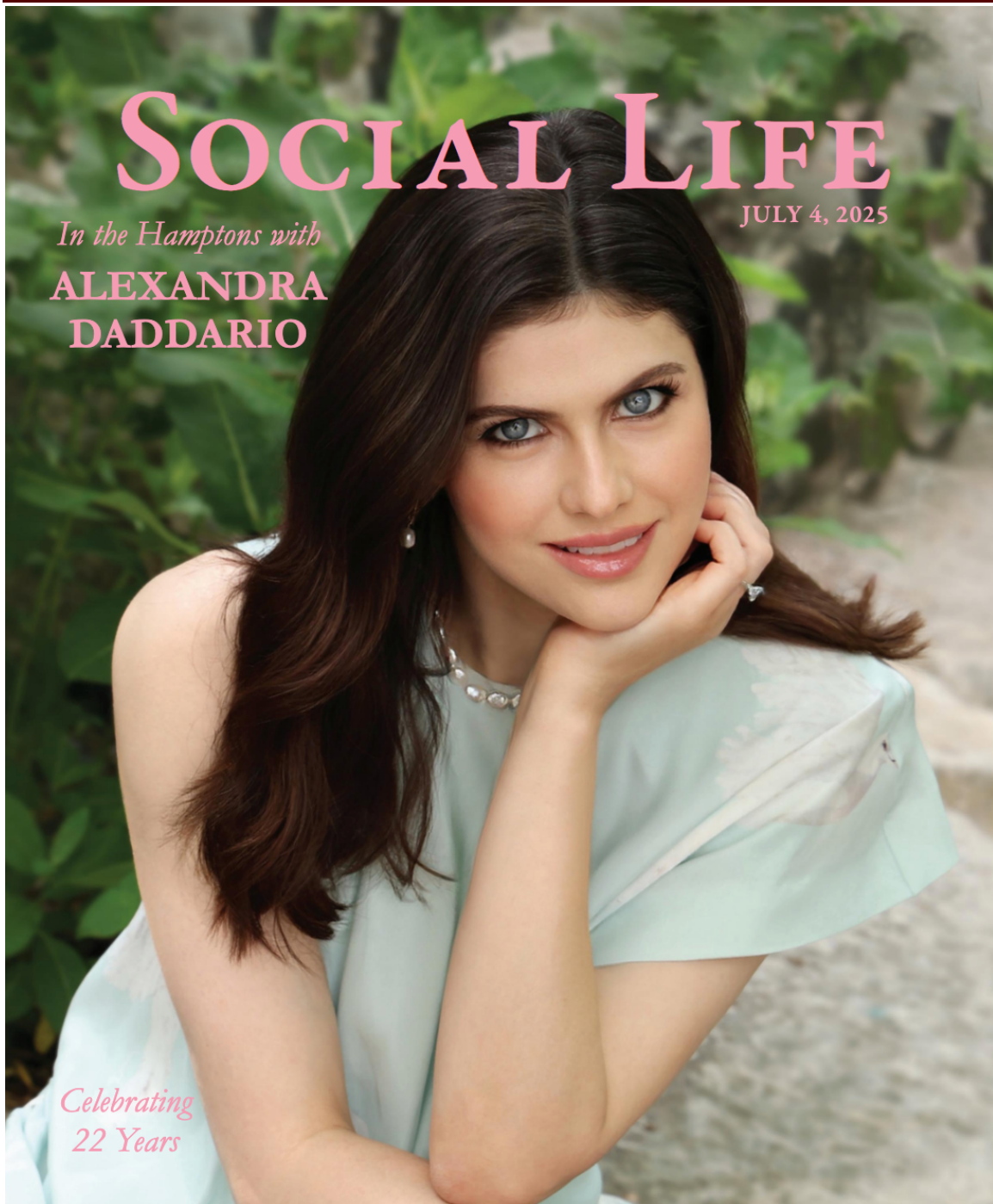


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CHRISTINE MACK

ADVOCATING FOR ARTISTS WITH THE MACK ART FOUNDATION

By JEREMY MURPHY

A PERSONAL JOURNEY INTO ART AND PHILANTHROPY

Christine Mack never planned to become a patron of the arts. But today, the New York City-based entrepreneur is emerging as one of the city's most passionate advocates for emerging artists—using her own experiences, instincts, and resources to create opportunities where few existed.



