

[Corel PaintShop Pro X5](#) Corel's Latest Photo-Editing Suite. Try It For Free at Official Site! [Corel.com/AU](#)

[GE Money Personal Loans](#) Easy Applications in Less Than 15 Minutes - Online or Over the Phone. [www.GEMoney.com.au](#)

[\\$600 Cash Loans | 1 Hour](#) Get \$600 Cash in 60 Minutes. Faster Approval. 5-Minute Signup! [CashDoctors.com.au/Cash-](#) AdChoices

# Cash Finance

www.cashfinance.com.au

[Home](#) [News](#)

## Paint X Numbers

*Sydney Morning Herald*

Thursday June 28, 2007

Meg Stewart

They spend their cash on art and their time in galleries. Meg Stewart talks to four very different art buyers about their carefully crafted - and much loved - collections.

### The Eclectic Collector

Neil Balnaves, former executive chairman of the Southern Star entertainment company and founder of the Balnaves Foundation, a charitable trust that supports the fields of medicine and creativity in arts, particularly sculpture.

"I've got a bit of a crush on Streeton," announces Neil Balnaves as he stands in the "Streeton room" of his Mosman home, flower paintings by the famous Australian impressionist Sir Arthur Streeton all around him.

Balnaves's pleasure in his "disparate" art collection is palpable and infectious. He's tickled pink by the charming early 20th-century Ethel Carrick Fox beach painting he acquired at a Sotheby's auction in May and he chuckles with pleasure over Rosalie Gascoigne's Murrumbidgee Venus, which came from Deutscher and Hackett's inaugural fine art auction held the same month. Half the art in the house, he estimates, has been bought at auction; the other half purchased from galleries.

Gascoigne's prices have jumped considerably since her death in 1999, with significant works fetching six-figure sums. She is also an artist whose sensibility Balnaves particularly relishes. Murrumbidgee Venus (definitely not a high-price-range example) was a birthday present for his wife, Diane. The circa 1975 headless Aussie goddess is a tongue-in-cheek tribute to the famous Greek Venus De Milo. She has weathered timber in place of the ancient statue's broken arms and wears a cut-up cream sweater. Balnaves loves the work's "humour", while Diane "is still getting over it", he jokes.

As for the Carrick Fox (an artist also currently undergoing a posthumous buying revival but whose prices don't nearly reach Gascoigne's top sums), this will join his "Mosman collection". He's putting together a group of paintings relating to Mosman from the 1860s through to the 1950s that will eventually be donated to the Mosman Art Gallery, "so kids can see what an artist's eye of the neighbourhood they live in was like, maybe 100 years ago".

Balnaves, 63, came from an "average family in Adelaide" and grew up with "very little" understanding of art, which, he admits, may account for the zeal that brought his Mosman collection to life. In the 1960s and '70s, he and Diane "bought the odd Dickerson and a couple of little Pro Harts" but it wasn't until about 15 years ago that the bug really bit. Balnaves is best known for his public support of sculpture but equal amounts of paintings and sculpture fill the house. Most works would have cost thousands of dollars. But all, Balnaves says, were bought out of "love" and never as an investment.

A brightly coloured, textured Michael Johnson abstract from the late 1980s occupies a whole wall in the living room (the wall was built to accommodate its width) and big, established names of Australian art such as William Robinson, Margaret Olley and Ray Crooke are prominently displayed. The collection also includes a striking large black, white and red painting by Ningura Napurrula, whose work is on show at the Paris Musee du Quai Branly.

The sculptures are casually positioned. A mesh ellipse by the late Bronwyn Oliver rests on the floor beside a couch. A William Robinson beach ceramic - complete with lumpy, swimming-costumed bodies - sits on a coffee table.

