

## ESTRADA FINE ART NEWSLETTER – May 2009

### ***You don't have to be a Rockefeller to collect art.***

I saw this subtitle of a documentary film by Megumi Sasaki recently and was very interested as it refers to a couple of unconventional art collectors that I had the pleasure to meet numerous times in New York in the 80s and 90s. Herb Vogel was a postal clerk and Dorothy Vogel was a librarian and despite their modest means, this couple was able to build one of the most important contemporary art collections in history.

They began with small artworks due to the size of most New York apartments. The small pieces were also more affordable. After decades of befriending and supporting artists through purchases, their multi-million dollar collection was recently donated to the National Gallery. Richard Tuttle, Chuck Close, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Lynda Benglis, and Lucio Pozzi are just a few of the artists' work they acquired. Needless to say, the work increased in value monumentally!

Speak to any collectors and they will tell you that building a collection is a gratifying and intellectually stimulating experience. For many, buying art is more than a hobby, it's a way of life – one that involves visiting galleries and museums, belonging to arts organizations, planning vacations around art fairs and museum shows, attending lectures, taking classes and reading.

### **Beginning An Art Collection - What Acquiring Minds Need to Know**

Do you long to live with beautiful contemporary art, but don't know where to start? In this first article, I plan to share some thoughts with those of you that are new art collectors and underscore what those of you who are seasoned art collectors have felt all along.

Here are the questions to ask yourself.

#### **1. What do I like?**

Are you drawn to certain styles, colors and emotions?  
Which mediums do I like – painting, sculpture, photography, mixed media, installation art?

**Tip:** It is important to get in touch with the kind of art you like – the art that you would want to live with for a long time.

#### **2. How much time can I devote to discovering art?**

It is important to look at the art in local museums and galleries. Try to define the art you want to collect, the artists, the styles and the price range. It is a **visual literacy** learning experience rather than just about buying objects.

**Tip:** Start at a museum and spend a couple of hours walking through the collection. Or attend an artwalk, a gallery opening or an open studio tour.

#### **3. What is my purpose for wanting to collect art?**

The following are just a few of the reasons collectors cite:

- Sensual pleasure
- Inspirational or spiritual enjoyment
- Status symbol/prestige
- Investment value
- Historical (personal or global)
- Lasting legacy

**Tip:** Look at the list above, pause for an instant and ask yourself why you want to collect.

#### **4. What type of artists do I want to collect?**

- **Emerging artists** – young and upcoming artists just beginning their careers.
- **Mid-career artists** – working professionals with at least 10 years experience. They have had a number of prominent shows and their work is in collections.
- **Established artists** – artists with a lifetime commitment. Their work is hanging in museums and featured in art magazines.
- **Dead artists** – a wide range -- all the way from masterpieces to pieces that never rise above obscurity.

**Tip:** Set aside some time and decide upon the type of art and budget. Remember you don't need a huge budget -- Herb & Dorothy Vogel collected small artworks of emerging artists and used Herb's salary to purchase the work (they lived on Dorothy's salary).

**Art can reflect who we are, what we want to be and how we choose to live.**

Treat the artwork as if they are more than decoration. A grander purpose for art is to promote dialogue and cause its viewers to make a discovery.

**In addition, there are six additional key issues to consider when weighing a potential purchase.** Stay tuned as I am saving these issues for the next issue of the **Estrada Fine Art** newsletter.

If you do not have the time to explore on your own, there are qualified art advisors and art dealers to help you through this process. Estrada Fine Art is one of them.

- Geneen Estrada

***Geneen Estrada is the owner of Estrada Fine Art. We represent established mid-career artists. More information can be obtained at [www.estradafineart.com](http://www.estradafineart.com).***