

WELL HUNG

We visit a vital gallery in the contemporary-art world run by three women – we meet two of them – with a handle on how to stage exhibition-standard shows.

Q&A
Daniella and Alma Luxembourg
Luxembourg & Dayan
London

A hop, skip and jump up a thickly carpeted staircase takes you to Luxembourg & Dayan's well-appointed townhouse of a gallery that, during our visit, is showing *Alberto Giacometti in his Own Words: Sculptures 1925-34*. This largely non-selling display of the highly valuable Swiss artist's work is one side of a gallery programme that shows living and dead artists, treating their work "always as an emotional response", says Daniella Luxembourg. The other name over the door, Amalia Dayan, spends more time in New York where another, smaller gallery is kept.

Here Daniella and her daughter Alma (both pictured, Alma on right) the other partner in the gallery, talk about putting on exhibitions, dealing with collectors and why a commercial gallery would mount a show where hardly anything's for sale. "The success of a great exhibition is the emotional output that you give," says Daniella. The sculptures wink in approval.

This Giacometti show must have taken a while to organise. How far in advance do you plan?

Daniella Luxembourg: The truth is that we don't. Basically we leave ourselves a lot of time to follow our own paths and that is the secret to it all. We are absorbed with art all the time and everything is done with a critical eye. There is always a trigger: one painting, a sculpture, seeing one price in the art market and suddenly you think, "It's so great – how can it be so cheap?" People always buy the wrong things.

How much art is there in putting on a show? Is there a similarity between you and the artists?

Alma Luxembourg: I'm not sure I'd go that far; we don't consider ourselves artists with that sort of talent but I think we have a certain



rigorous approach. Once you start doing a show like this it becomes quite ambitious quite quickly.

You sound like collectors rather than dealers; is this some sort of collector's gene?

DL: Yes that's it: it's a collector's gene. After artists the next in the hierarchy are the great collectors. Collecting is the biggest aphrodisiac in our profession.

Do you do shows because you think certain people are going to like them?

AL: Not at all. We've had shows where very few people came and shows where a lot of people came; we've shown 1920s artists and very contemporary shows of young artists that you don't know will resonate at all.

What about the bricks and mortar of the gallery itself?

AL: Well, this is how we like to do business and how we want to show art. Some galleries are huge spaces with concrete floors and white walls and that works for them but it's not us. I think the biggest luxury we have is that we're free to *not* do things.



And why do you put on a show where not everything is for sale?

DL: With the Giacometti show, most of it is not for sale. The purpose was not to make money; if we're lucky we'll cover our expenses. There was another thing: if you can express yourself in a monumental way for the artist and relatively inexpensive way for you, you should do it. Every gallery has its own view of the art world. One is not better than the other but it has to be authentic to you.

Is there a healthy amount of nosiness in this world?

DL: Oh yes.
AL: Well I don't know if it's nosiness, I think it's passion. There's something very obsessive about being a collector. A collector who owns a Giacometti from this period cannot help himself coming and seeing the rest of that period,

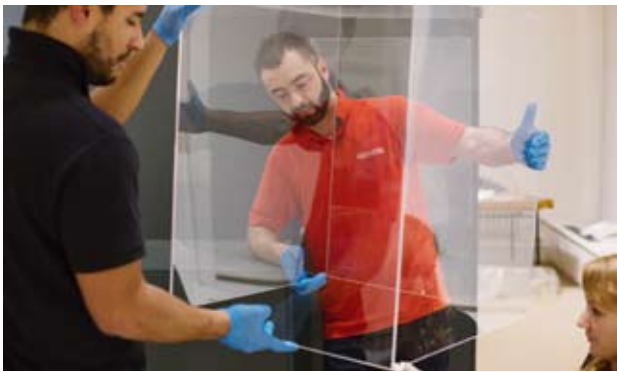
maybe in the hope that he may one day own another.

Are most collectors' collections mostly in their minds?

DL: Of course. And they only remember what they didn't buy. The flaw of human nature is that we only remember what we didn't do, not what we did.

Is it nicer to work with dead artists or living ones?

AL: Both. It's incredible to work with living artists because unpredictability is really exciting. Alex da Corte took over our building in New York and changed it radically; Bjarne Melgaard created an installation that we could never have imagined. So that has a cachet to it that is different to creating an exhibition where the factors are more known. — RB
luxembourgdayan.com



COLLECTORS

Toronto's art scene – small but perfectly formed – has been aided and abetted by this husband-and-wife team. We met them to talk buying and collecting.



Ann Webb
Art collector
Toronto

Ann Webb is managing director of contemporary culture at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Together with her husband Marshall she has spent more than 30 years amassing a vast collection of photos, sculptures, drawings and multimedia works from around the world.

What was your first purchase?

We started collecting in 1985. Our first works were two photographs and a drawing by postmodern artist James Welling from Cash Newhouse Gallery in New York.

How do you find new pieces?

Our interest is to support the programmes and work of a few galleries and artists with whom we have established long-term relationships. We like to learn and grow with the artists and dealers.

What's the difference between buying and collecting art?

Buying art is shopping. Collecting is thinking in terms of a whole; the works have to relate to each other. Collecting is an ongoing conversation. Sometimes our purchases are well thought-out; others are intuitive.

What does your collection say about you?

Our collection is a reflection of our interests in literature, music and contemporary issues. US installation artist James Lee Byars' *Q is Point* from the early 1990s best captures this: it's a large circle of red Japanese paper with a gold Q – for question – at the centre. We tend to collect artists early in their careers. For us collecting is an act of optimism. — JZL

SALE

What do you know about Uruguayan art auctions? Exactly. We take a short tour of Castells to get a handle on a fascinating market.



PINTURA NACIONAL,
CASTELLS AUCTION HOUSE
6 APRIL

One of Uruguay's oldest auction houses, Castells used to hold sales on top of horse-drawn carts on the streets of Montevideo. While the selling of art has migrated indoors, the family-run business remains at the core of Uruguay's art scene. It is now run by the founder's great-grandson Juan, who is committed to continuing the "true culture of the auction".

According to Juan, the Uruguayan art market is in a state of transition: "A few years ago the classical European artworks that we auction owned the market. Nowadays our market is dominated by contemporary art from within the nation." In response to the trend, Castells held its first Pintura Nacional – or National Paintings – auction in 2011, featuring works exclusively by homegrown creatives.

The 6 April edition of Pintura Nacional includes works by influential Uruguayan artists, among them early modernist painter Pedro Figari, who was known for his ability to capture everyday customs from a child's perspective. His oil-on-cardboard *Luna de Miel* depicts a hazy illustration of a wedding couple: a man in a brown suit slouched down on a chair and a woman standing next to him in a bridal gown. — NI
castells.com.uy

Highlight:

Pedro Figari
"Luna de Miel"
Estimate: \$8,000 (€7,200)