But the piece de resistance is Robert Klippel's Cynthia, a tall, slender metal assemblage. Balnaves had owned a small model of this work before he bought Opus 266b (as the sculpture is formally titled) at Christie's farewell auction in 2006, where it had an estimated

### News Archive

• [Latest News](#)

#### 2010

• [January](#) [1]

#### 2009

• [January](#) [1]

#### 2008

- [November](#) [6]
- [October](#) [7]
- [September](#) [2]
- [July](#) [4]
- [June](#) [5]
- [May](#) [3]
- [April](#) [5]
- [March](#) [13]
- [February](#) [6]
- [January](#) [1]

#### 2007

- [December](#) [8]
- [November](#) [2]
- [October](#) [5]
- [September](#) [4]
- [August](#) [12]
- [July](#) [8]
- [June](#) [7]
- [May](#) [3]
- [April](#) [1]
- [March](#) [6]
- [February](#) [7]
- [January](#) [3]

### Featured Payday Loan Lender



Cash Doctors is one of Australia's leading short term lenders. They have helped thousands of Australian's overcome short term financial difficulties by offering instant cash loans.



You can submit a payday loan application online with Cash Doctors for loans of **\$100 - \$600**.

A Cash Doctors Payday loan application will only be approved if submitted by people who have been employed for at least **3 months** and are paid more than **\$350 per week** net after rent/mortgage repayments have been taken into account.

Payday loans are paid directly into your bank account **within the hour**.

Cash Doctors **do not require any paperwork** from you to approve your loan. This is a completely faxless payday loan with your details confirmed with your payroll officer before approval of your payday loan is granted.



## NEED CASH?

Get up to \$600 in 60 minutes.

- ✔ 5 minute application
- ✔ Just 60 minute payment
- ✔ First time costs 1 cent

▶ APPLY NOW  
CLICK HERE

selling price of \$90,000 plus.

In the courtyard pool are two granite whorls made from a single piece of stone that Balnaves commissioned from Keizo Ushio, the internationally recognised Japanese sculptor who exhibits at Sculpture By The Sea. The Bondi to Bronte exhibition was also where he discovered Alexander Seton's work. In 2004, Seton exhibited a life-size marble couch complete with wrinkled bottom indentations called The Modern Panopticon and Balnaves tips the artist as one to watch.

When Neil and Diane set up the Balnaves Foundation, one of the reasons they focused on sculpture was because it did not seem to be receiving the prize money and exhibition opportunities that were afforded to painting in Australia. As well as being exhibition patron for Sculpture By The Sea, the foundation currently funds the annual Balnaves Foundation Sculpture Projects at the Art Gallery of NSW and is this year also supporting Callum Morton's exhibition in the Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in Italy.

"I just think Australia's such a fertile country for ideas and creativity," says Balnaves. "Nowhere in the world do the elements - the sea, the sky and the land forms - and the sculpture come together so beautifully, I think, as Sculpture By The Sea."

The Contemporary Collector

Emma McDonald, general counsel, Austereo Group.

As she walks from painting to painting in her inner-city terrace, Emma McDonald explains that she began collecting Lucy Cullitons when the artist had just finished studying at the National Art School in 1996. Since then, she has tried to buy something from every series Culliton has done. "I seem to have a propensity for choosing paintings with pink or red in them," says McDonald. "Lucy paints all her boards pink first so even if the colour's not pink, pink always comes through."

McDonald now owns 19 paintings by Culliton, whom The Sydney Morning Herald art critic John McDonald (no relation to Emma) recently hailed as "simply one of the most talented painters in this country". "It was never a conscious decision to start collecting art," says Emma. "To buy, to have paintings, yes. But not to collect. I get so much pleasure from having paintings on the wall. They give me colour and light."

McDonald's living space is shared with her partner, Stephen Peach, the CEO of the Australian Recording Industry Association, his son, Declan, his daughter, Sophie, her two sons, Ben and Joe, and Charlie, a dog with a very loud bark. Thanks to McDonald's predilection for art, the interior sings. Apart from the paintings hanging everywhere - there's even one in the loo - her love of colour is clearly evident around the house. The tiles in the kitchen are bright green and, as she laughingly points out, the toaster is red.

It was colour that first attracted McDonald to Culliton, as well as subject matter. Among her Culliton collection are two early postcard-sized nudes of a woman lying on a sofa, a restful Hartley landscape, one each of Culliton's joyous cake and cactus paintings, a sublimely simple study of a pair of scissors and a pink knitted pig from Culliton's 2007 exhibition.

McDonald's passion for art is not surprising. Her mother is Janet McDonald AO, who was a trustee of the Powerhouse Museum of Applied Arts and Science. Donald McDonald AC, her father, is the arts administrator who was chairman of the ABC from 1996 to early 2007. McDonald, now in her late 30s, grew up surrounded by her parents' "eclectic collection of art". But she is quick to stress that she "never deliberately intended" following in her parents' footsteps.

