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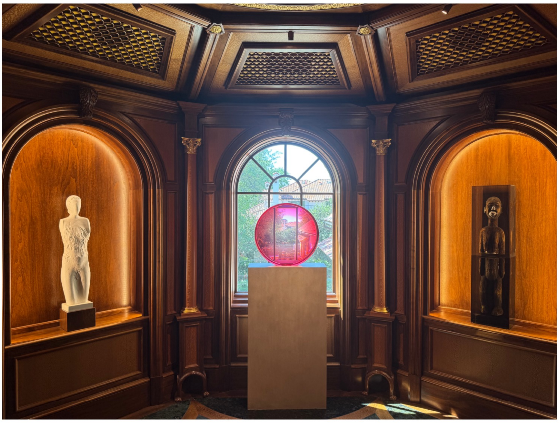
How the Green Family Art Foundation Is Shaping Dallas' Rise in Contemporary Art

The family has quietly been building one of the most coherent and ambitious collections of contemporary art in the country. Their next goal? Cementing Dallas' reputation as a major art hub.

By Elisa Carollo • 04/18/25 11:04am



The Green family has been instrumental in shaping Dallas' reputation as a serious hub for contemporary art. Courtesy the Green Family Art Foundation

One might expect the most prestigious art collections, particularly of contemporary and ultra-contemporary art, to be concentrated in major cultural hubs like New York, Los Angeles and Miami. But Dallas Art Week told a different story. The sprawling metroplex of a city hosts some of the most formidable private art collections—holdings assembled with speed, precision and taste. Among them, the Green Family's collection stands out as a sharply curated chronicle of contemporary practice, tracing both the rising stars of the market and the historic figures who shaped their visual vocabularies.

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During the Dallas fairs, Observer sat down with Adam Green, the driving force behind the collection, and Katherine Delony, its director, to discuss its origins and evolving focus and the broader mission behind its recent growth into a foundation and its role in Dallas' fast-growing art ecosystem.

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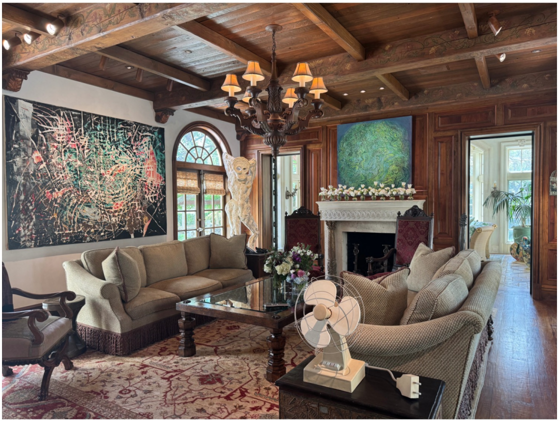
According to Green, it all started with his parents collecting Impressionist and modern art in the '90s. But as he came of age, Adam urged them to look toward their own time, and particularly at women who were rapidly building careers and markets but still critically overlooked. "In the early 2000s," he told Observer, "women artists were very undervalued, so that one could afford nice works by those artists for reasonable amounts."

One of their first major acquisitions was a work by Dana Schutz, then fresh off a solo show at Brandeis University's Rose Art Museum, where Adam studied art history. From there, the Greens' collecting instincts sharpened. "When you're starting out, you just buy what you like," Adam said. "Over time, a focus finds you."

The Greens collected pieces by Nicole Eisenman and Cecily Brown as their careers progressed toward the well-established status they have today. Significantly, the Greens would try to acquire several works from different moments of their oeuvre while, at the same time, looking for work by the artists who influenced them, expanding the collection coherently. "Shortly, it became important for us to have an intergenerational dialogue, and we learned about artists this way, building a coherent journey into aesthetics and artistic languages."

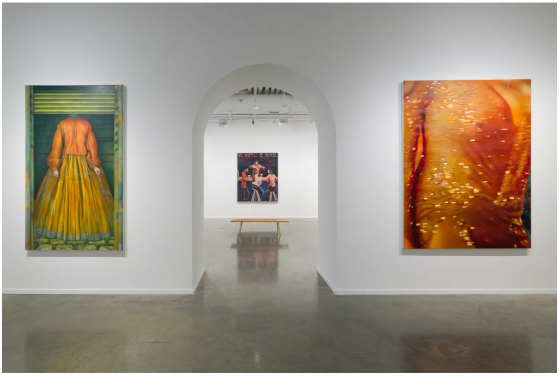


Established more than two decades ago by Eric and Debbie Green, the Green Family Collection comprises more than 600 works by over 400 artists. Courtesy the Green Family Art Foundation

That logic now plays out across the walls of the Greens' Dallas home, where works by Eisenman, Brown and Jenna Gribbon hang alongside Maria Lassnig's corporeal investigations, Joan Semmel's feminist psychological figuration and Luchita Hurtado's symbolically charged close-ups. The collection is not a parade of trophies—it's a meaningful conversation across generations, styles and narratives, despite being predominantly concentrated around artists who emerged in the U.S. and Europe.

