

SAM MOYER'S STONE PAINTINGS  
CONFRONT NATURE'S MYSTERIES

ARTISTS, GALLERISTS & COLLECTORS  
REFLECT ON THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

PRINTS & MULTIPLES: WHAT  
TO LOOK FOR & WHAT TO AVOID

ArtandObject.com  
FALL 2024

# Art & Object



DISCOVER  
SOMETHING  
BEAUTIFUL

FEATURE STORY

# The Creative Economy Ecosystem

*Art & Object* talks to six art-world participants about their contributions to creativity.

BY CYNTHIA CLOSE

British entrepreneur and author John Howkins is credited with coining the term “creative economy” in his book *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas* (2001). Since then, the term has become a rallying cry for the entire cultural ecosystem, stimulating

hard data on how artists, collectors, museums, galleries, and all other cultural institutions, nonprofits and for-profits alike, contribute to overall economic health.

Today’s economists consider creativity to be the defining characteristic of 21st-century economies, in contrast to previous eras, when nations were built on manufacturing and industry. In those countries, cities, and towns that have embraced creators and built the infrastructure to support them, their positive impact on the overall quality of life for all citizens is statistically measurable. According to the latest U.N. estimates, the arts account for 3.1 percent of global GDP, generate annual revenues of over \$2 trillion, and provide nearly 50 million jobs worldwide.

Understanding the complex nature of an art-based ecosystem requires a close examination of the roles played by individual artists, public and private institutions including museums and galleries, dealers, buyers, collectors, and the auction houses that serve as public-facing vehicles for establishing market value for artwork. The traditional view of the isolated artist, working alone in his or her studio only to be accidentally discovered after death, is a thing of the past. The rise of digi-

tal technologies has transformed how artists make art, how museums and galleries display art, how dealers and auction houses sell art, and how collectors and buyers acquire art. Now, creators have a broad field to consider when deciphering what is meaningful to themselves, to consumers, and how to create impactful art out of available resources. New markets are more accessible than ever before.

Individual artists are empowered by the ability to reach new audiences directly, thereby circumventing institutional gatekeepers. However, experienced professionals—curators, gallerists, appraisers, critics, art historians and scholars—continue providing vital services to establish what is of value in the marketplace. We profiled two artists, two collectors and two gallerists, presenting a snapshot how key players position themselves in today’s creative economy.

## THE ARTIST’S VIEW

Photographer Rachel Portesi and painter Eric Aho are a married couple who have raised children together in the rural town of Saxtons River, Vermont. They have accomplished that simulta-

neously with the parallel evolution of their careers as independent, successful artists.



COURTESY OF RACHEL PORTESI

### Rachel Portesi

*Looking Forward, Looking Back* (2023) is one of 17 pieces recently commissioned from photographer and installation artist Portesi by the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, and acquired for the museum’s permanent collection. The title was the perfect device with which to start our conversation.

In 1995, Portesi had an epiphany. Looking at one of her Polaroids, she realized she had made something beyond a simple photograph. She had created *art*, and now that her children are old enough to take care of them-



COURTESY OF RACHEL PORTESI

Rachel Portesi,  
*Queen*, 2018.

**“THE INTIMACY OF THE FEMALE GAZE IS AT THE HEART OF MY WORK.” WOMEN’S HAIR, A SUBJECT THAT HAS SENT CULTURAL MESSAGES FOR MILLENNIA, HAS BEEN THE CATALYST.**

**“I use my post-maternal voice when I tell my kids to ‘go for it!’”**

RACHEL PORTESI

selves, Portesi has the time and space to consider her place in the world as an artist. “It’s a fact that my whole recent body of work was the outgrowth of a sort of midlife crisis when I hit my 50s. I’d worked hard at manual labor—waitress, housecleaner—then I became a parent.”

Portesi sees her photography as relating to larger cultural issues, mostly feminist ones. She received a B.A. in Sociology and Photography from Marlboro College in Vermont. Female identity, aging, motherhood, and now mortality are central to her thinking. Elements of time and patience are also necessities, considering that Portesi has chosen to work in analog technologies including wet-plate collodion tintypes, a largely obsolete medium producing one-of-a-kind prints.

