

ICONS

COLLECTOR'S EYE: STEVEN AND KATHY GUTTMAN

Scraps Transformed Into Art? Mais Oui

BY KELLY CROW

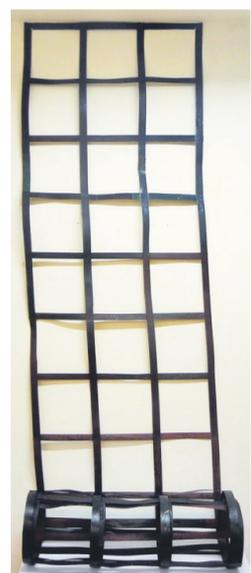
ON THE LOOKOUT for a historically significant artist whom the booming art market has somehow overlooked? Take a page from Steven Guttman, the New York-based principal owner of Uovo Fine Art Storage and chairman of the Centre Pompidou Foundation, and his wife, Kathy.

For the past few years, collectors have been paying record sums for examples of Arte Povera—that postwar we-can-make-art-from-scrap style that popped up everywhere from Italy to Germany to Japan. The Guttmans, who also have a home in Paris, said that they discovered 15 years ago that France had its own kindred version of Arte Povera, a movement that began in the late 1960s called Supports/Surfaces. At the time, though, few people in France or elsewhere were collecting the work.

Rather than shy away from fear they would wind up with duds, the Guttmans said that they researched the movement's significance to art history and began buying pieces by its founders, including André-Pierre Arnal. Today, artists who were part of Supports/Surfaces are getting a closer look from galleries and museums (Canada Gallery in New York has a show of their work up through July 20), and the Guttmans' collection of their work ranks among the world's best.

The Guttmans spoke about their collection, which they keep in their home in Paris. Below, an edited transcript.

KATHY: “We don't want to collect art by keeping a checklist: OK, we have a Hirst, a Richter, a Warhol, that status symbol. We want the antithesis of that. We'd rather have people come over and see something they've never seen before. We started coming to Paris about 15 to 20 years ago, and one day, a friend of ours told us that **André-Pierre Arnal** had an amazing studio looking over the Pompidou, and so we went to check it out. Arnal had thousands of pieces, folded-up canvases, stacked floor to ceiling. We sat for hours pulling things out, talking about this movement. Who knew France had a movement similar to Arte Povera but all its own? We started asking galleries if they had pieces by these guys.”



KATHY AND STEVEN GUTTMAN in their Paris home, top. In their collection, above from left: Claude Viallat's 'Rope Knot: No. 24,' 1972; Daniel Dezeuze's 1974 'Flexible Wood Ladder'; and an untitled piece by Toni Grand, 1974.

'We don't want to collect art by keeping a checklist.'

STEVEN: “The whole idea behind Supports/Surfaces was to create art that didn't need to be framed or mounted. We liked some of their paintings, but we realized we were more interested in their sculptures. Still are. It's a movement that matters to Paris, and to Europe, but their pieces aren't selling for millions like the Arte Povera in Italy or the Zero Group in Germany. I think the most important pieces in Supports/Surfaces sell for \$100,000.”

One of my favorites is this **Daniel Dezeuze** piece from 1974, 'Flexible Wood Ladder.' Dezeuze is known for these grid-like formations that he bends into different shapes—like a ladder or a fence partly folded up. His works from the 1970s often look like metal, but they're actually really thin wood. Quite fragile. Imagine how revolutionary he must have seemed to Paris back then. I mean, Picasso was still alive and painting at the time that this guy was folding these wooden grids. Pretty amazing.

We first saw 'Flexible Wood Ladder' at the FIAC art fair. It didn't sell, but I kept thinking about it. Afterward, we asked the gallery if we could live with it for a month or two. We could only do that because there was no demand.

We also love **Toni Grand**. What we know is that he was supposedly a nice guy who worked by bending and torquing wood into graceful, abstract shapes. Alfred Pacquement, who used to run the Pompidou, said Toni may have gotten ill from the chemicals he used to bend the wood. The fumes may have killed him. The horrible thing is that before he died, he got depressed and set fire to his studio, so there is very little work left. We paid around \$70,000 for a curved, C-shaped untitled piece.

