

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Artsy

19 Collectors on the Art They Bought in 2020

Artsy Editorial

24 November 2020



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Like most activities, traditional ways of collecting art were upended this year by COVID-19. Galleries in nearly every city with a thriving contemporary art scene shut down for months; fairs and auctions became almost exclusively virtual affairs; and, suddenly, once-secondary channels like online viewing rooms and Instagram became the primary means for artists, dealers, and collectors to connect. Amid the financial rollercoaster caused by the pandemic and other sociopolitical crises in 2020, many collectors remained equally or even more active and engaged than in years past.

We reached out to collectors around the world to get a sense of how their collecting practices changed in 2020; the artists, galleries, organizations, and institutions they supported; and who they have their eyes on going into 2021.



Lisa Young and Steven Abraham

New York

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

A painting entitled *I Had Such an Amazing List* (2019) by Natisa Jones. We had been looking at expanding our collection to be representative of the broader Asian diaspora and learned about her through Hatch Art Project. We were immediately struck by her strong visual language and abstracted figures in her work. The piece was the result of her reflection on transitional spaces, the disconnection that came with being in a transitory state but also needs and attempts to connect. She was at the time living between Bali, Jakarta, and Amsterdam for about four years and moved between places every four months or so. The title itself was talking about how she uses lists as a way to navigate each one of those places. Being in constant transition, she found that her lists had to change to reflect her priorities at the moment and place. With this comes constant questioning and evaluation of her values and goals. Although this brings anxiety to her and things are not always working out the way she intended, she felt that her lists had been a compass for her life to navigate changes.

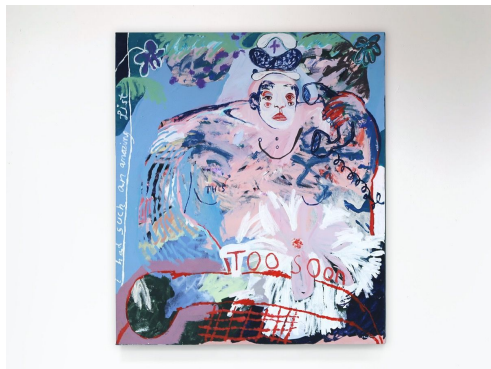


Image: Natisa Jones, *I Had Such an Amazing List*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Young-Abraham Collection.

It was created in 2019, and viewing it in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic really struck a chord for us; it felt prophetic in just how strongly that anxiety would be felt by us (and the world, really).

Would you say you've been more or less active as collectors in 2020 than in years past?

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This year hasn't necessarily changed our level of activity, but rather has made us reflect on our roles as collectors and has changed what those activities are. More than anything, it has pushed us to think of collecting more as a practice than a series of acquisitions. With many shows being upended and everyone staying home, we found ourselves spending more time doing virtual studio visits and connecting with other collectors, curators, galleries, etc. A silver lining has been being able to do this with people outside of New York and taking more time for personal connection. Particularly in reaction to COVID-19, we've also been thinking about how we can support artists in their practices, and have started a pilot program to provide studio space for those who have been impacted.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?



Image: Timothy Lai, Untitled, 2020. Jack Barrett, Contact for price.



Image: Oscar yi Hou, Mlle. Chris à central park 103rd, en automne, 2019, Kohn Gallery, Contact for price.

There are many artists on that list, but two that come to mind are Oscar yi Hou and Timothy Lai. Oscar's approach to portraiture is as textured as the relationships he has with his subjects, and the use of symbols and icons brings forward an intimately complex narrative that reveals new clues at each gaze. Timothy's paintings are equally personal and the way he uses the canvas as a stage is mesmerizing. The blend of real memory and passed-down myths calls to mind something uniquely his and echoes of familiarity with our own lived experiences.

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Estrellita B. Brodsky

New York

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

I recently acquired *Metamorfosis de un cubo* (1955), an early work by Jesús Rafael Soto, an artist I've been studying for a long time and the subject of my Ph.D dissertation at the Institute of Fine Arts. This work was included in the influential exhibition "Le Mouvement," at the Denise René gallery in Paris in 1955, where it was purchased that same year by the renowned Venezuelan architect and major collector, Carlos Raúl Villanueva. When I curated Soto's retrospective at New York University's Grey Art Gallery, we were unable to borrow this work so it was a nice turn of events.



Image: Jesús Rafael Soto, *Metamorfosis de un cubo*, 1955. Courtesy of ANOTHER SPACE.

It is such a significant work for many reasons: its early date, its relationship to the rest of the artist's oeuvre, its impeccable provenance, and certainly its visual strength. I think it is a pivotal work within the larger historical narrative, as Soto was the only Latin American artist to be included in "Le Mouvement" alongside of other international artists Marcel Duchamp, Alexander Calder, Victor Vasarely, Jean Tinguely, Yaacov Agam, and Pol Bury—a decisive exhibition in the history and development of the Kinetic movement. This work reflects Soto's early experimentation with multi-layered Plexiglas, a material he used throughout the rest of

his career (and which Minimalism claimed to pioneer a decade later). You don't come across works of this historical significance every day.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

This year I still acquired works from artists I knew from before and from dealers and galleries with whom I had worked in the past. I have also acquired work related to the recently inaugurated exhibition at my nonprofit foundation, ANOTHER SPACE. The show is about artists' role in shaping the ways in which we approach the environment.

I and my husband Dan have felt very strongly that we wanted to support cultural institutions that were facing critical challenges because of the pandemic and a desire to support inclusion and diversity. We were happy to give added support to large institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as smaller ones such as El Museo del Barrio. I was also pleased to continue my support of other acquisitions groups and culturally specific initiatives.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?

