

Observer, 17.9.24

The Art Collectors Behind Christie's 'Exceptional Impressions' Sale

Alan and Marianne Schwartz were so intent on promoting the importance of prints in art that they freely loaned pieces from their art collection to institutions.

By [Christa Terry](#)

On October 23, Christie's will offer up works from one of the largest and most diverse collections of prints ever amassed in the United States. Carefully curated over six decades by Alan and [Marianne Schwartz](#), that collection encompasses hundreds of works spanning four centuries of art history. Represented therein are movements as diverse as German Expressionism and American Modernism, alongside masterpieces by European Old Masters and American icons. There are Picassos and Rembrandts. Works by Edvard Munch and Erich Heckel. By Goya, Daumier, Manet, Beckmann, Kollwitz, Braque and Miró. Until Alan's passing, the Schwartzes were listed among ARTnews' Top 200 Art Collectors for the thoughtfulness and zeal with which they elevated this art form.

The couple is widely recognized for building one of the world's most significant private collections of works on paper, and 130 prints from their vast trove of graphic art will go on the block in next month's [Exceptional Impressions: The Alan and Marianne Schwartz Collection](#) sale. Leading the auction are Picasso's *La Femme qui pleure I (Weeping Woman I)*, with a high estimate of \$1,800,000, and Rembrandt's *The Three Crosses*, with a high estimate of \$1,500,000. But print lovers with smaller budgets will find lots to like here, with works by [Pierre Bonnard](#), [Elizabeth Catlett](#) and others priced \$10,000 and under. Further works from the collection will be featured in an online sale, *Graphic Century: Featuring Exceptional Impressions from The Alan and Marianne Schwartz Collection*, in November. Together, the two sales will offer up a total of 230 prints from the Schwartzes' 400-print collection.

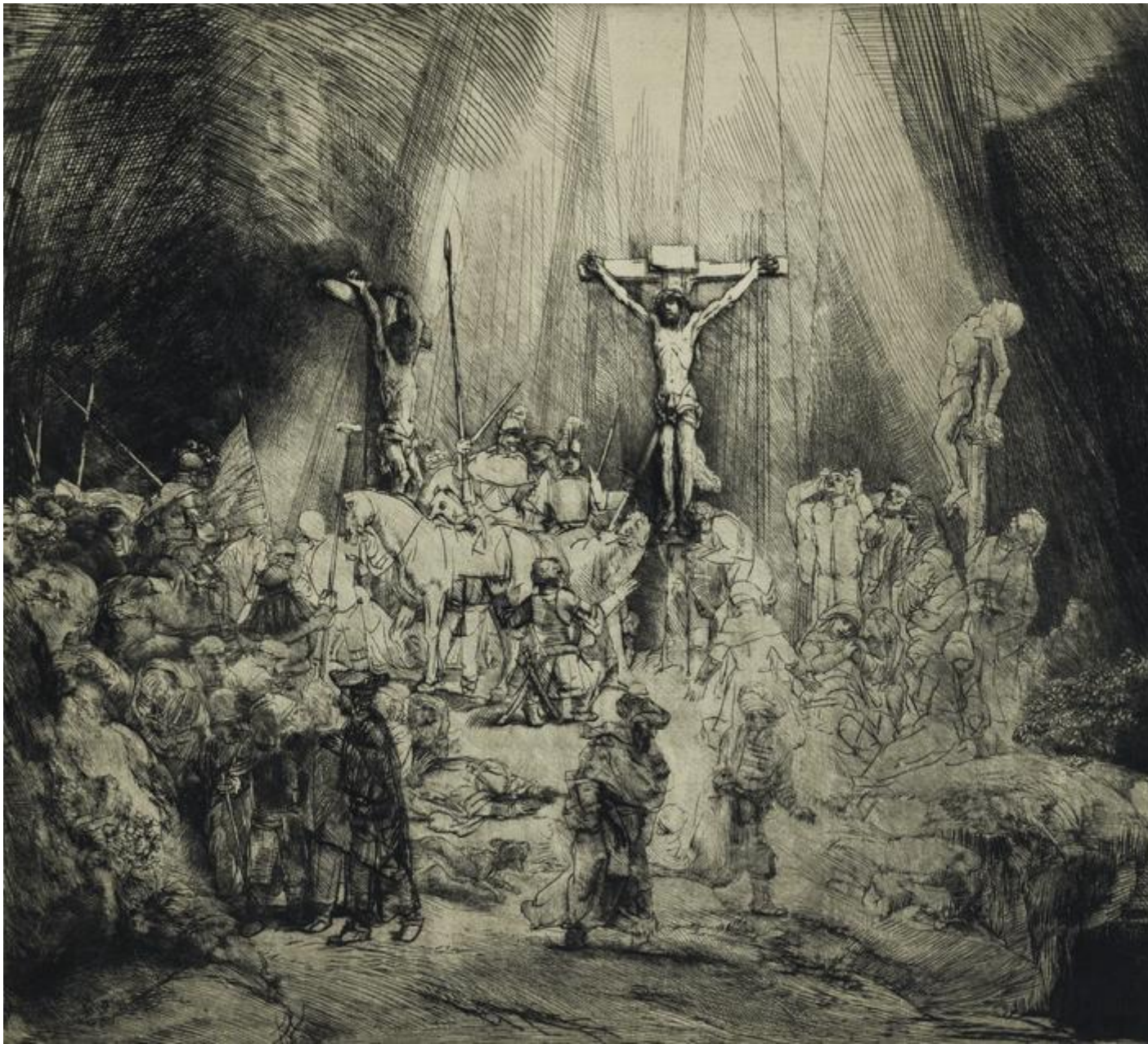
Who were Alan and Marianne Schwartz?