Regarding her vision, she explains, “The intimacy of the female gaze is at the heart of my work.” Women’s hair, a subject that has sent cultural messages for millennia, has been the catalyst. Hair sends signals about body chemistry, age, politics, and style savvy. Since her inclusion in a 2017 group show, *The Secret Life of Plants*, at the Tribeca-based gallery Freight+Volume, Portesi’s reputation and career as an emerging artist has grown exponentially. Her work was selected for *FRESH*

2024, an annual exhibition sponsored by New York’s Klompching Gallery, one of the most respected presenters of photography in the United States. The Wadsworth Atheneum exhibited its commission of her work in *Styling Identities: Hair’s Tangled History*, through August 2024. This was followed by the *Atlanta Photography Group’s Portfolio 2024* exhibition, a selection of eight artists at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, and finally, an exhibition that ended on September 1 at the Vermont Center For Photography, *Women on the Edge: Alternative Processes in New England*, featuring female artists who use historic processes to push the boundaries of conventional photography, making the summer of 2024 the busiest so far for this up-and-coming artist.

**Eric Aho**

Eric Aho was trained as a printmaker, earning a BFA and graduate certificate at Massachusetts College of Art (MassArt) in the 1980s. In 1989, he participated in the first student cultural exchange between the U.S. and Cuba in 30 years. In a recent conversation he admitted, “Nothing prepared me for art school ... and ... although I took a job in 1989 teaching painting at the Putney School,



COURTESY OF RACHEL PORTESI

Rachel Portesi, *Bush Head* (triptych), 2020-2022.



Eric Aho, *Vernal Pool (Oxford County)*, 2022.

**“You paint the way you live in the world.” ERIC AHO**



COURTESY OF ERIC AHO (3)

Eric Aho, *Fireflies and Mists Under a Gibbous Moon no. 1*, 2022.



Eric Aho, *First Forest Threshold*, 2022.

I was afraid to paint.” Obviously, that fear has been overcome.

Since 1988, Aho’s paintings have been featured nationally and internationally in over 50 solo exhibitions, as well as in group shows too numerous to mention. His list of accolades and awards is equally long and includes a Fulbright Fellowship, a MacDowell Fellowship, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, a Vermont Arts Council and National Endowment for the Arts Finlandia Foundation Grant, among others. His paintings are in the collections of many major institutions, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Denver Art Museum, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the National College of Art in Oslo, Norway, and the Oulu City Art Museum in Finland. As a Finnish-American, Aho has first-hand knowledge of the culture of this northern nation.

Now, Aho has reached the enviable position of being able to paint all day in his Saxtons River, Vermont studio without having to supplement his income with teaching or gig work. He gives a generous amount of credit to his gallery, DC Moore in New York’s Chelsea. “DC Moore understands my position. They don’t dictate what I paint. [Gallerist] Bridget Moore told me, ‘Don’t worry about your audience, let me worry about your audience. You just do what you do.’ Hearing this was such a relief.”

The landscape provides a path for painting as Aho works his way through formal issues. He talks about “the muscularity of the paint” and works exclusively in oil. In the beginning he painted in plein air. Later, he says, “I taught myself about the exchange between indoors and outdoors.” His work is a delicate balance between the specific and the universal, providing the viewer with an overwhelming sense of place. He is currently preparing a new body of work titled “Wild Meadow” for his biennial exhibition at DC Moore. “Honesty is the key component,” he says. “It isn’t about truth to nature or even, as in Cézanne, truth to sensation. In the end, the object on the wall is the truth.”

## THE COLLECTOR’S VIEW

When does a buyer become a collector? This is a question best answered by gallerists and art dealers who often mediate such transitions, or by collectors themselves, who are notoriously private about their acquisitions.

### Mark Waskow

Brooklyn-born Mark Waskow, a collector and founder of the fledgling nonprofit Northern New England Museum of Contemporary Art (NNEMoCA),

a buyer’s interest deepens, it is often accompanied by a desire to know more about the artist behind the work. Many collectors depend on gallerists and dealers to educate them and to guide their buying habits based on their goals. Is this an investment, a prestige object, or a reflection of their discerning eye and individual taste? Mark Waskow chose another path. “I prefer to deal directly with artists. I’m a verbal kind of guy and I like to talk to people before they’re dead. I also go to art fairs and galleries all over the country—Miami, New York.”

Waskow has an appreciation for geo-



**“My intent is not to buy art as investment. I want to provide income to artists... This is my calling.” MARK WASKOW**

has amassed over 15,000 works of art and an estimated 35,000 books, catalogues and ephemera during his life as an avid connoisseur. Waskow did not study art but credits his mother, who was a commercial artist, for cultivating his aesthetic eye. “I grew up in Brooklyn, and she and I could visit all these free museums. She also painted murals on the walls of our apartment.”

