

## NEW GALLERIST PAIRS PICASSO CERAMICS WITH ‘OUTSIDER ART’

By: Katy B. Olson, December 4, 2017



Sara Kay set about her art career in a highly practical way: era by era. She began as an old masters specialist at Christie’s, then worked with the Marina Picasso Estate at Jan Krugier Gallery, before becoming director of White Cube Gallery. Her first gallery, Sara Kay Gallery, which is located in a 19th-century townhouse in Manhattan, opened in September. The first exhibit was an “outsider art” show that aimed to connect pieces from Audrey Heckler’s private collection with Jean Dubuffet’s sculpture and Picasso’s hand-painted ceramics.

*Congratulations on the gallery opening! Tell us about how you got to this point. How did the experience at Christie’s and other galleries impact your decision to open your own space?*

I have thoughtfully built my career over the past 20 years gaining experience and expertise in old masters, modern and contemporary art. Sara Kay Gallery is the culmination of this diverse experience. I purposefully chose a 19th-century townhouse for the gallery, as I wanted a space that felt like a warm and inviting home. I kept the original exposed brick, wide planked wood floors and skylights. When I saw the space for the first time, I knew this where I wanted to share my vision with the public.

*What are some of the highlights currently on view that designers might appreciate?*

I [am] exhibiting a selection of 19Th-Century American Quilts alongside paintings, drawings and sculpture by abstract women artists, including Helen Frankthentahler, Elaine de Kooning, Lee Krasner, Louise Nevelson and others. Quilting had the tendency to be viewed as a passive, practical hobby with little more than functional purpose and quaint charm. The exhibition highlights how quilts were a peaceful aesthetic outlet with a vast range of styles and voices. The departure from being a merely functional pursuit (made possible by developments in technology and, accordingly, changes in technique, style and purpose) shifted people’s perspective on quilting to be recognized as a complex and expressive art form. I began my career at the *Folk Art Museum* and fell madly in love with quilts at the time. It will be such a pleasure for me to have over 25 diverse styles of quilts on view through January 13.

*What was behind your decision to include ‘outsider art’?*

I have been passionate about outsider art for many years. It’s such an accessible area in art and each work has its own story and soul. Alongside a selection of unique Picasso ceramics and Dubuffet sculpture, the exhibition was a rich dialogue and exchange between varied periods and mediums. [The show closed on November 30, but select works can be viewed and purchased privately.] I want the gallery to be a place of discovery where one can experience how artworks and objects that may seem incompatible or unexpected fit together flawlessly.



L to R: Tennessee Flying Geese quilt; courtesy Sara Kay Gallery, 'Pichet Rond Scène Tauromachique,' hand-painted ceramics by Pablo Picasso



Kay's new gallery is located in downtown Manhattan.