

Lessons for novice art buyers in Japanese collectors' Hong Kong show

Works from private collections of seven connoisseurs who were among the early buyers of Asian contemporary art shown in exhibition at Hong Kong Arts Centre to coincide with Art Basel

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Novice art buyers can get inspiration from Japanese collectors before hitting the art fairs in Hong Kong this week. The Hong Kong Arts Centre is showing dozens of pieces picked from seven private collections, reflecting the tastes of connoisseurs such as Yoshiko Mori, owner of Tokyo's Mori Art Museum, Ryutaro Takahashi, a psychiatrist who has amassed 2,500 pieces over the past two decades, and Keita Arisawa, the Hong Kong-based hedge fund manager known for his extensive collection of photographic art.



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The selection ranges from Yayoi Kusama's *Hi, Konnichiwa*, large statues of a dog and a girl in polka dots which usually greet visitors at Takahashi's clinic, to Kwan Sheung-chi's *One Million (Japanese Yen)*, a video work owned by Daisuke Miyatsu.



The show is part of the arts centre's annual Collectors' Contemporary Collaboration project, an exhibition-cum-symposium that brings international collectors and some of their favourite art to Hong Kong ahead of Art Basel week. Japanese collectors have been buying art longer than most of their Asian peers because the country's economy took off earlier. In the 1980s, they became known for outbidding Western collectors for paintings by impressionists and modern masters, but since 2000, interest in more cutting-edge, contemporary, art has been on the rise.



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Connie Lam, executive director of the arts centre, said she was struck by their dedication to the art of collecting. "For instance, they invite artists to design their own apartments and workplaces, and spend a lot of their own time nurturing both local and international young artists. In addition, the collectors have a clear philosophy behind what they do," she said. The exhibition is curated by Fumio Nanjo, director of the Mori Art Museum, and Roger McDonald, deputy director and founding member of Arts Initiative Tokyo.



Intimate Curiosity - Invitation to Japanese Collectors of Contemporary Art, Pao Galleries, Hong Kong Arts Centre, 2 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Mon-Sun 10am-8pm. Ends April 10