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# ART + AUCTION

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# POWER 2010



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## WHO CONTROLS THE ART WORLD?

What constitutes power in the art world? Is it wealth, institutional influence, or mastery in deal making? Perhaps it's something less tangible, like the uncanny ability to sense the next big thing before anyone else. The art world power elite includes the Qatari sheikh who spends freely to build collections of Islamic art treasures, among many other items, as well as the New York museum director who six years ago raised \$850 million for one expansion and is now preparing to raise more millions for another. Then there's the gallery owner who has franchises in 10 cities worldwide and shows no signs of stopping at that. Such global players influence the lives and careers of people around them through their activities.

**E**ach December the editors of *Art+ Auction* reflect on the events of the year and select the men and women who have had the greatest impact on the art world.

Most on the list have done something during the past 12 months that made us take notice. But there are also perennial candidates, who are so integral to the day-to-day machinery of the art world that it's hard to imagine it functioning without them. They are the tastemakers who make or break reputations and markets.

Working out who controls the art world is not easy, because most powerful people in this business try hard not to appear too powerful. Some shun the spotlight altogether. Museum and other nonprofit professionals never want to talk openly about power, let alone acknowledge its uses; supporting artists, they say, is their primary mission. Such protests betray a certain disingenuousness, of course, because their choices have consequences for artists' markets.

Much art world power continues to be concentrated in the U.S., where the market is still strongest in spite of the recession. But shifts are apparent, and nobody really knows what form power will take over the next few years. Europeans have been buying more, mostly in London, while new players have emerged in Brazil, India, and the Middle East. China, including Hong Kong, is also poised to play a much greater role in the market, mirroring its clout in the general global economy. The country now has more than 1,000 billionaires, so the power stakes could be high.

Some people argue that the art world these days is simply too large and heterogeneous to be dominated by any one individual, group, or country. That seems right to us. Power is increasingly dispersed—many who participate in the art world have some degree of control over some aspect of it. The diversity of fields covered in the following pages and the widely varying paths the people on the list have taken to reach their pinnacle reflects this new decentralized reality.

THE EDITORS

## POWER PATRONS

### ELIBROAD

Los Angeles's biggest benefactor recently commissioned Diller Scofidio + Renfro to build a downtown home for his 2,000-plus postwar and contemporary artworks and kicked in an additional \$2 million for the University of Michigan museum that will bear his name, bringing his total outlay on the project to \$28 million.

### PATRICIA PHELPS DE CISNEROS

The Venezuelan-born patron spreads her largesse among educational and cultural institutions to raise the profile of Latin American art. This year her foundation endowed a chair at Hunter College and funded projects at Bard College; the New Museum; the Hirshhorn; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and the Jack S. Blanton Museum, in Austin. The first Seminario Cisneros on Latin American contemporary art and culture will convene in Caracas in January 2011.

### DIMITRIS DASKALOPOULOS

A Guggenheim Foundation trustee and member of both the Tate International Council and the New Museum's Leadership Council, the Greek financier and noted collector recently endowed a new curatorial post in non-Western art at the Tate Modern.

### ROBERT J. FISHER

The new president of SFMOMA's board is overseeing a major expansion of the museum that will contain the formidable collection of modern and contemporary works that his late father, Gap founder Donald Fisher, bequeathed to its stewardship last year.

### SOICHIRO FUKUTAKE

As much a fan of architecture as of art, the reclusive billionaire chairman of the Benesse Corporation has since 1988 been the driving force behind the museums that dot Japan's Naoshima Island and its neighbors. The latest—designed by Tadao Ando and opened this past summer—is dedicated to the Korean Minimalist Lee Ufan.

### AGNES GUND

This tireless doyenne of New York arts philanthropy—president emerita of MOMA, chair of the board of PSI, and benefactor of El Museo del Barrio—extends her munificence



ELIBROAD



PATRICIA PHELPS DE CISNEROS



LAKSHMI MITTAL

as well to regional institutions like the SITE Santa Fe International Biennial and her hometown Cleveland Art Museum, of which she is a trustee.

### THE LEE FAMILY

Having brought their Leeum museum to fruition in Seoul in 2004, the Samsung dynasts have set their sights on international venues, including New York's Guggenheim, where they have underwritten a senior curatorship in Asian art and are rumored to have committed \$1 million annually to the museum for the next five years.

### LAKSHMI MITTAL

Proving the power of the corporate purse—and the lure of a legacy Olympic monument comparable to the stadium designed by Ai Weiwei for Beijing in 2008—the CEO of steel giant ArcelorMittal has pledged €16 million (\$25.8 million) of his company's money for the Anish Kapoor–designed Orbit tower in London, site of the 2012 Olympic Games.



DIMITRIS DASKALOPOULOS



STEWART &amp; LYNDA RESNICK

### VICTOR PINCHUK

Building on his PinchukArtCentre's biennial awards for young Ukrainian artists, the steel-pipe billionaire and L.A. MOCA trustee this year announced the \$100,000 Future Generation Art Prize for international artists under 35.

### MAYA & RAMZY RASAMNY

Among the sponsors of the current Walid Raad exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery, this well-heeled London couple (Ramzy is CEO of Plurimi Capital) is helping to pilot purchases of Middle Eastern art at the British Museum and Tate Modern, where Maya is co-chair of the Middle East North Africa Acquisitions Committee. She has also served as a judge of the Dubai-based Abraaj Capital Art Prize and on the committee for Art Dubai.