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Image: Feliciano Centurión, *Estoy vivo*, 1994, ANOTHER SPACE, On loan.



Image: Nicolás García Urriburu, *América Latina unida por los ríos*, 2003, Herlitzka + Faria, Contact for price.

At ANOTHER SPACE we just opened “Stayin’ Alive,” an exhibition about survival and resilience, looking at artists’ strategies in anticipating or coping with environmental and social crises from the 19th century until today. It has been fascinating to see so many artworks questioning the ways in which nature is perceived and utilized, often underscoring the destruction of various ecosystems and the erasure of indigenous practices and cultures—particularly in Latin America.

I have discovered the work of artists such as Alicia Barney, who has been addressing water and land pollution in her native Colombia since the 1970s, and whose work remains underappreciated in the United States. I have also had the chance to deepen my understanding of the work of other pioneers like Chilean-born Juan Downey and the Argentinian Nicolás García Urriburu, who were already exploring the possibilities of art and technology to deal with large-scale environmental issues since the 1960s and ‘70s. I believe artists play an important role in shaping our perception of nature and they will be crucial to address climate change (especially at a time like this, when science has been under attack from the highest levels of government). I would love to see more museums exhibit these types of works.

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Cindy Chua-Tay

Hong Kong

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

Personally, I “reconnected” with our collection this year. For once we are spending a large portion of time at home and indoors, and in doing so, we are able to fully enjoy and appreciate our art collection. I have also taken to rehanging some works to my husband’s chagrin, but that has enabled me to relook, reflect, and recurate the collection. It’s been therapeutic!

The most meaningful work I purchased is a precious piece by Liu Xiaodong from Lisson Gallery. Liu, the usually itinerant Chinese painter, was unable to travel back to his home in Beijing, China, and was in lockdown in the United States from the middle of February. From his tiny apartment (a far cry from the luxury of space he usually enjoys in his studio in Beijing), he made a series of watercolor paintings documenting the changing landscape of New York City over a period of four months. This body of work serves as a record of this landmark moment in history: from the colorful, poignant, picturesque scenes of the Big Apple in springtime under the pandemic—with quietly deserted children’s playgrounds, unusually abandoned streets, delicate blossoms falling from the trees, and intimate, precious portraits of his wife, fellow artist Yu Hong, and his daughter—to the subsequent zeal, chaos, and crowds of the Black Lives Matter protests that swept the city and the rest of the nation.



Image: Liu Xiaodong, Coming across a scene like this one cannot but think of Manet’s *Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe*, 2020.06.12, 2020. Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery.

The piece that resonated with me is entitled *Coming across a scene like this one cannot but think of Manet’s Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe*, 2020.06.12, a watercolor on paper. Liu depicted a beautiful picnic scene in a New York City park, which, to him, resembled the famous Manet painting. While Manet’s painting focused on a female nude staring plainly and directly onto the viewer

and in the company of two dressed men, Liu’s scene feels like a contemporary response to the Manet painting. It embraces men of different races, sitting together, their sexuality ambiguous and unknown, yet their togetherness and closeness reflects the unity and freedom so pronounced and apparent in a city like New York. Another thing that stood out for me was the scale, or rather how special it is to own a work by Liu that isn’t large and life-size (as his works tend to be). As he was unprepared for art material when he was forced to be in quarantine in New York, he resorted to small works on paper and watercolor, which was all he could find at that time. This is an unexpected departure for Liu, but it also gave him a freedom to document in real time, hence creating a series that is deeply contemplative and meaningful.

Would you say you’ve been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

There hasn’t been a huge change or shift in my collecting this year. The main difference for me has been how I see art, and the amount of time I actually spent and continue to spend looking at art. Admittedly we all seem to have more time to view and engage with art this year. I am now more engaged with artists and taking part in

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many artists' talks and studio visits on webinars globally. I am also "participating" in a lot more art fairs, as in attending them virtually. In the past I had to painstakingly pick the fairs I could attend, due to the constraints of my travel schedules. This year, I have been a virtual attendee in an unprecedented number of art fairs! It has been most gratifying.



Pamela Joyner

San Francisco

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

The most important purchase for the collection is not a single work, but a body of works I have added to the collection. In 2020 we have added five works by Suzanne Jackson. She is in her seventies and making a series that is the most transformational of her career. The innovative nature of the current practice inspired me to buy current works and to also look back to try to assemble earlier works as well. Her translucent acrylic paintings, which typically hang from the ceiling, significantly advance the conversation about painting. In our collection, they are in dialogue with Kevin Beasley's slab paintings, Sam Gilliam's drape paintings, and Igshaan Adams's hanging tapestries. In a larger art historical context, Jackson's work easily relates to floor works by Lynda Benglis. We have been focused on adding women of the earliest generation in our collection because they still have been less recognized than other artists of color.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

We have been the busiest we have ever been. We are adding more work than is typical because traveling less has enabled me to research and think more. However, I have focused on filling gaps in the collection with work by artists that we already own. It is much harder for me to add new artists if I cannot do studio visits and see exhibitions.



Image: Suzanne Jackson, SPLIT - DRAPE, 2020. Photo by Timothy Doyon. Courtesy of Ortuzar Projects, New York.

