



petra wiese

There's only one rule when it comes to art, for this director of an altruistic art organisation: invest for the love of it

Text **Genevieve Fisher** Photographs **Adam Letch** (portrait)

Petra Wiese is evangelical about art for art's sake and, unsurprisingly, has a venerable disdain for conventional art rhetoric pivoted around value and investment. As director of the philanthropic Youngblood Arts & Culture Development, a Cape Town-based organisation that provides artists with the necessary business skills to become self sustainable, Petra's love affair with art is all-encompassing. In fact, it was a promotional dalliance with contemporary dance company Remix that saw her taking on her current role. Housed in the beautiful life building in Bree Street, Petra describes Youngblood as 'an incubator with a holistic approach to arts and culture. Our first aim is to attract talent, thereafter assisting artists with necessary funds and training to not only further their creative talent, but provide the necessary skills to sustain themselves.' As a young girl growing up in Bonn, Germany, Petra spent hours in museums 'watching art' because of 'the energy it exudes', something that informs the choice of artwork in her own home. ybafricanculture.com



FROM TOP 1. Robert Hodgins' 'New York! New York!!!'; 2. Petra Wiese; 3. Gavin Youngue's 'In Camera'; 4. Bryony Purvis' 'It's Cruel Not to Talk to you in Person'; 5. 'American Dream' by Rod Dudley.

Which one artwork do you regret not buying? I regret selling! Ten years ago I sold a Robert Hodgins painting I loved. Recently the painting came up for sale again, but I can't afford it any more. **New 'youngbloods' whose work you admire?** I admire any artist whose work combines skill and creativity to express their beliefs and feelings, and who is brave enough to exhibit in public, thereby opening themselves up to judgement. **What's your favourite piece of art in your home?** A 1.8m painted wooden sculpture by Rod Dudley, an Australian artist, which I bought 25 years ago in Italy when I lived there. It has been with me ever since, and has given me energy every day. I have no idea of its market value, but to me it's priceless. **What would you buy now because you love it?** I buy all art that I love if I can afford it. At the moment I'm looking at sculptures by Gavin Youngue from his 'Cheval de Bataille' project (I'm still saving up) and will buy several smaller works by a new artist, Bryony Purvis, who is currently exhibiting in our building. **Is there currently a dominant theme in local art?** What I like about South African art is its variety. The main theme I find is that a lot of artists are experimenting with different materials, which adds another dimension to their work. **Who is your favourite great South African master?** William Kentridge. **What is your most cherished artwork?** I love variety and benefit from the different energies artists convey through their work. My home is filled with artworks for the various moods I might be in... I'm like a parasite, feeding off them. **Describe your personal art preferences.** My current preferences are sculptures because I have no more wall space left, but am happy to share my floor area! ☺