In the 1990s, when McDonald first started buying art, her budget was a few hundred dollars per artwork and she allowed herself two purchases a year. These days, she tries to set an individual price limit of \$3000 but the yearly number of splurges has crept up. Besides Cullitons, McDonald's collection is made up of lively works by artists who are mostly at the start of their mid careers. Many - such as Michael Bell, Franck Gohier and contemporary Chinese watercolourist Li Jin - exhibit at the Ray Hughes Gallery. Hughes's taste seems to "coincide" with her own, McDonald says.

However, the painting that really knocks her out is, of course, a Culliton. A large work (currently on loan to the touring Cuisine & Country exhibition) titled Oranges and painted in 2000, it's made up of 16 enticing individual images - citrus fruits, persimmons and pawpaws in zinging oranges, yellows and limes - that spill onto each other.

McDonald is adamant she'll continue collecting Culliton. "There is something very satisfying about following the career of an artist right from the start and being able to reflect upon how their work grows and changes with time," she says.

"I would like to find more artists like her."

The Compulsive Collector

Roddy Meagher, retired Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW and consulting barrister.

"I haven't got nearly enough paintings," Roddy Meagher enunciates richly. "If you would give

me another 30 Cossington Smiths and another 30 Fairweathers, it would make me a much more placid person."

Meagher, who owns 17 Cossington Smiths - 18 if you count the one that is painted on both sides - has been described as brilliant, eccentric and unashamedly politically incorrect. He pads down a long hall, hung floor to ceiling with paintings. The hall is just for starters. The three floors of his Darling Point home are similarly crammed with the spoils of his mania for art, along with a few other collectables, such as a dazzling array of ties behind a door on the second floor.

"I adore art," intones the 75-year-old barrister, who has never bought a painting for its potential value or sold one to make money. He has no idea what his collection is worth and acquires each painting "because I want to look at it".

He describes his collecting as "an absolute obsession" that is now out of hand.

Meagher's first purchase, bought when he was an arts student at the University of Sydney, was a monotype by Paul Haefliger, the artist and modernist art critic of the 1940s and '50s. The romantic study of two women's heads beside a vase of flowers "was displayed in a dear little shop in Rowe Street run by Lady [Marion] Hall Best", Meagher recalls nostalgically. It cost him 12 guineas and he "paid for it 10 shillings a week".

For his next buy, a smallish oil titled Trojan Theme (coincidentally by Haefliger's wife, the neo-classicist painter and respected teacher Jean Bellette), he queued on the steps of Macquarie Galleries in Bligh Street from 4.30am to be first in line when one of the gallery's famous Show Of Sixes opened at 10. These exhibitions began in the early 1950s and featured works by artists such as William Dobell, Donald Friend and Russell Drysdale. Priced at six guineas, the paintings always provoked decorous jostling between art lovers.

These days, Meagher's collection - which has taken him more than 50 years to accumulate - is split between his Darling Point abode and another house at Bowral. It begins with two Greek pots dated between 500 and 400BC, a Cypriot pot also "well before BC" and a Greek or Roman - nobody quite knows which - male torso that lives on the kitchen table at Darling Point. He has four Vuillards (he'd like more of those, too), three works on paper by Toulouse-Lautrec and one work on paper by Rodin. He found these four in the 1960s wrapped in a dirty bundle on the floor of the auction house Lawsons and snapped them up for \$5.

"I could never afford a Tom Roberts or an Arthur Streeton," he states. "I buy what appeals to me if and only if I can manage to afford it. It's a constant struggle against desperate poverty." Barristers, he says, when questioned about his dearth of finances, "are a very poverty stricken section of the community". Income tax, as well as day-to-day domestic expenses, has also curbed his spending on art, he grumbles.

But he does have his Rupert Bunnys, Roland Wakelins and those Cossington Smiths to console him. Of Cossington Smith, he declares admiringly: "She's seen Cezanne and she's applied the message. She's never copied Cezanne but she knows what it's all about. I think she's marvellous."