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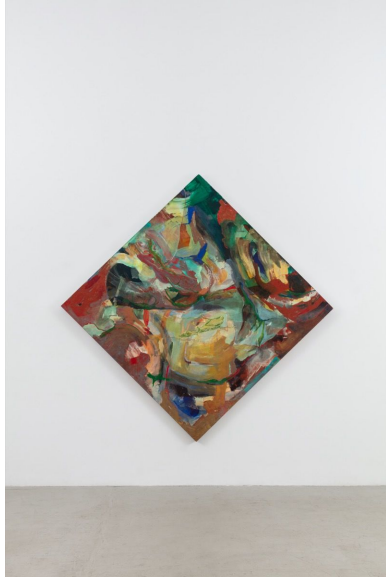


Image: Suzanne Jackson, *Lizards*, 2005. Photo by Timothy Doyon. Courtesy of Ortuzar Projects, New York.

We are always active lenders, but this has been the busiest year in my collecting history for loan requests. Many institutions are featuring artists of color and we are happy to help by lending works from the collection.

In addition, several of our artists, like Lauren Halsey, are deeply immersed in social justice organizations and have asked collectors to support these efforts. We have been honored to participate in several of these projects that have great and positive impacts on communities in need. We are involved with a number of institutions who find that these are the most demanding times. In that context, we also are trying to do our part.



Samallie Kiyingi

Cairo

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

One of the most meaningful works I've purchased this year is from "Kuchu Series (Queer Ugandans)" (2020), a series by Leilah Babirye. I first came across Leilah's work in 2014 during the Kampala Art Biennale in Uganda. Even then, Leilah had a very powerful and distinct visual aesthetic. Leilah's work was completely different from anything I had seen in Uganda at the time. Leilah's combination of wooden sculpture and found objects was very raw but also very considered. A graduate of Makerere University in Uganda, I was struck by how she used her formal training as a point of departure to create something so striking.

In smaller art markets, with a limited pool of collectors, there is at times pressure to conform—aesthetically as well as conceptually—to "make it." Leilah instead chose to challenge. It's also special because it's quite personal. I am from the same ethnic group as Leilah, so the titles of her works, which are in my mother tongue, as well as the cultural references, have added meaning.

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Image: DuduBloom More, *Aligning Unsettled Calm I*, 2020, BERMAN CONTEMPORARY, Sold.



Image: Leilah Babirye, *Kuchu Series (Queer Ugandans)*, 2020. Courtesy of Stephen Friedman Gallery.

As an African, I think it's so important to support African artists. A lot of my support has previously been to art institutions—the Ugandan Arts Trust (also known as 32 Degrees East, where Leilah completed a residency), the Gasworks residency space in London, and Tate Modern's African Art Acquisition Committee—but increasingly I've moved to support artists more directly. I was therefore thrilled when I learned that Leilah is now represented by Stephen Friedman Gallery in London. The work I purchased in 2020 is a work on paper and was part of the gallery's "25 Years" anniversary show. Unfortunately no sculptures were available, but I am hoping to acquire one soon.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

In recent years I haven't been able to travel as much to see art as I used to. However, the move to online engagement by the art world in 2020 has meant that physically missing an art fair or a gallery opening doesn't mean missing out on seeing art. As a result, I've been far more active as a collector this year. While it's not the same as seeing art physically, I have found that galleries are now far more open to virtual conversations. It's also been great to have a front-row seat to major art fairs and auctions from the comfort of my own home. I've tried to make an event out of it—art and champagne...without the sore feet.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?

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Image: Mary Evans, The Bronze Collection, 2014, Tiwani Contemporary, £4,000.

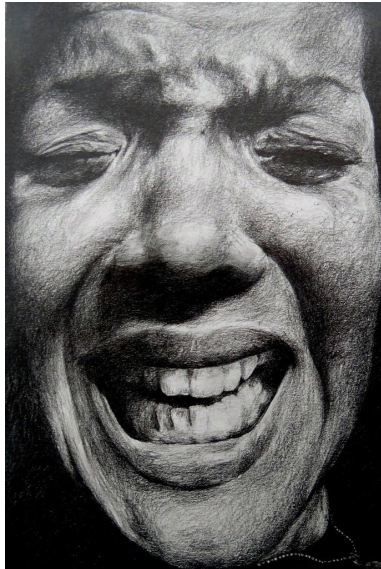


Image: Phoebe Boswell, Eye VI, 2018, Sapar Contemporary, Sold.

I am definitely hoping to continue supporting Leilah Babirye's practice. I'm also a big fan of Phoebe Boswell. She is a thoughtful and exceptionally talented multidisciplinary artist. Without fail I find her work moving, multilayered, and beautiful. I've quietly been watching Mary Evans from a distance. She is an extraordinary storyteller tackling complex issues with disarming simplicity. She has had some amazing institutional commissions recently and I'm looking forward to her next gallery show. Last but not least, I'm looking forward to engaging more with the work of Frida Orupabo. There is a quiet power to her collages which I am drawn to, but I need to learn more.



Grażyna Kulczyk

Engadin, Switzerland

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

This year, I have continued to make several important acquisitions to fill what I felt to be gaps in my collection. Though the work I chose is very timely, I did not want today's valuations and perceptions in the art market to postpone my commitment to the collection. One work that is particularly important is a spectacular and large work by Kara Walker. I have been observing her practice for quite some time at various occasions. Her work is made to be shown to the public in major museum collections. When it comes to the collection, I am very methodical and will consider the artist for some time; however, when I've made a decision on how the artist will contribute to the mission of the collection, I am impulsive and follow my intuition on the artwork itself.

