

# The Art of Revenge

WHY SOME ARTISTS WON'T SELL OUT, LITERALLY, TO DEEP-POCKETED COLLECTORS

**MAYBE IT'S THE GEN-X SENSE** of entitlement, but young artists are becoming increasingly selective about who's allowed to purchase their creations, working with their galleries to ensure their pieces stay in the hands of those they deem appropriate. Take Damien Hirst, who was catapulted into the collec-

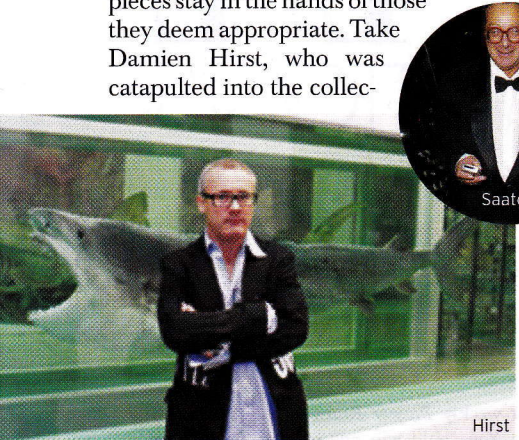
In 2002, the two battled over how Hirst's work should be displayed in Saatchi's new London gallery, and the dustup culminated in Hirst buying back 12 of his pieces from his benefactor.

While Saatchi may be thought of as the art-world bogeyman (artist Matthew Day Jackson is another rumored to refuse to sell to him directly), he's not the only one. In 2002, the artist Barnaby Furnas reportedly sold a canvas of a Civil War battlefield, *Heartbreak Ridge*, to Michael Ovitz for \$12,000, only to see the former Walt Disney Company president flip it at Sotheby's four years later for \$520,000. (Furnas responded with a print edition entitled *Effigy [Don't you love me anymore?]*—a man with dollar signs for eyes, a pig nose, and giant Mickey

Mouse-like ears.) In some instances, New York City-based artist Ryan McGinness sells a partial stake of major works, having the purchaser sign a contract giving McGinness and the buyer equal ownership. Both have to agree to sell it and split the proceeds. "I'm very proud of my work and concerned with where it gets placed," McGinness explains. "I'm not interested in selling to people who will auction it a year later."

With artists paying close attention to who's writing the checks, don't assume that something is beyond your budget.

Jacob Lewis, the director of Manhattan's Pace Prints Chelsea, would rather see pieces in the hands of a bona fide enthusiast. "I'm more tempted to negotiate with a person who expresses an emotional attachment to the work," Lewis says. "If that's considered picky, so be it."—MEGAN DEEM



Hirst



Saatchi



McGinness with his Rainbow McTwist



Ovitz

tive consciousness when London-based advertising legend Charles Saatchi commissioned *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*—a shark floating in a tank of formaldehyde.

## For Those About to Rock...ON AND OFF BROADWAY THAT IS, TAKE NOTE: IT'S NOT AS EASY AS STEPHEN SONDHEIM MAKES IT LOOK

**INDIE ROCKERS TEND TO DISDAIN MUSICAL THEATER UNTIL THEY TRY IT.** Then the musical theater tends to disdain them; either their songs fail to tell stories effectively, or the stories they choose aren't worth telling. As *Passing Strange*—a downtown highlight last season—makes the big move to Broadway this month, we look for the lessons in the hits and misses.—JESSE GREEN

THE MUSICAL:	<i>Passing Strange</i>	<i>Spring Awakening</i>	<i>10 Million Miles</i>	<i>High Fidelity</i>	<i>Cry-Baby</i>
INDIE X FACTOR:	Stars Stew, front man of the L.A. band the Negro Problem, who wrote the book and, with Heidi Rodewald, the music.	Music by Duncan "Barely Breathing" Sheik.	Score by Patty Griffin, "country hybrid" songwriter covered by everyone from Emmylou Harris to the Dixie Chicks.	Music by NYC club fixture Tom Kitt, whose single "Road to You" was featured on <i>Dawson's Creek</i> .	Music by Adam Schlesinger, bassist for Fountains of Wayne; wrote "That Thing You Do!"
THE GIST:	Semiautobiographical tale of a young black L.A. artist's search for home via Amsterdam, Berlin, sex, drugs, and performance art.	Rock remake of 1891 German shocker about repressed teenage sexuality, with book and lyrics by playwright Steven Sater.	Fifteen mostly pre-existing Griffin songs set to an original story by playwright Keith Bunin about melancholy lovers on a road trip from Florida to New York.	Adaptation of Nick Hornby novel and John Cusack film, with lyrics by Amanda Green, daughter of classic wordsmith Adolph.	<i>Hairspray</i> -inspired adaptation of John Waters movie about the forbidden love between a greaser and a square.
THEATER CRED:	Instead of inflating the slim story, director Annie Dorsen shapes it as a kind of superhip club act.	Not much. But savvy direction and choreography make up for songs that don't advance the action.	Griffin's tunes tell detailed stories, with clear characters and natural arcs: one-act plays in themselves.	As an alumnus of the BMI Workshop, Kitt really knows how to hook and develop a number.	Also on board: <i>Hairspray</i> 's book writers, and lyricist David Javerbaum, of <i>The Daily Show</i> .
RESULT:	Perfect marriage of music and story enhances both.	Infusion of new sounds into old world electrifies Broadway and disguises flaws.	Stuffing old material into a new plot trivializes the former and distorts the latter.	No getting around a bad script. Kitt has a second chance with this month's <i>Next to Normal</i> .	Opens on Broadway this spring, after tryouts in La Jolla, California.

Hirst: © Rune Hellestad/Corbis; Saatchi: Can Nguyen/London Features International; McGinness: David X. Prutting/PMC; Ovitz: Tom Grizzle/PMC; indie rockers, left to right, top to bottom: Frederik Clement/Getty Images; © Michal Daniel, 2007; Joan Marcus; © Monique Carboni; Joan Marcus; Kevin Berne; Jemal Countess/WireImage.com; RD/Retna (2); Joseph Marzullo/Retna; Mark Mainz/Getty Images; Gina James/Retna; Thomas Northcut/Getty Images (4)