Waskow explains, “I was a conservative businessman. My collecting started in 1982 when I bought a huge house; then I needed to buy art to put up on the walls.” A common trigger for many collectors is the impulse to decorate. As

metric abstraction, although stylistically the collection reflects his idiosyncratic, non-hierarchical approach. Janie Cohen, former director of the Fleming Museum of Art at the University of Vermont, became aware of Waskow’s mindset that “the process of collecting art is a creative act” and invited him to participate in a 1993 show titled *Selections From My Collection*. Waskow explains how his vision about collecting has matured. “Although I purchase things that appeal to me visually, now I ask myself how this new piece will continue the dialogue with other works already in the collection, and will it

advance or enhance the focus of our institution's mission?"

Part of that mission is driven by a streak of altruism and an honest desire to contribute to the support of artists Waskow admires. To that end he has launched the Northern New England Legacy Project (NNEALP), designed to assist culturally significant artists of modest means to document their work and preserve their place in the historical record.

### Michael Sherman

The unequivocal statement that "Art has put film on the back burner" opened my conversation with veteran L.A. filmmaker, committed art collector, and Baltimore native Michael Sherman. He, along with his wife, Carrie Tivador, are important collectors of contemporary art and dedicated supporters of the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Love of story-telling is a necessity

for being a good film producer, and Sherman has applied this impulse both to his film career and art collecting. He has brought his self-assurance as a filmmaker to his eye for art. "I learned what I liked early on," he says. "I bought a Banksy in 2005." This was before he produced a documentary on art world provocateur Maurizio Cattelan or worked with Rashid Johnson on an adaptation of Richard Wright's novel *Native Son*. When Sherman purchased a new home in L.A. in 2011, he decided to fill it with art. He bought pieces by Wes Lang, an artist who favors images of American renegades, and Noah Davis, a Black artist and founder of the Underground Museum in L.A. who died of cancer at the age of 32.

At first, Sherman was put off by the art market, which he found difficult to break into: "If people don't know you, they won't sell you anything." In 2014, he continued to buy

art and began acquiring from smaller galleries; he also reached out to artists directly on the then-nascent Instagram. "I love finding someone. My favorite collecting style is to discover somebody myself," he says. Sherman's energy and unbridled support for the artists he collects is infectious. "I love art and I love the artists who make it. If I can do something cool for a young artist like getting them into a museum show, it can launch their careers."

That "something cool" has recently manifested in the purchase, along with interested partners, of a building in the Green Point section of Baltimore. Sherman's vision is "to establish a home for my collection in Baltimore as well as to provide a cultural hub with studios, a gallery, coffee shops, etc., for the people and artists who live here." This collector's positive impact on one American city will be felt far into the future.

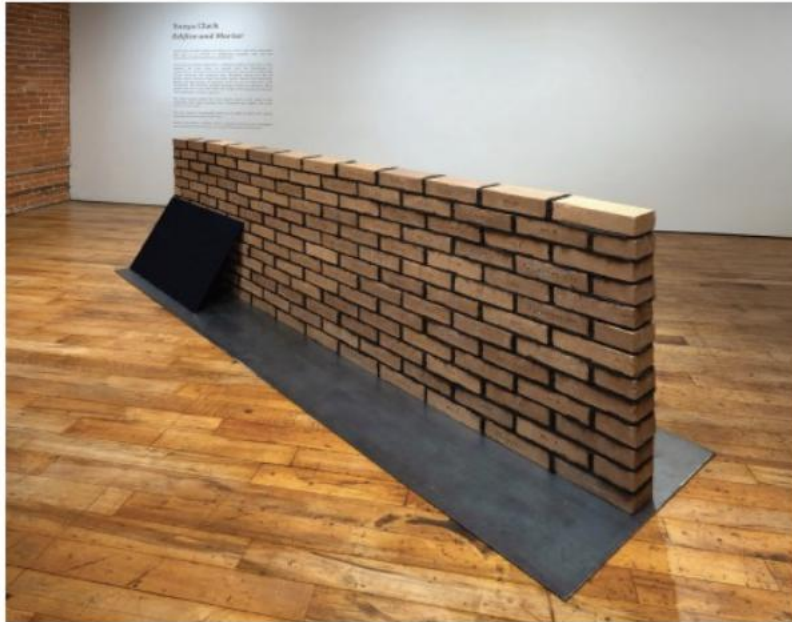


"Art has put film on the back burner."

MICHAEL SHERMAN

Michael Sherman

COURTESY OF MICHAEL SHERMAN



Sonya Clark, *Edifice and Mortar*, 2018, Goya Contemporary.



Exhibit *Bearing Witness: A History of Prints* by Joyce J. Scott, Goya Contemporary.



Exhibit *Bearing Witness: A History of Prints* by Joyce J. Scott, Goya Contemporary.

