **Private Views**
Inside the Homes of Artists and Dealers
By Tiqui Atencio Demirdjian. All photos by Jean-François Jaussaud



— 122 **Art Collecting Becomes a Self-Portrait**
Clio Peppiatt Talks with Her Father Michael Peppiatt



— 130 **During the Night**
By Edmund de Waal



— 142 **The Apothecary's Cabinet: Provenance in Sound**
By Rosey Chan



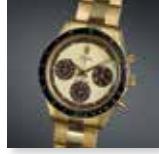
— 150 **American Costume Jewellery**
By Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo



— 158 **Mario Testino**
Through the Lens of Collecting
By Mario Testino



— 184 **Bollywood's Influence on Popular Culture:
A Personal Reflection**
By Kanika Kapoor



— 194 **One of the Greatest Rolex Watch Collections**
By Laurent Reiss



— 200 **Art as Jewellery**
By Louisa Guinness

— 206 **State of Gold**

By Fabrizio Moretti

— 212 **Collecting Infinity**

Takaya Awata and the Art of Lou Zhenggang

By Takaya Awata

— 222 **The Monet Centenary: A Forgotten Scandal**

By Marianne Mathieu

— 232 **The Many Lives of Michael Chow**

A Conversation Between Simon de Pury and Michael Chow

— 246 **Picasso the Collector**

By Diana Widmaier Picasso

— 254 **Collecting and Legacy**

Staffan Ahrenberg in Conversation with Simon de Pury

— 262 **Food for Soul**

Artists Collecting Art

By Joachim Pissarro

— 270 **Botero as a Collector: Art as a Spiritual Necessity**

By Fernando Botero Quintana

— 280 **Wim Delvoye**

On the Origin of Species, by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life

— 294 **From Visibility to Viability**

The Evolution of an Art Ecosystem and Market Anchored in Pan-Africanism

By Kami Gahiga

— 302 **The Hat Collector**

A Conversation Between Simon de Pury and Marc Quinn

— 308 **Some Experiments in Art and Technology**

By Hans Ulrich Obrist

— 316 **Ron Arad: Better Than I Deserve**

An Interview Between Simon de Pury and Ron Arad

— 326 **Nick Rhodes**

Un homme très cultivé

Simon de Pury in Conversation with Nick Rhodes

Contributors



CHRISTIAN LEVETT

Christian Levett is a British art collector and philanthropist who founded FAMM (Female Artists of the Mougins Museum), the first museum in the world outside the United States dedicated exclusively to women artists. He owns one of the most significant private collections of works by female artists, with a particular focus on Abstract Expressionism. His collection includes over 600 works by women among nearly 2,000 in total. Levett actively supports museum loans, academic initiatives, and institutional research, and has co-published three scholarly books on women artists in collaboration with Merrell Publishers.



DANIELLA LUXEMBOURG

Daniella Luxembourg is a founding partner at Luxembourg + Co. gallery, London and New York, which she runs together with her daughter, Alma Luxembourg. The gallery specialises in museum-quality exhibitions of modern, post-war, and contemporary art, and promotes new research and scholarship related to its exhibition programme. Before establishing her gallery, Ms. Luxembourg served President and co-owner of the auction house Phillips, de Pury & Luxembourg, she was also the Founding Director of the Jewish Museum in Vienna, Deputy Chairman of Sotheby's Switzerland, and co-founder of Sotheby's Israel.



EDMUND DE WAAL

Edmund de Waal is an artist who writes. Much of his work is about the contingency of memory: bringing particular histories of loss and exile into renewed life. Both his artistic and written practice have broken new ground through their critical engagement with the history and potential of ceramics, as well as with architecture, music, dance and poetry. De Waal continually investigates themes of diaspora, memorial and materiality with his interventions and artworks made for diverse spaces and museums worldwide including The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire; the Musée Nissim de Camondo, Paris; The British Museum, London, and The Frick Collection, New York.



LOUISA GUINNESS

Louisa Guinness, founder of Louisa Guinness Gallery, is internationally recognised for championing the artists' jewellery movement. A former stockbroker and long-time collector, she opened the gallery in 2003 to bring greater visibility to jewellery made by modern masters. It was the first gallery ever dedicated to exhibiting artists' jewels. In 2017, she published the book: *Art as Jewellery: From Calder to Kapoor*, which offers an extensive overview of the subject. Over the past 20 years, Louisa has collaborated with more than 25 major artists, including Anish Kapoor, Mariko Mori, Ed Ruscha, Gavin Turk and Tim Noble & Sue Webster, to produce finely crafted, wearable works. Today, she is the leading dealer in pieces by artists such as Alexander Calder and Claude Lalanne, a key voice in the field, and advocates for contemporary and emerging jewellers, helping bring their work to a wider audience.



FERNANDO BOTERO QUINTANA

Fernando Botero Quintana is a businessman passionate about art and the role it plays as a transformative axis in society. In 2014, he published "Explicando lo Inexplicable" a book based on interviews with seventeen of Colombia's most important leaders exposing from their perspective the causes and possible solutions to the issue of poverty in Colombia. He graduated in Business Administration and has an MBA from IESE Business School. From 2020 to 2022 he worked as a consultant at Bain and then as COO at Payjoy, an American fintech. He currently lives in Mexico and is committed to preserving and spreading the legacy of Maestro Botero around the world.



TIQUI ATENCIO DEMIRDJIAN

Tiqui Atencio Demirdjian is a Venezuelan-born, Monaco-based collector, author, and cultural philanthropist. She is the founder of Tate's Latin American Acquisition Committee and Trustee Emeritus of the Tate Americas Foundation. She is also, President Emeritus of the former Guggenheim International Council, and an Honorary Member of its Constellation Council. In 2016, Tiqui published her first book titled 'Could Have, Would Have, Should Have: Inside the World of the Art Collector.' In 2020, she started the 'For Art's Sake' series, publishing 'For Art's Sake: Inside the Homes of Art Dealers,' and in 2024 published 'Inside the Homes of Artists.' In 2024, Tiqui, together with her husband, Ago Demirdjian, founded the Mustique Caribbean Contemporary Art Show & Prize. This biennial initiative provides support and exposure to emerging Caribbean artists.



KAMI GAHIGA

Kami Gahiga is a curator and art professional based between Kigali and London. Her work primarily focuses on art from the Global South and she has curated several exhibitions across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. She is an acting contributor to NKA Journal of Contemporary African Art. Kami is the Art Basel VIP Representative for Africa. Previously, she served as the Head of VIP & Gallery Relations at 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair (London, Marrakech, New York, Hong Kong). Gahiga is the Co-Founder of the The Gihanga Institute of Contemporary Art opening soon in Kigali, Rwanda.



HANS ULRICH OBRIST

Hans Ulrich Obrist (b. 1968, Zurich, Switzerland) is Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries in London, and Senior Artistic Advisor of The Shed in New York. Prior to this, he was the Curator of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Since his first show "World Soup" (The Kitchen Show) in 1991, he has curated more than 300 shows. Obrist's recent publications include *Mondialité*, *Somewhere Totally Else*, *Ways of Curating*, *The Age of Earthquakes* with Douglas Coupland and Shumon Basar, and *Lives of The Artists*, *Lives of The Architects*.



ROSEY CHAN

Rosey Chan is a London-based pianist-composer and founder of Sonic Apothecary, an applied-listening studio. She works in two lanes: performance for the stage, and neuro-acoustic music designed to be used—artist-made, clinician-guided. The studio creates short reset tracks, discreet room pieces for hospitality and public settings, and editions/commissions; recent pilots with dementia-support and PTSD communities explore gentle, measurable benefits. Sonic Apothecary 2.0 releases January 2026. Rosey is also developing a grand piano with Zaha Hadid Architects (with Patrik Schumacher)—where sound, architecture and technology meet.



JOACHIM PISSARRO

Joachim Pissarro is an art historian, theoretician, curator, and museum consultant. He is also an internationally sought-after speaker and interviewer at biennials, fairs and museums. He has taught at Yale University, Osaka University, Sydney University and at Hunter College of the City University of New York. He has held curatorial positions at Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.



PATRIZIA SANDRETTA RE REBAUDENGO

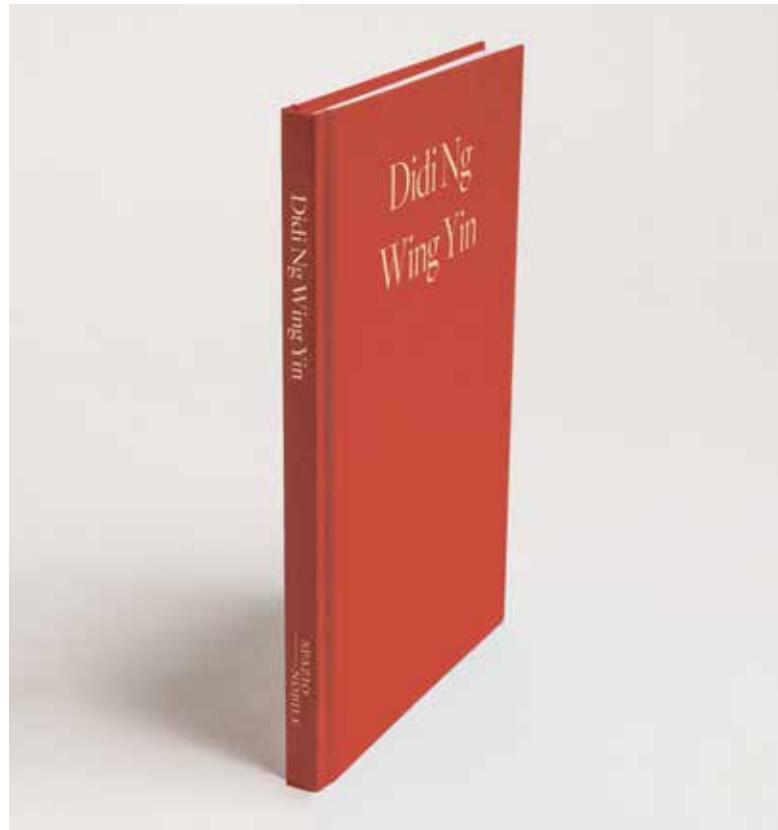
Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo is a collector, founder and president of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin and the Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Madrid. A tireless advocate for contemporary art, she supports emerging artists and curators through exhibitions, residencies, and education. She sits on key international museum boards, lectures widely, and has received major honors for her cultural patronage. She teaches at IULM in Milan and writes articles, interviews, and essays on art collecting for newspaper, magazines, and academic publications.



LAURENT REISS

Laurent Reiss was born and raised in Geneva. He studied at HEC Geneva, earning a Master's degree in Finance, and built a distinguished career at Union Bancaire Privée (UBP). Over more than 20 years at the bank, he rose to head the hedge fund group, working in New York, London, and Monaco, and gaining broad international experience. He now lives in Monaco, where he oversees his family office and makes investments across various sectors. Outside of business, Laurent is passionate about watch collecting, photography, and traveling.

Artists' Monographs published by Spazio Nobile Editions



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The Art of Collecting

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55 x 44 x 7/8 in / 139.7 x 111.8 x 2.2 cm. Framed: 60 3/4 x 49 3/4 x 2 1/16 in / 154.3 x 126.4 x 5.2 cm
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PAD Paris
Day Dream, Group Show
Jardin des Tuilleries
8–12.4.2026



© Courtesy of the Artist & Spazio Nobile

Éva Garcia, *Tadrart #6*, 2024, Carborundum engraving on aluminium plate, Private Collection

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The Art of Collecting

Self-Portrait and the Primacy of Instinct

Lise Coirier
Founder, Publisher & Editor-in-Chief



© Gueorgui Pinkhassov, Magnum Photos

Simon de Pury is the Guest Editor of this new annual edition of *TLmag*, in which he appears, gavel in hand, as depicted by Urs Fischer on the cover. Entitled *Jurassic Park*, this work introduces a critical distance tinged with irony: Simon appears as an emblematic figure of the art market. The auctioneer embodies the decisive moment when the work shifts from desire to value, from gaze to transaction. The gavel, a symbol of authority and verdict, crystallizes the power to set a price, to consecrate a work, and to inscribe it, through an artistic gesture, into a global economy.

Parc Jurassique also evokes a prehistoric, almost fossilized world, where immutable rituals, protocols, and established hierarchies remain. The art market appears as a spectacular ecosystem, sometimes frozen in its codes, where mythical figures survive while coexisting with contemporary creation. This cover subtly questions the concept and reality of collecting, as well as the constant tension between innovation and artistic traditions. It invites the reader to glimpse the art world as a living landscape, traversed by forces, narratives, and paradoxes. Following in the footsteps of Bas Smets, Marco Sammicheli, Lidewij Edelkoort, and Chris Dercon, the content of this iconic edition of the magazine has been

designed as a ‘carte blanche,’ focusing on the personal and subjective choices of its author.

To mark the 10th anniversary of Spazio Nobile Gallery, dedicated to contemporary applied arts and fine arts, and the 18th anniversary of *TLmag*, which has now come of age, we wanted to delve into the depths and mysteries of a keen eye, such as that of Simon de Pury. The gems and passions, often kept secret like hidden addictions, are revealed before our eyes as we read these articles, which unfold like a diary set to music by our special guest. A state of grace can be read between the lines: a tribute to strong and sincere friendships, a deliberate eclecticism that reflects his generous personality. A collector of images and encounters, he makes no secret of it: his innate curiosity and energy are matched only by his global travels. His soul as a globetrotting gentleman is in tune with our vision of art and culture. Simon de Pury echoes the thinking of Saint-Simon: a resolutely positive faith in movement, the circulation of ideas, and the ability of art to shape the future rather than remain frozen in the past. ♦

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I Collect Therefore I Am

Simon de Pury

Guest Editor

I am immensely grateful to Lise Coirier, owner and chief editor of *TLmag* for having offered me the unique chance to be guest editor of this current issue. She has given me complete 'carte blanche' under condition that the main focus be on collecting.

Collecting is an incurable disease. There are as many different motivations for collecting as there are collectors. Most children collect marbles, toys, miniature cars or dolls. As teenagers this urge to collect or accumulate recedes somewhat. It is as adults, that when for the first time we make a financial sacrifice to acquire a work of art that we covet, that we make the seminal first step. The next steps follow automatically. The act of acquiring becomes a sign of vitality in itself and is like a challenge to our own mortality. I have often seen collectors making some of their boldest purchases when they were either very old or affected by serious illness. At the highest level collecting is an artistic pursuit in its own right. A good collection always carries the handwriting of the person who has put it together. It is therefore not surprising that very often artists themselves are the best collectors. The bug of collecting can affect anyone independently of their financial possibilities. I have come across collectors who have built remarkable collections with limited means and equally affluent ones who have not managed to do so.

In this issue I have asked a number of friends, colleagues or acquaintances that I admire and who are active in a wide variety of fields to contribute in one way or another to this issue. It is a pure vanity project since nobody got paid for their efforts. I am infinitely grateful to them. I have listed all contributors in alphabetical order below

Staffan Ahrenberg
Ron Arad
Tiqui Atencio Demirdjan
Takaya Awata
Francesco Bonami
Fernando Botero Quintana
Maurizio Cattelan
Rosey Chan
Michael Chow
Wim Delvoye
Kami Gahiga
Louisa Guinness
Jean François Jaussaud
Kanika Kapoor
Christian Levett
Daniella Luxembourg
Marianne Mathieu

Fabrizio Moretti
Hans Ulrich Obrist
Clio Peppiatt
Michael Peppiatt
Diana Picasso
Jean Pigozzi
Joachim Pissarro
Marc Quinn
Laurent Reiss
Nick Rhodes
Don Rubell
Mera Rubell
Patrizia Sandretto
Re Rebaudengo
Mario Testino
Edmund de Waal

The main engines in my own life are passion and curiosity. This issue allows me to share insights into many fields that fascinate me such as art, photography, architecture, music, cinema, design, fashion, food and sport. I do hope that the readers of this issue will derive at least a fraction of the pleasure I have had in putting it together.

An undertaking like this could never have taken place without invaluable painstaking and tireless work. I would like to express here my deepest and warmest thanks to Blaire Dessent and Rukiah Zakaria who have attended to any imaginable issue and to Antoine Jovenet the brilliant graphic designer.

Simon de Pury
January 2026

Artists' Portraits on My Instagram

By Simon de Pury

Collecting is in no way limited to material things. I am an extremely superstitious guy so I collect superstitions. Every time I hear about a new one I am adding it to my collection which leads to weird habits such as eating an apple before every auction I conduct.

During the very limited time that is allotted to us on this planet I try to collect as many experiences as possible. Few things give me more joy than getting to know artists, whether visual artists, musicians, actors,

writers, designers, photographers , architects, collectors, curators or football players. I did the first portrait of an artist in the early days of Instagram. On a studio visit to Alex Israel, inspired by his self portraits in profile, I asked him to sit for me in the same pose. Ever since, I am photographing the artists that I admire, preferably in front of one of their own works. Below is a tiny selection of my 'collection' of these artist portraits all shot with my iPhone.



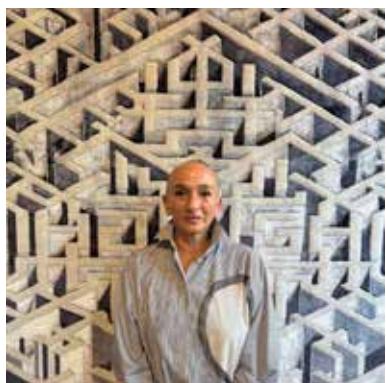
Adrian Ghenie



Adrien Brody



Ai Weiwei



Aidan Salakhova



Alex Israel



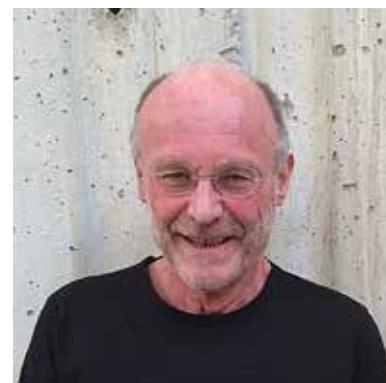
Alexandre Diop



Alvaro Barrington



Anh Duong



Anselm Kiefer



A\$AP Rocky



Beatriz Milhazes



Berlinde de Bruyckere



Bernar Venet



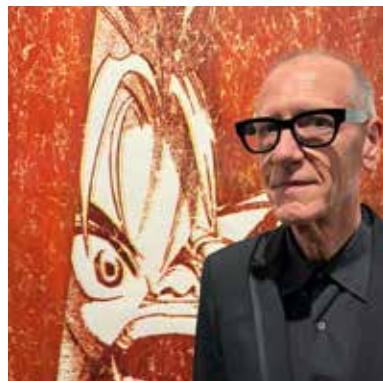
Brice Marden



Cai Guo-Qiang



Chloe Wise



Christian Marclay



Christo



Christopher Wool



Daniel Arsham



Daniel Buren



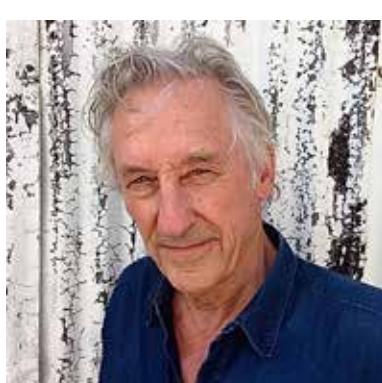
David Adjaye and Julie Mehretu



David Yarrow



Diana Picasso



Ed Ruscha



Eliane Fattal



Elizabeth Colomba



Eric Fischl



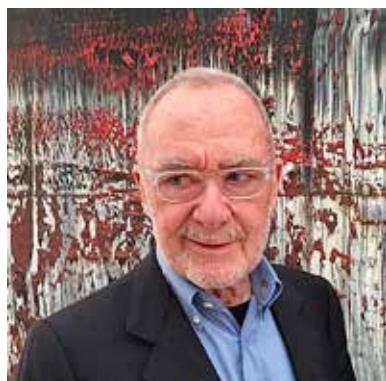
Farshid Moussavi



Flavie Audi



George Condo



Gerhard Richter



Glenn Brown



Glenn Ligon



Guillermo Loroa



Henry Taylor



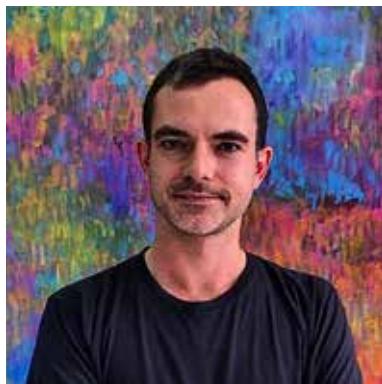
Ilya Kabakov



Pierre et Gilles with Michèle Lamy



Isaac Julien



Jean-Baptiste Bernadet



Jeff Koons



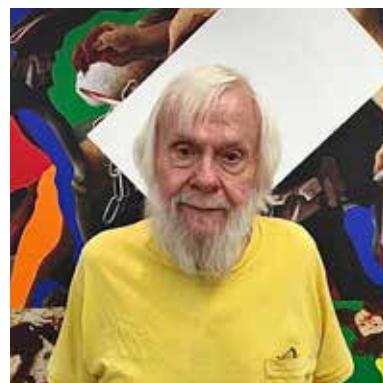
Jennifer Guidi



Joe Bradley



John Armleder



John Baldessari



Jonas Wood



Julian Lennon



Julian Schnabel



KAWS



Kenny Schachter



Kenny Scharf



Lionel Richie



Lou Zhenggang



Marc Quinn



Mario Testino



Mark Grotjahn



Mary McCartney



Mary Weatherford



Michael Armitage



Michael Chow and Karolina Kurkova



Mickalene Thomas



Minjung Kim



Miquel Barceló



Murakami



Neo Rauch



Nicolas Party



Nile Rodgers



Norman Foster and Frank Gehry



Olivier Mosset



Pascale Marthine Tayou



Peter Beard



Philip Colbert



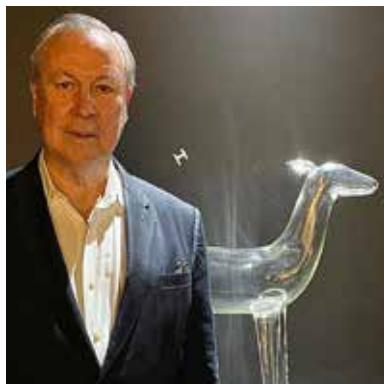
Piotr Uklanski



Rashid Johnson



Refik Anadol



Robert Wilson



Rolf Sachs



Ron Agam



Ron Arad



Sterling Ruby



Stéphane Graff



Swizz Beatz



Sylvie Fleury



Thandiwe Muriu



Thomas Heatherwick



Thomas Houseago



Tracey Emin



Tschabalala Self



Udom Taephanich



Ugo Rondinone



Vija Celmins and Marlene Dumas



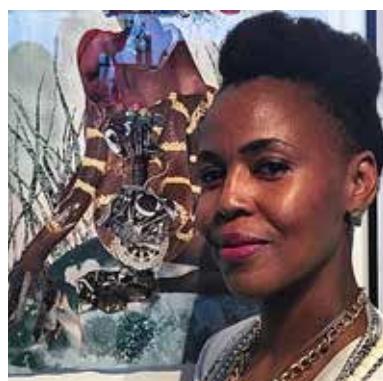
Vija Celmins



Vivienne Westwood



Wade Guyton



Wangechi Mutu



Will Boone



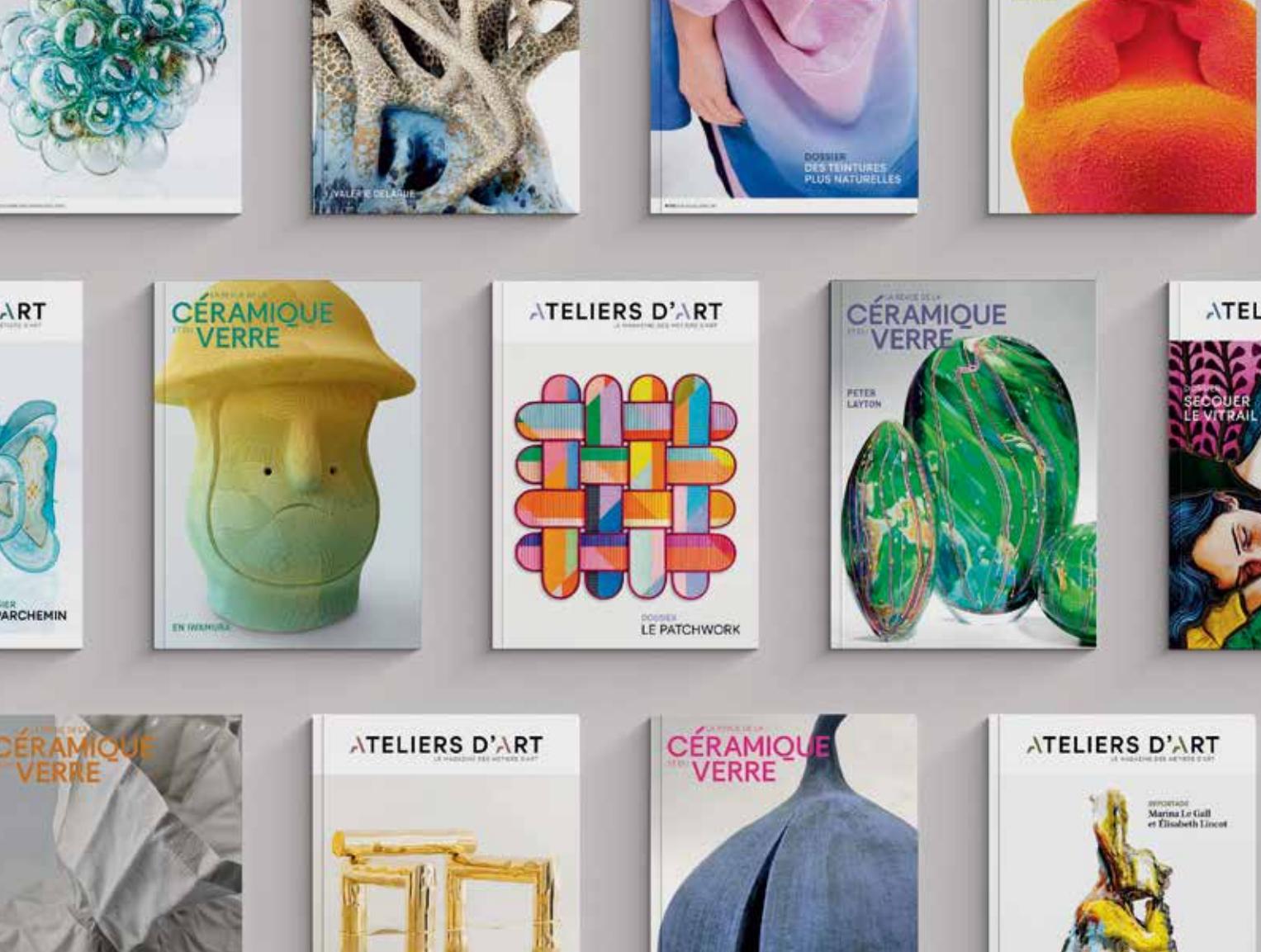
Wim Delvoye



Wolfgang Tillmans



Yan Pei-Ming



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Cattelan Speak Bonami Listen

By Maurizio Cattelan and Francesco Bonami



Maurizio called me while I was in Hangzhou, China opening a show at By Art Matters, the contemporary art museum located in the Renzo Piano Art Center, where I am the artistic director. We both had watched the underwhelming auction of America at Sotheby's and he was in the rare mood of talking ...so, I listened. -Francesco Bonami, January 2026.

Maurizio Cattelan: The Greek philosopher Plotinus used to say that the soul is like gold, if you don't make it shiny is worth nothing...

Francesco Bonami: I did not know you were familiar with Greek philosophy.

M.C.: I am not ...I read that quote inside a Bacio Perugina chocolate, but I thought it was very appropriate about *America* ... and now with the myth of it going literally down the toilet is even more appropriate.

F.B.: So at the end of the day, what is *America*?

M.C.: *America* is not just a sculpture, it's a diagnosis.

F.B.: A diagnosis of our contemporary soul or of *America* itself?

M.C.: I would say both. But it is also a monument to vanity and at the same time the delusional wish or desire to purify yourself through the absurd.

F.B.: What is absurd in this case. And was *Comedian*, the taped banana, also absurd?

M.C.: You see, you touched an open nerve ...because *Comedian* was just a banana taped on the wall that became an icon, a sort of simulacra to be worshipped and, like any other simulacra, the worship is attached to its own absurdity... people worship a tooth of a martyr or a saint, a shock of hair.

F.B.: But....

M.C.: But *America*, and here maybe was my original sin, was never a simulacrum... or at least in spite of my wish it never became a simulacrum because it never let go of its function. I thought the gold would

have worked like the gaffer tape for the banana, changing its function... which was to be a fruit to be eaten... while with the tape you can't eat it, and even the person who ate it did not destroy the work... to do so they should have also eaten the tape. When they stole *America* [from the Blenheim Palace in 2019], they probably melted it, and in doing so they destroyed at the same time the art and its function...

F.B.: It's getting confusing.

M.C.: Follow me ...the *Comedian* is the banana, the tape and the wall. You eliminate one of the three elements and you don't have *Comedian* any longer... if you tape the banana on the floor is not *Comedian*... while *America* remained the same, at least I thought so, even at the collector's home or at Sotheby's.

F.B.: So?

M.C.: I realize that in fact *America* was *America* only in the Guggenheim bathroom and it should have stayed there or maybe in another public institution... so maybe the fact that the entertainment firm, Ripley's Believe It or Not bought it, in a way they saved it. It's not a museum but at least it will be a public venue.

F.B.: So you made a mistake in considering it a work of art like others?

M.C.: Yes I did. I was greedy and I shot myself in the foot.

F.B.: You thought *America* was like Covid, a virus capable to create a pandemic in the art system?

M.C.: Yes, and instead it was just a regular cold; the Guggenheim was the lab where I created the virus and I thought it could

have been devastating, and it was while it stayed inside the lab... outside it was killed by stronger viruses... *Comedian* was one of those... in fact *Comedian* is the vaccine against *America*.

F.B.: Do you feel healed now or sicker?

M.C.: That evening, when I was watching the auction, I thought I was sick, very sick, almost dying. But then I realized that it was like when you have very high fever you think it is bad but in fact you are healing. If someone, a private collector, would have bought it for more money and put it in their home, that would have been the real disaster... it would have been like someone buying *Comedian* and showing only the tape on the wall.

F.B.: You like flip flops?

M.C.: Yes so what?

F.B.: *America* was a flop and *Comedian* was a flip.

M.C.: You can say so.

F.B.: *Comedian* makes you proud and *America* make you feel ashamed?

M.C.: Well, it is like two children, one turned out to be a great piano player, the other one a gigolo, but they are both my children. It depends whether as a father, if you like more music or sex.

F.B.: What do you like more?

M.C.: Maybe sex listening to some good music. But in fact, sex is basically always the same and it always ends, music is always different and it can last forever. Music is the soul, sex is like gold.

F.B.: You go back to Plotinus.

M.C.: No I go back to the Bacio Perugina.

◇





Two or Three Things I Know About Collecting

By Daniella Luxembourg



1 — The Arthur Hahnloser and Hedy Hahnloser-Bühler collection at Villa Flora, Winterthur. Courtesy of the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland
 2 — Johann Zoffany, *Tribuna of the Uffizi*, 1772-77, Oil on canvas, 123.5 x 155 cm. Courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust

A friend once told me that in order to understand what makes a great collector, one first must acknowledge the difference between passion and desire. The first is an enduring and relentless enthusiasm for something, while the second is a fleeting sentiment that dissipates just as easily as it arises. This was certainly a guiding principle for the great collectors of the Renaissance era, who set the bar for modern collecting patterns – a growing fad in our time. I am thinking about the Medicis, the Farnese family and Isabella d'Este, as well as a few others who came after them. King Charles I of England, for example, acquired approximately 550 works by Leonardo during his reign, making the Royal Collection incomparable in this regard. Catherine the Great of Russia, in turn, commissioned the painter Rubens as her emissary, who acquired an incredible number of works all over Europe. These were not only ambitious collectors in relation to the scale of their acquisitions, but more so because of the rigour and dedication that they, or their advisors, manifested in their criteria; qualities

that separate them from many other wealthy individuals whose name or possessions we no longer recall. Indeed, the collections of the individuals I mention here came to define the image of states and monarchies, they reflected the taste, vision and success of the sovereign, not only to themselves and their families, but also to their subjects, their allies and even their enemies. Truly remarkable, it is sporadically the scale of these acquisitions that we now commemorate, but more importantly it is the coherent and personal mark of their owners' interest that is left engrained on them. Indeed, the imperative inherited by the great collectors of the past is simple: collect so that the sum of your possessions will be greater than its initial composite parts. The recipe to achieve this, however, is more difficult to formulate, and the question that follows is whether cultural worth can migrate, along with a bill of sale, to new hands. History suggests that it can, although not without hard work. One well known example of such transfer of ownership took place in 1958, at Sotheby's London, when the coveted estate of the German-Jewish banker

SAMMLUNG MERZBACH



HER





3 — Kunsthaus Zürich, Sammlung Merzbacher. Photo: Franca Candrian, Kunsthaus Zürich

4 — Franz Mayer in Picasso's studio viewing three paintings selected by the artist, December 20, 1967, Photo: Kurt Wyss, Vintage print black and white photograph on baryta paper, 16.1 x 23.7 cm, Inv. 2018.41, © Kurt Wyss, Basel, Courtesy Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, Gift of the photographer

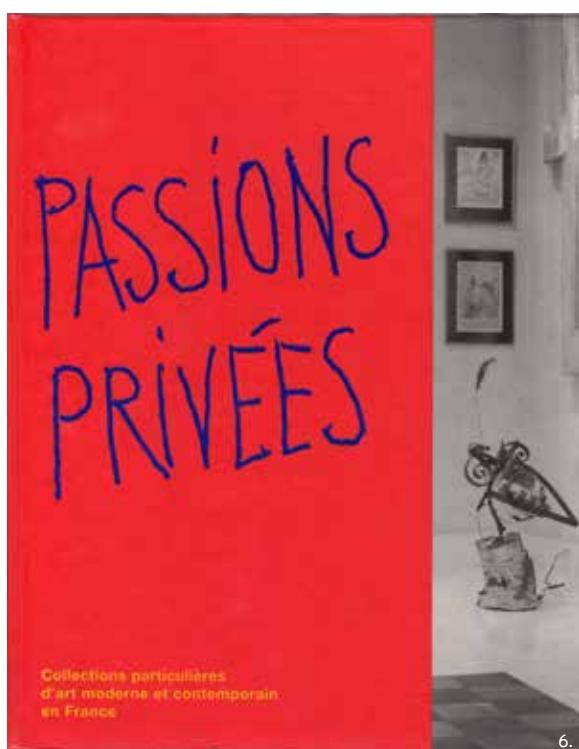
Jacob Goldschmidt was sold for record-breaking prices in a glamorous event, the like of which was never imagined before. Organised as a gala – a concept foreign to the dreary presentations of auction rooms until then – the sale attracted movie stars, politicians and socialites. One collector in particular stood-out that evening from the uniform crowd of men that crowded the podium, all dressed in identical black suits and neckties. Paul Mellon was the heir of a wealthy banking family, whose father, Andrew, had already amassed a collection that would form the basis of the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Eager to match his old man's achievements, the young Mellon agreed to pay a record price, five times higher than any artwork sold at auction beforehand, in order to acquire Paul Cezanne's *Boy in a Red Waistcoat* of 1888–90: for the extraordinary sum of £220,000.

A triumphant event, highlighted by an acquisition of the utmost importance, this auction also marked a turning point in the way collectors would come to be perceived, drawing attention to the understanding of art as part of the financial market in the most unforgiving way. Mellon himself, however, seemed unphased by the media storm his acquisition generated. A sensitive and knowledgeable collector, he was simply eager to add the *Boy in a Red Waistcoat* to the walls of the

National Gallery of Art, admitting this was a crucial piece in an ongoing puzzle that he would not be able to complete in his lifetime. But passion, Mellon knew, is not hereditary, nor is it a shared sentiment. Great collections often emerge in the hands of individuals but later pass on to the custody of institutions meant to ensure their safety and preservation. Agreements of this sort give origin to some of the world's best public collections and have been possible, in each instance, thanks to a visionary museum director or politician, who managed to supersede the bureaucratic structures of their own establishment. Such was the case for Alfred Barr Jr., who formed the basis for MoMA's exceptional collection. Barr identified opportunities and pursued them at all costs. For example, he personally ensured that the museum would acquire some of Picasso and Matisse's greatest paintings (*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* from the former, and *The Red Studio* from the latter) and went to great lengths to acquire works from the Nazi Degenerate Art exhibition in the late 1930s. Moreover, he understood the importance of making space for bequests of major private collections into the museum – indeed, as early as 1929, Barr welcomed the first gift to the museum from his former teacher, Paul J. Sachs, in the shape of eight prints by major German Expressionist artists.



5 — Man Ray, Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein (1922) © Man Ray 2015 Trust / SABAM Belgium 2026
 6 — *Passions Privées*, exhibition catalogue, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, published in 1995



Similar stories could be told of Kenneth Clark during his twelve-year tenure as director of the National Gallery in London, Werner Schmalenbach, the founding director of the Northern Westphalia Museum of Art, or Franz Mayer, the famed director of the Basel Museum, whose passion was so sweeping that, in 1967, it led to a referendum approving the purchase of two important Picasso paintings for the museum collection using tax payer money – an unprecedented vote. Another visionary worth mentioning in this context is André Malraux, who acted on behalf of several museum collections in France while serving as the country's Minister of Culture between 1959 and 1969. In fact, Malraux organised an exhibition in 1968 in Lausanne under the title *Icons from Swiss Collections* in an attempt to highlight the role and influence of private collections in the public's consciousness in France, based on Swiss examples. Malraux's project would find a rewarding echo in 1995, when the director of the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, Suzanne Pagé, brought together examples from 93 private French collections in one exhibition, titled *Passions Privées* (Private Passions), celebrating the importance of private ownership of art in France. The show also analysed the fundamental role private collections had played in promoting artistic innovation







8.

throughout the last century. Passion, Pagé insisted, is fundamental to the creation of significant collections, pointing to the sense of urgency that guided so many of those collectors to acquire works that were strange, difficult or incomprehensible in their time. Free from the requirement to obtain approval from a committee, or to back their decision with a rational argument, passionate collectors often get to see things differently, and in so doing invite others to do the same. As the wonderful French painter and sculptor Edgar Degas once said, 'art is not what you see, but what you make others see'.

But Degas' insight is easier said than done. As fashions change, and values fluctuate, not all collectors resist the temptation to follow trends. But the trick is to persevere with one's passion while considering its

potential for evolution. Stepping into collectors' galleries or homes, we see how they have been driven by an unstoppable quest, a need to pursue their inquiry path. Just think of the Neue Galerie in New York City: a private collection turned into a porthole to some of the most exciting achievements in German and Austrian twentieth century art and design; or the Bourse de Commerce in Paris, where one collector's vision of contemporary art is presented in rigorous terms, but always against the backdrop of the most opulent French 19th century architectural setting. Indeed, collectors of the last century continue to shape our view of art: from Gertrude and Leo Stein (each in their own way), through Albert C. Barnes, Louise and Walter Arensberg, Arthur and Hedy Hahnloser-Bühler, Werner Merzbacher, Giuseppe and Giovanna Panza



9.

7 — Interior of the Villa Panza di Biumo, Italy.

Photo: Armando Pezzarossa, © FAI

8 — Interior of the John & Dominique de Menil house in Houston, Texas. Photo: Balthazar Korab, Courtesy of Menil Archives, The Menil Collection, Houston

9 — Home of Louise and Arthur Arensberg, Los Angeles. Included in Hollywood Arensberg: Avant-Garde Collecting in Midcentury L.A by Mark Nelson, William H. Sherman, and Ellen Hoobler (Getty Publications, 2020)

10 — François Pinault. Courtesy Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, Photo: Maxime Tetard, Studio Les Graphiquants

11 — Installation view of Austrian Masterworks from the Neue Galerie, Photo: Annie Schlechter, Courtesy Neue Galerie New York

© Maxime Tetard, Studio Les Graphiquants



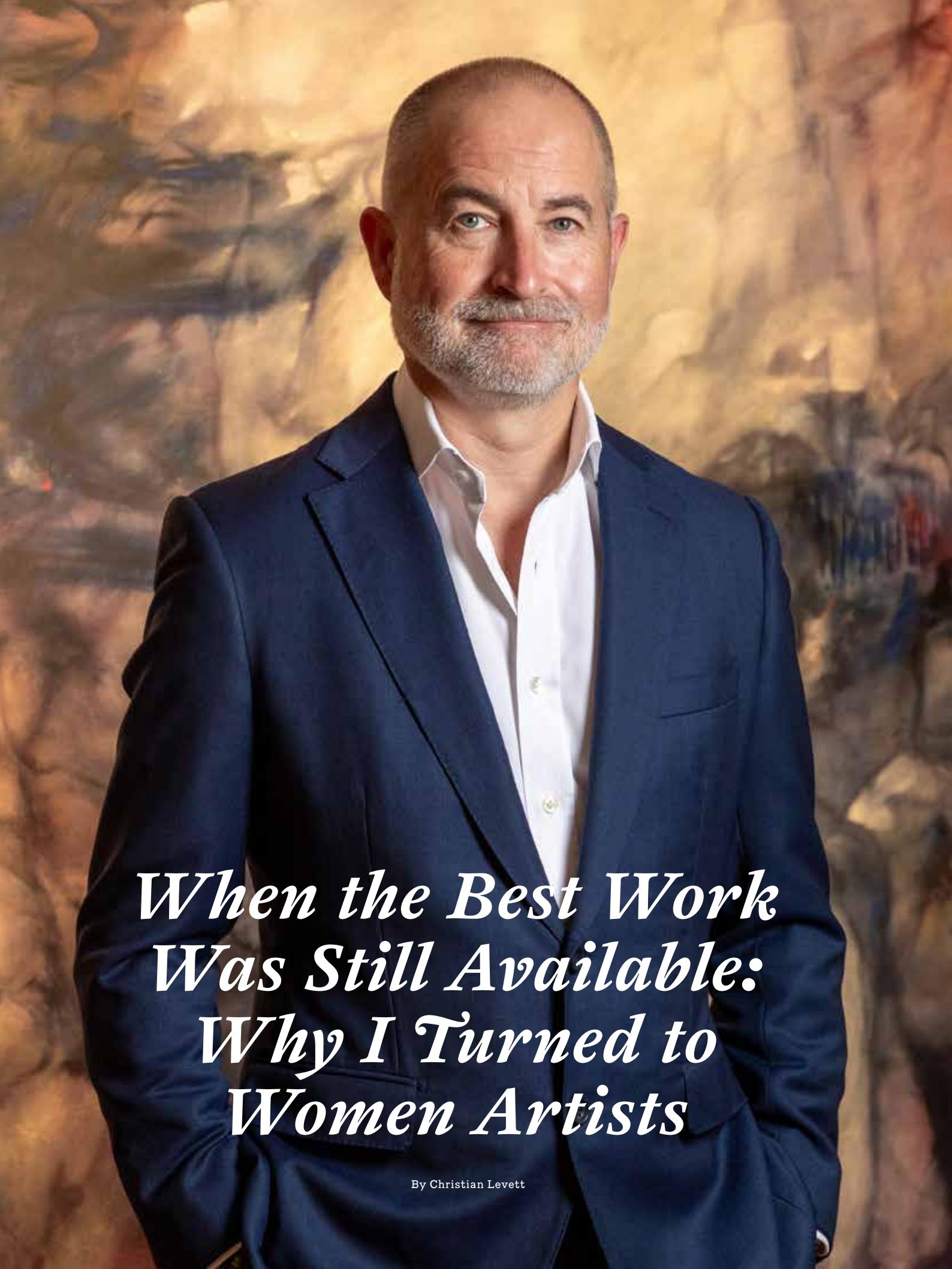
10.

di Biumo, John and Dominique de Menil, Monique Barbier-Mueller or Marion Lambert – these are only some of the names. Spread out across periods and places, they determinedly established a connection between new forays in modern and contemporary art and their own points of view.

As Walter Benjamin, the philosopher and great collector of books, once said: ‘Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector’s passion borders on the chaos of memories. [...] For what else is [a] collection but a disorder to which habit has accommodated itself to such an extent that it can appear as order?’ Indeed, to collect is to create an imaginary universe around oneself. One that protects and explains the world in a way that feels singular, intimate and above all, passionate. ◇







*When the Best Work
Was Still Available:
Why I Turned to
Women Artists*

By Christian Levett



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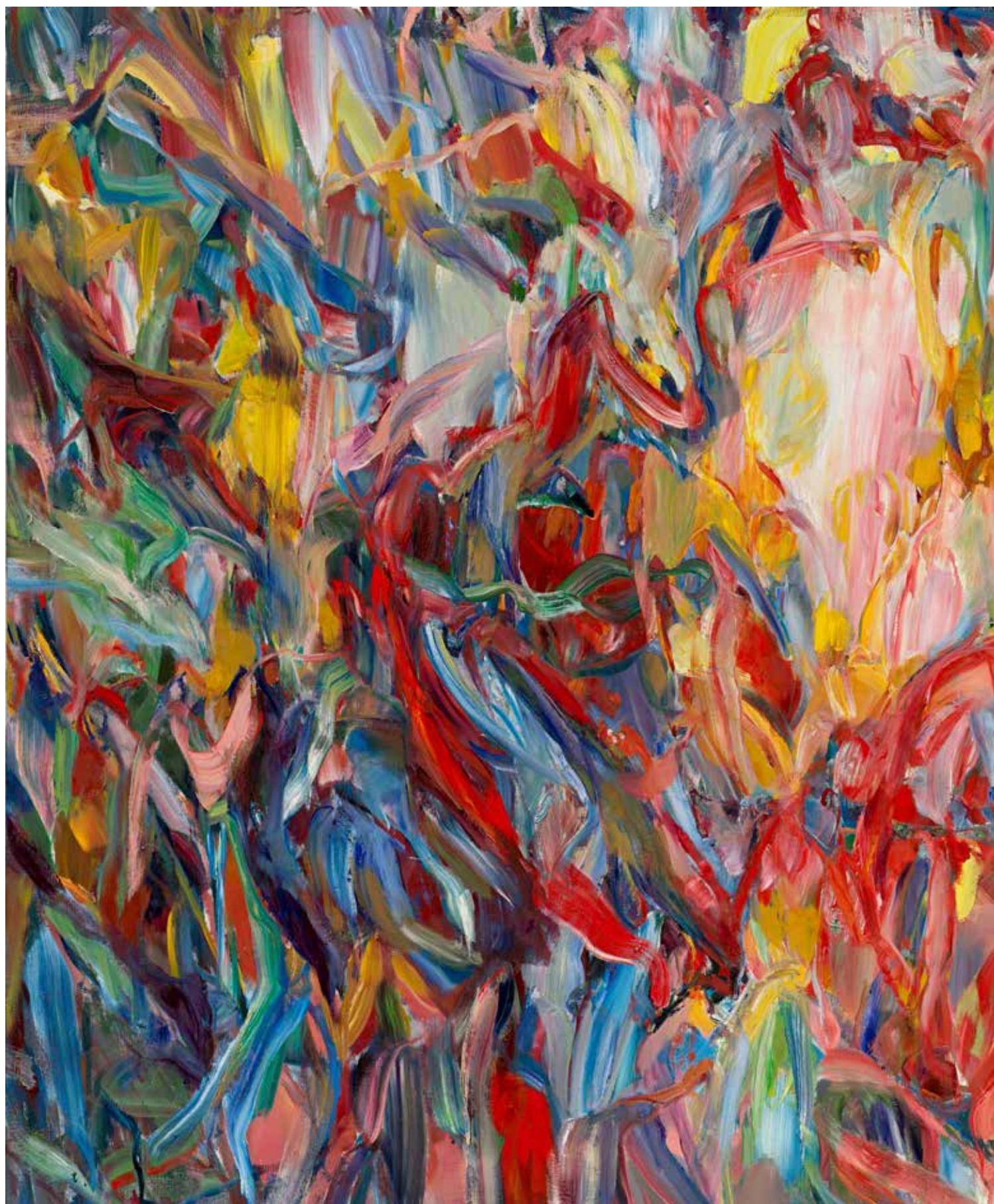
1 — Christian Levett. Photo: Jérôme Kelagopian

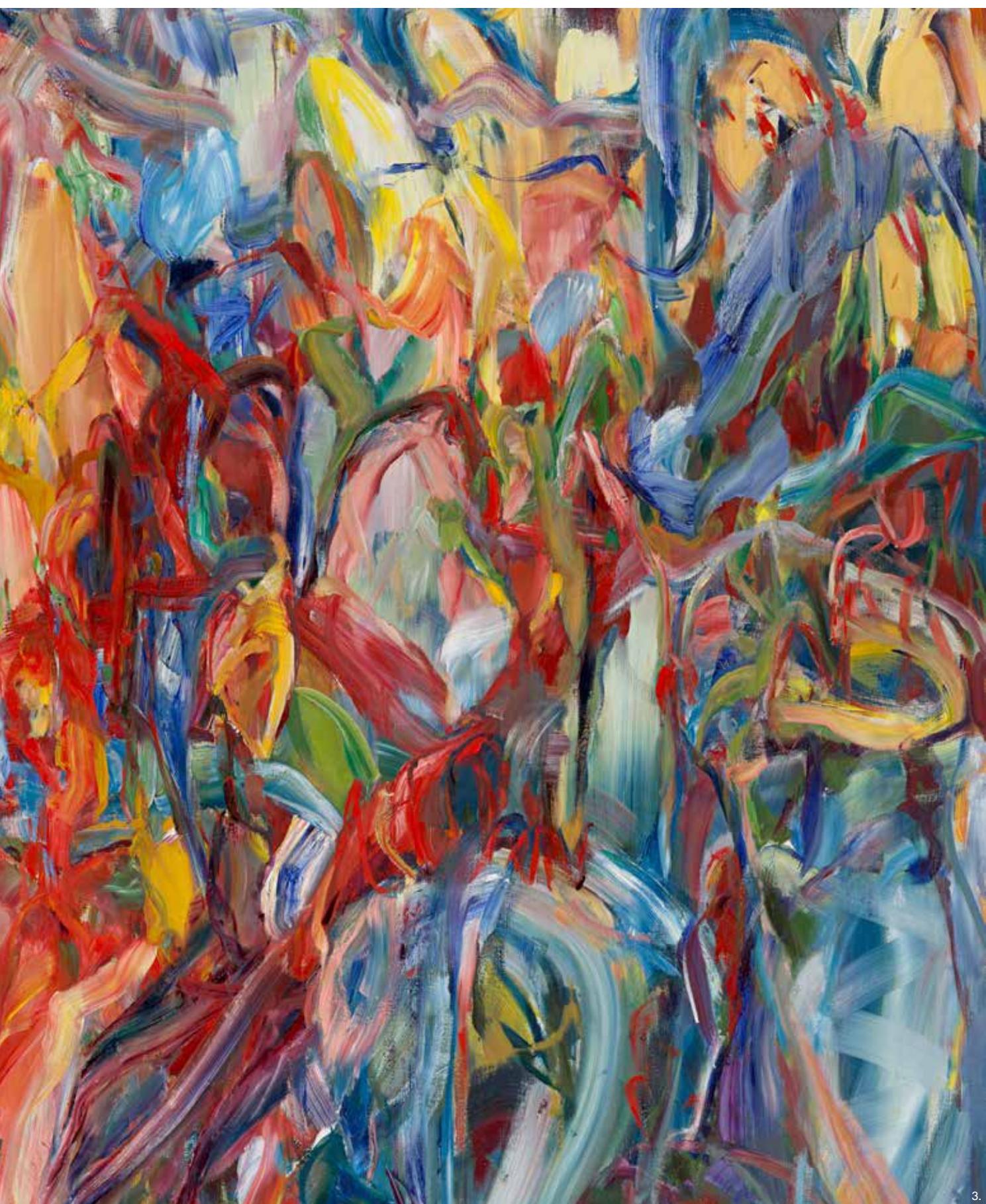
2 — Christian Levett's palazzo in Florence

3 — Sabine Moritz, *Ferragosto II*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. © Sabine Moritz. Courtesy of the Artist

I've been collecting art since I was twenty-five, for around thirty-years. For twenty of those years, I collected old masters, antiquities and classically-inspired modern artworks, which culminated in me opening the Mougin's Museum of Classical Art in France in 2011, to display the collection to the public. The museum won the Apollo Magazine 'new museum of the year award' and was a nominee for 'European Museum of the Year' in 2013. However, in 2014, I decided to change direction and focus entirely on buying modern art, in part because finding great old masters and antiquities with acceptable condition and provenance was becoming increasingly difficult. At first, I was buying artworks by both male and female artists – the gender didn't make any difference to me. I just wanted to buy important works of art by the major artists of 20th century including: Picasso, Basquiat, Keith Haring, Wayne Theibaud, David Smith, early Willem de Kooning, Fontana, Calder, but also Joan Mitchell, Helen Frankenthaler, Cecily Brown and Tracey Emin, for example.

