

With Mutual Affection

The Victoria Schonfeld Collection started with Vicki's passion for teapots. What began as a commitment to a few intimate objects grew and expanded organically over the course of the next thirty years. In addition to over forty teapots, her collection includes vessels, platters, figurative sculptures, abstract forms, paintings, and more. These artworks were predominantly made by women, as well as British and Japanese artists. As her collection and interests grew, a deep and abiding affection always remained at the core of Vicki's life and the objects for which she cared. That generous spirit and deep care also extended to all the people in her life.

I met Vicki in 2015, during my first New York Ceramics and Glass Fair working with Ferrin Contemporary. Artist Bobby Silverman arranged a dinner at a cozy Italian restaurant with a dynamic group of artists, curators, and collectors. Vicki immediately treated me with her characteristic warmth and kindness. In the years that followed, I assisted Vicki as a collections specialist — documenting, photographing, and organizing her work. This had a great impact on me personally and professionally. I learned valuable lessons about collaboration, communication, and compassion. Together, we crafted texts about her most beloved pieces. Periodically, I would clean pieces until "they sparkled," as she lovingly phrased it. She spoke of the artworks as if they held life, as if they were each imbued with personality — she interacted with each one with such happiness. When a new piece came into the collection, she would walk me to it sharing all its nuances and, together, we would find a place for it to "live" in the collection. She noticed every move of the pieces when I would adjust the arrangements after cleaning, even the slightest change, and she would declare how much she loved a new move here or a slight turn there.

The work we did together was like a gift to me, but it also laid the groundwork for passing on her collection to family, friends, and the extraordinary exhibition and acquisition of several works from the Schonfeld Collection by The Everson Museum of Art in 2021 and 2022.

When it came time to title the exhibition, Leslie Ferrin offered the fitting phrase Mutual Affection. It perfectly describes her relationship with the objects and the people in her life, helping to adequately title her well-deserved legacy. It has been an honor to know her and assist with her collection, and it is equally an honor to continue the relationship with her family as a steward of those memories.

- Alex Renee, Ferrin Contemporary