## THE GALLERIST'S VIEW

Galleries and the entrepreneurs who run them provide the necessary public-facing link between artists and the collectors who support them. Here's how two gallerists have succeeded in a busy marketplace.

### Goya Contemporary

Before assuming the role of gallery director in 2000, Amy Eva Raehse was on her way to starting a tenure-track professorship at a college in the South when a hurricane struck her destination. She and her husband immediately switched gears. "We quite literally blind pointed on a map with a plan to move to the closest urban area. This brought us to Baltimore. What we found in Baltimore was what I described to family as 'a mini-New York from the '70s.' Yes, that included the complications of a mature city that survived many hardships and changes, but it also brought along a grit, resilience, authenticity, history, and energy that we found attractive. It was a city that was 'about to be' so many things, transitioning from a city that 'had already been' so many things."

Among those "many things" Raehse found were the amazing artists who lived and worked there outside the pressure of the New York art world. "We met Joyce Scott, and Leslie King Hammond, and John Waters, and Timothy App, and Jo Smail, and Valerie Maynard, and a brain trust that also felt right. Later on arrived the Tom Collins, Amy Sherald, Paul Rucker, etc., circuit of transplants. There was a wealth of intellectual discourse and invention happening. Baltimore, as Joyce Scott has exclaimed for years, is "filthy with artists."

Goya Contemporary was founded as a print atelier by Martha Macks, who named it Goya-Girl Press as an homage to the late 18th-century Spanish artist Francisco de Goya, who was progressive for his era, sympathetic to women and a great printmaker ahead of his time. His name sent a message. Although Goya-Girl Press still collaborates with artists, Raehse says, "We are selective. Much of our time at Goya Contemporary is spent organizing larger museum exhibitions, artist estate management, building sizable collections, stewardship cultivation, and such."

In discussing the effect of technology





Goya Contemporary

COURTESY OF GOYA CONTEMPORARY

**“We are a family with our artists:  
we rise and thrive together.”**

AMY EVA RAEHSE

and Goya Contemporary’s response to the tsunami of social media, Raehse says, “Technology is a great starting point, but we still prioritize one-on-one communication after that initial technology assist. The joy of working with so many living artists is that we know them.” Much direct communication with both artists and buyers happens outside the gallery in the context of art fairs. “Art fairs are an enormous commitment financially, and in every other way too, but they are rewarding in as many ways.” This year Goya Contemporary has been selected to occupy two prominent sections at New York’s prestigious Armory Show in September. One booth will present 30 *Angry Women* paintings, all made in 1973 by the historically important feminist Louise Fishman (1939-2023), facilitated with support from The Louise Fishman Foundation and her estate. The second will feature newly created

work by MacArthur Fellow Dr. Joyce J. Scott, whose career Goya Contemporary has managed globally for over 20 years.

### Gallery Henoeh

New York gallerist George Henoeh Shechtman knows a thing about location. He has been the first or one of the first dealers to recognize when the eyes of the art world were about to shift their attention from one section of the city to another. But he didn’t start out surrounded by art. “I was born in New Jersey; my dad was a car salesman ... It was when I was an economics major at Rutgers University when I was bitten by the art bug.” Shechtman opened his first gallery in 1966 on Christopher Street when Greenwich Village was the headquarters for all that was hip in the arts. He remained there until 1972, when his reputation as a dealer earned him a place at a prestigious Madison

Avenue address.

These were also the years when abstraction and Minimalism were entrenched, but Henoeh saw the appeal of photorealism and shared an interest in the genre with his friend, gallerist Louis K. Meisel, who is credited with coining the term most closely associated with artists like Richard Estes. The now renamed Christopher Gallery had a successful 10-year run on Madison Avenue. In 1982, Shechtman moved to SoHo, buying a large space—John Lennon and Yoko Ono had used it as a performance theater—and founded Gallery Henoeh at 80 Wooster Street. As SoHo approached meme status in 2000, Gallery Henoeh migrated north to 555 W. 25th Street in Chelsea, where it remains today.

