

The Life-Enriching Love of Art

A Peek at Gary Fink's Personal Collection

By Julie Ann Segal

I'm a firm believer that the art in your space reflects your life. What you surround yourself with has an impact on the quality of your existence; it can dictate your happiness, success, how "well" you live. The feeling art evokes has an impact on how you feel. Being an Interior Designer and Feng Shui practitioner, I work closely with clients in their homes, and I'm witness to this every day.

When I heard about art lover Gary Fink, I was curious to see how the many pieces in his home make a difference in his life. I was curious to hear what he had to say about them. How and why they were acquired? What meaning do they have for him, and ultimately, how do they impact his life?

Fink, a fascinating man in his own right, was gracious enough to invite me to his home for a private viewing of his remarkable art collection. I was taken aback by the number and variety of pieces. Each one has a unique story to tell.

Who better to tell the story of some of them than Fink, who's got a full life story of his own? In Fink's recently-released autobiography, "The Power of Positive Phynque-ing" (garyfinkbook.com), he describes with humor his immensely successful career in insurance, and how he came to be a philanthropist and avid art collector.

As witnessed in Fink's home, displaying what you're passionate about can facilitate your living with passion.



Gary Fink



"Beacon" by Deborah Butterfield. Found Metal, 1996

Fink began collecting more than 35 years ago, during business and personal travels with his wife Jo Ann Fink. Their collection began with modern Southwestern art, but branched out to differing genres from around the world. In his autobiography, Fink explains, "Over time, our taste evolved and we became more educated on the history and finer points of art, we began accumulating an extensive and eclectic collection".

He credits art maven Maria Friedrich for accelerating this evolution, by touring them around New York, and expanding their tastes. "I owe her a debt of gratitude" remarks Fink. He's visited artists, and spoken directly with them about the meaning behind their art. The collection grew so large that Fink created "Museum: Louvre It or Leave It" (louvreitorleaveit.org) in downtown Minneapolis, to display a large portion.

Fink says the art he's collected during his life "has enriched it quite a bit." When asked what types of art in particular have this impact, or what attracts him to a particular piece, he described three common themes: history, anthropology and humor.

A sculpture of a life-size tiger, a green dinosaur in Fink's backyard, a replica of the Lindberg plane flying into a painting of Paris — all evoke a sense of whimsy and fun and definitely make a humorous statement. In describing them and others similar, they seem to bring Fink joy, but also having them allows him to express his own inner joy and zest for life.



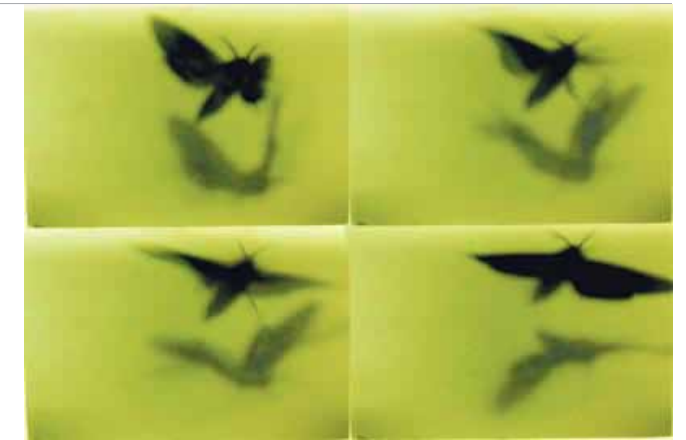
"Expulsion" by Roy Strassberg. Ceramic, 1998

I viewed some deeply moving pieces, such as *Expulsion* by Roy Strassberg (see photo) which is a part of the artist's Holocaust Bone Structures series. Fink notes that he's attracted to art commemorating social issues and causes. He has selected pieces which memorialize the Holocaust, and others portraying realities of war.

In another work I observed, a set of five sculptural installations represent the evolution of mankind ("aging, who we are"). Perhaps the closest to his own personal experience of being human is the bust he had commissioned depicting his daughter, who was tragically killed in a car accident at eighteen.

Besides tigers, Fink showed me elephants, giraffes, and his magnificent collection of horse art. (See photo on pg. 48.) Fink is an enthusiastic animal-lover and a generous supporter of wildlife conservation. Hence, this art provides aesthetic appeal as well as a physical reminder of the ongoing necessity for wildlife conservation.

When asked to pull a couple favorite artists out of this vast array, Fink points to two: prominent New York artists Mike and Doug Starn (Starn Brothers, starnstudio.com) and local artist Megan Rye (meganrye.com), who Fink discovered early on in her career, and has since won several awards.



"ATL Film Still Number Eight" by the Starn Brothers, Lambda Digital C-Print, 72" X 144"



Dinosaur by Christopher Tully, Foam, Fiberglass, Epoxy, Paint, 13' X 66" X 24"

As witnessed in Fink's home, displaying what you're passionate about can facilitate your living with passion. To find an exactly "right" piece of art, one that seems to encapsulate who you are, what you care about, is the goal. When you do, both your space and your "self" are in harmony, and that makes for an enriched life.

Find out more about how Fink cultivated such a life through his autobiography, which collaborator Randy Evert writes is "filled with humor, passion, tragedy, brief episodes of insanity, more humor, compassion and extreme generosity." Available at garyfinkbook.com



Julie Ann Segal, president of Metropolitan Interiors, is deeply committed to providing clients with state of the art interior design. Finding decorative art to reflect her clients' unique style is one of the many ways she exceeds expectations. Her cutting-edge, dynamic approach utilizes all resources within reach, including infusing elements of the ancient art of Feng Shui into all design endeavors, revealing environments rich in comfort, beauty, balance and harmony. From eclectic to classic, modern to traditional...there is nothing she and her team will not do to create the "wow factor" that's exceeded clients' expectations for over two decades. Metropolitan Interiors residential and commercial creations have been showcased throughout the Twin Cities. Trustworthy and dedicated, Julie Ann values relationships she's formed with her clients, and strives to design homes and businesses of their dreams. Visit metrointeriors.com or call 952-920-2827