"I came to New York as a young girl. I was 18 years old from Stockholm, basically with no money in my pocket," Mack recalled. After earning her degree from Parsons School of Design and working as a graphic designer for Hearst Publications, she eventually launched her own firm. But her real calling took shape when she combined two passions: philanthropy and art.

Mack is now the founder of the Mack Art Foundation and Greenpoint Studios, a residency program in Brooklyn designed to help artists launch their careers in New York City. "My mission is basically to give artists an opportunity," she explained. "I started it just with this idea of having a residency in New York ... New York is the art center of the world in my opinion."

MENTORSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND A BOLD NEW MODEL

The residency model is unusually and deliberately personal. Artists selected for the program are given an apartment, a studio, and the guidance of Mack herself, who acts as an informal mentor and connector. "I take them and introduce them to everyone I know in the art world. I take them to every gallery opening. I'm like the mother hen for them," she said. "Even when they're done with the residency, they still call me for advice."

In just three years, Mack has seen applications skyrocket, and she's now looking to expand. Mack's philosophy is rooted in accessibility and community. Her belief in direct action—connecting collectors with artists without commercial middlemen—has shaped her approach.

As Greenpoint becomes increasingly gentrified and expensive, she's planning a new "art hub" to offer affordable studio space and community engagement programs. "What I'm trying to do is to kind of create that again—where you can just go in, or bring the kids, go and meet the artist. There's an open house. It's about the conversation and really getting to know them," she said. "If you actually purchase one of their art pieces for your collection, you are making the world so much bigger for them."

BUILDING A LEGACY

Her method of financing the foundation is also unconventional. Rather than relying on grants or donations, she uses her private art collection. "When I've been sitting on art and it appreciates in value, I donate it back to my foundation and then the piece goes back to Gagosian or Hauser & Wirth to sell it," Mack explained. "So I can generate a few hundred thousand dollars a year, and that runs my residency."



Alexander James, *The Swamp in the Dressing Room*

The collection that fuels this model has been built over decades with what Mack describes as instinct more than strategy. “I collect everything. I collect a \$2,000 painting, and then I collect something else,” she said. Early on, she focused on emerging Black artists, LGBTQ artists, Scandinavian painters, and women painting surreal landscapes. “Luckily, I started collecting very early,” she said. “So it’s kind of fun when you see that you were right.”

For Mack, art is less about prestige and more about emotional connection. “I’m not scared of buying art that other people wouldn’t necessarily buy because it’s not decorative. It needs to speak to me somehow,” she said. “I have very personal relationships with my artworks and with the artists that are painting the artworks.”

Mack’s latest project, “Beyond the Present: Collecting for the Future,” will be on view at the Southampton Arts Center this summer. Curated in collaboration with Christina Strassfield and Natasha Schlesinger, the exhibition will showcase both established and emerging artists from Mack’s private collection. “The title of the show is ‘Beyond the Present,’” she said. “Looking ahead, what’s coming next? What are these artists telling us about the future?”

HONORED FOR HER MISSION

The project feels especially personal for Mack. “I’ve always gone to the Southampton Art Center Gala. I’m very close friends with Simone Levinson,” she said. “When Simone said that they wanted to honor me, of course, I was like, Oh my God. I said, ‘I will definitely accept it if I can really highlight the mission that I have with my foundation.’”

As much as Mack is building new platforms for others, she remains hands-on with her initiatives. She’s hired recent college graduates to manage the foundation, oversee projects, and document its work. “My goal is to find people like this, and then they can run it for me and I can kind of step away and go, okay, I’ll keep funding it. You guys run it,” she said.

Looking ahead, Mack remains focused on fostering a vibrant, accessible, and deeply human art ecosystem—one where emerging talents can survive and thrive in a city that often prices them out.

“We are getting further and further and further away from that,” she said. “We’re buying art online. You go into a gallery and you don’t even know the journey it took for that painting to get on that wall.” In Mack’s world, that journey—and the people behind it—matter most.