

INDULGE

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ART BASEL ISSUE

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Sharing the Wealth

COLLECTOR AND REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER
MARTY MARGULIES IS LED BY PASSION FOR ART –
AND COMPASSION FOR OTHERS.

BY HANNAH SAMPSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PATRICK FARRELL

The developer and art collector Martin Z. Margulies took a trip to the Royal Academy in London last year to view an exhibition of large-scale works by German artist Anselm Kiefer. That led to a jaunt to the influential artist's studio outside Paris.

And *that*, nearly a year later, led to major renovations at one of the buildings that houses the Margulies Collection at the Warehouse in Wynwood. They were done to accommodate a major installation from the London show and other works by Kiefer for an exhibition this fall and winter.

Multi-ton stones comprising a Michael Heizer sculpture have been shifted outside to the front of the Warehouse to make way for the monumental, 10,000-square-foot Kiefer exhibition of sculptures, installations and paintings from 1986 to 2014. Visitors will be in for a raw and powerful experience as Kiefer unflinchingly confronts modern Germany's history through painting and sculpture incorporating charcoal, ash, straw, dried branches, sackcloth and photographs. The works reflect key Kiefer motifs, including books, Kabbalah and poetry by Paul Celan.

The Kiefers and Heizer may seem a universe apart from paintings by Mark Rothko and Yves Klein, sculpture by George Siegel and John Chamberlain, photographs by Thomas Ruff, Ed Ruscha and Justine Kurland. Yet all have caught Margulies' finely tuned eye and his collecting zeal.

Said Margulies: "There's no plan with me. It just kind of happens."



Martin Z. Margulies at the Margulies Collection
at the Warehouse in Wynwood, with the sculpture,
Depression Bread Line, 1991, by George Segal.



JEANIE AMBROSIO / COLLECTION MARTIN Z. MARGULIES

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At the Margulies Warehouse, artist Anselm Kiefer installs *Die Erzeitalter (Ages of the World)*, 2014, shown top left. *Geheimnis der Farne (Mystery of Ferns)*, 2007, above, includes 48 images and two concrete sculptures.



Although today Margulies is regarded as being among the world's top collectors, his entry into the art world also just kind of happened.

"A woman at the time I was going with, she said, 'You should get involved in art instead of sports and chasing women,'" said the Key Biscayne resident, who does not give his age. He went to an auction and was impressed: "These are pretty smart people buying these princely objects for \$7,000, \$8,000, and they must know what they're doing."

Over the years, Margulies figured it out for himself, amassing a collection renowned for its paintings, sculpture, photography and, more recently, video. For decades, he has landed on ARTnews magazine's annual list of the world's 200 top collectors, though he said that accolade was a byproduct of what he really sought. "I don't aspire to it," he said. "I know who I am as a collector, so the ratings don't matter to me."

What matters, he said, is learning about the works. "That's very important to me; I do a lot of reading and studying of why a work is important in helping me see the work better. It became a very strong identity of my life and also a passion of collecting and learning. And eventually it led to educating people, which is what we do." In "we" he includes Katherine Hinds, his longtime curator and a crucial partner in the development of his collection.

Fran Allegra, president of the urban public charter boarding school called SEED School of Miami, has seen that commitment to education firsthand. After Margulies visited the school for at-risk kids, he suggested that some students take a field trip to the Warehouse.

Allegra brought six sixth-graders last year for what she described as "such an exciting, informative, enthusiastic, personal tour" by Margulies. "For many of them, of course, it was their first time in a private art gallery; for some of them, it might have been their first time in any kind of space that was museum quality," Allegra said. "They reacted as if they had been doing it all their lives. He made everybody feel very comfortable. He made everybody feel that art was very approachable. He made it feel like there were no wrong answers."

Judd Tully, a journalist who covers the art market and is editor-at-large at Art+Auction magazine, said he has been bumping into Margulies at auctions and fairs for at least 20 years as well as attending open houses at Margulies' Key Biscayne home.

While the 20th and 21st century works exhibited in the Margulies' Wynwood space include large-scale installations, sculpture, photography and video, the art in Margulies' apartment "definitely had a more classical, blue-chip edge to it," Tully said. "I would say it's quite different from what



Margulies with his long-time curator, Katherine Hinds, in an installation by Franz West, right. Above, Kiefer's *Sprache der Vogel* (*Language of the Birds*), 1989, and *Töchter Liliths* (*Lilith's Daughter*), 1986, bottom.

you see at the Warehouse. It's still his interest, but it's kind of another offshoot of that. But it's obviously chosen by someone who really knows the territory and does research."

Margulies seeks out less-traveled paths in his collecting rather than zeroing in on a set of young painters whose prices have soared at auction. "It's not just a pleasure, but I think it's an intellectual pursuit for him," Tully said. "With that other side being he's quite the philanthropist, very low-key, easygoing."

Not to mention funny, says Bonnie Clearwater, chief curator and executive director of the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, part of Nova Southeastern University. "People might not always get it, but he's got a great sense of humor," she said. "He has no trouble speaking his mind, and I think that's good." Indeed, he has been outspoken in his opposition to public funding for Marlins Park and the Pérez Art Museum Miami; government money should go to people who need social services, Margulies believes.

