

Bagley, Chrisopher, "Art and Commerce," *WMagazine.com*, October 26, 2015

W



Tony Salamé, on the site of his Aïshti Foundation, in Beirut. Photography by Jeremy Liebman

by Christopher Bagley
October 26, 2015

Art and Commerce

At mega-collector Tony Salamé's newly opened Aïshti Foundation, in Beirut, blue-chip works and designer dresses hang in the same building. Christopher Bagley takes inventory.

Bagley, Christopher, "Art and Commerce," *WMagazine.com*, October 26, 2015

Anybody who knows Tony Salamé, the Lebanese retail magnate, will tell you that he's a committed shopper. Salamé is the man who persuaded dozens of luxury fashion brands to open boutiques in war-torn Beirut, and he has long been an obsessive collector of rare and expensive objects, including rugs, watches, antique Chinese porcelain, and, more recently, major contemporary artworks. But even Salamé's longtime friends—along with his newer friends, in the elite circles of the art world—have been surprised by the speed and intensity of several recent buying sprees, such as his three-day splurge during Art Basel this past June.

During the art fair's VIP preview, a few seconds after the doors opened, Salamé warmed up by dropping more than \$150,000 on a brand-new Daniel Buren sculpture that happened to catch his eye as he rushed past the booth of the Paris dealer Kamel Mennour. Minutes later he was snatching up a Kathryn Andrews stainless steel readymade, followed by an Albert Oehlen collage and a Tauba Auerbach sculpture that he had previously reserved, plus a 2015 Auerbach painting to go with it. By the time he left town, Salamé's haul consisted of 22 works, including two monumental pieces that he'd secured before the fair had even opened: a set of 24 canvases by Sam Falls and a half-million-dollar John Armleder pour painting almost the size of a racquetball court.