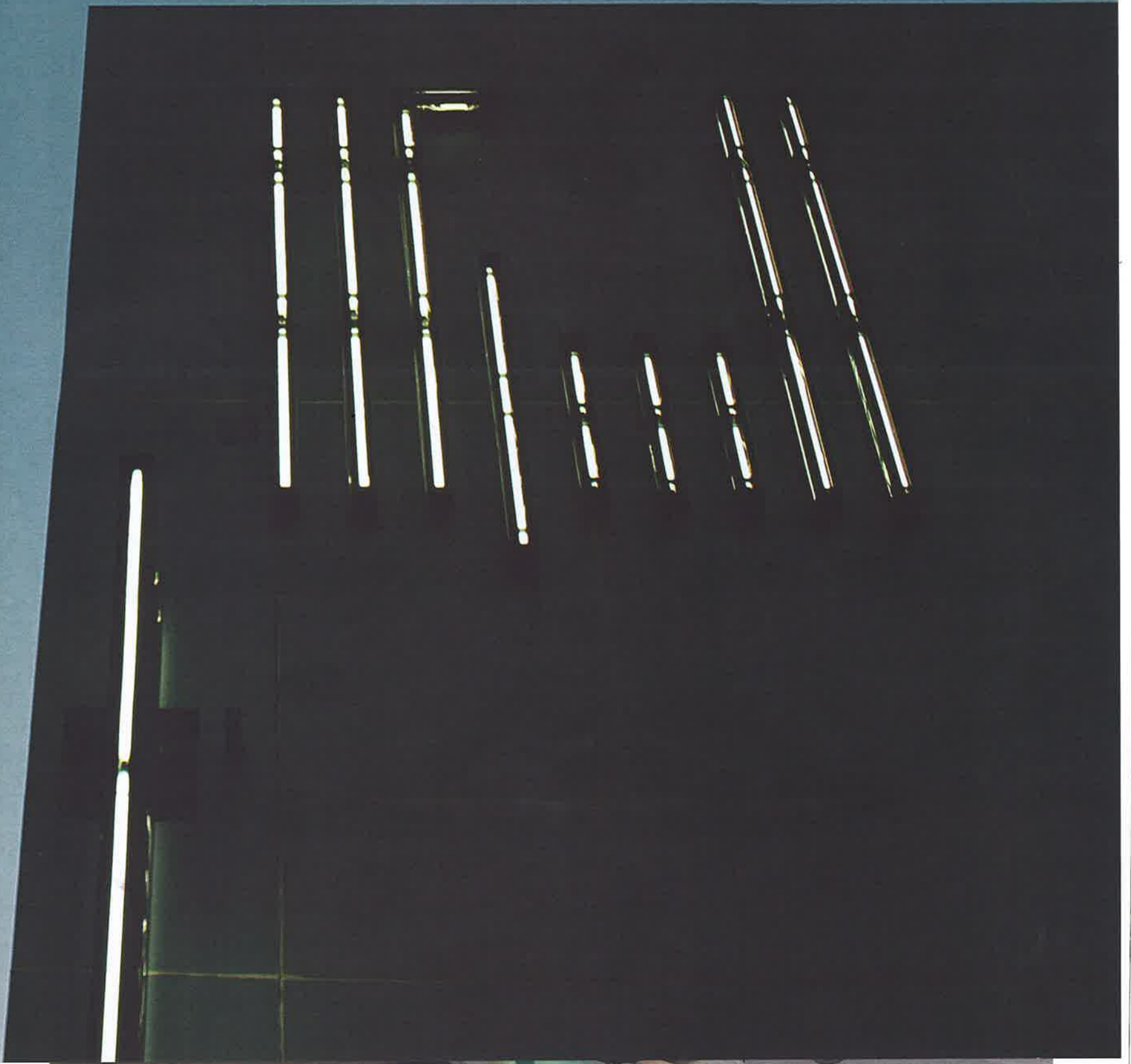


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# LEILA HELLER GALLERY

**Leila Heller**  
Founder, Director, Curator

## What was your first job?

My first major job was as the art curator for a securities group and investment bank on Park Avenue in New York City. I was responsible for collecting and buying art for the premises and on behalf of the general and managing partners.

## When did you know that this was what you wanted to do?

I began my time at Brown University as an economics major, but after taking a course with Professor Kermit Champa on Impressionism, I fell in love with the period and continued to take courses on Monet's Rouen Cathedral series, and several courses on Modernism, I decided to switch my major to Art History and French Literature, and knew that I had to continue to work with art.



## How and when did you start the gallery?

I began my gallery with a space on Madison Avenue in the fall of 1982. I had spent the months prior visiting artist studios with a close friend of mine whose uncle had a gallery in Paris and an office in New York. Was on these visits, I realized how much I enjoyed working with artists and it has remained a passion of mine to work closely with artists and is what led me to opening my own gallery.

## What was your first curated show and when? Tell us about the experience.

The first show I had at my gallery was of Leopoldo Altos de Chavo, a well known Argentine artist who lived in New York. He then became the Guggenheim Fellow for Creative Arts and the first dean of studies for the Altos de Chavo school of design. My first curated



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**What is your view on art in the UAE in the past 10 years? How do you see it developing in the next 10 years?**

I think that this is a very exciting time for art in the UAE. The scene has grown exponentially in the last few years and now with the opening of so many new galleries, foundations, and museums in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi it will continue to grow and become one of the most important hubs for art not only in the region, but the world.

**Who is your favorite artist(s) and why?**

One of my favorite artists is Piet Mondrian. I will always have a special affinity for him, as it was when I discovered his art work I truly fell for art.



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**How do you select your artists to exhibit in your gallery and on what basis?**

I select artists by following my intuition. When I see an artist I love, I know instantly. I have always allowed my passion to guide me.

**What advice can you give for young curators, gallery owners, and artists who would like to start their career in the art world?**

The best advice I can give to anyone who wants to work in the art world is to constantly be educating yourself. You must always read and follow what is happening in the world around you, and be up to date on new artists

