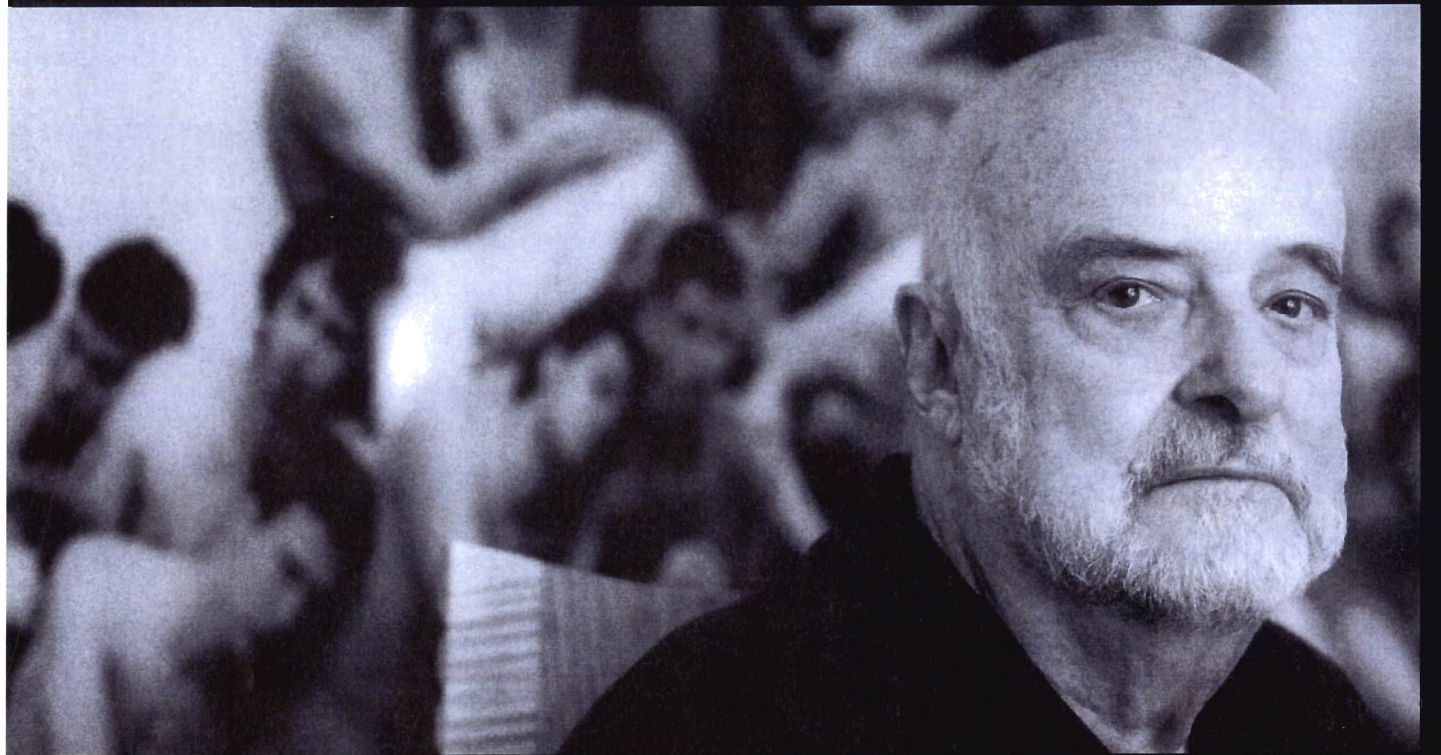


THIS IS A TALE OF THE *RICH*  
AND THE *FAMOUS* ...



Janssen is pictured in front of  
*Düsseldorf 5* by Spencer Tunick in  
which he appears with more than  
a dozen nudes. It was shot in the  
Museum Kunst Palast in 2006. Tunick's  
most recent shoot involved over 18,000  
nudes in the streets of Mexico City.

... OF KINGS,  
ART STARS,  
PSYCHICS—  
IN TIMES OF  
WILD LOVE AND  
DESPERATE LOSS.  
*IT'S ALSO THE STORY OF*

BORN INTO WEALTH AND NOBILITY IN PARIS, STÉPHANE Janssen led a privileged life, initially enabled by his great, great, great grandfather, who invented the industrial process of sodium carbonate (an ingredient in making glass and fertilizer). The company exists today, with 30,000 employees worldwide, but Janssen uses his lucky stars to play in the international art world.

These days, his primary residence is a great, great, great big house with wrap-around, drop-dead panoramic views of numerous mountain ranges every which way you look. Inside, this spectacular north Scottsdale abode is chock-full of contemporary art—some of it by big-name art stars, some of it quite outrageous. Two things come to mind when you walk through Janssen's home: First, this guy is having fun. Second, self-indulgence never looked quite so gentlemanly.