Between Alan, a lawyer, and Marianne, it was she who was the passionate art connoisseur. In a 2010 interview with the Detroit Free Press, referenced in [Alan Schwartz](#)'s obituary, he credited her love of art as the driving force behind their collection. She had the eye for it, along with a collecting philosophy likely shaped by her active engagement in Detroit's cultural community.

Marianne died in 2017 at age 85 after a lifetime of philanthropic activity in the arts. Much of her energy was spent supporting the Detroit Institute of Arts, where she sat on the board, developed the Docent Committee and eventually chaired the Collections Committee. She was also part of DIA's Executive Committee and worked in nearly every important volunteer role, starting with docent in her younger years.

In 1977, DIA honored the Schwartzes with its Lifetime Service Award. Three years later, the couple made a gift to the museum that became the Schwartz Graphic Art Galleries, which expanded public access to the museum's print collection.

Indeed, Alan and Marianne Schwartz were deeply committed to promoting the importance of prints in art and freely loaned pieces from their art collection to institutions for exhibitions while also funding acquisitions like the British Museum's purchase of Thomas Hart Benton's 1941 prints *Nebraska Evening* and *Arkansas Evening* in 2002. Their collection also inspired dedicated exhibitions, such as "Master Prints of Five Centuries: The Alan and Marianne Schwartz Collection," which the Detroit Institute of Arts mounted in 1990-1991. Alan Schwartz died in 2023 at age 97. Up until his passing, he was an honorary board member at the Detroit Institute of Arts, but by all accounts, the energy he expended supporting the museum was driven more by his love of the surrounding community than a particular interest in art for art's sake. In a 2004 [interview](#) with a representative of The Jewish Federations of North America, Alan called himself "a very happy passenger" in Marianne's activities in the art world, adding that "in every sense, she is the leader of our involvement in the art field."



REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. VAN RIJN (1606-1669), *Christ crucified between the two Thieves*, 1653; drypoint; Estimate: \$1,000,000-1,500,000. Courtesy of Christie'