



Private collections

Taste in art is very personal – even for those who live in the glare of global prominence. *Upward Curve* explores the private art collections of those who enjoy the expensive hobby

While the US-China trade war escalates and the UK teeters on the edge of a 'hard' Brexit, the arts world continues to offer crucial escape. And it's not all private buyers hoarding paintings in offshore homes. The faces that feed the Instagram generation are busy pumping money into canvas as well as digital, but how much is a genuine love for art and how much is just good PR? According to Sean "P Diddy" Combs' son, Quincy Brown: "He's done it all. What's left? Collecting art."

Brown also seemed to think that Combs' record-setting purchase of a Kerry James Marshall in 2018 was the start of a whole new endeavour, and that he would be starting "his own Getty Center".

Diddy, often spotted at Art Basel Miami Beach, made the winning bid for Marshall's painting *Past Times* (1997) at Sotheby's in May 2018. The \$21.1m price tag

Above: Barak Obama and Leonardo DiCaprio are both avid art collectors with extensive collections – they are not alone

was a record-breaking price for Marshall's work at auction, and the highest price ever for a living African American artist.

Oprah Winfrey is best known in the art world for making a \$62m profit when she anonymously consigned Gustav Klimt's full-length portrait to auction in 2016, fetching \$150m. Oprah also owns works by sculptor Gaston Lachaise and painter Harry Roseland.

Just last year, Beyoncé and Jay-Z are reported to have let their six-year-old daughter loose with the credit card at her grandmother's

2018 Wearable Art Gala (her grandmother is Tina Knowles). Blue Ivy Carter placed the winning \$10,000 bid for a Samuel Levi Jones piece, but lost out on an acrylic painting of a young Sidney Poitier to actor, playwright, filmmaker, and comedian Tyler Perry, who pipped Carter Jnr with a cool \$19,000 bid.

It does seem, however, that the couple take their art a bit more seriously than following the lead of a six-year-old. Beyoncé is reportedly a big fan of Tracey Emin, Donald Judd, Kara Walker and Ed Ruscha, while Jay-Z has used lyrics to namedrop everyone from Michelangelo and Rembrandt to Jeff Koons. He has a print of Damien Hirst's *For the Love of God* and owns a piece by YBA's Tim Noble and Sure Webster; paintings by David Hammons and Ed Ruscha, and a few prints by Richard Prince. ➤



Barbra Streisand recently told the Associated Press that she did her 2017 concert film to save up for an Amedeo Modigliani piece. “I’m a big fan of (Amedeo) Modigliani,” she said.

“There was a painting I wanted that I really had a save up for it... I lent it to the Tate Museum in London. I can’t work for money.

“I have to work for an object that I love, something I want to live with... What does money do? It goes somewhere, a stock, a bond. I don’t see it. But a painting I can look at every day and enjoy.”

Streisand has been a collector of American art since attending Bill Clinton’s inauguration in 1992, where she was drawn to the White House’s collection. She is also known to have bequeathed an eight-foot-tall painting by John Singer Sargent, Mrs. Cazalet

and Children Edward and Victor (1900), to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where she served as a trustee from 2007 to 2014. She bought the work in a private sale in 2002.

Leonardo DiCaprio – named Leonardo after Da Vinci – was born with art in his veins, and from *Titanic* to *Romeo & Juliet*, his Hollywood resume has followed a path that reflects his penchant for historical pieces. DiCaprio is known to be a big fan of Jean-Michel Basquiat, Walton Ford, Jean-Pierre Roy; Eric White, Frank Stella, Adrian Ghenie, Takashi Murakami, Urs Fischer and Andreas Gursky.

In 2015, DiCaprio donated John Gerrard’s *Solar Reserve*

Above: Jay Z Right: Oprah’s Gustav Klimt Below: Kerry James Marshall’s *Past Times*



(Tonopah, Nevada, 2014); a massive installation that reflects the orbits of the moon, to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Less glamorously he willingly surrendered two artworks that had been gifted to him by disgraced

Malaysian financier Jho Low: both a \$3.2m Picasso painting and a \$9m Basquiat piece.

Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi are art collectors with an envy-inducing array of works, including a ping-pong table by Rirkrit Tiravanija set against a woven hanging sculpture by Ruth Asawa, while one of Diego Giacometti’s bronze felines has pride of place on the desk. The couple also own a mixed-media sculpture by Catherine Willis, and works by Mark Grotjahn, Ed Ruscha, and an Andy Warhol that looks right at home in their Beverly Hills homestead.

Kanye West was so taken by James Turrell’s light installation at The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art last year, that he gifted Turrell’s project \$10m. ■