There has been "a tendency to the traditional" in what he has collected, he concedes. He "loves" the work of those artists who painted in Sydney in the 1940s, such as Margaret Olley. Also on his walls are two works by the reclusive genius Ian Fairweather, John Coburn's shapes of pure colour, a tiny Brett Whiteley sketch of a bird and three oil paintings by the great landscape sensualist Lloyd Rees. All were bought when the artists were less recognised and the works nowhere near as expensive as now. Equally treasured are paintings by less appreciated artists like Francis Lyburner.

Contemporary acquisitions vary from Cressida Campbell's lyrical woodcuts to jaunty fish sculptures by Pete Baka. He is also fond of works by Aboriginal artists including Jimmy Pike, Eunice Napanangka and George Tjumu Tjapaltjarri. The Robin Gibson Gallery in Darlinghurst is a favourite haunt because its prices are "more affordable", he says, adding that he still occasionally pays for his purchases in instalments. Meagher tends to avoid auctions because he doesn't trust himself not to get carried away.

Missed opportunities do nag at him. Many years ago, due to a lack of funds, he had to forgo "a lovely Dobell" of a woman sitting on the edge of a bed pulling on thick black stockings.

Meagher is always on the lookout for new artists. In April, he bought a "brilliant, strong, abstract drawing" by Dave Hickson, titled Annandale Wheelie. The Hickson drawing cost a few hundred dollars and came from the Hardware Gallery in Enmore, which focuses on emerging artists.

Melbourne painter Steven Cox, whose works range in price from a few hundred to several thousand, also has his attention.

He describes Cox's riveting, close-up studies of young men with titles such as The Thug, in which badness and beauty are combined, as "realist plus, plus, plus". "If it moves you," enthuses Meagher, "if it gives you a jolt and you think 'Crikey!' then you're on the way to being hooked."

### The International Collector

David Coe, executive chairman of Allco Finance Group, chairman of the Museum of Contemporary Art and board member of the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation and the National Gallery of Australia Foundation.

The offices of Allco are high in a building at Macquarie Place. The reception area is tastefully decorated - lots of cream and dark wood. An arrangement of red anthurium flowers and cactus sits on a desk resembling transparent marble. Behind the desk a nearby skyscraper is perfectly framed by a long window. But what catches the eye is elsewhere.

Almost entirely covering one wall are the rippling, mesmerising lines in soft ochre, pink, mauve and blue of a painting by indigenous artist Minnie Pwerle. Pwerle began painting in her 70s. In less than 10 years - and before her death in 2006 - she gained an international following and her works now sell for up to \$72,000.

David Coe owns the Pwerle as well as the half dozen or more contemporary artworks around every corner on the way to his office. Last year, the 52-year-old executive chairman of Allco was also listed by BRW magazine as one of Australia's major collectors of international contemporary art. "I didn't grow up with art," says Coe, as he sips a herbal tea and launches into a lengthy explanation of how he became fascinated by visual art. "I never studied art history. I majored in German literature at university."

Coe has no German background. His love of German literature was sparked by the writing and life of Franz Kafka. Even more influential, he adds, was an "epiphany" brought about by immersing himself in the work of the spiritual German poet Rainer Maria Rilke - in particular, Rilke's Duino Elegies. The German attraction continued after he finished university and in the mid 1970s he had "the joy" of doing postgraduate study in the German city of Bonn.

As he "struggled" with his thesis on the innovative poet Paul Celan, whose work primarily dealt with the Holocaust, he discovered a radical young German artist called Anselm Kiefer, who was using mixed media, such as straw, sand and lead, to bring to life the emotion of Celan's imagery. "I was blown away that there was this guy painting at a level so far beyond what I could do in words," recalls Coe. That, he says, was his "jumping-off point".

In the 1990s Coe travelled frequently for work and spent a lot of time in America and in London visiting galleries. "The magic is when there's that wonderful moment - you really think that in your own mind you understand what the artist's trying to convey."

The first Australian artwork he bought was an Arthur Boyd lithograph (circa late 1970s) called Jinker On A Sandbank, in which a stick figure driving a primitive sulky is contrasted with the enormity of a Shoalhaven riverscape. The first international artwork he purchased was, as you might expect, a Kiefer.

