



EDGE OF AN ERA

Top Collectors
Kent and Vicki Logan
embark on a quest
to identify those
artists working on
the cusp of the
contemporary
art curve.

BY MARGIE GOLDSMITH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HINERFELD

Andy Warhol's "Hammer and Sickle," 1977, silkscreen ink and acrylic on primed linen, greets visitors on the first floor, while "Self Portrait (Four Images)," 1986, synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen ink on canvas (above the fireplace) and one of the Logans' dogs, Luna, welcome guests to the living room.









Art collecting is not an avocation; it's a disease," says Kent Logan, who along with his wife, Vicki, has amassed one of the finest

contemporary art collections in the United States. "You begin with one painting, and then you cross several thresholds. There's a milestone when you pay \$10,000 for a painting and then another milestone when you pay over \$50,000. There's a major milestone when you've filled all the walls in your house and you buy a piece of art that you're going to put in storage and not even see. As each of those milestones are met, you're farther down the slippery slope, where it becomes all-consuming."

And the Logans know very well how a growing collection can infiltrate a life. Their 15,000-square-foot home and private gallery, situated among the ski-trailed mountains of Vail, Colorado, is the current home of one of the nation's largest collections of contemporary art. They built a diagonal front door to accommodate monumental—and often outrageous—works by artists such as Damien Hirst (a bull's skull

preserved in a vitrine) and Yasumasa Morimura (a wild three-part deconstruction of the "Mona Lisa" that shocked purists because no one expected to see a pregnant sitter.) Such works suit the taste of the Logans, who have amassed hundreds of pieces based on the idea that art should reflect contemporary social or cultural events and also be visually arresting.

At a moment when no clear movement or style dominates the art scene, the Logans have taken up the cudgels of edgy social commentary and built a gallery with an unparalleled selection of provocative artworks that they believe will stand as a watershed of our times.

With their values shaped by the social upheavals of growing up in the 1960s, the Logans amassed their disparate collection in less than 15 years, starting with blue-chip names from that period: about 30 Andy Warhols (including a self-portrait, skulls, electric chair,



Facing: Yin Zhaoyang, "Untitled" (left), 2005, oil on canvas; Gerhard Richter, "Reisebüro (Tourist Office)" (far wall), 1966, oil on canvas. Jeff Koons, "Hennessy: The Civilized Way to Lay Down the Law" (above), 1986, oil inks on canvas.



Yoshitomo Nara, "Heads" (above bed), 1998, fabric glued over painted fiberglass. Facing: Kent Logan and Takahasi Murakami's "Backbeard (Black)" (above), 2003, acrylic on canvas on woodboard. George Condo, "Sculpture of Kent & Vicki Logan" (below, left), 2005, hand-painted gold bronze. Glenn Brown, "Earth" (center), 2004, oil on panel.

"The art is central to our lives and one of our challenges is to interact with it so it's not just a rectangle on the wall that you walk by every day. As collectors, our challenge is to continue hanging things, and part of hanging them is whether they wear well with your mind." —Vicki Logan

"Double Jackie," eight "Brillo" boxes and "Campbell's Soup" cans, a large hammer-and-sickle painting, three male and female torso paintings) an early Gerhard Richter ("Tourist Office") and several pieces by both Ed Ruscha ("Slug," "Molten Polyester," "Scratches on the Film" and "Sin with Olives") and Anselm Kiefer ("Seraphim" and "Operation Sea Lion" from 1975). Their earliest acquisitions were by figurative artists from the Bay Area, like Richard Diebenkorn and Wayne Thiebaud, followed by a host of younger California artists. In the mid-1990s, Kent, a securities executive often on business in London, honed in on the brash Young British Artists. And, long before it was fashionable, the couple began to collect contemporary Japanese art.

"We've always looked for cultures that were undergoing dramatic change, because that is fertile ground for visual artists to work," Kent explains. This philosophy led the Logans to Tatsuo Miyajima, the gender-bending Yasumasa Morimura and more recent Japanese artists like Yoshitomo Nara, with his seemingly innocuous Pop cartoon figures, and Takashi Murakami, the anime specialist whom curators and collectors call the Andy Warhol of Japan. Next was Chinese contemporary art, of which they now have one of the largest collections in the world. "Ten years ago," Kent says, "no one cared about these artists, but they remember we were there when they couldn't even afford to boil tea." Until very recently, most Chinese contemporary artists had not established formal dealer relationships as is common in the West. The Logans were introduced personally to these artists, bought from them directly and continue to do so today.

That was after the Logans moved from Greenwich, Connecticut, to San Francisco, where Kent became a senior partner with Montgomery Securities. One Saturday in 1993, a business associate invited the couple to join a gallery walking tour. Upon seeing "The Butler's in Love," an enigmatic painting by the California realist Mark Stock, they were hooked, and

bought it for \$5,000. Today it hangs in their dressing room. "The irony is all those years we'd spent in New York we never collected art," says Kent.

Since they did not have a formal art education, the Logans relied on Martin Mueller of Modernism Gallery, in San Francisco, from whom they bought the Stock, as their advisor. He outlined in chronological order the important movements in modern and contemporary art. As they learned, they started to challenge classifications. For example, they thought using the term "figurative" was "too simplistic." Kent explains, "While the figure was used, it wasn't about the figure, which typically in artwork is used in a conceptual sense. So we coined the phrase 'conceptual realism.'"

