

ART Supply

WHEN CONNECTICUT GALLERY OWNERS FUSE EDGY AND CONTEMPORARY WORKS WITH A KEEN EYE FOR UPCOMING ARTISTS, THEIR TONY SHOP TURNS INTO THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

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Gallery owners Lee and Cindy Milazzo, shown below, bring buzz-worthy artists like Damien Hirst and Harland Miller into the Greenwich art scene. Unique and contemporary artwork, such as Jill Ricci's *Fools Gold*, right, and Mr. Brainwash's *All*, opposite, are some of the captivating works on display.



On any given day you'll find Lee and Cindy Milazzo happily surveying the artwork illuminating the walls of their contemporary gallery in Greenwich, Connecticut. Named after their two sons, the Samuel Owen Gallery has quickly become a destination for notable designers, collectors and casual shoppers alike. "People are drawn into the gallery because they like what they see," says Lee, who has owned the business for 12 years with his wife, Cindy. "It's the ultimate compliment."

Samuel Owen is home to some of the more formative artists of this generation. Lee, who possesses the curatorial eye for the space, acquires work from new artists as well as established superstars like Damien Hirst and Shepard Fairey—one of the most popular street artists currently on the scene. Cindy, on the other hand, admits that she is more behind-the-scenes yet brings a certain feminine vibe to their space. "We are the only gallery on the Avenue selling street art," she says. "We love everything we sell, but it also has to be marketable."

Both Lee and Cindy insist that they only show artwork that they would actually collect, and they speak proudly of their growing roster of accomplished living artists, including Peter Tunney. "I was a collector of his work so I brought him on board four years ago," says Lee. "At the time, I honestly didn't know if the market would 'get it.' I've since sold hundreds of his paintings." Certainly, the cutting-edge duo appear to have their finger on the pulse that runs through Greenwich and admit that watching emerging talent grow and succeed is the greatest reward. "We get to be a part of this fabric, and that's really fun and fulfilling," says Lee.

This summer, the Milazzos are forging another path by opening their second location in Nantucket, where they plan to offer the same high-caliber roster of artists, with exclusive rights to sell Hirst's iconic work on the island. Starting out, Lee and Cindy simply wanted to sell art that they found captivating and just plain cool. They ended up, however, giving the once-vanilla Greenwich Avenue an edgier feel, where the *de rigueur* is to go and see and be seen. ■

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