Of course, there's the French accent—part of Janssen's immense charm. There are the framed snapshots of his four children, who are pedigree gorgeous, like models in a Ralph Lauren ad (think yachting vignettes); ornately framed photos with friends King Leopold III of Belgium and his wife along with Henrik, Prince Consort of Denmark; photos from trips to exotic locales around the globe and references to an upcoming excursion to Tahiti and Easter Island. In numerous piled-high stacks are slick art books, as well as Sotheby's and Christie's catalogues, from which Janssen often fetches his indulgences.

He is a serious collector—smart and savvy about the frantic, ever-changing contemporary art market which takes new, sharp turns toward the latest rage, the most recent "discovery," tossing prices up and down. Above Janssen's living room fireplace hangs a Jean Michel Basquiat, which Janssen cleverly bought for a song, before prices soared. He collects photographs by the medium's

contemporary masters: Joel-Peter Witkin, Yasumasa Morimura, Anthony Goicolea, Spencer Tunick, and Stefan De Jaeger. He owns over a hundred paintings by Abstract Expressionist R.E. Gillet; even the master bathroom showcases a collection—Buddhas and Ganeshas. And then there are paintings by CoBrA artists (named for Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam), including Pierre Alechinsky, Karel Appel, and Asger Jorn, as well as contemporary craft, Native American art and artifacts, and European sculpture.

Rare among collectors, Janssen often makes a commitment to collect the work of an artist over their lifetime. This support often becomes a lifeline for artists. "It's a friendship," he says of the collector-artist alliance.

Throughout the house, furnishings are spare and mostly contemporary, including clean-lined chairs by Howard Werner (blasted with a power saw), tables and cat sculptures by Diego Giacometti, and a Gustav Stickley table and chair set.

In 2004, Janssen gifted over 600 ceramic pieces, his entire collection worth millions, to ASU Art Museum's Ceramics Research Center: "Young people should see good art—be pushed by things," he says, "Then, if they like Elvis on velvet, fine." The bequest was a tribute to his deceased life partner, ceramist Michael Johns, who tragically died 14 years ago. Janssen (who arrived in America in 1976 to establish a new life apart from his family), met Johns while living in California. "See that man," a friend and psychic prophetically told Janssen, while pointing to Johns (a waiter in a restaurant, at the time). "You will live with him."

The two traveled the world together, primarily collecting paintings and ceramics. "After his death," says Janssen, "I could no longer bear to collect them, so I bought photographs."

# STÉPHANE JANSSEN, A MODERN-DAY MEDICI

WRITTEN BY AMY ABRAMS  
PORTRAIT BY HARRISON HURWITZ



Although every piece in Stéphane Janssen's collection holds special meaning and comes with a story behind the purchase, our writer, Amy Abrams, asked him to describe a handful of his favorites



Stefan De Jaeger  
*R. Michael Johns,*  
 1958-1993  
 1993  
 Polaroid collage  
 36" x 36"

*"DE JAEGER MADE THIS ABOUT MICHAEL AFTER HE DIED. DE JAEGER'S WORK COMES FROM THE SOUL AND GOD, NOT FROM THE BRAIN AND WALLET."*

*"APPEL, A DUTCH EXPRESSIONIST, WAS CO-FOUNDER OF THE COBRA GROUP (FROM COPENHAGEN, BRUSSELS, AND AMSTERDAM). COBRA ARTISTS ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN COLOR AND BRUSHWORK. THEY WERE THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT ART MOVEMENT OF POSTWAR EUROPE—THIS IS THE ART OF MY TIME."*



Karel Appel  
*Deux Têtes*  
 Oil on canvas  
 1954  
 51 1/4" x 39 1/4"



POINTING TO THE LOWER LEFT: "THIS ONE IS ME. THAT'S MY BUTT, UNFORTUNATELY. THIS IS MY FRIEND PETER. WE HAD TWO PLASTIC BAGS, ONE FOR CLOTHES, AND ONE TO SIT ON. IT WAS GREAT FUN, ALTHOUGH NOT A PARTY ATMOSPHERE—THE LEAST SEXUAL THING I'VE EVER DONE. I'VE PARTICIPATED IN EIGHT TUNICK PHOTO EVENTS."



Spencer Tunick  
*Brugge 1*  
C-print mounted  
between Plexiglas  
2005  
79" x 89 1/2"

"IF THERE WAS  
EVER A FIRE, I  
WOULD TAKE  
ALL OF MY  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
OF MICHAEL AND  
THIS GILET."

"... MY VERY FIRST PURCHASE—1952, IN ST. TROPEZ. I WAS 16 AND HAD LUNCH WITH [DOMINGUEZ]—I MET HIM THROUGH A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY. I WAS HAPPY—I HAD AN EPIPHANY: THIS IS WHAT I LIKE IN LIFE—ART."



Oscar Dominguez  
*Coupe au Poisson*  
1951  
Oil on canvas  
5 1/2" x 7"



R.E. Gilet  
*Le Règne Végétal*  
Oil on masonite panel  
1953  
46 1/2" x 26 3/4"