

Entryway.
Caption tk

Permanent Collection

IN THE HEART OF THE CITY, SOTHEBY'S **HELYN GOLDENBERG'S** HOME IS A MODERN PARADISE AND TRUE WORK OF ART.

By **SUE HOSTETLER** Photographs by **WERNER STRAUBE**

It was Winston Churchill who said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

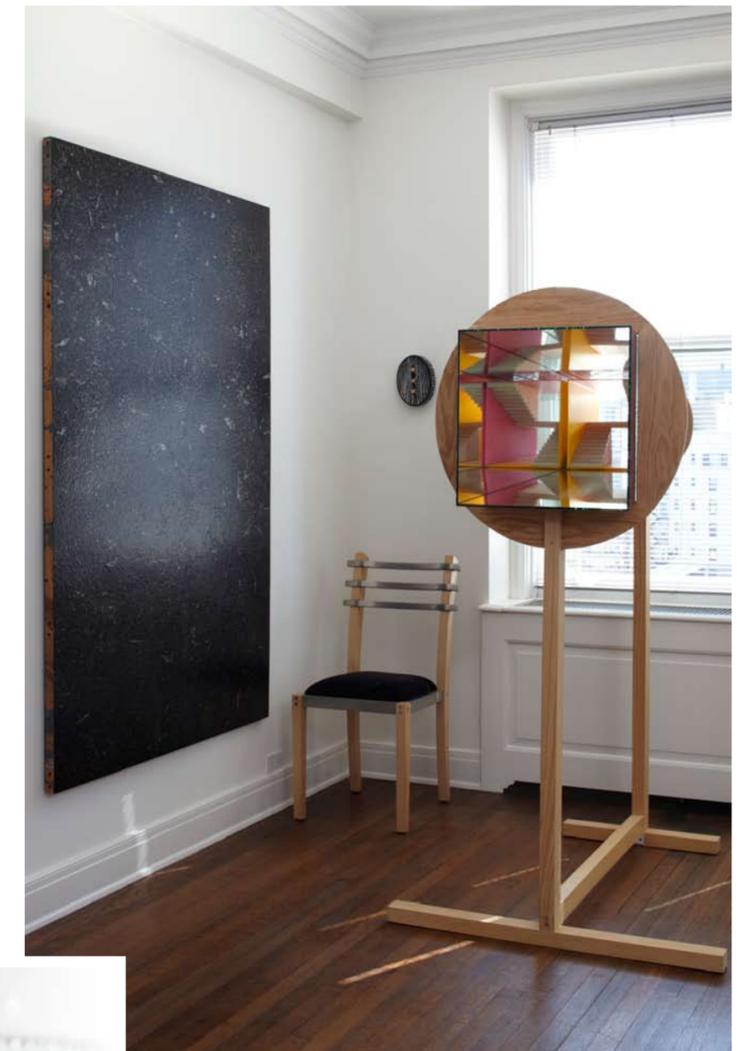
These words seem to be a guiding philosophy for lifelong Chicago resident Helyn Goldenberg, who has become well-known for investing time and commitment in giving back to her greatest passions—the art world, cultural pursuits and most importantly, her beloved hometown.

“Chicago is home,” says Goldenberg. “There is nothing that I don’t like about this town. I think it has absolutely everything a person can want: visual beauty, culture, a beach, lovely people. It is simply the unsung treasure of the United States.”

As Midwest chairman for the venerable auction house Sotheby’s and a legendary art collector in her own right, Goldenberg has helped change the philanthropic, artistic and cultural civic landscape of our city. A frequent auctioneer on the charity circuit, she is a longtime trustee and former chair of the Museum of Contemporary Art as well as a board member of the 50 year-old Chicago Central Area Committee (a group of the city’s top business leaders devoted to improving every aspect of life here), and is involved with many other area organizations including the Art Institute, the Chicago Arts Club, the Illinois Arts Alliance/Foundation.... Goldenberg’s dedication to the city goes on and on.

Nothing showcases Goldenberg’s devotion to the arts, her legendary eye, or the handsome Chicago landscape better than her singular apartment. Designed in 1925 by renowned Midwest architect Benjamin Marshall, Goldenberg’s Beaux-Arts masterpiece sits on East Lake Shore Drive, possibly the single most beautiful block along the lake. This stretch of waterfront property has been a prestige address since it was developed, starting in 1912—a row of eight buildings in the ultimate exhibition of the luxury apartment boom of the early twentieth century. In 1985 this entire block of the Drive was designated a landmark district. Marshall’s firm, which specialized in a rather Parisian style, designed several of the most desired neighboring high-rises, as well as the Drake and Blackstone Hotels and the South Shore Country Club.