After a couple of years, I began to realise that one could buy works by the greatest women artists of the 20th century, and buy their very best paintings and sculptures in a way that just wasn't possible when sourcing works by men. The male works were either impossible to find, or were between ten times and sometimes a thousand times the price of their female counterparts. I initially focused on Abstract Expressionism. At the time, you could buy an important painting by Lee Krasner and Joan Mitchell for \$3-\$5m, Frankenthaler for \$800,000, 1950's pictures by Elaine de Kooning and Grace Hartigan for just \$300,000 and other pioneering women of the movement such Miriam Schapiro, Ethel Schwabacher, Deborah Remington and Yvonne Thomas, for just \$100,000. I was finding original description labels on the back of paintings from exhibitions at major galleries of the 1940's and 1950's, and which had been exhibited at MoMA and the Guggenheim, New York, during the same period. It occurred to me, that if these pictures, with this kind of proven provenance, were by Franz Klein







4.

4 — Jenny Saville, *Generation*, 2012–2014. Pencil, charcoal and oil on paper laid down on canvas, 199.5 × 151.7 cm (unframed). © Adagp, Paris
 5 — Anna Weyant, *Char*, 2019. Oil on panel, 91.4 × 61 cm. © Anna Weyant

6 — FAMM, Installation view of the gallery of figurative art

or Robert Motherwell they would be \$20m, and if they were by Willem De Kooning or Jackson Pollock they would have been \$100–\$200m. In fact, I was watching fairly insignificant works by Pollock trade through the market at \$50–\$100m, and I quickly realised that for a fraction of the cost of one male picture, I could put together an entire museum-quality collection of absolute top-level Abstract Expressionist art by women artists, and create something unique, educational and of significant art historical importance. It would also work well to aiding the enormous counterbalance between art by men and women.

I was also inspired by the increasing number of museum shows happening around the country: *Modern Women* at MoMA, NY; Elaine de Kooning's 2015 retrospective at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C., and *Women of Abstract Expressionism*, in 2016, at the Denver Art Museum. In 2016. There also fantastic books coming out on the subject such as Mary Gabriel's 2018 "9th Street Women". The research involved was just as exciting as the thrill of the purchase. I was discovering new information all the time. While it wasn't difficult to source individual books about even the lesser-known women







artists of the period, women artists had been completely written out of the generalist art history books of the late 20th century, leading them to drop out of the art history curriculum of schools and colleges, and therefore, seemingly removed from the radar of being exhibited in virtually all public museums. By carefully and meticulously sourcing a large and significantly important collection of the very best female works of the period, it allowed me to curate and publish in this area too. Thus, once again, giving these women artists a voice and a platform to exhibit their works in a way that hadn't happened in many decades, and to really bring them back into the eye of the public.

By the end of 2020 I had amassed around 150 works by female abstract expressionists, including Lee Krasner's *Prophecy*, the work that she was painting just before Jackson Pollock died, and which [it is said] predicted the car accident. It's been in around 70 museum shows and is one of America's most important 20th century canvases. Two major Joan Mitchell paintings in my collection came with stories about them written by Mitchell. I bought a rare portrait of JFK by Elaine de Kooning, as well as her most important and largest ever painting, *The Burghers of Amsterdam Avenue*, which is 4.5m wide.

These important paintings were filling up in storage, so in March 2021, I entirely rehung my palazzo in Florence with works only by women artists and I opened it for private tours for museum patrons, academic and collectors' groups. The numbers of tours exploded, I couldn't believe the popularity of them among leading global curators and researchers, or their enthusiasm for the work that I'd done.

It became clear that the works needed to be made available to the wider public and to be published. I hired Merrell Publishers and engaged the preeminent scholars, Ellen Landau (who wrote Lee Krasner's catalogue *raisonné*) and Joan Marter (editor of the American Women's Art Journal), to write a book called "Abstract Expressionism; The Women", using my collection as the basis for it. On a recommendation from Eleanor Nairne, then curator of The Barbican London, I also contacted Iwona Blazwick OBE, 22 years director of The Whitechapel Gallery, and she and I put together the exhibition "Action, Gesture, Paint: Women Artists and Global Abstraction 1940-1970". The show included 150 paintings, approximately 50 of which came from my collection. It opened in London, in February 2023, and then travelled to The Vincent Van Gogh Foundation in Arles, France, and to the Kunsthalle Bielefeld in Germany. By now I had also been collecting female Impressionist artists, including Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassat, and Surrealists, including Leonor Fini, Leonora Carrington and Dorothea Tanning, where prices were also a small fraction of their male contemporaries, and yet the paintings often much better, rarer and more detailed.

By spring 2023, my collection of women artists had increased to 300-400 works, with a majority of them important oil paintings, so I made a momentous decision to renovate my museum in Mougins and completely reinvent it as FAMM (Femmes

Artistes de la Musée de Mougins), exhibiting only artworks by women. After a 9-month transformation we reopened in June 2024 as a museum showing a history of 160-years of artworks by women, from Impressionism to Contemporary. I also published the FAMM catalogue with Merrell Publishers, written by seven leading female scholars, which doubles as an excellent research book for those investigating the modern history of women artists. The media attention surrounding the opening of the museum was breath-taking. In summer 2024, we were covered multiple times on French TV, including on the 9 o'clock news and the breakfast shows of the major French TV stations. We had multiple-page features that summer in Harpers Bazaar, Marie-Claire and French and Italian Vogue. Fifteen months on, we have now been covered by French TV seven times.

Our loans programme — loaning artworks from my collection to other museum exhibitions around the world, also exploded. I regularly have up to 100 artworks out on loan to other museums. The Abstract Expressionist part of the collection in particular, continues to garner enormous interest. The American Federation for the Arts has arranged a travelling exhibition of the top 50 AbEx pictures from the Levett Collection, which goes to six American museums over two years, and which opened in Kansas in August 2025.

In addition, I just published a third book with Merrell Publishing, "Women Artists in Their Own Words", a book dedicated to 100 women artists, talking about their practice from Impressionism to Contemporary. Reflecting more on the financial side, despite the steeply rising prices for women artists in recent years, they still remain at a small fraction of the price of their male equivalents. The all-time auction record for a male artist (excluding the 'Salvatore Mundi' by Leonardo da Vinci) is approximately \$200m held by Picasso and Warhol, whereas, the all-time record for a female artist is \$40m. There are hundreds of works by male artists that have traded above the record for a female.

For living artists, it is even wider. The record is jointly held by Jeff Koons and David Hockney at around \$90m, but the record for a living woman is \$13.5m, by Marlene Dumas. In every art-history period, except emerging contemporary, records for women artists are anywhere between one fifth and one fifteenth of that of the men. Therefore, the gap is still absolutely gigantic.

In response to this, in summer 2025, I established The Levett Letter and Levett Lounge. A subscription-based art-advisory catering to a community of collectors, exhibitors, dealers and researchers interested in the market for women artists. Each month we take three modern women artists who we think are highly undervalued and go into statistical detail about how many paintings they made, which periods are the most important, what pieces by them are in the market, and the pricing compared to their male and female contemporaries. Using this, readers can gauge a comprehensive idea of their supply versus demand



7.

7 — Louise Bourgeois, *Nature Study*, conceived 1984–1996 and cast in 2007, Gold porcelain, 71.8 x 41.3 x 30.5 cm. © The Easton Foundation|SABAM Belgium 2026

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8 — Exterior view of FAMM

9 — Stacey Gillian Abe, *Whispers Of Sorghum II*, 2023, Acrylic and hand-embroidered details on canvas, 150 x 200 cm (unframed)10 — Jenna Gribbon, *The Mirror is out of the frame*, 2023, Oil on linen, 203.2 x 162.6 cm (unframed). © Adagp, Paris, 2024. Photo: Jérôme Kelagopian

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situation. In addition, we highlight works that we think are highly investable that are coming up at auction, or about to show at art fairs or are in current gallery exhibitions. We also invite people to Florence once a year for a viewing of my collection and also to Mougins to see FAMM and have lunch at my house. There is also a once per month online webinar with me, where you can ask me questions in person about the art market for women artists directly. All subscription fees go to FAMM, therefore aiding the exhibiting and publishing of women artists and their work. We don't accept commissions from auction houses or galleries, thereby maintaining impartial advice.

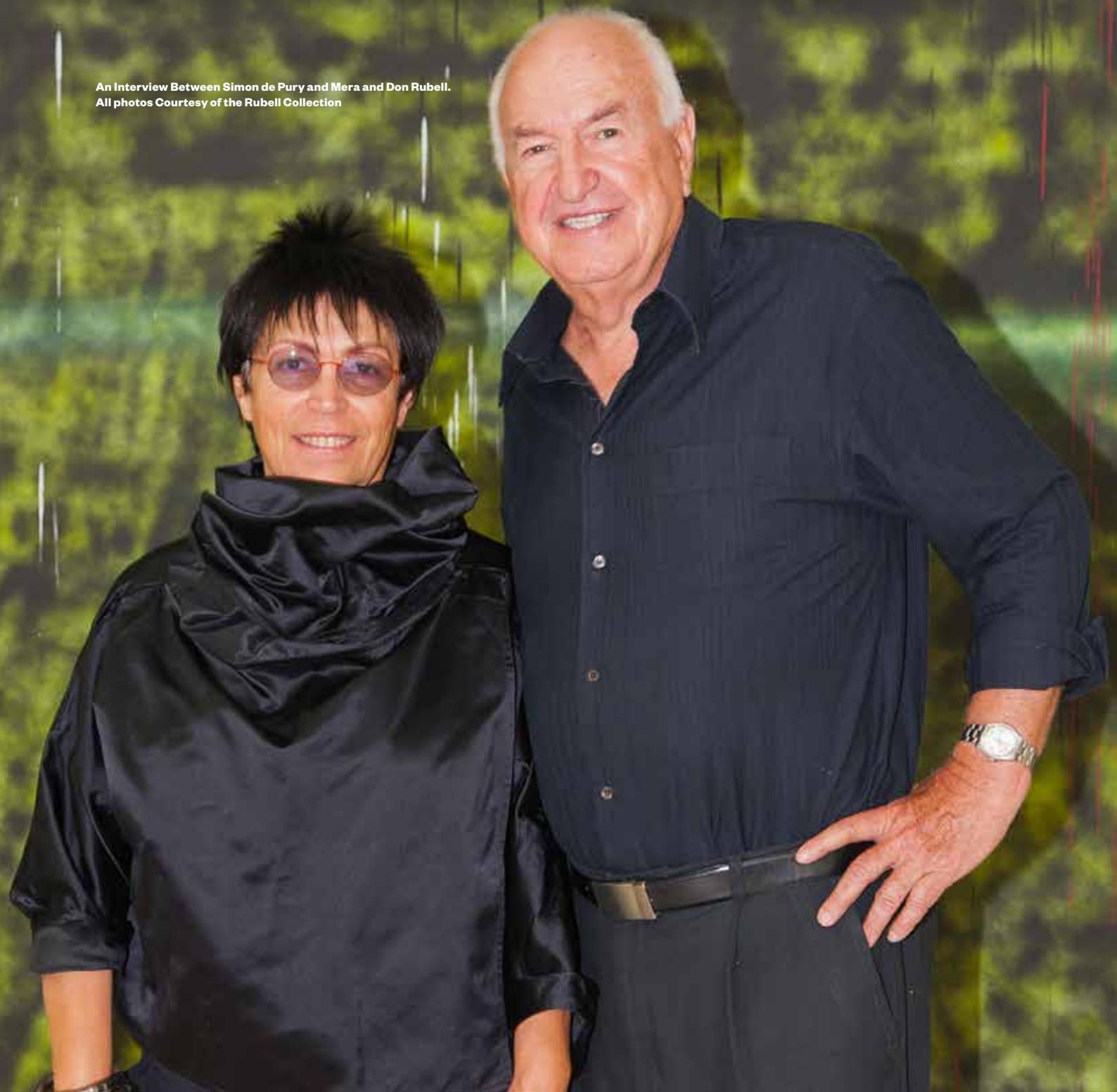
We give a 50% discount to museums, foundations, under 30's and artists. It's ideal for anyone who is serious about collecting, exhibiting and researching art by women. ♦

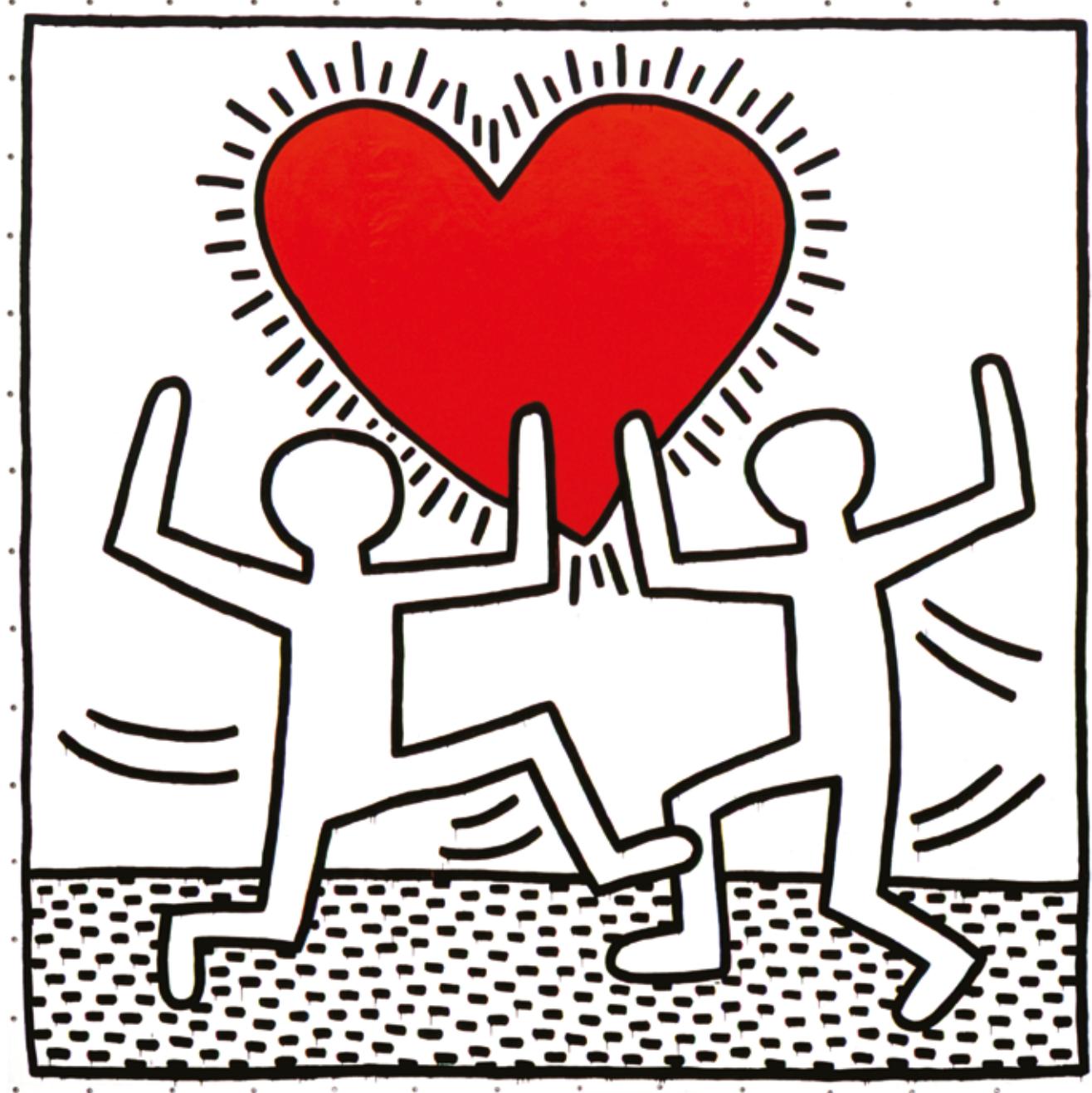
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Collecting as a Family Passion: Mera and Don Rubell

An Interview Between Simon de Pury and Mera and Don Rubell.
All photos Courtesy of the Rubell Collection



1 — Rineke Dijkstra, *Mera and Don Rubell*, 20142 — Keith Haring, *Untitled*, 1982, Acrylic on vinyl tarpaulin, 457 x 457 cm. Acquired in 1982

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Mera Rubell: Before we start, I have to correct you, because we're not just a couple, we are a threesome. Because Jason, when he was about eighteen years old, he became a member of our team. And we actually don't buy any work that the three of us don't agree on. For 37 years he's been an equal partner. But this also

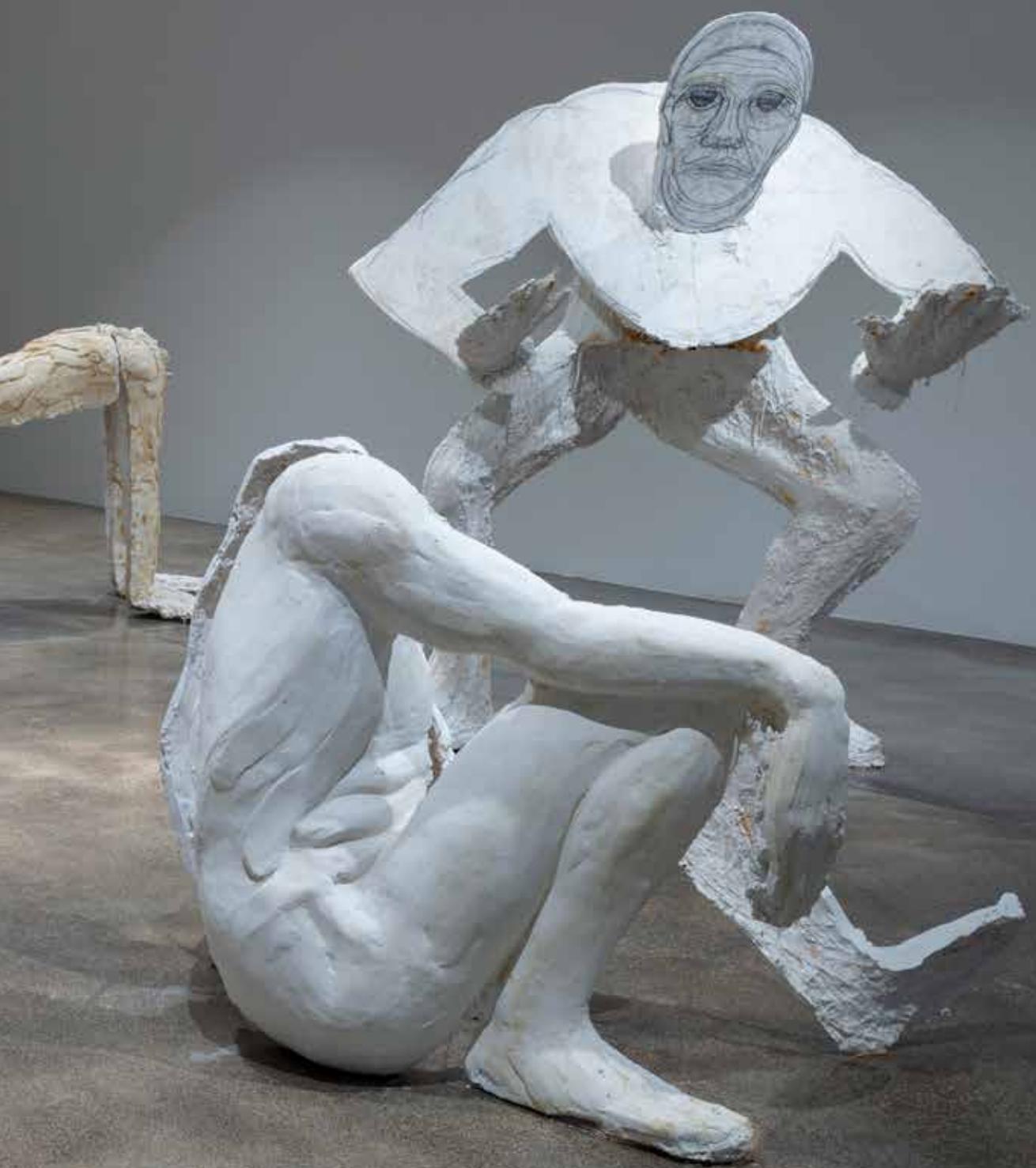
causes a lot more discussion and sometimes a lot of fighting. We have a pact, you know, that the three of us have to convince each other of the work we present. And it creates a momentum and it's a little bit of a competitive sport between the three of us. And so, in the process of the liberation and convincing each other, we

come to a resolution. Also, because we work together, our finances to some extent are pooled.

Don Rubell: And if we can't reach an agreement, we probably shouldn't buy the piece anyway.

M.R.: But also, when you're dealing with a different generation, it's kind of fun. As you





3 — Thomas Houseago, *First Light*, Installation view, Rubell Museum, Miami, December 1, 2025–September 27, 20264 — Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Bird On Money*, 1981, Acrylic and oil on canvas, 167.6 x 228.6 cm. Acquired in 19815 — Cecily Brown, *Service de Luxe*, 1999, Oil on linen, 190.5 x 190.5 cm. Acquired in 1999

know, Jennifer, our daughter, refuses to be on the team. She says, as an artist, that she brings too much criticality to this process. She has chosen to remove herself from that process. And we hope that in the future, we might put a grandchild on the team. I think collecting on consensus in a committee could be extremely compromising because there's so many political agendas, you know. But our agenda has always been very clear – that we want to build the most important collection of our time.

Simon de Pury: It's a wonderful mission.

D.R.: We are collecting for the future. In a sense, we're collecting in an attempt to help define our time.

M.R.: I have to say, I've come to appreciate my husband, and I've never said that before; but the truth of the matter is that my husband was born with a collecting gene. You can identify those people because as young people, or especially my husband,

as a young boy, he collected stamps, he collected baseball cards. He basically has this need to categorise, to just collect... It's a collecting gene and it's compulsive and it's very organisational. This describes the complete opposite person to who I am. And the thing about collectors, and I am generalising, of course, but a lot of collectors who we meet are extremely selfish. It's like, 'it's my bat, it's my ball, it's my game'. So, the fact that Don was by birth a collector and I was not, it's hard for a collector to let in anybody into this private obsession. So, you have to admire couples. It means that unless both of them have that gene, one of them has to be generous. And I think Don was generous from the very beginning.

S.D.P.: That's fascinating.

D.R.: Jason has the ultimate vote because Mera and I always disagree. The only advantage we have in terms of the politics of it is that when we get up every morning,

and I know it's hard to believe that during pretty much the entire marriage of 61 years, we wake up talking about art. And usually it's a conflict.

S.D.P.: I've often found that collectors have a very good flair for artists of their own generation. And then they still have a pretty good flair for artists of the next generation. But very often they no longer have the right flair for the third generation coming. And so, your threesome has a great advantage of being two generations. And hopefully three generations.

M.R.: We all know how seductive art is. And we are starting to see each of grandkids get pulled in. One is interested in the logistics of art. Another one loves the social part of it. We have a granddaughter who's now studying abroad in Barcelona and she's travelling every weekend to galleries all over Europe. She's already addicted. And the other two are now



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working in New York and they're attending all these openings. I mean, only Jason, Don, and I are involved in the museum — of course, with our director, Juan Valadez, who's been with us 27 years.

D.R.: Although the grandchildren don't have a vote, we encourage them to give us their ideas when they go around to galleries or museums. We take their ideas seriously. And we discuss it with them.

M.R.: I would say, if you're interested in communicating with the next generation, art is a great vehicle. If you want to stay connected to people, I would say art is a language that has potential

to keep you connected with the next generation.

D.R.: Our model is much more a European one than an American model. American collectors' collections seem to be single generation. And we were exposed to Europe so early that we really understood the meaning of an ongoing collection and what it means to not only collect art, but to understand the responsibility of the art, to understand following the ideas going forward.

M.R.: And this is very important for us. Europe just has the generational commitment to art. There's something about

going into a home, whether it's England or Cologne or Berlin, and people take pride in having artwork from a generation past, even if it doesn't match the contemporary furniture that they have. It's not an art that matches the couch. It's a piece of art that a great-grandfather left them.

D.R.: Strangely enough, you see this most often in Belgium, where the collections are the least public. But when you visit them and you go into their basement, you see collections that reflect 100–150 years of consecutive collecting. And I think that's a very interesting way to look and think about art.





M.R.: But I'll tell you one thing, people always say to us, you are married 61 years, please tell us one thing that makes this 61-year marriage work. And I've thought a lot about it. And you know what, I have to say, I have to say it's art. For us, it's art.

D.R.: I would have to say it's based on my wife marrying an absolutely wonderful person. [laughs].

M.R.: I have to say that it is the art because it's such an important part of our life. I feel like we talk art, we sleep art, we eat art, meaning it's such a dynamic spice in everything we do in our life.

D.R.: Art doesn't keep you young. It keeps you relevant.

S.D.P.: That's a good quote. I would say it does both.

M.R.: You of all people would understand this because this is how you've lived your life. It's really a dynamic universe that is constantly morphing. And if you don't morph with it, if you're not flexible enough, you can get angry and bitter and say, I don't like this. It's not predictable enough for me. But if you allow yourself to bend with the wind in the art world, it's always interesting.

S.D.P.: I feel we are all possessed by the same passion and obsession. And it's a real privilege because we are never bored. There's no routine. And we always have new things to amaze us. I was trying to think of other multi-generation collections. There is the Barbier Mueller collection that Joseph Mueller started and then his daughter Monique continued. Then the son-in-law Jean-Paul Barbier began as well. And now their three sons each in their own right have done amazing collections. It has become a big family collection. And with you, it's now two to three generations collecting together. Count Panza di Biumo, I think he had six children. But what was interesting with him, his first collection was sensational. Each artist that he chose turned out to be a major artist. And then he did his second collection, some of which is housed in his villa in Varese, which again, he had his finger on the pulse, with all the key artists. And then when he presented his third collection, I believe not a single artist from the third collection has really made it or has really lasted.

When I was a teenager in the 1960s, I was obsessed with, and I still am obsessed with pop music. We were all listening to Jimi Hendrix, to the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, et cetera. Some of these friends still today listen only to



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music of the 60s, maybe 70s. And they say no great music has been done ever since. Whereas I've always continued to follow pop music and rock. And I think music never stops. There's always great music. I think it's a question of mental attitude. And when you have your children and grandchildren and you can follow what makes them tick, then you are much more attuned to the evolution of taste. And you can, in a way, predict how taste will evolve.

D.R.: There's the excitement of discovery, when there is what you might call a lack of information, where you're forced to look at the artwork and to make your own judgment. You know, you cannot look at the Mona Lisa or at a Jackson Pollock and make a judgment because you're so biased by the history that you know about.

M.R.: For us, there's no greater pleasure than thinking that we found another talent. It's like finding the black tulip. And also, it's like a naive faith that there is always going to be new talent. You know, like you have to believe that there

is another Picasso. There is another Matisse. There's another Giacometti.

D.R.: You know, all you have to do is look at the inverse to realize that Leonardo was young once. Everyone was young once. Every great artist was young once. And oftentimes it's the work they produce when they're relatively young. That's the work that becomes the historical definition.

M.R.: I have to share with you a story. Last year we heard that Tracey Emin had this residency complex in Margate, England. And she is such a force and we wanted to know what was compelling her to do a residency. So before going to Art Basel, we decided to take a trip to Margate to see this artist, Vanessa Raw, who Emin is supporting. We flew to London and then totally jetlagged we got on the train to Margate for a few hours. And we arrive to Margate and it turns out that she is not doing a residency but that Tracey Emin is so enthralled with her work that she's given her three galleries inside of this complex to work. We walk in and we were just blown away. It was incredible.



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6 — Yayoi Kusama, *Narcissus Garden*, 1966, Composed of 700 stainless steel spheres. Installation view at the Rubell Museum, Miami
 7 — Yoshitomo Nara, *Sleepless Night (Sitting)*, 1997, Acrylic on canvas, 119.7 x 109.5 cm. Acquired in 1997

8 — The Rubells

9 — Sterling Ruby, Installation view in Collection Highlights, Rubell Museum, Miami

10 — Amoako Boafo, Installation view in Collection Highlights, Rubell Museum, Miami

We literally brought ten paintings on the spot. And later in the year we went to a small farm outside of Pittsburgh to see Seung Ah Paik's studio and it was absolutely incredible.

D.R.: And at the same time, Jason's in Paris and he goes to visit the Crevecoeur Gallery and he sees this young artist named Yu Nishimura. We had never heard of him before. Jason immediately saw the work and sent us images, which were spectacular. We love this part of the adventure, discovering something new

D.R.: Finding talents is so intoxicating. Whether it takes us to Pittsburgh or Margate, the underlying principle is we believe that with a young artist, you should go to where the art is produced. It's not enough to see it in a fair or a gallery. You have to really meet the artist, talk to the artist, learn what are the factors that allow the artist to make work.

M.R.: We have to talk about another important thing happening this year, which you will experience at Art Basel. Thomas Houseago came to visit us a few months ago and we were walking through the

museum and we were talking about how we have a 20-year history together. He was in our Red Eye exhibition 20 years ago and we have continued to support his work. And he said that we should do something around this. And so, it's starting a new series of survey exhibitions, where we will feature artists with whom we have had a long history, such as Richard Prince, Hernan Bas, Oscar Murillo. And each year we'll devote eight galleries to one artist. And that artist this year is Thomas Houseago. I can't even begin to tell you how exciting this is.

D.R.: It's not just about buying the artist at the first show, but artists that we feel that strongly about, we actually commit to for many years.

S.D.P.: You must be very proud of the fact that you are considered to be two seminal tastemakers in the art market, and you have been for many years.

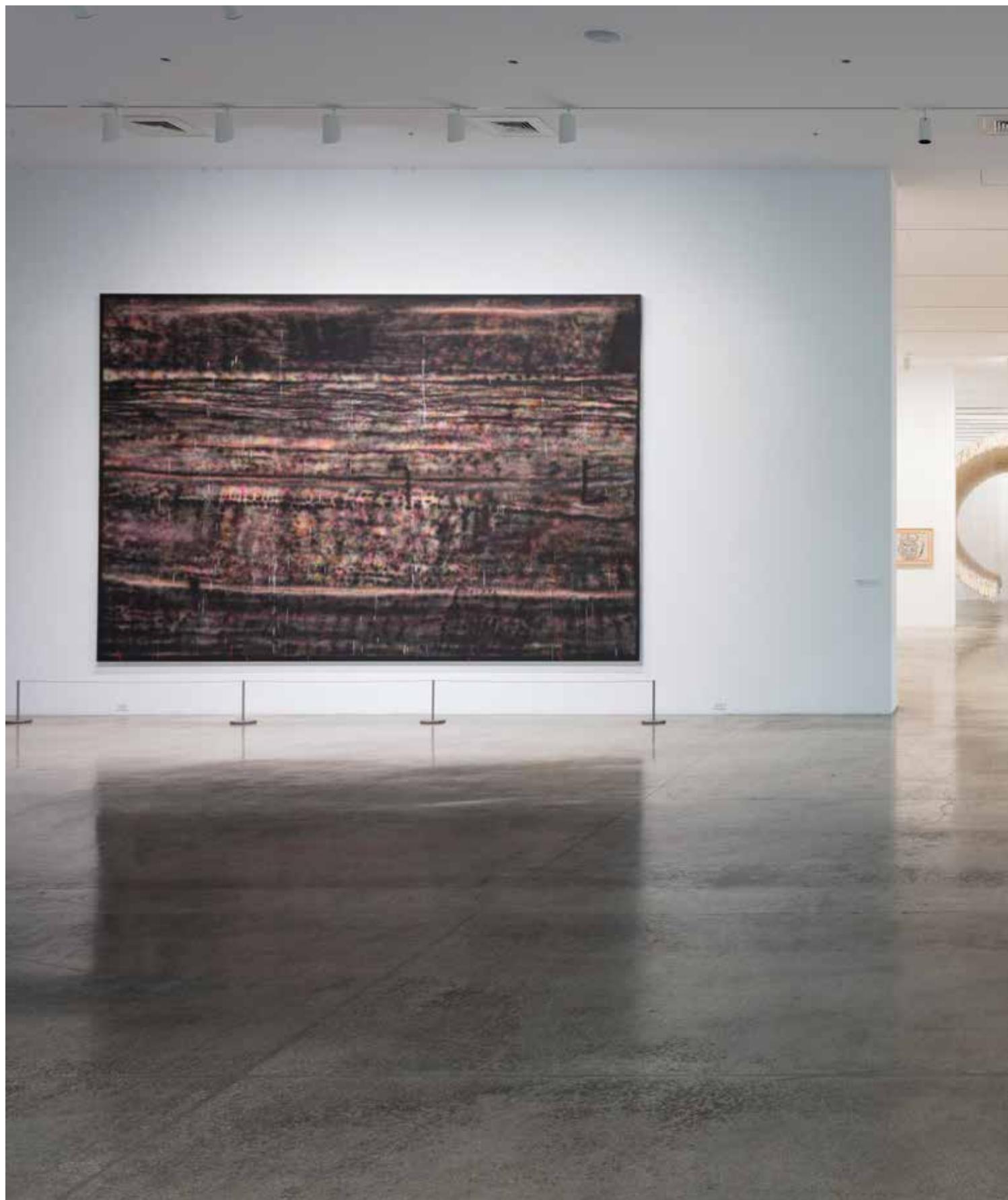
M.R.: It's a big privilege what we do. We have a mission. We run two museums. We have a big responsibility running these public museums. But we don't do it for

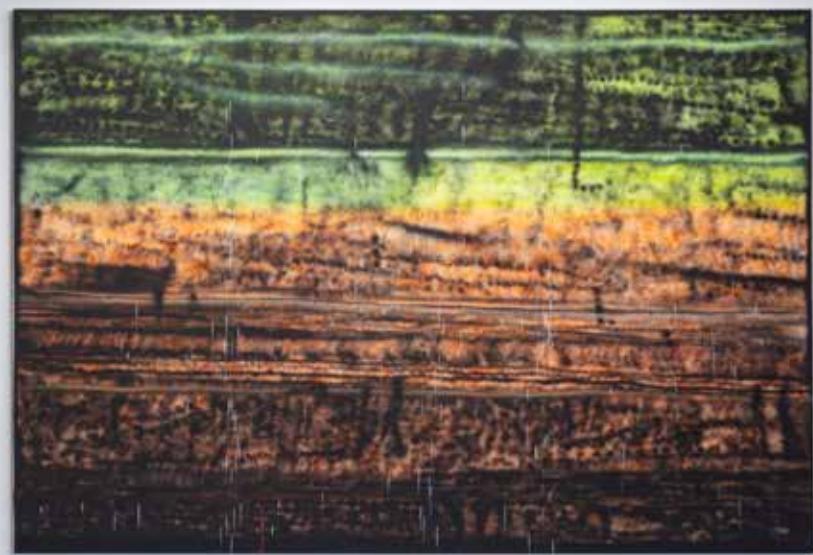
others, we do it because it is a big joy, a big joy to have done this all these years.

D.R.: Collecting art is the ultimate privilege and we are lucky to share it with people. We enjoy it. To see the geniuses of our generations, the ideas, the talent, the genius that arises from the art world is fantastic.

S.D.P.: Is there an ultimate dream that you have not yet realised?

M.R.: Yes, I would say the ultimate dream is beyond us — that it is to leave a legacy that reflects the pleasure and the adventure that we have experienced in our lives. That would be my dream. Art is without emotional limits. In the age of AI, depersonalisation, etc., art still connects you to people intimately. ♦





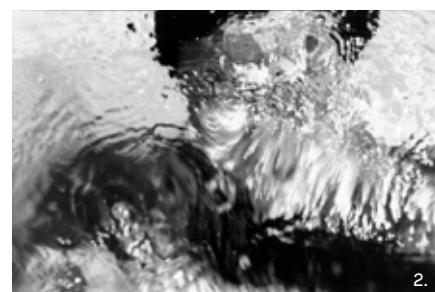






Jean Pigozzi Has His Own Rules

A Conversation Between Simon de Pury and Jean Pigozzi
All photos by Jean Pigozzi



1 — Fireworks, Cap d'Antibes, 2013

2 — Johnny Pigozzi, Self-portraits in the water, 1987

Simon de Pury: There are a few things that I wanted to talk about today. First, I think you are the ultimate "people collector" because you love to entertain and you have a gift for bringing interesting people together and from all different worlds. And people love coming to your place because they know that they will meet people who they would never meet otherwise. And the other thing I would love to talk about is how you are essentially the inventor of the selfie; you are really the precursor of this selfie culture we have today. And then, of course, your incredible collection.

Jean Pigozzi: Let's start with the first, about people. I think that a lot of hosts make a mistake. They think, 'oh my dentist

is coming for lunch, so we should invite other dentists and their office patients'. Or, 'today we have a painter coming, so we should have other painters and some collectors', but I think that's a complete mistake because if you're a dentist all day long, you are always in that world and you probably want to meet a painter or a pilot. People have no interest in meeting other people who are in their same profession. And I think a lot of people, for example the upper-upper class in England, they only want to meet people who speak about shooting and things like that. And they say, 'oh my God, if Pigozzi brings one of his African artists here, what are we going to talk to him about? This guy doesn't know anything about shooting or anything about the queen'. And that's

completely wrong because usually when you bring somebody completely different to a dinner, people are very interested in this new person. So, I think the secret for a good party is really to mix people. And age is absolutely very important in that mix. When I was in my twenties, I was very close with Gianni Agnelli, and I never understood why at 75, he hung around with his young nephews and his friends. Now that I'm 73, I am much more interested in meeting people in their twenties than people who are my age. Because I remember when I was young, we used to talk about hedge funds and girls, and now old people, they speak about taxes and what kind of doctors they're visiting. So, I think that mixing people is essential.

Now let's talk about collecting. I am incredibly focused on my collection. When I started, I had a collection like a rich dentist from Memphis; I had a little Clemente, I had a little Warhol, a little Sol Le Witt; and then I met Charles Saatchi and he said there are a thousand hedge fund guys who have better collections than mine, and that it was the wrong way to do it. The right way to collect is to specialise in something. And when you find an artist that you like, you have to buy as many as possible. If you're interested in Picasso, very few people have more than two or three Picassos. But if you find some young artists, the prices are lower and you can usually buy quite a few of them. So that's the advice that I would give to people starting to collect. And they should go to as many museums as possible. They



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3 — The Edge, Michael Hutchence and Bono, 1994
 4 — Uma Thurman, 2015
 5 — Helmut Newton and Mick Jagger, 1990
 6 — Akiyoshi Mishima, Don Queen, 2008

should go to as many fairs as possible. They should go to as many galleries as possible. Some people think, 'oh, I'm going to make money with my collection'. I never thought about that. And obviously I started 35 years ago. If I bought two Basquiat's and two Warhol's, my collection would be worth more than a hundred million dollars now, or much more if they were good. But I didn't do that. I bought African art. I'm not sure what the value of my collection is today, but it has been shown all around the world from the Guggenheim to the MoMA, to the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris. I think more than a million people have seen my collection. If I had one Warhol and two Basquiat's, nobody would be interested. I have at least 15 books on my collection. It has been a hundred times



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7-9 — Yasuyuki Nishio, *Fight in the Course of Justice*, 2007

more interesting putting my collection together than walking up and down Madison Avenue with a big check book and buying expensive paintings. But if you want to build a collection, it's another thing. You could have 20 paintings and try to make your collection better and better. It is not a bad thing if you can do it that way. Or, you are hoarder like me, and you end up with more than 10,000 pieces of art. There's alcohol anonymous, there's narcotics anonymous. They haven't started collectors anonymous but I should go there immediately because that's my problem.

S.D.P: We all need to join.

J.P.: And then about eight or nine years ago, I said, well, the African collection is great, but I want to try something else. I started to look at others things and I started a collection of very young Japanese artists. I met Takashi Murakami in New York and he told me about Geisai, an event that he used to

organise. He would rent a huge place, let's say the size of an American football field, and people would rent 10 square meters for a hundred dollars and they could show whatever they want. Some people showed knitting, some showed wood carving, and some people show painting. I walked around and there must have been, I don't know, 400 people there. And he asked me to be on the jury but I said no because then I couldn't buy anything. I ended up buying the artist who received the second price and the one who received the ninth price, but without knowing. And that was a really fun experience. And I have a rule for that collection. The artist has to be Japanese, live in Japan and born after 1985, and now I moved it to 1990. And then for my African collection, I also had a rule. They had to be black, they had to be alive, and they had to live in Africa. I think when you collect, you have to have rules of some kind – maybe its artists who make only

pink paintings or of horses, whatever, but you have to have some kind of rule. I like when people are obsessed by something. But if you have Renoir, a Sol Le Witt and Clyfford Still, for me, it doesn't really work.

Simon de Pury: I've never seen your Japanese collection. I've seen parts of your African collection in museums all over the world... have you exhibited the Japanese work before?

Jean Pigozzi: I have done two shows – one was in Grenoble and one was at the Garage in Moscow, and it was called *Japan-Congo*. Carsten Höller did the exhibition design and built two semicircles for the installation and in one side we put the work from the Congo and the other side we put the work from Japan. And in the semicircle, there was a corridor, and the interesting thing was that at night, somebody could have moved a few of the Japanese works into the Congo and



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10 — Larry Gagosian and Helmut Newton, Antibes, 1991
11 — Claudia Goutier, Antibes, 1986
12 — Michael Douglas, Antibes, 1990
13 — Elisa, Jean Pigozzi & Alexia Niedzielski, Antibes, 2013
14 — Tierney Gearon, Antibes, 1988



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15 — Kaori Kobayashi, *The Room with Entrance*, 2008
 16 — Akiyoshi Mishima, *Yao Robinson*, 2009

vice versa, and very few people would know. Obviously if it's some young geisha running in the field, ok that is clearly Japanese, but otherwise, you could have moved them around and people would not have known.

But let me be very honest with you, my African collection has been a huge success. As I mentioned, more than one million people have seen the work. I'm lending thirteen pieces by two artists for an exhibition at the next Biennale, and I have a show opening on the 9th of December at the MoMA in New York, which is a studio photography in the fifties and sixties. Two weeks ago, I opened a huge show of Seydou Keita at the

Brooklyn Museum. But the Japanese collection is still less known or appreciated.

S.D.P.: I can't wait to see it and it will happen because the knowledge about contemporary art in Japan is limited to the giants such as Murakami, Yoshimoto Nara and Yayoi Kusama.

J.P.: I discovered two things. First of all, in Japan, they like old people. If you're less than 70, they don't even talk to you. The second thing I discovered is that very few people collect, because if you rent an apartment and you make a hole in the wall to hang a painting, when you move from the apartment, you have to paint back your entire wall. So, people

buy one painting, they put it there, and then it stays for the next 20-years. That's the one painting they have. It is not like in Europe or the United States where people move things around and try different things. And there are only a few Japanese collectors who are interested in contemporary Japanese art. They bought Impressionists and Pop Art twenty-thirty years ago but they don't really buy Japanese artists, although it is starting slowly.

S.D.P.: Well, I hope I can help bring about an exhibition because that definitely needs to be seen. That's fascinating. And tell us about the selfie.



J.P.: Photography is also incredibly important in my life. In addition to being dyslexic, which makes me more visual, at a very young age, around nine, my father gave me a little brownie camera and I started taking pictures. And then he gave me, when I was eleven, his old Leica, which was really difficult to use, but I started taking pictures with it. And then sadly, my father died when I was twelve, so I inherited his Leica, an M something, and then I could really take pictures. I've taken more than a million pictures in my life and my goal is to try to take one good picture a month. So that's twelve good pictures a year. This year I have taken, I think 60,000 pictures. We are

in November, so we should have 12 good pictures this year. Obviously, somebody like Richard Avedon or Robert Frank or Cartier Bresson would do better than just one good picture a month. They would take a good picture a week. I'm still not there, but I'm trying.

Now the invention of selfie. When I was studying at Harvard, there was a thing that was called the Hasty Pudding Club or something. They would invite a movie star every year and that year, in 1972, it was Faye Dunaway. In those days, people would ask celebrities for autographs. And I said, well, the autograph is not of interest, it could be a fake autograph of Faye Dunaway, but if I take a picture of her next

to me, it's very difficult to make a fake. You could with A.I., but in 1972, there was no A.I. So, I took it and the picture came out well. And then I thought, okay, I'm going to do that. And I took hundreds and hundreds of pictures of movie stars, and my friends and people I meet in the street. So the selfie has been great, but I take pictures all the time. I'm really obsessed by taking pictures. ♦

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Private Views

Inside the Homes of Artists and Dealers

By Tiqui Atencio Demirdjian. All photos by Jean-François Jaussaud

All of the photographs included in this article appeared in either:
For Art's Sake: Inside the Homes of Art Dealers or Inside the Homes of Artists
By Tiqui Atencio Demirdjian. Photos by Jean-François Jaussaud. Published by Rizzoli



3.

1 — The entrance hall of Ivor Braka's home features a Tracey Emin neon, *I could have really loved you*, from 2007 above a metal table by Christopher Dresser. Over the door into the library hangs a masonic-inspired sign for the Sun Fire Office, the oldest insurance company in the world

2 — An untitled work by Richard Prince from 2011 hangs over the mantel of Tobias Meyer and Mark Fletcher's home, with Matthew Barney's *RIVER ROUGE: Coming Forth of the Seed of Horus* and Urs Fischer's *Untitled (bird with balanced egg)*, from the same year. An undated Kawari River hook figure is on the left

3 — Francesco Vezzoli's *Enjoy the New Fragrance (Sonia Delaunay for Greed)*, 2009 which hangs above a pair of 1968 Tulu chairs by Kazuhide Takahama and a 2000 D'e-Light table lamp by Philippe Starck for Flos. Garibaldi vases are on the shelves

I have always been fascinated by the different places and ways people choose to live. Somebody's home—the house itself, but also how it has been designed, decorated, and furnished—reveals so much about them as a person: their tastes and interests, their loves and passions, their histories and aspirations. Being invited into the home of someone else, especially for the first time, is to take an intimate and privileged look inside their world, to see how they view themselves and their relationships with others. As a lifelong collector of art, I have been fortunate to have been invited into the homes of many artists, dealers, and fellow collectors over the years. Each time was an eye-opening experience. I never knew what to expect, but always looked forward to being surprised. I realized that I was not alone in having this natural curiosity and started to wonder if there might be a book in the subject. As it turns out, there is more than one. My interest in other people's homes has led me to produce two interiors books so far, with a third in the works. All three volumes have grown out of

research I did for my very first book, *Could Have, Would Have, Should Have*, which was published in 2016. This insider's view took the reader inside the world of the art collector, and was based on interviews I had conducted with more than one hundred individuals involved in the buying and selling of art. Naturally, art dealers and artists were among them, and our conversations led to the choice of my interiors books. The first, on the homes of art dealers, came out in late 2020; the second, on artists' homes, came out four years later (the third will be on the homes of collectors). I was curious not only to see where and how the individuals and couples I chose to be in the books lived. Many of them were, like me, committed collectors in their own right, extending their professional interests and expertise into the domestic sphere. I wanted to understand what it meant to spend one's whole life surrounded by and devoted to art, both at work and at home. And as a collector, I wanted to know more about where their pleasures of collecting came from.



4.

4 — Dominique Lévy's home features Louise Bourgeois's *My Inner Life* (#5) from 2008 hangs behind a Jean Royère chair. The lamp is by Jean Prouvé

5 — Glenn Brown, A guest room boasts a William and Mary- style damask-covered four-poster bed, a George I gilt mirror, an eighteenth-century English walnut tallboy, other period furniture, and a late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century Neapolitan painting above the fireplace

By doing these books, I have seen for myself the myriad ways that artists and dealers choose to live with art. Just as they are very different as characters, their homes reflect a similar diversity. Some of the dealers see their houses as extensions of their professional worlds, while others view their homes as refuges from working life. In this way, some of the residences I featured were quasi public spaces, essentially showcases for their owners' business activities; others were only partially so, while the rest were entirely private, seen by no one but family and close friends.

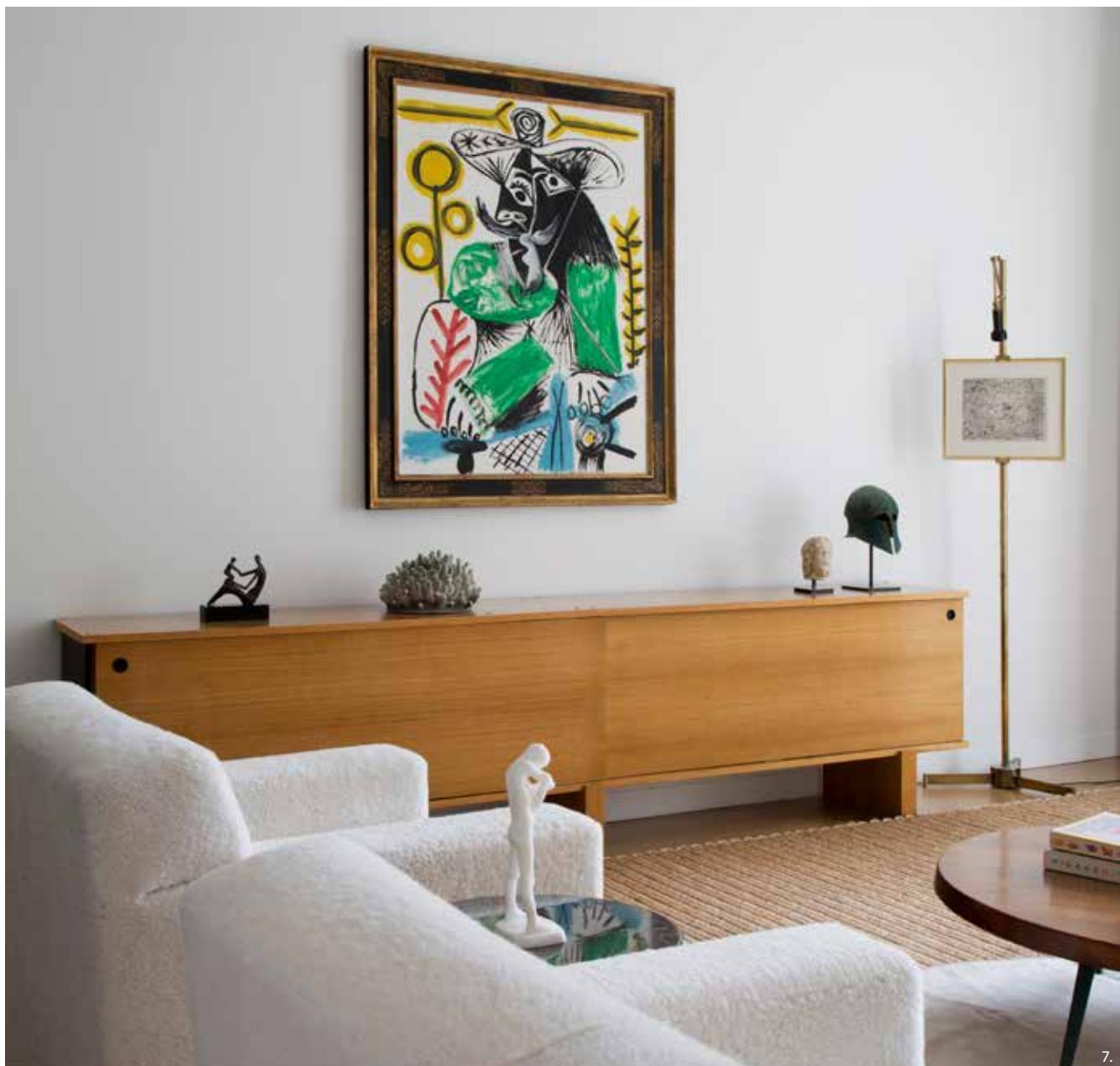
Most of the dealers I selected for the first book lived with art made by the artists whom they represent. Sometimes they did so because the works are gifts from the artists themselves and so their collection is like an

evolving history of a set of friendships, the record of a journey through life. Others wished to support their artists in a personal capacity or simply because they love the work. Some wanted to lead by example, so to speak, practicing what they preach to their clients by acquiring work from their stable of artists for their own private collections. On the other hand, there are dealers I interviewed who believed just as passionately that they cannot live with the work of their own gallery artists, because to choose one over another is to show favoritism, an impossible dilemma as any parent would say of their children. They might also feel a conflict of interest when they would prefer to hold on to an admired work for themselves, rather than sell it to somebody else.









7.

6 — A colorful neon installation by Jason Rhoades grabs the attention in the parlor of the principal room in which David Zwirner and his family host their parties
 7 — Pablo Picasso's *Homme assis* from 1969 is a focal point of one wall of the seating area of Christophe Van de Weghe's library. The Charlotte Perriand cabinet also carries Henry Moore's bronze *Mother with Child on Knee* from 1956 and Eva Zethraeus's porcelain *White-tipped Coral Mound* from 2016.

George Minne's marble *Le Petit blessé* from 1898 is on a table between a pair of Jean-Michel Frank sheepskin armchairs, while Jean Dubuffet's work

on paper *Sol* (Earth) from 1960 is displayed on a bronze Arredoluce easel lamp

8 — Pae White's *Prodigal Sun and the Other Brother* (chandelier) from 2004 hangs from Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn's living-room ceiling. The space also features, among several works, Richard Prince's *Inquisition* of 2008 on the wall and, in front, a c. 1969 chair by Diego Giacometti and Mark Grotjahn's *Untitled (Black and Brown Stack and Reversed Mask M4/5.e)* from 2011. In the corner is Magdalene Odundo's *Asymmetrical Betu III* from 2010 and on the right is Maria Pergay's *Ribbon Pouf Bronze* of 2007

There was a similar diversity of motives and ambitions for the artists I featured in the second book—not surprising, given the range of personalities, creative talents, and cultural backgrounds represented. While the Cuban artist Carlos Garaicoa told me that all artists always need space, and can never have enough of it, what was striking is that all of the individuals and couples in my book were looking for very different kinds of domestic spaces and for

very different reasons. Some live and work at home, with their studio within or attached to their residence. William Kentridge in Johannesburg and Raqib Shaw in London can be counted among this group. A few, such as Guillermo Kuitca in Buenos Aires, see no distinction between the two spheres, considering them to be one continuous entity. Indeed, even if the principal workspace is elsewhere, most artists also maintain a small studio at home.