Although it is said that he has owned a Henry Moore sculpture and also has works by American abstract expressionist Mark Rothko, Coe prefers to keep most details of his personal collection "private". One senses this is partly out of natural reticence and perhaps also to maintain impartiality in his role as chairman of the Museum of Contemporary Art. However, there is one artist whose work he collects and about whom he is happy to talk. That is the modernist New Zealander Colin McCahon (1919-87). Coe is deeply enamoured of McCahon's landscapes and powerfully compelling number and word works. "He ultimately tried to paint the spirit, just as Rothko tried to paint the spirit."

Of the MCA, conveniently visible through the stretch of glass in front of his desk, he is unequivocally enthusiastic. "The real pulse of any city ends up being measured by its attitude to culture," says Coe, who has been chairman since 2002. "We need to be aware that underneath all this veneer of the wonder of living here, there's

a soul and an intellect that need to be fed."

picture perfect

Where to begin

Hardware Gallery 263 Enmore Road, Enmore. Phone: 9550 4595.

Caters for entry-level and serious collectors, with a focus on emerging talent. Prices from a few hundred dollars to more than \$20,000.

Art Sydney 07 October 26-28, Royal Hall of Industries, Moore Park.

[www.artsydney07.com.au](http://www.artsydney07.com.au).

Formerly the Affordable Art Fair, this exhibition brings together 80 galleries. Works from under \$100 to \$100,000.

Where to build your collection

Robin Gibson Gallery 278 Liverpool Street, Darlinghurst. Phone: 9331 6692.

Exhibits well-established Australian artists, estate artists and artists whose careers are just

beginning. Specialises in sculpture. Prices up to about \$70,000.

Ray Hughes Gallery 270 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills. Phone: 9698 3200.

Tends to specialise in artists who are entering their mid careers, such as Lucy Culliton. Prices go up to about \$50,000.

Tim Olsen Gallery 63 Jersey Road, Woollahra. Phone: 9327 3922.

Represents John Olsen and other artists with long-established reputations or great potential. Expect to pay \$5000 to \$20,000.

Eva Breuer Art Dealer 83 Moncur Street, Woollahra. Phone: 9362 0297.

Handles both contemporary and historical works. Prices for graphics (with multiple print runs) range from \$200 to about \$25,000 for a 1970s Brett Whiteley lithograph. Paintings for under \$1000 or the sky's the limit.

Where to seriously spend

Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery 8 Soudan Lane

(off Hampden Street), Paddington.

Phone: 9331 1919.

Committed to innovative contemporary art. Exhibits more than 30 artists whose works are held in major collections nationally and internationally. Prices from \$500 upwards.

Australian Galleries 15 Royston Street, Paddington. Phone: 9360 5177.

Exhibits significant artists including Jeffrey Smart and William Robinson. Top prices but more affordable works are available.

Where to buy indigenous art

Utopia Art Sydney 2 Danks Street, Waterloo. Phone: 9699 2900.

Exhibits indigenous and non-indigenous art, including Papunya Tula artists George Tjungurrayi, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa and Makinti Napanangka and Utopia's Gloria Petyarre.

Grantpirrie 86 George Street, Redfern. Phone: 9699 9033.

Indigenous art communities shown include Mornington Island Arts in Queensland and Warlayirti Arts Centre in Western Australia. Prices from \$500 to \$45,000.

 © 2007 Sydney Morning Herald

Like  Like  AccessDeniedAc  Tweet

[Back to News Index](#) | [Back to Home](#)

CashFinance.com.au is an independent reviewer of the Australian financial sector. CashFinance.com.au is not an Australian registered bank, building society or credit union. CashFinance.com.au is a privately owned information portal and is not part of a financial institution. The information on this site has been gathered directly from the banking institutions, and while every effort has been made to keep the information up to date and accurate, it is not guaranteed to be free from error. Please note that this data represents only a limited group of services/accounts available in the Australian market. CashFinance.com.au accepts payment from affiliated partners and agencies in the form of sponsorship, commissions and/or advertising. We recommend that you seek the advice of your own financial adviser before making a decision on a product solely on the information you obtain from this website. If you choose to apply for a product please be aware that you will be dealing with the financial institution and not this website.

[Disclaimer and Terms & Conditions](#) [Contact Us](#) [Advertise With Us](#) [Reviews & Listing Guidelines](#)

Copyright 2011 CashFinance.com.au.