

Bellagio gallery creates new advisory service

Novice, seasoned collectors can take advantage

By KRISTEN PETERSON
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After years of fielding calls from buyers and sellers in the art world and occasionally selling work from its exhibits, the Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art has created an art advisory division, using New York's PaceWildenstein Gallery as one of its resources.

"Selling artwork is something we'd always wanted to do," Brian Cantor, director of the gallery's Art Advisory Services, said last week. "I don't expect thousands of people to use this service, but I'm sure there's a constituency out there who wants it."

PaceWildenstein Gallery, through its subsidiary PaperBall Las Vegas, operates the for-profit Bellagio gallery.

During prior exhibits, the gallery sold an Alexander Calder sculpture for a just under \$1 million, Andy Warhol lithographs for \$4,500 a piece and an original Warhol silkscreen for \$30,000.

Cantor, who joined the Las Vegas Gallery in 2001 and was serving as director of retail operations, said he sold a \$50,000 Calder in less than five minutes. He expects to work as an adviser, educator and dealer to tourists and residents.

Cantor has already been fielding calls from Las Vegas wanting to know if the piece of art in their attic is a Carravaggio, da Vinci or Degas.

"I never turn away a call, because you never know," Cantor said.

But mostly he expects to work with both novice and seasoned collectors, who might spend anywhere from \$5,000 or less to \$5 million, and with corporate collections.

"From the Renaissance to Modern art, PaceWildenstein can accommodate you," Cantor said

"Wildenstein has been around since 1870, Pace has been around since 1960."

The Art Advisory Service's main competitor is Godt-Cleary Projects, a downtown gallery that opened in 2003 and focuses on midcareer to established contemporary artists.

Godt-Cleary Projects is owned by Glenn Schaeffer, former president and chief financial officer of Mandalay Resort Group. Schaeffer, an art collector, also founded the International Institute of Modern Letters at UNLV.

Godt-Cleary offers corporate consulting services and advises and acquires work for private collectors. Recently it created and

installed the Nevada Cancer Institute's collection. Its inventory includes work by Rauschenberg, Ruscha and Sol Lewit.

Godt-Cleary also established the Third Thursday event downtown with Dust Gallery, which brought in a panel of collectors that included Schaeffer, Jim Murren, Roger Thomas, Wally Goodman and Patrick Duffy.

Regarding the Bellagio gallery's new service, Michele Quinn, director of Godt-Cleary Projects, said, "There's room for growth. A lot of different opinions is healthy."

Art historian Libby Lumpkin, who is also director of the Las Vegas Art Museum, sees the services by both entities as critical to Las Vegas' intellectual growth.

"Las Vegas needs art," Lumpkin said. "Art is a passion for collectors and they want to share it with people who can't be collectors. They offer loans to exhibi-

tions and (donate) works to museums.

"People who are collectors are moving here in greater numbers than ever before," Limpkin said. That has increased the number of collectors exponentially.

"In addition to that, the people living in Las Vegas are becoming collectors."

The Guggenheim Hermitage Museum's Young Collectors Council, a group of mostly young professionals between the ages of 25 and 45, has 108 members. They visit artist studios, collectors' homes and attend lectures.

Cantor, who has what he calls a modest collection, said the Art Advisory Service considered opening a gallery, but decided that the best way to launch the service was to take the Bellagio brand and transfer it.

"People associate Bellagio with fine art," Cantor said.

Also, he added, "We have the ability to be exposed to thousands of people every day here at the Bellagio."

Matthew Hileman, Bellagio gallery's managing director, said the gallery and the advisory service will operate independently of each other and neither will influence the other.

"Obviously, the kind of shows we are doing in the gallery have three goals: to be educational, entertaining and extraordinary quality, top-notch pieces that you'd see in another museum," Hileman said.