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Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

The practice of collecting itself—traveling to attend art fairs and exhibitions around the world—has been impacted by the pandemic, but the quantity of my acquisitions has been relatively equal in 2020 compared to recent years. My priority has been to maintain all the programming at Muzeum Susch and adopt a “business as usual” approach with all safety precautions in place. In these challenging times, I think that, with strict public hygiene regimes, cultural institutions should remain open for the public as much as possible. Cultural institutions offer an essential service for society and artists. We did adapt to the lockdowns with a dedicated podcast, Echolot (available online), and we continued to update our Muzeum Susch app with virtual tours of the latest exhibitions.



Image: Eszter Salamon performing The Valeska Gert Monument at Muzeum Susch, 2020. © Maja Wirkus. Courtesy of Muzeum Susch and Art Stations Foundation CH.



Image: Eszter Salamon performing The Valeska Gert Monument at Muzeum Susch, 2020. © Maja Wirkus. Courtesy of Muzeum Susch and Art Stations Foundation CH.

During the first spring lockdown, I funded over 100 financial stipends for artists in my native Poland. The financial support was provided to artists regardless of their background, practice, and stage in their career. It was intended to be used how they felt necessary for their survival and practice. Also, even in this critical situation, I decided to keep the performance program ACZIUN SUSCH at Muzeum Susch running. Contemporary choreography is extremely close to my heart. I have long been involved in supporting it. We supported Eszter Salamon in realizing a choreographic movie, shot on-site at Muzeum Susch, on German avant-garde choreographer Valeska Gert. We supported visual artist Laurent Goldring, who, in collaboration with choreographer Isabelle Schad, prepared his new exhibition dedicated to the choreography of washing hands—a ritual so relevant to all of us in this moment. I am also delighted to be a partner in a book by dance dramaturge Guy Cools, who

reflects on the tradition of lament in the arts.

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Arthur Lewis

Los Angeles

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

Night Dream (2020) by Lorna Simpson. Lorna is a legend and an artist I greatly admire. I have been a big fan of hers for a long time. Hauser & Wirth director Madeline Warren and I have had ongoing conversations for a number of years about Lorna's work, and the moment when she shared that Night Dream was available, I immediately had to have it! It is now a crown jewel in my collection.



Image: Lorna Simpson, Night Dream, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Arthur Lewis.



Image: Kim Dacres, Sharese, 2018. Courtesy of the artist and Arthur Lewis.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

I have definitely been more active as I think it's important to support artists and the communities that uplift them. During this time, I have prioritized organizations like the Studio Museum in Harlem and Titus Kaphar's NXTHVN.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?

In the fall, I purchased Sharese (2018) by Kim Dacres, who is a first-generation Jamaican American artist and teacher. She spoke to me about her craft, where she uses discarded rubber from bike and car tires to pay tribute to educators in her community. I have so many great things to say about Kim—she is meticulous about every detail, the passion she has for each work is palatable, and she is an extraordinary storyteller who brings

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various materials to life. Additionally, her show sold out almost immediately, and she deserves all of the success that she's earned and will continue to see. This is also a testament to gallerist Sarah Gavlak, who introduced me to Kim's work. She provided Kim with a platform to further explore her narrative. Sarah and her actions prove that providing opportunity is not a risky proposition. I hope this was a first acquisition of more to come and I am super excited to see her practice grow.



Image: Kwesi Botchway, Cocoa Girl, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Arthur Lewis.

In the spring, I purchased Cocoa Girl (2020) by Kwesi Botchway during our third week of lockdown. The second I saw an image of the piece, I knew I had to have it! Kwesi's paintings leave viewers with a long-lasting aftereffect in an astounding way. You cannot forget those red eyes and the beautiful pattern he creates to depict his subjects—I am blown away by his talent. Kwesi has appeared in group shows at Unit Gallery in London and Mariano Mercier Gallery in Brussels. He is becoming quite popular, as I've received several calls from collectors and his work often comes up in conversations I have within the art

community. The world is watching and I have a feeling that another star is born.



Makgati Molebatsi

Johannesburg

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

I acquired an untitled and undated artwork (apparently created in the 1960s or '70s) by the late artist David Mbele, which depicts a group of schoolchildren in what appears like a classroom, with their slates and books. It takes me back to my early school days in the mid-'60s. Mbele, who passed away in 2010, was one of the South African Black artists productive in the townships during apartheid.

I was attracted to one of Mbele's artworks included in the exhibition "A Black Aesthetic: A view of South African Artists, 1970–1990" at the Standard Bank Gallery, which ran from February to April 2019. The majority of the artworks in the exhibition were drawn from the collection of the University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. I posted the image of his artwork on Instagram, which led to my discovery of an archive of artworks he had left with his family when he passed away, very well preserved. I acquired the artwork from the family very recently, around August.

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Image: David Mbele, *Untitled*, ca. 1960–70s. Courtesy of Makgati Molebatsi.

During the lockdown, when everything was closed and schooling was remote, I wondered about the children from township schools who had no means nor access to remote learning. I thought back to my early schooling in black townships during apartheid. I remembered the artwork from visiting the family sometime last year. I sought to acquire the artwork, which resonated with my primary schooling, when we used slates in our first year of schooling, which was called sub A. It also made me think of Ernest Cole's photograph from 1960 of students kneeling on a floor in a classroom to write, from his seminal book *House of Bondage* (1967).

