

Peter Marino Adds to Louis Vuitton's Impressive Art Collection

The architect and Alexander Gray unveil the addition of Betty Parsons' "African Dawn" to the luxury brand's New York flagship.

By [Evan Prince](#) on November 10, 2017



📷 Betty Parsons. African Dawn, 1972. Acrylic on canvas. 67.50h x 35.50w in 171.45h x 90.17w cm. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York. © 2017 Betty Parsons Foundation

[Louis Vuitton](#)'s Fifth Avenue flagship is continuing to grow its impressive art collection with the recent addition of a Betty Parsons painting.

The work, "African Dawn, 1972," joins other prominent works of contemporary art in the boutique, including a sizable [Yayoi Kusama](#) flower sculpture. The first floor of the Upper East Side location also showcases a collaboration between the luxury brand and artist Jeff Koons.

During a conversation on Thursday evening between the luxury store's architect, [Peter Marino](#), and Parsons' estate manager, Alexander Gray, the two divulged how the piece found its way back to 57th Street, where Parsons once owned a gallery. "For those who attended the [Museum of Art And Design](#) today, they learned that chartreuse is my favorite color. The painting next to the door is chartreuse," said Marino, describing his attraction to the renowned painting. "You always look what the gallerist hangs alone on the entrance wall — duh — that's usually the best painting. He hung it in the middle of the wall when you came in...I didn't need a high IQ to go, 'I guess he thinks that one's really good.' I totally went, 'That's the one.'"

Besides the painting being his favorite color, Marino had an even more personal and nostalgic reason for selecting the work for the New York store. "As a high school music and art kid going to galleries on 57th [Street], I was certainly at [Parsons'] gallery. I just wanted to plant a flag on 57th Street. I made it my business to get ['African Dawn'] transferred from this gentleman over to [Louis Vuitton](#)." The designer felt so strongly about the painting that he urged Vuitton to place the painting in the New York store, despite having already spent his "hefty budget" for the store.

Marino's personal interests happened to align with the Louis Vuitton Foundation's, who "have a very strong bias of supporting women artists." In designing the New York and Paris stores, Marino and the foundation purchased 36 works of art, including 14 pieces by female artists.

The bias of the LV Foundation did not always parallel Parsons' own career as an art dealer. When given a chance during the early 1950s to showcase Carmen Herrera, "an abstract painter who is very celebrated right now," Parsons declined because she thought "people don't buy work by women," said Gray. However, later in the decade, her stance shifted and she began to champion not just female artists, but artists of color as well. Introducing artists that have been overlooked in the market — particularly female artists — is a common goal of both Gray's eponymous gallery and Louis Vuitton, making the partnership a harmonious fit.