The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Oppenheimer Collection with a museum-wide exhibition. To date, Tony and Marti Oppenheimer have funded the purchase of 153 works of art valued at more than $10 million. One of the newest acquisitions is "Town" (2012), by leading New York painter Dana Schutz.

The collection features many works that mirror the nation's dark outlook after the 9/11 attacks. Cindy Ryman's "Window Box" (2010), a recent acquisition constructed from 2-by-6s, reflects a recession-era turn to using found and discarded materials.

The Oppenheimers were honored at a Sept. 29 gala at the museum, where the galleries were filled with works of art they have purchased for the collection. It includes two "Soundsculptures" by Nick Cave, a Kansas City Art Institute graduate whose career is skyrocketing.

ON EXHIBIT
"OppenheimerCollection:20" continues at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Johnson County Community College, 12346 College Blvd., Overland Park, through Feb. 3. Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday. Closed Monday. It's free. For more information call 913-469-3000 or go to nermanmuseum.org

The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art and Johnson County Community College mark a milestone this fall, celebrating the 20th anniversary of art collectors Tony and Marti Oppenheimer's patronage.

The couple, former residents of the Kansas City area who now live in Los Angeles, have contributed more than $2.5 million for the purchase of contemporary art by emerging and established national and international names. They have also consistently supported local and regional artists, whose works make up roughly 30 percent of the museum's 153-piece Oppenheimer Collection.

Late last month, a museum-wide exhibit of the Oppenheimer Collection opened in conjunction with a 20th anniversary gala honoring the couple. Roughly two-thirds of the collection is on view, and all of the works are featured in a 340-page hardcover Oppenheimer Collection book, with an essay by critic and Star reviewer Elizabeth Kinsel, and pictures of each piece accompanied by short entries written by local art historians.

So it's a good time to take stock of what Nerman Museum director Bruce Hartman calls "the foundation upon which our permanent collection rests." The venture began in 1992, when Byron C. Goh's, Marti Oppenheimer's cousin, introduced the couple to Hartman, then director of the college's Gallery of Art. Impressed by Hartman's contemporary art programming and the growing collection he was assembling for the college, the two made a commitment to buy sculptures for the JCCC campus. They were inspired in part by the example of the Frankllin Murphy Sculpture Garden at UCLA, location of the Jules Stein Eye Institute. Sells, founder of MCA (Music Corporation of America), was Tony Oppenheimer's grandfather.

Working together, Hartman and the Oppenheimers acquired...
A magnificent small painting by Ian Davis (1994), a large painting by emerging artist Polly Apfelbaum, to the Oppenheimer Collection in memory of her friend Jim Saltiel. Almost 20 years later, the work, which features cut and applied fabric and dye on a found bedsheet, finds itself in an art world where many artists are making work out of found and discarded materials.

For now, Hartman has assembled an example of this trend: Cindy Re- man’s dazzling minimalist revelation “Window Box,” a “painting” com- posed of nested rectangles made from flax-bleached painted white on the exterior and brilliant reds within. This is the face of reconsidered art, and we can perhaps expect more of it, just as the mid-1980s year of the collection reflected the aftermath of 9/11. “If certainly plays on the Oppenheimer Collection expanding,” Marti Hartman said in an interview.

As Tony Oppenheimer has de- scribed it: “The rate of acquisitions changed dramatically. Instead of one or two pieces per year, we were pur- chasing more than 150 works in a rela- tively short time span.”

Earlier purchased included signature paintings by well-known artists such as Callum Innes, Kendra Wilson, Sue Williams and Wim Vandenbroucke, representing the first — and in some cases, only — piece that was purchased in this collection.

“Allison Schulnik’s huge canvas, “Skipping Skeletons,” exemplifies the strain of the grotesque that runs through the Oppenheimer Collection. From D3

The Oppenheimer Collection mirrors era

The Kansas City Star.

A "Reflecting Pool" (2002), by Ian Davi, is one of the two pieces purchased for JCCC has been a remarkable ad-

lection.

Allen G. Hudson, the first curator of the Oppenheimer Collection, says the collection is the only — works by these artists in-

nected by the recent acquisition of

To view the full article, please visit www.kansascity.com.

The Kansas City Star.

WWW.KANSASCITY.COM SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2012

FROM D1

a roster of global works by major names, including French-born Louise Bourgeois, Barry Hanegan from En-

O P P E N H E I M E R S: Collection mirrors era

ger, as well as L.A. artist L.A. E.G. SCHEMPF | OPPENHEIMER COLLECTION, NERMAN MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The Oppenheimer Collection mirrors the era as to which the works are connected. "If it was a watershed moment," he said. "We began to really have a piece."

"We began to really have a piece."

The Oppenheimer Collection is a testament to the idea that even the most popular of works of art can become forgotten or, worse, stale in a few years. The collection is made up of pieces that are not currently on display, pieces that are not in the public eye, and pieces that are not easily found on the Internet. The collection is also a testament to the idea that art is not just for the wealthy, but for everyone. The collection is open to the public and is a testament to the idea that art can be appreciated by anyone. The collection is also a testament to the idea that art is not just for the wealthy, but for everyone. The collection is open to the public and is a testament to the idea that art can be appreciated by anyone.