

An Oasis for Painting and Glass

by Tina Oldknow

submitted to Diana Daniels, Crocker Art Museum, 11/27/2015

2076 words

*We find it familiar to consider objects as useful or aesthetic, as necessities or vain indulgences. We are on less familiar ground when we consider objects as companions to our emotional lives or as provocations to thought. The notion of evocative objects brings together these two less familiar ideas, underscoring the inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things. We think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with. Sherry Turkle, *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With**

What do we learn from looking at an exhibition of a private collection? In museum exhibitions that draw together objects from around the world to develop a theme or investigate an idea, the curator builds context. On the other hand, in monographic exhibitions, whether they be an artist's retrospective or the presentation of a private collection put together by a collector or collector couple, essential context—the environment of the artist/collector—is removed. We may learn about the objects in the collection, the collector's taste, and the individual artists, but we miss how the collector experiences his own collection.

On viewing in a museum selections from the impressive collection of about 300 pieces assembled by David Kaplan and Glenn Ostergaard, I am aware that I experience the objects differently than most museum goers, because I have seen them in the context of painting. This distinction is important, because painting is the source of the couple's understanding of their collection, and that knowledge influences what they see, think, experience, and buy. David began the collection by acquiring color and light-filled canvases by Bay Area figurative painters, including Manuel Neri, Nathan Olivera, Paul Wonner, Joan Brown, and Elmer Bishoff. Glenn is a painter of large and ambitious patterned paintings that are characterized by color as confident as it is complex.