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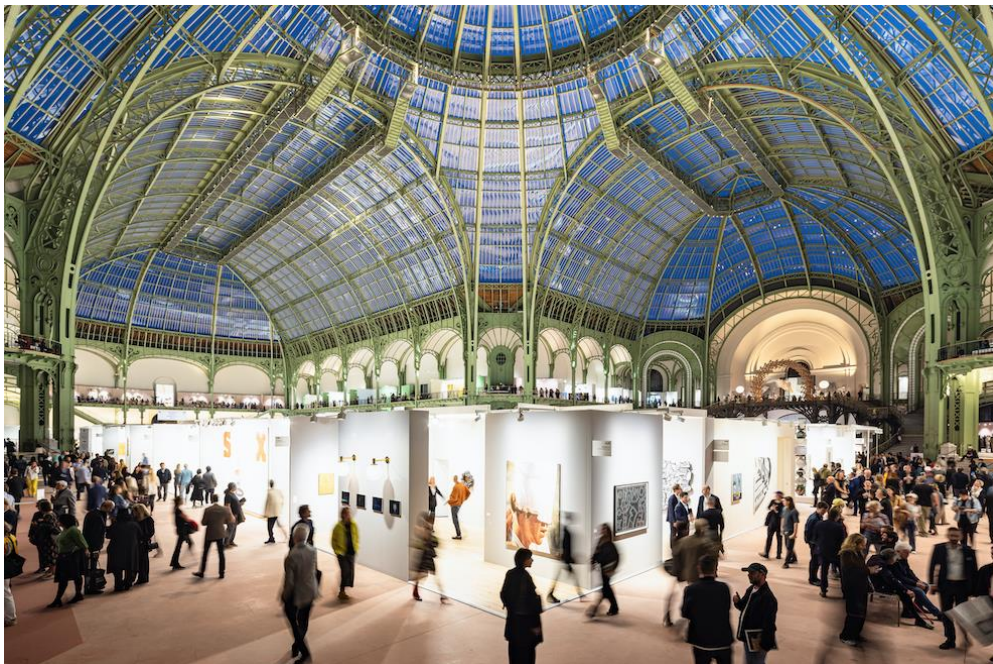
Art advisors on what to consider when building a collection (part 1 of 2)

BY #legend

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There are few – if any – markets more dynamic, unpredictable and exciting than that of contemporary art. Which makes experience and expertise exceedingly valuable to would-be collectors.

*Professional art advisors **Daryl Wickstrom** and **Yuki Terase**, talk to **Jaz Kong** about what to think about and what to avoid when building a collection*



Everyone is talking about art these days, especially contemporary art. The road from art lover to art buyer, then moving on to become an art collector is not easy. How, one wonders, to even start? And for intermediate and mature collectors, how to navigate a changing economy?

With the global art craze easing off, now is the perfect time to pause and contemplate next steps. And who better to point us in the right direction than professional art advisors?

**Daryl Wickstrom, co-founder and partner,
Patti Wong & Associates**



Patti Wong and Daryl Wickstrom are veterans of Sotheby's with decades of experience in the auction industry. The pair announced the establishment of joint venture Patti Wong &

Associates (PWA), in partnership with The Fine Art Group, just as the world was emerging from COVID. They now maintain a headquarters in Hong Kong as well as staff stationed all over the world to tend to clients across every possible time zone.

Even though no one could anticipate what the global economy had in store after the world opened up again, Wickstrom is glad they took the risk and launched PWA. “What’s most important is it’s always about the collector,” he says. “Setting up PWA was because over our time at Sotheby’s, we very much enjoyed working directly with clients and getting to know them. But when you’re working for an auction house, it’s very transactional in nature, and I think both Patti and I were working with clients oftentimes on things that had nothing to do with transactions and were more about museum loans, legacies, estate planning, directions they want to take their collection. And I think we felt we wanted to spend more time focusing on that side of the business.”

As an art advisor, Wickstrom believes respect is key. “We need to understand the collector’s focus and objectives overall with respect to their collection,” he says. “I think after COVID there certainly has been an uptick in younger collectors entering the market. There’s also been a change in how more mature collectors transact.”

When it comes to his own collecting, Wickstrom often lets things sit overnight to see if the desire is still there the next morning.

It's safe to say that he discourages impulse buying. "The advice that I've been giving for 30-plus years, and I think Patti would say the same thing, is buy with your heart, not with your head. If you enter with a purely investment mindset, I think it's not going to end well. Don't buy it with the expectation that in two to three years you're going to sell it for more money. Art doesn't work like that."

When it comes to art appreciation versus art investment, Wickstrom says, surprisingly, "I would argue they are the same thing. There's no doubt that with the prices of important art, it's an investment. But if you buy what you love and you've done your homework, and you use your art advisor to help you understand what the price should be for an object, then you're buying with as much knowledge as possible. And hopefully there will be an upside if you decide to sell that picture down the road. That's a different decision than wanting to buy this work because you think it's cheap and you can flip it in two years for more money."

Wickstrom argues that one should never compare the art world to the stock market. "We don't play the role of financial advisers," he explains. "Art collecting has a different set of metrics to think through once you start bringing in personal taste, enjoyment and cultural connection. That's what makes collecting fun."

In his time, Wickstrom has seen the market weather some storms. “Some artists go in and out of vogue or fashion or interest. And this is just constantly happening in the art market. It’s very difficult to have a set of investment parameters that helps you make decisions like that. Over the years I’ve seen a lot of people play that game in various categories – they play it, they get burned and they leave the market. If you’re truly interested in this market, do your research, learn about the artists you’re acquiring, and don’t chase the latest fad. I think to buy for investment requires that you buy so many different things and fill up a warehouse, so that you can sell the things that are worth money and hold on to the things that the market has slipped off a bit.”