The Greens' Dallas mansion is, in fact, a true trove, its walls densely hung with works by some of the most in-demand contemporary artists to emerge in recent decades. Yet the presentation never veers into a chaotic overhanging; instead, it strikes a careful balance that builds resonant dialogues between the works, the interior design, the architecture and even the surrounding landscape. The family's collection isn't limited to paintings. The Greens have also acquired ambitious sculptures and installations, including Eisenman's controversial and unforgettable parade piece from the 2019 Whitney Biennial, which now commands a prominent spot in the garden.

According to Adam Green, it has not only been nice but also important for the family to develop relationships with the artists and follow their careers, supporting them in different ways. As we talked, Adam's father, Eric Green, drifted into the room and joined the conversation, which quickly turned to more convivial topics. Both Adam and his father, it should be noted, are extremely humble about the collection they assembled. Avoiding any hint of self-congratulation or flaunting artworks as a marker of taste or wealth, the Greens speak about the collection as something that evolved organically—from a genuine passion into a sustained commitment to supporting artists' careers while fostering cultural awareness of the art in Dallas. "It's been growing and growing every year, even through recessions," Eric Green told Observer. "It's just booming here."



The Green Family Art Foundation is currently showing "A Room Hung With Thoughts: British Painting Now." Evan Sheldon

This latter part of the family's mission was realized in part when the Greens began opening the collection to visitors in 2021, eventually formalizing that access through the Green Family Art Foundation in the Dallas Arts District. The space hosts rotating exhibitions that are free to the public, and its current show, curated by Tom Morton, surveys a decade of U.K.-based artistic innovation, presenting intergenerational voices linked to the U.K. by geography, education or artistic ethos. "There's been a lot of excitement about British art recently," Adam said. "This may be the most exciting moment since the YBAs."

This show and others draw from the Green family's holdings but also include key loans, many facilitated by GRIMM Gallery, whose London outpost has championed many of the artists in their holdings. "Outside curators often start with what we have, then build on that," Delony told Observer.

That spirit of exchange flows both ways. The foundation regularly lends to local institutions—including the DMA and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth—to support programming and deepen community access. "We have good ties with many museums here," she said. "It creates a great access point for exhibitions."

Simultaneously, the foundation works to bring to Dallas art that wouldn't necessarily be there—something both Delony and Adam Green emphasize during our conversation. "I think one of our major goals was definitely to bring exciting shows to the city, to exhibit artists that maybe haven't been shown in Texas as regularly and, at the same time, expand the audience for art here in Dallas and the region," Adam said.

The first exhibition of its kind in Dallas, "A Room Hung With Thoughts" focuses on the vitality and diversity of contemporary British painting. Evan Sheldon

The foundation is deeply committed to contributing to the richness of the institutional scene with loans, facilitating major shows that further artists' careers, grow awareness of specific narratives or themes and support local and faraway institutions and museums to show a more diverse range of the art being made today. "We have strong ties to a lot of the different museums and institutions here. We lend works to the Fort Worth Modern and the DMA pretty frequently," said Delony.

At the same time, as was evident during Dallas' art fair weekend, there's a lot of crosspromotion between public and private institutions and other collections in the city, and that collaborative spirit has contributed to the rapid growth of the city's art ecosystem. "What is special about the Dallas art scene, versus some other cities, is that this is a very collaborative, very tight community," Adam Green said. "Even this week with the Dallas Art Fair, many collectors love to open up their homes; they like to be as hospitable as they can. Acting collaboratively, everyone tries to work together to enhance the art scene in Dallas."

The Green Family Collection includes one of the largest assemblages of works by female, Black and LGBTQIA+ artists. Courtesy the Green Family Art Foundation

Adam Green told us that he's seen a growing interest in Dallas in cultural spheres, whether that's artists moving to the city or galleries coming for the fairs. "I think that more recently, several artists have chosen to claim Dallas; either they've made it their home, or if they're from there. There's kind of a growing pride for the city and its art scene."

Locality is important to the family, even as they work to position Dallas as a major player on the global stage. The Green Family Art Foundation serves as a platform for local talent and for spotlighting the quality of the art collections that can be found in the city. In their next show in October in partnership with the New York Academy of the Arts, the foundation will feature alumni and faculty who have been a part of building the school's legacy, including two artists represented by Dallas-based galleries. In 2026, they will open an exhibition focused on Dallas art collectors curated by Sara Hignite.

The Foundation's rotating exhibitions often include a mix of works from its own holdings and key institutional loans. Evan Sheldon

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