

HESSE FLATOW

White, Katie. *Photofairs founder Scott Gray celebrates every win (big or small), covets Danish design, and believes in investing in a good surfboard.* Artnet News. Online. September 6, 2023.

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Valuations

Photofairs Founder Scott Gray Celebrates Every Win (Big or Small), Covets Danish Design, and Believes in Investing in a Good Surfboard

Ahead of the inaugural edition of Photofairs New York, we spoke with the fair's founder about what he values in art and life.

Katie White, September 7, 2023



Scott Gray, 2023. Photo: Casey Kelbaugh.

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So much of the art world orbits around questions of value, not only in terms of appraisals and price tags, but also: What is worthy of your time in These Times, as well as your energy, your attention, and yes, your hard-earned cash?

What is the math that you do to determine something's meaning and worth? What moves you? What enriches your life? In this new series, we're asking individuals from the art world and beyond about the valuations that they make at a personal level.

Scott Gray is not afraid of adventure, whether that's catching the next big wave on his surfboard or launching a fully fledged art fair.

In 2007, the British entrepreneur first launched the World Photography Organization, an organization devoted to the advancement of photographic culture, and with it established the Sony World Photography Awards, which has become one of the preeminent photography awards. Over the years, the organization has branched into the realms of film and contemporary art, leading Gray to establish CREO, a parent company devoted to fostering creative opportunities and events across mediums.

Gray, who is a lifelong photography lover, wasn't done yet, however, and in 2014, he took the leap into art fairs, launching Photofairs Shanghai, a highly curated fair focused on photo-based and digital work. Now, nine years later, Photofairs is bringing its curated and cutting-edge perspectives to Manhattan with Photofairs New York, a new edition launching this week and coinciding with Armory Arts Week (September 8–10). Art fair veteran Helen Toomer is at the helm as director. Promising presentations include an installation from New York's Hesse Flatow of artist Adama Delphine Fawundu's photographs, prints, and video works, which explore ancestral memory, as well as Spinello Projects's installation of artist duo Elliot & Erick Jiménez's staged photographs portraying deities and saints, in synthetic visions of Yoruba and Catholic iconographies.

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While Gray maintains a jam-packed calendar of entrepreneurial vigor, particularly in the lead-up to the fair, when he does enjoy downtimes he can be found scouting out high-quality design, hitting the beach with his bespoke surfboard, and discovering the work of overlooked artists.

Recently we spoke with Gray who told us what he values in art and life.

What is the last thing that you splurged on?

A bespoke surfboard.

What is something that you're saving up for?

A Finn Juhl 45 armchair.

What would you buy if you found \$100?

Lunch.

What makes you feel like a million bucks?

A win; big or small. Nothing worth having is easy.

What do you think is your greatest asset?

Affable tenacity.

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Tabitha Soren, *The Mind Baby Problem (Dawn)* (2023).
Detail. Courtesy of the artist and Jackson Fine Art.

What do you most value in a work of art?

Concept.

Who is an emerging artist worthy of everyone's attention?

Larry Cook. I'm excited to see his new work at Photofairs New York.

Who is an overlooked artist who hasn't yet gotten their due?

Tabitha Soren. Her photo-based artworks have great psychological depth.

What, in your estimation, is the most overrated thing in the art world?

Exclusivity.

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Larry Cook, *Le Pearl* (2023). Courtesy of the artist and Chela Mitchell Gallery.

What is your most treasured possession?

Sanity.

What's been your best investment?

The team.

What is something small that means the world to you?

Thoughtfulness.

What's not worth the hype?

Validation by social media and advent calendars.

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What do you believe is a worthy cause?

Education.

What do you aspire to?

Making a positive contribution.

- *Katie White*