

Preface

You're interested in art.

That's why you've heard about Park West Gallery.

You want to own art. You want to see art in your life every day. You may even want to make art.

Learning about art lifts people up. It enriches them. It gives them a deeper understanding of life. The Park West Gallery experience is a whole package that brings art directly into people's lives.

At every event Park West hosts, experts talk about the artwork on display. There can be up to thirty artists shown at any one event. The artists range from the classics (Dürer, Rembrandt, Dalí, Picasso, Chagall, Agam, Max) to recently deceased painters (Kinkade, Tarkay, Pino, Mouly) to the latest hot thunderbolts (Britto, Godard, Wyland, Guyton, DeRubeis, Lebo, Yanke, Glenn, and more).

Art brings joy to the soul. Human beings are wired for art—to look at it—to see into it. To be transformed, delighted, and transported to another place, another time.

Art is mysterious. It speaks to us in broad strokes and secret codes. Each of us has a personal experience with art that's unique. The art that we have around us says something about who we are and what we know.

This book is a tour of the artistry that goes into Park West Gallery, the world's largest art dealer.

More specifically, however, this is the story of Albert Scaglione, the man who created Park West and still leads the company to this day.

Albert's story is remarkable.

The definition of a self-made man, Albert left behind a career in the sciences to pursue his passion. He fell in love with art at an early age, making it his life's mission to bring art down from on high and share it with the people.

Through hard work, Albert transformed himself into the consummate dealer, a force of nature that the art world had never seen before. A visionary, he came up with a method of bringing art to the public that is unmatched. Anywhere. Any time. He then used his acumen and charisma to build a company that shares the joy of art with millions of people around the world.

And he still keeps expanding and refining his ideas. In Albert's words, "I know a whole heck of a lot more than I did when I began in this business, and I'm still learning something new every day."

This is a story of art, artists, Albert, and Park West Gallery. It's historic, spiritual, and unique. It's a testament to how hard work and clear vision can change the world.

THE STORY BEGINS

How does the Park West story begin? It begins with the artist. Albert works with artists as few art dealers can. He develops relationships and gives support. He offers guidance but always respects the artist's creative autonomy.

One of his best talents is finding artists. Albert's ability to recognize talent is remarkable. It was Albert's choice of artists to work with, during his early days as a dealer in the 1960s and 1970s, that laid the foundation and inspired the magic behind Park West Gallery.

In 1970, there was M.C. Escher, then in 1971, Peter Max, and in 1974, Yaacov Agam and Victor Vasarely.

These four artists—who were about to become megastars in the art world—had one thing in common. They all worked with Albert Scaglione and Park West Gallery.

In addition to these contemporary artists, Albert, in the earliest days of Park West, traveled to Europe, seeking out the people who were closest to the masters of twentieth-century art.

It wasn't enough for Albert to acquire a work by Pablo Picasso. He wanted to establish a chain of authenticity—he wanted his clients to feel that link through time, to know that their work came directly from those who knew the giants. If there's one thing Albert knows how to do, it's build relationships. Albert has had close, personal, one-on-one relationships with some of the most groundbreaking art dealers and artists of the twentieth century.

For years, he worked directly with Henri Petiet, the renowned art dealer, who acquired the collection of the legendary Ambroise Vollard, the dealer of Pablo Picasso, Pierre Auguste Renoir, and other masters. (In the 1930s, Ambrose Vollard published one hundred Picasso etchings known as the Suite Vollard. In 1919, Renoir memorialized Vollard's image in the lithograph *Ambroise Vollard*.)

He also worked directly with Maurice Jardot of the Louise Leiris Gallery, the exclusive print dealer of Pablo Picasso; with Alain Mazo and Yves Lebouc from the Bouquinerie de l'Institut, publisher of Marc Chagall lithographs; with Jean Estrade, the artistic director of Les Heures Claires, Paris, the publishers of Salvador Dalí; with Madam Aimee Maeght, the dealer of Joan Miró; and with the legendary master Joan Miró himself.

These dealers were all in Paris, which in the early twentieth century was the epicenter of the art world. These were the prime dealers and, in most cases, the exclusive publishers of hand-signed art made through graphic media for Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, and Marc Chagall. Paris was indeed good to Albert.

These massively successful dealers both embraced Albert and gave him access to authentic hand-signed works by the masters whose work they represented. They formed a network that connected him to important resources and artists throughout the world.

