

Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia: Tapping into Brooklyn's Artistic Power

By *Hilarie M. Sheets* POSTED 07/15/14

A couple collects dazzling works destined for their New York and Connecticut homes—and for the Brooklyn Museum



Stephanie Ingrassia with *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1994, by Deborah Kass.

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Hanging in Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia's Brooklyn Heights townhouse, overlooking New York Harbor and Lower Manhattan, is a family portrait by Tina Barney. The photo shows Tim fixing their eldest son's tie while Stephanie and the three younger children linger in various postures of engagement and disengagement. "We had all been waiting for my son, who was late coming home," explains Stephanie, president of the board at the Brooklyn Museum. "Tina is all about capturing that real moment in a family's life." Now, ten years later, Stephanie hopes to have Barney shoot another family portrait for the couple's 25th wedding anniversary.

Stephanie, 49, who studied graphic design at the School of Visual Arts and worked for years at newspapers and magazines, is the driving force behind the family's contemporary-art collection. Tim, also 49 and co-chair of global mergers and acquisitions at Goldman Sachs, has grown more involved in recent years. For Tim's birthday a few years ago, Stephanie gave him an LED video piece by Julian Opie, depicting a slinky woman in constant stride. That glowing artwork—along with the spectacular view—grabs one's attention upon entering the Ingrassias' living room. Works by Dana Schutz, Tal R, Alfredo Jaar, Deborah Kass, Amy Sillman, and Jean-Michel Basquiat hold other prominent spots throughout the parlor floor.

Initially inclined to collect paintings, Stephanie credits Brooklyn Museum director Arnold Lehman with opening her eyes to other art forms. Collages by Mickalene Thomas and Wangechi Mutu, a pin drawing by Tara Donovan, and two sound suits by Nick Cave are installed in the Ingrassias' more spacious farmhouse in Connecticut, where they also run a vineyard.

When in town, their focus is on Brooklyn. Tim heads the endowment board at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and sits on the board of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy. Stephanie recently bought one of Kara Walker's molasses-coated boy sculptures from the Domino Sugar installation commissioned by Creative Time, where the collector also serves on the board. She hopes to have the sculpture go straight to the Brooklyn Museum.

"I always think with two hats," says Stephanie. "I think about our own collection, but I also think about trying to energize the contemporary effort at the Brooklyn Museum. Brooklyn has more working artists than any place in the world. We really should be the museum for those artists."

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