

SARA SOBNOWY

ART FOR THE AGES

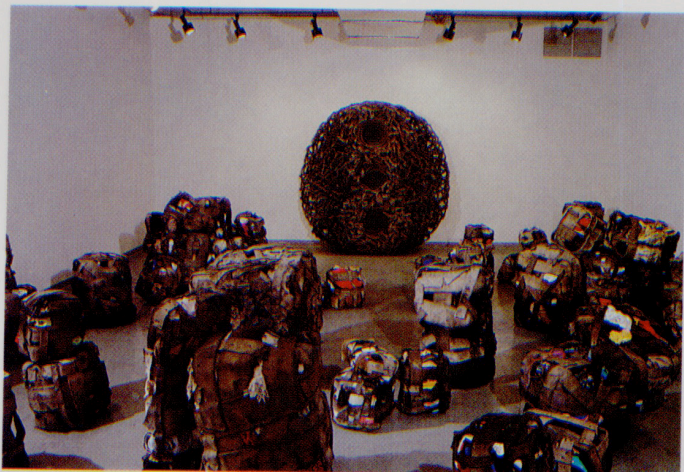
THOMAS HOVING PICKS A COLLECTION OF AMERICAN ARTISTS WHO MAY BE THE PICASSOS AND MONETS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

by Thomas Hoving

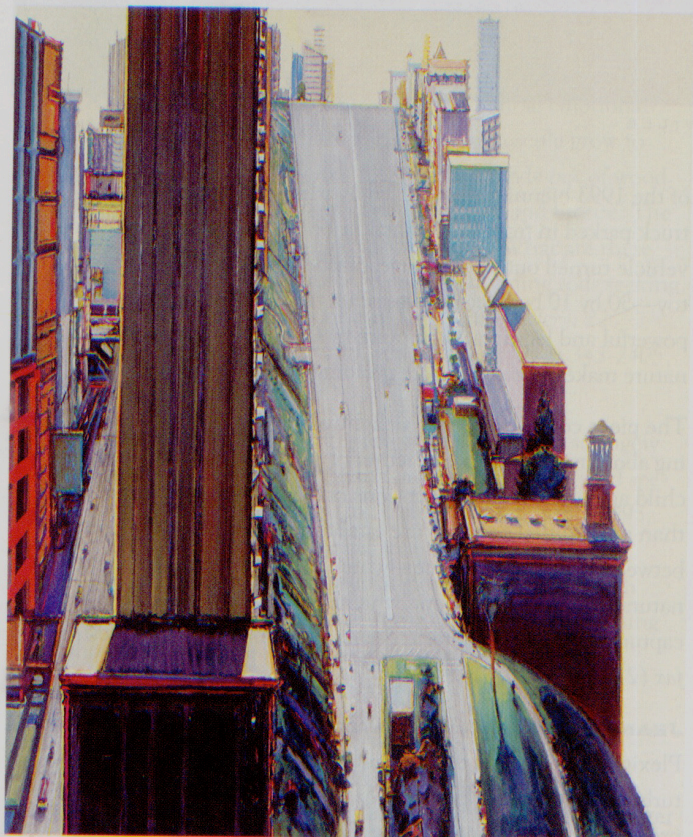
CIGAR AFICIONADO



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NARI WARD



WAYNE THIEBAUD

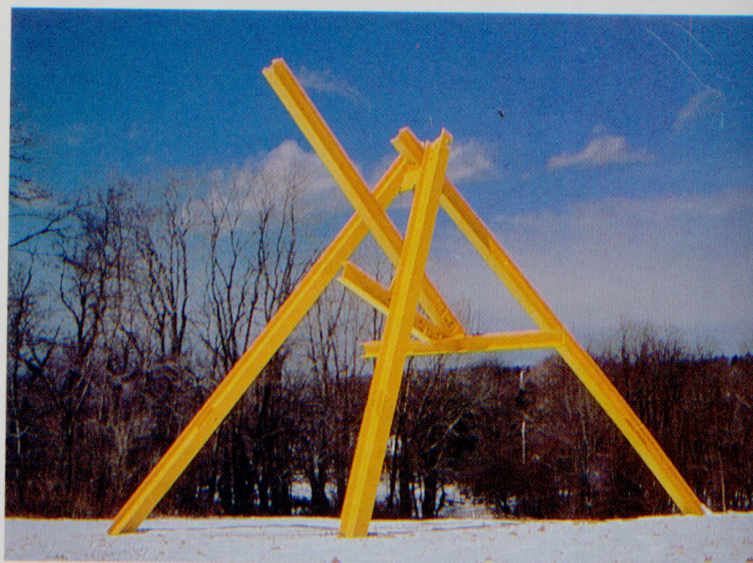
The question I'm asked most often is, "Who are the finest artists alive in America today that I should collect? You know, for investment?"

