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The Art Advisor Is In

If art is your passion, then **Kim Heirston** is a name to know. *Entrée* met with her in her Upper East Side town house to talk art
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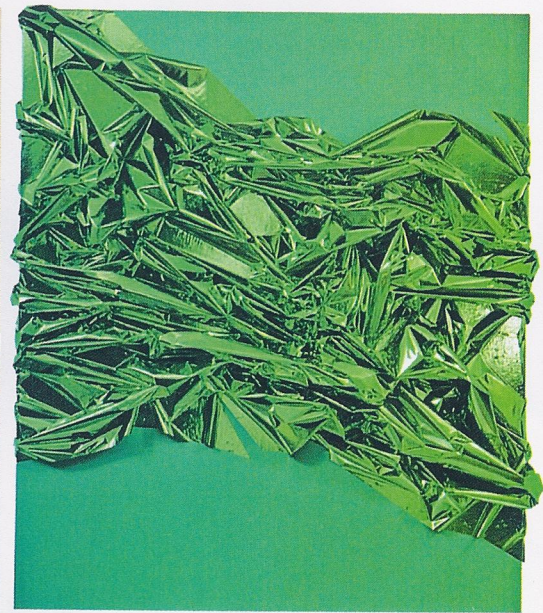
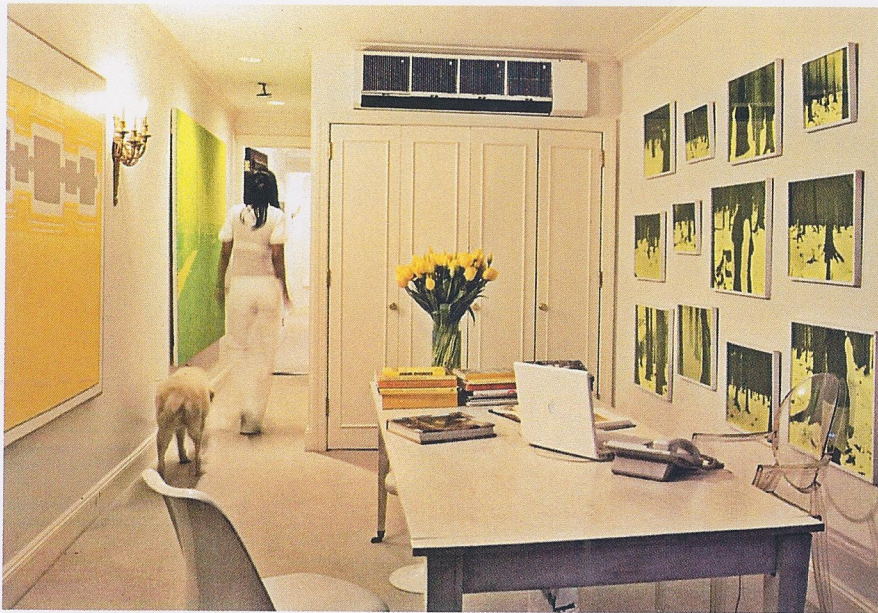
FEW PROFESSIONALS ARE CONFIDENT ENOUGH IN THEIR ABILITIES TO tell you that you probably don't need their services. Kim Heirston is one of these forthright types. "I'm the first person to say you don't need an art advisor," says Heirston, 43, an international advisor based in New York who looks at ease surrounded by the huge, colorful artwork in her town house. But there's a big if. Heirston continues that you don't need her "if you have the time and willingness to do the enormous amount of homework that I do with my director, Courtney Higginbotham, and my staff."

In other words, if you're serious about buying art, you do need someone like Heirston. She has the knowledge, the

experience, and best of all, the eye to turn your walls into a mini museum and your backyard into a sculpture garden. Heirston uses those qualities to get her clients into the inner chambers of the world's best art galleries. "It's not just walking into a gallery and seeing a show," she says. "It's seeing what's in the back room and knowing what's coming down the pike with the artist."

Though she makes it all look impossibly easy, Heirston still remembers discovering the art world for the first time. Part of her education was accompanying her mother "to see shows in SoHo even before it was really SoHo." All that culture paid off: Heirston studied art history at Yale, and then worked for two renowned

Above, left to right: Kim Heirston purchased Mike Kelley's *More Tragic! More Plangent!...More Purple!* (30 by 24 inches each, six Ektacolor prints on museum board, 1985–1986) for a client at Phillips de Pury & Company in 2004. Heirston has a penchant for choosing artists with serious track records, such as Richard Prince, who photographed *Untitled* (50 by 70 inches, Ektacolor print, 1997).



HEIRSTON'S ART ADVICE

Best unknown art destination: Zurich, Switzerland. "Great galleries and great *kunsthallen*," she says, referring to the small and flexible European exhibition spaces without permanent collections.

Best lesser-known galleries in New York's Chelsea: Greene Naftali, Andrew Kreps, and Gavin Brown.

Best auction alternative to Christie's and Sotheby's: Phillips de Pury & Company. "In New York, they have Saturday@Phillips, which features lower-priced works, such as prints," she says.

Best artists who aren't yet household names: Jean-Marc Bustamante, the photographer known for his large-scale color images; the brash and colorful painter Anselm Reyle, who often incorporates elements of collage; Jorge Pardo, who uses lighting in his installations, balancing between decorative art and sculpture; and Piotr Uklanski, the multimedia trickster equally at home with graffiti-sprayed signs and photography.


New York galleries, PaceWildenstein and Robert Miller, before becoming director of Stux Gallery at 25.

When clients first arrive in her office, she gets to know their tastes by asking them about their favorite artists and pieces. Then come the field trips, but not necessarily to galleries. "Initially, I like to take clients to museums, where there are no price tags," she says. She also spends time with the clients in their homes. "The

palette and all the surface things influence my decision," she says, "but there are practical issues too. If there are children, I know we can't do a delicate installation on the floor."

Though she showcases some of her favorite works in her own home, she makes sure to note that "a good advisor doesn't hoard all the best artwork." Not only is her collection pleasing to the eye, but it is also practical from a financial

perspective. "I don't think *investment* is a dirty word. I couldn't sell anything that I didn't think was going to at least hold its value," says Heirston. But people who buy art hoping for a quick profit do not please this art professional. "The good dealers, representing the great artists, want the art to find good homes," she says.

That sentiment says a lot about how she does business. For Heirston and her clients, it's clear that home is where the art is. 

Above left: Next to Heirston in her home office is Wayne Gonzales' *Little Cayman* (68 by 86 inches, acrylic on canvas, 2005). To the left, *Guide* (59 by 59 inches, acrylic on canvas, 1999) is an example of Dan Walsh's minimalism. On the opposite wall, Ugo Rondinone's *No. 169 Vierterdezemberneunzehnhunertneunundneunzig* (1999) is a set of prints in gelatin silver mounted under yellow Plexiglas. Above right: Anselm Reyle's *Untitled* (92½ by 78½ by 8 inches, mixed media on canvas encased in an acrylic box, 2005).