

Art, as well as Sotheby's and Christie's, two of the world's most famous and exclusive auction houses. She was amazed when Christie's offered her a job establishing and directing a new department for antiquities, Judaica and fine art. She jumped at the chance.

At Christie's, Joy was excited by her fast-paced job, consigning objects for auction, evaluating them and researching their origins—all without a computer. "Everything was cutting and pasting," she says. "In order to write the catalogue of items for auction, I had to cut and paste pictures next to my typed description. Photoshop didn't exist. It could take hours before I figured out the final layout." She also trained as an auctioneer, a skill that would later serve her well.

But working in a world-famous auction house in the late 1980s presented Joy with a challenge; she had to stake a claim as a woman in a male-dominated workplace, and as an Orthodox Jewish woman in the super-secular art world. "Twenty years ago it wasn't so easy," Joy explains, "There were very few Jews working at Christie's. I had a hard time leaving early on Shabbos." On the plus side, she got to travel frequently all over America, London, Europe and Israel to locate pieces for auction.

During her stint at Christie's, Joy met Rabbi Dr. Reuven Blum, *zt"l*, a child neuropsychologist and a famous *chazzan* whose rafter-shaking voice earned him a place at Temple Beth El in Boro Park, the summit of the world of *chazzanut*. ("If you get a position there, it's like being in Christie's," Joy says). The couple married, and Joy traveled with Reuven to *shuls* around the globe where he was hired to sing for the *Yomim Nora'im*. "And what did I do?" says the al-

ways-enterprising Joy. "I shlepped my Judaica with me [to sell]!"

When Joy was expecting their first child, she decided it was time to step down from her post at Christie's; the extensive travel, she felt, was not conducive to raising a family. She opened her own gallery in Manhattan right near her apartment and began running charity auctions for organizations like Chai Lifeline, Hadassah, and Emunah. It was, for her, the ideal way to balance motherhood with her passion for her work.

"Everything was by appointment," Joy says. "If there was no appointment, I could be with the children and go to the park... Everything was juggling, [because] you want that outlet in life, I think, but you don't want someone else with your children all the time."

As her children grew, Joy expanded her repertoire beyond the gallery and auctions to appraisals and lecturing. She often gives talks on history and Jewish art, how to build a Judaica collection, fakes and forgeries, and appraising. She has been invited as a guest lecturer to many hotels for Sukkot and Pesach, and has also served as a visiting professor at YU. Twenty-five years after she branched out on her own, Joy is still in demand in the Jewish art world.

If you ask Joy, an expert in Jewish art and history, which historical period of art is her favorite, her answer will surprise you. "Because my life is so filled with antiquities, I prefer to surround myself with ultra-modern art. My house is all high ceilings and lots of glass." Then again, that modern sensibility falls right in line with Joy's philosophy of living as a Jew in the modern world: "First you need a solid *frum* foundation of Torah learning, and then you can build on it." ■

"I was always religious, but I wanted to see with my own eyes the biblical things I had learned." -Joy



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