In an earlier interview for the *New Jersey Star Ledger*, Shechtman commented on the unbroken appeal of figurative art through the decades, “Oh,



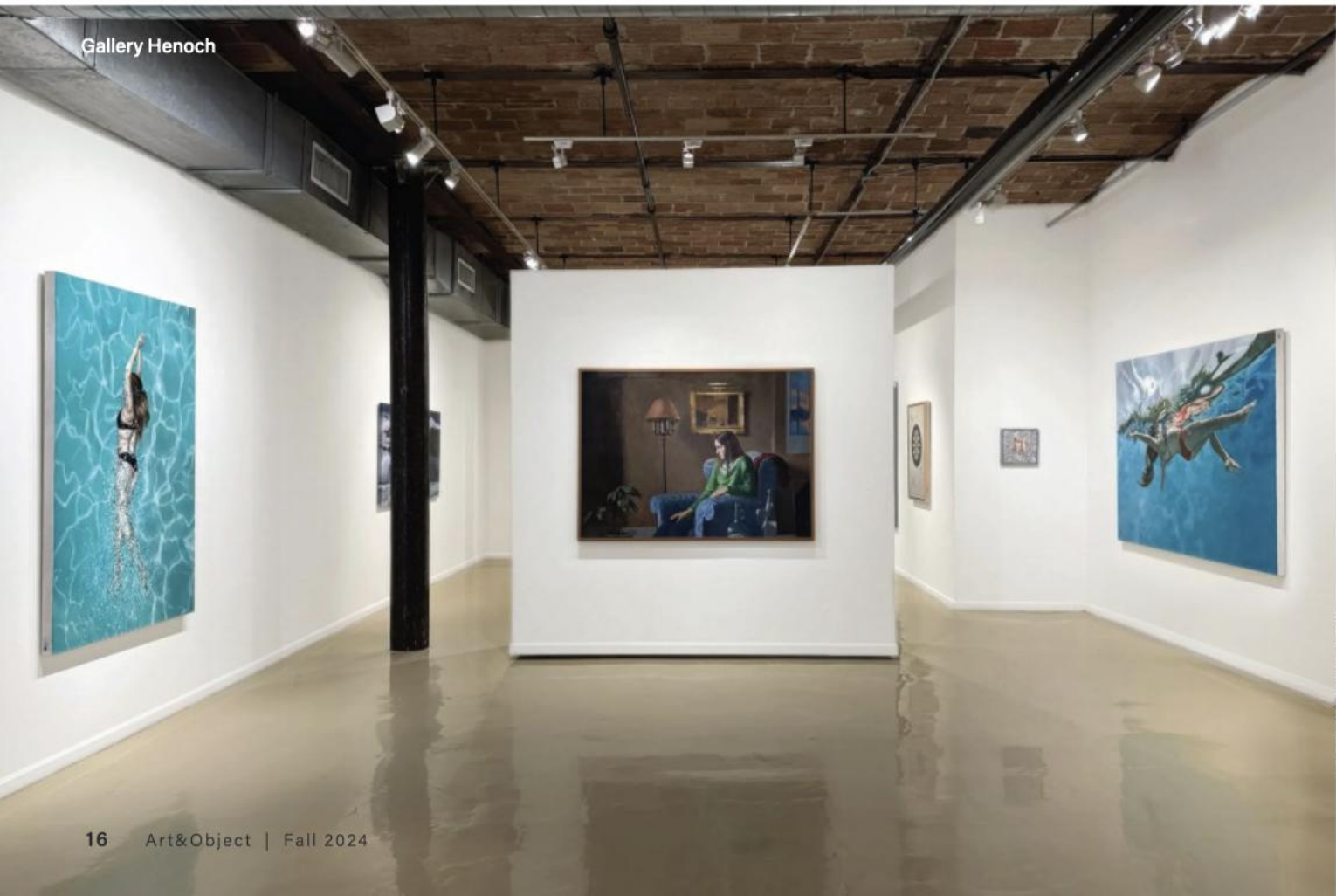
COURTESY OF GALLERY HENOCH

**“When I moved my gallery to Chelsea, on 25th Street, there was only one other gallery!”**

GEORGE HENOEH SHECHTMAN 2024

it’s come a complete circle since I started back in 1966. Now it’s talent and subject together, which always underpinned fine art, of course, but the mixture is different ... It’s moving away from Photorealism towards a sketchier, more personal or poetic touch.” That deeply felt personal approach is seen in abstractions of the sea, like *Blue Ripple* (2024) by Eric Zener, and the sundial-like lily pads of John Evans or the surrealist tinged *Take Out* (2024) by Mavis Smith. One can’t underestimate the appeal of Sharon Sprung’s intense portraits following her commission by Michelle Obama in 2016. Shechtman opined, “Sprung started out with me on Madison Avenue. I’ve watched her grow.” Active beyond the confines of New York, Gallery Henoeh will have a strong presence at Art Miami in December. Not a bad time to head south. 📍

Armed with an MFA from Boston University, **Cynthia Close** has had several productive careers in the arts. She now writes for *Art & Object* and several other publications.



COURTESY OF GALLERY HENOEH