

Art in his genes

By Lydia Martin

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MARICE COHN BAND / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Over Hadley Fisher's bed hangs a neon text piece, "When I Think About Sex" by Tracy Emin. Hadley Fisher is an art collector. He recently moved to a South Beach condo, where he and his wife, Katherine, live. They hope to exhibit their art in rotating shows that would be open to the public.

Growing up in New York, Hadley Fisher was mesmerized by contemporary art the way other kids were by comic books and video games. There was a gem of a Picasso in his grandmother's living room, an Ed Ruscha in her foyer, a Francesco Clemente in the hall on the way to the bathroom.

Her passion for discovering the next great artist rubbed off on Fisher, who recently moved to South Beach with his wife Katherine, schlepping along their own budding art collection with an eye toward weaving in a few local artists. He plans to buy a large enough home here to hang everything and then open their doors to the community's art lovers and art students for

shows, workshops and informal gatherings. Eventually, he'd like to open a public space in Miami, he says.

As Fisher gobbles up art – he did some damage at Art Basel last week – he keeps in mind everything his grandmother taught him. Emily Fisher Landau, a major philanthropist and art collector who in 1991 opened the Fisher Landau Center for Art in a former parachute-harness factory in Queens to house her impressive collection, and earlier this year pledged 367 works worth an estimated \$50 million to \$75 million to the Whitney Museum (by biggies such as Carl Andre, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Kiki Smith and Andy Warhol), always did her homework on every artist and every piece.

She visited studios, kept close relationships with certain emerging figures, strictly followed the rule about maintaining your own voice as you build a collection. And she was always conscious about supporting young artists and helping them advance. Fisher, 40, who also followed his family into the real estate business, is particularly obsessed with the latter.

"I moved to Miami because there's a pretty strong art scene here. There are some really great cultural things beginning to happen here and my wife and I thought it would be a great place to raise our kids," he says as he takes you around their current apartment, a luxe

two-bedroom on the ocean filled with art that is just an excerpt from their collection.

Among the works not stuck in storage: a John Baldessari by the dinner table, a Sean Landers and a couple of Annette Kelms in the baby's room, a Johannes Wahnseiffer on the way to the master bedroom, a Nathalie Djurberg claymation video playing in the living room and another in the master bath.

"I buy art from all over the world. But there are so many great Miami artists that I'm just starting to look at. I love Pablo Cano," Fisher says.

"I'm very slow and methodical in the way I do things. So it's going to take some time. But I want to add some Miami artists to my collection and foster relationships between local artists and artists from all over. I want to open my home, bring down one of the more established artists that I collect so that they can engage with some of Miami's younger artists. I think it's important to not just buy art because it's a good investment, but to also help along some of the really promising emerging artists around you. And there seems to be a lot of them in Miami."

Besides seeing the opportunity to establish himself as an art collector here, Fisher was also drawn to Miami by family history.

"My grandfather Martin owned a few hotels here in the '40s and '50s. The Shelborne, the Betsy Ross, the Sherry Frontenac. My grandparents got married at the Shelborne. Life could have been very different if they hadn't met and gotten married."

After picking up 25 pieces between the Miami Beach Convention Center and few of the satellite fairs, including Pulse, Art Miami and NADA last week during Art Basel, he hit the streets with his art advisor, Kimberly Marrero, to check out work by some locals.

"He was very emphatic about dividing his time between hitting the fairs and visiting the studios of Miami artists," says Marrero, who is based in New York. "The international art world focuses on Berlin, Paris, New York. Miami has a great art scene that is still waiting to be discovered. Hadley is very interested in how well Miami artists are networked, how they work together and inspire one another. And so many exciting cultures come together in Miami. The rest of the world hasn't caught on about Miami's art scene yet. They're going to be sorry they waited so long."

Fisher and Marrero hit the recently opened LegalArt in downtown Miami, which provides affordable live/work spaces for artists through a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. They spent a good chunk of time chatting with Aramis Gutierrez and Doug Crocco, who had a joint exhibition there, and they hung out with Monica and Tasha Lopez de Victoria, aka the TM Sisters, in their studio upstairs.

"When Hadley saw their work Superpowers, he practically fell on the floor," Marrero says. "It's an amazing piece that references so many of Miami's artists. There really is a family of artists in Miami. Of course they're competitive, but they celebrate each other's successes. [In the piece] they stand in front of a green screen and imagine they were each handed a

superpower. In it are Bert Rodriguez, Jen Stark, Bhakti Baxter, Naomi Fisher and several others. Hadley bought the piece on the spot and now is talking about investigating all of the artists in it.”

There’s another reason Fisher is devoted to supporting emerging artists: his brother Andrew , who had studied art at the State University of New York-Purchase and showed great promise before he was killed in a car accident at 21.

“Without art, our society would be very bleak. If I can help some artists get to where they want to go in life, and I can do it in my brother’s name, I get more out of that than anything,” Fisher says.