

Olyvia Kwok

33, art investment advisor

Kwok made her way into the art business through family collections and connections. At 23, the maths and 15th-century Chinese art graduate helped found an art investment fund for a private bank in Geneva; in 2005 she opened an eponymous gallery in St James's, then closed it in 2010 to develop her art investment business, Willstone Management. She specialises in blue chip 19th and 20th-century art.

My taste changes every two to three years.

There were times when emerging markets were super-hot; then it was American Pop Art, German Abstractionism, American Minimalism. It's been great because somehow I seem to have an afflatus when it comes to spotting new trends.

The first artist whose work I sold was Ling Jian, a Chinese avant-garde who lived in Berlin. When I first saw his art I knew that it was exactly what the West would think of as "hip" Chinese contemporary art.

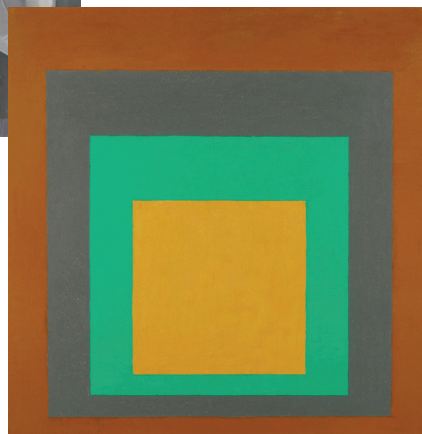
My clients are mostly high-net-worth individuals or single family offices. We're launching an art guarantee financing fund this year, backed by a US credit fund.

The greatest lengths I have gone to was for a Chinese client who is building his own museum in south-west China. He happened to be very passionate about André Derain, an artist in whose work I profess no expertise. But we had been in contact with the Derain Committee as well as top scholars and museum curators. We were able to find a fully documented diary by the artist and helped the client to purchase paintings directly from the estate. By the end I said that this was the most educational process I'd been through since boarding school. I certainly don't remember reading so many books since my university days!

The art market has not only retained its size since the global financial crisis – it has actually almost tripled in size. There have been some



Art is definitely the new tangible asset class that holds value, and is a great hedge against currency risk



difficult moments, but this market has proven itself over and over again. My next mission is to show institutional clients how fine art assets can be more transparent and liquid. We've invested in a new app for art pricing as well as launching the fund.

My private collection changes all the time.

The first piece I bought was by Zeng Chuanxing, the Chinese artist who used to paint the *Paper Bride* series. And, like every gallerist or art person, I fall in love with the artworks I'm looking at and dealing in (at the right price, of course). My most recent purchase was a painting by Josef Albers. ■

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FROM TOP:
OLYVIA KWOK,
PHOTOGRAPHY: JOE
MCGORTY; ZENG
CHUANXING, *PAPER
BRIDE*, GREY MOOD,
2007, OIL ON CANVAS,
150X90CM; JOSEF
ALBERS, *HOMAGE TO
THE SQUARE*, 1957,
OIL ON MASONITE,
61X61CM