



Can you please tell us about your background?

I am a clinical social worker who completed my master's degree in social work in the UK. I currently work in both the UK and USA, where we own homes. Our family is quite large, consisting of seven children, my partner Scott, my ex-husband Tony and his partner Brent, and myself. We may be a bit unconventional, but we are a happy and typical modern-day dysfunctional family! In addition to my clinical social work, I also own several businesses, including one of the largest independently owned clinical research companies in the world. At our company, we conduct clinical trials on new treatments, including those for cancer, HIV and AIDS, as well as cosmetic items like lipsticks and antiperspirants, among others.

You live with both your fiancé, Scott, and ex-husband. This is a refreshing attitude. How does this work in reality?

Tony and I met in 1987, and we had a relationship for 30 years, so we will always be best friends. Remember, we own seven homes around the world, ranging from Tampa, Florida, and London, UK, to Miami Beach and Bangkok, Thailand. We truly have the freedom to live independently with so many options available.

We recently saw you on the Rich House, Poor House programme. We loved seeing you on this, and Below Deck. Do you have any more programmes in the pipeline?

Yes, we are currently filming something that I cannot talk about, but we are also in talks right now with the creators of Rich House, Poor House about a totally new potential show with them. All very exciting, so stay tuned!

You have just become a grandfather, congratulations to you all. Have you any plans to add to your family?

No more kids for me-lol-ever. I am getting far too old to cope with the sleepless nights, luckily I have a much MUCH younger partner who is able to jump up through the nights. I am going to sit back and watch my children have children and enjoy them.

You are an avid art collector. When and what was your initial art purchase?

Yes, I LOVE having beautiful things around me. One of the most common questions I receive is 'what should I invest in?' and my response is always the same: art! Since the year 2000, art has outperformed the S&P 500 by 250 per cent! Even during periods of high inflation, contemporary art has shown a strong price appreciation of 13.8 per cent over the past 26 years. When you consider other major asset classes, such as real estate at 8.9 per cent and gold at 7.2 per cent, it would be foolish not to invest at least a bit in art. Additionally, you get the benefit of enjoying it day after day.

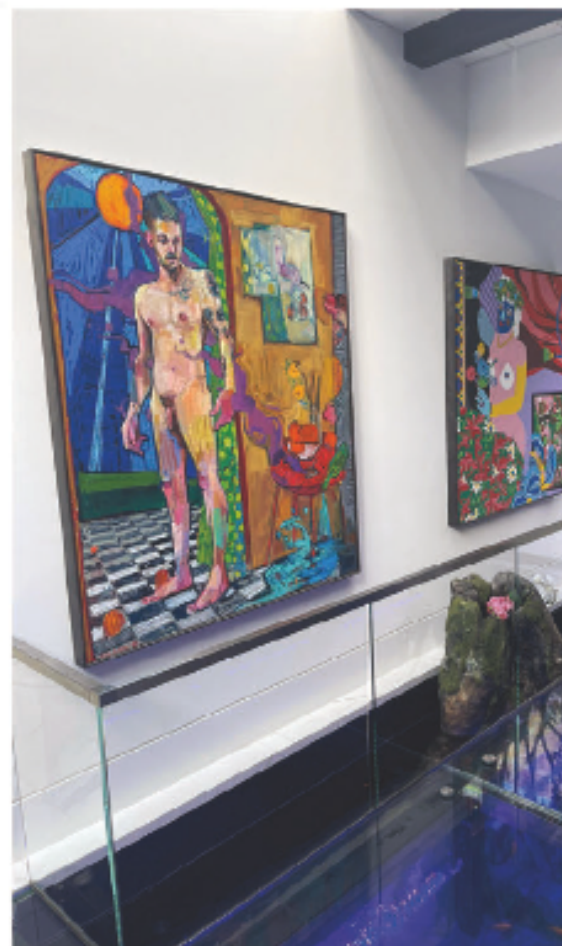
So, as you may know, I grew up on a council estate in Manchester, and my parents had no money whatsoever. I recall going on a school trip to Manchester central library (around 1983) and they were showcasing an exhibition by the renowned Manchester artist LS Lowry. During my upbringing, my granddad would occasionally mention that he had encountered Lowry a few times in Salford, and he would constantly marvel at how Lowry had achieved such immense popularity. As a young and economically disadvantaged child, growing up in close proximity to the scenes depicted in Lowry's artwork, I felt a strong connection to the themes and subjects they portrayed. It wasn't until 20 years later, when I sold my first business for £6m, that I obtained my first significant piece of art, which, unsurprisingly, turned out to be an artwork by LS Lowry. It all began with that exhibition at the Manchester library...

From that point on, I was hooked. Throughout the years, I have amassed a collection of various art pieces, ranging from paintings to Harry Winston diamond sets and Faberge eggs. To me, art comes in many forms and is not just something to hang on the wall...



