



"Since I was 18 my presents have always been artworks and I just continued," says Garance Massart. Jeff Topping /The National

## An art expert with a niche of her own

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As the daughter of a famous French auctioneer, Garance Massart initially resisted working in the art world. But she eventually cut a niche for herself advising individual and corporate clients on art purchases. Ms Massart, who splits her time between Switzerland, where she is based, and Dubai, where she owns property, speaks about how she transformed a hobby of collecting art into a career.

### You started collecting art when you were 18. That is quite a young age, is it not?

Since I was 18 my presents have always been artworks and I just continued. My mother, Marie France Massart, was the first woman auctioneer in France.

### How many pieces do you own now?

Over 100. But there are some things that are very valuable and some things that are not valuable.

### What is your most valuable work?

I sold it. [It was by Anselm] Kiefer. A lot of people didn't like it. It was dark red and brown with dried-up flowers. I was worried they were going to fall off. I quadrupled my money.

### How much did you sell it for?

Almost €1 million (Dh4.6m).

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**You have also made a career out of your hobby. How?**

I was against working in the art world because my mother had just done so much. I didn't want to be a dealer. I didn't want to be an auctioneer. I didn't want to have a gallery ... so I started advising. Now I am doing corporate art programmes.

**How do you choose artworks for a company?**

You try to find the mission and the vision of the company and the philosophy and the culture. And you try to find a programme that fits in with what they want; yet you find good art.

**Are you doing anything here?**

I am working on that. We are very far from a green light. If it happens, it will be huge. At the moment we are doing a corporation in Germany where we are working with Middle Eastern artists.

**Do you prefer to work with companies or people?**

It's a lot more work and a lot less money [with companies] because the time invested is a lot longer, but [it is] much more fulfilling, because I site specific artworks. If I buy for a private client, I go to a fair or an auction. There's no creative process. What I am doing now is I am creating the art programme. I am the curator of that building.

**Why would a business collect art and show art?**

For reputation and for acquiring new clients - for many reasons: to be innovative, to be on the brink of the future, to be differer from others, to stand out from your competitors and to have a better environment for your employees. It has been proven that art in the work environment increases the work ethic. Companies that have artworks have employees who are happier and work better. That's why a lot of companies are doing it now.

\* Gillian Duncan

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