

Stéphane Debost, the gallery owner who helps you invest in art from €5,000 to earn up to 40% per year



Stéphane Debost represents 40 international artists. He recently opened his third gallery 'In Arte Veritas' in Valencia.

Art and the economy are increasingly merging. Betting on painting is the luxury investment that has appreciated the most in the last twenty years.

However, Stéphane Debost has been dedicated to it professionally for ten years: he juggles his role as a gallery owner with that of an advisor for art investors.

Despite being a chemical engineer by profession, specializing in the environment, he shifted to the other extreme: art, developing it self-taught. He bought a book about its history. "I read the first page, but never made it to the second," he confesses.

Stéphane Debost's passion for collecting artworks was so immense that it led him to create his first gallery, In Arte Veritas, in his native country, France.

At the age of 18, he bought his first artwork for 50 euros. While in the past, he used to sell pieces for an average of 1,000 euros, now the average stands at 20,000.

Life allowed him to evolve in this sector, and he recently opened his third gallery in Valencia, on Cirilo Amorós Street, number 48. If the first collection fit in a house of just 86 square meters, the three spaces he now has add up to a total of 1,100.

He decided that for developing his career as a gallery owner in Spain, Valencia would be the ideal location: "It took me ten minutes to think about it, I accepted right away." The city welcomed him immediately, as he fondly recalls.

In his early years as a gallery owner, despite having contacts, the lack of visibility or credibility in the art market made his task challenging. But he never gave up on his attempt: he spent his days in museums, artists' studios, and among significant collections.

For the past five years, he has been connected with high-level creators, "in whom it is profitable to invest," he asserts. He also claims to have engaged with individuals with high purchasing power interested in art, such as wealth management companies, international investor clubs, architects, luxury real estate agencies, as well as private clients. In 2022 alone, he managed over two million euros in art purchases.



Asked about the reasons to invest in art, he says, "they are very varied." The type of art that Debost usually promotes is figurative, where what is observed on the canvas is recognizable. "It has a very high power of evocation and can reach people who don't know. It operates under supply and demand," he points out.

Emotion, on one hand, and interest at the fiscal level, on the other, are what lead people to invest in this asset. The gallery owner highlights the profitability of the investment: "the prices of certain artists can increase by 20, 30, and even 40% in a year."

The significant rise in the value of painters is due to the global visibility that art possesses. "There are talented artists with a unique artistic expression. Those are the ones I look for as a collector and gallery owner, the ones I recommend for investment because I believe they will have international reach," he notes.

The demand for a painting skyrockets the price in an "exponential" way, as "a work appreciates if you keep it long enough," Stéphane explains.

The collector recommends investing in large works if, for example, "you have 50,000 euros," instead of "ten small works." The reason is that it is easier to sell one work than many. "The most exceptional ones are the ones that increase in price the most and can generate more interest in the market later," he asserts.

As for minimums, the current price would be around 5,000 euros. "It is evident that if you invest this amount, you can never expect that the work will be worth a million in the short term. But if you invest more, the chances of obtaining a great profit increase, due to visibility, international projection, or presence in museums," Debost clarifies.

Artists

As for sculpture, pieces by the Spanish artists Coderch & Malavia are the top sellers, being awarded the world's first prize in this discipline. Stéphane mentions that their prices have tripled, and sales have multiplied by more than ten times within an eight-year period.

Of all the artworks curated by this gallery owner, one-third are purchased, and two-thirds are left on consignment. In other words, artists deposit them in the gallery for sale, and if no one acquires them, Debost returns the pieces to the artists.

Stéphane represents almost 40 artists, translating to an average of 1,000 artworks. "If they were all mine, I would have to anticipate 20 million euros, and I can't," he explains. "We only buy unique pieces or those that force us to do so," he continues.

He reveals to this newspaper that in his room, he has a love letter from Victor Hugo, a Chinese sculpture with 1,380 years of antiquity, and contemporary painting and sculpture. His experience in this world has allowed him to have some aces up his sleeve: "I have access to works very suitable for investors: from Dalí, Fragonard, or Jacob Jordaens, who is the most famous artist of the 17th century Dutch, along with Rubens," he surprises.

He is talking about pieces that exceed 200,000 euros, although they are few. From artists like the ones mentioned, he keeps some pieces to enjoy for himself.

Investment emotion

Regarding clients, many times Stéphane does not know who they are, as the exchange takes place through an intermediary: "Recently, a prince from Dubai wanted a piece, but I never directly engaged in the buying and selling with him."

He emphasizes that the most beautiful sales he has made are with people with limited resources because the openness to art produces in that leap into the unknown an "emotion difficult to explain."

Stéphane has revealed to EL ESPAÑOL that Virut Panchabuse is the next artist, dedicated to collage, who will exhibit in the gallery on Cirilo Amorós Street. In this case, he has purchased all of the artist's works.

Virut Panchabuse will come from Asia expressly to showcase his work. It will be open to the general public starting from November 10th. "His prices have tripled in 7 years. He is an artist who generates demand much higher than his capacity to produce works, and that allows for an increase in valuation," explains the gallery owner.

For future projects, Debost has in mind the Palacio Colomina, among other events in Valencia. This art enthusiast, who also conducts business, has been fortunate in a city that has opened its doors to him because, for him, Valencia is the ideal place for seeking opportunities.