

Integrity and Quality

An Interview with James Borynack, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, FINDLAY Galleries

EDITORS' NOTE Eighteen years before acquiring FINDLAY Galleries International, Inc. in 1998, James Borynack purchased FINDLAY Galleries in New York, having already been its Director and Senior Vice President. His relationship with the company began in 1972 when he was hired as a salesman after having served as a partner at De Noyer, a boutique specializing in European high-fashion imports. He has also been associated with various government-related positions, including Cultural Attaché and Ambassador for Republicans Abroad International. In addition, he served as North American President of the auction house Phillips Son & Neale. He is an alumnus of New York's Parsons New School for Design.



James Borynack

FINDLAY Galleries specializes in impressionism, European Modernism, l'École de Rouen, l'École de Paris, and 20th Century American Art. The gallery currently represents more than 40 contemporary artists worldwide creating more than 50 exhibitions annually within their gallery network.

Will you highlight FINDLAY Galleries' history and heritage and what have been the keys to FINDLAY Galleries' longevity and ability to stay relevant?

Understanding what the correct choice of art was for us to represent during the different art movements over the past 152 years and having the insight to select the artists that would renew our leadership in both period and contemporary art is our heritage and key to future successful years. We maintain our integrity as a business by ensuring an uncompromising level of quality in the art we represent. When we reunited an iconic American family in art, by merging Wally Findlay Galleries and David Findlay Jr. Galleries, we captured a broader range of art to represent, making our presence in the art world more inviting and significant.

GALLERY BRIEF As art dealers serving individuals, institutions and corporate collectors, FINDLAY Galleries International, Inc. (findlaygalleries.com), was founded in 1870 in Kansas City, Missouri. With galleries in New York and affiliates in London and Paris, in addition to its flagship premises in Palm Beach, Florida,



FINDLAY Galleries flagship premises in Palm Beach, Florida

Will you provide an overview of FINDLAY Galleries' business?

FINDLAY Galleries has learned to rely on its ability to renew and adapt to the market. With that comes awareness and judgment calls regarding the depth of artistic movements and trends. Having a contemporary management team mixed with a seasoned sales team can rocket up great initiatives that keep pace with the development of "now" tactics while advancing our long-term strategic programs for the future. Our websites and virtual exhibitions are renewing bi-monthly and our electronic catalog hits grow regularly. Alongside our digital tactics, we continue to garner success with our aggressive print media budgets. As a worldwide brand, we are one of few established representational and abstractionist galleries providing full retail services and offering both renowned living and period artists to the many thousands of our active clients globally.

How do you define FINDLAY Galleries' culture?

We are proud to be a business based upon integrity and quality. Our corporate culture calls for the transmission and preservation of



The entrance to FINDLAY Galleries, New York gallery at 32 East 57th Street

tried-and-true standards refined over 150-plus years. The magic happens when we couple those standards with a constant effort to improve. This approach is defined by the leaders within our company, but in the end it all comes down to every member of our staff understanding the advantages and benefits of working within that culture which is in turn what allows our clients to enjoy those benefits as well.

Will you highlight your galleries in New York and Palm Beach and is there a consistent feel to the galleries?

Each location has its own style while still maintaining the core of the experience. The FINDLAY Galleries' experience is the enjoyment of beautiful art in a way that doesn't impose certain postures or restrictions. Everyone is welcome to visit any of our galleries at any time. Both our galleries are always open during business hours and personal appointments can always be arranged. Another integral part of the experience is the contact with our art consultants. They provide insightful and inspiring commentary which makes the experience even more remarkable. In regard to the main differences, it is perhaps the overall style – our New York Gallery at 32 East 57th street (2nd floor), features a large open floor plan in a space designed by I.M. Pei as a part of Pace's previous location in Midtown. The look is minimal and yet personal. The gallery on Worth Avenue in the heart of Palm Beach was opened in 1961 and remodeled in the eighties by world renowned designer Valerian S. Rybar. Regardless of which style and location, the art and the way in which it is exhibited is proof positive of the fact that great works of art from any period and style can be aesthetically copacetic with any type of architecture – all it takes is vision.

How did FINDLAY Galleries adapt its business to address the challenges caused by the pandemic and how proud are you to see the way your team showed resilience during this unprecedented time?



John Ferren, From Paris to Springs exhibit at FINDLAY Galleries, New York from October 4 through November 16, 2021

FINDLAY Galleries turned 150 years in 2020 whilst the world was burdened by the pandemic; in spite of it, we significantly improved our ability to reach our clients globally. We communicated clearly with our staff and our artists and chose to focus on confidence and beauty. Our marketing programs expanded into new avenues along with an increased budget. We celebrated with two exhibitions monthly online and increased our catalogue mailing by twofold. By 2021, we had presented 24 exhibitions with an increase in our client base (collectors) by 40 percent just in South Florida alone. Our staff in New York focused on reaching out to international clients and as result we saw a doubling of sales to the Pacific Rim. I am very proud of the way our team reacted and executed. They are the kind of people who choose to see the opportunity in crisis and that was very rewarding for me as their leader.

What are the keys to New York's recovery and rebuilding from the pandemic?

The key is the people, just as in every great organization, as the most valuable resource is human capital. New York will rebound because of the strength, resiliency and resourcefulness of its people. The city has always attracted the brave, strong, talented and hopeful. These trying times will not be different. The question is what the government and officials will do to help the people rebuild. With a new Governor and an incoming new Mayor, there will be opportunities for the city to reemerge triumphant over this pandemic.

What do you see as the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?

I am most fortunate to have an exceedingly collaborative team. I continue to oversee our contemporary artists group along with most of our art purchases for inventory. Having joined Wally Findlay Galleries 48 years ago, I have an insider understanding of its unique history and the people who were instrumental in its building and one of the very few who had a friendly relationship with each member of the greater Findlay family. I focus through the good counsel of my COO and life-partner of 20 years, my wise and talented Gallery Directors from Palm Beach and New York, my daughter, currently President of the Findlay Institute, and a very astute and informed circle of art consultants throughout our galleries. I am as well enlightened by our coterie of gallery affiliations worldwide.

What advice do you offer young people interested in a career in the industry?

The key to success in life is passion, which in turn becomes effort. Without passion along with the ups and downs of the journey, achievements can result in empty promises. If you wish to be an artist, a curator, an art dealer, an art critic, etc., make sure that is what you are most passionate about and follow it with all your heart. Careers in the arts are filled with difficulty and uncertainty, and those who persevere through the hardships while still maintaining their spark will be those who will look back and consider all of it worthwhile. ●



Chuang Cbe, All Within Time exhibit at FINDLAY Galleries, Palm Beach from October 2 through November, 2021