Clearwater has known him since 1985, when she was director of art programs for the Lannan Foundation. By then, Grove Isle, the Margulies-developed condominium and resort in Coconut Grove was finished, and its sculpture garden — including works by Noguchi, Dubuffet, de Kooning and Borofsky — was considered a "must-see" in Miami. (Margulies has since sold his interests on the island and the sculptures have been gifted to a variety of Florida educational institutions.)

Margulies was "already clearly collecting at a very high level and big way at that time," said Clearwater — and he has not stopped traveling, reading and educating himself about the art market. He has established relationships, she said, with specific artists, including George Segal and Frank Stella, and "has stayed loyal to them as opinion in the art world shifts . . . He stayed the course, and of course the art world caught up to him."

Of late, she said, Margulies has been focusing on the best way to refine his core personal collection of early modernist and mid-century American and European artists. "It truly is one of the finest collections of that period of work that I've ever seen," said Clearwater, former executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami. "And thoughtful — he's very thoughtful in what he's selecting, and whatever he's adding at this stage in his life is really elevating the entire level of the collection."

Clearwater organized a collection of another of Margulies' interests, photography, at the NSU Art Museum that ran from late 2014 through





Bottom, Michael Heizer's massive earth sculpture, *Elevated, Surface, Depressed*, 1981, was moved to the front of the Warehouse to make way for the Kiefer show. In 2012, Margulies showcased Ernesto Neto's *O Bicho!*, originally shown at the Venice Biennale.

this spring. Dorothea Lange's Depression-era photos and images of child laborers by Lewis Hine were among those included. "What I found was there's so many things he could have been collecting, but what clearly was interesting about that process of going through that particular collection was how his socially progressive perspective about America, about the world, shaped the collection," she said. Press material about the show mentions Margulies' background growing up in New York City in the 1940s and working at his parents' grocery store in Harlem.

That background is crucial to Margulies, said Constance Collins, a friend for more than a decade who runs the nonprofit Lotus House in Overtown. "I think he's understood firsthand, seeing it himself as a child, the inequities that are generated by poverty and why it is so important to provide resources and education and opportunities to those with the least," Collins said. "He has never lost touch with his roots."

The two met when Collins was beginning to develop Lotus House, a shelter for women and children. Margulies helped with the initial renovation of the building and then, after two hurricanes sent rain pouring into the nearly finished building in the fall of 2005, made sure Collins had the extra help she needed to open by the following spring.

Admission fees at the Warehouse go to the shelter, as do proceeds from an annual fundraiser during Art Basel Miami Beach, private events at the collection and occasional benefits at Margulies' home. He pledged in 2012 to bequeath a \$20 million donation to Lotus House and, Collins said, visits about once a week if he isn't traveling.

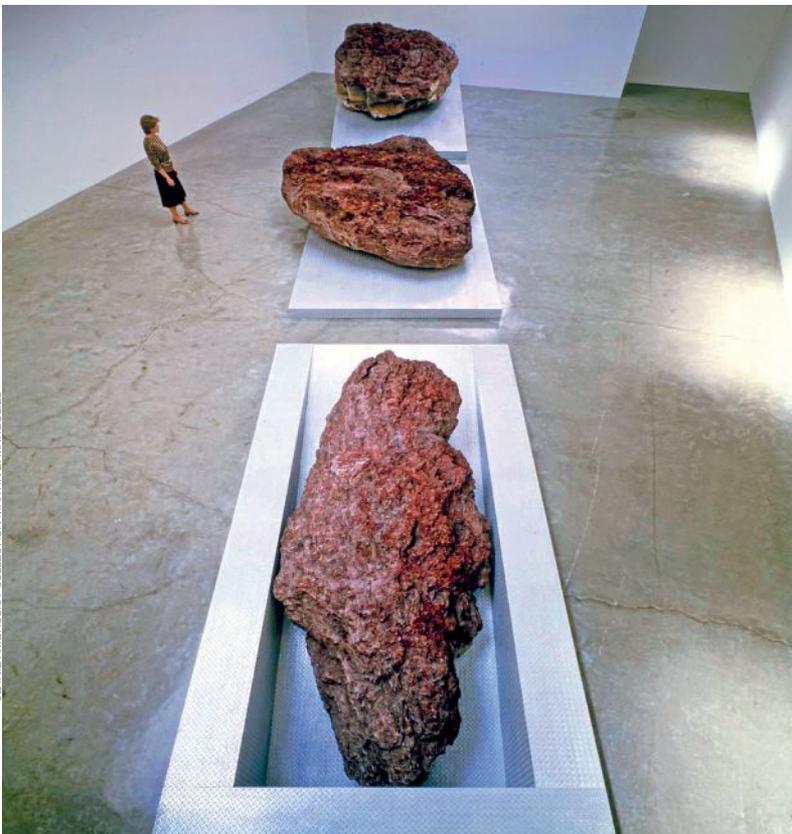
Collins and Margulies were married from 2008 to 2012 and remain close and committed to the cause of the nonprofit. "As the years have gone by, he has really been my right hand in everything that we've undertaken," Collins said. They are working together now on the next chapter of Lotus House.

"We are in the planning stages of creating facilities for Lotus House that are worthy of generations to come and that will provide enriched services to our Overtown neighborhood," Collins said.

Margulies, who refers to Collins as his best friend, called the plan "a very worthwhile and humane project."

"I've done a lot of projects in this town, and I don't need any more," he said. □

PATRICK FARRELL



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