10.

9 — Franz West's *Doku* chairs add vibrancy to a second dining room in David Zwirner's home while Marlène Dumas's striking watercolor portraits watch over the space and each other

10 — Glenn Brown, Almost all of the bathroom fittings, including the striking "ribcage" shower in the main bathroom, are freestanding to respect the wood paneling in the rooms and so they can be removed at a later stage without damaging the fabric of the house

On the other hand, there are several artists, among them the Spanish sculptor David Rodríguez Caballero, who see their home as an escape from the pressures of work, who use it as a space in which to switch off and decompress—perhaps even to cut themselves off from the rest of the world in their own private bubble. In a similar way, there are artists in the book who cannot have their own work on their walls at home. As one said

to me, "I have enough of that at the studio every day." They may choose instead to live with art by earlier artists who have inspired them; many spoke of exchanging or receiving as gifts works from other artists; more still said they bought to help their colleagues, a reminder of the strong sense of friendship, community, and mutual support with which artists today exist.



11.

11 — Guillermo Kuitca's former painting studio, complete with working sink, which he painted with his distinctive "cubistoid" patterns in 2013 and subsequently converted into a living area and library

The variety in the two books also extends to the properties. Among the dealers' homes that I covered were an iconic 1930s New York penthouse, a mid-century Neutra house in Los Angeles, a Victorian-era coaching inn in the Scottish Highlands, a seventeenth-century schloss outside the Austrian city of Salzburg, and a medieval castle in the Belgian countryside. Meanwhile in the artists' book, there was perhaps an ever greater variety, with properties across five continents, from a Rio de Janeiro

apartment and ultra-modern property near New Delhi to a Georgian manor in the English countryside and a magnificent ancient castle in the Swiss Alps. There were custom-built spaces in the south of France and São Paulo alongside several remarkable conversions, including a derelict sausage factory in London, a former old Masonic lodge in New York, and a jewelry manufactory in Paris. William Kentridge's Arts and Crafts style house in Johannesburg has been the family home for generations.



12.

12 — In the office space of Christophe Van de Weghe's New York home, a Gino Sarfatti spiral chandelier from c. 1950 hangs above a 1951 Jean Prouvé table and a Jules Leleu armchair from c. 1955. Andy Warhol's 1973 portrait of Marella Agnelli is in the background

Many of these homes have been created with the aid of architects, interior designers, and curators, while others are personal expressions designed solely by their owners. For some, the most important consideration might have been to make a setting for the display of art, whereas for others—the artist couple Rashid Johnson and Sheree Hovsepian, for example—it was to create a haven of comfort and love for one's family. The dealers, in particular, often employed specialists to help realize their dream

abode, whereas the artists, it may not surprise you to learn, usually preferred to maintain aesthetic control of any work. Tracey Emin, for example, speaking about her London Georgian town house, expressed shock at the thought that she, an artist, would want someone else like an architect or interior designer to impose their ideas on her living space. It was, as a result, all her own vision. "I think if I had been more academic, I might have been an architect," she told me.



13.

13 — Brett Gorvy and Amy Gold's dining room includes Hiroshi Sugimoto's haunting monochrome seascape *Sea of Japan*, 1996 a table by Hugues Chevalier from StudioM, a set of Mattaliano chairs, and a light by Serge Mouille. To the left of the Sugimoto are three collages by Lygia Clark from 1957, and to the right are a group of sixteen elements from Lygia Pape's acrylic on wood *Night and Day Book* from 1963–76. Details of Joseph Kosuth's seven-part *One and Seven – Description, II* from 1965 can be seen on the floor

Equally fascinating is the extent to which a particular home reflects its owner as an artist. Glenn Brown, for example, spoke about how his attention to detail in his period restoration of an English country house mirrors his obsessive focus in his delicate and precise paintings. Some consciously take this further by making their homes effectively an extension of their work. Raqib Shaw, for instance, has created an exotic oasis in urban south London that matches the opulence of his rich and exuberant paintings, which in turn often depict features of his domestic space. Similarly,

painter Claire Tabouret speaks about how walking into her colorful Los Angeles house is like stepping into one of her pictures.

It does not matter how grand or how modest the particular house or apartment might be, each time it is an invitation to have a privileged view inside not only the life of the owner in question, but also their mind, some might even say their soul. One sees how they live day to day, but also their likes and dislikes, their sensibilities, and through these insights, one can gain a better understanding of their work.



14.

14 — Tracey Emin. Another upstairs sitting room has Tracey's gouache on paper, *And There is Love*, and small acrylic-on- canvas *Cecily, Me, My Mum and Jesus*, both from 2017, and a minimal amount of furniture, including an antique chest and chair and contemporary red-velvet armchairs

For myself, going into these houses, most of which had not been seen by the wider public before, has been inspirational in a very direct and personal way. For it has helped to shape my own collecting activities. The light-filled, open-plan Brussels apartment of the art dealer Xavier Hufkens and ceramics and glass expert Pierre Marie Giraud oozes stylish cool. Everywhere you look there is an exquisite piece of modernist furniture alongside work by contemporary painters and Japanese makers. I was so entranced by one juxtaposition that I saw there—a suite of drawings by Louise

Bourgeois, whose work I knew beforehand, beside glass pieces by Ritsue Mishima, with whom I was not yet familiar—that I soon began to collect both artists myself. As a collector, it is always an enriching experience to see inside the homes of such talented, creative, and knowledgeable people. As Pierre Marie Giraud told me when I visited the couple's home, "It's a community: artists, collectors, dealers. Collecting is not only about buying and selling. It's about exchanging experience, knowledge, passions." ◇



15.

15 — The lobby area outside the Drawing Room of Iwan and Manuela Wirth's Scottish Highland's home includes Lucian Freud's *Annie*, a painting of the artist's eldest daughter from 1962, which hangs above a sofa upholstered in William Morris "Acanthus" print



16.

16 — Maurizio Cattelan. This is one of the artist's and the vacuum cleaner's least favorite spots in the house

A photograph of a man and a woman in an art-filled room. The man, on the left, is seated in a dark armchair, wearing a dark green turtleneck sweater. He has a white beard and is looking directly at the camera. The woman, on the right, is standing, wearing a dark, long-sleeved dress. She has long dark hair and is also looking at the camera. The background is filled with shelves and walls covered in various artworks, including paintings and books. The lighting is soft, creating a warm atmosphere.

Art Collecting Becomes a Self-Portrait

All photos by Elliott Power



2.

1 — Clio and Michael Peppiatt

2 — Pietà, c1500, polychrome wood, Southern Germany

Clio Peppiatt talks with her father Michael Peppiatt, the English art historian, critic and curator, about his eclectic art collection and his relationship with artists over the years.

Clio Peppiatt: I was thinking back to a conversation we had recently about collecting. I'm getting to a stage in my life where I would like to start collecting and what I liked about the conversation we had is that you told me, 'don't go and collect wine or watches, or even art because, those things are not your speciality. Focus on something you already love, something you understand, and also something that will give you the possibility of meeting other interesting people who share that interest'. So, with me being very much at the start of a collecting journey, it would be really nice to speak to you about how your collection started. How did it all begin?

Michael Peppiatt: I've never thought of myself as a 'collector', and it's never been a deliberate or even a conscious thing, because I don't think I'm an acquisitive kind of person. I used to buy a lot of shirts, more than I needed, because I found looking at them, all crisp in their cellophane, very reassuring, because I knew I would wear

them one day. But apart from that, I am not acquisitive. What happened was that when I started writing about art, I was very young, I started when I was about twenty, as an art critic for *The Observer* in London in the early 1960s and then I went to Paris and I worked for a sort of glossy lifestyle magazine called *Réalités*. I also began to review exhibitions and do interviews with artists for a range of other newspapers and magazines, mainly in America.

A bit later I started writing for the more serious *Art International*, magazine which as you know we eventually bought and relaunched from Paris. So, I came into contact with a lot of artists because I used to go and see dozens of shows, mainly in Paris, and I'd meet the artists and we'd chat or I'd do an interview with them and then, sometimes, I was lucky enough to be given a work by the artist.

These were not particularly famous or even madly ambitious artists, but they'd sort of say, 'well, come to the studio and

choose something you like', and that of course was a fascinating experience in itself, entering another person's universe, seeing how they worked and all the materials and techniques they used to make their art. And sometimes the artist would just give me something or ask me to choose a work, often in lieu of payment, you know, so the whole thing became just a sort of exchange, like giving a leg of lamb or a pair of shoes for a barrel of beer. I'd do the writing or the interviewing or the reviewing and rather than get cash I'd get a painting or a small sculpture or something, and occasionally, if I was really lucky I'd get both money and a work which was even better, but I did particularly like receiving things because it made my life more interesting. And, like anyone else, I had walls to put these things on and I didn't like the idea of living in bare rooms. And every now and then I would fall in love with a particular combination, like a craggy Alberto Giacometti sculpture on



3.

3 — Clio and Michael Peppiatt
 4 — John Davies: *Painted Head*, 1980

a table designed by his brother, Diego, or a dramatic Old Master painting flanked by the drawings that had been done in preparation for it.

I also started curating exhibitions, particularly from the School of London painters, and a close friend of mine at the time who collected said, 'If you want people to take these artists seriously, you should put your money where your mouth is and buy one of their works.' Of course I didn't have any money at the time but I scraped enough together to buy a beautiful big charcoal portrait by Frank Auerbach that's been with me ever since. I never consciously collected, it grew out of that, and it became a bit of a habit. But what sort of accelerated the whole process was when Francis Bacon gave me a small triptych of three heads of one of his models, Peter Beard, one of the people he liked to paint because he was a very good-looking young man. Peter took endless photos of Bacon, although he was basically a wildlife photographer. Then Bacon did a series of portraits of him, and they became quite close.

Bacon gave me this triptych, these three heads, which for me was a really extraordinary thing to have, not only because they were very startling, impressive images, but also because they were worth more than the apartment I rented and probably more than the whole building I lived in. And this triptych worked as a kind of magnet on my other artist friends in Paris. They came around to look at it and then they all wanted to give me something better than they had already given me because they wanted to be in the same space as Bacon, to have their best works next to it. I had a bigish broken-down flat in the Marais from the late 1960s onwards, and my artist friends more or less pressed things on me. I mean, Dado gave me that great big collage that we now have in the kitchen and other things and so my so-called collection doubled overnight.

C.P.: When did Dado give you that piece to you? And where were you living? Because that collage is huge. I can't really imagine it in another space...

M.P.: On the rue des Archives where, when we took over *Art International*, we also had our offices. It was where I lived before I met mum. It seems such a world away now but I did have quite a few rooms in this ramshackle space—it had been a small printer's shop, then a sculptor's studio and home—with lots of big walls. Dado sent me this huge collage and, you know, he was very happy to have it in the same space as the Francis Bacon, which I displayed over the fireplace; and several other artists gave me things, but I've never gone out of my way until quite recently to actually acquire things. The collection has just sort of grown like that. Of course, once we were editing *Art International* in the Marais, other artists gave the odd work because they just wanted to be part of the whole thing because the works were on permanent display and sometimes we gave big parties there and the artists probably thought they might attract a dealer or a collector. Nowadays I am not given much because I'm much more interested in writing books, not articles or reviews. And for a long time, the





5.

5 — Tony Bevan: *Self-Portrait*, 1993

collection, for want of a better word, was contemporary European and British art. But more recently I have begun to collect Old Master drawings – mainly Baroque Italian — and to some extent sculpture, mediaeval sculpture, what the French call '*haute époque*'.

C.P.: What interested you in those pieces? what kick-started you to actively collect in that way?

M.P.: Having a bit of spare money at last and thinking that I don't particularly like leaving cash in the bank. I thought, now for the first time in my life I'd be able to actively collect, and since good modern art is way too expensive for me and I've always been interested in other areas of art, which I wrote about long ago at university and at *Réalités*. I'm in my mid-eighties, and a change of focus was very welcome. When I studied art history at Cambridge, I was mainly studying the Italian Renaissance, so to have even very minor things from that period, classical drawings and Baroque drawings from the late 16th and 17th century, was an extraordinary change. It filled me with awe to think that

I could have things that were 500 years old, because they were the sorts of things that we studied with some reverence.

C.P.: And it works so beautifully in your work space, your study, because you have a mix of art from more modern time periods as well. It's very nice, very eclectic.

M.P.: Yes, it is eclectic and all the bits seem to have settled down together quite nicely. It's a sort of party with very old people and very young people and, you know, I'm not saying they have a conversation, but they seem to get along very well. I can't pretend to have a particularly intelligent eye, but I've got a reasonably informed eye in a way, and what is odd is that it's quite specific. I do like very immediate, rapid drawings that just sort of give you a sensation, rather than the very polished, I think the Italians call it '*finito*' as opposed to the '*non finito*'; the '*finito*' appeals to me less. I suppose in this sense art collecting becomes a self-portrait. What I like is the very spontaneous, almost sketchy sort of faces and figures and things like that, studies probably for paintings or even frescoes. That's why

I never have to ask myself what I like. I know right away. And of course, you quickly run out of wall space, and that's one of the reasons why mum and I have given you and Alex various works over the years. Some of them of course were yours from the beginning, like that drawing by Antoni Tàpies, which he dedicated to you – '*à la belle Clio*' — when you were about two years old and we were on holiday in Spain.

A whole year could go past without my buying anything but occasionally there are pieces that arise, and if I can get them I will. I'll go up to a certain price and sometimes go beyond that price because I really get involved.

C.P.: Yes, it's quite exciting, isn't it?

M.: It's exciting but it can be quite dangerous. It's mum who does the bidding, not me. I sort of hover around nervously and say, 'OK, go up once more, twice more. No, no, stop there, for Christ's sake stop!'

C.P.: Backseat bidding!

M.P.: I guess. And then sometimes you're very happy because but you feel you've



6.

6 — Michael Peppiatt

got something that you think is special, even unique, and that stays with you and it's a wonderful thing to have around.

C.P.: When you find something you like do you have an idea of where you want it to live in your space?

M.P.: Not really, and our space is getting very crowded and I don't know quite what to do about that. For instance, there's that very lovely *Pietà*, that polychrome wood carving of Mary with the dead Christ in her lap. I hadn't realised how big the whole piece was and when it actually arrived, it was sort of overpowering. I've got a huge work desk, and so I had it right in front of me and it was almost too close for comfort.

C.P.: I know, I remember seeing it and thinking it didn't seem like a very healthy sight to have in front of you every day. It's quite sad that sculpture. It's very beautiful, but it's sad.

M.P.: It looked over my computer. If I peeped over the top of the computer there it was. Very stark image of a dead body, of rigor mortis and the mourning

mother. But now we've got an old, 17th-century country table to serve as a base for it. I like it and it is not so different in time from the *Pietà*—there might be a century between them. Oddly, I thought it wouldn't work at all because behind it, in a niche, is a piece of a South Sea Islands canoe with a caiman carved on the side that I picked up in the 1970s. I thought they wouldn't work at all, but they actually get on very well together, and it's rather lovely to have things of two completely different cultures, one behind the other.

C.P.: I agree. And I also think that my favourite collections are the collections that mix pieces from different places in the world, different times, because there's an art of collecting, but there's also very much an art of curating those pieces together. And it's interesting to me that you said that with the pieces you've been collecting more recently, it's the pieces that don't feel overly finished and have a rawness and an energy to them because, with I'm sure that was also the case with some earlier pieces, such as the Bacon triptych.

M.P.: Yes, that's true. I mean, the Bacon was so powerful even though it was just three small heads. I found it very difficult to raise my eyes to look at it. I felt it was staring me down from its commanding position over the fireplace.

C.P.: I thought it would be nice to talk about how you've also collected lots of memories, interesting memories of different people over the years. A lot of my favourite conversations with you are your stories and your storytelling, and so much of that is based off these memories you've collected over your lifetime.

M.P.: Well, that's nice! I mean, those memories are almost like a mirror, you could say even a kind of biography or a portrait of me in the sense that they reflect different enthusiasms, different friendships, different pursuits. So yes, I live with all of these pieces, which have a story, a part of my story, to an extent, and although I don't think of myself as a collector at all, somehow this ensemble has come together and it's a kind of record of various moments, various phases in my life, various interests,



7 — Michael Peppiatt and Jill Lloyd

various people, and it's a wonderful thing to have. I should spend more time reflecting on that, because it is very alive.

C.P.: The only other thing I wondered is if you wanted to say anything about *Faces in the Crowd*, your new book, which is a collection of memories, isn't it?

M.P.: Yes, they're sort of word portraits that I've done of other, relatively famous people that I've known.

C.P.: Yes, exactly. I think it gives a whole different dimension to the conversation.

M: The book contains quite a mix of people, mainly artists and writers, all very much alive in the 20th century, some of whom I met only briefly and others with whom I had a real friendship. There was Marlene Dietrich, who I met one evening because I sat next to her in a restaurant, and I didn't recognise her at first, and my friend who was more sophisticated than me asked the maître d'hôtel, *C'est bien Mademoiselle Dietrich?* and he said, *Oui, Monsieur*, and so we were suitably impressed and sort of eavesdropped on

what turned out to be a rather banal, drunken conversation — but nevertheless there was this goddess of the silver screen actually there, with those eyebrows and that voice.

Then it goes on to other people, Graham Greene, the novelist, whom I got to know a bit better and whose books I admired terribly, Samuel Beckett, whom I bumped into regularly in Montparnasse, and Henri Cartier-Bresson with whom I travelled with and had dinner with frequently. I did interviews with him and we went to exhibitions together. And artists like Sandy Calder and Miró, who themselves were great friends, and I met them at one point together. Let's see. There's Diego Giacometti—I was a great admirer of his brother Alberto's work, but Diego made these wonderful tables and furniture and was a very appealing kind of character and I used to go and see him in his studio. He'd been Alberto Giacometti's right-hand man and had actually cast a lot of the sculpture and done the patina on them. And then strange odd people like Nancy Mitford, the sort of leading Mitford

sister, all of whom were famous in their time. I met her and Gaston Palewski when I stayed for a year outside Paris at the Château du Marais, with its moat and water mirror, and met another whole tranche of French society. And then others who make a kind of cameo appearance, such as Picasso, of course, with Dora Maar, André Malraux, Sartre with Simone de Beauvoir, and other heroes of that time. There are a lot of coincidences and unusual people in the book. I'm sort of trying to remember them all. There's quite a crowd because a lot of them knew each other and saw each other in Paris: Salvador Dalí and his muse, Gala, who was sort of scandalous in many ways but fascinating and sort of tragic. Dalí hated Francis Bacon and told me so, particularly since Francis was having a success and Dalí's star had begun to wane.

C.P.: I think it is a kind of mirror to your art collecting because there is this curation of different characters from different places and different times. It is all quite eclectic and there's a nice synergy. ♦

Isaac Monté,
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The *Crystallized* series is the result of research into stalagmites, one of the greatest wonders of nature. The growing process of the objects can be seen as a metaphor for time. Each piece is unique in shape, colour and texture, due to the organic development of the object. Transforming natural minerals and oxides into radiant crystals that showcase the harmonious fusion of raw natural elements and refined craftsmanship, Isaac Monté has a fascination for unusual materials and an urge to master and manipulate them.



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Isaac Monté, *Crystallized Blue in Green Vase #23*, Crystallized minerals, Private Collection

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During the Night

By Edmund de Waal





2.

1 — Edmund de Waal, *During the Night*, Installation view at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 2016. © KHM-Museumsverband
2 — Edmund de Waal, *During the Night*, Photo: Mike Bruce

In 2016, Edmund de Waal was invited to create an exhibition at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, working with the historic collections. This followed the first contemporary intervention by Ed Ruscha, and was followed by Wes Anderson. This is the essay de Waal wrote about the project.

'At the Kunsthistorisches I feel exposed...'

Thomas Bernhard, *Old Masters*¹

It is October and the summer feels over-extended. The parks are dry and the roses have scattered. Dust clings. Some rain would help, a change in the weather, some breeze in the streets but as it is, everything seems a bit too sweet, late. There is tinny music from the café. The drinkers look dazed.

I cross the Ring, go past cars, trams, cyclists, tourists, and up the fifteen steps into the cool of the museum. I understand this building. I think I do. The Kunstkammer is to the left, Egypt and Antiquities off to the right, galleries of paintings stretch above me, away from the operatic staircase, past Canova's sculpture of Theseus, moved from its temple in the Volksgarten where I've just come from. It is an exhortatory museum. You are helped on your way by the naming of the greats in art

and philosophy, the sweep of the stairs, the storytelling in the painted ceilings, the busts. You get help. This is history and you are part of it.

So what am I doing here in this place with these collections? I have an invitation. I can choose anything I like from the Kunsthistorisches Museum or the Schatzkammer, from the collections of armour, musical instruments, or coins and medals, from Schloss Ambras, or from the library and archives. Tens of thousands of artefacts and paintings and documents, collected dynastically, obsessively, all flowing into this building. I can go anywhere. An anonymous door leads to storerooms with shelves of things that are here because they are damaged or out of fashion or not quite as good as those on display, or reattributed, their presence not required. A note is added. I cannot have the Habsburg crown jewels or objects that are immovable – an Egyptian sarcophagus that weighs too much, a few objects in the collections at Schloss Ambras that are too delicate to travel. Can I have Titian? Or Cellini? Of course.

All I have to do is choose and, once I have chosen, create a display.

¹ Thomas Bernhard, *Old Masters* (London, 1985; English translation of the novel *Alte Meister*, also 1985), p.11



3 — Albrecht Dürer, *Dream Vision*, 1525, watercolour on paper. Courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum
 4 — Edmund de Waal with *by disposition of angels*, 2025

I know some personal parameters. I know I don't want to create a Fodor's tour of these collections: I dislike the odour of masterpieces. Conversely, I think whimsy is insulting in this serious place. This is a charged place for me and I need to find my bearings, find my compass. As soon as I have seen it, I know. It is a watercolour and description of a nightmare pasted into Dürer's *Kunstbuch*, along with engravings and drawings. When it is shown to me in the museum storeroom, I am transfixed. The project becomes possible.

*

Almost five hundred years ago, Dürer woke up from a dream:

'In 1525, during the night between Wednesday and Thursday after Whitsuntide, I had this vision in my sleep, and saw how many great waters fell from heaven ... when I awoke my whole body trembled and I could not recover for a long time ... When I arose in the morning, I painted the above as I had seen it. May the Lord turn all things to the best.'

The volume of water makes the earth shake. The wind and the sound and the slowness of the deluge – the inevitability of this apocalypse is terrifying.

I follow Dürer, his line of thinking, his moment of exposure. It is his aloneness that speaks to me. He cannot control what is happening, only record what he remembers, what he sees, what he feels. This exactitude is not self-protection. It is a way of approaching what is happening when the world is unstable. During the night we are alone and vulnerable, the certainties disappear. Dürer paints and writes to see what will happen, to feel the edges of his control.

Dürer's aloneness takes me to my second object – the *Scüttelkasten*, or *shake-box*, which sits next to the vivid nightmare. When considering the *Wunderkammer*, the room of wonders, the philosopher Francis Bacon wrote of the possibility of having 'in small compass a model of universal nature made private'. Everything is possible. There should be a 'goodly huge cabinet, wherein whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine hath made rare in stuff, form or motion; whatsoever singularity, chance, and the shuffle of things hath produced; whatsoever Nature hath wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included'.²

² Francis Bacon, *Gesta Grayorum*, in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath (London, 1862), vol. 8, pp. 334–5. The *Gesta Grayorum* was a speech written for the 1594 Christmas celebrations at Gray's Inn.





This shake-box is the shuffle and tremor of things. You bring objects and the natural world together, but they move. Creatures emerge from under rocks, foliage creeps. How much control do you really have?

This unsteadiness of things is my map of the Kunstkammer. This might seem perverse. Surely room after room of golden skill speaks of dominion over the world, of collecting as power. Collecting is an attempt at mapping, a tracing of what you know. But objects and materials come back with travellers and you simply do not know what they are, whether what you hold in your hands is from an animal or a plant, what part of creation it belongs in, how old it is, what its properties might be. So in the Kunstkammer you find a nut found floating off the Seychelles, an ostrich egg, corals, a goblet crowned by precious stones. A narwhal tusk stands sentinel in the Schatzkammer as a unicorn horn.

With its strangeness, its unsettling movements, the shake-box takes me towards a world where objects have strange potencies. The fossilised sharks' teeth of the credenza are 'adder's tongues', dragons' teeth. Bezoars – the matted stone-like substances passed by mountain goats – are a protection from poison, a bastion against dangerous melancholy.

There is great power invested in these objects. Take this seriously. The love charm, just a slither of gold, carries so much aspiration in its three grams, the gemstones condense curses amongst their symbols and numbers. A tiny cube of glass contains a devil. Coral is fire made solid, the Gorgon's hair. This strange root is a crucifix.

And the handstones – strange landscapes created from minerals found deep in the mines of Bohemia – they embody this. The mine is a place of great danger. There are spirits who draw you on, places that give way under you, damp and noxious airs and gasses that make you sleep. There are seams that offer riches but are false. Here in these handstones something buried is transfigured: embedded into the rock are the steps towards the place of crucifixion, a mine working, a house. This is the landscape of anxiety, the attempt to make a safe narrative out of strangeness. I put them near Bosch's unsettling painting of Paradise.

Everything becomes a *vanitas*, a warning. But the allegories are unstable, the meanings move. So what do you do? Try and create a structure to hold them still: the bezoars are encircled with gold, the reliquaries become more and more elaborate to hold their precious fragments, tiny figures of saints are placed in handstones.

There are other changes too. Time changes. Fossilised fish speak of the Flood, 'Hereupon, the almighty father descended from the high ether in wild rage: he sends surges into the country, sending floods, and unbinds heaven to hell. He destroys the land, annihilates the farmland, the endeavour of oxen is in vain. The ditches fill up, the rivers are swelling and he condemns all domestic and wild animals to death.' We look at them like Dürer and feel we are in an end-time, sense the closeness of judgement.

And what is happening in the background becomes more significant. In the museum I have become slightly obsessed by what happens 'elsewhere' in pictures. As in the *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* in Brussels, which prompted W.H. Auden to note in his poem *Musée des Beaux Arts* how 'the expensive delicate ship that must have seen / Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky / Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.' And how 'everything turns away / Quite leisurely from the disaster'.³ I have chosen pictures where this disconnection is palpable. Look hard at these pictures. So what makes you anxious? Fear of erasure, disappearance? Fear of the shadows? Fear of bright lights, of being searched out and exposed? Fear of the fire, of being consumed by that we cannot control? Fear of being watched? Fear of being alone? Of crowds?

I'm not sure that the shape of anxiety changes much. Here in the city of Karl Krauss and Freud and Elias Canetti, the stories settle around objects and materials of anxiety. And also, images of night time that transition into the unknown, the liminal moment when we are less defended.

So for this troubling place I make a new work.

My studio is an old factory in south London. When I moved in three years ago it was used for ammunition, for filling cartridges with gunpowder, mending shot-guns. It was chaotic, stacks of wooden crates marked *explosive*, a store panelled in zinc, another for the secure storage of guns. But there was a kind of map here too, a history of where the guns and gunpowder had come from, paperwork for the hundred years for which the company had survived.

It is a vitrine, one of the largest I have attempted. And onto its nine shelves I place small silver aluminium containers that were used for the spare parts for guns. Some are filled with lead, some lead shot, some with broken pieces of porcelain. I stack small pieces of lead and I make porcelain vessels and they are glazed in black and with oxides, heavy with the minerals of alchemy. I create my own kind of *Kunstkammer* and bring this installation to the Kunsthistorisches Museum as my attempt at holding things together. It will hang alongside Dürer's night time terror, the handstones, Cranach's strange portrait of a young woman and her shadow, the reliquaries, the masks, *Orpheus and the Thracian Woman*, bezoars, gilded amulets. It will hang here for the whole winter. And I've named it *during the night*.

Edmund de Waal, London, June 2016 ◊

³ W.H. Auden, *Musée des Beaux Arts* (December 1938), in *Another Time*, (London, 1940) p. 34













The Apothecary's Cabinet:

Provenance in Sound

By Rosey Chan



Sonic Apothecary makes
neuro-acoustic music, designed
by artists, guided by clinicians.
Created to be used as medicine.

A small origin story (mum, bedtime, and improvisation)

Before bed my mum would make up music — no lessons, just feeling — to calm me down (I was a hyper tomboy). She'd play a semi-comic, avant-garde lullaby — surprising notes in exactly the right places — and I'd listen, wide-eyed, trusting every turn.

Those little experiments lodged in me; they taught me that sound can love you back.

When I improvise, I still follow her map: listen first, then step where the music smiles. It isn't "any sound"; it's pacing, proportion, intention.

We all keep a *musée imaginaire* — images, scents, songs that travel with us. These private collections shape our moods and emotions and Sonic Apothecary creates soundscapes that access these emotions and facilitates a kind of self-healing

*Sound changes behaviour.
This can be a positive
rather than a negative.*

My personal '*musée*' is dominated by music and sounds.

The piano's calm entry, the soft thrum of rain in the trees, the rhythm of a walk, the held breath as the baton hovers, just before the first downbeat.

I keep them the way a pharmacist keeps remedies — clearly labelled so you know when to use them — stored in my apothecary's cabinet:

Not shelves of objects, but labelled moments that steady the breath and clear the head — where and when they were made, how they were played, and what they did.

My Apothecary's Cabinets

Drawer One — Everyday hits (repeatable, human, free)

The kettle's last little click is my green light. One calm decision, no drama. If a piece can do what that click does — signal "now" without shouting — I keep it.

The sound of Rain on glass edits the world for you.

My favourite is the car wash. Water drums the windscreen, the rollers give a soft, low pulse through the seat, and for three minutes life reduces to rain, glass, vibration; shoulders obey.

Even a rock band can soothe when the groove is stable and the mix leaves air — that's still care.

Shoulders obey. That's the template for my night pieces: un-showy warmth and a steady pace. If a track can do what a rinse cycle does — wrap you, then let you go — I keep it.

SOUND AS A VEHICLE FOR STEADIER BREATHING AND A CLEARER HEAD

Our chief medical advisor, Dr Jack Kreindler, calls that second kind Neuro Acoustic Therapy (NAT): short, precisely paced pieces that help breathing and focus

*Silence isn't empty;
it's waiting for attention.*

A PIANO HEARD FROM ABOVE IN SALZBURG

One simple line drifting down the stairwell like warm light. I followed it up the cool stone stairs, half-asleep, with that familiar feeling when the right song finds you before coffee. By the landing I didn't need a name; the room had done the introductions. That's the kind of listening I write for — the music just comes to you.

Drawer Two — Human Time

A clock measure minutes; our bodies keep time by how they feel.

We move through our days at different speeds — walking to work, slowing down at dusk, taking that small loop to clear the mind. When music moves at a pace that feels familiar, the body often responds in kind: breathing steadies, shoulders soften, and thoughts begin to find their own rhythm. That's what I call neuro-acoustic common sense — using sound to help the nervous system find its balance again.

Sound becomes music when someone listens with intention.

These pieces are deliberately simple — no jargon, no theory; just a few quiet minutes and your attention.

Each lasts three to five minutes — short enough to fit inside daily life, long enough to change the weather inside your head.

- Morning likes clear rhythm and tidy phrasing — music that lifts you gently into focus.
- Evening prefers softer edges — phrases with space to set the day down.
- Night needs room to exhale — slow, spacious tones that invite rest.

These are the Sonic Apothecary pieces I reach for when I'm walking, waiting, or winding down — music written to connect with you wherever you are. They follow the same pulses I use when I am at the piano: steady, warm, and human.

Drawer Three — Rooms with good manners (well behaved spaces)

My rule is simple: if a space already whispers, I don't shout — I keep the whisper company.

Some rooms are good listeners; they help a note settle and stay. Wood and fabric quietly tidy the edges. A carpeted corridor at midnight can hush a day without trying.

This holds especially true in the places where I'm invited to work quietly, which brings me to the applied side of my practice.

Each space has a unique frequency.

If we listen, adjust, measure, repeat — the room will calm.

Some houses create a signature soundscape the way they create a scent. The agreement is simple: results over headlines. In practice, this means discreet sound environments, commissioned, tested with clinicians, neuroscientists and tuned in situ, for hospitality, wellness, retail, and cultural spaces; the measures are practical, longer exhales, steadier pulse, fewer startles, better attention.

Guests don't ask why; they simply linger, return, and trust the hours. In luxury hospitality and retail spaces it's called dwell. I call it good manners in sound.

Sonic Apothecary is my field studio: the place where stage-quality music meets quiet, measurable care.

What makes it ours: a living archive of Provenance Cards (room, light, touch, pulse, effect), a small circle of medical advisors, and a house style that never changes: calm, human, measured. We design for familiarity over novelty so the brain spends less energy decoding and more recovering.

We develop small pieces — artist-made, clinician-guided — as quiet tools rather than performances. We keep the houses private; the outcome isn't. This is one branch of my work alongside concerts, albums and installations; the sensibility stays the same: clear, humane, restrained.

I'm a pianist-composer who performs on stage and records in studios — but I also design how sound behaves in the world. At times that means weeks on end working quietly inside certain houses that prefer anonymity. I choose a suite and turn it into a working studio by day and a small sound sanctuary by night for private listeners. It's not background music. It's applied listening — music used as an invisible tool to steady the nervous system and clear mental fog.

APPLIED LISTENING (RESIDENCY / DISCREET HOUSES)



2.

2 — Rosey Chan. Photo: Suzannah Baker Smith
3 — Rosey Chan playing with the dancers from the central school of ballet



3.



4.

4 — Rosey Chan, Photo: Mike Figgis
5 — Rosey Chan, Photo: David Black



5.

Drawer Four — Good machines (no engine worship)

I care about craft, not decibels. A well-made machine keeps steady time without shouting. The even hum of a small prop plane, heard from the ground, can match a calm walking pace. A well-tuned classic car can sprint if asked; the charm is how it takes the hill in one steady pull and then softens over the crest. That's the shape I prefer for a crescendo at the piano: a steady rise, then a gentle release.

I learned tempo as a kid in the back seat of our big, buttery-yellow Rover — long country drives, up Lake District hills and along Welsh roads — more... now rest... more... now rest. The luxury here isn't loudness; it's manners.

Drawer Five — Tinctures (labelled relief)

I file pieces as tinctures because the word keeps me honest. No bloat, clear purpose, small dose.

- Morning — “Stand Up Nicely.” Five minutes; friendly spine; major key. Side effect: you stop slouching without feeling told off.
- Afternoon — “Do The Thing.” Seven minutes; crisp rhythm, not too clever. Side effect: inbox bravery.
- Evening — “Blue Light, Warm Hands.” Nine minutes; phrases wide enough to park the day. Side effect: phone loses its crown.
- Night — “No More Lists.” Six minutes; barely moving. Side effect: brain closes all apps.

These are the labelled versions of what Sonic Apothecary 1.0 discovered.

What “provenance in sound” actually means

Grand Central, Whispering Gallery (NYC).

Stand at one arch and speak softly; a friend across the curve hears every word. The Guastavino-tiled vault carries quiet sound from corner to corner. That's why, for every piece I keep, I note the room, the moment, and the effect.

The minute before the downbeat.

In the hall, just before an orchestral performance begins: the oboe sounds an “A,” the strings settle, and the whole room holds one shared breath before the baton lands. It is the most charged quiet I know.

Sharing space with an orchestra.

When a 50-piece orchestra holds harmony, you feel it through the piano stool — a small vibration up the spine — before you can even name the chord. I log the moment by its signals: longer exhales, shoulders releasing, attention gathering — a gentle tilt toward the parasympathetic.

HOW I RECORD PROVENANCE

- Where + when: place and time.
- How it was played: touch, pace, volume.
- Room notes: materials and feel.
- What it did: observable effect (breath slowed; shoulders dropped; focused; slept).

HOW THIS BECOMES WORK YOU CAN USE

- Short resets (1–3 minutes): small tracks designed to help breathing and attention settle on the spot.
- Room pieces: discreet sound for real spaces, built with clinicians, tuned in situ, so rooms feel calmer, longer.
- Editions & commissions: the same method shaped into albums, private pieces, and house signatures.

This is the spine of Sonic Apothecary: artist-made, clinician-guided, practical by design, and delivered with discretion.



6 — Annotated working score by Rosey Chan (Frieze Art Fair London)

7 — Rosey Chan, *The Listener's Room*, Mixed media on paper. A private interior where sound becomes space. Courtesy of Rosey Chan





8.

8 — Rosey Chan, *Melody Girl I (on piano)*, (2024). Sculpture from the Melody Girl series, created by Rosey Chan for Sonic Apothecary

Coda – Next pieces for the cabinet

I collect what helps, and I build what I can't yet find.

Sonic Apothecary 2.0 is the newest set of short, human pieces—written to meet you in the middle of an ordinary day. We build music the way a watchmaker builds time — precisely enough to make you forget it's working. ♦

www.sonic-apothecary.com

@dangerousmoonlight



American Costume Jewellery

By Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo



2.

1 — Trifari, *Jewels of India, four color crystals butterfly pin*, 1965. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection

2 — Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo with Irajd Moini. *Crystal twist choker necklace*, 1994-2004. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection. Photo: Riccardo Ghilardi Contour for Getty Images

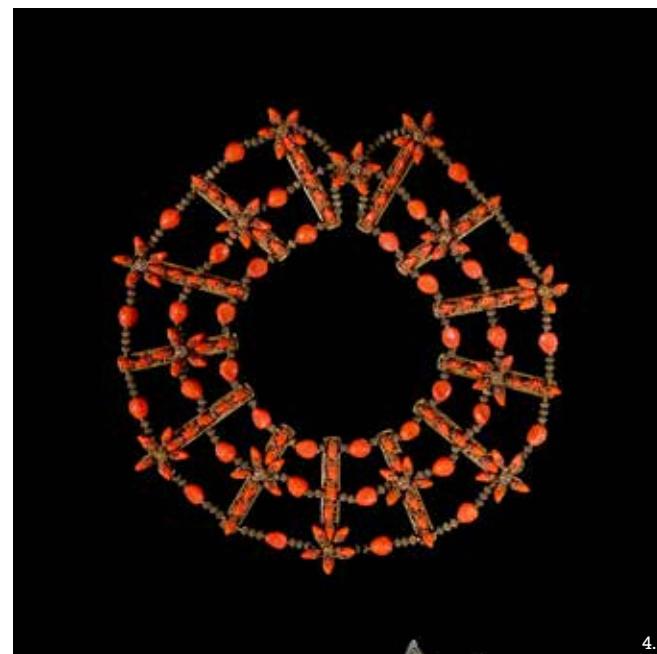
Collecting has always been part of my DNA. As a child, I catalogued pillboxes in a small notebook with meticulous care. Yet it was not until the late 1980s that I discovered the world of American Costume Jewellery. A dear friend pinned the first Trifari brooch to my jacket, and I was immediately captivated: the playful forms, the vintage elegance, the free spirit of a jewel anyone could own.

My innate curiosity led me to delve into its history, and I soon realized that these pieces are far more than adornment; they are a lens onto the social and cultural life of twentieth-century America. Costume Jewellery emerged in the 1930s amid the hardships of the Great Depression, and continued to thrive during the Second World War, when access to precious metals was limited. Designers responded with extraordinary creativity, crafting intricate forms in bakelite, celluloid, resins, vulcanized rubber, and acrylic. These materials

gave them the opportunity to experiment, not merely reproducing the classic forms of jewellery, but creating entirely original ornaments, all at an affordable cost. They were a gift that any woman could give to herself whenever she wished, without having to wait for a present from a father or husband on a special occasion; for this reason, they are considered “democratic jewels” and an expression of female freedom. These accessible jewels allowed women to dream, to feel glamorous even in lean times, and were embraced by Hollywood stars as well as ordinary women. Every decade left its mark: brooches for the inauguration of the Golden Gate Bridge, pins worn by the maîtres of New York’s Stork Club in the 1950s, or charming Christmas-tree pins sent to soldiers in Korea. I am particularly fond of Trifari’s *Black Amour*, depicting a Baroque figure holding a flag that doesn’t exist, which was likely a prototype.



3.



4.



5.



6.

3 — Miriam Haskell, (Robert F. Clark), *Yellow poured glass necklace*, 1964-1966. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection

4 — Miriam Haskell, *Egyptian revival necklace in coral glass*, c. 1970. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection

5 — Marcel Boucher, *Spangled pink enamel octopus pin*, 1941. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection

6 — Eisenberg, *Large green and clear crystal swirl pin*, 1942. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection

7 — Hobé, *Large multicoloured filigree flower pin*, c. 1945. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection

I wear these jewels daily, letting the brooch or necklace dictate my outfit. I enjoy choosing them according to my mood and the commitments of the day. In summer, I favour Coro's fish, Moini's seahorses, or Boucher's pink enamel octopus; in spring, the butterflies of Trifari or the flowers of Eisenberg; in autumn and winter, compositions by Hobé, De Rosa, or Haskell. In the evening, I usually wear a necklace by De Lillo. Collecting Costume Jewellery, like contemporary art, combines emotion, knowledge, and instinct. I choose pieces that

resonate, whether rare prototypes or widely produced ornaments. Each brooch, necklace, or bracelet in my collection preserves a moment in history and carries cultural significance, a testament to the enduring allure of these democratic, imaginative creations.

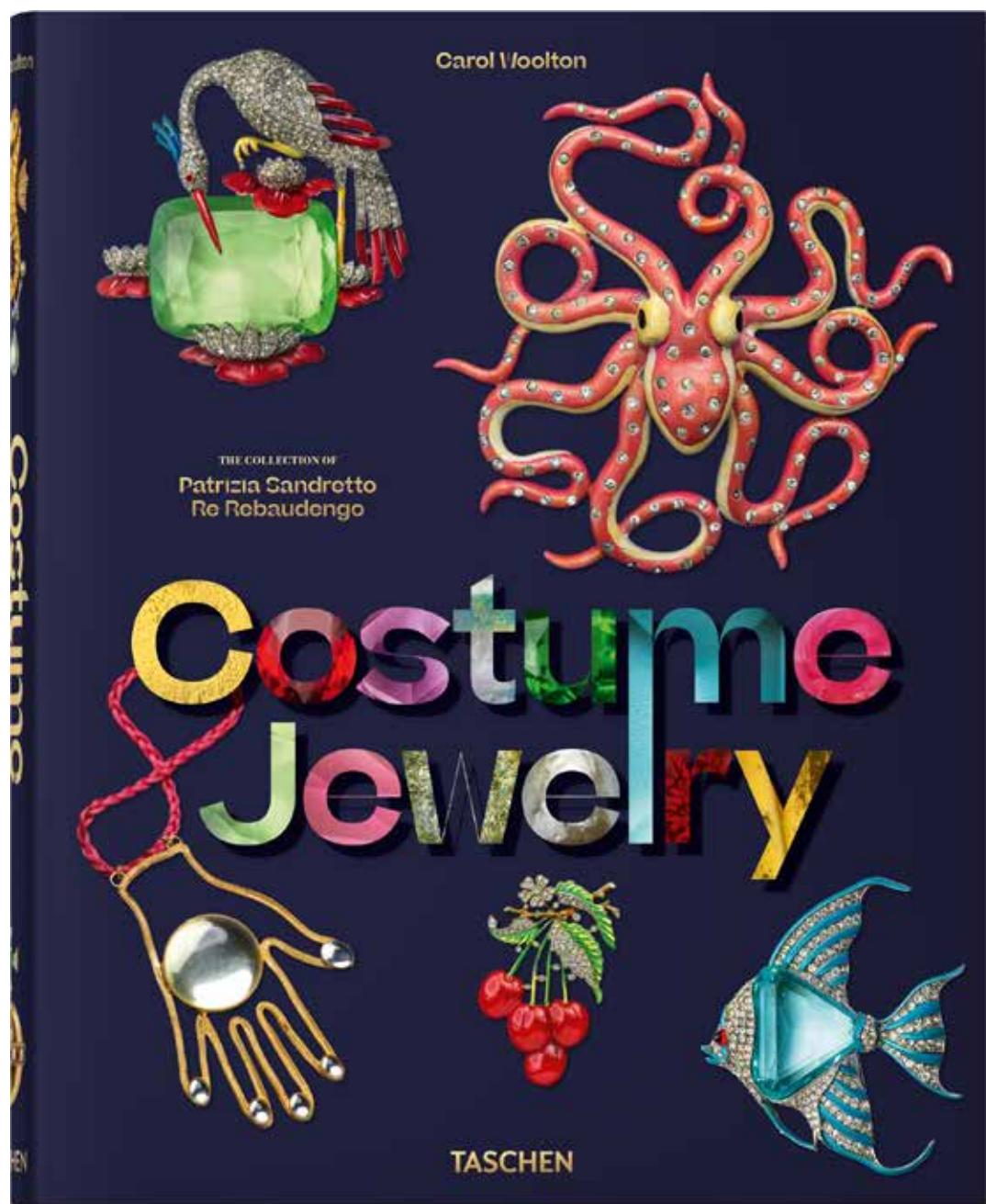
It is with great joy that I see this passion now finding form in a Taschen monograph dedicated to my collection, a book that allows these jewels to shine beyond my personal story, carrying their beauty and meaning into the wider world. ♦





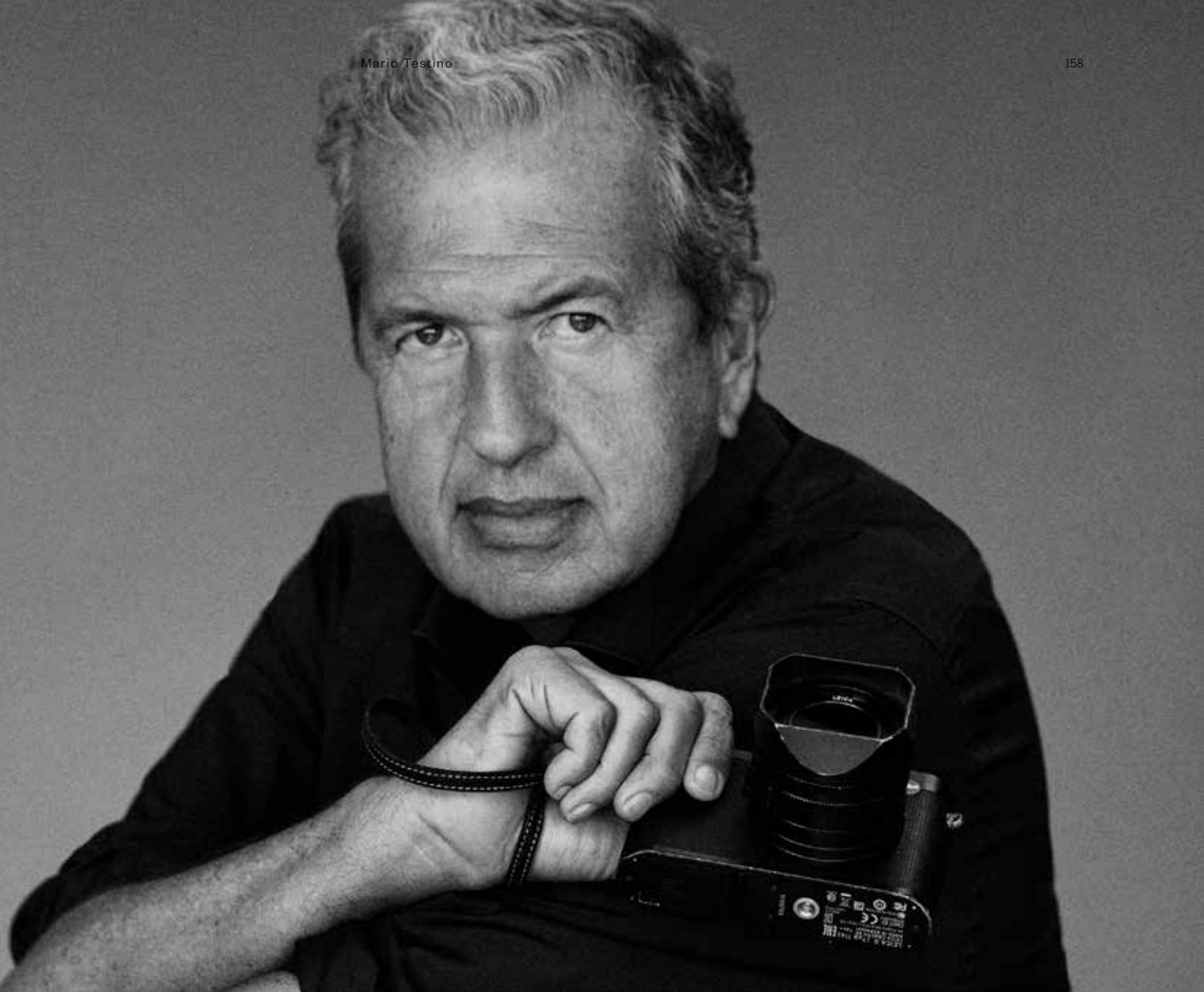






11.

8 — Iraj Moini, *Multicolored seahorse brooch*, 1994-2004. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection
9 — William de Lillo, *Egyptian revival unique collar necklace*, 1969. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection
10 — Ralph De Rosa, *Enamel forget me not in a crystal vase pin*, c. 1940. Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection
11 — *Costume Jewelry. The Collection of Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo*. Taschen, 2025



Mario Testino

Through the Lens of Collecting

By Mario Testino



1 — Mario Testino

2 — Mario Testino, in collaboration with George Condo, for American Vogue

3 — Mario Testino, in collaboration with Urs Fischer, for German Vogue, 2014

I began my career by looking at the work of others. Living in London at the time, I immersed myself in the photography of Cecil Beaton, David Bailey and Lord Snowdon, and others. Their images showed me how elegance, character, and society could be transformed into myth. As soon as I started earning money, I began buying their photographs, as well as works by English surrealists such as Madame Yevonde and Angus McBean. Collecting was not just about possession—it was a way of learning. Each print I acquired was like a masterclass in how an artist framed the world. Covent Garden, where I lived, became my classroom. I discovered a gallery showing film stills from Truffaut and French New Wave photographers. Looking at those images, I began to understand rhythm, gesture, and narrative in photography. They trained my eye to see beyond the surface of fashion and into the story that an image could carry.

As I established myself in the 1990s, my life became defined by travel. For the next thirty years, I was almost permanently in motion. At first, I collected

fashion photographs, because that was the world I worked in, but soon I turned to photojournalism. I wanted to learn the urgency of the quick snap—the intuition that if you don't press the shutter at the right instant, the moment is gone forever. Around this time, my friend Johnnie Shand Kydd suggested that I look at photography not only as a tool of documentation but as an artistic language in itself. He introduced me to Sadie Coles, who opened my eyes to a new field entirely: to photography used by artists for conceptual and aesthetic expression not limited to documentation. The first work I bought in this spirit was by Liza May Post. Her photographs were enigmatic and surreal choreographies, often resisting immediate interpretation. They demanded patience, context, and thought. That was the first time I realised that a photograph could operate as a concept, not just an image. It could provoke, unsettle, and change the way we see. This lesson stayed with me—that an image is most powerful when it challenges the viewer's perceptions and offers unexpected interpretation.



4.

