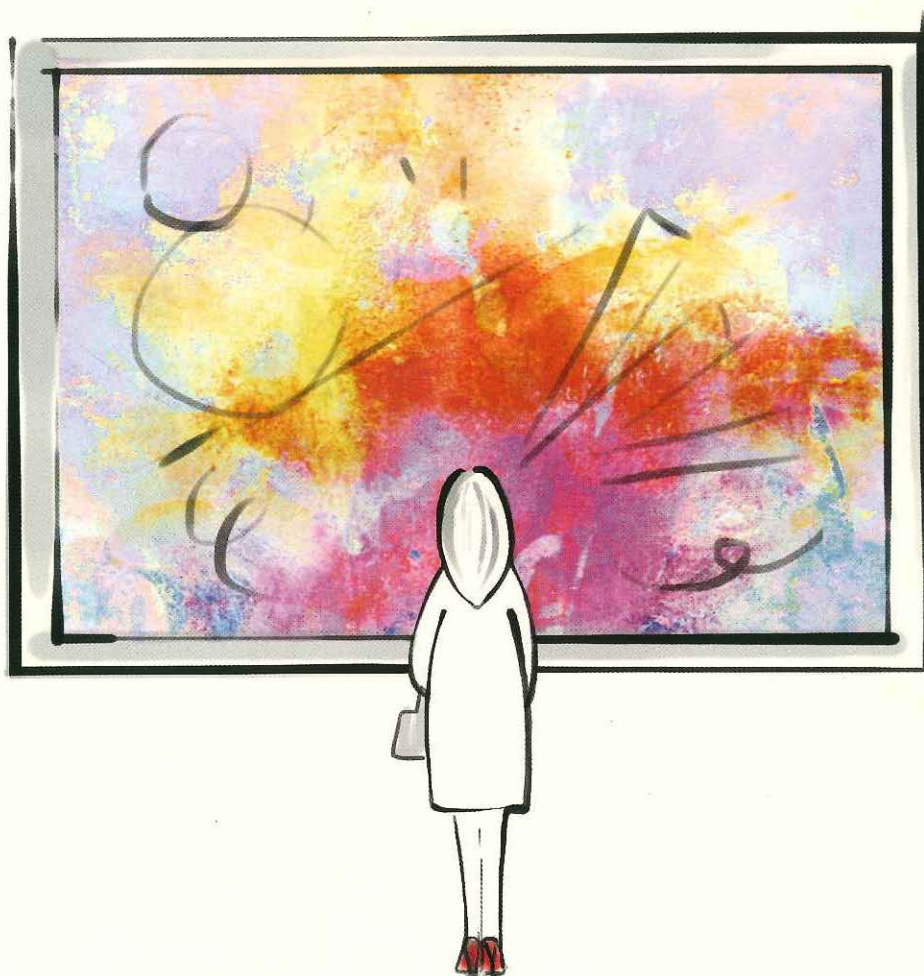


ISSUE 233
1 MARCH 2015

The List

THE MAGAZINE THAT KNOWS

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EVERY TWO WEEKS



All About Art

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Art Collection 101



Ahead of all the art festivities this year, continuing education center HKU Space teamed up with Art Basel and Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design to

launch Collecting Contemporary Art, a first-of-its-kind course for those new to the scene. Ken Wong of HKU Space, who helped organize the classes, talks us through his insight for novices.

The List: How are you affiliated with the art world?

Ken Wong: I'm the head and principal lecturer in global cities at HKU SPACE, the continuing education arm of the University. I'm also a co-founder of NarrativeHK, which

is devoted to long-term improvements in Hong Kong in the way of events, workshops, arts and culture, and creative breakthroughs. I teach and write articles about art and cultural industries as well as promote Hong Kong as a creative city.

The List: When did you get into art collecting?

KW: My parents collect calligraphy, watches and teapots, so I grew up around art but without any master plan. It was eight years ago when I brought my first artwork. In comparison, my peers are streets ahead of me.

The List: Why did you start the Collecting Contemporary Art program?

KW: I remember when I first walked into an art gallery—the experience was intimidating. I can totally understand the concerns of the younger generation of collectors when they come into the art

market, want to collect, and realize that there are barriers. This is why I started this collecting program with Central Saint Martins and Art Basel.

The List: What does the program hope to achieve?

KW: Many new collectors make mistakes: buying art that goes beyond his or her budget, getting too caught up in the hype, collecting too many artists, or buying pieces randomly without a plan to build a collection. The program lets people listen to and interact with some 20 speakers, including Marc Spiegler, Lars Nittve, Hammad Nasar, Florian Knothe, Jehan Chu and Pascal De Sarthe. By the end, I hope participants will have a clearer idea of how art collecting works, where to start with buying a first piece, how to get it insured, how to frame it properly, and of course, how to minimize mistakes and risks.

The List: Why is the emphasis on contemporary art?

KW: The contemporary art world is becoming a major social event, and every year people are there to see and to be seen, as much as to shop around and perhaps buy art. This phenomenon is growing fast in Hong Kong and in Asia. If you start collecting teapots or calligraphy as my parents did, you will never experience this excitement. Fairs, preview parties, opening events and biennials allow you to mingle with lots of new people and perhaps also with the artists whose works you're interested in.

The List: What should a new collector consider before making purchases?

KW: New collectors should come up with a set of rules for themselves, at least in the beginning—maybe it is a budget rule or a plan limiting the number of themes,

artists and mediums that they want to focus on. To me, the greatest beginners do not solely rely on consultants' or friends' opinions. Instead, they do a lot of their own homework and take some risks.

The List: What's the best way to discover up-and-coming talents?

KW: New collectors should not only carefully choose young artists at graduation shows but also look for a unique style or identity. Another good way to keep your eye on emerging artists is to look at independent pop-up shows and art awards, where art professors nominate young artists and they're judged by an esteemed panel of critics, artists and curators.

The List: Is art a good investment?

KW: It all depends on how you define a good investment. To me, it is about how the collector grows the art ecosystem, supports

emerging artists and incentivizes our young generation of collectors to invest in artworks and the future art scene of this city. So art buying is a form of investing in a different attitude and lifestyle—a new way to look at things. It is an investment that enriches your way of life for many years to come!

Keen to kick-start your collection? Sign up for next year's Collecting Contemporary Art sessions (\$29,000 tuition for six modules, Jan-March). Learn more here: hkuspace.hku.hk.

