

Collector Conversations

Chicago Gallery News continues its series focusing on the collector. For this issue, Art critic **Alicia Eler** spent some time talking with young collectors, and new parents, **Khloe Karova & Jeff Young** about the personal experience of collecting art.

While I was sitting in Khloe and Jeff's Humboldt Park living room, my eyes wandered from Carrie Schneider's Untitled (Library)—an unnerving photograph of the artist standing uncomfortably close to her brother at a library—to Nathan Redwood's giant painting of a gnarly, twisted ship fighting the ocean. Nearby, Coco, the couple's first child, alternately napped and cooed from her baby swing. Khloe, who studied art history at Northwestern and received her MBA from University of Chicago, and Jeff, a flash developer with a BA from Columbia College, are Chicagoans whose collection reflects both the city's gallery scene and the plethora of emerging talent.

What's the thematic or ideological focus of your collection?

Khloe: A couple years ago, I made an attempt at creating some sort of theme and being very deliberate in what to collect. I decided okay, I want oil and canvas—I'm just going to collect paintings. Or I wanted still-lives, or something abstract. Everything I've bought has nothing to do with that original agenda. If I were to impose a theme, it would be mostly Chicago artists who have received an MFA or BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC).



Carrie Schneider's *Untitled (Library)* from her 2006-2007 *Derelict Self* series

The first work in your collection that I recognized was Carrie Schneider's *Untitled (Library)* from her 2006-2007 *Derelict Self* series. How did you discover this piece?

Jeff: We saw Carrie's work at Art Chicago. I noticed the work, & then the next day Khloe mentioned that she was looking at work by this artist, Carrie Schneider, who works with images of her with her brother. I knew right away that we were talking about the same artist.

Clearly her work made an impression on us—we both have one other sibling, though I'm a little closer in age to my brother than Khloe is. When I first looked at the work, I didn't even realize that they were brother & sister—these two people are standing really close to each other. She's obviously saying something about her relationship to this person, to a man, and when you find out they're siblings, you're surprised.

Which artists in your collection create works that recall certain art historical periods?

Khloe: Nathan Redwood. He's a painterly artist, and formally he's very skilled. He has a sense of perspective that's almost like a Van Gogh, but there's also a sort of raised up perspective that you'd get in a Mary Cassatt, so in some ways it defaults into Impressionist or post-Impressionist. Formally, it's interesting, and easy to digest. Technically speaking, he's a painter who is very much about materials and experimenting with paint. You can touch his canvases and everything is perfectly smooth. I thought, here's someone who is so into his art that he is trying to devise new materials for his working. As a collector, you definitely want to buy someone who has some staying power and who is committed to the work. After meeting the artist, I felt like his paintings strongly convey a sense of who he is. Nathan's a trained carpenter. I get that sense in his work, of construction, deconstruction, tearing things apart and putting them back together in a different way.

Tell me about work you own by Su-en Wong, another SAIC MFA graduate.

Khloe: I saw myself in Su-en Wong's piece, *Recess* (2007)—those little Asian girls in their Catholic schoolgirl uniforms. There's a sort of autoerotic aspect to it, and this is the only artist I know of who is going to create that response in me. I first saw her work at Danese Gallery in New York. I wanted it and I regretted not buying it. I thought okay, I've got to commit to that, and I lived with that for years. Then I saw her at Art Chicago—Zolla/Lieberman was also representing her. **Jeff:** That was the quickest sale, I think, in history. Literally, Khloe saw it and was like I want that. The gallery assistant said okay. We bought it and walked away.



Khloe and Jeff at home with Su-en Wong's *Recess*

I noticed you two have mostly painting, drawing, photography and sculpture in your collection. What are your thoughts on video art?

Jeff: I would say I'm kind of warming up to it, and I've gained a lot more tolerance for it. As I see it, the problem is that you could easily upload any video art to YouTube. The video pieces I really respond to are more in part three-dimensional—not so much the straight video. One of the coolest video installation pieces I remember is one in which the artist laid a bunch of books down on the floor, arranged fans to blow the pages of the books and then projected video onto the books. I really enjoyed this interplay between the material and the video.

Do you have a strategy for scouting & collecting art?

Khloe: I don't want to say it's impulsive, but we'll go to fairs or gallery openings, and there's a chance we'll buy something. I think it's more of an adventure. We don't know if we're going to buy something. But maybe the artist will be there, and perhaps after getting to know the artist we'll take a second look.

District Tours & Walks

1st Thursdays

River North / West Loop Galleries

Monthly. Participating galleries open 5-7pm.
www.chicagoartdealers.org

1st Fridays

MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art)

6-10pm (see website for ticket info)
www.mcachicago.org

Flat Iron Arts Building

6-10pm • 1579 N. Milwaukee
www.wpbfirstfriday.com

2nd Fridays

Pilsen East / The Chicago Arts District

6-10pm • S. Halsted & 18th St. (Pilsen East)
www.chicagoartsdistrict.org

Fine Arts Building Open Studios

4:30-9:30pm • 410 S. Michigan
www.myspace.com/fineartsbuildingstudios

3rd Fridays

Oak Park Arts District (OPAD)

6-9pm • Harrison St.
www.shopoakpark.com/opad

Saturday Mornings

Saturday Morning Gallery Tours

• *River North:* meet @ 750 N. Franklin 11-12:30
• *West Loop:* Call for dates and info. 1:30-3pm
www.chicagoartdealers.org Tel 312 649 0065