4 — Mario Testino in collaboration with Keith Haring, for *The Face*, 1987

5 — Mario Testino in collaboration with John Currin, for *German Vogue*, 2008

6 — Mario Testino, *Alta Moda*, Sarawja women's costume, tradition of the Carumas, Cuchumbaya y San Cristóbal Calacoa districts, province of Mariscal Nieto, Moquegua, Peru, 2018



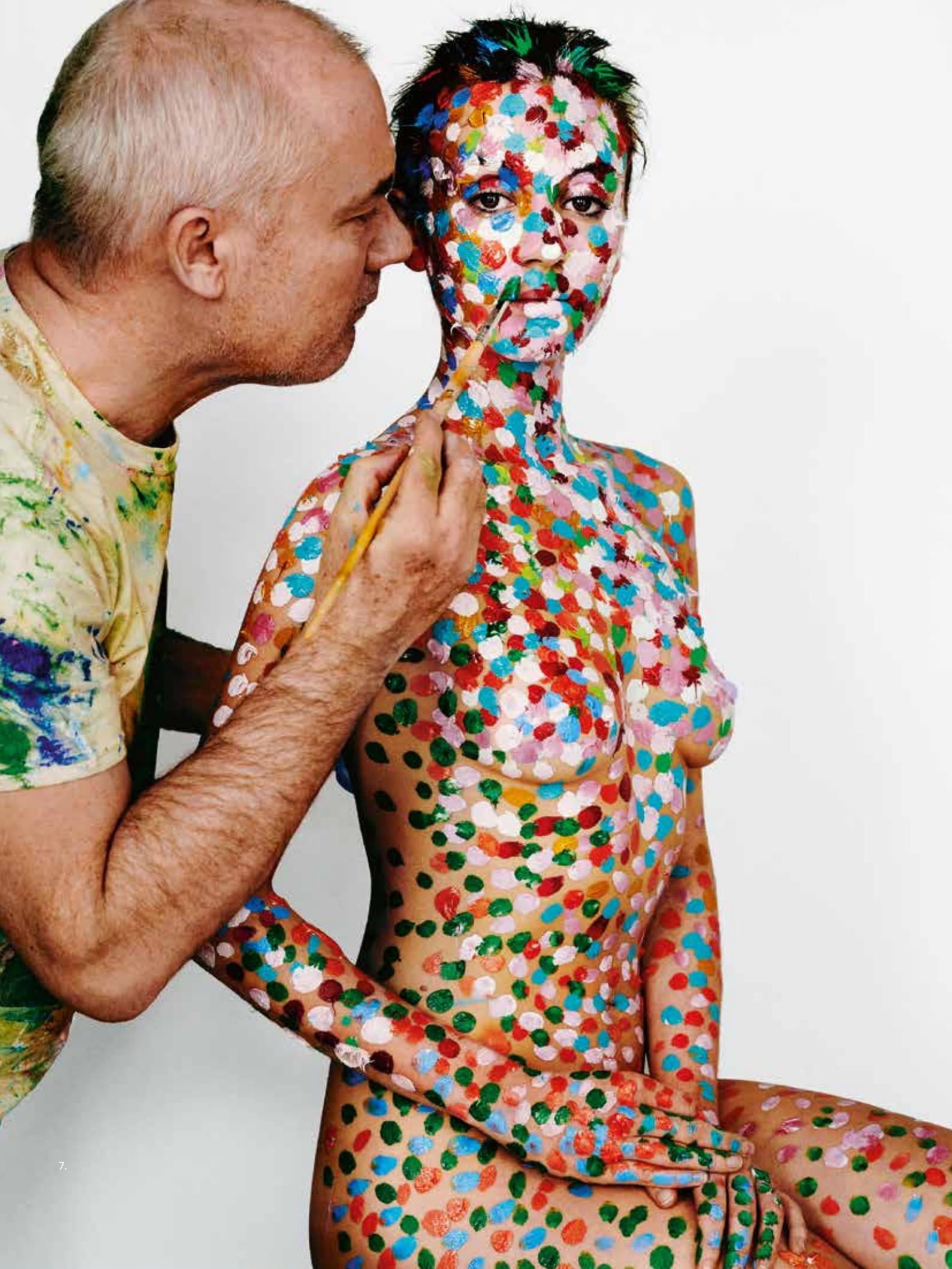
5.

With Sadie, I discovered a generation of artists who expanded the language of photography: Annette Kelm, Hannah Starkey, Luisa Lambri, Angus Fairhurst, among others. Collecting their work sharpened my own vocabulary. It taught me that images could function like poetry, with ambiguity and rhythm, not just clarity. Collecting also exposed me to other mediums. For years I had been shy of painting, sculpture, or installation, because I knew nothing about them. But constant travel—and the guidance of friends—eventually broke down that barrier. Cecily Brown was the first painter whose work I saw that ignited a real hunger to collect. I encountered her work at Jeffrey Deitch, in New York. A friend warned me against it, insisting I should stay within my field of knowledge, which was photography. But my curiosity was precisely what drove me to buy. I wanted to learn through living with works I didn't yet fully understand.

From then on, the process became compulsive. Wherever I went, I visited galleries. Inevitably, I would buy. Soon my homes were overflowing, and I turned to salon-style hanging just to fit everything in. This, in turn, influenced how I presented my own exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in 2002, in which

I installed my photographs in the same dense, layered way. It was a success, breaking attendance records, and I remember thinking: not bad for a Peruvian immigrant. What fascinated me about entering the art world was the contrast it created with my own professional life. As a commercial photographer, I was always working for someone else's needs. Creativity was essential, but always in the service of a brand, a magazine, or a client. By contrast, in the art world I encountered artists working with an enviable and exciting freedom, without those constraints. This pushed me to think about my own position differently. As my career developed, magazines began to give me more space. From six pages at the back, I moved to covers and twenty-page features. Eventually even that felt too little, and I began producing entire issues of *Vogue* in Japan, China, Spain, Brazil, Germany, India, and beyond. I wanted these issues to feel alive, to reflect culture in a broad sense, so I began collaborating with artists. I would give them a photograph of mine, and they could transform it however they wished. George Condo, John Currin, Beatriz Milhazes, Urs Fischer, Jenny Saville, Cecily Brown, Albert Oehlen — each collaboration taught me something new about freedom and dialogue in art.







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9.

7 — Mario Testino, In collaboration with Damien Hirst, London, 2019

8 — Mario Testino in collaboration with Jenny Saville, for *Vogue Brasil*, 2013

9 — Mario Testino in collaboration with Cecily Brown, for *Vogue Brasil*, 2013

This was not entirely new for me. Back in the 1980s, for *The Face* magazine, I had collaborated with Keith Haring on a story inspired by Jean Cocteau. We created a figure out of paper cut-outs, and I invited models of different races to emerge through it. The work reflected my early interest in inclusion, in creating an image of unity out of difference — ideas that would return later in the series *A Beautiful World*. Collecting and collaboration led me naturally to curating. Gallerist Andrea Rosen invited me to organize a South American show in New York, and I drew on discoveries

I had made in Brazil. For Yvon Lambert New York gallery, I recreated my London apartment, complete with fireplaces, English sockets, and salon-style walls, turning the gallery into a personal portrait. All of these experiences shaped me, but more importantly, they prepared me to step into my own projects. They gave me courage to go beyond briefs and campaigns, to ask myself: what do I want to say? I have always admired artists who shift perception, who make us look anew. Collecting taught me to recognize that quality, and to search for it in myself.



10.

A BEAUTIFUL WORLD

The real turning point for me came in Peru when I found an archive of traditional dress in Cuzco and I couldn't let it go. For ten years I photographed this series, which became the collection of photos *Alta Moda*. At first people doubted the project. They thought, why would a fashion photographer spend his time on old costumes? But when I showed it at MATE, my museum in Lima, the reaction was overwhelming. People suddenly looked at their own traditions differently. They saw beauty, pride, identity. For me, that was one of the most moving moments of my career. That experience pushed me to think bigger. I realised that what I had found in Peru wasn't just local—it was universal. Every country has its own way of showing identity through dress, through colour, through how people carry themselves. I wanted to capture that. That's how *A Beautiful World* was born. In this project I've travelled to more than thirty countries, from Ethiopia to Japan, Mongolia to Brazil, photographing people in the clothes that define them. But it's not only about the fabric or the embroidery—it's about the pride in the way they present themselves, the energy of showing who they are. Every portrait is a story of heritage, family, memory, and imagination. I know that my years of collecting prepared me for this. Living

with art taught me to look harder, to value difference, to search for originality. Collecting made me understand that an image can do more than just show beauty—it can make us rethink what we already know and open our eyes to something new. That's exactly what I want *A Beautiful World* to do. For me, this project is not about nostalgia. It's not a museum record. It's about showing that traditions are alive, moving, transforming. Culture is not fixed—it's something people carry with them, renew every day. That's the language I've been trying to develop: photographs that don't just show, but celebrate, that don't just document, but connect.

The hardest part is discipline. With your own work, there's no client, no deadline, no editor waiting. It's only you and your vision. But that's also what makes it exciting. *A Beautiful World* is not a commission, not a campaign. It's curiosity. It's my curiosity about people, about how we all express ourselves, and about what connects us in our differences.

In the end my biggest interest is people and what defines them. ◇



11.

10 — Natalia Vodianova photographed by Mario Testino at his home in Los Angeles, for American Vogue, 2012
 11 — Mario Testino: At Home, Yvon Lambert Gallery, New York, US: July 10 – August 21, 2007.

Following pages:

- 12 — *A Beautiful World. A Devotee of The Orisha Obatalà Santiago de Cuba*, 2023
- 13 — *Tokyo*, 2018
- 14 — *A Beautiful World. A woman of Juchitán, Mexico*, 2019
- 15 — *A Beautiful World. Festtagstracht, Appenzell Innerrhoden*, Switzerland, 2024
- 16 — *A Beautiful World. Men Tattooed by Horiyoshi III Yokohama Japan*, 2019
- 17 — *A Beautiful World. A Bukhara Bride, Bukhara, Uzbekistan*, 2023
- 18 — *Aquila chrysaetos (II)*, Mongolia, 2019
- 19 — *Acinonyx jubatus*, Kenya 2023
- 20 — *Codes of Honour Pontifical Swiss Guards. Vatican City*, 2023
- 21 — *A Beautiful World. A Man in costume as El Diablo Blanco de Rabinal, A White Devil from the dance of Moros y Cristianos. Antigua, Guatemala*, 2023
- 22 — *A Beautiful World. A Bedouin Woman Al Arish, Egypt*, 2024
- 23 — *A Beautiful World. Women of Lagartera wear baroque embroidery Lagartera Spain*, 2019
- 24 — *A Beautiful World. A Kurdish Bride Sulaymaniah Kurdistan Region of Iraq*, 2025
- 25 — *A Beautiful World. A Woman of the Thari Tharparkar Pakistan*, 2024















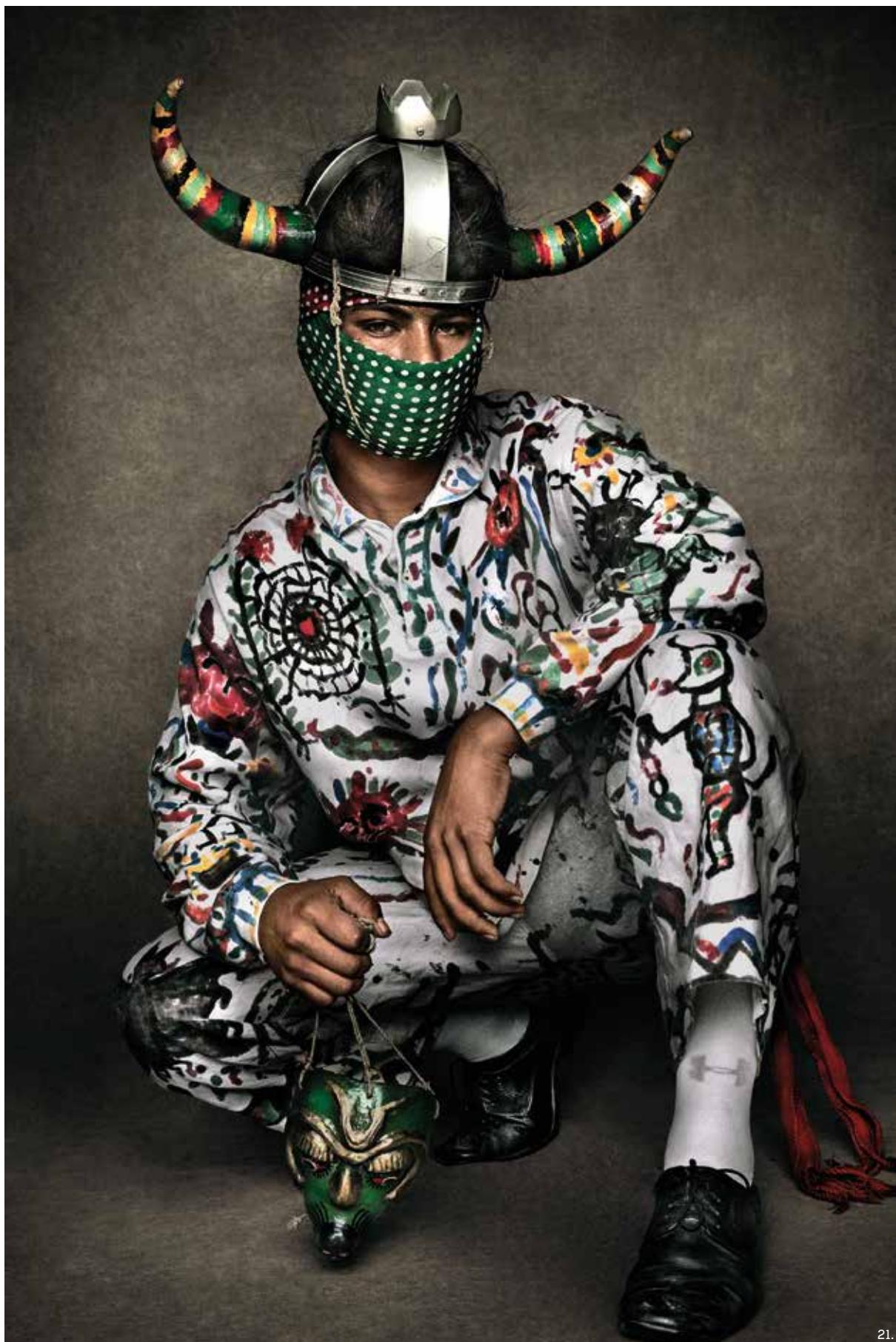


















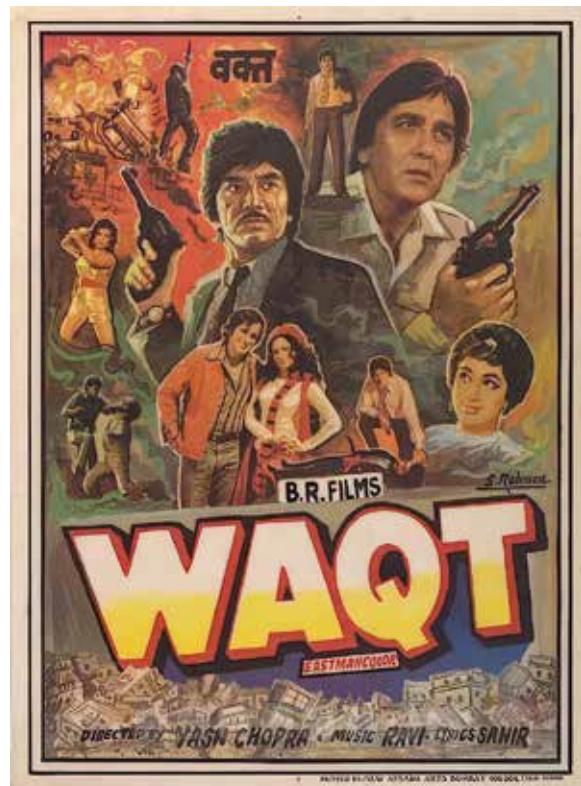
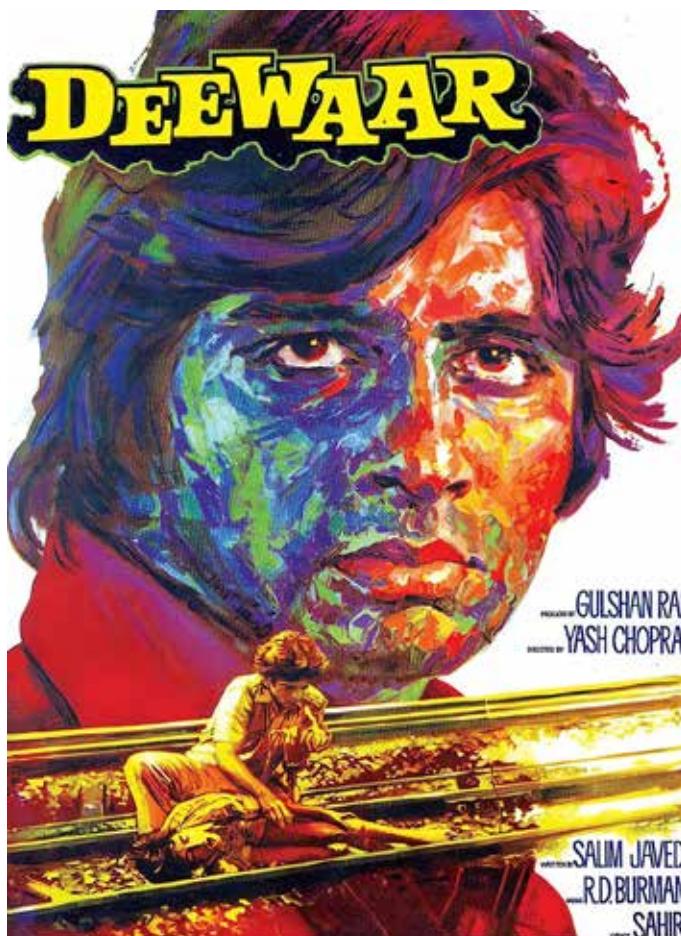




Bollywood's Influence on Popular Culture: A Personal Reflection

By Kanika Kapoor





1 — Kanika Kapoor

My journey began in the historic city of Lucknow, in India, famed as a centre of culture, arts, and poetry. Here, I spent my early years studying classical music, training under renowned gurus, and immersing myself in the region's rich cultural heritage. I grew up in a typical home of a north-Indian family and attended a convent school for girls, where our hobbies were limited to pursuing the finer arts. However, it was the vibrant world of Bollywood that would eventually propel my passion and steer my career into the music industry; a journey that has led me to a Grammy Award nomination for the Best Global Music Album category.

I moved to the UK at the age of 18, leaving behind my music training, singing practice, and the world as I knew it. A decade later, after navigating life's twists and challenges, I found myself drawn back into the world of music. An unexpected opportunity to create Indian pop songs in the UK catapulted me into the spotlight of Bollywood as a leading vocal artist. My world changed rapidly once again. I embarked on tours with superstars, made appearances on TV shows, and met people from the industry worldwide. These encounters opened doors to new projects and exciting cross-border collaborations from Christmas songs in France to Afrobeats-fusion albums in Nigeria. All the while, I continued to work on Bollywood songs with major studios and labels.

People often assume my Bollywood journey began with early hits like "Jugni Ji" (2012) or "Baby Doll" (2014). However, it actually started years earlier, with an eye-catching movie poster outside a cinema hall in Lucknow. I can still picture it vividly: I was a little girl holding an ice-cream cone in one hand and clutching my mother's in the other, standing in queue. It was the first day of the release of an eagerly anticipated movie, and the crowds were jostling for tickets. Suddenly, there it was: a larger-than-life, hand-painted poster of a beautiful Bollywood actress, clad in bright colours, staring down at me. Her expressive eyes were so deep that I felt like she could see into my soul. I was captivated. I did not know it then, but that moment shaped how I would remain fascinated by Bollywood and connected to Indian popular culture wherever I went in the world. Years later, no matter where I was touring – Australia, Europe, the USA – a single Bollywood poster or album cover could spark a deep nostalgia, so specific and familiar to me, that I instantly knew the emotional landscape of the film being advertised even without watching it. That was the magic of Bollywood's unique brand for visual language and music. It has the ability to pluck heartstrings and strike chords with billions of people. Over the years, I realised something remarkable: Bollywood images were India's earliest global influencers. Long before YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram, they carried our culture, style, and storytelling across far borders.

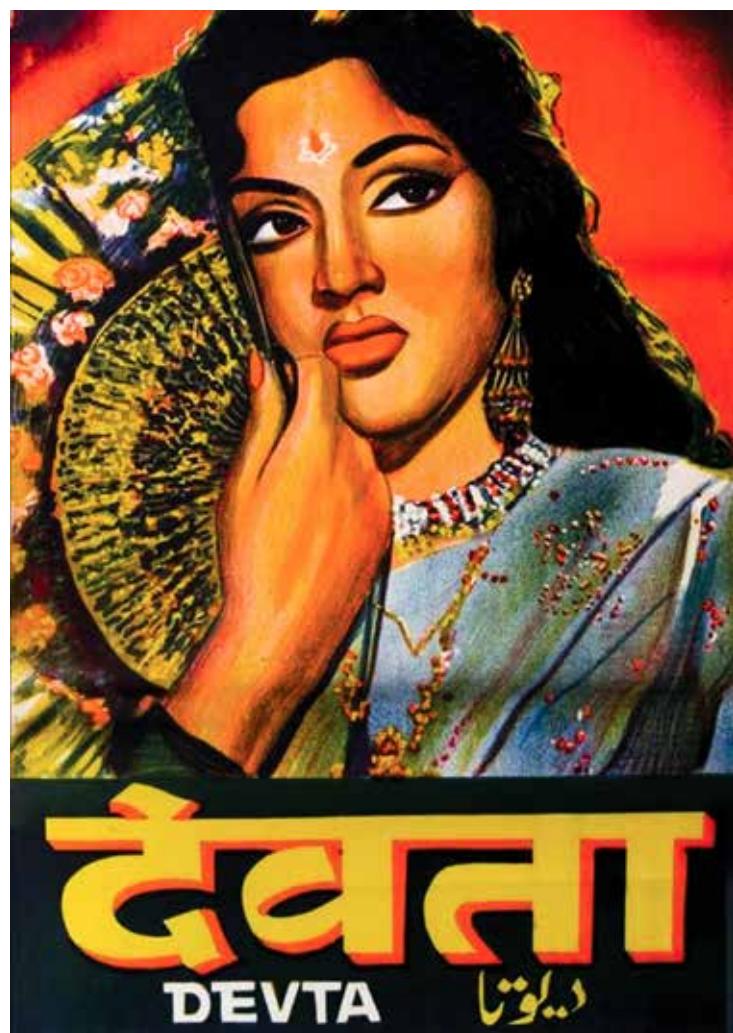
THE ART THAT CAME BEFORE THE CINEMA

Indian streets have been lined with movie billboards and hoardings since cinema began. As the industry grew, so did the variety and volume of movie posters. However, if we trace back earlier, the ubiquitous film poster in India seems to have had a prior incarnation: the domestic wall calendar. These poster calendars, often religious-themed, were popularised when mass printing techniques were adopted. This led to the emergence of a movement in India known as 'Calendar Art', which featured images of religious idols or mythological characters depicted by India's famous artists. Due to their popularity and affordability, these calendars were the first-time that art was widely introduced into homes and workplaces across the country.

At the heart of this movement was the legendary 19th-century painter Raja Ravi Varma. His portrayals of Hindu deities established a visual benchmark for the genre. His regally draped figures with soft expressions, luminous skin tones, and fine, delicate features became iconic and a template for how Indians imagined the divine. This style, emulated by many other artists, filtered down into popular art and culture, even cinematic imagery. Bollywood leaned heavily into this aesthetic, particularly in its early decades, as their storylines often drew on traditional themes of mythology, further reinforcing the visual codes of this style to its audiences.

Fast-forwarding a century, another artist, the modern master M.F. Husain, began his career painting Bollywood cinema hoardings. Accomplished in this field, he then explored artistic boundaries, moving away from the saturated colours of poster art into the realm of modern art. The turbulent state of the nation during the Independence period deeply moved him, and he found a voice and connection in the art of storytelling and visual communication. He began expressing his thoughts on canvas, though his style transformed, his themes remained rooted in mythology, politics, and cinema. One popular Bollywood icon, Madhuri Dixit, was a muse and featured strongly in many of his works. He loosely represented her image on canvas, capturing just her form or movement in essence. She became a symbol of feminine grace or even a universal 'mother figure' to the nation, India, that resonated strongly with his audience.

These two artists, Ravi Varma and Husain, though separated by era and artistic style, shared a common thread: they both shaped the nation's collective imagination and helped define how India visualised herself.



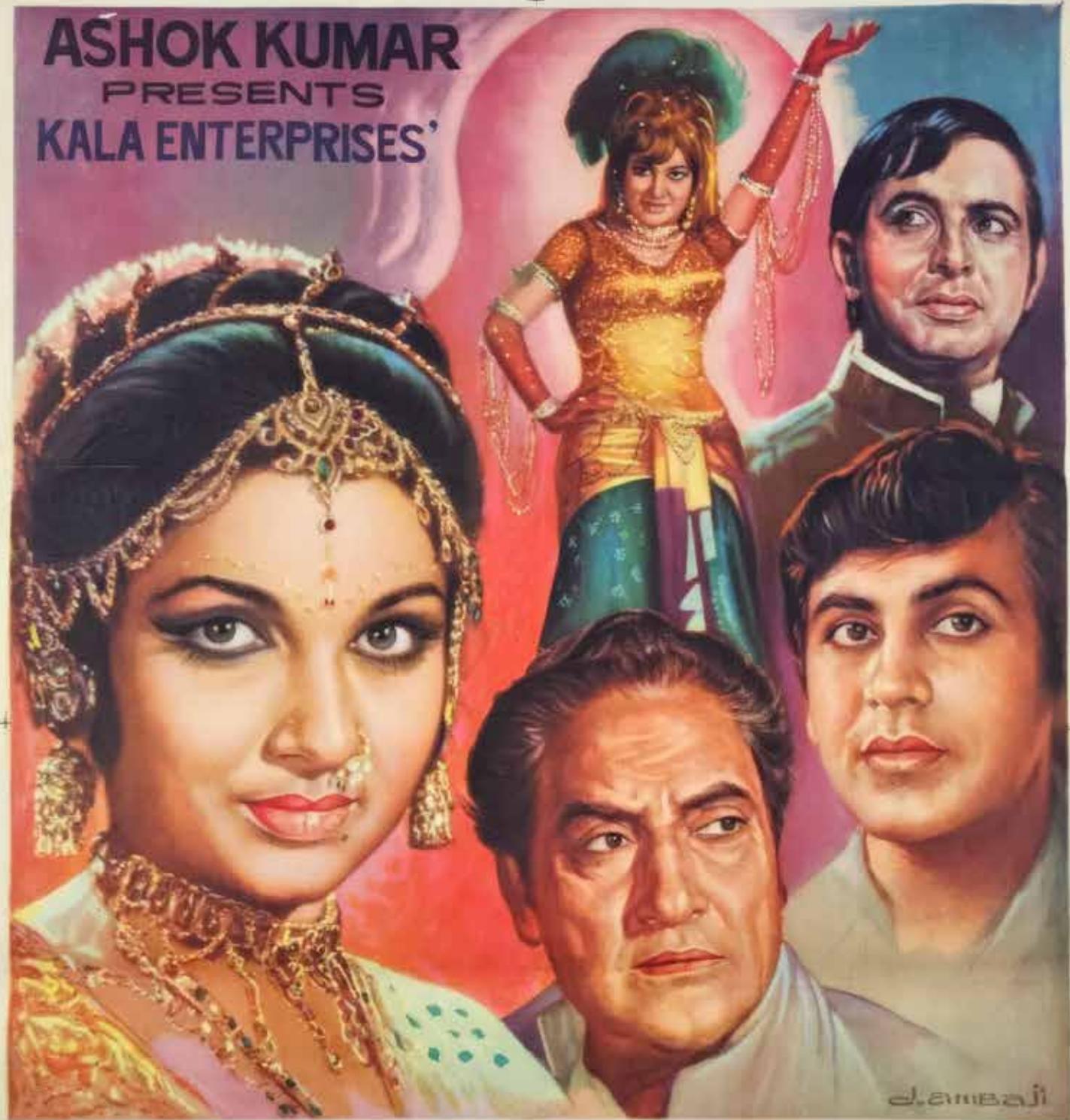
INDIA'S FIRST POP ART EXPORT

For millions of Indians who began migrating in the mid-20th century, Bollywood posters were not just advertisements for movies – they were emotional anchors that became a means of staying connected to their home and roots. Families carried their favourite posters or vinyl albums and cassettes along with them as they ventured abroad. These portable talismans helped preserve their culture and nourish their spirits whenever they longed for home.

Over time, these still-frame images of characters in romantic embrace, melodramatic expressions, and bright costumes came to represent Indian aesthetics to the world.

The palette and cinema imagery were instantly recognisable, featuring hennaed hands, kohl-lined eyes, bindis, swirling lehengas, and the unmistakable energy of a choreographed dance with melodious beats, usually set against a backdrop of green fields. This was pure pop culture: bold, saturated, and emotionally charged, and one of India's first forms of pop art export.

ASHOK KUMAR
PRESENTS
KALA ENTERPRISES'



D. Ambaji

अशोक कुमार
ब्लॉक प्रस्तुत

कला एन्टर प्राइजेज कृत

राखी और हथकड़ी

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MUSIC THAT MOVES THE WORLD

Bollywood's export is not just visual; it is profoundly musical too. Indian cinema tells stories about human resilience and aspiration, but uniquely through song and dance as a means of communication. These elements are foundation pillars and part of the emotional architecture of the magic experienced on screen. Through melodies we express longing, heartbreak, devotion, courage, and hope, transcending language barriers. This integral component keeps audiences hooked.

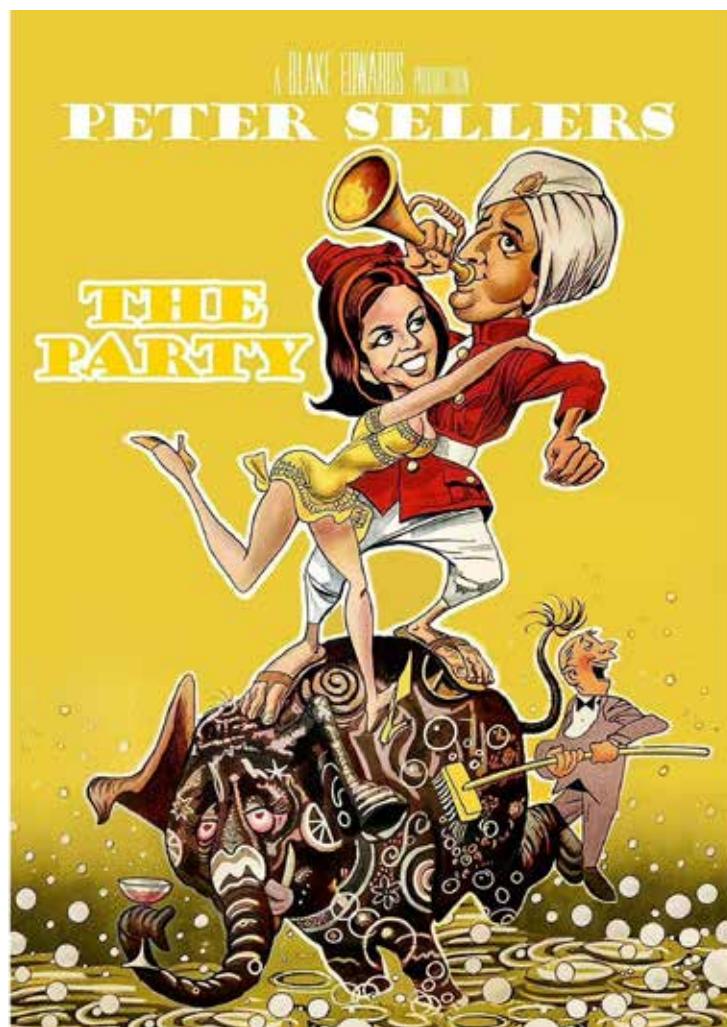
As a playback singer, I lend my voice to the emotion manifested on screen. When the music is paired with the visuals—the scene, the choreography, the acting—an ordinary moment becomes a cinematic spectacle for the viewer. This ability to capture music and imagery into a distinct emotional experience is what makes Bollywood special. It's essentially a universal emotive language that can be understood across continents. No wonder Bollywood found so much success overseas. In many regions, especially across the Middle East, the Far East, and Africa, audiences connected to Bollywood through its music first. People sang along to radio broadcasts or music tapes long before the films arrived in their region or could be watched in cinema halls. They familiarised themselves with the movies' songs and became invested in the film's characters long before watching the story unfold on screen by their favourite actors. By the time they watched the film, they could passionately sing along to the story with a genuine, emotional, and deep connection.

The winning formula of music and choreography from Bollywood has seeped into international cinema, with films like Moulin Rouge and Slumdog Millionaire that borrowed this style taking global audiences by storm. Slumdog Millionaire, in particular, featuring Indian composer A.R. Rahman's song "Jai Ho," swept up an Oscar and introduced Bollywood rhythms to the global mainstream. It's a crowd-pleaser that everyone has surely danced or sung along to at some point.



INDIA'S KALEIDOSCOPIC SOUL

When people think of "Bollywood," they often conjure up bright, colourful visions. This is no coincidence. India's relationship with colour predates its cinema. The sophisticated use of colour and pattern has been seen in India's artistic expression for millennia and is embedded in every aspect of culture, from rangoli patterns and textiles to temple decor and structures, sweets, spices, and jewellery. India even has entire cities dedicated to colour, such as Jaipur (the Pink City) and Jodhpur (the Blue City), and a traditional festival in celebration of colour itself: Holi! India uses the colour spectrum boldly and profusely.



A former Vogue editor, Diana Vreeland, famously declared, "Pink is the navy blue of India." This statement still resonates today. In October this year, the British Museum in London hosted its inaugural annual ball, dubbed the UK's version of 'The Met Gala', with an Indian theme. The gala, named 'The Pink Ball' in honour of India's hues, was held over the Diwali weekend and attended by the who's who of culture. Seeing Indian heritage celebrated on such a global stage filled me with pride.

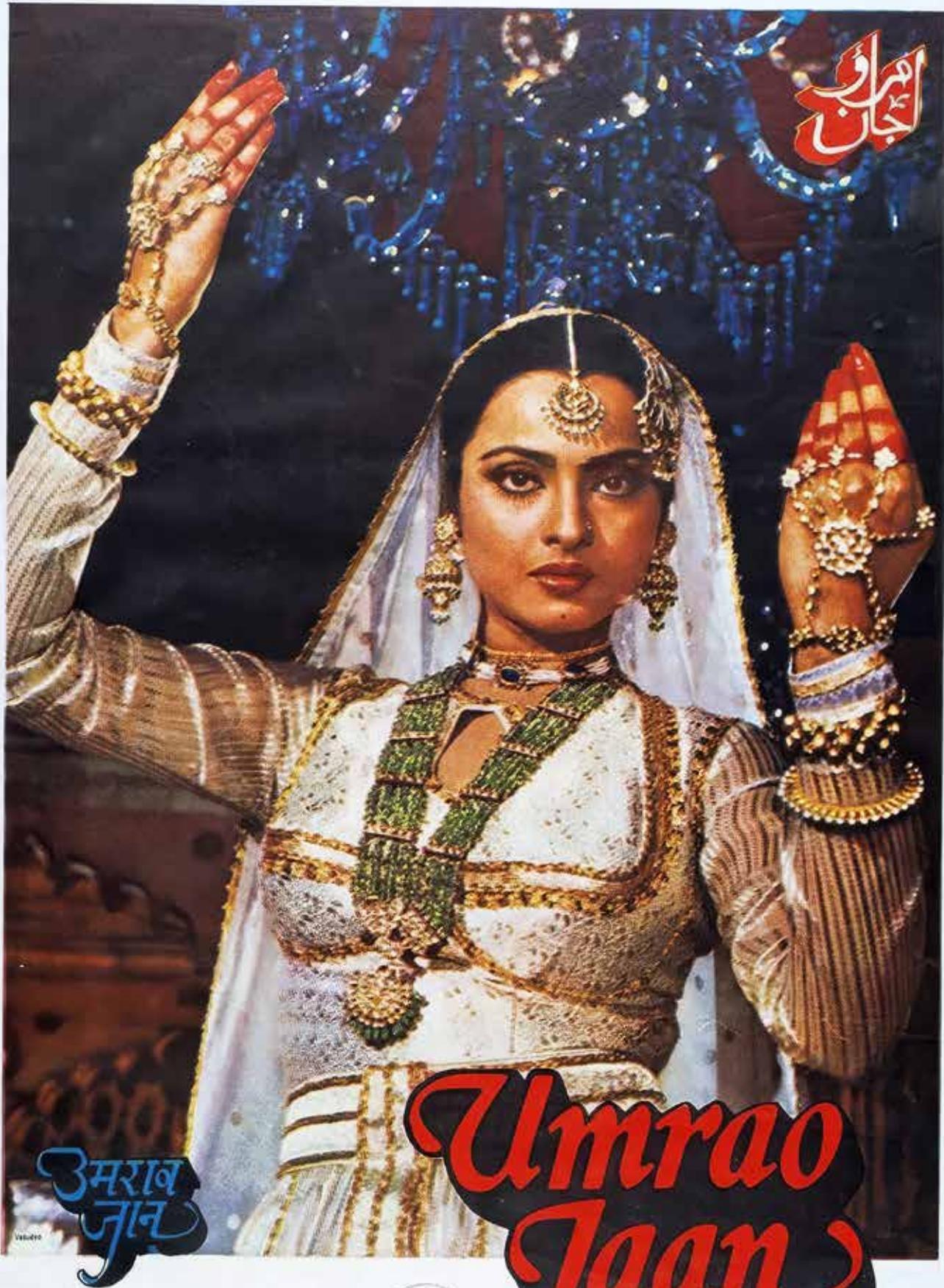
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A film by Muzaffar Ali

Music: Khayyam Lyrics: Shahryar

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BOLLYWOOD AND MODERN INDIAN FASHION

The visual language of Bollywood has strongly shaped modern Indian fashion too. In the early years, the industry incubated a wave of fashion designers who were initially employed by film studios to create costumes for actors. These designers gradually became mainstream fashion labels as fans mimicked the style of their favourite stars, fuelling the demand for their creations. Over time, influencing consumers' trends, these designers became household names in their own right.

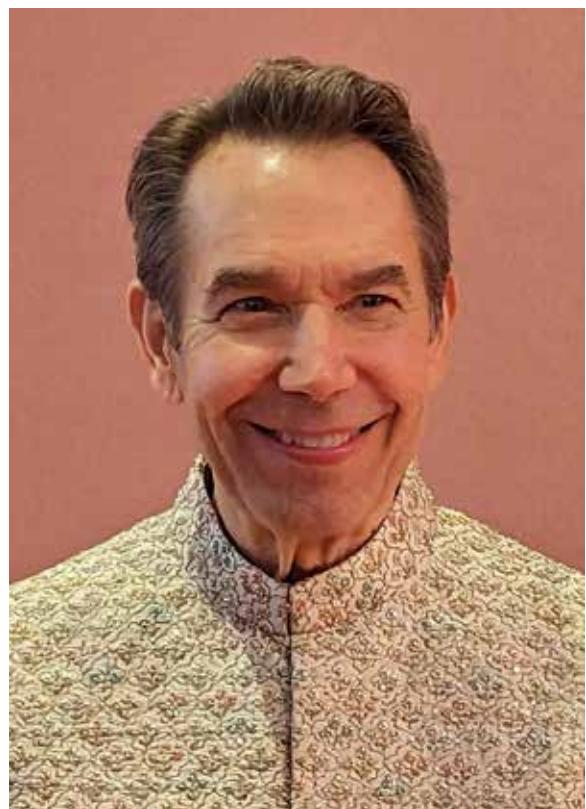
As Indian fashion gained popularity both domestically and among the diaspora, designers began to expand their global reach. Abu Jani & Sandeep Khosla, for instance, started dressing Hollywood icons at prestigious events like the Cannes Film Festival and the Oscars, introducing Indian fashion and craftsmanship to a wider audience. Soon after, Sabyasachi, Manish Arora, and Anamika Khanna followed suit, opening boutiques in London, New York, Dubai, and Los Angeles to cater to the growing fascination with traditional Indian fashion.

Today, designers like Rahul Mishra and Gaurav Gupta continue to push the boundaries of fashion, creating avant-garde creations rooted in Indian craftsmanship. However, it's worth noting that many international couture houses have long relied on Indian artisans for their production. Brands like Dior, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Givenchy, Chanel, and YSL have sourced specialised embroidery, beadwork, textiles, and embellishments from India. In recent years, these brands have begun to acknowledge this collaboration more openly, either by creating collections inspired by India or, as Dior recently did, by taking major fashion shows to India. Their historic 2023 show at the iconic Gateway of India monument in Mumbai, paid homage to these craftsmen, celebrating their pivotal role in shaping luxury fashion.

THE BIG, FAT, INDIAN WEDDING

If Indian fashion is a manifestation of Bollywood's glamour, then the Indian wedding is the grand stage on which it is showcased. For decades, Indian families have hosted extravagant celebrations overseas, in cities like Paris, Monaco, Venice, Istanbul, and Bali. The "big fat Indian wedding" became an international phenomenon, with A-list artists performing for guests. A sea of sparkle, music, and colour would descend upon these cities with an exciting flourish of Indian culture, couture, and festivity.

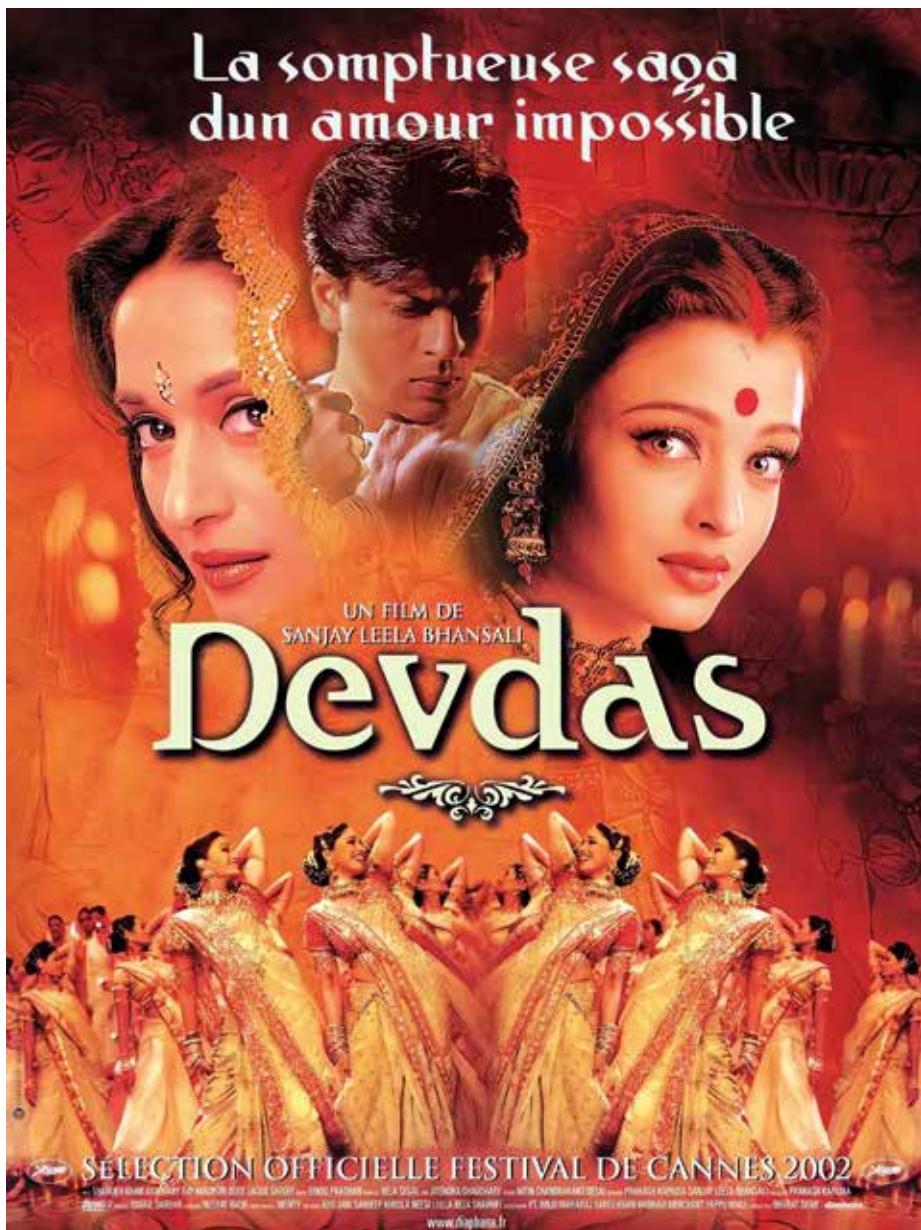
However, the trend has reversed of late, with the bigger, fatter, Indian weddings now being held on home turf. The world now flocks to India's cities, captivated by her hospitality and to experience lavish celebrations and the exuberant energy of a Hindu wedding. Many of these events have made headlines due to their scale and opulence. For instance, the Ambani family wedding of 2024, with its unmatched grandeur and dazzling VVIP guest list, captured global attention and affirmed India as a progressive epicentre of culture and luxury.



Jeff Koons wearing Manish Malhotra couture at NMACC (Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre) inauguration in Mumbai

DIAMONDS ARE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

Of course, no discussion of an Indian wedding is complete without mentioning the bling. The glittering outfits displayed at these celebrations are only ever outshone by the fabulous jewels that accompany them. India has a deep and historic association with jewellery, renowned for its famed Golconda diamond mines and spectacular Mughal-era jewels displayed in museums worldwide. Many royal families of India were among the greatest clients of European houses like Cartier and Chaumet, commissioning treasure troves of heirlooms. Many of these have been curated for display at recent sell-out exhibitions, such as the V&A this year. The relationship between Indian jewellery houses and the subcontinent was symbiotic. These houses found inspiration in Indian aesthetics and relied on the subcontinent to source precious materials like diamonds, gemstones, and gold. During this centuries-long exchange, many introduced Indian-inspired designs and motifs into their collections, influencing tastes across Europe and beyond. A lesser-known fact is that Harry Winston's principal designer, for four decades, was an Indian jewellery master named Ambaji Shinde whose designs even had Marilyn Monroe famously crooning. This demonstrates how intertwined India is with global luxury even today, as seen in contemporary houses like Bulgari continuing to create marvellous pieces inspired by India.



BOLLYWOOD AS A CULTURAL AMBASSADOR

Bollywood, more than just cinema, serves as a cultural ambassador. Through its imagery, music, fashion, festivals, and stories, Bollywood has not only travelled but has also taken root. Everywhere I go, I meet artists who tell me about their experiences growing up listening to Bollywood songs or watching Bollywood films, and the profound impact it has had on them. They remember the colours, melodies, and emotions. This connection has created a bridge that unites people. This cultural diffusion is evident in everyday life around the world too. We see it in our chai lattes, pashmina shawls, yoga studios, turmeric and ashwagandha supplements, and even in the Arabic numerals that are actually Indian ('Hindu') numerals. The soaring

popularity of Indian cuisine is another example, with luxury groups like LVMH investing in the brand Darjeeling Express. Bollywood continues to steam ahead, expanding and transcending boundaries, offering the world multi-faceted aspects of India's cultural soul—a soul that sings, dances, loves extravagantly, and celebrates colour unabashedly.

As a singer who gets to be part of this legacy, I feel an immense sense of privilege. When audiences listen to my songs, I know they're not just connecting with my voice, but with an emotion shaped over generations of Indian artistry and expression. This vibrant, emotional, and enduring connection invites the world not just to have a taste India, but to feel and experience it passionately. ♦





One of the Greatest Rolex Watch Collections

By Laurent Reiss. All images are Courtesy of Collection Monegasque, Capital Editions



1 — Rolex Diamonds on Black 'Padellone', Ref. 8171, Stainless Steel, Circa 1960

2 — Rolex Black 'Stelline', Ref. 6062, 18K Gold, 1953

3 — Laurent Reiss

THE EVOLUTION OF A COLLECTOR

Watch collecting is not a hobby that one enters lightly. It requires patience, discipline, knowledge, and above all, a deep passion for timepieces as cultural objects. For me, this journey began in the most natural of places: Geneva. To grow up in Geneva is to breathe in an atmosphere where horology is not only a craft but part of daily life, woven into the history and identity of the city itself. Inevitably, this environment shaped my destiny.

From an early age, I was fascinated by watches. My first one was a simple digital Casio—hardly the stuff of legend, yet it ignited a spark. That little watch taught me the joy of timekeeping and the beauty of mechanical precision, even if it was electronic. As I grew older, my tastes matured. I graduated to more serious mechanical pieces, such as the Omega Speedmaster and the a Rolex Explorer II. These early acquisitions were stepping stones, each one a teacher in its own right, guiding me deeper into the world of horology.

Over the years, my interest in watchmaking transformed into a genuine passion. I became more focused, more demanding of what I wanted in a timepiece. I realized that building a collection was not merely about

accumulation; it was about curation. To collect without purpose is to amass objects without meaning. To collect with discipline is to tell a story, to create a legacy. My collection grew rapidly. At one point, I owned more than 300 watches spanning a wide variety of brands, models, and eras. Each one was acquired with enthusiasm and a curiosity to learn more. Some were rare, others common but significant for personal reasons. The experience of owning so many watches taught me invaluable lessons about quality, market trends, and above all, my own tastes.

However, there came a time when I realized that my approach needed to change. A true collection is not judged by size but by focus and depth. Owning hundreds of watches might seem impressive, but ultimately, it is a distraction. I wanted to build something more meaningful: the world's best Rolex collection that would stand as a benchmark of quality and refinement. Rolex, to me, represents the pinnacle of what makes a watch collectible. Its history is unparalleled, its designs timeless, and its quality unmatched. To focus on Rolex was to focus on perfection. It was not an easy decision to sell or trade so many watches in order to concentrate on a smaller, sharper goal. But as in any discipline, sacrifice is necessary.



WHAT MAKES A WATCH COLLECTIBLE?

Quality and rarity. Above everything else, quality is the defining trait of a collectible watch. One cannot compromise here. A vintage Rolex may not always be rare in absolute numbers, but its craftsmanship, its patina, and its place in history make it unique.

In addition to quality, collectability comes from story. Watches are storytellers: they speak of their owners, their eras, and the milestones they witnessed. A Rolex Submariner worn by a diver in the 1960s, a Daytona carried by a racing driver, or a GMT-Master taken around the world—all carry narratives that transform them into cultural icons.

4 — Rolex Chronograph Rattrapante, Ref. 4113, Stainless Steel, 1942

5 — Rolex Daytona Tropical 'Paul Newman' Lemon, Ref. 6264, 18K Gold, Circa 1970

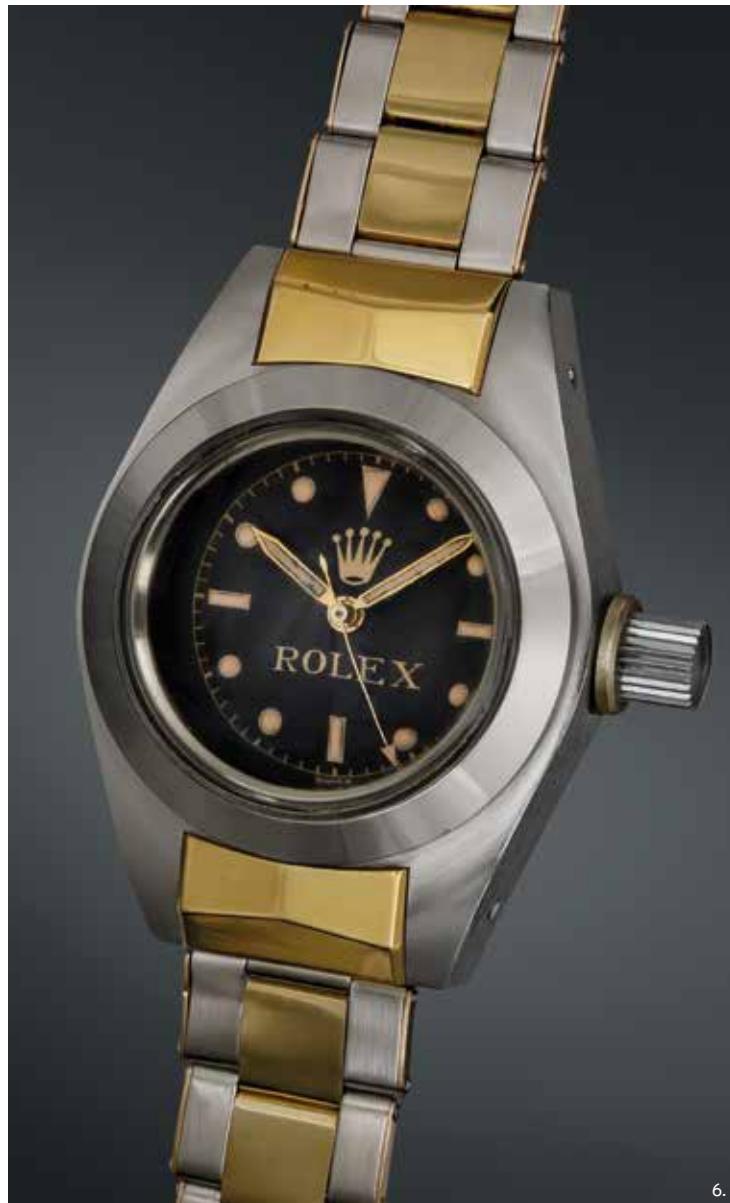
THE DISCIPLINE OF SELECTION

When I look back at my evolution as a collector, I see discipline as the central theme. At first, like many, I bought with passion and spontaneity. But soon I realized that passion without discipline leads to chaos. To build a great collection, one must be selective, thoughtful, and strategic.

Today, my goal remains very clear: to assemble the world's top 10 Rolex watches. This means carefully curating the finest examples of legendary models—watches that represent the very best of the brand. Each watch must be perfect in quality, provenance, and condition. Each must have a rightful place in the narrative of Rolex history.

This is not merely about personal satisfaction. It is about creating a collection that could inspire other collectors and enthusiasts. To have ten Rolex watches that stand among the very best in the world is to elevate watch collecting into an art form.







THE COLLECTOR'S PHILOSOPHY

Do I wear the watches I collect? Absolutely. A watch is not a museum piece locked away forever. It is a living object that comes alive on the wrist. Of course, some watches are more fragile or valuable than others, but I believe that wearing them, even occasionally, is part of honoring their craftsmanship.

My philosophy has always been to balance fun with seriousness. Some watches I wore just for the joy of it, while others became pillars of my collection. Once on the wrist, each watch has the same value to me: it becomes part of my personal story.

