

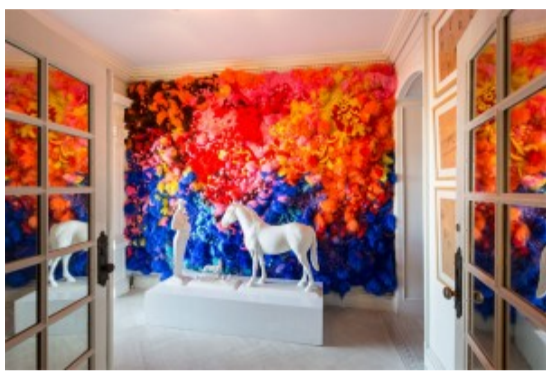
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The Collector

A curator of Latin-American art, Frederico Sève explores his passion and past as he surveys his personal Upper West Side collection.

To catch the vibe of Brazil-born art dealer Frederico Sève's cavernous Upper West Side apartment, it's crucial to understand the home's history: A true artist's apartment, the space was built in 1909 as a studio for Karl Bitter, whose sculptures grace the Metropolitan Museum of Art's façade. It's a place of giant windows and pupil-contracting big light, with sweeping views. And with Sève at the helm, the home is carrying on that artistic tradition as a showcase for his collection of primarily Latin-American art.



Sève, the jovial owner of the Frederico Sève Gallery on West 57th Street, wears a chic blue-checked shirt, gray slacks, and beige suspenders as he conducts a tour. Every room in the home is infused with contemporary art. Pieces are hung between windowpanes and

line the hallway. Walls bear works of art atop works of art: delicate symmetrical butterfly wings by Colombia-born Maria Fernanda Cardoso, undulating blue and pink neon tubes by Brazil's Antonio Dias, grim photographs of a prison two hours from Rio.

Sève points to one work in particular, by the Icelandic artist known as Shoplifter: an eye-popping multicolored, textured patchwork made from synthetic hair. He calls his relationship with it "love at first sight" and mimes being clocked in the jaw as he describes how it feels to lay eyes on it when he walks through his front door. But asking him to drill down to exactly why he chooses the works he does isn't quite so simple.

"Well, you want a logical explanation for feelings, no?" he asks. "Why somebody that you know fell in love with you immediately, and some other people don't even look at you? It's like this, no? Art is like this. After this, you explore if it's true love or not."

For Sève, he found that elusive true love with the artists he collects and champions, including Chilean painter Roberto Matta and Brazilian surfer-turned-photographer André Cypriano. His passion is obvious. When Sève bends down to move a framed piece by Mariana Vera that rests adjacent to the imported European fireplace, he lifts it and gently swings it from side to side, whistling a waltz and moving with it in three-quarter time. It is a lovely thing to watch—a collector romancing his work.

Perched in his library on a red-leather chair, Sève is quick to tell the tale of how this love affair began—how, at 20, he rode from Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo for six hours on an old rickety bus to spend \$1,000 on a rendering of brightly colored flags depicting Brazil's "festa juninha" by artist Alfredo Volpi, instead of on the more practical selection of a car.

To illustrate, he does a Google

Apple computer monitor. As the images load on-screen—large blocks of primary colors containing compelling geometric shapes—Sève points out which of the artist's pieces he owns: "That was mine... That belongs to my uncle... That was mine too," he says. "He loved to paint." Sève's acquisitions take up a good portion of the page.



"Art is the maximum symbol of the culture of a country," he says. "Through the art, the culture expresses creativity. It's the maximum freedom."

Yet, despite his deep love for Latin America (he opened his first gallery in 1965 in Rio de Janeiro), he chooses to reside in NYC. In particular, he loves to hop on his bicycle in the warmer months and cruise down the West Side Highway to Chelsea, where he says he can see 20 or 30 galleries in one morning, to keep his perspective fresh.

"The whole city is about art," he says. "Whatever is interesting in the world, there is the same thing in New York—or very close."

He blows his visitors a kiss with both hands as they leave. We definitely feel the love. —Jamie Beckman

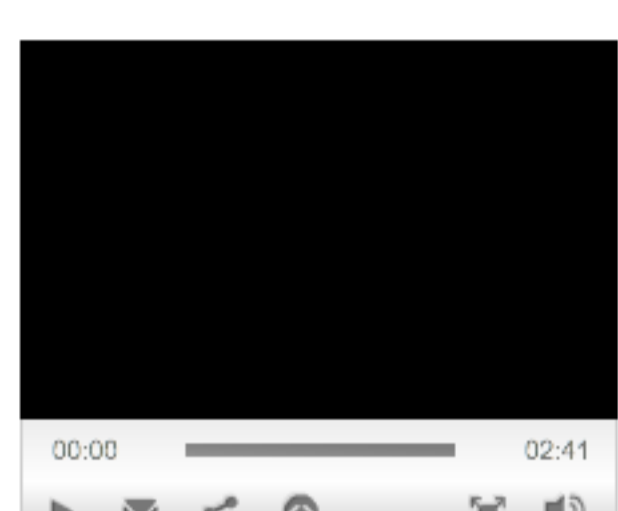
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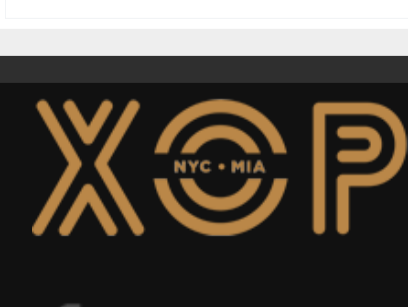
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