

Calm, Cool and Collected

Art collector and man-about-town Adam Lindemann shares his knowledge of the contemporary market in a new book

Photograph by KATHERINE WOLKOFF

The idea for the book came to Lindemann in, of all places, Dharamsala, India, where he was attending a teaching by the Dalai Lama.

Adam Lindemann, the polo-playing media entrepreneur and New York social fixture, has coined a new term to describe himself. "I'm a 'consumptaholic,'" he says, leaning forward in one of the safety-orange Marc Newson chairs scattered about his sunny West Chelsea office. "I like to eat a lot, drink a lot. I buy vintage cars and boats and surfboards and watches. I'm a very consumptive person." Look around his workspace, a cement-floor loft in the heart of the gallery district, and it becomes clear that this accumulative urge has lately been focused on contemporary art. In front of his desk sits a piece from Damien Hirst's "Apostles" series—a partially decomposed bull's head in a clear plastic vitrine of formaldehyde. Opposite the front door is Paul McCarthy's *Chocolate Silicon Blockhead* sculpture, which Lindemann describes, somewhat bluntly, as depicting "Pinocchio taking a dump." And on the far wall hangs a steely gray Richard Prince piece, *Car Hood*, that represents for him the art-world equivalent of a hunting trophy. "It's so phallic and so much about white trash," muses the tan, blue-eyed

44-year-old. "I had to work for this piece. I had to kiss Barbara Gladstone's ass for, I think, seven months. Lunches... flowers... 20 phone calls. I think it was a record."

A record it might be, but in today's frenetic contemporary market, landing a prized piece is far more complicated than walking into a gallery and writing a check. A prospective buyer must first ingratiate himself with dealers, pay consultants, endure waiting lists and make various promises—to resell only through the gallery, to donate to a museum, to lend out for various shows. Lindemann, who has been around the art world most of his life—his billionaire parents were collectors, he spent his early 20s hanging out with Warhol and Basquiat, and he recently married gallerist Amalia Dayan—knows the ins and outs of "the game," as he often refers to it, better than most. And he's now sharing that knowledge in a book, *Collecting Contemporary*, out in September from Taschen.

The idea came to him two years ago in, of all places, Dharamsala, India, where he was attending a teaching by the Dalai Lama with one of his former college professors,



Adam Lindemann in his West Chelsea office. The orange chairs are by Marc Newson. In the corner, a sculpture by Franz West.

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Buddhist scholar—and father of Uma—Robert Thurman. (The irony of a confessed consumptaholic being interested in Tibetan Buddhism is not lost on Lindemann. When asked whether he would ever consider giving up all of his possessions in the manner of the Buddha, he jokes, “Maybe if I could be guaranteed enlightenment, but it doesn’t really work that way.”) As the Dalai Lama spoke, monks passed various items to the crowd. “There was a red string, a flower that you put on your forehead and branches to put under your pillow,” says Lindemann. “When you slept on the branch, you were supposed to have an important dream. Mine was that I would do this book, and I started to write it there in my hotel room.”

According to Lindemann, who often lapses into a stock-speak indicative of his former career in finance, the “macro theme started out as *Art Collecting for Dummies*.” The end result is infinitely more sophisticated. Inspired by Jack Schwager’s 1989 book *Market Wizards*, a volume of Q&As with top hedge fund managers, *Collecting Contemporary* is a compilation of Lindemann’s conversations with 40 art-world players. Museum of Modern Art director Glenn Lowry discusses the market influence of museum exhibitions. Larry Gagosian, Andrea Rosen and Marianne Boesky each provide the dealer’s point of view on how to gain access to good work. Most impressive of all, press-shy megacollectors like Eli Broad, Peter Brant, Charles Saatchi and François Pinault open up about their philosophies and strategies. Lindemann says he has a personal relationship with most of his subjects, but that didn’t mean getting them to talk was easy. “Pinault turned me down twice before I finally cornered him at a Christie’s event,” he says, laughing.

Interestingly, Lindemann opted not to include the artist’s point of view. “I always like to meet and get to know the artist whose work I’m collecting,” he writes in his first chapter. “The fact is, though, I don’t believe it does any good.” Lindemann calls the statement the “most conceptually powerful” in the book, but it’s also quite controversial—and it’s not the only idea likely to set tongues wagging. *Collecting Contemporary* largely deals with the art world as a marketplace, an unsavory concept to those who fear the cultural consequences of treating creative works as tradeable commodities. “Money does matter,” writes Lindemann. “No one wants to pick a loser.... The picture always looks better when someone offers you two, three or 10 times the return on your investment.”