This philosophy also extends to my interest in other fields. For example, I have long collected French interior design from the 1950s through the 1970s. The same principles apply: quality, discipline, and story. A chair, a lamp, or a table from that era carries the same cultural weight and craftsmanship as a fine watch.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

For young collectors, my advice is simple: discipline. Collect with passion, yes, but also with focus. Decide on your objective and pursue it with patience. Do not be distracted by every new release or every passing trend. Think long-term.

Understand that a watch collection is not built overnight. It is a journey that requires sacrifices, both financial and personal. You may need to sell or trade to upgrade, to move closer to your goal. There is no shame in this; in fact, it is essential. You are not a hoarder—you are a curator.

THE FUTURE OF WATCH COLLECTING

Tastes change, fashions evolve, and future generations may not be as fascinated by mechanical watches as we are today. Perhaps digital lifestyles will overshadow mechanical craftsmanship. Or perhaps, precisely because of the digital age, mechanical watches will become even more treasured as symbols of heritage and permanence.

Whatever the case, I believe that true quality will always endure. A Rolex Daytona or a Submariner from the golden era of watchmaking will remain desirable because it embodies timeless values. Watch collecting is not just about timepieces, is a lifelong journey, and for me, the adventure is far from over. ◇



Art as Jewellery

By Louisa Guinness
All photos by Simon de Pury



‘Some people like an artwork on their wall; I prefer to wear one’.



1 — Claude Lalanne, *Petit Gui*, 1990

2 — Louisa Guinness wearing *Boules des deux côtés d'un cylindre*, a bracelet by Pol Bury, 1968, *Papillon Bracelet* by Claude Lalanne and *Water Earrings, Form I, Small*, 2010 by Anish Kapoor

3 — Man Ray, *La Jolie*, 1970

One of my favourite moments is when someone walks into my gallery for the first time and exclaims, “OMG, I never knew Picasso did jewellery!” This revelation often sparks a journey of fascination as people discover which artists have made jewellery, how it connects to their wider body of work, and, ultimately, may ignite a new passion.

When I published my book, *Art as Jewellery: From Calder to Kapoor*, in 2017 (alas, now out of print), it was intended as an introduction to this extraordinary niche within the art and jewellery markets. Many are surprised by the number of renowned artists who turned to making jewels, often beginning with pieces for family or friends. Sometimes, connections in the jewellery world encouraged them toward more commercial ventures.

Artists—by which I mean painters and sculptors—have been designing jewellery for years. While both the “precious art jewel” and the “artist’s jewel”

occupy similar territory, there is in fact a world of difference between them. Jewellery is widely recognised as an art form, but its status is frequently overshadowed by an emphasis on precious materials or ostentatious design. Unencumbered by traditional production techniques, artists often design jewellery with a freer, more conceptual hand. The result is sometimes “art for art’s sake,” without even a thought for the wearer. Yet, in my view, the most successful artist jewels are unmistakably part of the artist’s extended oeuvre; they act as another medium for creative expression.

Jewellery has existed since ancient times, but for this exploration, I’ll begin in the 20th century.

The grandfather of it all—and, in my view, the best—is Alexander Calder. As a child, he made necklaces and earrings for his sisters’ dolls. Later, while staying with friends, he was known to sneak into their cutlery drawers at night and reshape beloved knives and forks into



4.

4 — Claude Lalanne, *Leaf Necklace* c 1970

5 — Louisa Guinness on the steps of her gallery attracting customers

brooches, often with the host's initials. Calder was never without his pliers and was always making or experimenting, moving naturally from small wearable objects to large scale sculpture. He never trained as a jeweller and used mostly silver and brass, although later, as he had more money, he made a few pieces in gold. You will never find any solder in his work—only twisted wire or occasionally a rivet holding the pieces together. He hammered out the metal, leaving distinctive hammer marks which became an important way of recognising his work. Producing around 1,800 unique works, some are signed; all are authenticated with a Calder Foundation archive number—a vital safeguard against forgery. Calder

famously resisted suggestions to create editions, insisting, "Why should someone else have my fun?"

A Calder mobile appears dull and lifeless in its crate; it becomes animated only when in motion. Likewise, Calder's jewellery is meant to be worn or to perform—the wearer becomes part of the artwork, a participant in the spectacle.

Claude Lalanne was another artist for whom jewellery was a vital, personal art. She and her husband, François-Xavier worked together for many years, but only Claude made jewellery, creating some of the most sought-after works on the market today. She immortalised flora from her garden, electroplating stems and

LOUISA GUINNESS GALLERY

104

104



leaves into copper and working the patina into her signature pinkish burnish.

Enduring artist-made jewellery is almost always the result of a close partnership with a skilled goldsmith or editor. Successfully “scaling down” original artistic ideas is not as simple as it sounds; proportions must be rethought, and it requires a trained eye to achieve balance on a miniature scale.

Among the most important facilitators was GianCarlo Montebello, who collaborated with more than 50 artists—Fontana, Niki de Saint Phalle, Man Ray, Larry Rivers, among others—producing jewellery unlike anything else in history. With his wife, Teresa Pomodoro (whose brothers, Arnaldo and Gio, were goldsmiths who also became artists), Montebello reinvigorated the world of artist’s jewels from 1967 to 1978. His arrangement with Joan Sonnabend, whose New York gallery ‘Sculpture to Wear’ specialised in these works, She was instrumental in opening the eyes of many to the interplay of jewellery, sculpture, design, adornment and art and was the conduit to the great shores of America.

François Hugo was another great creator who provided the route to gold for many artists. In Vallauris, in the south of France, Hugo persuaded Picasso—after creating large silver platters—to permit him to make “medallion” editions in 23ct gold. Through Picasso, Hugo worked with Max Ernst, Cocteau, Tinguely, and others. Many of these pieces are editions, some still in production today. The most valuable retain their original boxes and certificates; if made during the artist’s lifetime, collectors value them even more highly.

In 2002, I opened my gallery and was the first to have a space dedicated solely to artists’ jewels—dealing, collecting, and commissioning new works. Attending fairs and travelling, I spread the word about this exciting field. I wrote a book, often give lectures, and have collaborated with contemporary artists including Anish Kapoor, Antony Gormley, Ed Ruscha, Gavin Turk, and many others. My goal has always been to illuminate this quickly growing intersection of art and jewellery. Awareness and excitement around artist jewellery have surged, not least due to the energy and scholarship of collector Diane Venet, who has organised landmark exhibitions in New York, Palm Beach, Monaco, and beyond.

As market awareness spreads, so do values. Top results include a rare silver Calder necklace that fetched \$1.9 million in 2013. Since then, while a few exceptional pieces have appeared—Salvador Dalí’s *Eye of Time* brooch sold for just over \$1 million in 2014, and, more recently, the *Swirling Sea* necklace achieved €732,000 in Paris—there are still relatively few masterpieces in emerging. Claude Lalanne’s jewellery continues to attract strong bids—her vermeil *Les Groseilles* earrings reached nearly \$50,000, and her gilded *Dahlia* necklace sold for \$114,000 in 2022.

The field continues to grow as crossovers multiply. The historical connection between fashion, design, and art is evident in collaborations such as Schiaparelli’s work with artists in the early 20th century, or Alberto Giacometti’s transformation of drawer handles and



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6 — Louisa Guinness wearing *Disc Ring*, 2012, 18ct Rose Gold by Anish Kapoor; *Grasshopper Ring* 18ct gold by Rob Wynne, *Papillon Bracelet* by Claude Lalanne and *Water Earrings, Form I, Small*, 2010 by Anish Kapoor

7 — Pol Bury, *Boules des deux côtés d'un cylindre Bracelet*, 1968

buttons into wearable art. Dalí, too, designed for both attire and shop windows. Meret Oppenheim was inspired by a chance meeting with Picasso in Paris to create a Fur Cuff, from this she created the famous fur teacup—an icon of MoMA. Louise Bourgeois’s gold and silver spider brooches, made with Spanish designer Chus Burés in 1996, are among the most in-demand pieces collectors ask me about.

As the appetite for individualism and boldness endures, the intersection of fashion and art will only intensify. Jewellery designed by artists will grow in cultural significance, its coded allure passing subtly among those “in the know.” A nod from a fellow wearer acknowledges not just good taste but membership in a global, quietly exhilarating community—one now drawing in curious and passionate young collectors.

“One should either be a work of art or wear a work of art.”

—Oscar Wilde ♦



State of Gold

By Fabrizio Moretti





1 — Giotto, *Virgin and Child enthroned, surrounded by angels and saints* (Ognissanti Maestà), c. 1300–1305, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
 2 — Pietro Cavallini, *Annunciation* (from the Circle with stories of the Virgin), c. 1291–1295, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome

Since time immemorial, gold has been regarded as one of the most precious of metals, employed both as a medium of exchange and as a means of adornment. It has long functioned as a marker of opulence and material abundance. Yet, to my mind, gold possesses a value that surpasses the merely worldly: it is endowed with a spiritual resonance.

When I first entered the art trade, the material that captured my imagination above all others was my father Alfredo's own speciality: the painting of the Trecento, more commonly referred to as gold-ground painting. As early as the thirteenth century, artists were already working upon gold grounds. Gold was treasured not merely for the distinction it conferred upon a work, but for its ability to sublimate the figures and lend them an otherworldly radiance. One need only call to mind the great altarpieces by Cimabue, Giotto's master, at the close of the Duecento. Federico Zeri, the most eminent art historian of the last century, once observed — perhaps with a hint of irony — that after Giotto, humanity invented nothing truly new.

Giotto, indeed, marks the advent of modern art. He employs gold not simply to embellish, but above all to articulate a newly conceived sense of space. In Trecento painting, the gold ground is an element of both sanctity and beauty — consider, for instance, the extraordinary mosaics of Pietro Cavallini, an artist every bit as monumental as Giotto. The fourteenth century, an age of profound artistic and cultural transformation, witnessed the apotheosis of the gold ground in Italian painting. Though at first it may appear a purely decorative component, it was, in fact, vital to the visual language of the period. The gold ground, that luminous field characteristic of so many works of the Trecento, was far more than an aesthetic choice: it symbolised sanctity and the divine. Gold — noble, incorruptible, and eternally radiant — embodied divine light and the glory of God. By employing it, painters sought to evoke divine presence and guide the viewer towards an experience of transcendence and awe.



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3 — Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1290–1300, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 4 — Cimabue, *Maestà*, c. 1289, Musée du Louvre, Paris
 5 — Fra Angelico, *Christ glorified in the court of heaven*, c. 1423–1424, National Gallery, London
 6 — Paolo Veneziano, *Pala Feriale*, c. 1345, Basilica di San Marco, Venice
 7 — Giovanni di Paolo, *Virgin of Humility*, c. 1440, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid
 8 — Fabrizio Moretti
 9 — Gherardo di Jacopo Starnina, *Saint Vincent*, c. 1410, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
 10 — Urs Fischer, *Marsupiale (Fabrizio)*, 2017, Piazza della Signoria, Florence



9.

The painted panels of these artists transport us into a metaphysical realm. The technique itself was demanding and required consummate skill. Gold leaf was laid upon a gesso or wooden support, then refined through techniques such as tooling and punchwork to create decorative motifs and intricate textures. The result was a scintillating surface that appeared almost to emit its own light. Thus, in Trecento painting, the gold ground was not merely ornamental, but a true vehicle of spiritual and artistic expression. Through it, painters produced works that transcended the boundaries of the visible world and invited the viewer into an atmosphere of sanctity and wonder. This sophisticated practice endured until the mid-fifteenth century, as demonstrated by the masterpieces of Lorenzo Monaco

and Fra Angelico — two artists currently celebrated in a magnificent exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi in Florence. Numerous artists of the twentieth century and of our own day — De Dominicis, Fontana, Stingel, Cattelan, to name only a few — have employed gold in their work. Yet, in my considered view, none has attained the sublimity of the great masters of the past. Today, I continue both to handle and to collect these splendid Trecento works. Gold-ground painting is, in truth, timeless. Although I cherish contemporary art, I do not believe there exist objects more genuinely modern than these gilded panels conceived centuries ago.

Perhaps Federico Zeri was right after all. ♦



Collecting Infinity

Takaya Awata and the Art of Lou Zhenggang

By Takaya Awata



2.

1 — Lou Zhenggang, *Untitled*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas, 162 × 130 cm
2 — Takaya Awata

**“At times, it gives me courage. At other times, comfort.
Art offers a power beyond words.”**

— Takaya Awata

There are moments in life when a work of art does not simply move you — it changes your direction. For me, that moment arrived in 2022, on an early autumn afternoon in Izu.

I had come to visit the calligrapher and painter Lou Zhenggang, whose work I had admired from afar. Her studio stood quietly above the sea, bathed in a kind

of stillness that seemed to contain the whole movement of the world. We spoke for hours, surrounded by brushes, canvases, and light. By the time I left, I knew that encounter had altered something fundamental in me. Since then, Lou’s art has become a constant companion — a mirror, a teacher, and, in some ways, a compass.



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3–5 — Lou Zhenggang in the studio
6 — Lou Zhenggang, *Untitled*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 162 × 130 cm



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A LIFE SHAPED BY DISCIPLINE AND FREEDOM

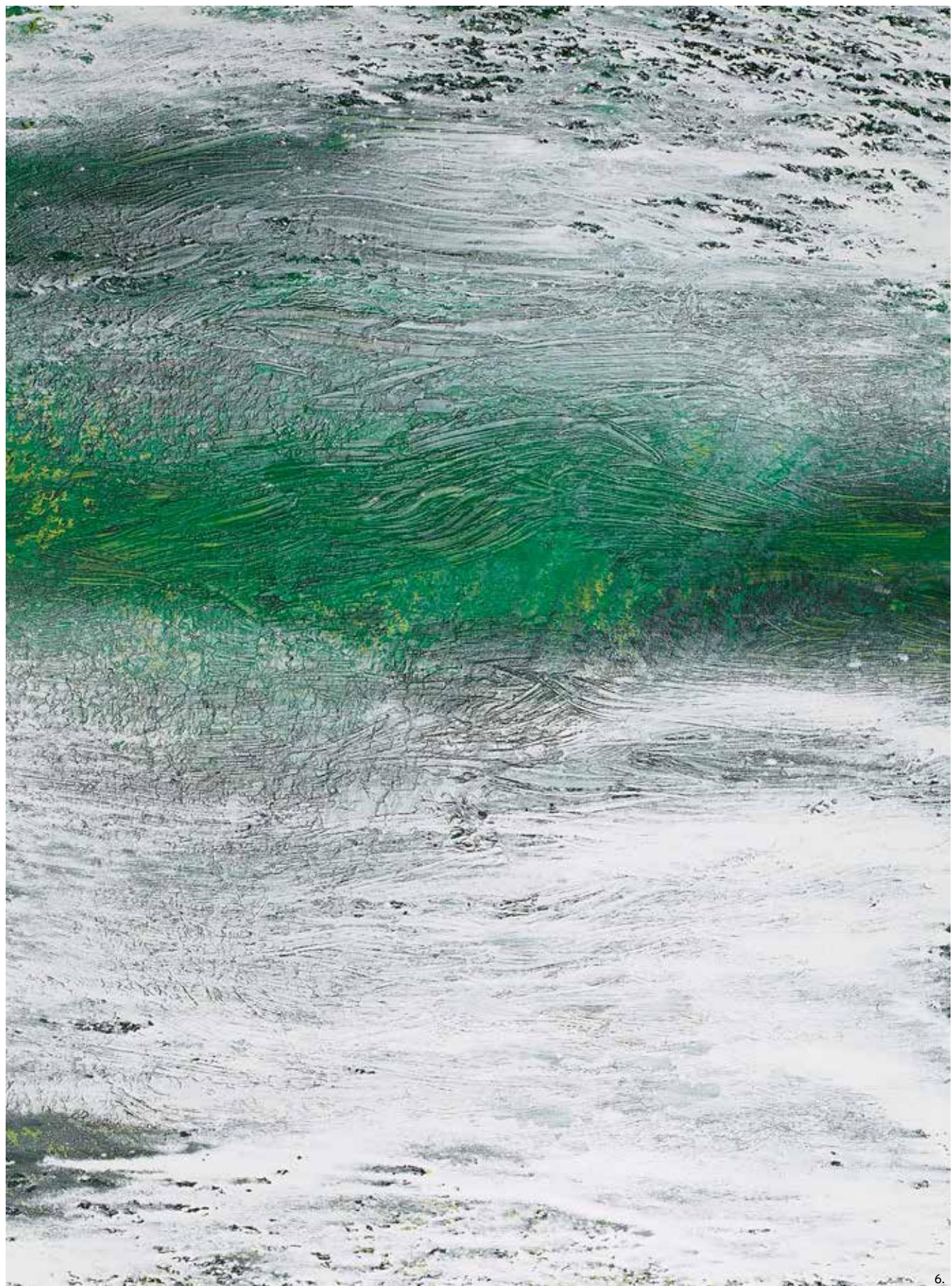
Born in Heilongjiang Province in 1966, Lou Zhenggang was a prodigy of calligraphy before she was even a teenager. Under her father's guidance, she mastered the brush — not as an instrument of obedience, but as a means of discovery. By her twenties, she had already earned wide recognition in China. But her ambitions reached further than praise. In 1986 she moved to Japan, a decision that freed her from the weight of expectation. There she began to unlearn, to question, to strip her art to its barest essence. Over the next three decades she would hold more than twenty-seven solo exhibitions across Asia and the United States, each tracing the contours of an evolving self.

Lou's work moves between precision and release — between the centuries-old rigor of calligraphy and the wild openness of abstraction. Her titles read almost like fragments of poetry: *Life and Love*, *Heart*, *Harmony*, *Vitality*, *Nature*. Each one gestures toward something elemental — the pulse of being itself. In recent years she has returned to painting with renewed intensity. From her studio in Izu, overlooking Sagami Bay, she created the *Untitled* series — vast, luminous abstractions that hover between silence and explosion. These works were featured in *Abstraction: The Genesis and Evolution of Abstract Painting* at Tokyo's Artizon Museum in 2023, a landmark exhibition that placed her among the great modern innovators of form and feeling.

The following year, her monumental folding screens were exhibited at Yakushiji Temple in Nara, a World Heritage site. To see her work within those ancient halls — sacred air mingling with contemporary paint — was to sense how art collapses time itself.

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7 — Lou Zhenggang, *Untitled*, 2025. Acrylic on canvas, 162 × 130 cm. Exhibition view at the AWATA COLLECTION, Tokyo
 8 — Lou Zhenggang, *Untitled*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas, 145.5 × 145.5 cm

A COLLECTOR'S TURNING POINT

I had collected art before, but never like this. Encountering Lou's work was not a decision of intellect; it was something closer to necessity. Her paintings did not speak — they breathed. They asked questions without words: about energy, solitude, the discipline of creation. And they seemed to contain within them a vast, unmeasured space — one that felt deeply familiar. That experience led me to begin collecting her work in earnest, eventually forming what is now known as the Awata Collection. In 2024, I opened Gallery L in Hiroo, Tokyo — a private space dedicated entirely to Lou Zhenggang's art. Visitors who enter often describe a sense of suspension, as though the air itself were listening. From her early avant-garde calligraphic pieces to her recent acrylic paintings, the gallery holds the full arc of her journey. The centerpiece is a monumental work nearly ten meters tall — a painting that seems less like an object than an atmosphere. For me, each piece functions like a meditation — a way of clearing space inside the mind. "When I stand before her work," I often say, "my imagination expands without limit."

COLLECTING AS A FORM OF DIALOGUE

People sometimes ask why I collect only one artist. I suppose the answer is that I am not collecting *objects* at all — I am collecting a *conversation*. To devote oneself to a single artist requires patience and humility. It is not about ownership, but about listening. Over time, the act of collecting becomes a kind of apprenticeship in perception. You begin to sense shifts not only in the artist's evolution but in your own. In business, I have always believed that imagination determines scale. The larger your vision, the further your enterprise can grow. Lou's paintings embody that principle. They remind me that imagination is not an indulgence but a discipline — one that demands both rigor and faith. Entrepreneurship and art share this paradox. Each requires structure, yet both depend on the ability to leap beyond what can be measured. Lou's work reveals that balance perfectly — the coexistence of precision and freedom, of restraint and wildness.



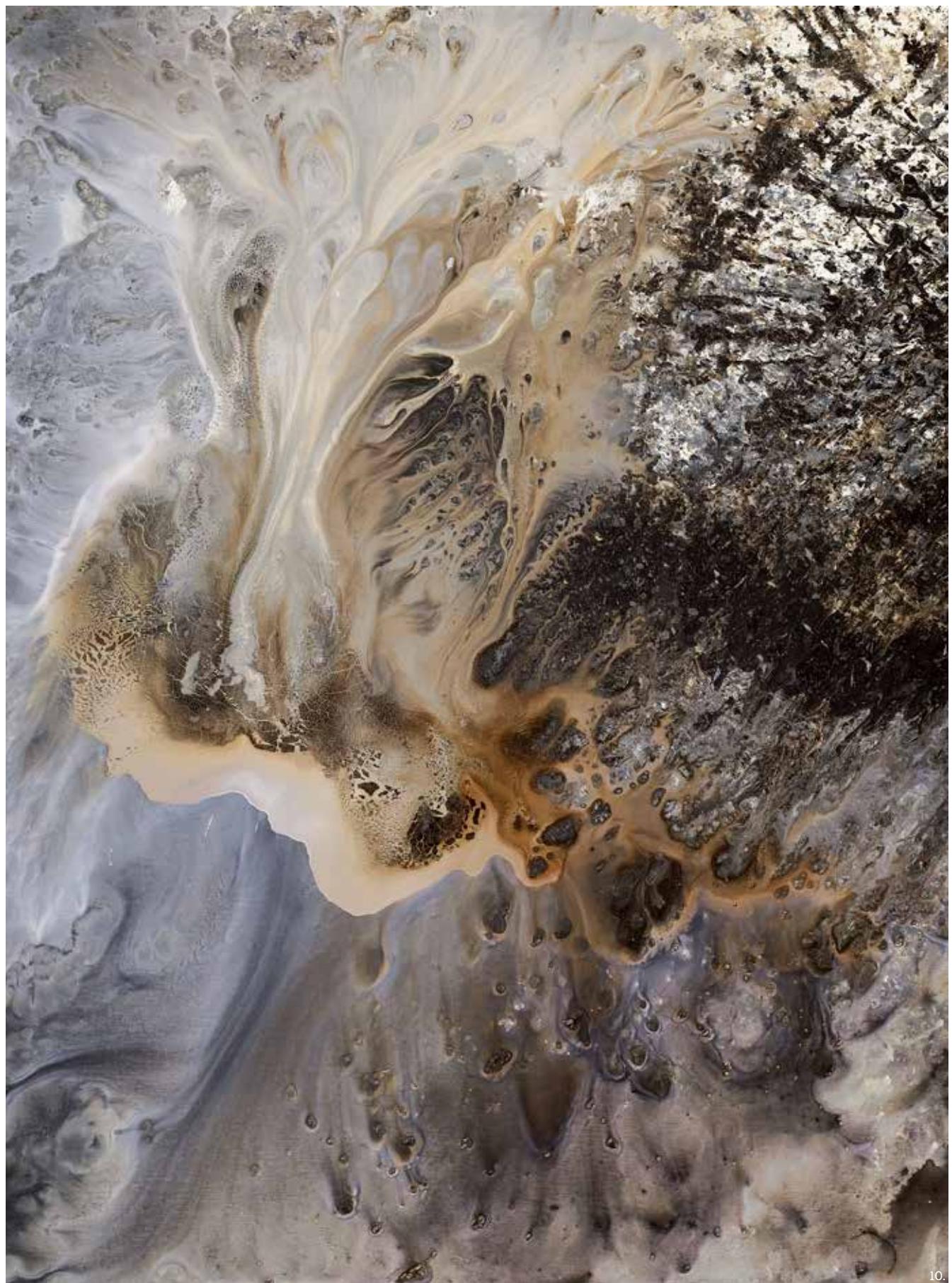
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THE NATURE OF SHIZEN

Lou often speaks of *shizen*, a Japanese word that translates as “nature,” but also as “naturalness” or “spontaneity.” In her art, *shizen* is not imitation — it is revelation. It is the state of allowing what is innately human to move through the brush. Her paintings might appear spontaneous, but each gesture is the result of tireless repetition, honed over decades. She once told me that the most difficult thing is to paint as if you were not painting — to reach a state where every stroke emerges from the body’s memory rather than the mind’s control. When I first stood before her *Shizen* series — later shown at Almine Rech in

London, in 2024, I understood what she meant. The works were alive with contradiction: disciplined yet free, intimate yet vast. They could be read as abstraction or as landscapes of emotion. They seemed to breathe with the same rhythm as the earth itself. For many in the West, that exhibition marked their first encounter with Lou Zhenggang. To them, her art felt both foreign and deeply familiar — an aesthetic language that transcends geography. Comparisons have been made to Zao Wou-Ki or Cy Twombly, but her voice is unmistakably her own: rooted in Asia’s spiritual traditions, yet universal in its humanity.







9 — Lou Zhenggang, *Untitled*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 194 × 162 cm

10 — Lou Zhenggang, *Untitled*, 2018. Acrylic on canvas, 116.8 × 91 cm

11 — Lou Zhenggang, *Untitled*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 194 × 810 cm. Exhibition view at the AWATA COLLECTION, Tokyo



A BRIDGE BETWEEN WORLDS

Throughout Asia, Lou's art has long been embraced by major collectors and institutions, with her works appearing at China Guardian and Poly Auction. Yet her presence beyond Asia is still unfolding. In this sense, the AWATA COLLECTION acts as both archive and bridge — a record of her evolution and a gesture toward her future recognition. Each painting carries not only her touch but also the quiet dialogue between artist and collector, between imagination and belief. True collecting, I think, is an act of faith. It is not about accumulating value but about protecting a vision — preserving a certain way of seeing the world. When I stand inside Gallery L, surrounded by her works, I feel as if I'm inside that vision, inside a space where imagination and reality finally overlap.

THE POWER OF IMAGINATION

I often return to the idea that imagination has no limit. In both business and art, it is the invisible engine that transforms possibility into form. Without imagination, there is no creation; without faith, there is no continuation. Lou's paintings give form to that faith. They are, in a sense, visual meditations on what cannot be spoken. The brushstrokes move like breath — sudden, deliberate, alive. Sometimes they explode with colour; other times, they fade into silence. Standing before them, I find courage in their quiet intensity. I am reminded that every great endeavour — whether a painting or a company — begins as something unseen, a pulse within the mind that insists on becoming real.

A PRIVATE DIALOGUE, SHARED PUBLICLY

When people visit Gallery L, I tell them there is no need to interpret. Just stand and breathe. The works will do the rest. Collecting Lou Zhenggang has never been about display. It is about resonance — the vibration that occurs when imagination meets devotion. I consider the AWATA COLLECTION not an achievement but an ongoing conversation, one that continues to change me with each passing year. If this exhibition, or this story, leads others to encounter Lou's art for the first time, then perhaps it will serve its truest purpose: to open a door. Because art, at its core, is not about possession. It is about connection — the brief, luminous moment when one person's imagination ignites another's. And in that moment, the infinite becomes tangible. ♦

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<https://gallery-l.com>

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The Monet Centenary: A Forgotten Scandal

By Marianne Mathieu





2.

1 — Marianne Mathieu

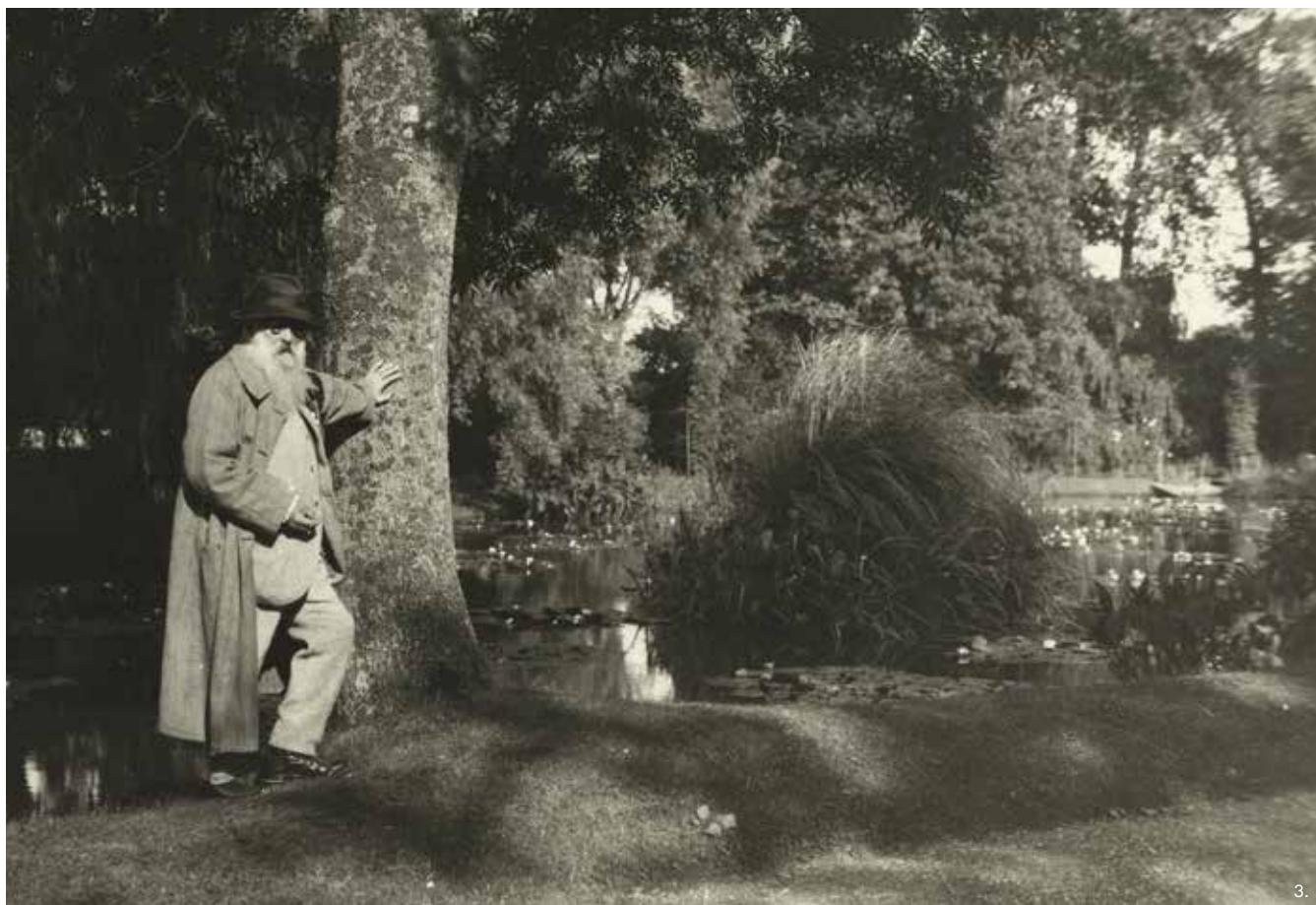
2 — Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, (detail), Installation view at the Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris

2026 marks the centenary of Claude Monet's death. Celebrations abound, with exhibitions and publications paying tribute to this giant of French art—leader of Impressionism who, through the years and a singular evolution, became a precursor of abstract art.

We tend to forget that Monet's death on December 5, 1926 was followed by an artistic thunderclap. Just after the painter passed away in Giverny, the *Water Lilies* at the Orangerie des Tuileries—the 'Grandes Décorations' that Monet had offered to the nation to celebrate the armistice of the First World War—were revealed in Paris for the first time. Yet their reception was met with some turmoil. A look back at a little-known scandal and a recent chapter in art history.

It is hard to forget the historic photographs of Monet posing proudly at Giverny. He stands in the studio-salon, near a bed of geraniums; another time, we see him at the edge of the lily pond or in front of the panels dedicated to them, which he executed in the studio built in 1914 and bearing their name. In Sacha Guitry's documentary—*Ceux de chez nous* filmed in 1915—the painter, who had his parasols

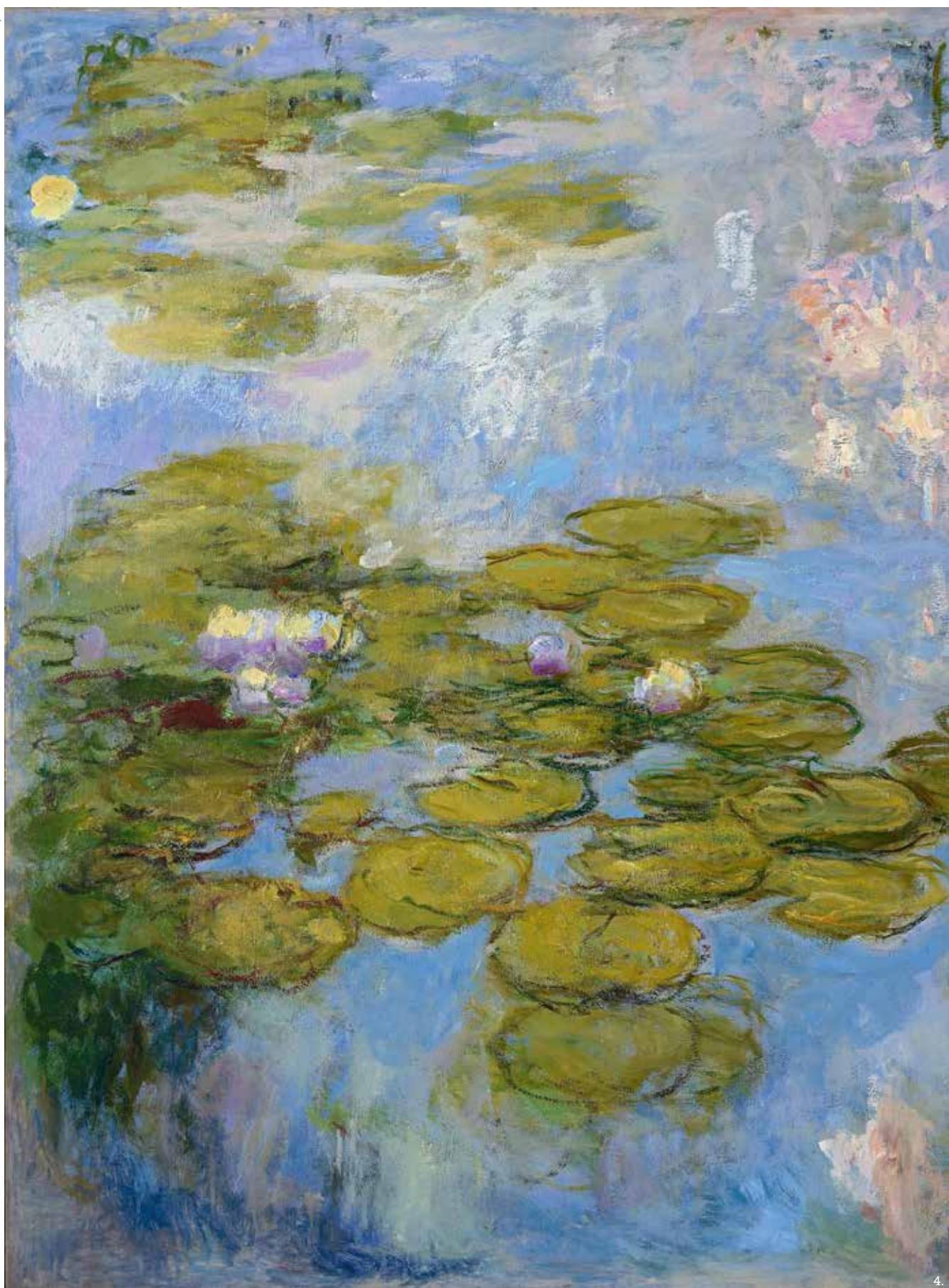
and easel installed at the pond's edge, allowed himself to be filmed while painting. We see the canvas taking shape, the flower becoming paint. So many testimonies that familiarized audiences with the great water lilies during their creation, often making today's admirers forget that they remained unpublished during the artist's lifetime. For after 1912, and the exhibition of his Venetian views at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery, Monet definitively ceased presenting his current work. Only a few privileged individuals admitted to his property knew of the paintings he made between 1914 and 1926. Over a quarter century, the body of work produced was impressive. The *catalogue raisonné* lists more than one hundred and eighty canvases. They constitute more or less the corpus of the great *Water Lilies* panels—the "flower-paintings" with which we identify Monet today.

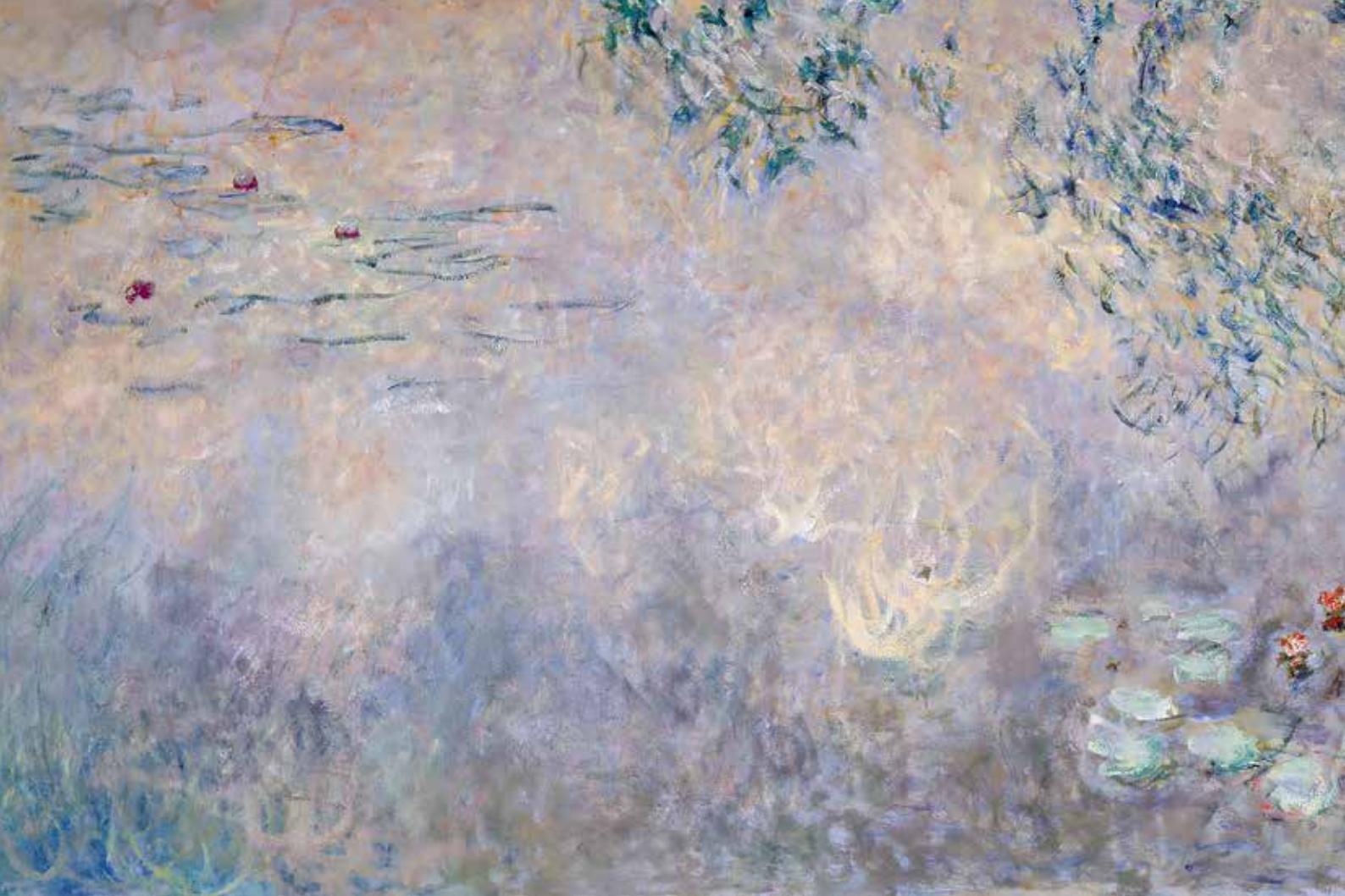


3 — Claude Monet, © The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley / Thérèse Bonney / BHVP / Roger-Viollet / Ville de Paris
 4 — Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1916-1919, Oil on canvas, 200 x 180 cm, Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Sammlung Beyeler

“Imagine a circular room whose walls, below the chair rail, would be entirely occupied by a watery horizon dotted with plants, with walls of transparency alternately green and mauve, the calm and silence of still water reflecting scattered blooms; the tones are imprecise, deliciously nuanced, with a dreamlike delicacy.” Such was the project Monet conceived for the Orangerie des Tuileries, whose *Grandes Décorations* were inaugurated on May 17, 1927. Installed nearly ten years after the end of the First World War, they celebrated the Edenic visions inspired by the enchantment of the Giverny pond, but appeared out of step with moment. While the idea of a harmonious world conveyed by the *Water Lilies* cycle might have echoed the pacifist impulses that emerged immediately after “the war to end all wars,” the notion of a better world inherent to it was—on the eve of the Great Depression, the rise of nationalisms and totalitarian ideologies—profoundly dissonant with current times. Should we be surprised, then, that the unveiling of Claude Monet’s final work provoked divided reactions, even though the painter was already considered one of the most important figures of French art? There were, of course, admirers. Georges Clemenceau, Louis

Gillet, and Georges Grappe were among them. Their often poetic, sometimes pantheistic prose celebrated a “mirror of reveries,” a “divine lotus dream” containing “all the poetry of the universe,” a “canticle without words” that they sang more than explained. A portion of the avant-garde—each assuming, in its own way, the tragic dimension of a disintegrating world—rejected the *Water Lilies*, the artist’s final paintings. Those close to Cubism, for whom the colourful expressions of Impressionism belonged to the past, were particularly virulent. Aligned with them, Jacques-Émile Blanche recycled (but was he aware of it?) criticisms invoked by Louis Leroy in the satirical article in *Le Charivari* that gave Impressionism its name in 1874. “These palette scrapings [...] this loose execution, these rubbings and splatterings,” condemned by Leroy, reappeared fifty years later in Blanche’s pen, denigrating “these stains, these splatterings, these scratches inflicted on the canvas.” “Monet squandered his riches, at the whim of his fancy, according to the seasons and the décor of his flowerbeds, as if they were models for wallpaper, which one would cut and paste here or there, at will. [...] One step further and Monet would have fallen into vulgarism.”





5 — Claude Monet, *Le Bassin aux nymphéas avec iris*, 1914/1922, Oil on canvas, 200 x 600 cm, Kunsthaus Zürich, gift of Emil G. Bührle, 1952
6 — Marianne Mathieu, *Monet par-delà l'horizon*, Vanves, Éditions Hazan, 2025

Thus, the artist's pictorial testament was as poorly received as the eponymous Impressionist canvas, *Impression, Sunrise*, had been in its time. Speaking of the *Grandes Décorations*, André Lhote even cried "artistic suicide." Refuted by the most influential art circles, Claude Monet's *Water Lilies* thus entered the purgatory of art history. For not only was the cycle deemed out of step with political history, but it also proved ahead of art's own developments, making it difficult to understand. From the 1890s onward, Monet ventured beyond Impressionism. Having, through his series, sounded the death knell of subject matter's primacy in art, he then broke with the tradition in force since the Renaissance that defined painting as a window open onto the world. By eliminating the representation of the horizon line, by capturing a detail of the water's reflection, by presenting it as a plane parallel to the canvas, Monet disregarded perspective and the notion of mimesis. The space he depicted—which seems to have neither beginning nor end—does not take the water lily pond as its subject, as such, (nothing describes the topography of the place); rather, it consists—to use Monet's words—of "harmonies and concerts of colours that are sufficient in themselves and succeed in touching us." Monet thus opened a path where only painting matters—colour

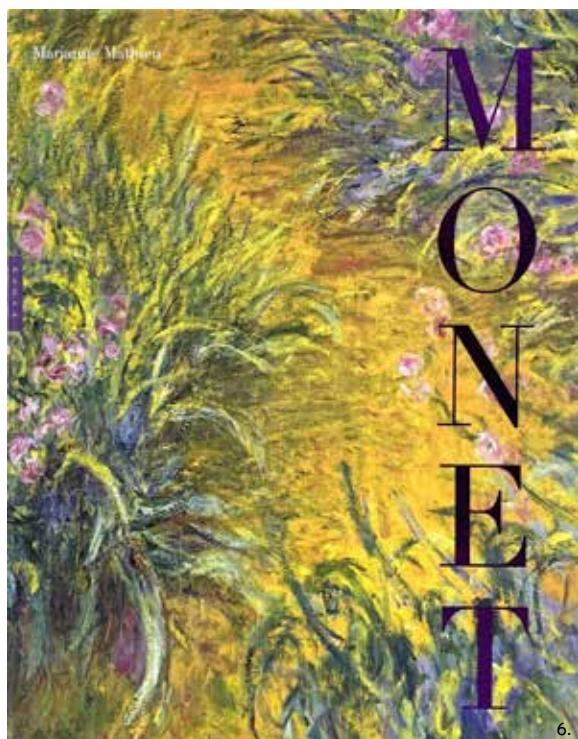
and gesture—possibly disconnected from reality, with the artist charged with exploring its infinite potential. Henceforth, painting defined itself as a world unto itself. Monet established with brushstrokes a new paradigm, the advent of an autonomous pictorial space announcing, nearly thirty years in advance, an abstraction close to Art Informel.

It was not until the 1950s that the rehabilitation process of the *Water Lilies* began, as a new world order imposed itself and, after the immeasurable tragedy of the Second World War, a future seemed possible again and the symphonies of the Giverny pond finally acceptable. The phenomenon also fed on advances in art and originated in the United States, where critics identified mysterious correspondences between the gestural and monumental painting of late Monet and the innovative work of American Abstract Expressionists that emerged in the late 1940s. Colour, gesture and monumentality were the meeting points between the young school and the (old) master's work; the reading of the *Water Lilies* was thus entirely revised. The ultimate work of Monet, described by MoMA as "abstract impressionist," was then recognized as containing the foundations of mid-twentieth-century art and, a fortiori, of the first American school of painting. It fell to French painter André Masson to resolve the



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7 — Monet in the gardens of Giverny, 1921. © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Patrice Schmidt
8 — Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, Installation view at the Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris. Photo: Brady Brenot



ambiguities inherent in the notion of decoration and to definitively elevate the *Water Lilies* of the Orangerie to the rank of masterpieces of humanity:

“Despite their monumental dimensions, they [*Les Grandes Décorations*] in no way manifest the characteristics of great Venetian or Flemish decoration. His state of mind seems to me to be that of a great ‘easel’ painter who decides to give his vision a space vast enough—imposing enough—for it to embrace the world. (A water reflection will suffice to identify with the Universe). Cosmic vision, I would like to say, if this word had not been diverted in recent seasons and uttered about anyone, anything. Thus Michelangelo, creator of unique and solitary figures, awaits the day when a Vatican chapel will allow him to take flight, to show his omnipotence. This is why it pleases me, quite seriously, to call the Orangerie des Tuileries the Sistine Chapel of Impressionism. A deserted place, in the heart of Paris, as if consecrating the inaccessibility of the great work it contains: one of the summits of French genius.” Masson concludes by urging young painters to discover Monet, not to ‘restart’ Impressionism: but to listen to his most precious piece of advice: Move forward!” And indeed, we can agree with Masson: “Monet the founder.” ♦









The Many Lives of Michael Chow

A Conversation Between
Simon de Pury and Michael Chow





2.

1 — Urs Fischer, *Michael Chow Wax Portrait*, 2014, Parrafin Wax, microcrystalline wax, encaustic pigment, oil paint, mild steel, wicks, 185 × 55 × 51 cm. Collection of Michael Chow. Photo: Eric Powell
2 — Andy Warhol, *Portrait of Michael Chow*, 1981, Screenprint in black on newspring, double-sided, 123.2 × 92.1 cm. Collection of Michael Chow

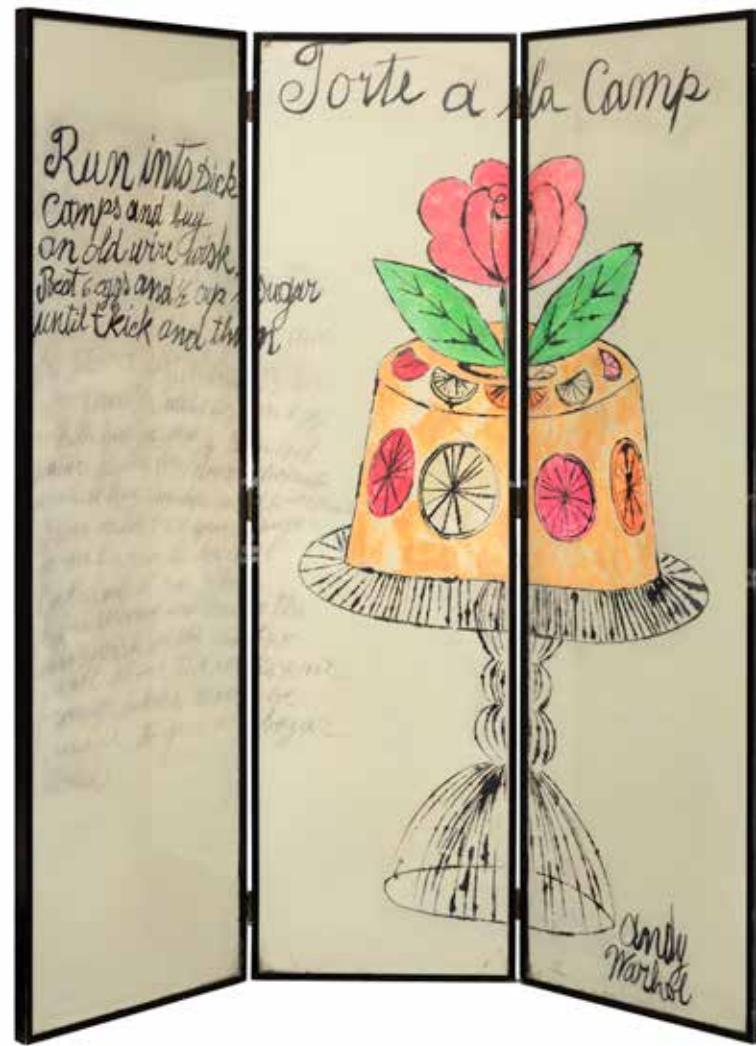
Michael Chow is a figure who defies easy categorization. Best known for founding the legendary Mr. Chow restaurant in London in 1968, he has lived multiple creative lives as restaurateur, art collector, and artist. His collection of portraits—featuring works by Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and many others—stands as a testament to five decades of deep friendships with the defining artists of our time. The son of one of China's greatest opera singers, Zhou Xinfang, Chow has spent recent years returning to his first calling: painting. In this conversation with Simon de Pury, Chow reflects on the nature of collecting, the spiritual dimension of creativity, and what it means to live authentically across many worlds.

Simon de Pury: You and I met through our mutual friend Helmut Newton. He was very fond of you and I remember him introducing you as a major figure in the art world. I think that one cannot speak of the history of art over the past fifty years without mentioning you. Because you have known all the key artists of the last fifty years. I would love to hear about how this came to be, your first steps into the art world and with artists...

Michael Chow: I have met everyone—apart from Napoleon [laughs]. But, I have had this great fortune. So that is one thing. But, if we are talking about Helmut, the secret of Helmut, like [Alfred] Hitchcock, is that he mixed documentary and the artificial. There is a famous quote by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann: "There is no luxury without fantasy." And usually fantasy includes sex. And sex and violence are connected... But what I am saying is, this mix of documentary and artificial is important. For example, when Hitchcock creates a scene — there are so many tiny details that go into the scene, like the ashtray is always messy, etc., that it becomes like a documentary... So when he finally hooks you in, you really believe the scene, and then someone comes in and stabs the character...and that's the artificial. People, when they truly believe you, it's wow. But those who mimic these things, then it's all artificial and it doesn't work.

The other thing I wanted to say is that collecting is about memory. I had the fortune to be inspired to become a great collector. The greatest collector, in my opinion, is Jacques Doucet. He was a French aristocrat and fashion designer and he had an incredible collection: Rembrandt, Picasso, big, important artists. And then he sold the whole collection in 1912, and I am lucky to have a copy of the catalogue. In my opinion, he was the greatest collector because he had an incredible mix of pieces from snake charmers to Kandinsky. All collectors are caretakers. Because you're not taking anything with you when you die. You are a temporary curator, so to speak. And it's important because people curate to better understand the world. Collecting is about better understanding history, humanity, and all that.

Another thing about collecting is that when you have the opportunity to acquire something rare, and you will it, and your heart starts pounding—the only other time you're going to get the same feeling is when you fall in love, and that's very rare. Right? So, it's a great joy. Collecting is extraordinarily important, and this



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3 — Andy Warhol, *Cake* screen. Collection of Michael Chow. Photo: Eric Powell

memory has to do with appreciation, and as your appreciation sharpens, it allows you to enter into spirituality.

This year I went to China to celebrate my father's 130th birthday and the fiftieth anniversary of his death. My father was one of the greatest icons in the history of humanity. In other words, if you drop twenty names of famous people including Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Goya, Turner, Van Gogh, etcetera, my father is one of them.

I made a speech in Shanghai for my father's celebration—and I spoke about three artists.

One is Beethoven, the other one is Claude Monet, and the third is my father.