“It’s hard to believe, but I’ve lived here for 31 years,” says Goldenberg. “It’s an extremely sought-after building. People are constantly asking if any apartments are available, but they rarely come on the market.” With only two units per floor and a veritable who’s who of boldfaced names as residents, it’s not

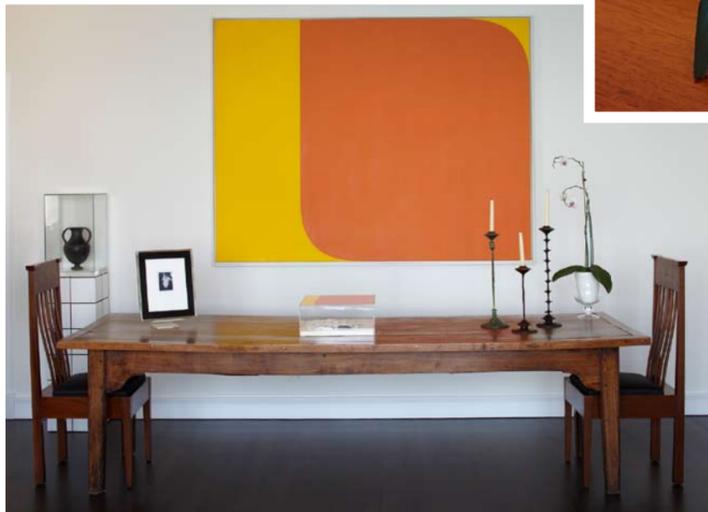


CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Gallery Bottles; Gallery Corner; Gallery Wall Art.





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Portrait; Calder; Dining Room orange.



surprising. Goldenberg affectionately remembers how she and her former husband made the decision to buy: He was sold on the building's car valet, she on its sheer beauty. "When we pulled in and they actually took our car Ralph turned to me and said 'I hope you like the apartment because we're buying it,'" she laughingly recalls. "Fortunately I walked in and didn't get any further than the elegant entrance hall before saying, 'OK, we'll take it.'"

What they took just happened to be the pièce de résistance: one of the two penthouse units, with 65 feet of window running along the front of the building, providing dramatic and unfettered views of the lake, and infusing the apartment with glorious light. Goldenberg immediately brought in celebrated Chicago designer Bruce Gregga (who started as a set designer for iconic photographer Victor Skrebneski and later famously designed the late film critic Gene Siskel's Art Deco apartment) and the two worked together to spruce up the place. "It was a total mish-mash, eclectic if you're being kind," Goldenberg remembers about the décor of the space. "So much kelly-green carpeting that it looked like a golf course! Bruce was the biggest designer in Chicago at the time. He did it in a very pure sense—no mold-

ings, which is perfect for me because I collect contemporary art." Gregga and Goldenberg's sleight of hand was flawless; they replaced materials that had been added in the 1950s (think pink and aqua linoleum) with more sophisticated materials, yet left all the pristine original 1920s elements intact, such as the old-world-feeling wood-paneled library and the classic 1920s fireplace. The tone is one of understated glamour and luxury, perfectly reflecting the owner. Even at a rambling four master bedrooms with private baths the space still feels cozy and warm due to the layout and the well-edited collection of furnishings. Pieces such as an exquisite Art Deco desk and matching chair in the study, as well as the wool handwoven Heriz rug in the library create an air of charming simplicity; peaceful yet visually arresting.

But the undeniable theatricality of the space is seriously amplified by the superlative contemporary art collection. Goldenberg's collecting acumen and shrewdness to buy artists early in their careers is well known. "Collectors are really just custodians, you know," Goldenberg offers. "I've had the privilege to live with all of these fabulous things, but I don't like to keep art in storage, so when I've wanted to get new things I've sold and bought again." The gallery space in the entrance hall stands out with its barrel-vaulted ceiling and black-and-white-



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Tea service; Kitchen window; Kitchen Chock Board.





checkered marble floor that glows candy colors emitted from one of Dan Flavin's iconic fluorescent light sculptures. Only truly knowledgeable contemporary-art aesthetes will recognize the more esoteric pieces in the house, such as Tony Feher's green bottle sculpture in one of the bedrooms. Most impressive is Goldenberg's ability to strike that delicate alchemy of turning individual works of art into a cohesive, authentic and personal collection.

For those who know this ardent supporter of the arts—and Chicago—this passion and dedication comes as no surprise. And Goldenberg's enthusiasm for her hometown extends to the prospect of the 2016 Olympics being held in the Windy City. "We want the Olympics," she says. "It would bring Chicago the world attention it deserves. This is an international city, but it's called the heartland for a reason... it is the heart of this country. Chicago is what the United States is really all about." **||MA**

LEFT: Living room. RIGHT: Living room table art. BELOW: Den.