Which artists do you collect? Do you like to meet contemporary artists in person? Some people prefer to separate the art from the artist.

About five years ago, I realised that I was having difficulty finding art that I truly enjoyed. My interest had shifted from the old masters to contemporary artists and the emerging younger talent. I embarked on a new project: constructing my dream home, a Malibu mansion nestled in the heart of the Essex countryside. After finding the perfect location surrounded by woodland, I encountered delays due to COVID-19 and struggled to source materials, but I knew what I wanted and I worked all my life to build this house, so I was determined to have exactly that. I explained to the designer that this mansion could not look like the others, it had to be 1000% contemporary and I wanted to feel like I was living in my very own art gallery. I decided that I would employ the help of a London based art gallery, and have them guide me and introduce me, to the right artists... over £1m later, I truly feel as though the finished product resembles living in my own personal art gallery!



Where do you purchase art (online, galleries, etc.)?

Beers London Gallery is my preferred destination. The gallery's director, Kurt Beers, has travelled extensively worldwide in search of the finest contemporary artists. After identifying about 20-30 potential artists, we sat down to review their available works. Eventually, we settled on seven key artists to decorate this house. Personally, I am particularly fond of the works of Hyangmok Baik, who lives and works in Seoul, South Korea. I own several pieces by him, but one in particular caught my attention - a painting featuring three perfectly balanced poodles (poodles being my personal hobby and obsession). Unfortunately, I was unable to secure it at an auction in London. However, I reached out to Beers Gallery and asked them to contact the artist for a commissioned piece similar to the one I missed out on, but with slight alterations to make it unique. I must say that this artwork now holds a special place in my office and is the first thing I lay my eyes on every day. It brings me a great deal of happiness.

London-based artist Adébayo Bolaji holds a prominent position in my house. I have had the good fortune to meet the artist on multiple occasions, including during his exhibition at the Untitled Art Exhibition on Miami Beach, which is conveniently located near our Miami home. The exhibition was so close to our front garden that I felt as if it was literally taking place there. I am genuinely enthusiastic about this artist and his work. His pieces breathe life into any occasion and provoke engaging conversations when guests visit our home.

Our latest addition is Manu García from Oviedo, Spain. Scott and I instantly fell in love with his artwork approximately eight months ago when we acquired one of his pieces to display in the atrium of our UK home. Since then, we have acquired an additional six pieces from his current exhibition at the Beers Gallery in London. My current go-to artist, and the one I'm most excited about for potential major investment, is Canadian-born Andrew Salgado. I have been extremely fortunate to acquire a couple of Salgado's works and even had a commission of Scott, naked, painted by him. Salgado held an exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery, in November, which was not to be missed! I was able to secure one of the main pieces to be sent over to my Miami house by the end of the year. This artist is a surefire investment, especially if you're into figurative painters. Salgado is the one for you!

I have various artists, some more notable in specific houses due to their work complementing the colours, as opposed to others. However, another of my current favourite artists is David Lock, who is based in London. A few years ago, I commissioned Lock to paint a portrait of Tony and myself. We loved it so much we decided to commission two more artworks from him. One depicts our eldest twins, Aspen and Saffron, while the other portrays Scott. These pieces, along with several other works by renowned contemporary artists, are displayed in the atrium of our home in the UK.

Do you have a preference for the art scene in either the UK or the USA, considering that you have homes in both countries?

Honestly, nowadays, most talented and influential artists are represented by excellent managers and galleries, which allows them to showcase their work all around the world. Artists in high demand, such as Adebayo Bolaji and Salgado, can be seen exhibiting in Miami one month and then in London, Canada, or Madrid the next. Art has truly become a global phenomenon, and I absolutely love it! I love visiting galleries to admire their collections and artwork. Many of the gallery owners and managers have started recognising me whenever I visit, which changes the entire experience. Sometimes, when Scott and I hear about an exhibition we want to see, we intentionally dress down, wear hats and glasses, just so we can peacefully walk around and fully immerse ourselves in the great works displayed on the walls. On other occasions, galleries invite us to their opening nights, hoping that we will promote the show through our social media channels. I don't mind doing this for some of the artists, I love being able to have a platform on which I can help promote them. I love how talented they are and how they are able to share that talent with the rest of us!

You have amassed an impressive collection. Do you have any particular favourites?

I undoubtedly love them all, particularly the commissioned pieces. They hold a special place as intention and thought were put into their creation before they graced the canvas or adorned the wall. At present, my top choice is My Poodle by Hyangmok Baik – although it's difficult to choose just one favourite artist. I am a fan of 20 lol.