Why do I choose these three people? Because, a), God has a sense of humour, and b), it's necessary to put the greatest artists through the grinder. Beethoven was deaf. Sixty five percent deaf. And then he created the greatest symphony, Symphony Number Nine, and was conducting it. And can you imagine he can't hear anything? And yet, he is a composer. A composer can hear every single violinist in the orchestra, but he can hear nothing. When it ended, he didn't know there was thunderous applause. They have to turn his body around so he can see that. So that's very moving. This man, one of the greatest artists who ever lived — he transcended humanity.



© Eric Powell

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4 — Keith Haring, *Mr. Chow as Green Prawn in a Bowl of Noodle*, 1986, Acrylic on tarpaulin, 254 × 254 cm. Collection of Michael Chow

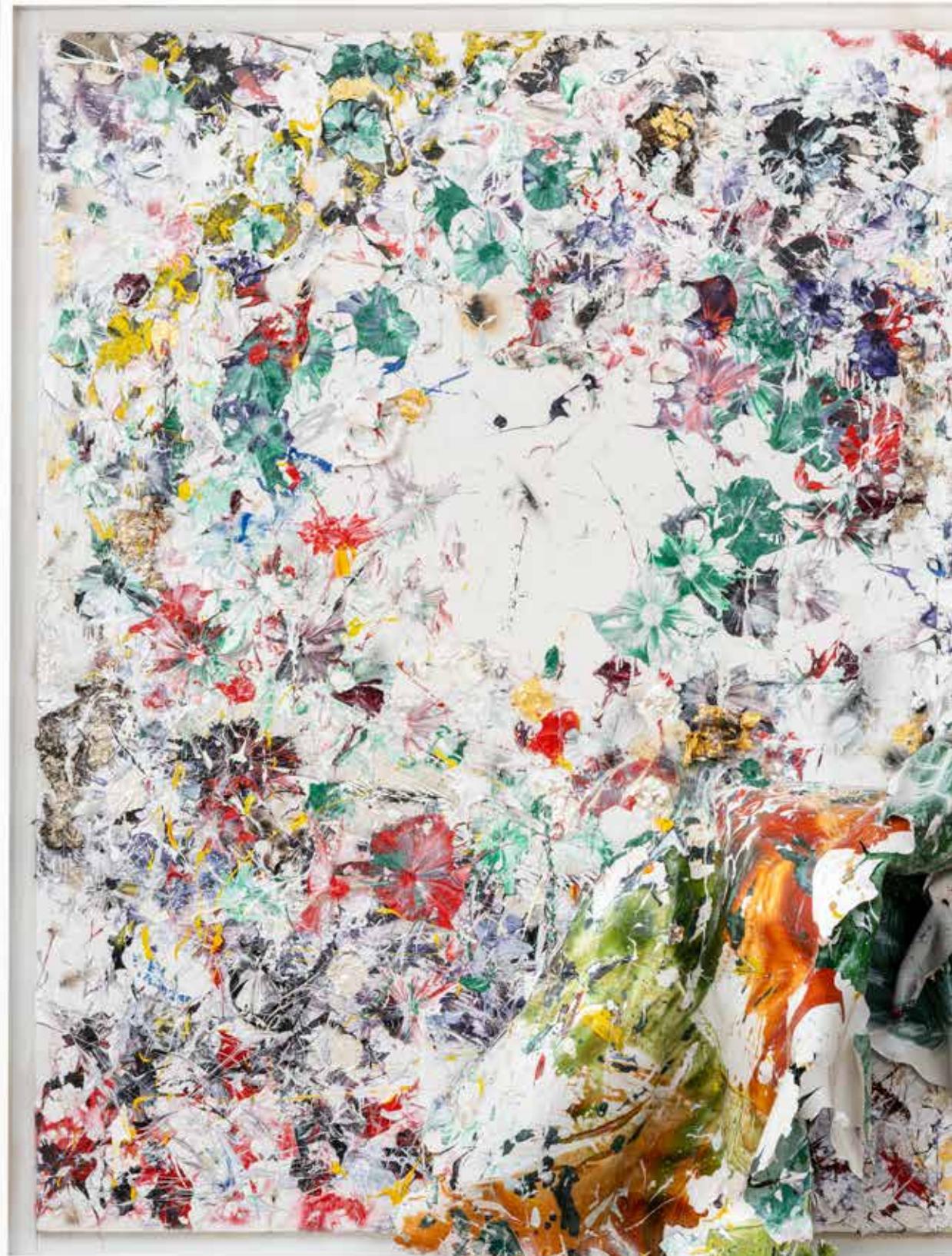
This is an incredible thing. And Monet is similar. He had such bad cataracts at the end of his life he couldn't see and yet he painted the *Water Lilies*. And then he died in 1926. And these paintings are incredible yet no one was talking about them and it took Jackson Pollock to wake us up. It was ridiculous. This was the greatest painter and then because he can't see and maybe he put too much blue or whatever, he has to suffer for having cataracts? Can you imagine?

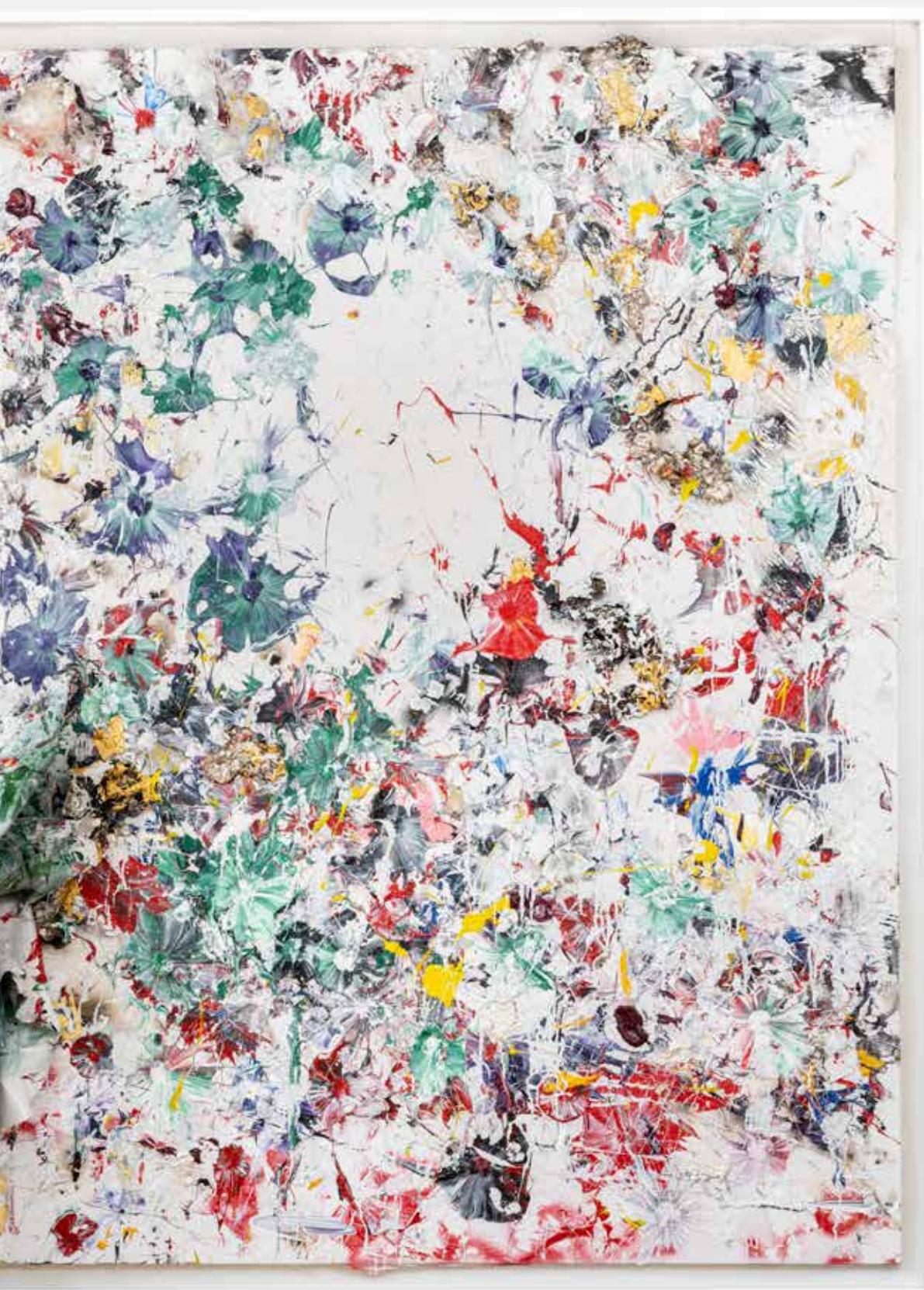
My father was one of the greatest opera singers but he lost his voice. He was similar to Maria Callas. He was a giant of giants. I'm trying to make a documentary because China does not recognize

my father as he should be recognized. England recognizes Shakespeare. Right? And my father is one of these guys.

S.D.P: You are an incredible collector. And I always say that collecting at the highest level is an artistic pursuit in itself. A good collection is like a work of art because it shows the handwriting of the person who put it together. And your collection is particularly personal because it's all linked to you, and you have developed a special friendship with every single artist that you have collected. Would you speak to us about your rapport with people like Andy Warhol, Jean Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring, for example?

M.C.: Yes, I started my collection sixty years ago. People talk about my portrait collection but I didn't intend to start a portrait collection. It began with Peter Blake. When I opened Mr. Chow in London, in 1968, I invited him the year before to make a painting for the restaurant. I wanted to do something to acknowledge the racism that was all around me and I said to him, look, 'why don't you paint the antithesis of racism'? So he made a portrait of me as a wrestling manager in a suit, and so, in a way, he started off my portrait collection because from then on, I asked other artists to paint a portrait of me. And there were some incredible results, they all did beautiful things, you know, including Keith







6.

5 — Michael Chow, *Green Drop*, 2022 mixed media on canvas. Collection of Michael Chow. Photo: Damian Griffiths

6 — Ed Ruscha, *Mr. Chow L.A.*, 1973, Mixed media on canvas, 254 x 254 cm. Collection of Michael Chow. Photo: Eric Powell

7 — Ed Ruscha, *Zhou Xinfang*, 1982

Haring and Jean Michel Basquiat, who filled [the painting] with a lot of different artistic references.

You know what else is important here — the fact of being in bed... Andy Warhol was often ill and in bed. I was in bed because of my asthma, and Jean Michel was in bed because he had an accident or something. So, staying in bed when you are young is very important. When he was in bed recovering, he was looking at all the books on Leonardo da Vinci and the human body and all that. And then painted a portrait of me with all the Leonardo references. You see? He was also really

educated and this is really important. He was so smart. It is about being a scholar, being a caretaker while you're on earth, and you nurture it with love, with passion, with understanding, and with an internal relationship to it, and then eventually pass it on. And collecting is important in all that.

S.D.P.: Tell me also about your portraits by some other, younger generation artists such as Julian Schnabel or Urs Fisher.

M.C.: Urs Fisher did one of his famous candle sculptures. He only did a few of these and he did one of me, which is pretty cool. And the concept is great, to

burn the whole thing down. Of course, people won't burn them, it's ridiculous, but it's great. David Hockney also did some incredible drawings, this was nearly sixty years ago. There is a unity to the collection and I like to keep it all together. I did an amazing book recently to show the history.

S.D.P.: I was with you in Beijing when your collection was shown for the first time and it was phenomenal to see the impact and the success it had. First of all, you were pursued by film crews and journalists and reporters. And to see the crowds queuing

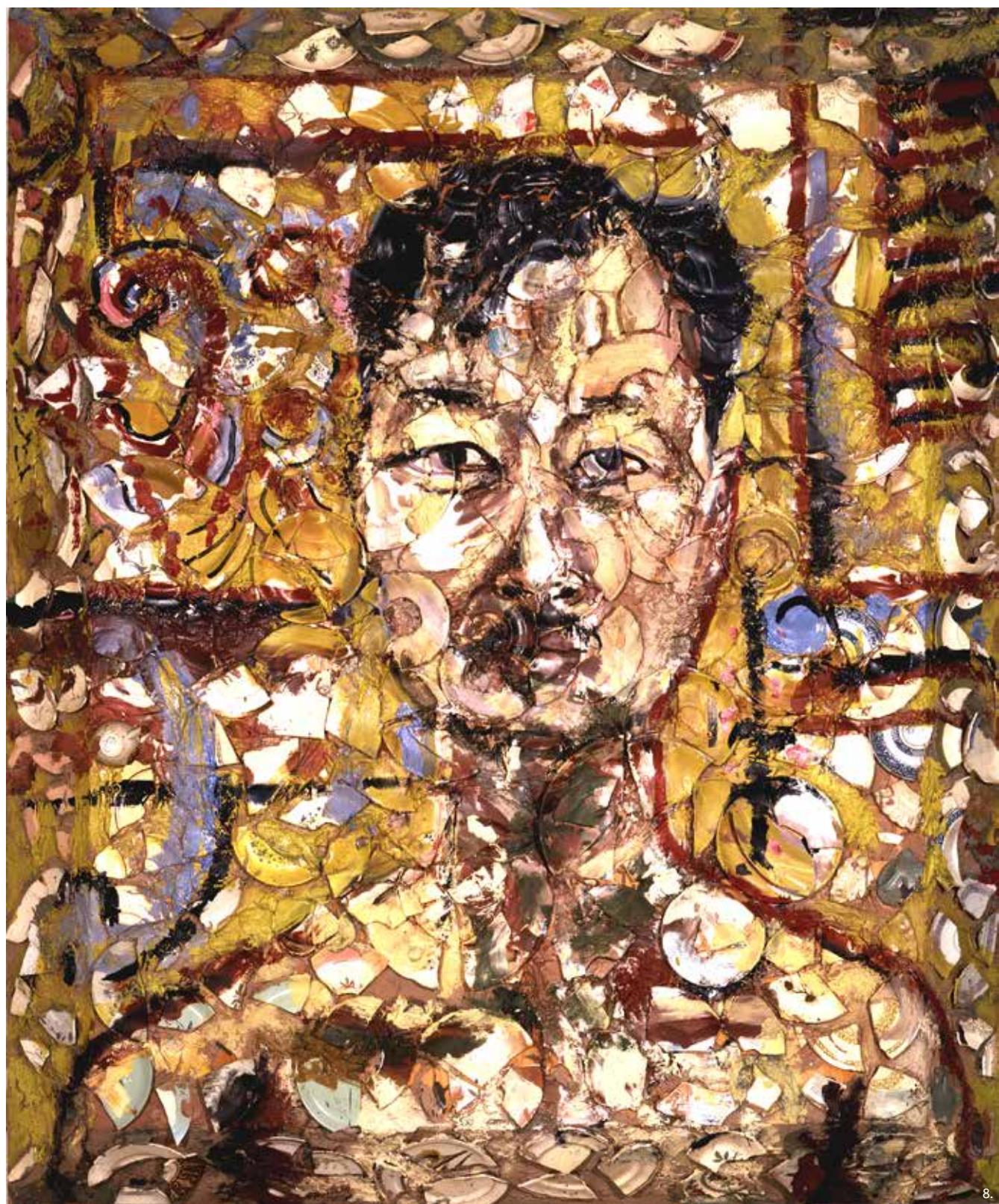
up to come and see that exhibition. And one part of the exhibition was devoted to your father, and it was clear to see how venerated he is in China. And then one other aspect was your own artwork. You started life as an artist when you went to Saint Martin School of Art in London. And what made you get back to being an artist yourself? I mean, obviously, you've been an artist all your life because the way you did Mr. Chow, the way you did your collection, only an artist can have done this. But what made you go back to being a visual artist to start creating art again?

M.C.: When I was young, I ended up in London and my choices in life were either having a restaurant or a laundry. I chose to open a restaurant and then I made it

into a theatre. So being an artist was not an option. And now, I've returned to it because years ago, I went to see an exhibition at Jeffrey Deitch Gallery, a show with all the usual suspects and some new ones. I walked inside and I could feel that I could do this. And since that day, I've been working like a dog, coming back after forty years of a radical sabbatical. I came back and I have been painting intensely for about eighteen years now. For me, it's about being in connection with the internal. It is what the Chinese call one breath. Being in the moment, it's like the big bang and everything: All the universe comes to you. In my documentary, for instance, I say, you have to be kind and real. A very difficult thing to do. You know? It is a very difficult

thing to do because if you become kind and real, eventually you become a good human being because you are coming from inside. At the beginning, you might be conscious of that, but if you practice enough, it will become you and become internal, and you will project that energy. It is like Chinese medicine. They can put three fingers on your pulse and they can read everything you have going on in your body. They know your liver, your heart. They can even tell if it's a woman or a man; if you're pregnant or not. They have practiced this for a thousand years. The objective is to make your body all harmonious. So once your body is harmonious, you become very healthy. Right? So that's the objective.

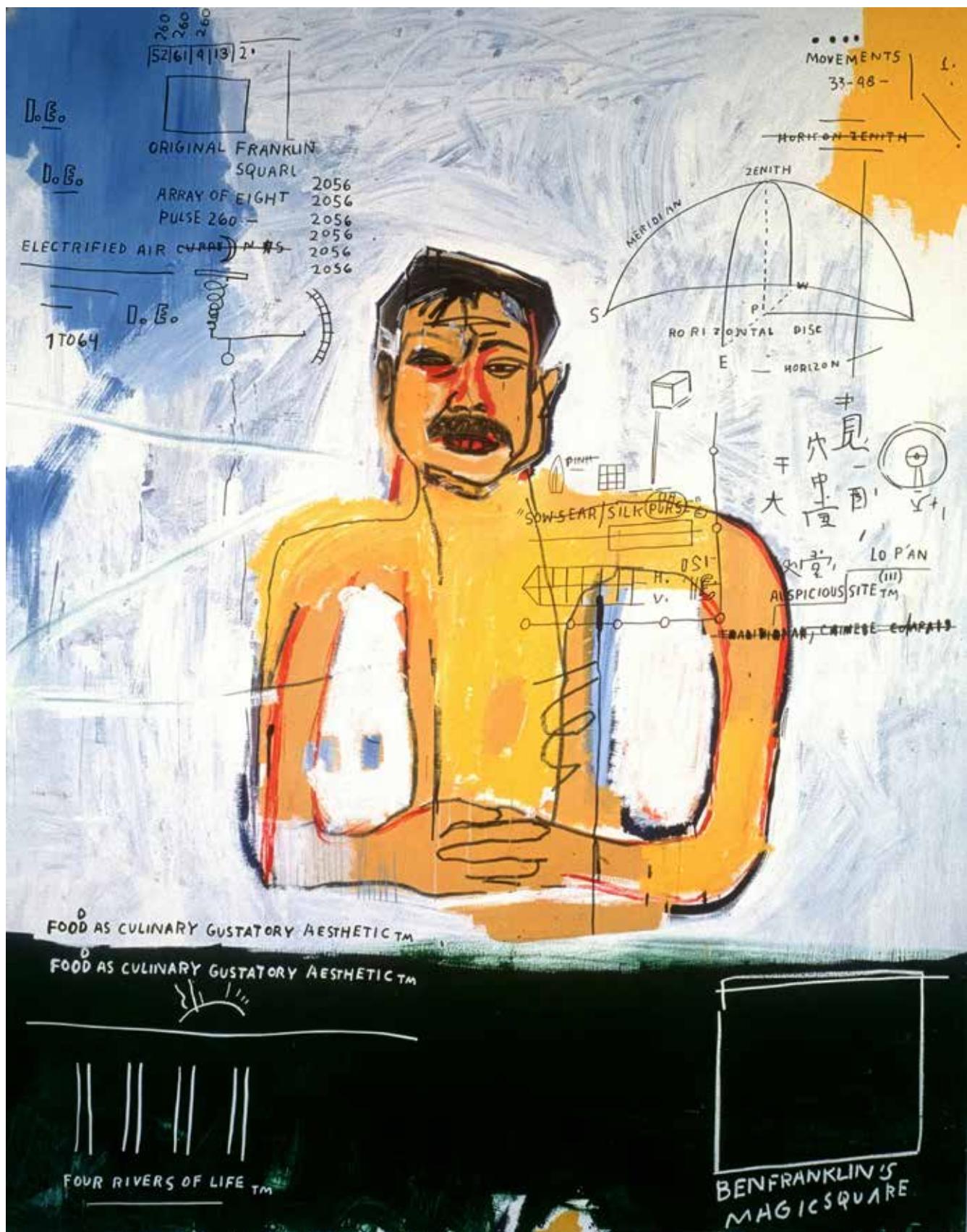




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8 — Julian Schnabel, Portrait, 1985, Oil and plate on panel, 183 x 152.5 cm. Collection of Michael Chow. Photo: Eric Powell

9 — Jean-Michel Basquiat, Portrait, 1985, Acrylic and oil stick on canvas, 218.5 x 172.5 cm. Collection of Michael Chow. Photo: Eric Powell

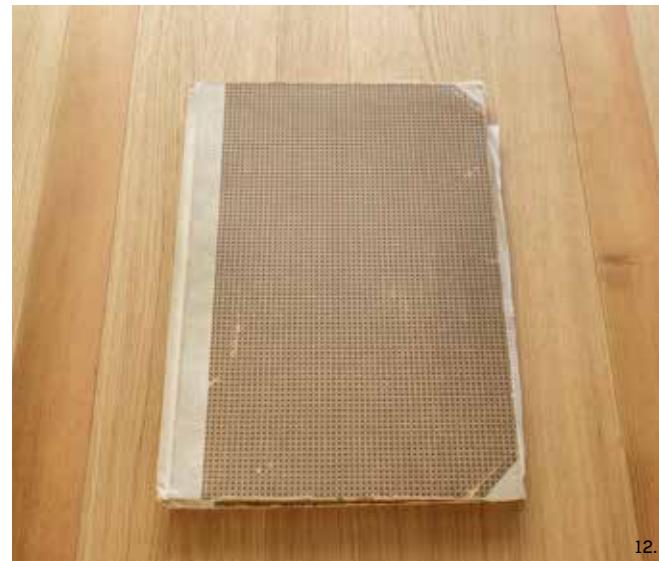




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10 — Peter Blake, *Frisco and Lorenzo Wong and Wildman Michael Chow*, 1966, Collage and mixed media painting on wood, 205.5 x 68.5 x 10 cm. Collection of Michael Chow. Photo: Eric Powell

11 — Photo of Michael Chow in Soho, New York

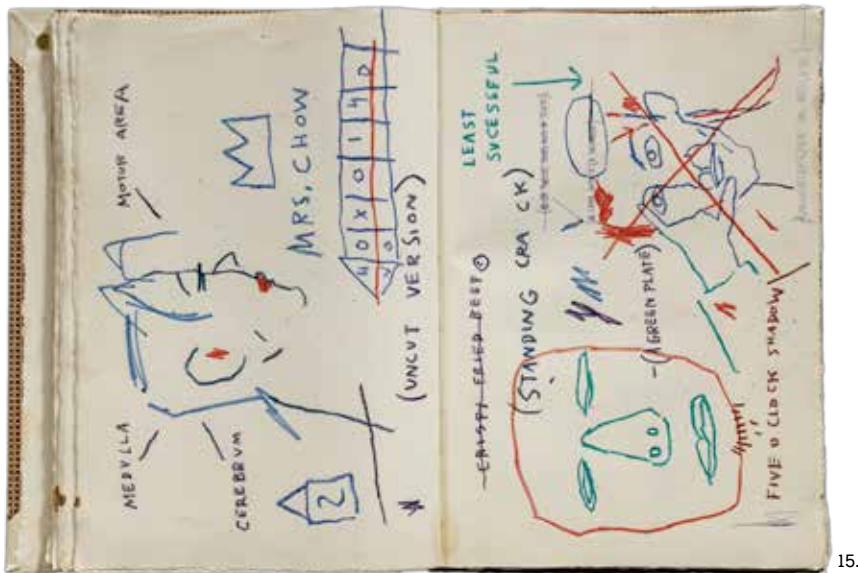
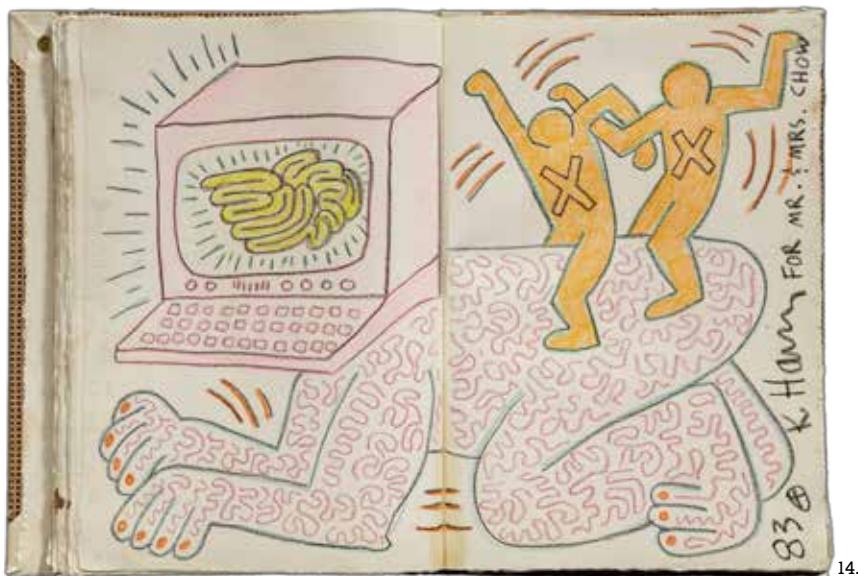
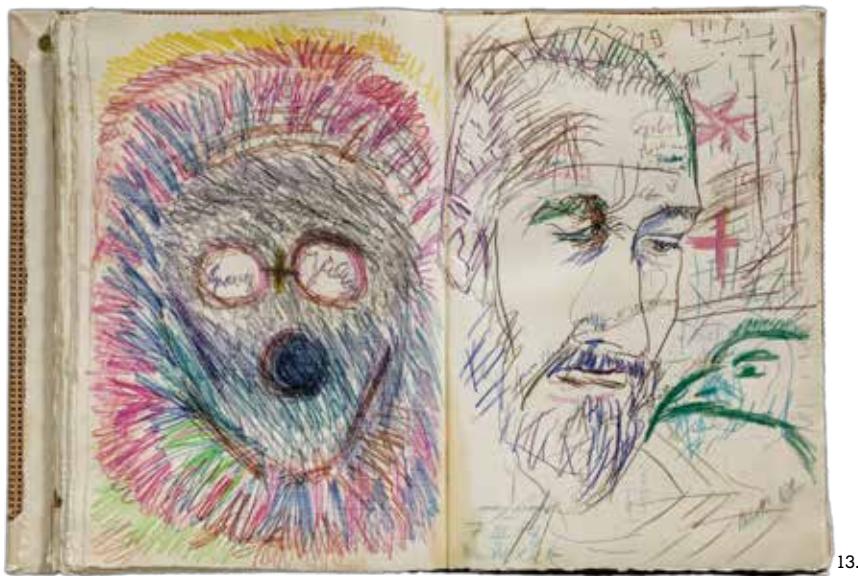
12 — Artist's Book. Collection of Michael Chow

13 — Artist Book with drawing by Georg Baselitz (left) and Julian Schnabel (right)

14 — Artist Book with drawing by Keith Haring

15 — Artist Book from Mr. Chow with drawing by Jean-Michel Basquiat

16 — Michael Chow, *Green Drop*, (Detail), 2022, mixed media on canvas. Collection of Michael Chow. Photo: Damian Griffiths



S.D.P: You mentioned prejudices, and I find that very easily humans get classified. One person is a businessman, one person is an artist, one person is this and that. And you are like a cat with many, many lives. You have achieved so much in so many different areas. But it's not always accepted that somebody can be outstanding in several areas. And so, what is your ambition as your legacy to be viewed as a great collector, as a great artist, as an extraordinarily successful businessman, as a collector of art? What is your ultimate goal to leave as a legacy?

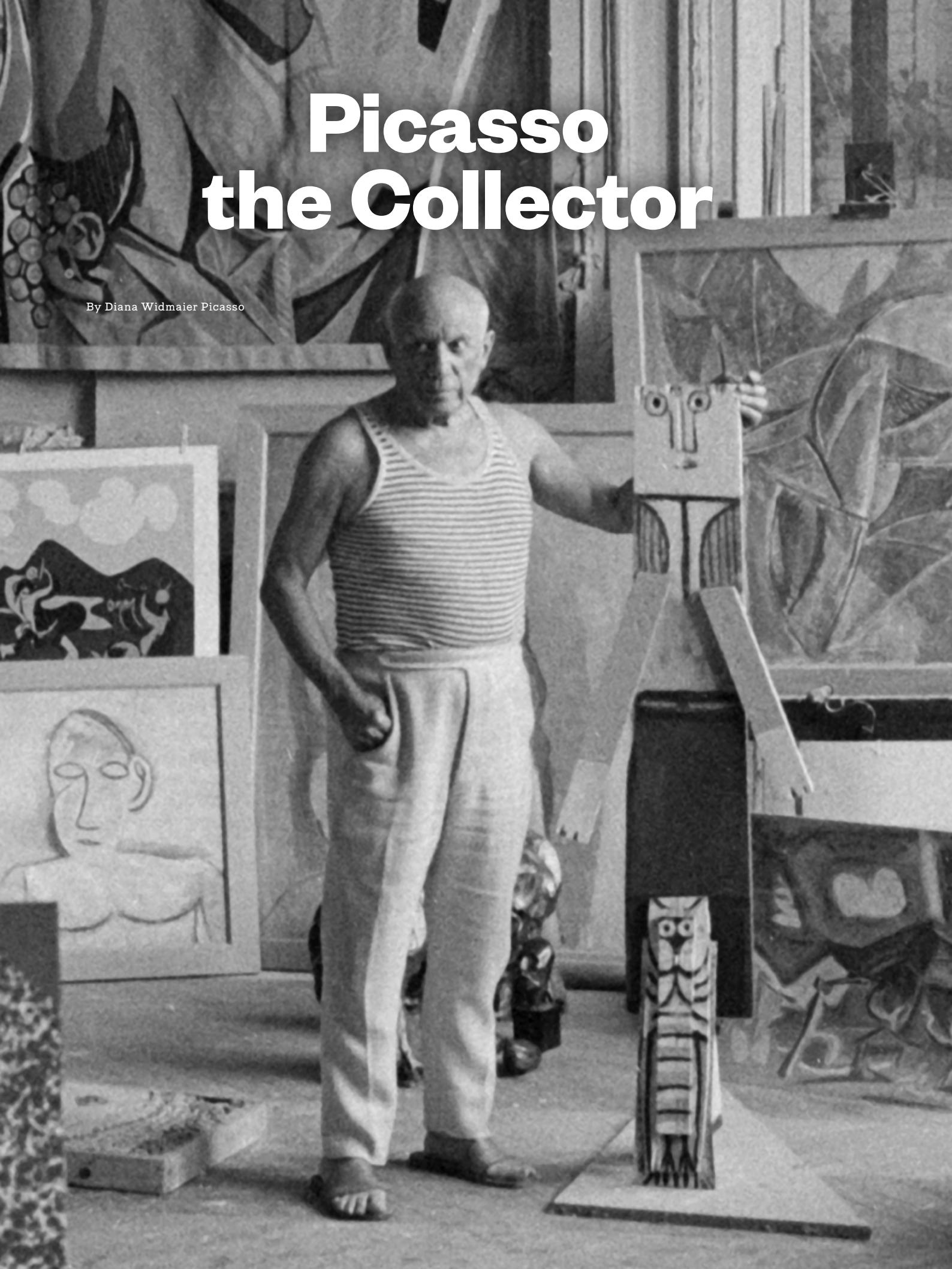
M.C.: Well, as I said before, the beginning was tough but it was simple. And as I said earlier, the prayer is to be kind, to be real, to be true. I mean, I know that is overused, but to be kind and to be true can be very difficult. It's not easy. But if you do one little thing really well, it's cumulative, it will filter into others. It's a form of a prayer. You know? What I'm saying is that everything has been corrupted, everything is being mixed up, too much information coming in from everywhere. The East and the West are still not communicating and, still in a very primitive stage. Not much has changed. Even in education, everything is dumbing down. Earlier I was talking about the definition of art as being poetry, sculpture, music, and painting. This is the highest level and it has to be useless, have no interruptions. Therefore, architecture is not art. Not fine art anyway. It's not art because architecture is functional, so it has limitations. Because of the nuances of uselessness, that's why the violin has the most nuances of sound. There are trillions. That is why the violin is the most sophisticated and sensitive material. Another thing, going back to Claude Monet again, in the hands of this artist, who's essentially blind, the landscape, those paintings can make you cry. He lived in this incredible garden that he helped create. When he died, he knew everyone and had an incredible house and garden but no one went, all of the artists, all the critics, they ignored him and it took Jackson Pollock to wake them up. This is ridiculous. It was nearly 20 years after his death that he started getting attention again. So, to finish, we have to pray not in the conventional way, not in the spiritual way, which can be practiced as a very simple thing, but to be kind, to be real. Simple things. ♦





Picasso the Collector

By Diana Widmaier Picasso





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1 — Edward Quinn, Pablo Picasso with *Femme Debout, La California*, Cannes 1960. © Edward Quinn Archive | © Succession Picasso. SABAM Belgium 2026
 2 — Edward Quinn, Photo of Picasso's studio on Notre-Dame-de-Vie, Mougins, with *La Jeune Fille*, 1914, by André Derain (on the floor, centre) and Self-Portrait, 1919, by Joan Miró (far right). © Edward Quinn Archive | © Succession Picasso. SABAM Belgium 2026

“What is a painter, after all? He is a collector who wants to build a collection by making himself the paintings he likes in others.”

Pablo Picasso

More than a painter, sculptor, and tireless innovator, Pablo Picasso was also a collector, but not in the conventional sense. His collection did not arise from connoisseurship or the pursuit of prestige, but from an insatiable curiosity and a desire to live in dialogue with other forms of art and daily objects. For Picasso, collecting

was never separate from creation. It was an extension of his practice, a mirror of his inner world, and a laboratory where his work could continuously reinvent itself. Works entered his possession through chance encounters, gifts from friends, exchanges with dealers, payments in kind, or tokens of mutual admiration among fellow artists.



3.

3 — André Gomes, Pablo Picasso's studio on Notre-Dame-de-Vie, Mougins with paintings by Henri Matisse including Marguerite and Jeune fille assise en robe persane, and Pablo Picasso, Self Portrait. © André Gomes | © Succession Picasso – SABAM Belgium 2026

When Picasso died in 1973, the unsuspected scale of his legacy came to light. It revealed a dual inheritance. On one side stood an exceptional group of works by his peers and predecessors such as Renoir, Cézanne, Matisse, Braque, Modigliani, Douanier Rousseau, Max Ernst, but also Chardin, Le Nain, Corot, and Courbet. Many of these paintings later entered French public collections, forming the nucleus of what would become the Musée Picasso-Paris. Toward the end of his life, Picasso had expressed the wish that this collection be preserved intact and transferred to the French state. His heirs respected this decision. The works were placed in the care of the Musée Picasso in Paris, where they remain today, augmented by later donations. This ensemble is more than a record of his tastes. It is a continuation of his artistic practice, an intimate space where his own creations find themselves reflected in dialogue with others. On the other side were his own creations, often referred to as the "Picassos of Picasso," in reference to the photographic volume by Douglas David Duncan published

in 1961, which unveiled dozens of paintings Picasso had never previously shown, including works created in April 1936 with Marie-Thérèse Walter in Juan-les-Pins and portraits of Dora Maar. These secret works were later divided between his heirs and the French state in 1979 through the dation system, which allowed inheritance taxes to be paid with artworks. The numbers alone are staggering: nearly 1,880 paintings, 1,355 sculptures, more than 7,000 independent drawings, some 200 sketchbooks totaling almost 5,000 pages, 880 ceramics, and about 20,000 prints.

The extent of this inheritance astonished even those closest to him. Few had imagined that Picasso had retained such a vast share of his own work. The posthumous inventory distinguished three groups: early works, sometimes bought back by the artist himself; pieces preserved as souvenirs, research material, or personal testimony; and works from his later years, not yet consigned to dealers. Far from treating his art as merchandise, Picasso lived with it daily. He moved pieces

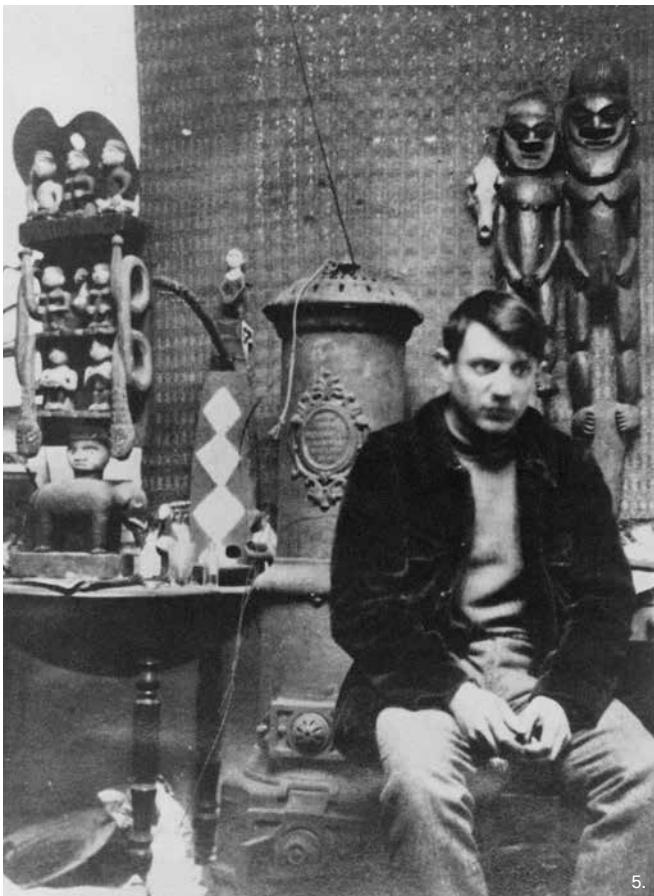


4 — André Gomes, Pablo Picasso in front of his paintings in his studio in Notre-Dame-de-Vie, Mougins, April 1965. © André Gomes | © Succession Picasso. SABAM Belgium 2026

from house to house, hung them in his living spaces, and presented them to visitors with fervor. This intimate relationship is perhaps clearest in his sculpture. Long overshadowed by his paintings and rarely exhibited during his lifetime, a significant body of sculpture was only revealed in 1949 by his dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, through Brassai's photographs. Picasso kept these works close, almost jealously, as if they were extensions of himself. His desire to record and preserve also took form in the monumental project entrusted to Christian Zervos, the catalogue raisonné of his paintings. Published between 1932 and 1978, it brought together more than 16,000 reproductions in 33 volumes, an unparalleled endeavor for a living artist. For Picasso, such documentation was not about posterity alone. It was about maintaining an active memory of his own creation, a living archive of transformation. Picasso's collection of works by the great masters was not simply a matter of admiration; it was an ongoing dialogue. To live with them meant to wrestle with them

daily, as if their works were at once companions and adversaries in his own artistic struggle. He looked to Chardin for stillness, to Courbet for matter and density, to Cézanne for structure, expressing it most clearly when speaking of Matisse, or Braque: "What better can one do?" These works became both challenges and companions, adversaries and allies in his lifelong battle with form. The nature of this collection, however, was unique. Picasso lacked the usual traits of an art collector. His collection was not the result of deliberate intent or a carefully constructed plan. These works were absorbed into the chaos of his successive studios, scattered across the floor, framed or unframed, mingling with his own paintings, or hung haphazardly on the walls, never with the intention of elevating one above the others. In many ways, this collection formed the backdrop of his studio practice. This extraordinary dialogue across centuries embodied his vision of collecting: not possession but confrontation, not homage but transformation.

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9.

5 — Frank Gelett Burgess, Pablo Picasso in his studio in the Bateau-Lavoir, Paris, 1908 and published in 1910. Musée national Picasso-Paris, © Succession Picasso – SABAM Belgium 2026

6 — Lucien Clergue, Picasso and the Matisse Monster, 1965. © Atelier Lucien Clergue / SOFAM | © Succession Picasso – SABAM Belgium 2026

7 — Lucien Clergue, Picasso with statues from the Marquesas Islands, La Californie, Cannes, 1955. © Atelier Lucien Clergue / SOFAM | © Succession Picasso – SABAM Belgium 2026

8 — André Gomes, Jacqueline Roque and Pablo Picasso holding hands in the studio in Notre-Dame-de-View, Mougins, April 1965. © André Gomes | © Succession Picasso – SABAM Belgium 2026

9 — Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, (Paris, June-July 1907), Oil on canvas, 243,9 x 233,7 cm. Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, Acc. No: 333.1929. ©The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence | © Succession Picasso – SABAM Belgium 2026



10.

10 — Pablo Picasso, *Still-Life with Pitcher and Apple*, Paris, February 19th, 1938. Oil, string, selles, cotton on canvas, 22 x 29 cm. © Private collection / Marc Domage | © Succession Picasso – SABAM Belgium 2026

Alongside his own production and his dialogue with the European tradition, Picasso assembled a vast collection of non-Western art – African, Oceanic, Iberian, and beyond – begun in the early years of the twentieth century. Photographs of his studios offer striking proof: masks, statuettes, and ritual objects piled in abundance. In 1907, a visit to the Musée du Trocadéro with André Derain marked a turning point. Picasso recalled the experience as an enchantment. What he discovered there was not merely an art form but a force of metamorphosis, an almost mystical fascination. From that moment onward, he never ceased to acquire, exchange, or receive African and Oceanic pieces: Marquesan tikis, Fang, Baga or Krou masks, Senufo sculptures, figures from Papua New Guinea or Vanuatu. For him, these objects were not ethnographic curiosities but mediators

between humanity and the unknown. Their influence on his art was immediate. That same year, he began work on *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), the canvas that shattered academic conventions and announced the birth of Cubism. The distorted faces of the two figures on the right bear the unmistakable imprint of African sculpture, with its radical abstraction and emphasis on essential form over naturalistic likeness. Picasso's Cubism did not emerge in isolation. It was born at the crossroads of Cézanne's lessons and the disruptive force of African and Oceanic art.

Beyond artworks, Picasso amassed an extraordinary archive of everyday life. He threw nothing away. At his death, nearly 200,000 items were counted: 20,000 manuscripts, 11,000 press clippings, 15,000 photographs, along with boxes of letters, receipts, sketches, clothing, locks

© GrandPalaisRmn (musée national Picasso-Paris) / Mathieu Rabeau



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11 — Brassai, Vitrine with sculptures and objects in Pablo Picasso's studio on 7 rue des Grands-Augustins, Paris, October 25, 1943. © Musée national Picasso-Paris – Copyright: © GrandPalaisRmn (musée national Picasso-Paris) / Mathieu Rabeau | © Succession Picasso – SABAM Belgium 2026

12 — Diana Widmaier Picasso attends the exhibition that she curated "Picasso and Maya, Father and Daughter" presented at Gagosian, Paris on October 19, 2017 in Paris, France

of hair, nail clippings, even dust. "Why should I discard what had the grace to come into my hands?" he would say. What might appear like mania was in fact an intimate logic. Each object, however modest, became a trace, a testimony. Françoise Gilot remembered them as a jumble where an empty matchbox might sit beside a Seurat watercolor, a Neapolitan puppet, or a sketchbook. For Picasso, every fragment carried meaning, everything had a secret force. Certain items were elevated to the status of talismans, such as his hair and nails, which he gave to his beloved Marie-Thérèse Walter for safekeeping. He feared these fragments might fall into the wrong hands, convinced of their bewitching power. These relics intertwined intimate memory with ancestral belief. Picasso extended this magical thinking into his art. In his assemblages

and collages, he integrated caps, wood, fabric, or scraps of paper, treating each as a bearer of memory gathered during his wanderings. He even used organic substances, such as excrement, living material charged with energy. In *Still Life with Pitcher and Apple* (1938), he attached a cotton pad from his daughter Maya's diaper, transforming a taboo into an initiatory image (ill. 15). Such gestures reveal a quasi-sorcerer dimension. For Picasso, art, life, and magic were inseparable, bound together by the act of collecting and reanimating fragments of existence. By collecting, Picasso sustained a dialogue between past and present, self and other, art and the unknown. His collection endures as one of the most intimate portraits of the artist, a mirror of his genius and a reminder that, for him, creation and collection were inseparable. ♦

Collecting and Legacy

*Staffan Ahrenberg in Conversation
with Simon de Pury*





2.

1 — Staffan Ahrenberg. Photo: Art Digital Studio, Sotheby's Paris
 2 — Façade of Cahiers d'Art, rue du Dragon, Paris. Photo: Gaetane Girard
 3 — Staffan Ahrenberg and Simon de Pury

Simon de Pury: Staffan, it always fills me with joy whenever I see you, as we have known each other for many years and it brings me back to my very first days in the art world. When I was a little greenhorn at Sotheby's, Peter Wilson — then chairman and a brilliant visionary — came to Geneva and asked me to be his driver so that we could visit a very, very important collector Theodor Ahrenberg. During the drive from Geneva airport to Chexbres, where your father was living at the time, he explained to me that your father was a key figure: a passionate collector. He emphasized how important it was that we made the best possible impression. Perhaps you can tell me what it was like to grow up as the son of someone who devoted his passion not only to art, but to living art.

Staffan Ahrenberg: I will — but first, a small anecdote. My father never did any business with Christie's. It was only Sotheby's and Peter Wilson. For his entire life, that was the only option that mattered to him. There was a very strong bond between these two men. Growing up in that environment was very special. I was truly inside an "art kitchen," in a way. From the age of five or six — by which time we had already moved from Sweden to Switzerland — my father established an artist residency on our property. He invited artists to live and work there, which was what made him happy at that time. Over fifteen years, more than 120 artists stayed there, whether for a day, a week, or several months. There was always an artist on the property, along with visiting artists, museum directors, curators,



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4 — Staffan Ahrenberg and Christo, Cahiers d'Art, 2019

5–6 —Frank Gehry, The Gehry Houses, 2025. Including the book *Frank Gehry: The Masterpieces* by Jean-Louis Cohen. Published by Cahiers d'Art & Flammarion, 2022

auctioneers — all kinds of people from the art world. My mother used to call it *le buffet de la gare*, because we were never fewer than ten people at lunch.

The house was full of art, and the art was constantly changing. New works were created, others were acquired, things came and went. As a very young boy, my job was to move and hang artworks. I became an art installer at an early age — without white gloves, I should add. It was incredibly exciting. It felt like a creative research laboratory, and I was right in the middle of it. The exchanges between all these artists and creatives clearly shaped my childhood and influenced what I later became. Books also played a huge role. I loved them. From around the age of fifteen, I began opening those artbooks, reading, and studying. I never formally studied art — everything I learned came from what I absorbed at home. It was a profoundly enriching experience, and I think it shaped my life forever.

S.D.P.: What did you do academically and after school?

S.A.: I studied at HEC Lausanne and then at the Stockholm School of Economics. After that, I decided I wanted to step completely away from my parents and their world. I had the chance to meet an extraordinary film producer of Russian origin, based in Paris and London: Alexander Salkind. He became one of the biggest producers in the world after acquiring the rights to *Superman* and producing *Superman I, II, and III*. I got a job with him when I was twenty-three. It was the only job I ever had.

I worked for him for three years. That was my apprenticeship in life. If you were a banker, you'd be a slave at Goldman Sachs — I was a slave to Mr. Salkind for three years. It was a fascinating experience, and it later led me to Hollywood and to producing my own films.

S.D.P.: So cinema was your first calling?

S.A.: Yes. What interested me was the business model. In art, once you sell a work, it's gone. In cinema, you license films. You retain ownership and license the rights, generating attention and revenue over time. That discovery was decisive for me.

S.D.P.: I remember attending the Paris premiere of *Summerlove a Polish Western*. Claude Berri was there, along with many people from the film world. I was fascinated by the film, especially knowing it was directed by Piotr Uklanski, who is also a major contemporary artist.

S.A.: Yes — it wasn't a spaghetti western, but a vodka western. Everyone was drunk in the movie. I produced two films directed by artists. The first was *Johnny Mnemonic* with Keanu Reeves, directed by Robert Longo and written by the renowned author William Gibson, released



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7 — Staffan and Teto Ahrenberg surrounded by friends and family including Jean Tinguely, at Staffan's seventh birthday dinner, Le Rocher, Chexbres, 1964. Photo: Ahrenberg Archives
8 — Le Corbusier and Teto Ahrenberg discussing plans for the Ahrenberg Museum, Stockholm, 1961. Photo: Ahrenberg Archives
9 — Tristan Lafon, Simulation of the Ahrenberg Museum in context, Norr Mälarstrand Quay, Stockholm, 2018

9.

Living with Matisse, Picasso and Christo

Living with Matisse, Picasso and Christo
Theodor Ahrenberg and His Collections



Thames & Hudson

in 1994. We did a premiere in Paris and did an exhibition with Thaddaeus Ropac. I asked Robert to create a print portfolio from the film, and he printed twenty-four video stills — one second of film — which became a remarkable edition. (there are 24 frames /second) We titled it *Mnemonic Pictures*.

Among the other films were *The Quiet American*, starring Michael Caine which I co-produced with Sidney Pollack, for which Michael Caine was nominated for an Academy Award, and *Total Eclipse*, written by Christopher Hampton and directed by Agnieszka Holland, starring twenty-year-old Leonardo DiCaprio playing Arthur Rimbaud. After *Polish Western*, I stopped producing films.

S.D.P.: *Johnny Mnemonic* is a film I would love to see.

S.A.: You should. It's very special. We recently colourised it in black and white and re-premiered it at MoMA in NY.

CAHIERS D'ART

S.D.P.: Let's move to Cahiers d'Art — one of the most historically charged art publications in existence. How did you come to acquire it?

S.A.: It happened entirely by accident. One day in 2010, walking on the Rue du Dragon in Paris, I noticed the physical space of Cahiers d'Art. These were the books I had studied when I was fifteen — we had them at home. I was surprised that there was still a gallery space and a publishing house that no longer published. I rang the bell to ask why they were still operating. When the door opened, I asked who owned it. The man said his brother. I then asked if his brother would sell it. Two days later, I met him, and he said, "You've come at exactly the right time. I was thinking of selling." That's how it happened.

S.D.P.: What were your first steps once you became the owner?

S.A.: The first step was to relaunch the *Revue*. I created an editorial board together with Sam Keller, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Isabela Mora, together we decided that Ellsworth Kelly would be the right artist to relaunch it. He had lived in Paris between 1948 and 1954 — a

formative period for his work. Sam called him, and his answer was simply, "Oh yes." That response is typical. Cahiers d'Art carries such weight that artists immediately want to be associated with it. It's a wonderful platform.

CATALOGUE RAISONNÉS

S.D.P.: At what point did you decide to republish the Zervos catalogue raisonné?

S.A.: That was step two. I met Claude Picasso in New York and asked for his agreement. He said, "It's not that I authorize you — you must do it." We translated it into English and published it in 2014, in partnership with Sotheby's as distributor. From there, I understood how essential catalogue raisonnés are, even if they are rather unprofitable and incredibly demanding in terms of work, time and commitment. I asked Ellsworth Kelly whether he had a publisher. He didn't. I suggested Cahiers d'Art. We published volume 1 and 2, Vol 3 will come out fall 2026, in total it will be 5 volumes. As a great reward, for Volume 1, we won the *Prix Pierre Daix*, created by Francois Pinault.

Later, I asked Frank Gehry if he would like to do his. He said yes, and that project will ultimately consist of eight volumes. Volume I is published; Volumes II and III will appear in 2026 and 2027. After Frank's passing, the work continues through his archives at the Getty Research Institute and in collaboration with Gehry Partners, with an architecture professor as editor.

FRANK GEHRY: THE BOXES

S.D.P.: You also created artworks with Frank Gehry to accompany the catalogue raisonné.

S.A.: Yes, working together, we became very close. When you undertake a catalogue raisonné, you are essentially married for life and beyond. I asked him if he could make some small boxes as a playful edition. Months later, at his studio in Los Angeles, he showed me twelve extraordinary handmade boxes — book slipcases recreating facets of his first house in Santa Monica, built in 1978. The that house made him world famous.

During the 2025 fires, Frank and his wife moved back into the original house. The house now lives on through these boxes, which we are making available to the public. We presented the edition for the first time at Art Monte-Carlo in 2025. The first buyers were Bernard and Almine Picasso, as well as Maja Hoffmann. I donated an edition to the Fondation Beyeler yearly gala for their charity auction (which you conducted) and it sold for three times the initial price, the buyer was a museum in the Netherlands.

COLLECTING AND LEGACY

S.D.P.: Your father clearly suffered from the incurable disease of collecting. How has that affected you?

S.A.: It's hereditary — and contagious. My father collected almost exclusively artists he met personally. I collect actively, though I don't need to meet the artist to do so. Collectors are not only *passionnés*, they are *passionnants*. Being with people who share that passion is one of life's great pleasures.

LE CORBUSIER: AN UNBUILT DREAM

S.A.: Before we finish, I should mention one more thing. My father commissioned Le Corbusier to design the Ahrenberg Museum for Stockholm in 1961 — one of his last projects. The plans were completed, the site chosen, but it was never built for political reasons. I own and have the original plans. One of my dreams is to realize that building somewhere — in Sweden, Switzerland, or elsewhere — working with a living architect to bring it into the present.

