

Day 8 - Elena Cestero

As described in the Robert Hughes documentary, "The Mona Lisa Curse", art has become a commodity that is admired for its price above its artistry. Powerful dealers and collectors such as Larry Gagosian have created an art market in which art is viewed as an investment or asset and in which trendy rather than significant art sells at astronomical prices. These powerful dealers shape and control the market and what is popular to a large extent through the careful selection and marketing of artists, and the strategic buying and selling or reselling of art. These moves contribute to a branding or franchising that is intended to signal quality. Branding is used to the advantage of both the artist and the dealer. Through branding and marketing, dealers gain renown that is transferred to the artist and their art and typically leads to a precipitous increase in the value of the artist's work (although overexposure can potentially hurt an artist's career as well). The success of the artist in turn increases the reputation of the dealer even more and so the system functions in a cyclical manner.

Another important art dealer other than Gagosian is Barbara Gladstone (born in 1935), an American who has been in the business for over thirty years (photo below by Andrea Spotorno). Her [eponymous galleries](#) are located in the Chelsea district of New York City and described as being among the largest in the area. She also has a fairly new gallery in Brussels, Belgium. Gladstone represents many popular artists such as [Shirin Neshat](#), [Sarah Lucas](#), [Matthew Barney](#), [Anish Kapoor](#), [Carroll Dunham](#), and formerly [Richard Prince](#) (who she lost to none other than Gagosian in 2008). Through these artists, Gladstone Gallery represents a wide variety of contemporary art from installations and conceptual art to paintings, photography, film, and sculpture.



At forty years old, Gladstone left Hofstra University where she taught art history to open a gallery in Manhattan. In a [Wall Street Journal article](#), Gladstone is described as having strong ethics, and much like the dealers interviewed in Velthuis's book, [Talking Prices](#), claims that, "This isn't like selling real estate or stock. We deal in personal relationships," and compares her relationships with artists and collectors to that of a family. At the same time that she purportedly only cares about her role as "mother" to artists through helping them develop and reach their potential and represent their art, Gladstone praises fellow dealer Mary Boone for being, "...ambitious and determined, as interested in business and having power, and admitting it, as men." Below are examples of pieces from artists represented by Gladstone Gallery:



Shirin Neshat's *Games of Desire: Solo*, 2009 - C-print (diptych) with ink



Carroll Dunham's *Bathers 5 (the wind)*, 2010-2011 - Mixed media on linen