

Gallery Rosenfeld

PAYS HOMMAGE TO ITS FOUNDER

By Marianne Morazzani

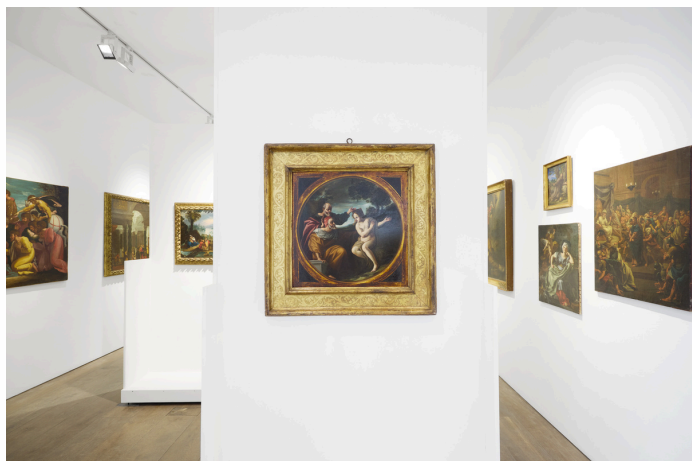


Ian Rosenfeld with his mother and brother Michael at the gallery

I never met Ian Rosenfeld personally, and yet encountering his world felt unexpectedly intimate. In discovering his collection, his gallery, and the stories told by those who knew him, I was struck by the rare clarity of his conviction. Here was someone who truly cared for art — not as currency or positioning, but as a living force. He believed in artists with instinct rather than caution, using his eye, his means, and his network not to control careers, but to help them unfold. There is something profoundly liberating in that kind of freedom — especially today, when such trust feels increasingly scarce. Ian's approach reminds us that art flourishes most fully when belief is given without restraint, and when generosity is allowed to guide ambition.



Ian's Room Installation at Gallery Rosenfeld
photo credit @Tom Carter



Old Masters room at Gallery Rosenfeld
From Ian's Room Exhibition photo credit @Tom Carter



Contemporary room at Gallery Rosenfeld for Ian's
Rooms Exhibition photo credit @Tom Carter

A Collector's Eye



Details of Ian's bedroom at Gallery Rosenfeld for Ian's Rooms exhibition, photo credit @Tom Carter

To understand Ian Rosenfeld as a collector is to recognise that collecting, for him, was never an act of ownership but of connection. He responded to art instinctively, with the immediacy of someone who trusted his eye and his emotions in equal measure. He did not collect with an eye on legacy, nor did he linger on what might come after. He lived entirely in the present tense of art — in the encounter, the spark, the moment when a work simply spoke.

His passion for collecting began early, long before galleries and exhibitions, with the record collection he built as a teenager in London. That same sensibility followed him throughout his life: a desire to live surrounded by the things that moved him. Years spent in Venice and Florence deepened this instinct. There, among Italian Old Masters and sculpture, he lived quite literally with art — paintings and objects woven into daily life, surrounded by papers, catalogues, and notes. These were not trophies on walls, but companions. Each work entered his world because it resonated, and once there, it stayed.

What set Ian apart as a collector was his devotion to process. He wanted to understand how things were made, who made them, and why. Studio visits mattered as much as exhibitions, sometimes more. He connected to the place of making as deeply as to the finished work, often immersing himself fully — on the floor of a studio, surrounded by materials, absorbed in conversation. Collecting, for him, was an act of learning, and that curiosity never faded.

His relationships with artists were inseparable from his collecting. He acquired works out of genuine adoration — for the art, for the labour behind it, for the person who made it. He believed in artists early, often before others did, not because he sought discovery, but because he recognised sincerity and quality when he saw it. Age was irrelevant. Reputation was secondary. What mattered was dedication, vision, and the integrity of the work. When he committed, he did so deeply, collecting in depth rather than breadth, following a practice because it continued to speak to him.

There were no boundaries between his private collection and his life. His children grew up surrounded by art; his wife, an art restorer, shared his intimacy with objects and their care. A painting that once hung in Ian's home now carries two histories: that of its maker, and that of the life Ian chose to live alongside it. This layering of memory is what gives his collection its emotional gravity. Each work is marked not only by its artistic lineage, but by his presence.

“ He was often seen down on his knees, drawn instinctively toward the work, as though closeness were a form of listening.”

Rosenfeld's generosity as a collector extended far beyond acquisition. He supported artists in moments of uncertainty, offered space, time, and belief without conditions. One artist recalls his response when she worried pregnancy might disrupt her first solo show: family is everything. The work went ahead, shaped by lived experience, and strengthened by trust. This was typical of Ian's approach — art and life were never in competition.

His collection, rich in Old Masters, 20th-century works, and contemporary voices, reflects a mind constantly in motion — nourished by literature, opera, history, and a tireless appetite for understanding. He was learning until the end, always open, always curious. Ian's Rooms, the homage exhibition at Gallery Rosenfeld, captures this beautifully, presenting the collection not as a survey but as a lived environment, a series of encounters shaped by instinct and affection.

To speak of Ian Rosenfeld as a collector is to speak of authenticity. His vision was never strategic, never market-driven. It was deeply personal, rooted in trust — in his eye, in artists, in the belief that art deserves to be lived with. His collection is not a monument, but a trace of a life shaped by curiosity, generosity, and love for the act of looking. In that sense, his legacy is not something he planned — it is something he simply lived.

From 13–15 January, Ian's home opens its doors to collectors and visitors for an intimate open house, ahead of the Dreweatts auction (25–28 January), where part of the exhibition will be reinstalled at their Newbury showroom and selected works from Ian's collection will be presented for sale.)



Ian Rosenfeld at the artist studio photo credit



Enrique Brinkmann : Mune (REPOS METAPHYSIQUE),
1966, Oil on canvas, 130 x 100 cm

Right Page "Dante Inferno" 2024
Natalia Ocerin' photo credit @Tom
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A captivating piece visualizing the nine levels of Dante's Inferno—a text Ian was reading at the time.