S.D.P.: That is the most exciting thing I've heard. I had no idea. I would love to help make that happen. It would be extraordinary to realize an unbuilt Le Corbusier project.

S.A.: The Heidi Weber Pavilion in Zurich proves it can be done. It remains utterly contemporary. That gives me confidence.

S.D.P.: Let's work toward it. Thank you, Staffan.

S.A.: Thank you, Simon. ♦

REFLEJOS

PICASSO



REFLECT



Food for Soul

Artists Collecting Art

By Joachim Pissarro



2.

1 — Jeff Koons and Joachim Pissaro. Photo: Lucía Rivas © Museo Picasso Málaga

2 — Paul Cézanne, *Nature morte à la soupière*, c. 1877, Oil on canvas, 65 x 81,5 cm. ©Grand Palais Rmn (musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

“When we look at artworks, also from the past, we can truly experience time travel and we can get an essence of how it was like to be alive at that time, to be a human being, and still feel that sense of wonders and connection. Just like genes in DNA are tied together, culturally we are linked in the same way. When now I look back to history it feels like a family. If I make a reference to Poussin it’s because Poussin feels like a great uncle. And being able to show with Michelangelo and Donatello will be like showing with a great-great-great cousin. It’s a wonderful sense of community and family. Information leads automatically to an appreciation for the past.”

Jeff Koons

“It’s putting skin in the game. It is not just endlessly acquiring.”

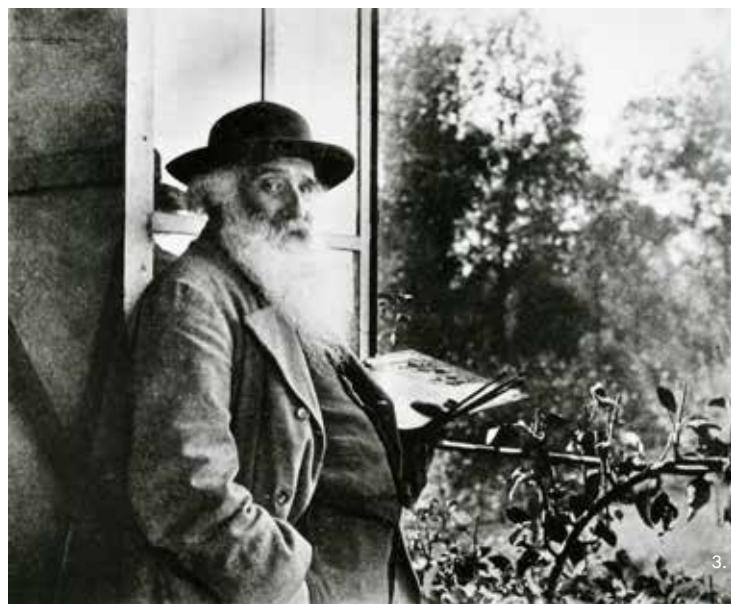
KAWS

Collecting, for many artists, is not just a hobby, it is nourishment - nourishment of the soul, that is! It is as essential - vital - to the creative imagination of living artists - as bone marrow is to a living organism. One simply cannot live without it, as Jeff Koons emphatically stated, in the epigraph above.

What we usually understand as collections whether it's a private collection or a museum collection, is an accumulation of works of art - assembled together according to a variety of criteria, aesthetic, historical, art historical, political, etc. Such criteria and parameters are utterly different when it comes to artists collecting art. In fact, I'm not even sure that the concepts of 'criteria' and 'parameters' apply to *artists collecting art*. KAWS sums it up beautifully by saying: "you put skin in the game" - to put it dramatically it's a matter of life or death for artists. They put their lives into it. They seek out traces of the life, the psyche, the energy, the creative forces at work within the works that they decide to collect. KAWS also says it, "for me it's not a collection, it's a group of works with which I live." The emphasis here is on the last word—live: he buys works in order to live with them. Conversely, these works enliven the life of their new owner. This comes down to a life exchange. These works come to life again, and they enable the artist who lived with them, to live better, stronger.

The stakes are high. It's not just a matter of accumulating a group of beautiful pictures. For one thing, the notion of the best, the most beautiful, the most desirable, the most expensive, matter relatively little. Such quantitative gauges don't mean much to KAWS, as he says: "I'm not collecting trophies or trying to create a church environment;" These artists are collection works of art with which they're going to *live* with—their lives (at least their creative lives) somehow depend upon these works. Their collection (although many don't really like the term 'collection') becomes their lives.

To these artists, the notion of collecting 'important' works of art is plainly absurd. What's important, is that importance is not important. One day, Jasper Johns, kindly showed me the new display of his "collection". Among works by Rauschenberg, Cezanne, de Kooning, he decided to quiz me on a beautiful and intriguing rusty metal work laid on his chimney. The work presented interesting twists and curvatures—rough, yet beautifully patinated. I mentioned: David Smith, a guess that was immediately met with Jasper's hearty laughter. Before furthering this humiliating examination, I decided to give up. Jasper announced: This is a work that my dog and I found on our daily walk! They don't judge works of art by museum, gallery, or other collector standards. Importance (in the art world sense) carries no importance in an artist studio. In fact, Pissarro, Cezanne and KAWS are similar in their anti-establishment views. When Pissarro buys himself, as he puts it, 'a bunch of Cezanne drawings', he's definitely not talking about the *Montagne Sainte-Victoire*, he's interested in finding a live document of the raw imaginary creative forces by Cezanne on a sheet of paper. That's what Pissarro is looking for, and

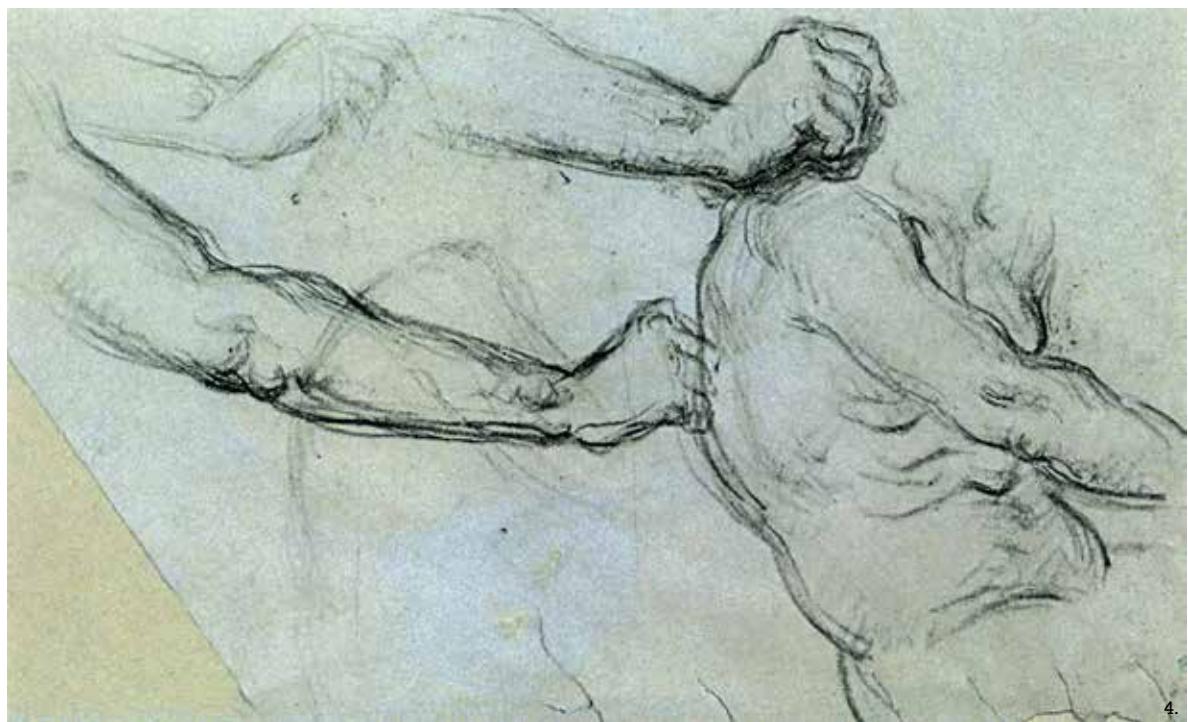


3 — Camille Pissarro

when KAWS goes for these early graffiti sketches it's also what he is looking for. These are the two stories we are looking at, today – as there would be plenty more to explore.

Even though Pissarro's economic situation was very precarious, he found a way to "buy himself" a handful of studies by Cezanne from the famous art dealer Tanguy: these consisted of a small oil study of the mid-1860s with a subject vaguely inspired from mythology, together with three preparatory drawings. He explained to his son Lucien that, if one is too far away, it is easy to get wrong ideas of what is happening; and, if one is too close, one cannot see anything: according to Pissarro, "this is just like a picture by Cezanne that you would stick under your own nose." Meanwhile at home, Pissarro's wife, Julie, deeply concerned with the family's very precarious economic situation, and accused her husband of not seeing the reality. The situation became highly critical and she even threatened to commit suicide with her two youngest children. She fortunately decided to think twice and pleaded to her eldest son Lucien, who was very close to his dad, to intervene in this situation:

"Your poor father is really a fool; he doesn't understand the difficulties of living. He knows that I owe 3,000 francs and he sends me 300, and tells me to wait! Always the same joke. I don't mind waiting, but meanwhile one must eat. I have no money and nobody will give me credit. I paid off a little of the debts here and there, but it is so little that they don't want to give me any more credit. What are we to do? We are eight at home to be fed every day. When dinner time comes, I cannot say to them "wait" —this stupid word your father repeats and repeats. I have used up anything I had put aside. I am at the end of my tether and, what is worse, have no courage left. I had decided to send the three boys to Paris and then to take the two little



4-5 — Paul Cézanne, *Etudes*, 1867-69, Black crayon on blue wove paper (fragment) 17 x 25.1 cm. Courtesy Martin Kline Collection
 6 — Paul Cézanne, Reverse side of *Etudes* in the original frame



ones for a walk by the river. You can imagine the rest. Everyone would have thought it an accident. But when I was ready to go, I lacked the courage. Why am I such a coward at the last moment? My poor son, I feared to cause you all grief, and I was afraid of your remorse. Your dear father wrote me a letter which is a masterpiece of selfishness. The poor dear man says that he has reached the top of his profession and doesn't want to prejudice his reputation by having an auction sale or by pawning his pictures. Not to prejudice his reputation! Poor dear, what repentance for him if he should lose his wife and his two little ones! To uphold his reputation! I think he doesn't know what he is saying. My poor Lucien, I am terribly unhappy. Good-bye. Shall I see you again, alas?"

It is in this very context that Pissarro decided to 'buy himself' a bunch of Cézanne studies!

Lucien, himself an artist, defended his father to his mother Julie:

"It's curious that you are unhappy that Papa is not worried. On the contrary, I admire him. If by bad luck, he was a man who allowed himself to be overcome by discouragement, what would become of us? A discouraged man is incapable of working and above all of working well. To make good painting, it's necessary to have complete serenity of spirit, which happily, he has. It's already unfortunate that you are so anxious. If both of you despair, everything will be lost, while with coolness and perseverance, we can still get out of this. Reflect, my poor mother, and try to be a little





8.

7 — Brian sitting on the couch. Photo: Jason Schmidt
 8 — Notebook with sketches by Futura 2000

reasonable. From what I've been able to see, things are getting better and the latest canvases that Papa has sent out have had much success.

It's plain and obvious that the only goal is to benefit Murer himself.."

It is in this dire situation that Pissarro appears to say triumphantly 'I bought myself a handful of drawings by Cezanne.' This provides context to suggest that, to an artist, with no means to live, collecting art was definitely not an act of luxury. It was an act of survival.

Already in the early 1870s when practically nobody was interested in Cezanne, Pissarro was trying to convince Duret, the very influential art critic of the time, to consider acquiring a Cezanne. Pissarro – definitely not a born art salesman – trying to impress Duret, described Cezanne "as a five-legged sheep"! Indeed, a rarity. He told Duret: "*Dès le moment que vous cherchez des moutons à cinq pattes, je crois que Cézanne pourra vous satisfaire, car il a des études fort étranges et vues d'une façon unique.*" [As long as you are looking for

five-legged sheep, I believe that Cézanne will be able to satisfy you, because he has very strange studies and seen in a unique way.] The very fact that Cezanne's works do not fit the standards, the criteria, the acceptable canons at the time is precisely what Pissarro finds interesting, and what he tries to communicate by referring to Cezanne as a five-legged sheep – a monster. It would not be until 20 years later, in 1895 (Cezanne was 55) when the first exhibition that caught the public's attention took place, organized by the far-sighted Ambroise Vollard.

This dire existential context neither justifies, nor accuses Pissarro—or maybe, both: he can either be seen as callous and indifferent, or passionate and bold in his choices. Whatever character judgment one will pass on Pissarro, it is clear that buying a work of art in such a context was not simply a matter of an aesthetic choice, or a desire to add to the collection. It was an artist's need. It was a life choice.

An analogous and striking story can be found today with KAWS, who thus describes the works that surround him (I prefer to avoid the term 'collection'), "Besides that, they all keep me company, honestly." These works of art are life, they keep him company, just like friends, or invited guests, or colleagues. He's not saying, 'Oh, it's like they keep me company'; No, they do keep him company. They are forces of life enabling him to go on with his own creative energy.

Valerie Rousseau describes KAWS's collecting activity as 'clearly one of many of his multifaceted creative endeavours' pointing out the fact that this is not a linear process. They are like a library that he consults, as KAWS explains, "I'm looking for what I feel is the right thing, and I'm not thinking these are the masterpieces. I'm not collecting trophies or trying to create a church environment; it's more of a library. When you think of how artists, over decades, change and transition, you understand why it's great to be able to look at all of this work in person-to see first hand how work goes back and forth." He goes on to say "As an artist, intimately knowing the work that you collect is very different from looking at it in a gallery or a museum." The nature of the gaze of an artist upon the works they collect is utterly different the experience of viewing such works in a museum - or in a private collection.

KAWS's 'library', a much more appropriate term than the word 'collection', is a testament of how KAWS grew up and how his artistic soul was nourished by the graffiti generation of the 1970s and 80s. Mayor Ed Koch in the 1980s and Rudy Giuliani, beginning in 1994, took action to eliminate the graffiti that had covered nearly all New York City subway cars for years. From being overwhelmingly visible and ever present, as often as you entered a train, or simply saw a train, the graffiti and its history suddenly vanished. Every night they would wash the trains, so the graffiti just disappeared within a matter of weeks or months. Through both Giuliani's and Bloomberg's administrations, 16 million square feet of graffiti were removed. As KAWS describes it, "One reason I collect '70s and '80s graffiti is because I grew up feeling so strongly about this work but not seeing it in museums in the '90s and early



9 — Peter Saul, *Subway II*, 1982, Alkyd on canvas, 198.1 x 269.2 cm. © Peter Saul and Gladstone Gallery / SABAM Belgium 2026
 10 — Paul Cezanne, *Portrait of Camille Pissarro*, ©Grand Palais Rmn (musée d'Orsay) / Tony Querrec

2000s. It came in and out of galleries, but I don't think there were many cohesive collections formed. Now I figure I'm in a place where I can put one together and pass it on when the right situation presents itself. I like looking for the original works that created this culture. Whether it's album art, magazine art, skateboard graphics — I find it really interesting that somebody can make something that takes on a life of its own and goes way beyond whatever the artist's first intentions were. I've always had collecting inclinations, starting with stamps, comic books, toys."

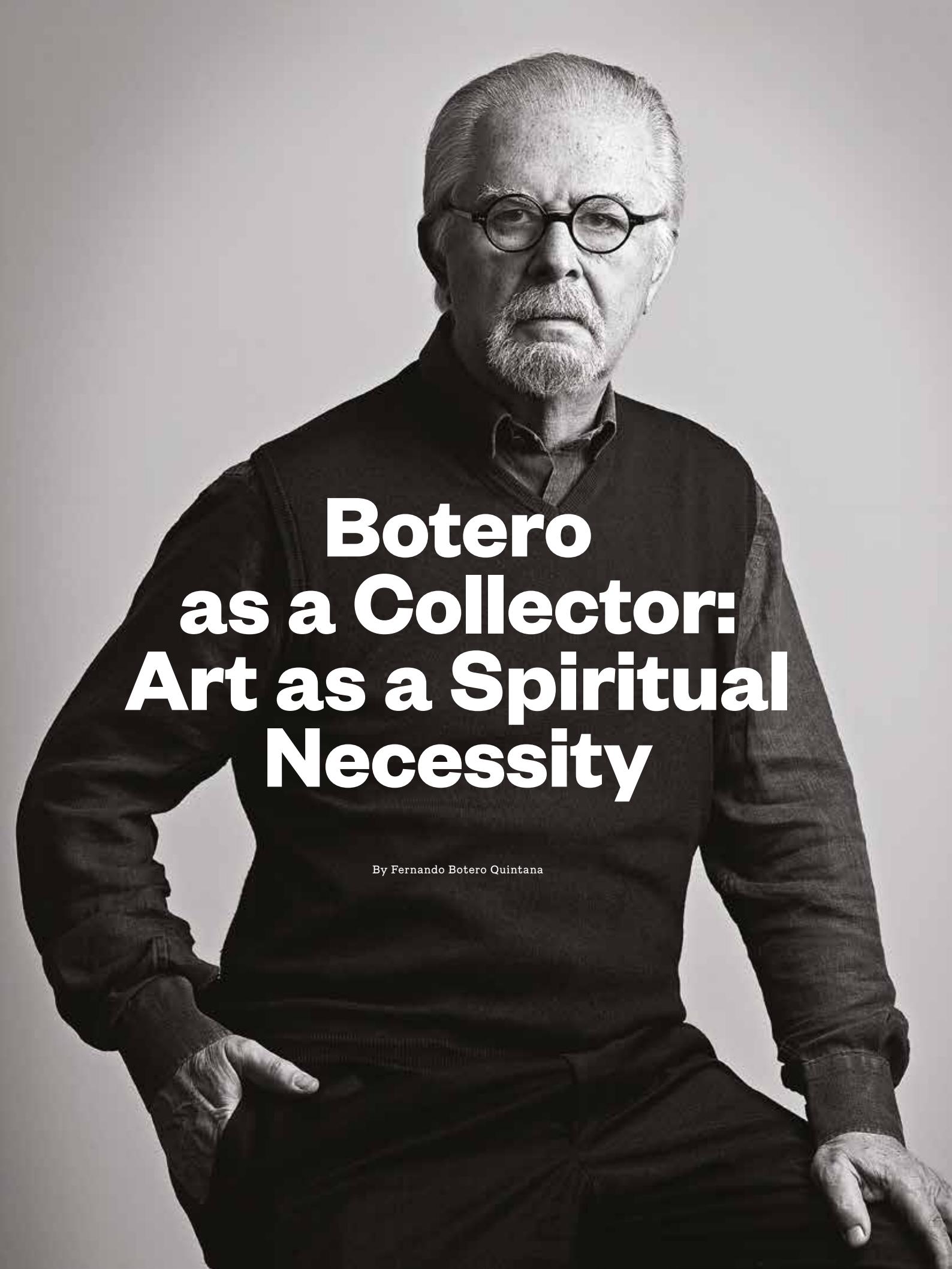
For KAWS, the vital force in his multifaceted collecting endeavour was to conserve the archival sources: drawings, sketches, motifs, preparatory works, by all these graffiti artists whose works on the New York City subways were suddenly wiped out. But precisely, beyond this conservation instinct was another deep abiding life force: the will, the intent, to bring back to life what two generations of New York mayors had erased. Today, if you want to look at and understand

the history, indeed, the life, of graffiti, you can either view photographs that survive or turn to KAWS's collection of these incredible early archival drawings by major artists such as Dondi, Futura 2000, and Lee Quiñones, to name a few.

When artists collect art, it is part of their DNA. It is just as important if not 'more important' than food, because for an artist, collecting art is the food that feeds the soul. Artists evolve their own art through collecting and help preserve art from being forgotten. Artists collecting art is the core of art history. When it comes to artists collecting art, the very notion of collecting is imbued with a whole other dimension — best summed up by Nietzsche:

"I know of no better life purpose than to perish in attempting the great and the impossible." ♦





Botero as a Collector: Art as a Spiritual Necessity

By Fernando Botero Quintana



1 — Fernando Botero. Courtesy of Fernando Botero Archives

2 — Frank Stella, *Double Gray Scramble*, 1968, Courtesy Museo de Antioquia © SABAM Belgium 2026

2.

I believe that one of the most profound yet simple definitions of art, and its essence, was pronounced by my grandfather, Maestro Fernando Botero, in the speech he gave at the opening of the Botero Museum in Bogotá in 2000, when he officialised the donation he made to Colombia: 208 works in total—85 artworks from great artists of the IXX and XX centuries and 123 of his own creation. “Some people have asked me about the meaning of this donation, the significance of these works remaining in Colombia at a time when the country is going through turbulent days. And the answer is that precisely because our homeland is besieged by violence, this collection must remain here. We must counter barbarism with civilisation; violence with culture; and intolerance with art, because art is not a whim that adorns a society, but a spiritual necessity that must be shared with enthusiasm.”

This definition of art — and of its essence as a spiritual necessity that must be shared by a society, or by a civilisation, with enthusiasm — in my opinion captures in a fascinating way the profoundly meaningful facet of my grandfather as a collector.

It took my grandfather many years, indeed, an extraordinary life and career, to shape his perspective on art. That vision eventually materialised in his collection. In this text I would like to share how he forged that collection through four key elements.

BOTERO'S PASSION FOR ART

The central axis of his work as a collector stemmed from the approach towards art that he developed during the formative years of his life. It is the approach of someone profoundly passionate about art; someone who devoted himself to meticulously studying the critical periods of the history of art and who held on tightly to key convictions such as the coherence of style and the belief that art must produce delight.

My grandfather's study of art began with his first encounter with the Cubist works of Picasso. His obsession with studying art intensified when he discovered the use of volume, the ability to compose forms, and the use of colour to illuminate space in the paintings of the great Renaissance masters, such as Piero della Francesca, Andrea Mantegna, and Paolo Uccello.

Later came an extraordinary period in Mexico, where he explored Diego Rivera's deeply rooted perspective for narrating social context, as well as Rufino Tamayo's exalted and expressive colour palette. Throughout his life, the creative pauses to deepen his knowledge and skills were constant.

One example was when he found a letter from Raphael to a student who had asked for advice on how to balance colours. In his response, Raphael explained that the best way to achieve colour balance was to use a

short palette of three or four tones, which would naturally create harmony within the composition. That letter was transformative for my grandfather, as it helped him discover the balance of colours in his own work.

His phase as a collector therefore began with the same fervent drive that defined him as an artist: an obsessive commitment to admiring and studying art. Alongside that obsession with studying art was my grandfather's profound admiration for artists whose plastic mystique were rooted in the coherence of style. My grandfather spent more than ten years searching for the artistic style that would ultimately define him. His true birth as an artist took place in 1956.

That loyalty and admiration for figurative art came at a high cost; it meant going against the current of what was happening in the art world in the late 1950s and 1960s, when abstract art and Pop Art were dominant. He remained faithful to his style, and for that reason he always sought a connection with artists who shared that same inspiration for the figurative.

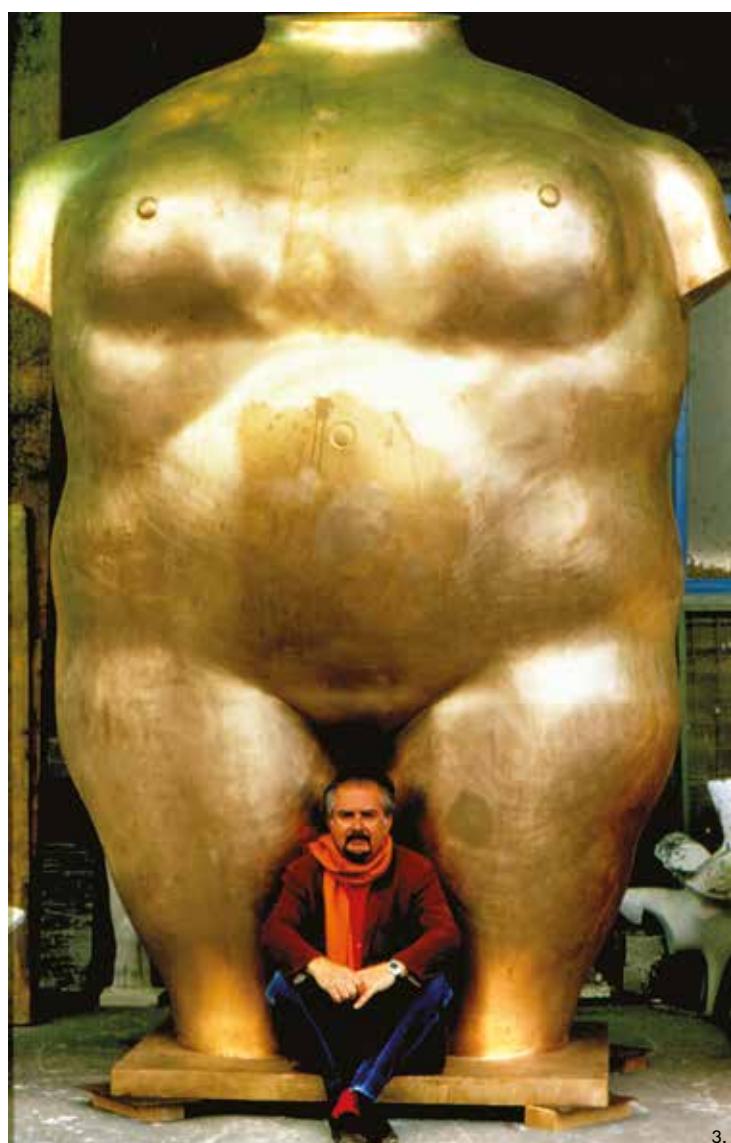
The first pieces he acquired were works of Pre-Columbian art—marvellous objects that are essential for understanding the history of the ancient civilisations that flourished before the discovery of the Americas. However, the first acquisition of modern art for his collection was made in the early seventies with that painter's eye — and above all, as a devoted student of art — and driven by his admiration for figurative art. That first artwork was a drawing by Fernand Léger for one hundred thousand dollars.

Later, during the 1970s and 1980s, he acquired other important works for his collection — pieces that brought him delight and genuine pleasure. He first kept them in his apartment in Paris and then in New York. Two critical paintings he acquired according to this criterion were *Portrait of Madame La Fontaine* (1923) by Édouard Vuillard, which he chose to hang in his New York apartment directly across from his bed so he could wake up each morning admiring it; and *Nude with Chair* (1935–1938) by Pierre Bonnard, a painting my father studied closely to understand the artist's masterful use of colour and light. He admired it deeply, knowing that Bonnard spent three years preparing to paint it, and he often referred to it as one of his favourite works in the collection.

ADMIRATION AND DEVOTION FOR GREAT MASTERS

My grandfather had a mantra that he was able to discover in his late adulthood after years of artistic exploration: "A good artist searches for solutions. A great artist searches for problems."

This mantra reflected his lifelong journey to discover his artistic style and to continually challenge himself to become a better artist. It was also an expression of the admiration and devotion he felt for artists who deliberately sought discomfort as a catalyst for artistic evolution. Many of the artists from whom he nurtured his own artistic language, and whom he deeply admired, were also great collectors art



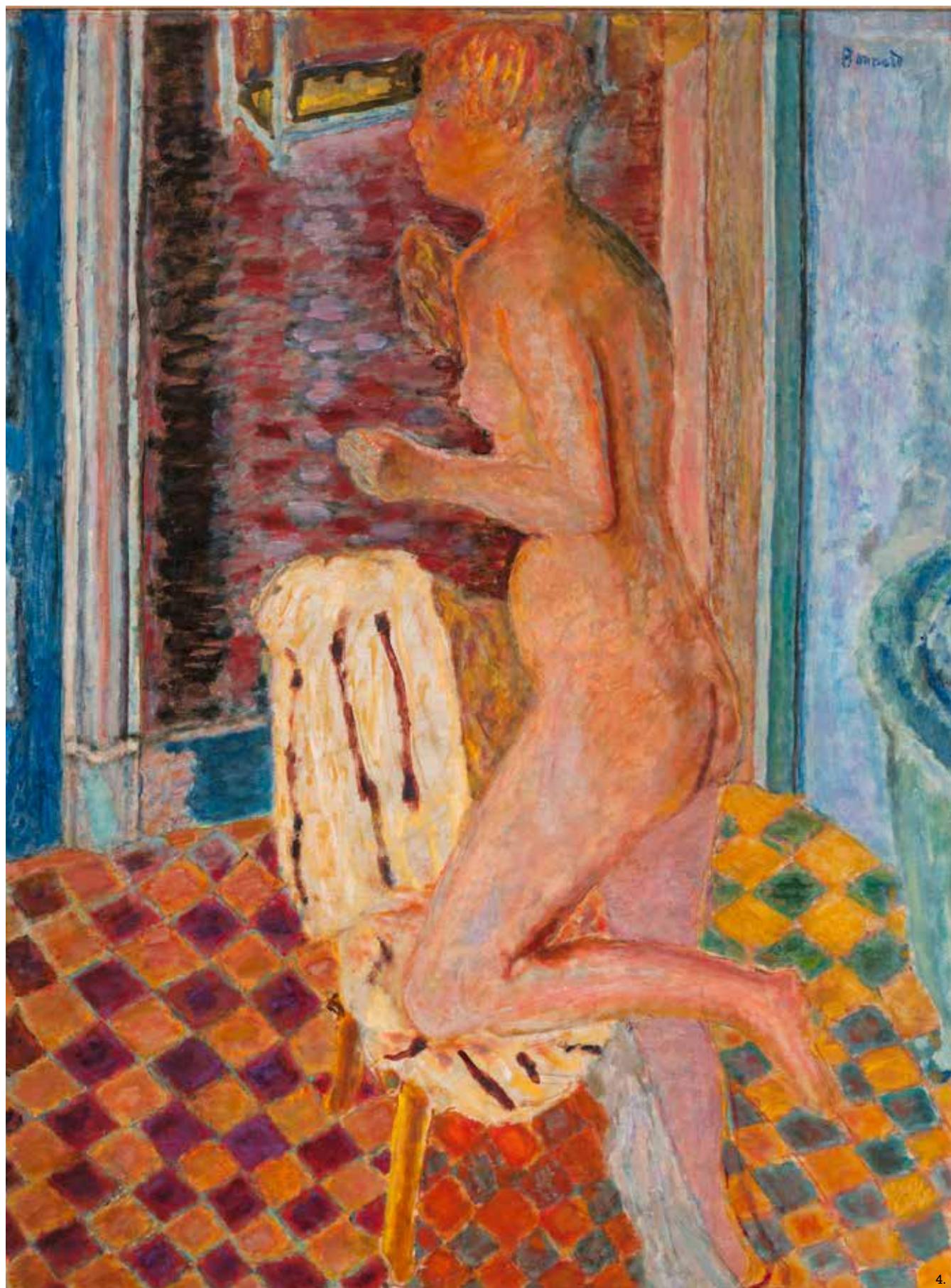
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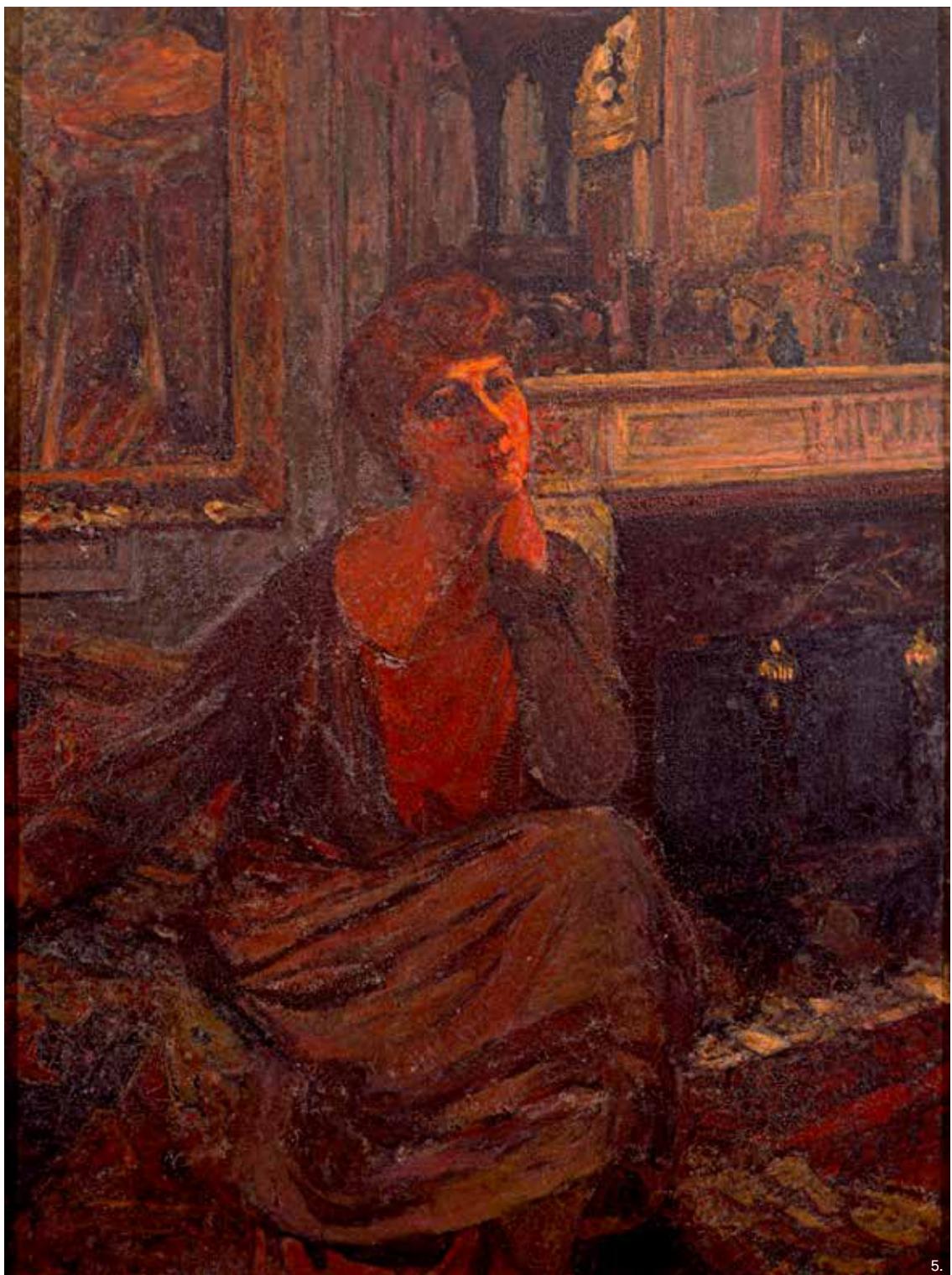
3 — Fernando Botero photographed with one of his large sculptures.
Courtesy of Fernando Botero Archives

4 — Pierre Bonnard, *Nude with Chair* (1935–1938)

themselves. He was especially captivated by Picasso, a great collector of Modigliani, Matisse, Renoir, and others, whose versatility, bold distortions of form and volume, and nonconformism profoundly inspired him. From Monet — an avid collector of Delacroix, Cézanne, Pissarro and Renoir — my grandfather learned the importance of immersing himself in local roots, in the case of my grandfather his Colombian roots, as the only true path toward developing a universal artistic language.

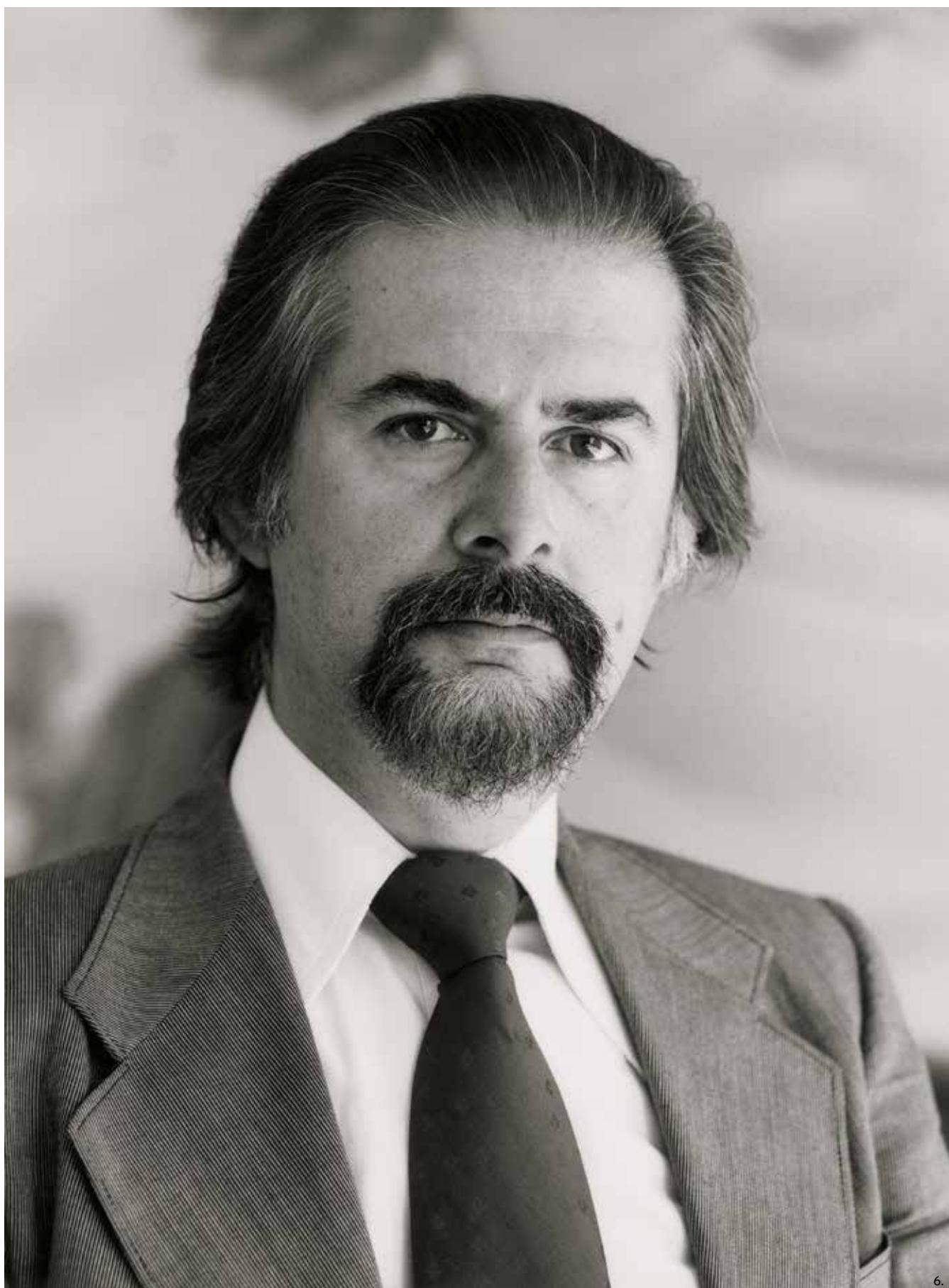
From Matisse, himself a great collector of sculpture, my grandfather learned to admire the rare mastery of an artist capable of succeeding both in painting and in sculpture. That overview into the artistic journey the great masters undertook, and how they built their collections, profoundly influenced the way my grandfather conceptualised his own collection.

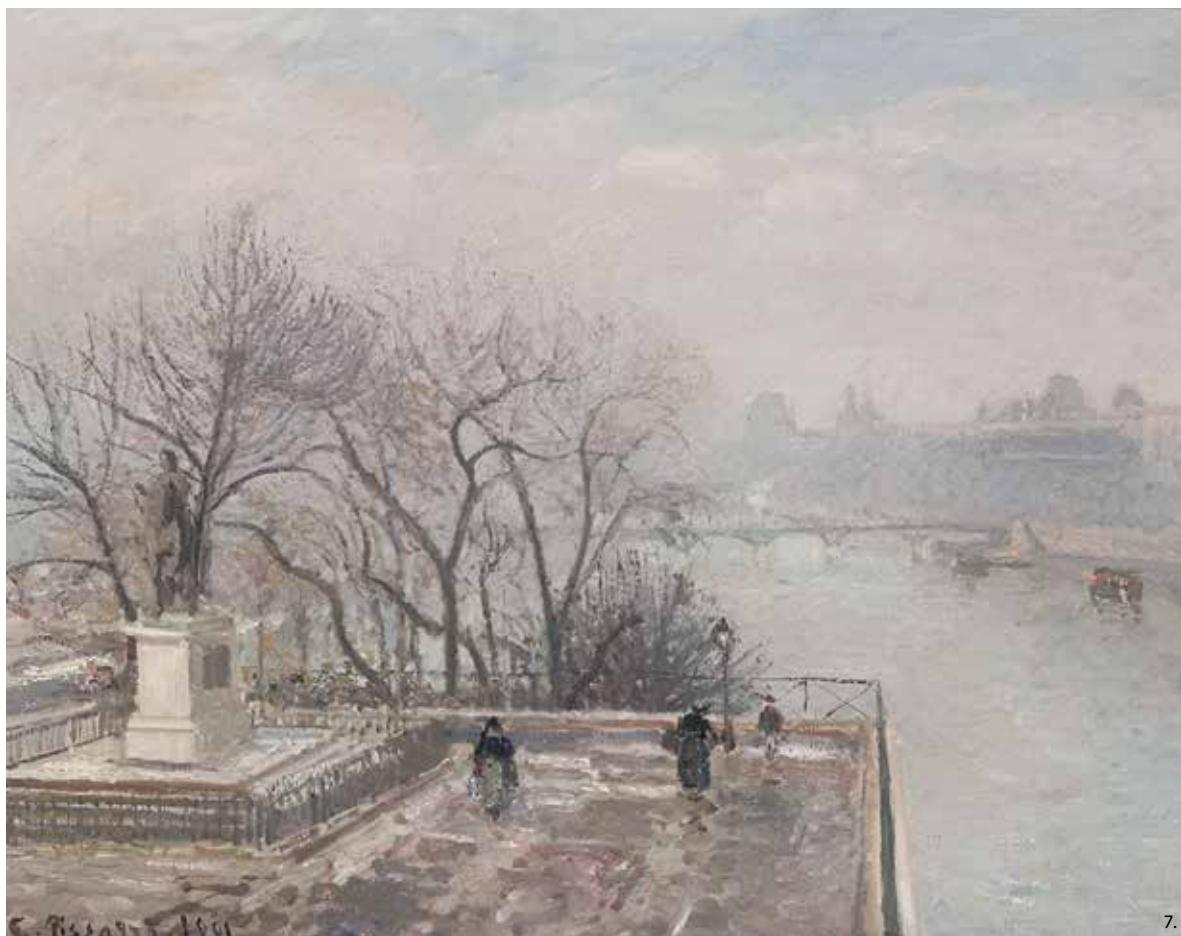




5.

5 — Édouard Vuillard, *Portrait of Madame La Fontaine* (1923)
6 — Fernando Botero. Courtesy of Fernando Botero Archives





7 — Camille Pissarro, *The Louvre, Foggy Morning 1901*

THE USE OF HIS ART TO EXPAND HIS OWN COLLECTION

The 1970s was the decade when my grandfather first began to gain recognition, which also meant that his financial circumstances changed drastically. However, it was during the 1980s that he reached artistic consecration, a period that brought abundance and stability. With the first important money he earned, he made an investment in the stock market that went sour. This setback made my grandfather realise that he could do better as an art collector with his passion and knowledge of the field. This is how he went about acquiring his first paintings. He purchased works through art dealers or galleries, and occasionally he bought directly from collectors.

Later, he became excited about acquiring works through auctions. He preferred to follow the auctions and bid by telephone. He always said he avoided attending in person so as not to risk paying more than he was willing for a painting.

Yet the method he used most widely to grow his collection was through the barter of artworks he owned for pieces he dreamed of adding to his collection. First, he selected the artwork he wished to acquire; then he approached one of the art dealers he regularly worked with and asked for help locating and securing the piece. He paid part with traditional bank notes and the

rest with two or three of his own works. This is how he acquired *Double Gray Scramble* (1968) by Frank Stella and *Harmonie* by Aristide Maillol, two works that his close friend and long-time art dealer Felipe Grimberg recalls he helped my grandfather secure. He later donated both pieces: *Double Gray Scramble* to the Museo de Antioquia in his hometown of Medellín, Colombia and *Harmonie* to the Botero Museum in Bogotá.

Through these three methods, purchases from art dealers and collectors, auctions and barter, my grandfather built his fabulous collection step by step.

DONATION OF HIS COLLECTION

My father Fernando — Maestro Botero's eldest son — often recalls how his room was filled with paintings by great artists such as Balthus, Vuillard and Rouault, among others. During the late 1970s, he was living with my grandfather in his apartment on Boulevard du Palais, on the Île de la Cité in Paris. It was there that my grandfather first stored and hung many of the paintings in his growing collection. Later, he kept some works in his apartment in New York, until eventually deciding to send most of them to a storage facility in Switzerland. From time to time, he visited the collection, though those visits became less and less frequent over time.



8.



9.

8 — Joan Miró, *The Red Disc Is Chasing the Lark's Wing*, 1953 © Successió Miró / SABAM Belgium 2026

9 — Francis Bacon, *Study of a Child* © The Estate of Francis Bacon /All rights reserved / Sabam, Bruxelles and DACS, London 2026

10 — Fernando Botero in his studio. Courtesy of Fernando Botero Archives

At the end of the 1990s, while staying at Villas del Sol — a beautiful hotel in Zihuatanejo where he spent the month of January — he experienced a sudden revelation. He was there with his third wife and lifelong partner of more than forty years, the artist Sophia Vari, when he realized it was a “crime,” in his words, that his collection was stored away from the public in a dark storage facility in Zurich. Perhaps driven by a promise to his younger self, who grew up believing that every individual should have access to art and culture, he felt a deep desire and responsibility to donate it to Colombia.

He immediately asked the hotel switchboard to connect him with Miguel Urrutia, a banker of great cultural sensibility who at the time served as President of the Banco de la República, Colombia’s Central Bank — the only institution my grandfather believed capable of sustaining such a donation. The donation soon became a reality. It was an extraordinary gesture of trust in Colombia and a profound belief that culture could help the country move beyond turbulent times. During that period, Colombia had the highest homicide rate in the world.

Fully aware of the donation’s importance, he decided to acquire major artworks to strengthen the collection, such as *Seated Man with a Pipe* (1969) by Picasso and *Study of a Child* (1960) by Bacon. He also bought

works by artists with whom he felt no personal artistic affinity — Tapiés, Barceló, and others — but whose significance he recognised as essential to a collection. He often explained that as a painter, one must rigorously examine which influences to take and which to reject. But as a collector, his perspective changed entirely: one must understand each artist’s effort and their reality, a stance from which greater tolerance and appreciation can arise.

This is the remarkable story of how one of the most important art collections formed by any artist in the last century was built. Fortunately, this collection became the most significant artistic donation ever made to a country or institution in Latin America. My grandfather, a passionate art lover and devoted student who continuously paid tribute to his masters, undertook a challenging yet profoundly inspiring journey to become a well-known artist. With that same impetus, and driven by a desire to give back to a country marked by violence, yet one he deeply loved and believed in, he assembled a magnificent collection. His vision did, indeed, come true: today, millions have visited and enjoyed his private collection with enthusiasm, fulfilling that spiritual necessity he well defined as art. ◇





Wim Delvoye

*On the Origin of Species,
by Means of Natural Selection, or
the Preservation of Favoured Races
in the Struggle for Life*







2.

My collection of *La Vache Qui Rit* labels, which I have assembled into an installation entitled *On the Origin of Species, by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, is both a personal obsession and a reflection on the nature of collecting itself.

The collection is not prestigious or pretentious. It doesn't grant me social capital the way a traditional art collection might. It has the dryness, even the dullness, of a stamp collection—where obsessive attention is paid to microscopic differences, and where meaning is often manufactured through classification itself. By organizing the labels scientifically or even "philatelically," the work becomes both comedic and neurotic, highlighting the absurdity of the obsessive drive behind collecting.

The title isn't ironic—it's precise. The survival of *La Vache Qui Rit* as a brand over nearly a century mirrors a Darwinian process, where design, marketing, and cultural resonance act as mechanisms of natural selection. In this sense, the labels themselves become evolutionary specimens. I've arranged them chronologically, so the installation thus becomes not only a portrait of a brand but also a commentary on how images evolve, how mass culture mutates, and how meaning can emerge from the most banal of objects.

This work has been shown at the Lyon Biennale in 2005, at the Museum of Fine Arts in Lille in 2015 as part of the exhibition *Joie de Vivre*, and most recently during my solo exhibition at the MAH in Geneva in 2024. ♦

1 — Exhibition view: *L'Ordre des Choses*, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Genève, 2024

2-13 — Above and next pages: *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, 2005, 114 frames, 81 x 68 cm each (detail)



LVQR



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From Visibility to Viability



**The Evolution of an Art Ecosystem
and Market Anchored in Pan-Africanism**

By Kami Gahiga



2.

1 — Kami Gahiga, Photo courtesy of Art Basel

2 — Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, *Macuto*, 2025, installation composed of printed fabric and printed cut-out metal. /Hyperallergic. Exhibition curated by Cameroonian curator Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

Pan-Africanism is an ideology and international movement that advocates the advancement of African singularity and culture. It was developed by several prominent figures over centuries, from abolitionist writers such as Olaudah Equiano in the late 1700s and W.E.B Dubois to Presidents Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Léopold Sédar Senghor of Sénegal, who, in the 1950s and 60s, were central in the for the advancement and structuration of the movement. Pan-Africanists stood against political and intellectual colonialism, advocated nationalism and fought for the devolution of authority to Africans. The generative seeds of Pan-Africanism culminated in the decolonisation of Africa in the mid-twentieth century, beginning with Ghana in 1957, before spreading to the rest of the continent and the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa in the early 1990s.

Today, Pan-Africanism has evolved from a political movement into a network of intra-African and Global South circuits. The art ecosystem on the continent and the expansion of the contemporary African art market over the past two decades are both anchored in tenets of Pan-Africanism, involving institutional, commercial and circulatory networks grounded in partnerships and collaborations that are reshaping the geography of the global art market.

Before delving into the dynamics of the market, it is essential to revisit the historical pillars that shaped Pan-Africanism from an intellectual ideal into the cultural framework of a growing market ecosystem for contemporary African artists.

Soon after Senegal's independence in 1960, the World Festival of Black Arts took place in Dakar under the patronage of President Léopold Sédar Senghor, most famous for having dedicated 25% of his country's budget to art and culture. An investment that reflected his firm belief that culture was central to his nation-building plans. Senghor's cultural initiative was attended by artists, musicians and scholars, bringing together thirty-seven countries from across the continent and the diaspora. The exhibitions encompassed sculpture, painting, music, architecture and cinema.

Following Sénegal's 1966 Festival, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (formerly Haute-Volta) hosted FESPACO, to this day the most significant African film festival, whose aim is to "contribute to the expansion and development of African cinema as a means of expression, education and awareness-raising." For the influential Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène, a founding father of the festival, "nowhere are so many African films shown at once; nowhere do so many African filmmakers ever come together." At its peak,

in pre-Covid years, FESPACO attracted more than 100,000 local and international spectators.

A decade later, FESTAC 1977 was held in Lagos, Nigeria, gathering artists from multiple countries on the continent and around the world. Their practices spanned visual arts, music, performance, theatre, and literature. Later, these continental manifestations paved the way for the launch of major institutional and commercial exhibitions such as the Dak'Art Biennale (1992), Doual'Art (1991), the Rencontres de Bamako Photography Biennale in Mali (1994), Johannesburg Biennale (1997), Marrakech Biennale (2004), FNB Art Joburg (2008), 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair (2013), Investec Cape Town Art Fair (2013) and Art x Lagos (2016).

Today, the contemporary African art scene is supported by a wealth of infrastructure in Africa and internationally. After years of rapid growth, the market has entered a period of recalibration, aligning with the broader global slowdown witnessed in the past two years. According to Artnet, auction sales of African artists have declined by 36% between 2023 and 2024 in par with global fine art sales, a slowdown driven by geopolitical tensions, economic volatility and trade fragmentation.

However, regional data reveal a more nuanced landscape when assessing the health of the contemporary art market beyond the Western hemisphere. In South Africa, Strauss & Co, the largest auction house in Africa, recorded a 5.6% increase in annual sales in 2024, its most successful year since it was founded in 2008, with private sales accounting for 19% of total revenue. Likewise, the Investec Cape Town Art Fair organised its largest edition in February 2025, welcoming 125 exhibitors with more than half of galleries hailing from Africa.

Also, the market for women artists experienced unprecedented visibility and market strength. ArtTactic reports the total sales value of works by African women artists reached \$22 million in 2024, representing 452 artists up from 288 in 2023. The five highest-priced sales of the year were all by women: Julie Mehretu's *Mumbaphilia* (J.E.) led at \$5.8 million, followed by Irma Stern, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Toyin Ojih Odutola and Marlene Dumas, each surpassing the \$1 million mark. Women collectively accounted for 52.8% of total African art auction sales, a historic shift in both representation and valuation. As Lindsay Dewar, Chief Operating Officer of ArtTactic, observed: "The African art scene stands out as a leader, where women artists are thriving and performing exceptionally well."