We also like **Claude Viallat**, but he's still alive, and he's incredibly prolific. He probably has 10,000 pieces, and his pace of production far exceeds demand for his work. He's known for folding canvases and painting these rows of colorful, geometric shapes on them, but the piece by him we really loved was this little strand of rope.”

KATHY: “When we saw his 'Rope Knot' in a gallery booth, we just thought, 'Wow.' He's employing the same rhythms and bright colors he uses on his paintings, but he's painting squares up and down the length of this thin rope instead. It's conceptual and playful. He took the whole movement to a new extreme.”

Clockwise from top: Olivier Amsellem (portrait); Gallerie Bernard Ceysson (2); Steven and Kathy Guttman (rope)

BY JENNY CHE

AN ARAB WORLD IN FLUX

WHETHER THE focus is politics, family life or the built environment, the Arab world depicted by contemporary artists in a new exhibit at New York's New Museum is a portrait of change.

A sense of instability and transition pervades “Here and Elsewhere,” which opens July 16 and features the work of 45 artists. Much of the feeling comes from the physical transformation of the region: Video footage by artist Ahmed Mater captures the demolition of old buildings in Saudi Arabia, and photographs by Fouad Elkoury show the remains of downtown Beirut at the end of the Lebanese civil war. Hassan Sharif's bundled fabrics and cardboard point to the problem of rising consumerism and the growing manufacturing economy of the United Arab Emirates.

Other experiences of upheaval are more intimate. A series by the Tunisian photographer Fakhri El Ghezal shows the framed photos often kept in homes and shops. Mixed in with the pictures of beloved family members are more disquieting empty frames hanging crookedly on the wall. Their former subjects were leaders since removed from power. The missing photos signal an “amnesia produced by the fall of the regime,” said Massimiliano Gioni, associate director at



Fouad Elkoury/the Third Line, Dubai/Galerie Tamit, Munich/Bernt

FOUAD ELKOURY'S 'Place des Canons (Beirut 1982);' from the New Museum's exhibit 'Here and Elsewhere.'

the New Museum.

Such personal accounts give a new perspective on the region's historical events. “It's about the act of seeing as an individual, as opposed to the macro-history,” Mr. Gioni said.

Mohamed Larbi Rahali also takes a personal approach. Over the past three decades, the Moroccan artist has collected thousands of matchboxes from sidewalks and cafe patrons. The human figures, seascapes and colored grids that he then drew on them are part reality and part fantasy, offering glimpses into the artist's daily surroundings and encounters. Stacked on top of each other in multiple rows in the exhibit, the tiny, disposable paper cartons have an ephemeral quality.

The abstract ink cityscapes of Istanbul by the German-Egyptian artist Susan Hefuna evoke another place. During a four-week visit to Istanbul, Ms. Hefuna noticed that the city's architecture shared some similarities with the buildings of her birthplace, Cairo. As a result, she has added a recurring motif of Egyptian mashrabiya lattice screens on top of her blue grids of Istanbul's cityscape. (Mr. Gioni described them as “psychological landscapes.”)

Her work poignantly echoes the exhibit's title. “It's like something very familiar and yet from somewhere else,” she said, “and it's all coming together.”

DON'T MISS: JULY 12-18



Simon Says
 Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, until Oct. 19
 “Simon Ma: Heart. Water. Ink” features over 70 works by the Chinese artist, including paintings, calligraphy, 3-D videos and large-scale sculptures. Left, the painted fiberglass sculpture “Awakening” (2012).

(l-r) Simon Ma; Laurie Simmons/Salon 94, New York; Paley Studios



Performing Arts
 Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, Del., through Sept. 21
 A survey of visual performance art in the 21st century, “Performance Now” includes work by Marina Abramovic and William Kentridge. Left, a still from Laurie Simmons's “The Music of Regret,” from 2006.



Master of Metal
 Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, through Sept. 28
 Nearly five decades of the metalsmith's career are covered in “American Metal: The Art of Albert Paley,” which features his jewelry, furniture and monumental sculpture. At left, “Evanescence Maquette,” from 2010.