

A Life Immersed in Art: Michael Rips

The New Executive Director of the Art Students League

MICHAEL RIPS has lived his life with a passion for the arts. He is a collector, patron, arts advocate, and author. He is a friend to many artists and the spouse of a painter and sculptor. Becoming the Executive Director of the Art Students League marks the next phase in Michael's life-long commitment to studying, sharing, and supporting the visual arts.



Above: *Michael Rips*, by David Salle, 1998. That's Michael in black and white on the left. Below: Examples of work donated by Mr. Rips, clockwise from left: Paul Signac, *Le Pont des Arts*, gift to the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Al Held, *Scholes I*, 1991, gift to the Princeton University Art Museum; Michele Zalopany, *Altalena*, 1993, gift to the Whitney Museum of American Art

Collector and Patron

Michael began collecting as a teenager in his hometown of Omaha, Nebraska, where he scouted out rare items in pawn shops. Since that time, Michael has built an extensive collection of works of African and contemporary art. He and his wife, the artist Sheila Berger, have donated work from their collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Princeton University Art Museum, and the KANEKO and Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha.



Advocate for the Arts;

A Leading Role in Dia:Beacon

Michael is an attorney by profession. In addition to clerking for Supreme Court Justice William Brennan and representing clients before the Supreme Court, Michael has spent a significant portion of his law career supporting the arts. He is a leading expert on artists' rights, copyright, and intellectual property issues. (Continued)

Michael has represented many artists, museums, and foundations. Michael's clients have included artists James Rosenquist and David Salle, the Queens Museum, the Estate of Dan Flavin, and Dia Art Foundation.

Michael played a leading role in the founding of Dia:Beacon in Beacon, New York. His efforts helped transform the city of Beacon and the Hudson Valley into a vibrant arts destination. At the New School University, Michael conceived, developed and headed a project team for a graduate school devoted to government service. Michael is a graduate of Princeton University, Oxford University, and George Washington University Law School.

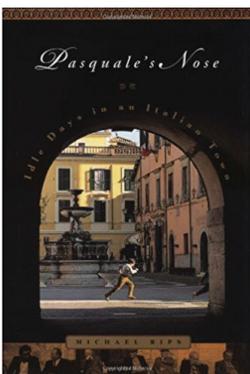
Friend of the Art Students League

Michael first came to know of the Art Students League during his childhood in Omaha. Michael's father, Nick, enjoyed painting, and Michael recalls League alumnus and instructor Arnold Blanch, a modernist painter connected to the Social Realist movement, visiting his family. Impressed by Blanch and his stories, Michael gained a deep respect for the League that continues to this day. Michael gave the presentation speech at the League's 2016 Gala honoring alumnus James

Rosenquist, his friend and legal client. Sheila Berger, Michael's wife, has studied and worked in the League's sculpture studios since 2011. Her work *AVIS GLORIAE ET LAVDIS MMXVI* was a highlight of the League's 2016-17 Model to Monument installation in Riverside Park South and is currently installed at the Key West International Airport on the Florida Keys Art Trail. Michael and Sheila plan to return to their home in the Chelsea Hotel after renovations are completed in 2018.

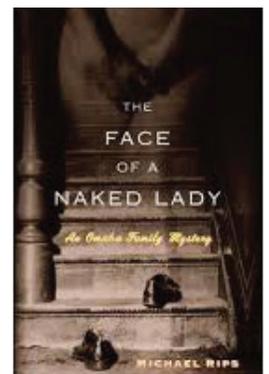


James Rosenquist's *Silver Birds*, 1981, a gift from Michael to the Princeton University Art Museum; Arnold Blanch's *Circus Girl*, 1926, from the League's permanent collection; Sheila Berger's *AVIS GLORIAE ET LAVDIS MMXVI*, 2016, at the Key West International Airport.



Author

Michael has written frequently on the arts, including an April 2017 *New York Times* Op-Ed arguing that artists should be able to take a tax deduction for the fair market value of donated works of art. Michael has also authored two works of literary non-fiction: *Pasquale's Nose* and *The Face of a Naked Lady: An Omaha Family Mystery*, the latter of which revolves around a group of mysterious paintings, and which Joan Didion called "an amazing, beautiful book."



The Art Students League welcomes our accomplished, generous and creative new Executive Director, Michael Rips. We look forward to thriving under his leadership.