

Wall Street collector opens private gallery in Chelsea

Artist Chuck Close is curating the inaugural show this month

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A new space for contemporary art will open by appointment this month on the ninth and tenth floors of 545 West 25th Street in Chelsea. The gallery has been established by the Flag Art Foundation, a non-profit organisation which sources say was recently created by collector Glenn Fuhrman, 42, co-head of MSD Capital (the company formed to manage the finances of computer billionaire Michael Dell). Mr Fuhrman declined to confirm his backing of the project, but New York City real estate filings indicate that he bought the 7,680 sq. ft condominium in the Chelsea Arts Tower in August 2006 for around \$5.45m.

According to the foundation website, the programme will include two or three guest-curated shows a year of established and emerging international artists “from a variety of sources”, presumably including many from Mr Fuhrman’s own collection. The foundation also intends to lend works, again presumably largely from his collection, and offer a list of available works to interested curators. The structure appears similar to Los Angeles collector Eli Broad’s art foundation which maintains a space open by appointment and lends works from both the foundation’s and Mr Broad’s personal collections. We understand that other private collectors are also involved with the project.

The inaugural show “Attention to Detail” (through April) is curated by artist Chuck Close and includes work by 50 artists. They range from Louise Bourgeois and Vija Celmins to Gerhard Richter, Ed Ruscha, Andreas Gursky, Maurizio Cattelan, Olafur Eliasson, Robert Gober and Damien Hirst as well as a range of younger artists. It is not clear whether they belong to Mr Fuhrman, the foundation or other collectors.

Stephanie Roach, who formerly worked with Galeria Senda in Barcelona, is named as the director on the foundation’s website; she was not available for comment. Curators of upcoming shows include Sylvia Chivaranond, who has worked for the Walker Art Center (where her husband Philippe Vergne is chief curator); Kembra Pfahler, the founding lead singer of the East Village shock-rock band The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black; and Susan Cahan, professor at the University of Missouri-St Louis and former curator of the Eileen and Peter Norton Collection.

Though Mr Fuhrman is keeping a low profile, his art-world stature is rising. He serves as chairman of the American Acquisitions Committee of the Tate in London, vice-chairman of the Contemporary Arts Council of the Museum of Modern Art, and as trustee on the boards of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC, and Dia Centre for the Arts in New York. His collection is known to include works by Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Long, Robert Therrien, Jim Hodges, Ron Mueck, Paul Pfeiffer, Kehinde Wiley, Jim Torok and Conrad Bakker among many others. He has lent or donated works to dozens of museums including the Pompidou in Paris, Tate Modern in London, the Guggenheim and the Whitney. The number of works belonging to the Flag Foundation is not known.

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