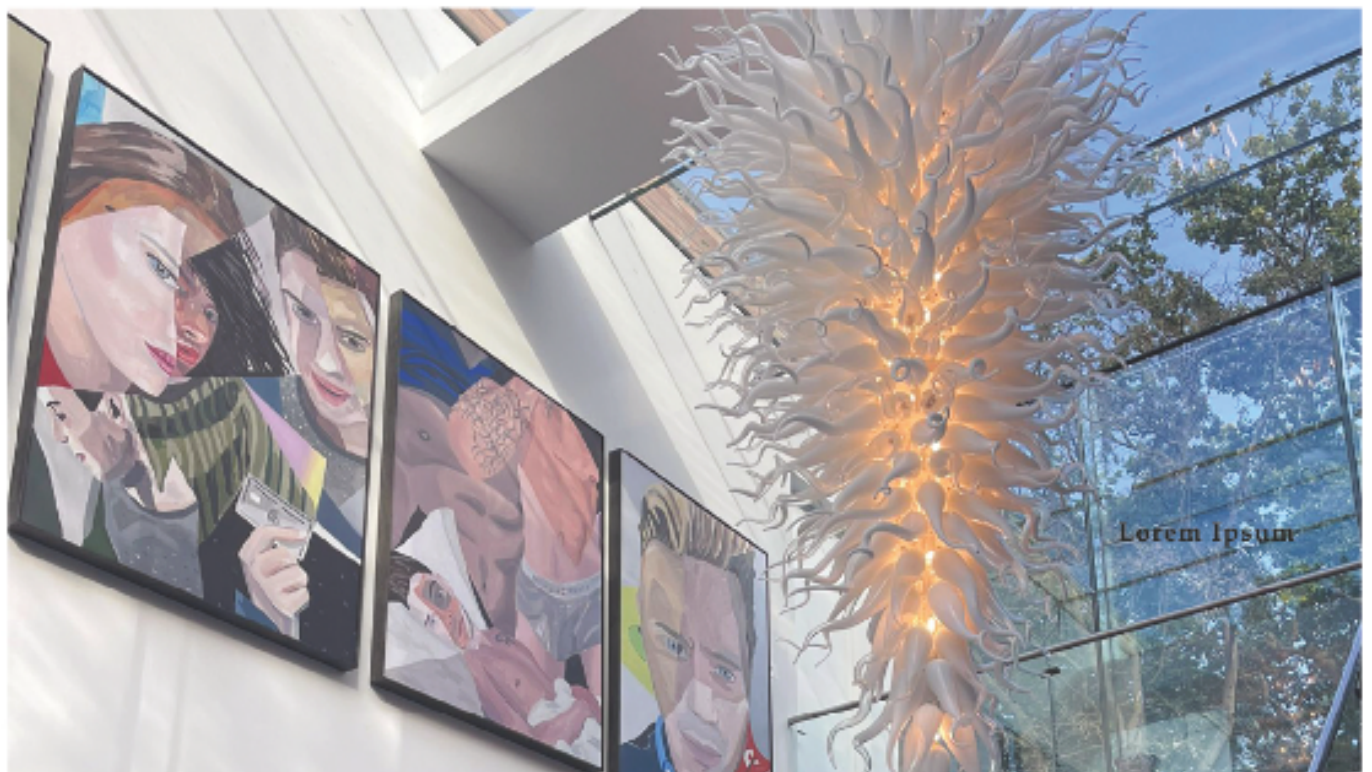


Do you purchase art as an investment, or do you buy it because you genuinely love the work?

Both actually. I do have a few pieces that I acquired for over £150k each, but they are not my personal taste at all. Therefore, I would never display them in my house. They are solely investments and are currently stored in a spare room. They were created by a street artist from New York who is currently very popular. I even purchased some of his NFTs to see if I could profit from them. It's quite amusing! However, everything I have on display is artwork that I truly love.

You recently commissioned the English artist David Lock to complete a series of portraits which are wonderful. Can you tell us about the process - were you hands on or did you let the artist create his vision of the brief?

Yes, I mentioned a little earlier about David. I just love his work and I love his dedication to art. He is a gay, disabled middle-aged man living with medical issues. He is determined and so, so talented. As with all the artists I have commissioned works from, I have an initial chat with them, and say I'm looking for a portrait in their style. The reason I go to each one is because I love their style and other works they have painted, I never want to kill their vibe or interfere with their creativeness. I want my finished piece to be something they would have painted without it being commissioned for me. They have to love the finished piece too.



How important is it for you to incorporate art into the interior design of your homes?

I don't care who you are and what you can afford, no house – and I mean no house – is complete without having some art. Everyone's budget is different – I understand that, but you should always add something to a bare painted wall.

Do you have any artists on your wish list?

No, I'm fortunate enough not to need a wish list. If I want something, I buy it.

Do any of your children share your passion for art?

Actually, all of them like art, but none of them have shown a passion for it like I would have expected or liked. Right now, I want to leave my entire £30m art collection to the poodle rescue! Let them go to some real use when I'm gone. In the meantime, I will enjoy going between my homes and have a private showing each time I go!

What does the next few years hold for the Drewitt-Barlows?

Who knows, maybe I will retire soon and spend my days on Miami beach. That sounds like a good plan to me.