



Chrissy Crawford Malone, '98

As a child, Crissy Crawford Malone fantasized about working for a New York museum.

"I thought that seemed very glamorous, but I didn't know then what it paid," she says, laughing. She grew up in an art-friendly environment that provided the perfect foundation for her current career as a New York-based virtual gallerist, entrepreneur and art advisor. Thanks to her mother, an interior designer who often bought art for her clients, and a father who served on the Dunedin Art Center board, Crawford Malone's childhood included art classes and trips to museums and art fairs.

She says, "I wanted to own art ever since I was little," and credits Shorecrest classes with Penny Spears for helping her decide on an art-related career. After attending a two-month art history program at Oxford University the summer between her junior and senior years, she took Spears' 7 a.m. AP art history class.

"Her humanities class was one of the best I'd ever had. It covered everything and exposed us to so many new things. And art history was amazing."

Crawford Malone majored in art history at Southern Methodist University, where her first class in modern and contemporary art struck a chord and became her focus. She planned to become a museum curator until one of her mother's friends, a Citibank employee, told her that the bank employs art advisors to assist clients who collect art. With that career possibility in mind, she graduated and spent three years working in Aspen for the Aspen Art Museum and 212 Gallery.

Next stop—London, where she received her master's degree in international art business from Sotheby's Institute of Art; completed a diploma program in art and law



at the Institute of Art and Law; and worked for a small art advisory group. In 2007, she moved to New York and set up Crissy Crawford Art Advisory.

"Most of the clients were experienced full-time collectors, and very busy. They told me what they were interested in, and I went to studios, galleries, and auctions and told them what I thought they should buy. I did the legwork and research, and handled the financing, negotiating, insurance and shipping." She also began helping first time buyers, many of whom were young bankers who wanted to collect art but didn't know where to start. And then the economic downturn prompted the need to think of art advising in a whole new way.

"The recession hit the young collectors hard...and galleries were closing, so the artists were really struggling. I started to think of making art advising more accessible to a broader audience and getting more people investing in artists' work." That led to the creation of ArtStar.com and LittleCollector.com, both of which launched in January of 2011.

Working with curators around the world, ArtStar offers affordable originals (under \$5,000) and museum-quality, limited edition prints (\$25-\$250) of work by new and established artists. LittleCollector.com offers limited edition contemporary art prints by leading artists especially for children (\$40-\$250, unframed). The site's educational section, Art 101, includes a glossary of art history terms and other information designed to help parents teach their children about art. Ten percent of the proceeds from LittleCollector.com go to New York charity, RxArt.

Crawford Malone's husband, Michael, a former investment banker, serves as the head of operations, handling printing, fulfillment, accounting, and website development. And although Crawford Malone still does art advising for several clients, she's focused on growing her galleries. Plans include layering in Chinese, Korean and Japanese on the ArtStar site and possibly doing some of the printing abroad.

After three months, both sites are running in the black, and the future looks bright for the art lover who conceived win-win ventures for artists and their patrons.

"My mission is to open up the art world. What happened to artists in 2008 might not happen as severely [in the future] if their work is more available to a larger audience. Having more people participate in contemporary art is really big for me. We get a lot of great testimonials from collectors who are happy that we're making art accessible, and that feels good."

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