Likewise, while overall values of the contemporary African art market have softened, the volume of works sold increased by 13% in 2024 as observed by specialist Elikem Logan. This mirrors the global market trend: although high-value transactions have declined, the number of works sold under \$50,000 rose by 3%, as outlined in the 2025 Art Basel and UBS Market Report, showing sustained activity in the more accessible segment. Rather than a contraction, this adjustment signals an opportunity for the market

to consolidate. Hence, from its early days of 'discovery' and speculative enthusiasm, the market for contemporary African art is now shifting to a phase of structural maturity.

Dialogue between Africa and its diaspora, a core tenet of pan-Africanism, felt particularly resonant during the fair season this fall. There seems to be a renewed energy in the contemporary African art market—*un nouveau souffle*. Speaking with galleries exhibiting at Frieze London, there was a noticeably positive atmosphere, with collectors from Congo, Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria particularly visible and active. Frieze dedicated a section of the fair to exploring the cultural continuum between Brazil and West Africa, inviting Galerie Atiss (Dakar), Tafeta (London), Jahmek Contemporary (Luanda), Mitre Gallery from Brazil, and Selebe Yoon (Dakar). This conversation recalls the spirit of FESTAC 1977, the Second World Festival of Black Arts and Culture held in Lagos where Brazil curated an exhibition titled *The Impact of African Culture on Brazil*. At the 1-54 Art Fair, galleries reported a notable expansion of acquisitions by African collectors, including a Nigerian-based collector who acquired a diptych by contemporary Jamaican artist Leasho Johnson from Tern Gallery, and a Cameroonian collector purchased two Souad Abdelrasoul paintings from Gallery Misr in Cairo that will be presented at Art Basel Doha in February 2026.

At 1-54, a conversation in honour of Koyo Kouoh with Afro-Cuban artist Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung (Curator São Paulo Biennal 2025), Ibrahim Mahama (Artist and founder of SCAA Tamale, Ghana) and Marie-Hélène Pereira (Director RAW Material Company, Dakar) discussed Pan-Africanism and the importance of nurturing collaborations in Africa and across the Diaspora as a mode of institution-building and curatorial practice. Campos-Pons spoke movingly about how Yoruba philosophy and spirituality remain a guiding force in her work. This momentum extends to Art Basel Paris where one of the fair's cultural partners, Detroit Salon, will present three distinct exhibitions across venues including Palais de Tokyo, Grand Palais and Hôtel de Talleyrand, inspired by the intellectual work of Pan-African pioneers W.E.B. Du Bois and Thomas J. Calloway.

The principles of Pan-Africanism are increasingly palpable across the continent, visible in the growth of institutions and the expanding web of collaborations. The Kenyan-based auction house Art Auction East Africa and Strauss & Co in Cape Town joined forces on November 5th for a live sale from Nairobi at Circle Art Gallery, broadcast globally on Strauss & Co's Invaluable platform. Earlier this year, the Nairobi Contemporary Art Institute (NCAI) founded by Michael Armitage, and the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in Tamale, founded by Ibrahim Mahama, co-organized an exhibition *Notes on Friendship: Breaking Bread*, inaugurated at NCAI in April 2025 and presented a dialogue between artists from Kenya and Ghana.



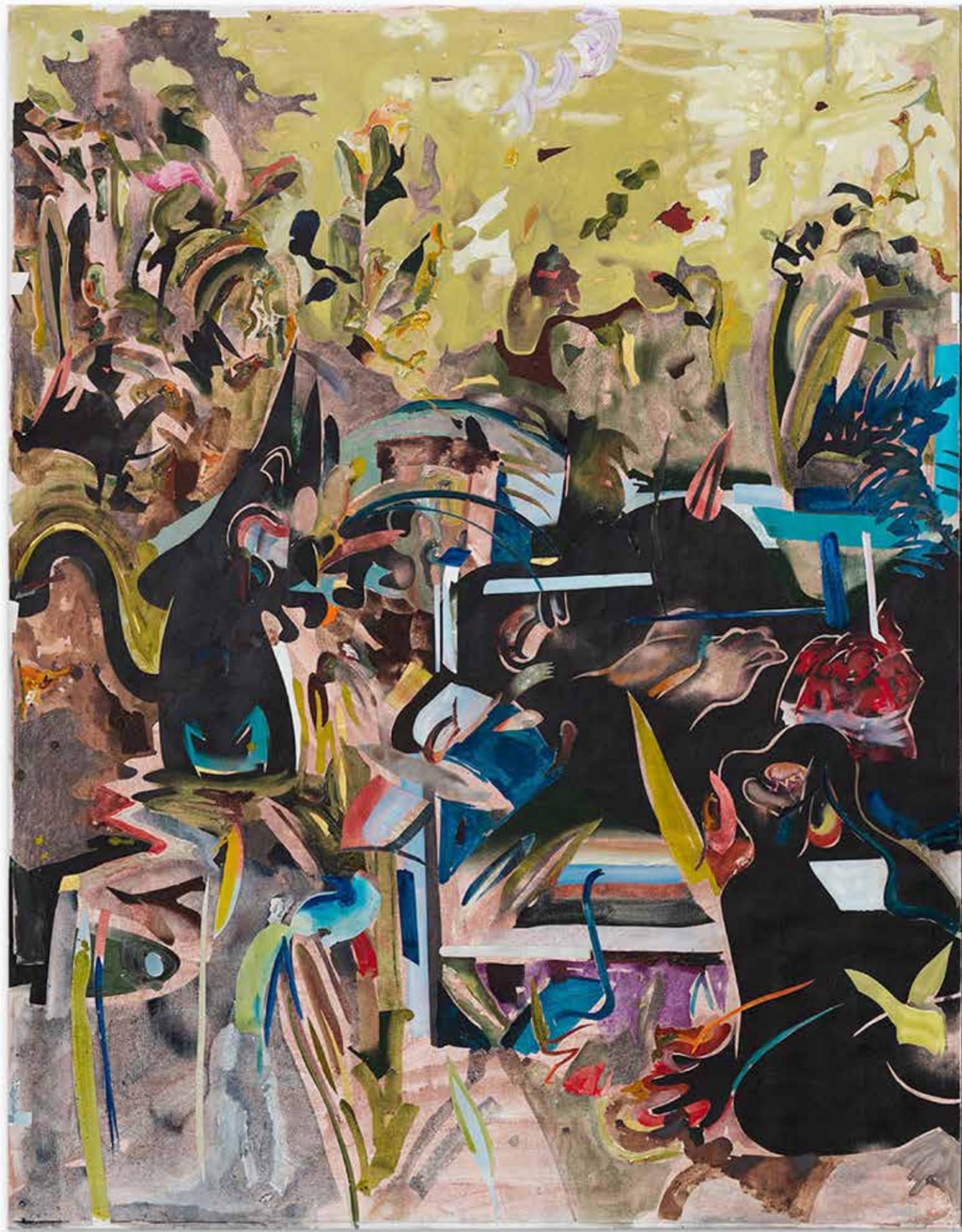
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3 — Katie Mongoven, *Vintage Handmade Liling China Blue & White Miniature Vase, 020325 (Ghost)*, 2025, Seed beads, viscose, found ceramic vessel, 12 x 4 x 2.5 in.
Courtesy of Art Basel

4 — Performance by Dawidi at the Gihanga Institute of Contemporary Art, Kigali, Fall 2025



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5 — (previous page) Leasho Johnson, *With Stony Hearts or With a Wound (Anasi #30)*, 2024, 171 x 264 cm, Courtesy of the Artist, Tern Gallery, Bahamas and the Liverpool Biennale

6 — Art Basel Paris, 2024, Courtesy of Art Basel

7 — Cedric Mizeré, *Protection 5*, 2022, Photograph printed on canvas and embellished with red beads and medallions, 101,6 x 175,2 cm. Courtesy of Crenshaw Dairy Mart Gallery

Further underscoring this spirit of cross-continental collaboration, the G.A.S. Foundation in Lagos, founded by Yinka Shonibare, and Fondation H in Madagascar partnered on a year-long exhibition dedicated to the Nigerian artist in April 2025, marking a rare conversation between West and East Africa through one of the continent's most renowned artists. Such projects embody the ethos of reciprocity and knowledge-sharing that underpins Pan-Africanism today.

Parallel to these initiatives comes the emergence of new nonprofit museums and institutions dedicated to a lasting cultural infrastructure. In April 2025, representatives from the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) and the multi-disciplinary art space Gihanga Institute of Contemporary Art (GICA) were invited by Harvard University to discuss their efforts in bringing to life two landmark projects: MOWAA opened in Lagos in November and Gihanga Institute launched in Kigali in December 2025.

These efforts underscore that Pan-Africanism is no longer an abstract ideal but a living framework in the contemporary African art ecosystem and market as manifested by institutional collaborations, cross-market collaborations in Africa, and the building of sustainable infrastructure by African art practitioners.

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The Hat Collector

A Conversation Between Simon de Pury and Marc Quinn
All photos by Simon de Pury, Courtesy of Marc Quinn



Simon de Pury: It's such a pleasure to finally see part of your extraordinary collection of baseball caps. Ever since I've known you, and I've had the privilege of knowing you for quite some time now, you've always impressed me. Besides being an artist who I admire and who constantly evolves and pushes the envelope, as a highly stylish gentleman, you are, for me, a kind of fashion icon. One thing in particular has always struck me. I've never seen you wearing the same baseball cap twice. I assumed you must have a large collection, and today I have the proof. What can you tell us about this collection? When did you start wearing baseball caps, and how did this all begin?

Marc Quinn: I started it about 15 or 20 years ago. When I was younger, I wore suits with more classic felt hats, like a fedora. But then I got bored of that, and I thought

I needed to change the way I dressed, so I got a more contemporary look, and the baseball hat seemed like the obvious choice. And then I evolved into wearing them, because obviously if you are bald like I am, your head gets very cold or gets sunburnt, there's hardly ever a comfortable moment. So it's better to regulate it with a hat, as well as it being an object. I love its object-ness. It turns you into a sculpture because you can then wear it in any way and change it as often as you want.

S.D.P.: I think it must be at least 20 years that I have known you and I've never seen you wearing anything else but a baseball hat. I cannot even begin to imagine you in a suit. I met Peter Marino when he was wearing a suit and tie, and when you see what he's wearing today, it's nearly unthinkable to think of the transformation.

So, I also now have difficulty imagining you wearing a suit.

M.Q.: I actually like suits because I love the process of having a bespoke suit made. But I don't wear them very often. It's more the process of making it which is like creating a kind of sculpture that fits your body. It is quite interesting.

S.D.P.: Do you know how many baseball caps you own, roughly?

M.Q.: Not really. No. But there are boxes and boxes. There are probably 150 boxes here and there are more. This is not everything.

S.D.P.: Do you think you would have 10 times as many or...?

M.Q.: I'm not sure, because they go to storage as well. And sometimes you wear more than one a day. But mostly I have a

roster of about two, three or four that I'm currently into. And I move them around, different ones, depending on what clothes I'm wearing and depending on how I feel in the day. And there's a whole roster of decision-making about the curve of the bill. Sometimes I like flat ones. Sometimes I like slightly curved ones, but they always have to have a structure in the front. I don't like baseball hats that are just fabric, that are just like a little slipper on your head. I like the cap to have a sculptural quality to it.

S.D.P.: And then of course, I'm always fascinated by the combinations, because you have the most incredible collection of T-Shirts as well. Sometimes it's Adidas, sometimes it's tracksuits, it's very refined, the combinations between your baseball cap and T-Shirt.

M.Q.: To some people, it might just look like I am wearing athleisure. But to me, every piece is kind of like part of an art collection; it has a provenance and a reason for being in my collection. It's not just randomly bought. Some of the hats I've handmade, such as that one on the floor with the scribbles on it. But looking at them now, I think I should make more that I paint myself because it's all very well buying things, but they need to be transformed. So even seeing this has made me understand that I need to do more creative work on the actual hats rather than just having shop-bought ones.

S.D.P.: I love the idea because you could paint and create so many of them.

M.Q.: They're like drawings. They look great as an object also, when they're kind of like laid out, it looks like a kind of installation. Well, it is an installation, isn't it?

S.D.P.: And having seen now all your baseball caps, together. I would be very tempted to see how it would look if Taschen, for instance made a pocketbook edition of all of your baseball caps.

M.Q.: It would be great!

S.D.P.: It would become a kind of reference book for baseball caps. And nowadays, the only hat that most men wear is the baseball cap. I think this book will become an ultimate bestseller.

M.Q.: A modern etiquette book.

S.D.P.: That's it, because you could have different ones that you wear at different times.



M.Q.: A gentleman must never wear this at dinner. Yes, only for a walk in the morning.

S.D.P.: But if you go to a dinner, do you keep your hat on?

M.Q.: Yeah. I might change the colour. Sometimes I'll wear a darker one. But sometimes, it depends on what I'm wearing to the dinner as well. Whether I'm wearing something a bit more formal or not.

S.D.P.: I'm always fascinated about the dress code of different worlds. When I

started in the art world, I dressed the way bankers used to dress – a tailored double-breasted suit and a tie. And I've never changed this. Now, whether I see bankers or people in the art world, I'm the only guy wearing a tie and a suit. Whereas there was a moment when I felt that everybody in the art world was wearing all black, black jeans, black T-shirts. Everything black. I'm fascinated. If you go from the music world to the art world, to the banking world, to every microcosm has a different dress code.



What would you say about the art world dress codes?

M.Q.: I would say that in general, men's clothing is becoming less formal, and I think, you know, wearing hoodies or track-suits has become more an aspiration than wearing a suit now. It assumes that you work in a business where you have to wear that. So, in a way, wearing something different is a sense of freedom, but then, it is very nuanced, and it depends on every micro bit of the world. But obviously, what you wear signals something doesn't it?

S.D.P.: It completely singles you out. Because I feel that the way you dress is basically the image that you want to give to the outside world. Whereas the way you live inside your home, your interior, that's a look into your soul. There is this saying in French, which says *L'habit ne fait pas le moine.* (the dress doesn't make the monk). Or the equivalent never judge a cover by its book. What you try to project may not at all correspond to what you really are.

M.Q.: I think that you also have to wear clothes that you feel comfortable wearing, and that could be a suit or it could be something else. Because the worst thing is when the clothes look like they're wearing the person. The clothes have to become part of you and become part of your natural way of moving and being, rather than feeling like the clothes are wearing you.

S.D.P.: Yes, because it is what you are used to. For instance, I think I can only remember two days in my life when I wore a T-Shirt, and I feel deeply uncomfortable. I was in Florida once, in a shop called Ron John, and there were the most unbelievable T-Shirts. And I was there with my four older kids and we all got one and there are funny photographs of us wearing these T-Shirts, and then we went to Disney World, and we fit in beautifully.

M.Q.: But how did you feel when you walked around with a T-Shirt?

S.D.P.: I felt so uncomfortable and like an imposter. I literally did not feel well, and the minute I could put a shirt back on I felt so much better. And I feel really well when I have a tie on. So that's why most people think that I was born with a tie. But it's what you are used to.

M.Q.: But there is also the ritual of getting dressed. It's like when you put your shirt on and your tie on, it's almost like you're putting your armour on to kind of deal with the world.

S.D.P.: For me, it is very much like that.

M.Q.: There are different ways of doing that. It could be a shirt and tie, or it could be a T-Shirt and a hoodie. It just depends on what you're used to, what you've evolved into wearing. I guess.

S.D.P.: I remember in my very early days at Sotheby's, there was a gentleman who was coming in wearing a torn jacket. He really looked like a pauper. And there was a secretary who was at the front desk, and she was very snooty, not very nice. I was starting in the business, so I was spending a lot of time with this gentleman, showing him catalogues and all that. And he was asking a lot of intelligent questions. Until one day he came, and he showed me a book, and he said, 'this is my collection,' and I nearly fell over backwards. Incredible. European, medieval works of art, old master paintings, and he sadly had to sell it. And I had no idea who I was dealing with. This was a fantastic sale that took place at Sotheby's in the seventies.

M.Q.: Amazing.

S.D.P.: I was being nice, and I liked this person. I did not judge him by his appearance.

M.Q.: But I always feel like I also want people to judge me by my appearance and then find out they're wrong.

S.D.P.: Yes, yes.

M.Q.: In some way I want to be under the radar.

S.D.P.: But if I had to classify the way you dress and say to which microcosm you fit in, for me, it's the hip-hop world. I think that's where dress-wise you fit in the best. The only thing you're not wearing is a big chain.

M.Q.: I don't wear jewellery. Only a watch.

S.D.P.: You designed an extraordinary watch for Rolex.

M.Q.: I did some with Bamford, and I've got a new project as well with another brand, which I can't talk about.

S.D.P.: And when you were invited for dinner by her majesty?

M.Q.: I actually wore my cap. I made a terrible faux-pas about ten or fifteen years ago. I had a piece that I'd done in the Chelsea Flower Show. And the Queen came to unveil it and I kept my cap on when I met her and talked to her. Afterwards I thought maybe that was a



terrible photo. I mean, I wouldn't have taken it off, but I don't know if she thought it was a slight or not.

S.D.P.: Well, that was the point I was going to get at, because in the old days, when you wore a hat and you said hello to the monarch or any woman, the first thing you did was to take off your hat.

M.Q.: There are still several places where you're not allowed to wear hats, but where I'm allowed to because the owner of the place has given me special dispensation, which is always a good thing to have.

S.D.P.: So wearing a baseball cap is like your comfort animal, you know? Like when a pet is not allowed somewhere but you have a certificate saying it is your comfort animal, you can bring it anywhere you want. I think for you, a baseball cap could have that same function. ◇



Some Experiments in Art and Technology

By Hans Ulrich Obrist



1 — Ian Cheng, *Emissary Sunsets The Self*, 2017, live simulation and story, infinite duration, sound, 2017. Courtesy of the Artist, Pilar Corrias, Gladstone Gallery, Standard (Oslo)

2 — Worldbuilding, Installation view at the Serpentine, Photo: Alwin Lay

3 — Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst, *The Call*, 2024, Photo: Leon Chew, Courtesy of Serpentine

Today, artists are increasingly engaging with technology, from mobile apps to Web3, from virtual and augmented realities to artificial intelligence. They are also increasingly collaborating with others, whether these are humans working in different disciplines, other species or digital entities, forming novel configurations of continuous co-creation. New technologies are not spelling the end of painting, drawing or sculpture. They can rather be thought of as an additional layer within artistic production. Yet while in exhibitions, contemporary technological practices are flourishing, in the world of collecting, still relatively few people actually live with experiments in art and technology installed permanently in their home. It is worth considering whether this might soon change. For unlike video works, which tend to play out on loops, these new works are characterised by constant transformation: you can never experience the exact same moment in successive views. The artwork is a living organism.

An artist whose practice epitomises this new strand within artistic production is Ian Cheng, whom we hosted at the Serpentine with the solo show *BOB*. This exhibition featured an artificial lifeform whose behaviours, beliefs and emotional life were influenced by exhibition visitors. Cheng's notable *Emissaries* trilogy (2015–17) illustrates his particular approach. Here he constructed entire fictional worlds of flora, fauna and human-like characters, with varying degrees of sentience and intelligence, which inhabit the landscape and interact with each other. He refers to these worlds not as static artworks, but as "live simulations". The work never repeats – whenever we encounter it, we see a different work.

What is profound about continually evolving art works is that complexity arises not through the desire or actions of any single actor, but instead through their constellation, collision and constant evolution in symbiosis with one another, giving rise to unexpected outcomes and unending, unknowable situations.







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4 — *THE DELUSION*, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, 2025. Commissioned and produced by Serpentine Arts Technologies. © Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Photo: Hugo Glendinning

Cheng's live simulations not only utilise AI for the generative aspect but also heavily draw from the methodologies and technologies of gaming, having been created using a video-game engine. The result is, in his words, "a video game that plays itself".

This brings me to a key area that is developing within contemporary artistic production. While traditionally, gaming has been considered distinct from contemporary art, recent cross-contamination should come as no surprise given that today, around three billion people – more than a third of the world's population – play video games, turning a niche pastime into the biggest mass phenomenon of our time. Many people spend hours every day in a parallel world and live a multitude of different lives. Video games might be to the twenty-first century what movies were to the twentieth century and novels to the nineteenth century.

The various ways in which artists have interacted with video games and transformed them into art was the theme of the 2023 exhibition *WORLDBUILDING: Gaming and Art in the Digital Age*, originally conceived as the fifteenth anniversary exhibition of the Julia Stoschek collection in Düsseldorf, and later travelling to Centre Pompidou Metz, and in 2026, to The Canyon in New York City. The idea of *WORLDBUILDING* is to present a long-duration exhibition that develops

over time, adapting and changing through feedback and new encounters, thus mirroring the process of creating and playing games.

When researching for the exhibition, I made countless studio visits to artists working with video games. It became clear that games, both as reference and medium, have a fixed place within artistic practices. Presenting games and game-based works within an exhibition context allows for very exciting possibilities – the expansion of the game space into the physical space, the ability to experience games in a more immersive way. The digital nature of the works also allows for the exhibition to be presented in different places at the same time, creating an exhibition as a learning system that takes on new knowledge from different localities.

Like many digital technologies, video games first entered artistic practice decades ago, when artists began to integrate the language of these games into works. But since then, they have continued to appropriate, modify and often subvert existing video games in order to reflect on them, as well as to approach questions of our existence within virtual worlds and the socio-political issues involved in the rendering of new realities.



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5 — Ian Cheng, Installation view, BOB, Serpentine Gallery, London (6 March – 22 April 2018). Photo: Hugo Glendinning

6 — *THE DELUSION*, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, 2025. Commissioned and produced by Serpentine Arts Technologies.

© Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Photo: Hugo Glendinning

7 — Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst, *The Call*, 2024

8 — Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst, *The Call*, 2024

9 — Ian Cheng, Installation view, BOB, Serpentine Gallery, London (6 March – 22 April 2018). Photo: Hugo Glendinning

10 — Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst, *The Call*, 2024

11 — *THE DELUSION*, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, 2025. Commissioned and produced by Serpentine Arts Technologies.

© Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Photo: Hugo Glendinning

12 — Ian Cheng, *Emissary Sunsets The Self*, 2017, live simulation and story, infinite duration, sound. Courtesy of the artist, Pilar Corrias London, Gladstone Gallery, Standard (Oslo)

The idea of time is intriguingly altered within the realm of gaming, where people spend hours working their way through the narratives, missions and challenges. This longer temporality, of course, feeds into how game-inspired artworks unfold.

C. Thi Nguyen argues in his book *Games: Agency as Art* (2020) that by offering a temporary alternative experience of life, games and other such interactive or immersive art forms allow players to enjoy new and expanded kinds of agency. For when we enter these proxy realities, we are given the opportunity to reflect and change. As such, games also offer artists opportunities for worldbuilding. Art is a space for reimagining other possible realities, other speculative futures, whether exemplary utopias or cautionary dystopias. Rules can be reset, surroundings, systems and dynamics can be built and altered, new realms can emerge. As Ian Cheng told me, at the heart of his art is a desire to understand what a world is. Now more than ever, the dream is to create new worlds, not just inherit and live within existing ones.

Many of the questions raised in this text have been addressed in more extensive and research-orientated ways within our ongoing Serpentine annual strategic briefing, Future Art Ecosystems (FAE), which launched in 2020 with the publication *Art x Advanced Technologies*. For our CEO Bettina Korek, myself and the Arts Technologies team led by Kay Watson, a key priority is to share this research through downloadable, open-source documents, ensuring that its benefit extends beyond the Gallery to the wider sector and everyone working within the art world. I therefore invite readers of this article to further explore the subject by downloading the Future Art Ecosystems texts on the website: <https://futureartecosystems.org/> ◇





Ron Arad: **Better Than I Deserve**

An Interview Between Simon de Pury and Ron Arad
All photos Courtesy of the Artist





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1 — Ron Arad, *Dakar Big Easy*
 2 — Ron Arad, Photo: Simon de Pury
 3 — Ron Arad, *Love Song, A Hard Days Night*

Simon de Pury: I was fascinated to see the recent works that you did in Senegal. They are some of my absolute all-time favourite pieces that you have made. What can you tell me about all of that?

Ron Arad: First of all, you know, we are in the age of technology. It is taking over, to the fear of everyone, but also to the delight of many. I mean, technology is a tool. Everything is a symbiosis between the will of the artist, the designer, the material and the process. When you work with an artisan, there's another element, not only through their ability, but also their culture. The visual culture that you experience when you work in Africa with amazing artisans, such as from Dakar. I had an amazing time in this city, and I continue working with the artisans on Zoom.

We took one of my favourite pieces, *Oh, the Farmer and the Cowman Should be Friends*, which is a large wall piece that is the map of America. And I did a piece that's called *America Made in Africa*, made of oil barrels. They showed me a picture of a pyramid of oil barrels, and we

chose some of them together. And then they cut them, flattened them, and we built the piece with what they found and shared with me on Zoom. My favourite sentence is, 'Better than I deserve', and, and this is absolutely better than I deserve. While I was there, we looked at my chair, *The Big Easy*. This is a piece that every time there is new technology, a new idea, a new way of doing something, it can be adapted to fit that new idea. I made the skeleton of a *Big Easy* and they adapted it beautifully. It was really nice.

S.D.P.: Are there collectors who have bought both the original *Big Easy* and the reinterpreted *Big Easy*? It would be lovely to have them side by side. In a way, it's like you composed a piece of music and have witnessed it being reinterpreted. I mean, you are reinterpreting with a different set of musicians and therefore, while originally the same *Big Easy* so it is essentially a remixed work.

R.A.: I did the *Big Easy* in pieces of rocks and resin, which I piled together and then

cut it with a five-axis building machine. I used to paint the mould from the inside with a gel coat, so it is another favourite way of doing it as well. It's not painting the piece. It's making it out of the paint. It takes three days to set and when you take it out of the mould you see the results. It is similar to the Mickey Mouse pieces (*Dont' F**k with the Mouse*).

S.D.P.: There are very few artists whom you want to collect in depth. And you are one person who has often had collectors go deep and who have wanted to put together quite a substantial collection of your work. Showing your works from different periods and different aspects.

R.A.: Yes, because I jump from one thing to another. I don't stick to one thing and devote my life to it. I'm not a methodical person. I'm not saying that everyone should do that. When I look at an artist like Alberto Giacometti, when he did these amazing figures again and again, and when you can see him working with the soft clay, it's almost like you are seeing



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4 — Ron Arad, *Dakar D-Sofa*
5 — Ron Arad, *Big Easy Blue*

a painter working. I love it but I'm not like that. I am pulled by my ideas and want to try different things, discover different things. I discovered tapestry and weaving and was very excited by it. Recently, I started working with marble. There's a company from Verona that came to see me in the middle of the lockdown. I had never met them before and they asked me to make something very difficult, and I was very surprised by this. And we made a very, very difficult sculpture, *Twisted Love Song*. And that led us to doing other difficult pieces. And as we speak now, they're showing new pieces in an art fair in Saudi Arabia, a big desk that is made all in one piece. I haven't seen it yet. I've sketched it, I've modelled it, I've rendered it, and I've seen videos of it being made, and I've seen photographs of it. Although I haven't seen it before, I'm sure it's much better than I deserve.

S.D.P.: That's going to be very exciting. But this is common with your work as an architect, because as an architect, you plan and design everything, and you imagine what the final result will look like.

R.A.: It is a similar thing when you suddenly discover for yourself the final result [of a project]. But in architecture, you visit the sun. Of course, the sun is something I've never seen, although I know all about it, and it's as if I have seen it, but I haven't.

S.D.P.: I love your series of works called *Love Song*, and when I hear the word *love song*, I think of the songs that Paul McCartney wrote called "Silly Love Songs" with his group Wings.

R.A.: I made a box the size of an LP, and I took a piece of foil, and I wrote 'Love' and folded it. And you see *Love Song*, and there's a place for people to put their favourite LPs. (Showing Simon the artwork): So there's my record and there's this piece, which connects to Cattelan's banana artwork, *Comedian*. And to Andy Warhol and to Lou Reed, all of them together.

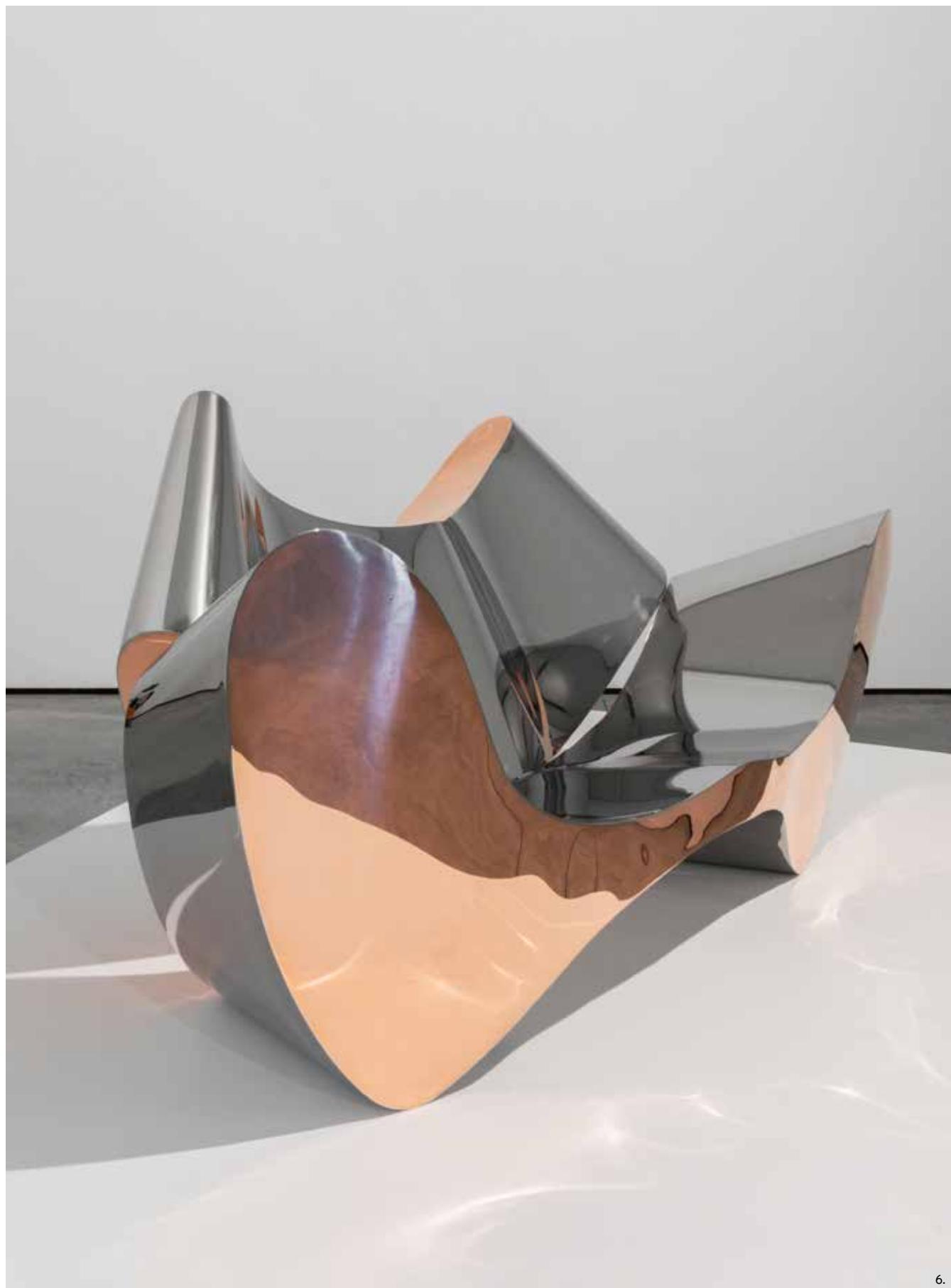
S.D.P.: I love the *Love Song* sculpture because what you've done, it looks like a swan. And then the distortion is quite extraordinary, also how a certain object evolves according to the scale because you work on all different scales, obviously

as an architect on a ginormous scale, but also on a very small scale.

R.A.: The *Love Song* series is an example of how I like to move around to different works. When I was doing the edition of 20 Mickey Mouse chairs, I used to do them every Friday, and one Thursday I thought, what am I going to do tomorrow? I was looking for a word that is a visual palindrome. Like if you put a mirror to it, you get another word. I came up with Love and Song. I don't know how. I got out of bed, went to my computer and drew it, and I did it the next day. But I was very excited about what I was doing with the chairs. I was also excited by the discovery of Love and Song. and I started playing around with the idea and doing all sorts of things with them. Like, I did the virtual one in Canary Wharf, I did the marble sculpture, an African sculpture and the *Shadow of Love*... I would love to illustrate all the love songs which have album covers behind them.

S.D.P.: Do you collect art by other artists?
R.A.: I'm not a collector, but I have some pieces.







7.

6 — Ron Arad, D-Sofa

7 — Ron Arad, *D-Sofa*, Courtesy Phillips

S.D.P.: But you have many artist friends. For instance, Antony Gormley, I think he was at the origin, or his name was at the origin of one type of work you have done.

R.A.: Yes. *Gomli*. And I have a really nice birthday present from him that's on the wall. We're very good friends.

S.D.P.: You've been a very generous artist as well, because I know that you've donated some of your works to various charities. And I remember selling a *Gomli* piece at an auction organised by Bernard Levy, which was United Artists for Europe.

R.A.: It was about making something that can work for anyone, whether it is Pavarotti or Twiggy, everyone should be comfortable in it. The piece is like a figurative sculpture of a person. But unlike

Antony, because Antony's always himself, this was every man, but I couldn't help it when I saw the piece, I couldn't help but think of Antony Gormley figures, although it's the opposite. So, I made a piece that I called *Gomli*.

I was in Hong Kong last week and I found in the street the best ever readymade. If someone made a film and they wanted to show an artist finding a readymade, this would be it. It looks like a wooden chair, but it's made of metal. With the round back from the front, with an amazing portrait of Marilyn Monroe.

S.D.P.: Incredible.

R.A.: So, we went to Hong Kong and shipped a lot of things back, but a lot of it didn't make it because it was stuck in

customs. I knew I had this piece in Hong Kong. I managed to find it and salvage it, and so it was in a show, but I don't think people paid too much attention to it there. If it were in Paris or if it was London or New York, it would be an immediate, 'yes'.

S.D.P.: It would be snapped up. What did you do with it?

R.A.: I am keeping it. And it says 'do not move' in Chinese. Again, this is another reference to the Duchamp piece *Prière de toucher* (*Pray to Touch*).

S.D.P.: Yes.

R.A.: If you saw it in a museum it would be a global success. But, anyway, I think we've tortured you enough, and we could, of course, speak for hours... ◇

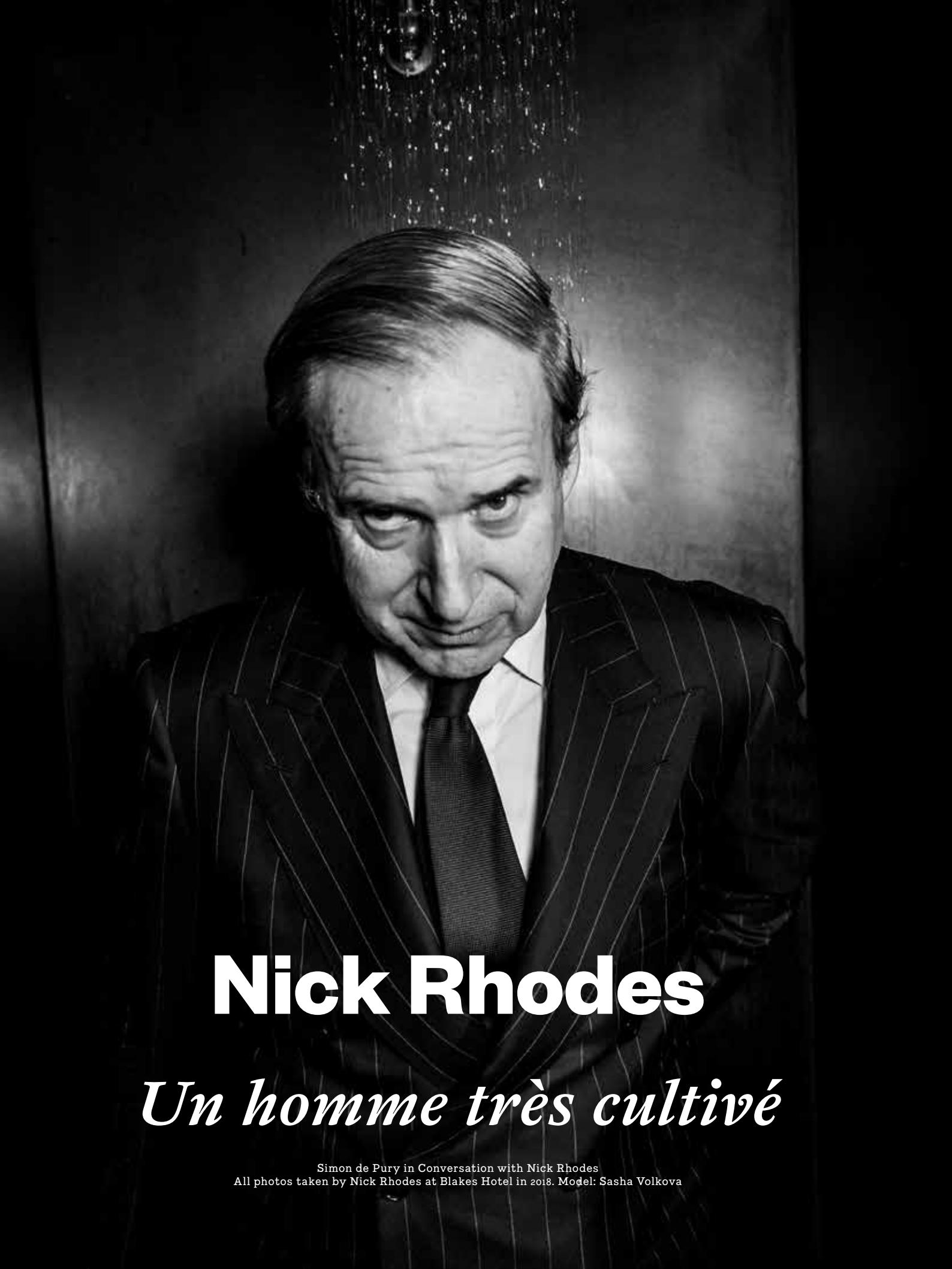


8 — Ron Arad, *Big Easy*, 1988
9 — Ron Arad, *Love Song*, *Elvis Presley*, 2021
10 — Ron Arad, *Love Song*, *Leonard Cohen*, 2021
11 — Ron Arad, *Dakar Big Easy Red*
12 — Ron Arad, *Dakar D-Sofa*





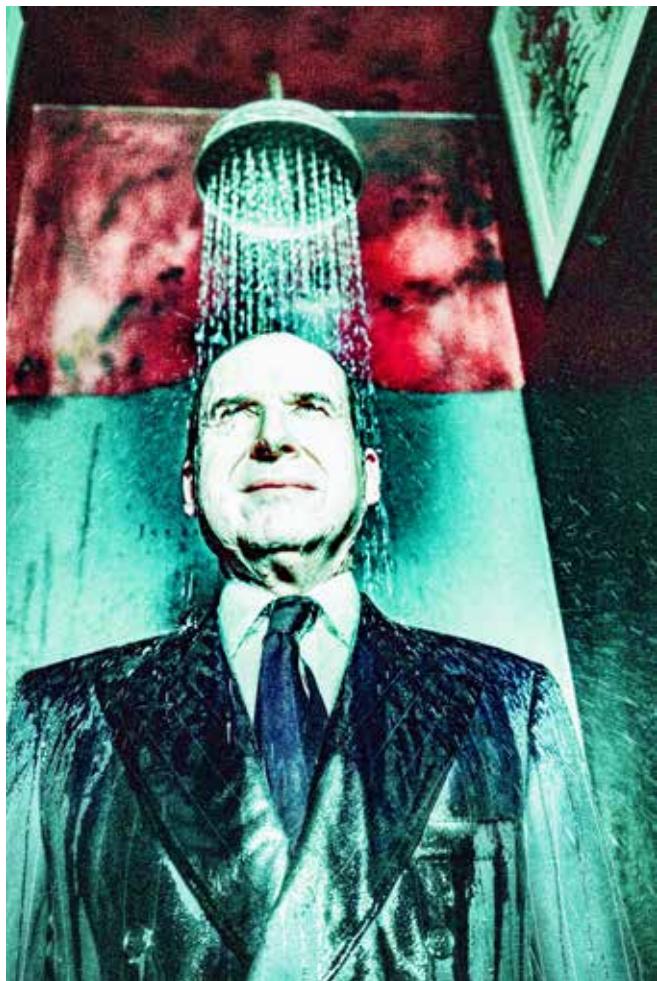




Nick Rhodes

Un homme très cultivé

Simon de Pury in Conversation with Nick Rhodes
All photos taken by Nick Rhodes at Blakes Hotel in 2018. Model: Sasha Volkova



2.

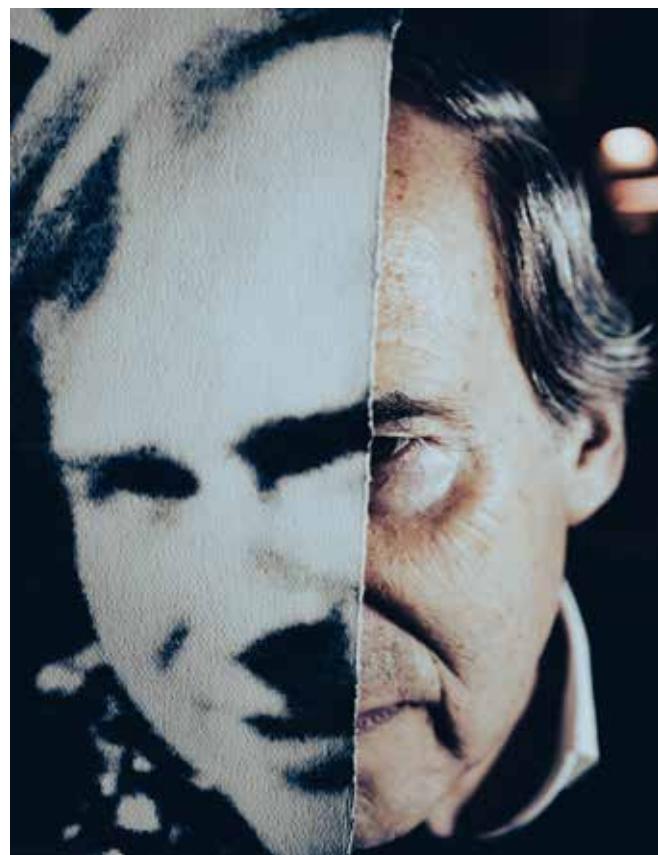
Simon de Pury: You are a multi-talented man and besides your fame and glory as being a key member in one of the greatest bands in the world, it is your activity as a photographer that I am fascinated by. I was thinking about that amazing time when I was told that you were going to take my photograph and we were going to do a shoot at Blakes Hotel [in London]. As usual, I was on the way to an airport and we only had something like an hour at our disposal, but it was an exhilarating moment from my perspective.

Nick Rhodes: Mine too! It's sometimes so easy to overthink what you want to do. You can spend all day fiddling with lights, fixing hair and makeup, changing locations... Or you can simply say, this is what we have, let's do it. I rather liked the fact that we had a concise amount of time because it put some pressure on us to focus. And as you well know from being the subject of these photos, my idea was to try to expose a slightly different side of

your personality, whilst simultaneously reflecting your indelible art world credentials. I looked at some photographs of you beforehand, and of course I'd known you for many years already, but my conclusion was that you are often portrayed as quite solemn and serious, which you can certainly be, but I know a little bit of the other side of you too, so I wanted to infuse some dark humour into the photos. I particularly love the ones of you in your pinstriped suit looking incredibly dapper, standing in the shower, soaking wet. I think that image says a lot, because if I'd suggested that idea to most successful people they would've said, no, I don't want to wreck a suit, or I'm not standing in a shower fully dressed, when I've got to go and get on an airplane when I leave here. But no, you were absolutely up for it. It reflects an understated elegance, but also a combination fun and surrealism at the same time. It's an unusual mix that's rare capture.

S.D.P.: I was prepared to sacrifice one of my suits for the opportunity of being photographed by you. And also, the other thing I remembered is that I had to wear eyeliner. That was my punk moment.

N.R.: Exactly! I think it's essential to experience different things in life, makeup has been one of my minor extravagances since I was a teenager. I thought it worked pretty well on my face and I never looked back. Since you made it this far Simon, without even considering the joys of surgical free, facial enhancement, I hope it was worth the wait! I think you looked remarkably comfortable and I suspect it will not be your last encounter with cosmetics. There's another image I love from that day, if you remember, I'd asked you to send me a photo of you when you were in your early twenties, because I wanted to cut or rip the photo in half and have your face juxtaposed with the original so that they matched up. Those actually turned out to be interesting images. I'm sure it's





been done before, but it's nice to see how you have grown into yourself during those years in between.

S.D.P.: I had completely forgotten about that one. My god, I'm so looking forward to see all of these images again. It's going to be a blast from the past.

N.R.: I think they've held up pretty well, you will have to tell me... Both of us have collected photographs for several decades and I am sure we could agree that when someone captures a really great image, it will stand the test of time. It doesn't matter whether it's a divine fashion portrait or a confounding surreal photo. The masters manage to sustain change. One can only aspire. It seems strangely disingenuous to me when some artists feel unable to acknowledge their influences - surely better to learn from the best, whilst trying to bring something new and unique to distinguish your own work in the future world. I am personally always very happy when I know I have taken some photos that at least manage to convey what I set out to achieve.

S.D.P.: Who are your favourite photographers? You have probably have posed for most of them.

N.R.: Well alas, not Man Ray, because he was gone before our time, but I always come back to him as being my favourite photographic image maker from the 20th century. In terms of contemporary photography, I like a lot of the fashion photographers. People like Nick Knight, Ellen von Unwerth, Mert & Marcus. Then from the 70s and 80s, Helmut Newton and Guy Bourdin, no question. I think Paris Vogue for that period was on top of the world, until the mid 1980s, when I believe Vogue Italia stole their crown to become the height of all beauty, graphics and photography. Steven Meisel, did most of those covers, of which I am a huge admirer. I think his body of work will possibly become the most significant of all post 1970s.

S.D.P.: I agree with you. I think French Vogue in those years was sensational. I much preferred looking at it than looking at any art magazine. The reason why I became close friends with Helmut is that whenever I checked the name of a photograph hat I loved, it was either Helmut or Guy Bourdin. And then I contacted Helmut and we became close friends.

N.R.: I met him a couple of times, but only very, very briefly. I never got to know him sadly, but I remain a loyal fan. All that iconic imagery he created for advertising

campaigns, Vogue shoots and ultimately, the most exquisite nudes you've ever seen. Incredible.

S.D.P.: What has always fascinated me in our encounters is that you are what one calls, in French, un homme très cultivé, which means you have an incredible depth of knowledge about many different areas, which is nowadays very unusual. And with such wide interests, what is your focus as a collector, if you call yourself one?

N.R.: I do collect and in fact, I'm a terrible hoarder. I've collected things since I was a child. It all started with stamps when I was around seven or eight years old. My father was a stamp collector and he also collected coins and some ephemera. I was completely fascinated with these things and wanted to know everything about them; where they came from, what they meant, how he found them... Some stamps were exquisitely designed and from countries that I didn't know anything about at that age. However, by the time I was about ten, I'd grown out of that first phase of collecting because I discovered music.; David Bowie, Roxy Music and Kraftwerk. That's really the point at which I started to become more interested in fashion too. And hence discovered Helmut Newton and Guy Bourdin. A few years later, I began a lifetime obsession with Paris between the period of 1900-1940, when there was an unprecedented explosion of creativity during the naissance of modern art.

When I started to earn a little bit of money, I slowly began to collect things I wanted to be surrounded by: photographs, artworks, whatever I could afford. I found that my taste developed in eclectic ways. I have pieces varying from 17th century Baroque paintings to contemporary Japanese photography. I don't know what it is that I look for particularly, but I do know when something excites me aesthetically, I follow my instincts. I suppose I'm always searching for my version of beauty, but beauty is such a complicated subject, it really is in the eye of the beholder. For example, I find some conceptual art appealing, particularly from the standpoint of understanding the intention and meaning of artists like Joseph Beuys, but I would not necessarily want to collect those works. It's a different thing wanting to own something and display it in your home than appreciating it in a museum. Though I guess there are always exceptions, I do love Marcel Duchamp and Yves

Klein, whom I feel were true pioneers... It depends what excites you and certainly what your budget is!

S.D.P.: We both have a passion for music, and in my opinion, album covers were a wonderful support for some great art. And music and the album covers were so closely linked because while one was listening to an album, one would endlessly look at the cover and everything that was on it and written on it. That link between the visual and the music is less evident now when you listen to it on your phone or streaming. What are some of your favourite album covers?

N.R.: Well, Andy Warhol did a lot of them. I think the work that he did for The Stones, such as the Sticky Fingers cover with the real zip on the jeans, is as good as you're ever going to get.

S.D.P.: Yes, that was genius.

N.R.: The musicians who chose to use artists to design their covers were the smart ones. The Beatles White album, by Richard Hamilton, is great, and of course Peter Blake's magnificent Sergeant Pepper. Sonic Youth collaborated with some significant artists: Richter, Richard Prince and Mike Kelley come to mind. David Bowie album sleeves like Aladdin Sane, were inimitable and influential when I was a kid. I recently saw that the original dye transfer master print of Brian Duffy's photograph for that album sold extremely well at auction, as it well deserved to.

It is probably my fondness for the music on the albums that makes me love the covers even more. But I can honestly say, I have never bought a record where I didn't like something about the cover. Because if I am not able to empathise with an artist and somehow relate to their style and presentation, it just doesn't work for me. Take Roxy Music, I love all of their album covers. For Your Pleasure, featuring a photo of Amanda Lear with a panther on a leash and Bryan Ferry in a limo... It is a masterpiece! Even inside the gatefold, it's beautifully styled with the band members photographed against a stark white background, each wearing crazy glam outfits, striking poses with different guitars. I love that! It's tricky getting the tone absolutely right. We've always been very particular about our covers due to my obsession with aesthetics and detail, which is also shared by John Taylor. He went to art school, where he designed and printed all of our early show posters, during the period when



we formed the band. The two of us grew up together doing exactly what you said; staring at album covers for hours on end, turning them back and forth, reading the credits and liner notes to learn whatever we could about who did what. There was something magical about it.

S.D.P.: Yes, I agree. It's a little bit like the difference between handling a physical book and reading it on our phone.

N.R.: My life is predominantly analogue. I don't buy digital art. I still buy real things that are tangible, I like to pick them up, touch them, hang them on my wall or

place them somewhere. I feel the same about playing keyboards, nearly all my synthesisers are analogue, so the sound is warm, glorious and lush. Whereas new digital keyboards often sound harsh for me and lack personality. The synthesisers that I use are alive. They have heartbeats. They're like wild beasts that you have to tame and learn how to control, versus digital synths, that tend to produce the same type of generic sounds within a specific bandwidth, which seems to lack emotion and substance. I think that same principle is true on many levels with digital devices and products. Even cameras...

Reverting back to the beginning of our conversation, I have to say, I think the hour we spent together at Blakes Hotel was inspired. We walked into the room with absolutely nothing and both left having created this unexpected series of images. They've got humour, edginess and a feeling of slight unease which is a combination David Lynch would have appreciated!

S.D.P.: I feel that one also can collect moments. And that hour at Blakes Hotel for me is a precious moment that I see as part of my collection of recollections. ♦



NOMAD St Moritz
In Altitude, Group Show
Villa Beaulieu
12–15.2.2026



© Alessandra Vinci. Courtesy of the Artist and Officine Saffi

Ann Beate Tempelhaug, *Tide*, Stoneware, porcelain glaze
Left: Benoît Maire, *Table au héron*, Polished bronze, varnished and walnut-stained pine

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Season XL – A Decade of Spazio Nobile
Roots and Traces, Group Show
18.6–26.8.2026

& Summer Escape, *25 Columns*
Art Installation, Plintsberg, Sweden
7–8.2026



© Ann Brys

Lise Coirier and Gian Giuseppe Simeone at Spazio Nobile
Right: *25 Columns*, Plintsberg, Sweden, by OFFICE KGDVS

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Tue – Sat, 11–18 & by appointment

Roots & Traces is the curatorial theme of the touring exhibition organized by Lise Coirier and Gian Giuseppe Simeone, co-founders of Spazio Nobile, on the occasion of the gallery's 10th anniversary. Conceived as a journey across three locations – Spazio Nobile Gallery & Studiolo in Brussels, Villa Spazio Nobile in Tervuren, and *25 Columns* in Plintsberg, Sweden – the exhibition reflects on origin, continuity, and transmission.



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Roots evoke the cultural, material, and human foundations that have shaped Spazio Nobile's vision over a decade: craftsmanship of excellence, dialogue, and a deep connection to place. *Traces* refer to the marks left by collaborations, gestures, and narratives that unfold over time and are subtle imprints linking us to nature. This dialogue between roots and traces finds a powerful architectural echo in *25 Columns*, their most recent project built up by OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen. Embodying Spazio Nobile's core values and ecosystem, the project was a finalist for the Swedish Kasper Salin Prize of Architecture in 2025, recently commended by the House Awards 2026 of *The Architectural Review*.



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