The Logans since have collected independently, buying from artists they have met. "If artists see you spend the time to go their studios, look at their work and engage them in dialogue," says Kent, "then they're going to feel better about saying to a dealer, 'This should go to so-and-so's collection.' I have the opportunity to create a collection that really is a snapshot of a society through time."

Many of the Logans' acquisitions lean toward art that is provocative and stimulates reaction and contemplation. "We've never been afraid of edginess," says Kent. "Damien Hirst is about death, therefore life, and so is Katharina Fritsch. If you don't want to look at death as part of life, then it does come out dark, but let's face it: Contemporary art is art on the edge and always has been."

"When the Impressionists painted, somebody said that pregnant women should not look at these works because they might cause them to miscarry," Vicki says. "Everything was contemporary once, everything was edgy once."

The Logans have always been ahead of the market. In 2000 in Berlin, they bought a work by Franz Ackermann, known as the art world's urban nomad, and one by the stylish and cool Thomas Scheibitz when no one knew their work. They bought the sometimes cryptic work





Lower stairway: (clockwise from top left): Three works by Cindy Sherman, "Untitled Film Still #55A," 1980, gelatin silver print; "Untitled," 1996, Cibachrome; "Untitled Film Still #40A," 1979, gelatin silver print. Facing: Marc Gunn, "Yellow Cut Nervous Breakdown" (central foreground), 1998, stainless steel, concrete and polyurethane.



“We’ve never been afraid of edginess. Damien Hirst is about death, therefore life, and so is Katarina Fritsch. If you don’t want to look at death as part of life, then it does come out dark, but let’s face it: Contemporary art is art on the edge and always has been.” —Kent Logan



In the gallery: Jeff Wall, “The Arrest” (left), 1989, transparency in lightbox. Eberhard Havekost, “Personal Engineering 1-9” (center), 2004, oil on nine canvases. Elmgreen and Dragset, “Don’t leave me this way” (foreground, right), 2003, wood and paint. Facing: Tom Otterness, “Man with Pencil and Book” (on table), 1992, bronze with gold and black patina. Richard Patterson, “Red Studio” (right), 1996, oil on canvas.

of the contemporary German painter Neo Rauch, who recently had a solo exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. “We bought Rauch when one cost \$20,000. Now it’s worth more than \$500,000,” says Kent. There were, of course, the ones that got away, like a 12-foot-square Hirst spot painting that was available for \$40,000, which Kent turned down because he already owned a Hirst of that size. Today that same painting would cost more than \$1 million. Earlier in their collecting career, the Logans saw a Warhol portrait of Marilyn Monroe for \$1 million. “I balked and didn’t buy it,” says Kent. “Today it would probably go for \$15 million to \$20 million. I wish we could have bought 10 more Warhols. The prices in the mid to late ’90s were a fraction of what they are today.”

After Kent retired in the late ’90s, the Logans relocated from San Francisco to Vail, Colorado, where they had married atop a mountain in 1985, and built the contemporary house to showcase some of their art. “We built an 11-foot-diagonal front door to make sure I could

get a Damien Hirst spot painting through,” says Vicki. They also bought a neighboring lot to build a 7,500-square foot private gallery with 124-foot ceilings. Presently there are more than 100 artworks in the house and 150 in the gallery.

“The art is central to our lives,” says Vicki, “and one of our challenges is to interact with it so it’s not just a rectangle on the wall that you walk by every day. We change what’s in the gallery, but we don’t change what’s in the house very often. As collectors, our challenge is to continue hanging things, and part of hanging them is whether they wear well with your mind.”

Whether the many unconventional works wear well with the public remains to be seen. “In 100 years, what will be remembered about this time is the art, literature and music,” says Kent. “Successful businessmen and athletes will largely have been forgotten. It really is culture that defines a society.”

“We were just in Pittsburgh and everybody remembers Carnegie, but more for Carnegie





Sui Jianguo, "Discobolus" (above), 2005, bronze.
Facing (left to right): Mona Hatoum, "Untitled (Wheelchair II)," 1999, stainless steel and rubber.
Richard Patterson, "Motocrosser III," 1995, oil and acrylic on canvas. Marc Quinn, "Jamie Gillespie," 1999, marble with plinth.

Hall than the fact that he was a steel magnate," Vicki adds.

The Logans believe that contemporary art should be seen when it is still current. "You're more remembered for what you gave back than what you took away," says Kent, who in 1997 gave a fractional gift of 350 pieces to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In 2001, the Logans donated a similarly structured gift of more than 200 works to the Denver Art Museum, and this year they donated the remaining 300 artworks in their collection to DAM (which DAM will receive upon their deaths) as well as a cash legacy of \$15 million, a \$10 million endowment and their Vail home and private gallery. Sources say that the donation is worth about \$60 million.

The Logans are building a house in Scottsdale, Arizona, to be completed in the fall of 2008, that will house approximately 100 pieces from their collection. There won't be a separate gallery building as in Vail but there will be four gallery spaces in the house.

Recently, Kent and Vicki were at a Manhattan gallery opening where they snapped up a painting by a Cuban-born artist, Enrique Martinez Celaya. "What do you want to buy next?" someone asked them.

"I don't want to buy anything," said Kent.

"But," responded Vicki with a smile, "that doesn't mean we won't." 