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

I have been less active, considering the challenging period we are experiencing with curtailed means of income. In October I was among the facilitators participating in the Ubuciko

Professional Development Programme for Visual Artists weeklong workshop, an initiative by a collaboration of art organisations the Arts & Culture Trust, an inspiring individual, Rolihlahla Mhlanga, and Kgalee Contemporary, which was supported by a Johannesburg Property company PARETO. I delivered a virtual master class to early career artists called "Navigating the Art Market and Understanding how Value is Ascribed to an Artwork." This brought me into contact with a young and promising photographer, Mpumelelo Buthelezi, whose work I have developed an interest in.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?

The photographer I have just mentioned, Mpumelelo Buthelezi. I am looking at acquiring one of his photographs and to continue supporting him where feasible. For his young age, he brings so much emotion, dedication, judgement, and precision to his photography. He has a very promising career ahead of him.



Jorge Pérez

Miami

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

Despite the obvious challenges that this year has presented, we have been lucky enough to expand and strengthen our collection. As a very hands-on collector, I find that every acquisition has meaning, but there are certainly some that stand out. This year, we purchased a spectacular painting from 1950 by avant-garde Cuban master Amelia Peláez. The piece is stunning and adds another layer to our Cuban and Latin American collection.

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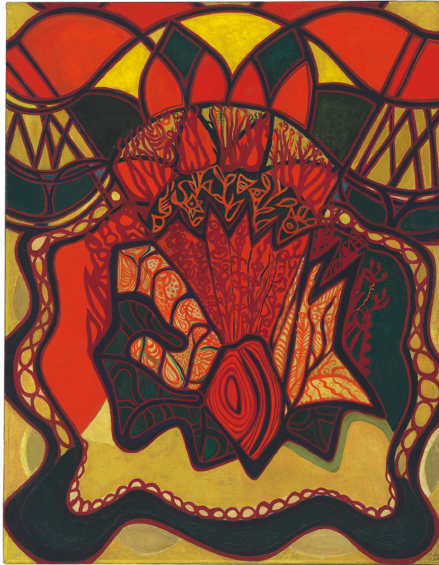


Image: Amelia Peláez, Sin título (Untitled), 1950. Courtesy of Jorge Pérez.



Image: Pamela Phastimo Sunstrum, The Two II, 2020. Courtesy of Jorge Pérez.

We also got our hands on several works by the young African artist Pamela Phastimo Sunstrum, whose practice I truly admire. Pamela was born in Botswana, studied in the United States, and is currently based in Johannesburg, South Africa. We were first introduced to her when we were researching artists for our upcoming exhibition at El Espacio 23, “Witness: Afro Perspectives from the Jorge M. Perez Collection.” Her multidisciplinary work is inspired by literature but is infused with science as she creates alter egos and a parallel universe to reflect modern society as well as her own life. Her process is also extremely unique—she uses a variety of media, all

very lightly layered, exposing intricate drawings beneath the paint.

Would you say you’ve been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

The pandemic has without a doubt impacted the way we see and experience art. We miss visiting museums and traveling to art fairs, but we have been pleasantly surprised by the richness and variety of the online and digital platforms. I have had the opportunity to join numerous Zoom studio visits, typically by invitation, but I have also participated in just as many live showings on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. I think this is an incredible opportunity for students, young collectors, and even the general public to have this close interaction with amazing artists from around the world.

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Image: Pamela Phastimo Suntrum, *The Seven*, 2020. Courtesy of Jorge Pérez.

We certainly cannot ignore the negative effects this pandemic has had on people, in particular within the arts and culture community. It has always been one of my biggest missions in life to support creatives, and we've really doubled down on our efforts this year. On the collection side, we're continuing to purchase art, both from local and U.S. artists, but also abroad in countries like Spain, Colombia, South Africa, and Cuba. Additionally, we've committed to a

\$250,000 donation to the nonprofit arts organization Americans for the Arts for a first-of-its-kind national program, which will benefit artists, public art administrators, and/or representatives from the civic design field. Of course, there is still a lot more work to be done, and we are committed to making it happen.



Lauren Prakke

London

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

It's definitely Zoë Buckman's *Her Hair Wild* (2020), which draws from a poem she wrote at a difficult time, but it takes on a new context during the pandemic as it speaks to the feeling of being limited or trapped. I think we met when I chaired the Tate Young Patrons at an art event we held in Miami and we totally hit it off. Zoë may have a different recollection, but I clearly remember we bonded over our mutual passion for women's equality, racial equality, living in both New York and London, and obviously art. I wanted to stay all night as I was intrigued—and that is sort of rare for me.



Image: Zoe Buckman, *Her Hair Wild*, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Lauren Prakke.

I purchased it in total 2020 pandemic style—online at Her Clique, which offers limited-edition works by women while supporting nonprofit organizations. Two things inspired me to buy it. I hold a degree in 19th-century literature and I'm drawn to words—however you interpret her words, they have an immediacy and a power that is difficult to turn away from. The second is that proceeds go to benefit United Way of New York City, which helps low-income New Yorkers make ends meet and lead self-sufficient lives.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

I've been less active in 2020 as the bulk of my energy has gone into emergency help for women affected by domestic violence during COVID-19 (I actually qualified as a volunteer counselor), and simultaneously a project

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called 100secs with Restless Buddha to get the suburban women's vote out in swing states. I feel strongly that we are/were in dire need of political change, intelligence, stability, and civility in our government.

I've been approached by the Children's Institute in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles (interestingly in a building designed gratis by Frank Gehry himself) to move forward on an arts project for them. It's a community center supporting everything from after-school youth development activities, counseling, and arts and computer classes to a gang task force. It just broke ground in January and I'm so excited about what they're doing.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?



Image: Patrick Martinez, American Memorial 2, 2020, L.A. Louver, \$17,500.



