

HOME

DECOR

An artist/collector's South Broad Street home doubles as a gallery and exhibits more than 200 paintings, including the works of Salvador Dali and Joan Miro.

By Amanda L. Snyder

REVIEW STAFF WRITER

Being an artist himself, Charles Bobroff has a knowing eye. The walls of his home feature more than 200 paintings — including some of his own — valued in the millions.

Bobroff, who goes by Zachary Fae (a name carried over from his former shoe business), purchased the place at 1209 S. Broad St. a decade ago and created a gallery filled with artists and paintings he liked. Nearly two-thirds of the collection accumulated over 40 years is on display at the Zachary Fae Fine Art Gallery with the remainder on loan.

"I buy for what I feel, what I enjoy, and it seems to work out where other people like my taste," he said. "I lean toward the surrealist, futuristic genre — but of course you can see we have all kinds of different artists — but that's my specialty."

Beginning in 2003, the three-story, 15-room home was redone, but certain aspects of its original 1840s' structure remained intact. The furnishings are mostly antiques and include a chair from the Dwight Eisenhower White House years.

Bobroff, along with wife of 17 years Deborah Slutter, was looking for a large home to show their art collection when they stumbled upon the Broad Street spot. It has since been appraised at \$1.2 million, he said. Slutter and the couple's 8-year-old daughter, Sophia Slutter, often stay there.

Paintings hung throughout the rooms and hallways include artists from around the world, including Haiti, Israel, Spain and Italy, in addition to local talent.

"All the works you see are the major works they've done," he said of area artists such as Paul Gorka, Peter Potoma, Sally Chase, EO Omwake and Robert Panzullo.

ROOM CONCEPTS RANGE from his daughter's "Beauty and the Beast"



theme to an art-deco section on the third floor, both of which Bobroff and a team of artists designed, along with 13 others.

His works — usually large-scale expressionistic pieces — are displayed intermittently among the artists with his newer additions on the third level beside some of his own sculptures and ceramics. Others are stored-away items rotated in for public viewing.

Bobroff hosts two to three openings a year, including one New Year's Day which Mayor Michael Nutter regularly attends, and another in the summer, he said. The gallery does not have set hours, but accepts a handful of appointments, a week, usually capping out at 10.

"I'm always available if someone makes an appointment and I'm here," he said. "I'm here most of the time."

Always involved in art, at about age 11, Bobroff began creating collages and paintings and continued through his high school years at West Catholic where others began admiring what he was doing.

"I guess I liked the idea of the reception of the work and I built an identification around that and kept painting," he said.

The University City native attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated in '69 with a degree in art

history. Two years later, he received a master's in fine arts from West Chester before returning to Penn for his Ph.D. He then ventured into fashion with his own store and the motto "passionate shoes for men."

"It was very exclusive and one-of-a-kind," he said of the business he owned during the '70s and '80s.

Bobroff used his 21st and Walnut and 18th and Walnut streets locations, as well as one in New York City, to showcase some of art collection. His first home gallery was at 23rd and Pine streets. He traveled when was exhibited, including trips to Italy, France and Spain, with artists such as Salvador Dali and Joan Miro, whom he met. He even lived in Italy at one point to find shoes for his shop.

With a gallery all his own, Bobroff takes good care of his collection.

"You have to treat them like your children," he said. "It's very, very important. Water can damage them because there's a lot of water-based paint."

Children and paintings actually mingled quite well when up to 20 kids stayed

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ter to send to Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Phil for support and are working on developing the nonprofit Tom and Enid Slutter Foundation. The thought of using 50 percent of the profits from the paintings and an in-the-works book to benefit the children through the foundation in being banded about.

Aside from keeping up with his home gallery and helping his in-laws, Bobroff keeps busy with "The Fine Art of Theosophy" with co-authors Abraham Davidson, an art professor at Temple University, and Dr. Steve Levy. Theosophy, which means "divine wisdom," is a major point of inspiration in his work, Bobroff said. The book will delve into the spiritual influence in fine art.

"It's been a few years since I have painted a large painting," he said. "I've been collecting the other artists more so and working on my book." **SPR**

For more information on the Tom and Enid Slutter Foundation, the gallery or to make an appointment at the gallery, call 215-465-4009.

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with the family at their South Broad residence. In-laws Tom and Enid Slutter have 24 adopted children ranging in age from 1 to mid-30s who suffer from psychological illnesses or have drug-addicted parents. The couple also has four grown biological children that includes, in addition to Deborah, Lindsay, Jimmy and Tommy.

For the last 10 years, Bobroff and his wife have help support the children, including purchasing a house at 19th and Christian streets for them to reside. Others live with the Slutters near Scranton. Bobroff and his wife are preparing a let-