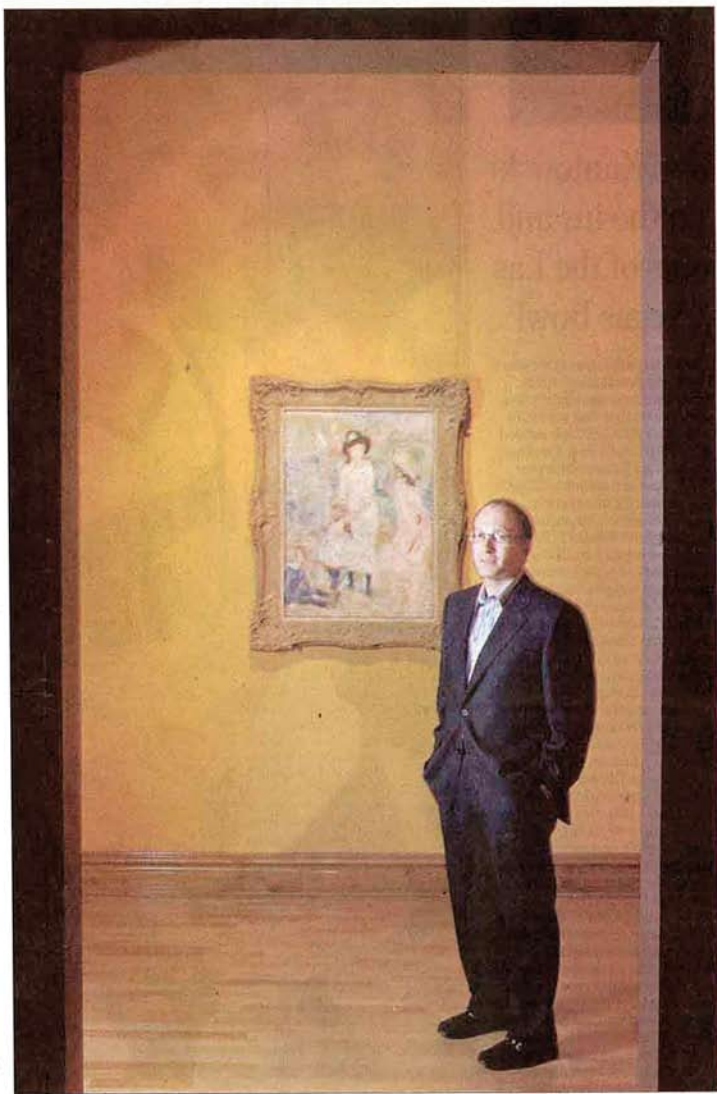
"Any art fairs or monthly shows (Brian) is doing are not going to be dictated by anything we do here."

Hileman said that the new division will not affect the gallery's relationship with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Cantor, who has access to all of Pace's inventory, was a partner in Gallery 613 Inc., in Santa Mon-



Quinn



R. MARSH STARKS / LAS VEGAS SUN

Brian Cantor, Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art's advisory services director, stands before Renoir's "Children in the Seahorse." He expects to serve as an adviser, educator and dealer to tourists and residents.

ca, Calif., and was president and owner of a company that specialized in licensing collectible products before he joined PaperBall in 2001.

"He's very knowledgeable," Andrea Glimcher, spokeswoman for PaceWildenstein, said. "He's an art collector himself. He's got a great print collection."

Quinn worked in retail and auctions in the contemporary print business in New York. She

was a director for Brooke Alexander editions and Gemini at Joni Weyl and worked at Christie's East and Sotheby's auction houses, before moving to Las Vegas to curate the collection at The Hotel at Mandalay Bay.

Basically, Hileman said, "We've been inundated since we've opened with phone calls from around the world from people wanting to sell art or buy art. They didn't understand (our pur-

pose). "Then it became an issue of customer service. Rather than send them to auction houses, we created a consultation service."

"We have enough connections in the art world that we should be able to steer people in the right direction."

Kristen Peterson can be reached at 259-2317 or kristen@lasvegassun.com.