

1530 MAIN



CULTURE

SHARE: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Pinterest](#)

JULY 26, 2018

ART IN RESIDENCE

Behind the collection of John and Lisa Runyon

Bucking current convention, art advisors John and Lisa Runyon did not remove walls in their tree-shaded, Mid-century modern home in Dallas. They added them. All the better to showcase a rotating curation of contemporary artworks from their personal collection of over 2,000 pieces.

The Runyons' passion is also their profession. They co-helm Runyon Fine Arts, an advisory service helping clients begin or build their own collections. Below, a conversation with Lisa during the recent Forty Five Ten campaign shoot, which took place onsite in their home.

John credits his father, who was a collector, with instilling his early love of contemporary art. What about you, Lisa?

I visited museums throughout my childhood, mostly local, but in my late 20s I started traveling with John. We made frequent trips to New York, LA, the Venice Biennale, and various art fairs. Marfa was probably my most impactful art experience—witnessing Donald Judd's work, and his commitment to his posse of artist friends and the importance of permanence.

What was the first piece the two of you bought as a couple?

Our first major purchase was a Donald Judd "Bullnose" progression from the '70s.



Calvin Marcus, "Me with my Tongue" (2016)

Is there a philosophy behind the art you've collected over the years?

We have responded to opportunities—movements, genres, regions—where quality works were still available at prices that met our budget. In the '90s we were buying minimalists like Donald Judd, Fred Sandback, and Dan Flavin. Also in the '90s we were acquiring work by California artists from the '60s & '70s, like Ed Ruscha, John McCracken, and Craig Kauffman.

When did you first realize that advising other collectors was a career option?

John owned and operated a gallery in the '90s; I had a career in special events. At the millennium, art fairs started proliferating internationally and art as an asset class was becoming widely accepted. We started Runyon Arts in 2000 as a private advisory firm focused on assisting collectors navigate the art world and manage their collections.

A lot of your work has focused on art for public spaces. Can you talk a bit about the collection at Forty Five Ten?

The boundary between art and fashion is blurry these days. With Forty Five Ten's amazing architecture, finishes, and designers, the art collection was not an afterthought but a priority. Tim Headington has acquired meaningful museum-quality works and shares them with the public at Forty Five Ten, The Joule, and The Spa at The Joule. One of the most significant acquisitions for the store is a suite of Catherine Opie photographs of Elizabeth Taylor's personal items and spaces. The project was initiated shortly before Ms. Taylor passed and completed shortly after. The photos offer an intimate portrait without a single image of the actress herself. I encourage everyone to search the store for all 50.

How is collecting for yourself different than curating for clients?

Art collecting is personal and specific to every individual's taste and experience. Working with clients is always collaborative, and we really try to tailor the program to the individual. Often, there's a learning curve, especially for more conceptual works. But the toughest works can also be the most rewarding. Obviously, collecting for ourselves, the decision process is streamlined because there are just the two of us. It is not unusual for John to return home from an art fair with a few new items to add to the collection. He knows he doesn't need permission.

How do the two of you collaborate?

Since 2000, John and I have worked side by side in the business. I manage the office and advise corporate clients. We have separate clients, but of course combine our experience, resources, and knowledge to serve our collectors.



Donald Moffett, "Lot #120309" (2010)

Have you ever argued about a piece of art or an artist?

I never question John's eye or his acquisitions— although in the past he has been in trouble for selling something I wanted to keep! We don't sell much of our personal collection anymore.



Sheila Hicks, "Seeing and Thinking Out Loud No. 3" (2018)

encourages challenging fashion.

Art and fashion are often characterized as being only for the rich. Is that a fair assessment?

No, definitely not. You see some of the best fashion at art fairs, and it's typically not on the wealthiest patron but a street-savvy blogger. Art and fashion can be collected on all levels and at all price points.

Do you foresee a time when your own collection will be "done"?

As long as we are breathing we will be participating on some level. It is a lifestyle.

Can you recommend a couple of favorite places to see art in Dallas?

The Rachofsky's Warehouse always has thoughtfully curated shows. The Nasher Sculpture Center and Dallas Museum of Art offer world class collections and exhibitions. And do visit The Joule's collection across the street from Forty Five Ten for more art viewing, dining, and shopping.

Place you feel most inspired?

Hiking in Colorado with my husband, and playing canasta with my girlfriends

Pop quiz. Good art is often...

Challenging on the front end

The relationship between art and fashion is..

Symbiotic

Have you ever fallen out of love with a piece?

It's a fact of life; collections, tastes, markets change over time. So, sure, we have parted ways with an artwork for one reason or another, but it is usually to buy another artwork that better represents the direction of our collection.

What advice can you offer someone who might be just beginning to collect, or who has a limited budget?

Read, listen, and learn. Join a museum that aligns with your taste in art and social life. It's a great learning opportunity. Take your time and make relationships with seasoned collectors. They can help you avoid the landmines and introduce you to artists and galleries that might be a good fit. Of course, we're biased to the advisor model because the collector can leverage the advisor's knowledge, experience and relationships.

What about people who view art chiefly as a financial investment?

If you are acquiring work by artists who executed in a conceptually interesting way and offered something fresh and new in this concept, then the financial investment component will take care of itself. It always helps if you discover the artist before the rest of the world—timing is a big part of the game. Financial investment should not be the number one priority.

Fashion and art both communicate very powerfully without many words. How has your work influenced the way you dress?

I agree, both art and fashion communicate very powerfully, especially today with trends in art and fashion changing rapidly, but both keeping an eye on the past. Anything goes in the art world when it comes to dress, which is quite liberating. The art world is generally very accepting and

Place every art lover should visit?

Marfa

Museum you'd most like to live in?

The Menil Collection in Houston

Period you find most interesting?

The present

If you could own any work of art?

A Willem de Kooning from the '80s

And where you would put it?

In my bedroom

Fall gallery show or exhibition you're most excited to see?

I am super excited to see "Balenciaga in Black" at the Kimbell in October.

Three current artists you're following closely?

Calvin Marcus, Rashid Johnson, Mary Corse

Favorite quote about art?

I'll quote John: "Collecting is a journey, not a race." So many want to jump into collecting and quickly fill spaces. We think it's best to enjoy the learning curve and process.

The Details: See some of the works the Runyon's have acquired for The Joule's art collection at 1530 Main Street.

READ ON...

[Forty Five Ten's new campaign: Like a Woman](#)

[Surprising, Sublime, Surreal. Our guide to The Joule art collection](#)

1530 MAIN STREET, DALLAS TEXAS 75201 | EDITOR@1530MAIN.COM

