

Riki Altman-Yee

## Spotlight on Martin Z. Margulies

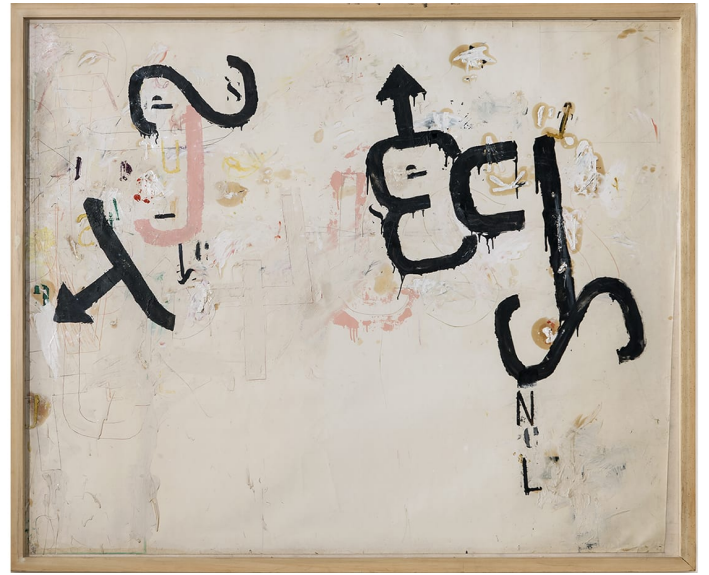
The renowned collector and founder of The Margulies Collection at the Warehouse in Miami reflects on past and present

Ask Martin Z. Margulies how big his collection of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and new media is and one might get this response: 'I don't know. We have it all organized and documented somewhere.' Ask him to cite when he bought a particular piece and he may say, 'Overall, and over time, what registers with me the most is not a singular acquisition at a particular fair many years ago but rather the enjoyable, wonderful and challenging experience of collecting art as a way of life.'



Martin Margulies. Photo by Jon Lowe.

However, there is a particular Art Basel Miami Beach purchase forever imprinted in his mind: 'One year, Jeffrey Deitch brought a two-ton truck by Barry McGee,' he recalls. 'It was a video installation with wall of TV sets inside the truck and graffiti everywhere. The truck was positioned on its side with all this automotive oil pouring out of the engine. I knew Jeffrey didn't want to ship the truck back to New York or California at the close of the fair, so we went for it.' And, he adds, 'I have been able to find very important works by European artists, such as a very rare 1960 drawing by Jannis Kounellis and a 1970 frost-and-neon work by Pier Paolo Calzolari, both of which I found at Galleria Christian Stein.'



Left: Barry McGee, *Untitled* (truck installation with TVs), 2004. Right: Jannis Kounellis, *Untitled*, 1960. Both images: Collection Martin Z. Margulies

Fortunately, Margulies has the perfect spot for the aforementioned – and so much more. Back in 1999, he and longtime curator Katherine Hinds created The Margulies Collection at the Warehouse, a 55,000-square-foot space in Wynwood, which the Martin Z. Margulies Foundation operates and funds. Offering seasonal and special exhibitions from his collection, along with educational programs, The Warehouse also provides an international loan program. This year, visitors will experience shows titled ‘The Italians’, pieces by 15 Italian artists who were influenced by Arte Povera artists; ‘New European and American Painters and Sculptors’, works by artists new to The Margulies Collection; and ‘The Bitter Years’, featuring Great Depression-era photography by Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and others. In an effort to walk the walk, Margulies also invited his adult daughter Elizabeth to present ‘Selected Works from the Collection of Elizabeth Margulies’, a mix from emerging and midcareer artists. ‘Elizabeth is on the ground, hitting the pavement, going to galleries and fairs, living and working in New York and Miami, and has become very knowledgeable about the gallery scene in the United States and Europe,’ her father says. ‘She has an excellent eye and is very well informed. We hope to inspire young collectors who are interested in starting their own collections but are hesitating to take that first step.’



Left: Dorothea Lange, *From the Migrant Mother Sequence, Image #3*, Nipomo, CA. *Migrant Agricultural Worker’s Family. Seven Hungry Children. Mother Aged Thirty-Two. Father is Native Californian.* Nipomo, CA, 1936. Middle: Walker Evans, *Detail of Roadside Advertisement for The Back Porch Restaurant*, Destin, Florida. August 6, 1974, 1974. Right: Arthur Rothstein, *Farmer Who will be Resettled*, Wolf Creek Farms, Georgia, 1935. All images: Collection Martin Z. Margulies.

Perhaps Elizabeth is motivated by the way her father has honed his craft, in a manner that is holistic, scholarly and based in altruism. ‘We have to do this,’ Margulies says, ‘to make great art available to the public so that people can get exposure to a wonderful activity that will enlighten and enrich their lives and the lives of their family. People might not even be aware of how pleasurable it is to be engaged with and informed about contemporary art. When you experience the great artists of our times, you get something out of it, even if it is just one visit. And I think that is important.’



This article was originally commissioned for the *Art Basel Miami Beach* magazine 2022.

Captions for full-bleed images: 1. Gian Marco Montesano, *Eppure Tra Loro Coperta di Vento, C'è una Bambina che non Può Correre*, 1991 (detail). Collection Martin Z. Margulies. A dark filter was applied over this image for readability. 2. Susan Phillips, *Part File Score*, 2014. Collection Martin Z. Margulies. Courtesy of Tanya Bonakdar, New York.

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