

After Hours

A PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO LEISURE

PROFILE

The Art Collector

While accounting eventually won her heart, **Tia Walsh's** first love never waned

IN HER YOUTH, Tia Walsh never gave much thought to art appreciation.

Her artistic epiphany happened in her early 20s, and not just anywhere: it was in Florence, while standing before Michelangelo's David. "I was mesmerized by it," she says. "It was pure in execution and beauty. It was overwhelming."

She continued her journey, visiting other galleries throughout Europe, then took art history classes in Vancouver. She contemplated a career in the art world but decided to follow in the footsteps of her father, Ron Walsh, who founded the Vancouver-based accounting firm Walsh King LLP, where she is a partner today.

Through the years, Walsh built up a small contemporary art collection of about 40 pieces, of which 30 hang on her apartment's walls, creating a sparse, minimalist decor. "Many people first set up their living space, then try to find a painting that matches with their sofa," she says. In her setting, that process is reversed: "Art is the central decor."

For many years, Walsh sat on the board of the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, which allowed her to immerse herself in a community of artists and fellow collectors. As a mother of six-year-old twin girls, she says, "My ability to attend openings has diminished, but with [my daughters'] growing interest in art I am hopeful that we will all enjoy the arts together."

Art adds an essential dimension to her work as a CPA. "People view accountants as technical and conservative," she says. "My practice brings me in contact with owner-operated businesses, dynamic entrepreneurs who are engaged in the world around them. They are not looking only for static thinkers as advisers, but for people who are dynamic themselves, who understand the world around them.



Having an interest in something that goes beyond the stereotypes that people expect allows me to be a better observer and adviser."

In her appreciation of art, beauty is significant, but she seeks above all an experience that is directly meaningful. One piece can have simple visual interest, and another may appeal at a

deeper level. "I recently acquired a piece by Holly Marie Armishaw that is a self-portrait of the artist's torso in a simple white slip dress; the words written in purple nail polish on a Plexiglas box frame read backwards, 'Those who never apologize are the most difficult to forgive.' I loved it on so many levels, and I had to live with it." — *Yan Barcelo*

Jimmy Jeong/KlixPix