My answer is in two parts: Never buy art for investment, only for love and to enrich your soul; and always collect contemporaries the way the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, Alfred Barr, did—with an intense contempt for acquiring what's chic at the moment or "stylish" or representative of some style.

Whatever one thinks of the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, most people generally agree that Barr bought the best and most diverse examples of paintings and sculptures of his day. He was enormously proud of the way he acquired works without giving much of a hoot about individual



ERIC FISCHL



MARK DI SUVERO

styles. He chased after specific works of excellence and punch, and landed them.

I remember him telling me with justifiable pride about how—in a month's time—he would bring into the collections works by Picasso, Miró, Picabia, Dalí, Peter Blume, Yves Tanguy and Andrew Wyeth. Whether a work was abstract or surreal or even magic realism realist wasn't the point; only the power and superiority of the individual piece counted.

That's how to drive for an incomparable collection.

Who are the absolutely prime artists working today? Who should you buy now so that your grandchildren can dangle their wills before the covetous eyes of the biggest museums in the land, and be wine and dined for the rest of their lives at the nation's greatest museums and the toniest homes of museum trustees?



REZ WILLIAMS

WAYNE THIEBAUD. He's great, primarily, because he defies being categorized. He was once mistakenly even branded a pop artist. Thiebaud is a painterly magician who transforms the most banal objects—things like mens' ties, round cakes or candy apples—into adventurous admixtures of the real, the abstract and the mysterious. The ties are far more than a jumble of colorful cravats; they form a turbulent environment, a cluster of ravines and sharp cliffs one might encounter in the back country of northern Arizona. And his landscapes of San Francisco are vertiginous, cruel and dramatic impressions of the urban scene, rich surges of painterly bravado, as unnerving as the first shocks of an earthquake. The 1993 oil on canvas on page 215—a full five feet by four feet—is a heady example of his incomparable portraits of one of the world's unique cities. *Wayne Thiebaud, 1617 Seventh Avenue, Sacramento, California 95818, phone (916) 447-4980*

JENNIFER PASTOR. There are hundreds of artists out there who make enormous constructions out of plastic, paper, wood, glass, bronze bits—you name it—but few have any inner passion. Pastor does. *Richard Telles Fine Art, 7380 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90036, fax (213) 965-5579*

REZ WILLIAMS. He paints out of West Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard, but he's about as far from one of those sticky-sweet chroniclers of island life and times as one can get. His scenes of the

Vineyard smash into your eyes like crescendos. The spaces warp and move. The colors clash and rebound. You gaze at something like "Gay Head Light" (above) for a few seconds and you get out of breath. Williams is light-years beyond the Vineyard, yet no one has distilled it better. *Rez Williams, P.O. Box 3143, West Tisbury, Massachusetts 02575, phone (508) 693-1253*

MATTHEW BARNEY. The artist is one of the most bewildering, inchoate, agonizingly frustrating image-makers in the world today. As the art writer Jerry Saltz has so aptly pointed out, Barney is a kind of "athlete-aesthete who crafts psychosexual works" of the most gripping quality. Writes Saltz: "It's as if Rube Goldberg, Charles Atlas, Paul Bunyan, Audie Murphy and the Marquis de Sade teamed up to make art." *Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 99 Greene Street, New York, New York 10012, fax 212-966-9310*

CATHERINE OPIE. She creates photographs of the most arresting variety—troubling, dark, yet gifted images of flesh engraved and wounded, such as her self-portraits in the guise of afflicted and out-cast members of American society who don't seem to care in the least. Her works are arresting and curiously universal for all their arcane weirdness. *Stuart Regen Gallery, Inc., 629 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069, phone (310) 276-5424, fax (310) 276-7430*