



INTERVIEW WITH

*Find Your Passion
(A Guide to Art Collecting,
Art and Artist Agency):*

Marine Tanguy,
CEO of MTArt Agency

BY ZOË GOETZMANN

Marine Tanguy managed her first gallery at age 21 under Steve Lazarides, who discovered Banksy and JR, and opened her first art gallery in Los Angeles at age 23, where she was lucky to be mentored by Michael Ovitz—co-founder of Creative Artists Agency (CAA)—himself. In 2015, Marine launched MTArt Agency to build the reputations of the most incredible artists and to inspire everyone with their art. Fast-forward to today—MTArt Agency is the art sector's leading talent agency, representing some of the most talented, forward-thinking artists in the world, working with global organizations and cities and nurturing its international community of art-lovers and collectors.

Marine was awarded Forbes 2018 30 under 30 Europe: Art & Culture, UK entrepreneur of the year for the 2019 NatWest Awards and Woman of the Year 2021 by "Women of the City" (WOTC) magazine. She is a writer and keynote speaker on contemporary art and art investment. Her talks include two TEDx Talks on

how to transform cities with art and how social media visuals affect our minds.

Founded in 2015, MTArt Agency is a certified B Corp® award-winning agency for the most exciting up-and-coming visual artists worldwide, and a creative agency that delivers exciting art-driven projects for brands, public bodies and cultural organizations. While the art industry typically concentrates on selling art on walls, MTArt's visionary approach focuses on investing in and supporting the person behind it.

As a creative agency, MTArt uses its expertise to work with inspiring brands on commissions and partners with cultural organisations and public bodies to deliver public art projects. Its artists have collaborated with Hyundai, FIFA, Rosewood Hotels and brands such as Gucci, Chloé and Method, government bodies including the Mayor of London and Camden Council and with museums, auction houses, festivals and luxury hotels.

By Zoë Goetzmann

On the topic of “Art Collecting,” I sat down with Marine Tanguy (@marinetanguyart), CEO of MTArt Agency (@mtartagency)—the first international artist agency.

Born on the French island of Île de Ré, Marine Tanguy loved art from an early age. When asked her favorite artistic genre, she notes that she appreciates “19th century Romantics” [Romanticism]. Inspired by the mentorship and vision of Michael Ovitz—co-founder of Creative Artists Agency (CAA)—Marine made the decision to launch her own artist agency. For artists, MTArt Agency covers studio costs, sells artwork, helps establish cultural and commercial partnerships and offers press exposure. For collectors, MTArt Agency works to build relationships with the artists to establish the MTArt Agency community. MTArt Agency offers an “Art Collectors’ Club” and a subscription-based membership, “Rising Star Circle,” in which collectors can cultivate a community and connection with artists. On average, artworks signed to MTArt Agency have seen a 150% year-to-year value growth. MTArt Agency receives commission from each artwork. In return, the artist may give a piece to the agency’s collection. MTArt Agency’s Corporate Collection invests in emerging and blue-chip artists “because we contribute to their studio costs and therefore support them, we receive a work per year going to our corporate collection. To this day, we count 312 works that we own.

The MTArt Team comprises of Marine Tanguy (CEO), Lise Arlot (Head of Strategy), Yann Mathias (Director of Innovation and Impact), Fouad Kanaan (Chief Operating Officer), Blue Gaydon (Executive Director of Partnerships), Rita Alay Del Curto (Art Sales Director), Tara Zadeh (Director of Special Projects), Serra Ataman (Director of Public Art Projects), Zina Wilkins (Social Media Manager), Lucy Clarke (Special Projects), Giulia Almaleh (Content Coordinator), Wayne Fletcher (Director of Ad Campaigns), Serra Ataman (Public Art Director), Estelle Raulot (runner) and Gabriel Shelsky (assistant) and Ana Sofia Almeida (Executive Assistant). Key investors include Saul Klein, Frédéric Jousset, Tracey Brown, David Amsellem, Robert Falzon, Helen Sunderland-Cohen, Nicolas Barnabé, and Nicolas Laurent. Per month, MTArt Agency receives 200 artist portfolio submissions. Each portfolio is evaluated by the selection committee. The agency evaluates portfolios of emerging and established artists based on these attributes: 1) artwork, 2) artist, 3) technique, 4) process. Marine adds that “passion” is a key component. Artwork should be innovative and have “a story,” she explains, “unique” to the artist. Ideally: artists should possess “the complete package.” Passion is key. When it comes to evaluating an artist’s passion, drive or—as Marine says, “resilience”—this latter notion is evident:

“I think you can tell when someone has resilience. Their careers are very long, and they will come with a lot of pressure. Some people have a very clear vision of the kind of work they want to make and [the kinds of] projects [they want to create and/or make],” she says, “and that resilience and drive is very tangible.” MTArt Agency artist Lorenzo Quinn (@lorenzoquinnartist) is an example of this type of “ambition.” Marine notes that she admires him for his “innovation” and practice. Accessibility in the art world is a key topic that was brought up in my discussion with Marine. As she explains: “The biggest struggle in the sector is not really gender; it’s the fact that 90% of the sector comes from an upper middle- or middle-class background. That’s the bigger issue,” Marine says, “lots of internships are unpaid.” She continues: “As a B Corp, we’re much more committed to this [issue] at large if we’re talking about entrepreneurship,” she says, “within our sector; the bigger issue is access to wealth and networks.”

Research is paramount when it comes to dealing with any part of the art world (from artists, buyers, collectors, sellers, curators, dealers, galleries, museums, art fairs, to Biennales—the list goes on). Art agents are able to move a bit more freely through the art world than a gallery or a gallerist—cultivating solid, trustworthy relationships with artists and clients. MTArt Agency was the first in the United Kingdom to become B Corp Certified. B Corp Certification means that the company and its employees have been vetted to the highest standards of performance, accountability, employee benefits and transparency. When asked what advice or insight Marine could provide to early collectors (or those who wish to begin to collect artwork), she explains, “I would say research. I would suggest collecting as [a] couple or with friends because it’s nice,” she says, “[to] exchange [this] research.” In addition to the corporate and statistical analysis that can be executed to predict an artwork’s future investment and long-term value (which MTArt undertakes), collectors should have a passion for the artwork that they hope to acquire. As Marine refers to in our discussion, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (@lynettesyiadomboakye) is an artist who she explains she was “lucky” to be able to collect before she had a solo exhibition at Tate Britain this year.

Galleries and museums are still key nodes of influence in the art world. Curators and critics determine the tastes of the international art world and the international art market (for those who wish to enter it). Yet agencies such as MTArt are leading a new trend—one that the likes of other small-scale agencies are now following in the art world, such as Brushes with Greatness (BWG), located in London, England. Through their previous professional experiences, agencies are able to cultivate their own community and to inspire artists and early collectors on their own terms. ♦

