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DEC 20

## Eye Exam: Be a Professional Artist Today!

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By Jason Foumberg

A self-identified "second-generation collector" admitted, "I have never heard of a small artist group that's having something [an exhibition] where anybody's reached out to me." This was in the MCA's auditorium at a well-attended panel discussion on Chicago's local art scene in November. The collector, who was seated in the audience, chose to respond to the topic of how emerging artists can connect with emerging collectors. The collector, who presumably lives in Chicago, admitted to not shopping locally (and only at art fairs) because artists don't invite him to their exhibitions. As a caveat, he bluntly told the audience, "What we see [in Chicago] is generally not appealing."

Most artists need collectors if they're expecting to be career artists, but this collector did not toss out calling cards to the hundreds in attendance, nor identify his name. It's likely that this collector, and many others, enjoy the prestige of collecting art, yet collectors are not public figures. (The highest echelon of philanthropy is the "anonymous" donor). If you are an artist in Chicago you can probably name fifty fellow artists, twenty art galleries, and maybe one art collector. This collector revealed a double-edged secret: collectors don't need artists.

"Each and every month commit to identifying a minimum of fifty potential collectors and make at least one sale," writes

