



FRANK TALKS

Susan Fisher – President and CEO of Bark Frameworks

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Susan Fisher is President and CEO of Bark Frameworks, a custom framing and art services company located in Long Island City. Founded in 1969 in SoHo, Bark was originally established with artists forming the core of the firm's early client base. Today, the company collaborates with artists, collectors, galleries, museums, interior designers, and art advisors. Prior to her work

at Bark, Susan served as Director of Collections and Curatorial Affairs at the Brooklyn Museum; and as the Executive Director of the Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation — the historic Greenwich Village home, studio, and collection of sculptor Chaim Gross. She has held curatorial positions at the Yale University Art Gallery and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Please enjoy reading Susan's Frank Talk below!

What was your first job in the Arts?

I worked at Sotheby's in the French Furniture Department. After that I went to graduate school for seven years, and then I got a job as Collections Curatorial Assistant at the Guggenheim Museum.

What was the most useful or important thing you learned at that job?

I worked at the Guggenheim during and after 9/11 in 2001. I saw how world events impacted an institution.

Tell us a little more about yourself. When did you realize you wanted to pursue a career in this industry?

I learned about different careers in college, at Oberlin, where I majored in art history. Oberlin had a January term internship program and I worked at an art gallery (Jay Gorney Modern Art) and an auction house (Sotheby's), and also trained as a docent at Oberlin's Allen Memorial Art Museum so that I could give tours to the public and schools during the academic year. Right after college I had a paid internship at The Met and I split my time there between answering visitors' questions at the Information booth in the Great Hall, and taking inventory of the European Paintings collection. These experiences made me certain that I wanted to continue my study of art history in graduate school and pursue a career in the arts.

What do you do now?

I'm CEO of Bark Frameworks, a custom framing and fine art services company in New York. The artist Jed Bark founded it in 1969 in his SoHo loft in Manhattan, with artists like Donald Judd forming the core of the firm's early client base.

Where are you from?

I'm from New Jersey. I was born in Orange, and lived there until I was about 10. Then I lived in Millburn, NJ until I went to college.

What is the arts community like there?

It's the suburbs of New York, and when I was growing up my parents took me to the New York City museums, especially The Met.

Has where you come from shaped what you do in the arts today?

Yes, I've pretty much stayed close to New York City my whole professional life.

What is the best piece of advice you can give about working in the art world?

I would advise someone to listen to all advice and pick and choose what accords with your instincts.

What is one of your greatest accomplishments in your career so far?

I'm proud of the professional success of my former interns and assistants, many of whom are now in leadership roles in the art world.

What has been a challenge for you?

Balancing work and my family- I have two kids who are 8 and 10, as well as parents who live close to me.

What is something you do every day at the office (or your current home office)?

I pop by the office of our office manager to say hello every morning. He has a great sense of humor and I start my day laughing.

What is one of the weirdest things you have had to do on the job in your career?

A cross-country courier trip I did in an 18-wheeler from New Haven to Los Angeles as an assistant curator at the Yale University Art Gallery was intense, and a little surreal.

What defines a good employee? What defines a good boss?

A good boss leads with integrity. In my experience a good employee is usually aligned with the mission of the place, and finds support from its leaders.

What do you think makes a person hireable?

Showing that they really want the job- with zero ambivalence.

What is your advice to making yourself stand out in your workplace? Any good tips for a giving a great interview?

Overprepare so that you can be super confident and be ready for anything.

Is there any advice you would like to give people entering the art world?

It really depends on the person I am speaking with; I like first to listen to what their needs, interests, and passions are, before offering advice.

Any other anecdotes about your working experience that you would like to share?

None that I can think of!

What is the best exhibition you have seen in the last year?

Jeffrey Gibson: When Fire is Applied to a Stone It Cracks at the Brooklyn Museum.

If you could own a work by 5 different artists, who would be in your collection?

I already own works by many artists who I love; my current wish list includes Richard Mayhew, Katherine Bradford, Kathy Butterly, and Susan Bee.

What artwork is in your home office?

In my office at Bark Frameworks, I have a study for *Amerika* by Tim Rollins + KOS that Jay Gorney gave to me when I interned for him when I was 18.



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