

ART COLLECTOR

**50 THINGS
COLLECTORS
SHOULD KNOW**



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RIGHT: Natalie King beside the work of Kaylene Whiskey and Meringka Burton.
PHOTO: SIMON STRONG

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NATALIE KING

Long before major institutions caught up, **Natalie King** was forging paths between Asia-Pacific's art scenes and the global stage. These days she advocates for what she calls "slow curating", prioritising sustainability and meaningful engagement over spectacle.

As one of the most influential voices in contemporary art curation, **Natalie King** has her finger firmly on the pulse of emerging art scenes across the Asia-Pacific. Fresh from wrapping up the inaugural Timor-Leste Pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale, King is already deep in preparations for her next major project as co-Artistic Director of the 5th Kathmandu Triennale. Her unique perspective on the future of global art offers valuable insights for collectors and art world professionals.

"We're seeing a significant reorientation towards the Global South and Asia," King observes. She points to the flourishing network of exhibitions across South Asia, including the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Lahore Biennale, and Dhaka Art Summit, which are reshaping how we engage with contemporary art. But it's her approach to these platforms that's particularly interesting – King advocates for what she calls "slow curating," a methodology that prioritises sustainability and meaningful engagement over spectacle. "Instead of the high intensity vernissage... we could reimagine a biennale in slow motion that builds relationships and solidarities, discourse and conversations that lead towards a jointly sustainable future, over time and in time."

For collectors looking to stay ahead of the curve, King highlights Timor-Leste's

Maria Madeira as an artist to watch. "She's an exceptional and original artist whose work is inventive and tells powerful stories of Timorese emancipation," King explains. "Since there are no art supply stores in Dili, she works with materials at hand such as the ochre soil from her village Ermera or offcuts of tais, the traditional woven textile." Madeira represents the kind of innovative practice emerging from regions often overlooked by the international art world.

King also draws attention to Nepal's dynamic yet underexposed art scene, particularly artists like **Tsherin Sherpa**, who masterfully blends traditional techniques with contemporary concerns. "It's vital that collectors think beyond domestic borders and engage regionally to ensure a more dynamic, broader art scene," she emphasises.

Looking ahead to 2025, King envisions a transformation in how major art events are conceived and executed. She's pioneering more sustainable models of exhibition-making through co-creation and resource sharing between institutions. At the Kathmandu Triennale, for instance, she's developing a database of Nepalese artists' portfolios to share with future curators, breaking down traditional silos of non-disclosure.

Perhaps most significantly, King is helping reshape the power dynamics of the international art world through initiatives like

the Firsts Solidarity Network, which she supported during the 2022 Venice Biennale. This informal group offered support for participating artists and curators from marginalised or under-represented groups, fostering cross-pavilion discourse and addressing systemic inequalities.

For 2025 and beyond, King anticipates a continued emphasis on curatorial revisionism, particularly focusing on overlooked artists, women and artists of colour. "This is part of a curatorial practice of conversation, dialogue, friendship, support, alliance and camaraderie," she reflects, pointing to the growing importance of collective action and mutual support in the art world. Her current fascination lies with overlooked figures like Italian Jewish photographer **Lisetta Carmi**, whose sensitive documentation of industrial workers and the transgender community of Genoa has received limited recognition.

As the art world grapples with questions of sustainability, representation and relevance, King's methodology of careful listening and relationship-building offers a compelling model for the future. Her work suggests that the next frontier in contemporary art won't just be about discovering new artists or regions, but about fundamentally reimagining how we engage with art and artists across cultural boundaries.

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