

## TOP 200 COLLECTORS



### JORDAN SCHNITZER

Portland, Oregon

Real estate

*Contemporary art; Postwar art*

October 3, 2024

#### Overview

As a collector, Jordan Schnitzer is likely best known for his deep holdings of prints and multiples—his collection is by many accounts the largest in the world of its kind. Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Louise Bourgeois, David Hockney, Alex Katz, and Ed Ruscha are just a few of the major names who make up the collection; the Warhol holdings alone number over 1,300 pieces.

But Schnitzer has also amassed a collection that includes paintings, sculptures, ceramics, and more, and now numbers more than 20,000 objects with some 1,500 artists represented. And he—and his trusted team of curators and registrars—show no signs of slowing down anytime soon. Rounding out the collection are works by artists including Jeffrey Gibson, Kara Walker, Julie Mehretu, Lorna Simpson, Marie Watt, Hung Liu, Wangechi Mutu, and Robert Colescott, of whom Schnitzer owns 30 paintings.

Two acquisitions made in 2023 represent the collection's dedication to prints and its expanded purview to other mediums by way of Keith Haring's first print *Bean Salad* (1977)—the collection already has about 50 prints by Haring—and a 6.5-foot-high bronze version of Hank Willis Thomas's *The Embrace* that was commissioned for the Boston Common and was unveiled in 2023.

Other recent acquisitions in diverse mediums include sculptures by Robert Rauschenberg, Louise Nevelson, Vanessa German, Leonardo Drew, Kehinde Wiley, Jeffrey Gibson, and Josiah McElheny; an installation by Christopher Myers; textile-based works by Alison Saar; a Bruce Nauman neon work; and mixed-media paintings by Jim Dine and Mickalene Thomas.

But the crown jewel of his collection might just be his acquisition of Judy Chicago's print archive in 2021; since that purchase, he's continued to add works by Chicago in other mediums and now owns the largest collection of work by the pioneering feminist artist.

Operating under the aegis of the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, the collection is housed in a 50,000-square-foot storage facility in Portland, Oregon, Schnitzer's hometown; works from it can often be seen in an exhibition space in downtown Portland, as well as at three university museums in the Pacific Northwest. Over the past two decades, the foundation has organized over 160 exhibitions that have traveled to some 120 museums. On the philanthropic side, Schnitzer is also a major funder of the new Converge 45 biennial in Portland and the annual IFPDA Jordan Schnitzer Award for Excellence in Printmaking, which comes with a \$25,000 grant to produce a new work.

In a way, collecting runs in Schnitzer's family. His first acquisition came in 1965 via the Fountain Gallery of Art, which was operated by his mother, Arlene. On the back of the painting, a small study from 1965 titled *Sanctuary* by late Portland artist Louis Bunce, Schnitzer said, reads "The First Piece of the Schnitzer Collection!"

"While I am honored to now have a collection that consists of thousands of paintings, prints, sculptures, videos, ceramics, and glass, this work *Sanctuary* has never left my side and I look at it every day," Schnitzer told *ARTnews*. "Yes, it reminds me of my mother but also of Louis Bunce, who like many artists in many communities, was in the center of the art world in Portland. ... I always talk about the importance of supporting local artists. All of us in the Pacific Northwest were lucky to have Louis Bunce in our midst."

**Jordan Schnitzer**



Robert Colescott, *Pancho Villa*, 1971.  
Photo: Courtesy Christie's

In addition to acquisitions of prints by artists like Mel Bochner, Keith Haring, Jasper Johns, Charles Gaines, Amy Sherald, and Faith Ringgold, Jordan Schnitzer purchased Robert Colescott's 1971 painting *Pancho Villa* (above).

**Q: Can you tell us more about the Colescott acquisition?**

**A:** My late mother, Arlene Schnitzer, was Robert Colescott's principal dealer. We have 17 of his paintings and all his prints. When this came up for sale several months ago, I thought it would be a wonderful addition to our collection. *Pancho Villa*, 1971, has all the classic Colescott images of folks and people of color dancing and fighting, all set in a historical context that makes us think about our identity.