In turn, Albert met many of these giants—rubbing shoulders with Miró and more—and brought their art to the masses as no other dealer could.

This was how Albert built Park West Gallery. He found the superstars of the era, connecting with artists like Peter Max, who were at the height of their fame, and formed solid partnerships with them. (Max, in particular, was a massive star at the time, appearing on the *Tonight Show*, the *Ed Sullivan Show*, the cover of *Life Magazine*, and the cover of every Yellow Pages in New York City.)

From there, Albert kept going. In 1973, he spent the summer in Japan, selling from Park West's already respectable Picasso collection of hand-signed etchings, lithographs, and linocuts. At the same time, he was developing new Park West collectors and acquiring exquisite Japanese woodcuts. In 1974, he journeyed to Amsterdam, where he gained access to works by classical European masters like Rembrandt van Rijn and Albrecht Dürer.

The stage was set for the Park West engine to start. Its first important VIP event was about to happen. In 1974, Park West clients visited Paris and Amsterdam. In Paris, Albert took them to visit the great dealers and museums.

Albert knew how to keep it personal and help people feel connected to the art. The highlight of the trip was M.C. Escher's wife playing piano for about thirty Park West VIPs in her living room. The clients were enthralled with viewing Escher's amazing artwork in the very rooms where he lived and worked.

It was an intimate event that offered invaluable insights into the life, character, soul, and substance of the art and the artist. For the collectors, it created memories that would last a lifetime and provided them with the most perfect provenance one could imagine.

There was also comic relief and unexpected excitement along the way, as when the whole group, led by Albert, got lost in the subway in Amsterdam after midnight—*welcome VIPs to Park West's adventures in art!*

Albert, who was accompanied by his older sister Marie and his eleven-year-old daughter Lisa, fell in love with the people and the special events each day in Paris and Amsterdam. He knew he needed to develop a system to do it again and again. (What else would an engineer do?) At that very moment, he knew that perfecting that system would become one of the great joys of his life.

Park West now produces more than one hundred events like that one, each one special because of its uniqueness in connecting the art, the artists, and the collectors. Over the past few years, Park West VIP events have been held on all seven continents.

Why did Albert find such overwhelming success as an art dealer? There are many factors—including his unrelenting work ethic—but one of the most notable was how he completely revolutionized the experience of buying art.

Albert wasn't content with just letting his art hang on a wall and wait for admirers. Instead, Albert knew how to make art personal and engaging for his clients.

“All we want to do is please the artist and please the customer,” says Albert. “We want Park West to be what brings the art and the artist and the customer together—the marketer in the middle. We want to take people who never thought they could afford art and get them good and great art. When we see our clients with tears in their eyes over how much they love their collections, that's the real thrill for us.”

Starting in the 1970s, Park West began to conduct art auctions in fine hotels throughout the world—one of many ways Albert sought to bring art out of the museums and into the lives of ordinary people.

These events enabled Park West to teach, entertain, and bring art to a far bigger audience than had ever been thought about before.

In 1995, Park West expanded by bringing its art programs and auctions to cruise ships sailing around the globe. Now, there are events on almost a hundred cruise ships during any given week. There are thousands of events every year, reaching millions.

Today, in total, nearly one thousand extremely talented fine art auctioneers, gallery directors, and art associates call Park West home as they travel the world. They receive training six to eight times annually at the company's Miami Lakes headquarters and its campus in Southfield, Michigan, where Park West Gallery, Museum, and Foundation are housed. At Park West events, you will find highly trained teams of auctioneers, directors, and associates presenting the Park West art and artists in a unique way that has become identified with the Park West brand. This talented team is accompanied by art educators, teams of art handlers, and hundreds of support staff members working behind the scenes.

The entire enterprise is buoyed by the quality of Albert's collection of classic artwork. Many of these masterworks are on permanent display at the Park West Museum. Other works routinely travel to museums as a part of major exhibitions sponsored by the Park West Foundation, the company's tireless charitable arm.

Recently, a few of the ships have begun sailing with museum collections on board—actual museum collections at sea that allow interested travelers the chance to marvel at works by Picasso or Salvador Dalí while they're on vacation.

This is an enormous service to the public, bringing both classic and contemporary art to eager audiences.

That's something you'll learn about Albert. He likes giving back. He's generous, gregarious, funny, tender, and demanding all at once.

What's the secret formula at the heart of Park West Gallery, Park West Museum, and the Park West Foundation?

In the words of Albert, "Being yourself, making friends, and having a good time."