Image: Hank Willis Thomas, This Is Now, 2019, Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Contact for price.

I am really drawn to artists that highlight social causes and injustice in our world, from Judy Chicago, Zoë Buckman, Patrick Martinez, Mira Dancy, and Ai Weiwei to the well-known godfather of For Freedoms, Hank Willis Thomas. A painting of a vase of pretty flowers no longer does it for me. When you walk into my home, you're very clear about what I stand for.

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020? Kelly Akashi's Cultivator (Metamorphic) (2020) is super meaningful to me. I have been following her for years and she has just gotten better and better with each new work. This was my favorite work from the show "Mood Organ," which opened at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in February. It was taken before the show opened, so I had reserved a different one. But when the original sale of the piece fell through, I was offered the work. It's a very personal piece for the artist as the pedestal represents her cardiogram. Hands in art have always felt important to me, perhaps due to the historical references. This oversized bronze

hand, intertwined with delicate, sinuous handblown glass, reflects such an elevated moment in Kelly's practice. It lives just outside my bedroom so I get to take it in every day, multiple times a day.

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Image: Kelly Akashi, detail of Cultivator (Metamorphic), 2020. Courtesy of the artist; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; and Francois Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

I have been a bit less active as a collector since COVID-19 (my budgets have taken a hit), but I remain as active as an appreciator and a museum board member. It has been a challenging time for art institutions and it is nice to be able to contribute with my skill set in marketing and digital media to support in new ways. I may not be going to galleries as much as I used to, but I have increased my screen time on my phone so much that it is a little embarrassing! Most of that time, when I'm not working, is spent looking at art.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?



Image: Kennedy Yanko, Cocina, 2018, Leyendecker, In the Coral



Image: Kay Hofmann, In the Coral, 1986, François Ghebaly, Contact for price.

I am in love with Sally Han's work. I recently acquired a piece and I would like to collect more. I love how intimate and personal her paintings feel and she is incredible with her sense of realism. I am also hoping to collect Cristina BanBan, Coady Brown, Kennedy Yanko, Kathleen Ryan, Kay Hofmann, Ebony G. Patterson...the list goes on. There is no shortage there! They all have something different that resonates with my sensibility. They're all strong women whose stories permeate their work in complex ways.

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Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo

Turin, Italy

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

It's always hard to decide between artworks. I feel privileged that even in 2020, I have been able to add a number of exciting new works to the collection. For example, I acquired additional works from Brazilian artists already present in the collection, such as incredible new paintings from Luiz Zerbini and Ana Elisa Egreja, which have brought a colorful, positive spirit to the lockdown months. Similarly, I'm very happy to have added new works by brilliant and young artists such as Victor Man, Ambera Wellmann, Pia Krajewski, Manuele Cerutti, and David Czupryn in the last few months.



Image: Michele Rizzo, *Rest*, 2020. Photo by DSL Studio. Courtesy of Fondazione La Quadriennale di Roma.

I also purchased *Rest*, an installation and performative work by Michele Rizzo, an Italian choreographer and artist based in Amsterdam. We supported the production of this work for the Quadriennale—the most important exhibition in Italy devoted exclusively to contemporary Italian art—which recently opened in Rome. It is a room-sized installation composed of several sculptures, representing lying human bodies—

possibly ravers, at rest as the title suggests. They are immersed in a dynamic landscape of sounds and colored lights, and they come together as a result of a performative action by a group of dancers which recalls traditional processions, playing on the idea of clubbing as a religious rite. I decided to support and purchase this work because I was fascinated by the proposal by Michele, whose work I have been following since he performed his famous *HIGHER xtn.* (2018) at my foundation in 2019.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

This has been a very different year, where everybody has needed to adapt. I've been active in a different way—collecting more digitally and traveling less. What remained very important is my commissioning activity, whether it is linked to the exhibition program of the Fondazione or to other major international art events. This is the case of the recent acquisition of the video *Who's Afraid of Ideology? (Part 3) - Microresistances* (2020) by Marwa Arsanios, which was commissioned for the 11th Berlin Biennale and whose production we supported. The work is the final chapter of a trilogy that explores the intersection between feminism and ecology, dealing with specific communities of women in different countries, from Syria to Colombia, where they have to fight to keep their right to the land against extractivist industries.

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Image: Ana Elisa Egreja, Tropical paradise: Green still life with Cobogós, 2020. Courtesy of Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection.

With regard to the program of the Fondazione, we recently produced several works for the group show “Waves Between Us,” the final exhibition of our Young Curators residency program. Featuring a selection of young Italian artists invited by three international curators at the end of a three-month research trip through our country, the exhibition has both a physical component, displayed in

the Fondazione’s space in Guarene, and a virtual component: digital commissions presented on the project’s website. These include works by Marco Giordano, Bea Bonafini, Elisa Strinna, and the collective Femminote, among others.

Are there any artists you’re looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?

We are currently working on two major commissions, to be presented in 2021. The first, which is planned to open in March, is the solo exhibition “Neural Swamp” by Martine Syms, who is the recipient of the Future Fields Commission in Time-Based Media, a joint initiative with the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Syms is working on a new installation which employs AI technology for screenplay writing, character development, and acting, and which will be presented in an immersive environment. I am really interested in her ongoing investigation into the politics of technology, and how human beings and relationships are affected by the way individuals are represented and communicate with each other. We already started to work on the next commission of this series, with Lawrence Abu Hamdan, who will present his work at the Fondazione in the fall of 2022.



