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Matthew Barney, Huma Bhabha, Vivienne Binns, Kunmanara Carroll, Dean Cross, Zaachariaha Fielding, Naomi Hobson, Sarah Lucas, Shannon Novak, Sarah Rodigari, Nina Sanadze, Miranda Skoczek, Vipoo Srivilasa, Justene Williams & more



Thomas Hirschhorn,
Nail Antigone, 2013
Photo: Guy Grabowsky
Opposite
Portrait: Matthias Arndt,
Tiffany Wood-Arndt
and Labrador Melody
Photo: August Arndt

MARGINS · COLLECTOR PROFILE

MATTHIAS ARNDT & TIFFANY WOOD-ARNDT

German-born Matthias Arndt and his Australian partner in life and art Tiffany Wood-Arndt are unstoppable movers and shakers in the international art world. With homes to house their collection in Berlin, Athens and Australia, they've amassed an enviable collection of art. The ebullient and charming Matthias speaks about their love of art from their Victorian Cape Schanck locale, where they are gearing up for the opening of the much awaited Arndt Artbarn.

WRITTEN *by* COURTNEY KIDD



What kind of a collector would you classify yourself as?

Hybrids of collectors have emerged, and I would say I am one of these. Professionally, I operate as an art agent advising and managing artists. Back in 1994 I established a gallery in East Berlin then in the following two decades represented artists in my galleries in Berlin, Zurich, New York and Singapore. It was through Tiffany that I came to fall in love with Australian art. We married in 2006 and in 2011 we expanded activities into the Asia-Pacific region. Since 2015

we have actively amassed art for our own personal collection.

Collecting for us is a passion. It is addictive, a disease that cannot be cured. The biggest impact of living with art for us is that while it doesn't necessarily provide us with any answers, it does help us to formulate the right questions.

How would you identify the kind of art you buy?

It is engaging, critical, not always aesthetically pleasing but often challenging. Australian names include Tony Clarke, Del

Kathryn Barton and Ben Quilty. These names will be seen in the inaugural exhibition at the Artbarn alongside Joseph Beuys, Katharina Grosse, Ambera Wellmann, Rainer Fetting and Jessica Westhafer.

Have you had mentors who've influenced your collection or people you admire who have shaped your thinking about art? What shapes my views on art the most are the encounters with artists. Looking at art means judging everything I see anew.

Mentors include Jan Hoet, the curator of documenta IX, 1992 in Kassel, and Joseph Beuys, one of the most important artists of the 20th century. An encounter with his work in my teenage years changed my life, made me want to 'be in art'.

Collectors I admire for their passion and persistence, for acquiring the best works, for supporting artists, for giving to the global art community, would include Harald Falckenberg

in Hamburg while Australian counterparts would be Michael Buxton or David Walsh.

Many art buyers see work in the first instance via a jpeg or pdf. Is this the case for you when you purchase?

Ninety percent of the works we buy, we see as a digital file first. Very rarely have we been disappointed with the work in the flesh.

How has your thinking about art collecting changed since you began the process?

My passion for art and my aim to identify the best works is what drives our collecting, as it did our art business. The 'art-system' though has changed fundamentally since we started out in the art world decades ago. A seismic shift went through all areas, including the art market, private and institutional collecting, curating, even art journalism. While contemporary art as such has never been more

celebrated in the market, by the public and digitally, the pace in the market – pressure on transactions, the amount of art produced and competition among the ever-growing number of buyers – is rather extreme. Many collectors first look at the investment potential of an artwork rather than its artistic value or their 'love' of the piece. All this does not prevent a collector from feeling the joy (and sometimes pride) of owning an artwork and living with it. But as both an art collector and an advisor, I have to be more connected, informed and faster when researching and acquiring.

What advice would you give to an emerging collector?

Follow your heart – buy what you feel drawn to and what you love. Don't 'look with your ears' but instead read and study and look at as much art as possible. Build relations with your local art scene and dealers while also looking out internationally. When acquiring,



“Follow your heart – buy what you feel drawn to and what you love. Don't 'look with your ears' but instead read and study and look at as much art as possible.”





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always aim for the masterpiece. If you reach out internationally, seek the advice of an expert who has the contacts to introduce you to dealers and artists in the area that you are keen to explore.

What will the future bring for your collection?

Tiffany and I are very excited about our Artbarn, recently built for us by CHROFI architectural practice. We've run hundreds of commercial exhibitions in galleries around the world but have never had a private art space dedicated to showcasing our collection and to hosting projects we are simply excited about and want to share.

Contrary to our art agency, where we strategise and plan years ahead, with Artbarn we have not mapped out many presentations in advance. The first collection hang planned for January 2022 will mainly feature young and emerging artists from Europe, Africa, the US and Asia, in context with some fundamental positions

in painting and conceptual art. Other presentations might highlight geographic areas, such as Berlin or Africa. We are also thinking about monographic exhibitions and using the Arndt Artbarn as an artist residency.

What were your most recent acquisitions?

Gareth Sansom, Johanna Dumet, Raphael Adjetey Adjei Mayne and Alicja Kwade.

Do you have a dream purchase, a work that you fantasise about collecting?

We'd love a Philip Guston, a 1969 studio painting, and a Pablo Picasso painting from his last years that contains his boundless energy and the serenity of his creating.

Arndt Art Agency
Berlin, London, Melbourne
contact@arndtartagency.com
arndt-art-agency.com
arndtcollection.com

01
Arndt Artbarn, Cape Schanck
02
Ambera Wellmann, *Apologetic Power*, 2019
Pablo Picasso, *Wood Owl Woman*, 1951
Del Kathryn Barton, *bubbles touch - cold cold wave*, 2017
03
Pablo Picasso, *Wood Owl Woman*, 1951 on *Documenta table* designed by Franz West & Heimo Zobernig, 1997
George Condo, *Rodrigo and his Family*, 2007
04
Eames waiting room chairs
Friedrich Kunath, *My Fault, Your Fault*, 2019
Joseph Beuys, *Capri Batterie*, 1985
Yeo Kaa, *It's just a panic attack*, 2017

05
Entang Wiharso, *Borderless Floating Island* (detail), 2012
06
A.R. Penck, *Adler und Figur (Eagle and Figure)*, 1980's
Franz West, *Privat lampe des Künstlers*, 1989
Joseph Beuys, *Uncle Stuhl*, 2004
Ottomane 2005
07
Eames waiting room chairs
Friedrich Kunath, *My Fault, Your Fault*, 2019
Joseph Beuys, *Capri Batterie*, 1985
08
Joseph Beuys, *La Rivoluzione Siamo Noi*, 1972
09
Misheck Masamvu, *Conflicted*, 2017
All photos: Guy Grabowsky



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