

The Collectors

Agnes Gund



Agnes Gund, an ARTnews Top 200 collector, has said she believes that art “is a right, not a privilege,” and this belief has been the driving force behind her philanthropic endeavors in the art world for over four decades. Serving on the board of numerous museums and foundations (she is President emerita of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and current chair of its International Council, Gund also chairs the Mayor’s Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission of the City of New York and serves on the boards of the Frick Collection, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and the Barnes Foundation. She served on the board of the J. Paul Getty Trust from 1994 to 2006) Gund typically gives between \$6 million and \$7 million a year through her AG Foundation, which has also donated hundreds of works to the Museum of Modern Art in New York and other museums. On top of these generous contributions, she has made it possible for 30,000 students, 90 percent of whom are under-privileged, to receive over 45,000 hours of art education a year through Studio in a School, a nonprofit organization which she founded in 1977.

Her personal collection of over 2,000 works spans from 1940 to the present and includes pieces by Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Richard Serra, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Frank Stella, John Baldessari, and many more. (A visit to her New York City apartment is tantamount to a visit to a modern art museum.) Gund’s interest in contemporary art is compounded by her interest in contemporary artists themselves, many of whom she knows personally. Ellsworth Kelly once said of Gund, “Everyone falls in love with her. You can tell her I’m in love with her.” In 2017, Gund sold a \$150 million Lichtenstein painting from her collection to start the Art for Justice Fund, which will give grants to organizations working on criminal justice reform. The buyer of the Lichtenstein painting was Steven A. Cohen, who is also an ARTnews Top 200 collector.