Image: Luiz Zerbini, installation view of Happiness Beyond Paradise, 2020. Courtesy of Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection

Another important project planned for next year is the launch of a new outdoor sculpture park in Guarene, on a hill located in the Langhe region of Piedmont, close to Palazzo Re Rebaudengo (the Fondazione’s second venue). There, we will install

existing works from the collection and also invite artists to conceive site-specific works; the artist I invited for the inaugural intervention is Marguerite Humeau. As is typical of her practice, she has started to investigate the history of the site, taking inspiration from countless sources: from science to folklore, from literature to botany and geology. I am really impressed by her research process, which materializes in a fascinating sculptural language that combines myths and facts, history and stories.

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Alain Servais

Brussels

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

I discovered Young-Jun Tak at the excellent last Berlin Biennale in September. I never heard about him before, but the visual impact as well as the strength of the story he was telling was overwhelming. It mixes many subjects we are interested in: gender, religion, foreign culture, and civilization. He doesn't have a gallery, so I negotiated with him the custody of the work and it will travel from the biennial to Brussels. Museums and biennials are our favorite discovery places. The works are often artists' most ambitious and we respect the research and introspection effort of curators, which is for us an essential filter. The artwork also often gets better contextualization, which makes its relevance easier to assess.



Image: Kapwani Kiwanga, Flowers for Africa: Morocco, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery.



Image: Young-Jun Tak, Chained, 2020. Courtesy of the artist.

I have been following Kipwani Kiwanga for many years. Her recent presentations at the Prix Marcel Duchamp, the Dhaka Art Summit, and the Macba in Barcelona finished convincing me. The format is unusual and challenging as it consists only in the description of a bouquet of flowers to be submitted to a florist each time it must be installed. But we also find that it brings to light important viewpoints on decolonization. This work, Flowers for Africa: Morocco (2019), joins two other works by Kiwanga in the collection.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

We have been voluntarily as active as previous years as we were lucky enough to travel intensely before the confinement and we went back to galleries, museums, and biennials as soon as they reopened in Belgium and in Europe. We focused our acquisitions on artists directly and smaller and mid-sized galleries which we thought the most vulnerable in the current pandemic. We also kept welcoming artists and curators at our residency, the Loft.

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Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?

The list of artists we are interested in is long and we are patient until we find the right works because we believe that finding the right work is as essential as supporting the right artist. We will also make sure to be exposed to artists we don't know by visiting galleries, museums, and biennials as far as we can go.



Julia Stoschek

Düsseldorf

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

That is a tough question—sort of like being asked to pick a favorite child. During Art Week, we bought four Barbara Hammer films at KOW, which means we now have a total of eight works in the collection. They are stunning and very meaningful on many different levels. Barbara worked to create a more empathetic and sensual cinema so as to change the canon that she felt didn't reflect her reality. I first saw her work at KOW many years ago and then had the pleasure to meet Barbara in 2018.



Image: Meriem Bennani, installation view of *Party on the CAPS*, 2018, at JSC Berlin. Photo by Alwin Lay. Courtesy of the artist and C L E A R I N G, New York / Brussels.

smart and edgy. Meriem's political wit is so on point and filled with humor; something really needed at the moment.

We also bought a single-channel version of *Party on the CAPS* (2018–19) and *Mission Teens: French School in Morocco* (2019) by Meriem Bennani, which was part of "horizontal vertigo" curated by Lisa Long. Lisa introduced me to Meriem's work and I think her approach to video, installation, and sculpture is very

Just to name one more piece: Leila Hekmat's video installation *CROCOPAZZO!* (2020) bought from Bortolozzi blew me away. I encountered Leila's work at the gallery and was immediately captivated by the detail of her play/video/installation. She writes, films, designs, and produces everything with utmost perfection. And it's another work that offers comic relief although it deals with the weight of the world. Other acquisitions included *car, road, mountain* (2020) by Cemile Sahin and *Community Action Center* (2010) by A.K. Burns and A.L. Steiner.

Would you say you've been more or less active as a collector in 2020 than in years past?

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Image: Leila Hekmat, installation view of CROCOPAZZO!, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin.

I've been a little less active this year. I haven't been able to experience as much art as I would have liked because of the pandemic. But it is very important for me to support galleries and artists. I participated in certain support initiatives, for example Wolfgang Tillmans's 2020Solidarity, and as the president of the board at KW Institute for Contemporary Art and board member at MOCA Los Angeles, I'm involved in acquisitions and the funding of certain projects like the KW

Production series. I also recently joined the Freudeskreis at Hamburger Bahnhof and contributed to the acquisition of a film by Rosa Barba for Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?

We are currently planning our upcoming collection exhibition titled "A Fire In My Belly." There have been specific acquisitions for this show, which I will not yet share to keep it a surprise. The show will span all three floors of the collection and present approximately 30 works, mixing old and new. It will be a visceral and poetic exhibition. I can't wait!

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

One of the most meaningful works we purchased in 2020 was *Dirt God* (2020) by Kyle Dunn. We first encountered Kyle's work online and were struck by his beautifully queer figuration and uniquely stylized forms. However, owing to his use of bas-relief, we found that the paintings took on a new dimension in person when we saw them at Art Basel in Miami Beach. We had been trying to find the perfect work for some time, and while we missed out on some earlier pieces, the stars aligned when Kyle signed with one of our favorite galleries: P.P.O.W. They arranged a studio visit in New York City in March 2020 where we were struck by a particular work that elegantly incorporated the sculptural element while highlighting Kyle's recurrent themes of masculine vulnerability, isolation, and melodrama. Although the world changed dramatically immediately after our visit, we were lucky enough to acquire *Dirt God* from P.P.O.W's online presentation for Frieze New York.