### LYNDA & STEWART RESNICK

A \$45 million gift from these longtime LACMA patrons (of Fiji Water and POM Wonderful fame) funded the museum's new exhibition pavilion,

designed by Renzo Piano, which opened in October—and have promised to help fill it with a significant portion of their art holdings.

### SHEIKH SAUD BIN MOHAMMED BIN ALI AL-THANI

The chastened megacollector returned to the radar screen after his 2005 arrest (and later pardon) in Qatar for misuse of public funds to serve as honorary president of the ninth edition of the tribal-art fair Parcours des Mondes in September.

### CARLOS SLIM HELU

The Mexican telecom tycoon is set to inaugurate a gleaming new branch of his Museo Soumaya, whose holdings—64,000 works and counting—have outgrown the original San Angel digs in Mexico City. The new structure, which will house the largest collection of Rodins outside France, was designed by Fernando Romero (Slim's son-in-law) and cost an estimated \$750 million. Entrance, however, is free.



VICTOR PINCHUK

POWER  
CURATORS

IWONA BLAZWICK

**KLAUS BIESENBACH**

The Museum of Modern Art's chief curator at large and director of its PS1 affiliate organized a double-barreled blast of shows this year. The enormously successful "Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present," MOMA's first retrospective devoted to a performance artist, was followed by the well received third edition of "Greater New York" at PS1.

**IWONA BLAZWICK**

The director of Whitechapel Gallery, in London, has made good use of its new 41,000 square feet of space, mounting major exhibitions by Rachel Harrison, Alice Neel, and Walid Raad and persuading Greek collector Dimitris Daskalopoulos to loan his Duchamp *Fountain*. Blazwick chairs the gallery's MaxMara Art Prize for Women and sits on the jury for the Jarman Award for experimental filmmaking.

**BICE CURIGER**

From her perch in Switzerland, Curiger casts a long shadow in the international art world as curator of Kunsthau Zurich, as well as editor in chief and editorial director, respectively, of the art magazines *Parkett* and *Tate Etc.* Her appointment as curator of the 2011 Venice Biennale, which she has titled "ILLUMInations," adds to her reach.

**GAO SHIMING**

When the director of the Centre for Visual Culture Research at the prestigious China Art Academy, in Hangzhou, was tapped to co-curate (with Fan Di'an, Li Lei, and Hua Yi) the eighth edition of the Shanghai Biennale, he devoted one of the exhibition's five sections to Chinese artists and one to a Sino-Indian summit, reflecting the eastward shift in art world power.

**MASSIMILIANO GIONI**

Given his many roles, one could be forgiven for thinking that "Gioni" is a pseudonym for several people. This year the 36-year-old director of the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, in Milan, was promoted by New York's New Museum from director of special exhibitions to associate director and director of exhibitions, while also adding director of the eighth Gwangju Biennale, "10,000 Lives," to his list of titles.

**JENS HOFFMANN & ADRIANO PEDROSA**

The co-curators of the 12th Istanbul International Biennial, which opens September 2011, have a head start on their partnership: Pedrosa, a São Paulo-based critic and curator, worked with Hoffmann, the director of the

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, in San Francisco, on the Trienal Poli/Gráfica de San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 2009, and is on the editorial board of *The Exhibitionist: A Journal on Exhibition Making*, which Hoffmann launched this past January.

**JESSICA MORGAN**

A guiding hand behind the current John Baldessari show at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, as well as the forthcoming Gabriel Orozco retrospective at her home institution, Tate Modern, Morgan was recently named the latter's first Daskalopoulos Curator of International Art, a three-year posting that will allow her to beef up the museum's contemporary non-Western holdings. Come 2012 she will have the run of the Tate's Turbine Hall as curator of the Unilever Series of commissions.

**LARS NITTVE**

With a résumé that includes the directorships of both the Moderna Museet, in Sweden, and Tate Modern, Nittve may have landed his biggest gig yet as the director of M+, a new modern- and contemporary-art museum that will anchor a major Chinese government effort to establish a West Kowloon cultural district when it opens in 2015 in Hong Kong.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST**

In 2010 the international art scene's ubiquitous tastemaker organized shows by Wolfgang Tillmans, Christian Boltanski, Klara Liden, and Philippe Parreno at London's Serpentine Gallery, where he is co-director of exhibitions and director of international projects. The second volume of *Interviews*, anthologizing his ongoing series of conversations with artists, scientists, and philosophers, was also published this year.

**MARI CARMEN RAMÍREZ**

From Gego to Hélio Oiticica to Lygia Clark, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, has led in institutional reappraisals of numerous Latin American artists, thanks to Ramírez, who established the museum's Latin American art department in 2001 and is today its Wortham curator and director of its research arm, the International Center for the Arts of the Americas. She will mark the department's 10th anniversary next year with a retrospective of Op Artist Carlos Cruz-Diez, the installation of a monumental work by Jesús Rafael Soto, and the launch of a major online archive devoted to 20th-century Latin American and Latino art.



JESSICA MORGAN



BICE CURIGER



LARS NITTVE