When asked about such sentiments, Lindemann says he doesn’t subscribe to the idea of art for investment’s sake alone, but he’s also tired of it being taboo for collectors to discuss money and art in the same breath. His goal, he says, was to “try to keep some level of straight talk.”

PaceWildenstein Gallery president Marc Glimcher, a close friend of Lindemann’s whose interview is included in the book, thinks Lindemann accomplishes what he set out to do. “He exposes the sort of age-old paradox of art, which is that it’s not about money and it is about money,” says Glimcher, “and that paradox is pretty central to the history of art and especially to right now, with the art world functioning at such a high pitch.”

According to Amy Cappellazzo, Christie’s international cohead of postwar and contemporary art who has known Lindemann for a decade, his ability to figure out whom to listen to and when is what makes him such a successful collector. “He’s someone that other collectors watch because he’s very good at gauging where the market will be and which artists have staying power,” she says. “It’s a combination of having a good eye and having a good ear.”

Such skills have also served Lindemann well in the business world. After majoring in Latin American literature at Amherst College and earning a law degree from Yale, Lindemann eventually started his own investment firm, Lindemann Capital Partners. In 1998, with seed money from his father, businessman George Lindemann, he founded Mega

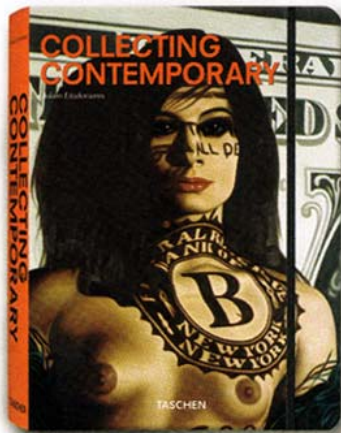
Communications, a chain of 20 Spanish-language radio stations that he has since largely sold off. His current business venture is a partnership with acclaimed designer Marc Newson. The two, who met three years ago through mutual friends, are currently at work on the relaunch of Newson’s Ikepod watch line, a collection of oversize timepieces that have a cult following among design aficionados.

“For me, there are different phases in life,” says Lindemann of his varied résumé. “Some people like to ride their bicycle, and they’ll ride their bicycle forever. I like to be stimulated, and I’m a junkie for learning.” Glimcher goes so far as to characterize his friend as something of an intellectual. “He’s a really smart guy. It’s a big secret that he doesn’t want anyone to know,” jokes the gallerist. “He’s a polymath disguised as a playboy.”

But Lindemann’s playboy days appear to be behind him. This past June he married Dayan, whose gallery, Bortolami Dayan, is around the corner from his office. The granddaughter of the late Israeli defense minister Moshe Dayan, the stunning 33-year-old met Lindemann, who at the time was married to socialite Elizabeth Lindemann, about four years ago, while working at Phillips de Pury & Luxembourg auction house. (Lindemann’s subsequent divorce from his first wife, with whom he has three daughters, received much attention in the society gossip pages.) The wedding, attended by 150 guests, including Uma Thurman, her father and scores of art-world bigwigs, took place in an ancient synagogue in Jerusalem’s Old City, with a reception that featured a rock show by one of Dayan’s cousins. The bride wore custom-made Lanvin.

After a honeymoon in Israel, the two returned to their sprawling apartment in the Time Warner building. Full of blue-chip works by contemporary stars like Hirst, Takashi Murakami, and Tim Noble and Sue Webster, the place is equal parts home and museum. According to Lindemann, the same will be true of the couple’s next residence, an ultramodern Upper East Side town house they’re building—from the ground up—with hot London architect David Adjaye. “It’s going to be a very new and different concept of living. The real purpose and focus will be housing and displaying art, and the actual features of a home will be sort of built around that. It looks,” he says, pointing to a model of the place that sits on his office windowsill, “a bit like the Whitney.”

—JENNY COMITA



PaceWildenstein Gallery’s Marc Glimcher describes Lindemann as “a polymath disguised as a playboy.”