Would you say you've been more or less active as collectors in 2020 than in years past?



Image: Kyle Dunn, *Dirt God*, 2020. Courtesy of Kyle Dunn and P·P·O·W, New York.

Given our isolated location in North Dakota, a large part of our interaction with the art world has been online, especially through Instagram (@theicygays). Since we were already comfortable acquiring works remotely, the pandemic has not really slowed down our collecting. In fact, we feel that the events of 2020 have served as a catalyst for many meaningful works of art and thus we've actually increased our acquisition over the past year. In addition, we realize this has been a

challenging year for many in the art community and were therefore motivated to continue to support artists and

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galleries we worked with previously while also reaching out to exciting new talent. As for other organizations, we continue to serve on the board of our local museum (via Zoom), support fundraisers (via Instagram), and even held a (socially distanced) benefit for our local symphony in our backyard.

Are there any artists you're looking forward to collecting or supporting in 2021?

Our collection has gradually coalesced around female-identifying and queer artists and we are excited to continue to support these artists and their galleries into the coming year. However, there are several artists not yet in our collection whose works we admire, including Shannon Cartier Lucy's haunting dreamy tableaux, Douglas Rieger's ambiguous intimate creations, and Cindy Ji Hye Kim's fascinating monochromatic compositions. In addition, it seems that we discover a new emerging artist every time we open Instagram, so you never know what might happen in 2021!



Robert and Eric Thomas-Suwall

Minot, North Dakota

What was the most meaningful artwork you purchased in 2020?

Although we like to collect through commissioning, we can't stop adding new works to our collection if something catches our eyes. Donum is a 200-acre estate, therefore we are drawn to monumental works. We added three to the collection this year; they haven't been placed yet, as the land needs to be prepared. Early spring is the best time for this; in addition to the vineyard and the Donum buildings, we are a living farm, so we have to consider the seasons. Not to mention the most recent fires which devastated California; we were one of the lucky ones and our thoughts are with those who were not so fortunate.



Image: Ugo Rondinone, White Blue Monk, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and The Donum Estate, Sonoma, California.



Image: Ugo Rondinone, Black Red Nun, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and The Donum Estate, Sonoma, California.

We have followed the work of Ugo Rondinone for a while due to his land art works. We had seen Seven Magic Mountains (2016) in the Nevada Desert a few years back. The way they popped off the horizon made us think of how they would look against the backdrop of the rolling hills of southern Sonoma. We love the formed stones as objects of beauty and contemplation, the inner self and the natural world in these bright colors. So we acquired nuns + monks from his show [at Galerie Eva

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Presenhuber] in Zürich in September. We have decided to place them around our lake and works are underway to build up the foundations underneath them.

We also commissioned Jeppe Hein to make some new works for Donum House—which is currently being transformed by architect and designer David Thulstrup. Hein has made us these colored mirror balloons to go in our tasting rooms. They produce beautiful yet distorted perspectives of the surrounding space. We already have a work of his on the estate, One- Two-Three (2017), a curved structure that our visitors love.

Would you say you've been more or less active as collectors in 2020 than in years past?



Image: Jeppe Hein, installation view, from left to right, of Redwine Mirror Balloon, Chardonnay Mirror Balloon, and Rose Mirror Balloon, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and The Donum Estate, Sonoma, California.

We are in discussion with a number of artists for Donum. We actually just finalized plans for a major work. The pandemic gave us and the artist a bit more time to think and consider the work. The placement of art on Donum involves a lot of thinking and land preparation. As our

projects are long term, our activity hasn't changed; we are committed patrons and have an evolving vision for our estate. We produce 8,000 cases of estate-grown pinot noir and chardonnay a year; everything we do has to complement one another, from harvest to sustainable farming.

We recognize that the arts have been seriously impacted by COVID-19 and we have stood by our artists. Naturally, we are involved with some nonprofit arts organizations, where we live in Hong Kong and those local to Donum, in the Bay Area.

Portrait of Steven Abraham and Lisa Young. Courtesy of Young-Abraham Collection. Portrait of Estrellita B. Brodsky by Hans Neumann. Courtesy of Estrellita B. Brodsky. Portrait of Cindy Chua-Tay. Courtesy of Cindy Chua-Tay. Portrait of Pamela Joyner by Drew Altizer. Courtesy of Pamela Joyner. Portrait of Samalie Kiyingi by Othello De'Souza-Hartley. Courtesy of Samalie Kiyingi. Portrait of Grażyna Kulczyk. Courtesy of Grażyna Kulczyk. Portrait of Arthur Lewis. Courtesy of UTA. Portrait of Makgati Molebatsi. Courtesy of Makgati Molebatsi. Portrait of Jorge Pérez. Courtesy of Jorge Pérez and The Related Group. Portrait of Lauren Prakke by David M. Benett. Image via Getty Images. Portrait of Karen Robinovitz by Kevin Lu. Courtesy of Karen Robinovitz. Portrait of Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo by Andrea Basille. Courtesy of Sandretto Re Rebaudengo. Portrait of Alain Servais by Michel Loriaux. Courtesy of Alain Servais. Portrait of Julia Stoschek by Peter Rigaud. Courtesy of Julia Stoschek. Portrait of Robert and Eric Thomas-Suwall. Courtesy of Robert and Eric Thomas-Suwall. Zhan Wang, installation view of "Artificial Rock No. 126," 2007–13. Courtesy of The Donum Estate.