

# The Sandors of Chicago—and the World

**R**ichard Sandor comes as close to rock-star status as one can in the world of economics. Innovative and charismatic, he revolutionized the financial markets with the concept of interest-rate futures and has served as chief economist for the Chicago Board of Trade. Now, as chairman and CEO of the Chicago Climate Exchange, he has turned his attention to reducing carbon emissions worldwide using the same basic principles of supply and demand.

His wife, Ellen Sandor, is a creative force of equal intensity—an internationally recognized multi-media artist and director of (art)n, a collective of international artists, scientists and thinkers. The two have influenced and inspired each other since they met in college, and their vast photography collection, which has overflowed from their home into the CCX office, is a fusion of their passions and talents.

In the CCX reception area, a large framed print by industrial photographer Edward Burtynsky hangs in harmony with two flat-screened monitors posing the day's trading. Throughout the 11<sup>th</sup> floor office in the heart of downtown Chicago, works by some of the greatest photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century hang in such profusion that visitors may wonder if they have stumbled into a hidden gallery of the art institute, a few blocks away.

"Our collection is a collaborative effort," says Ellen. "Richard is a researcher and an academic with the ability to focus and select, combined with a love of history. My passion is Post Modern and New Media Art. So this combination really helped shape the collection. We started with American photographers, and it just took off."

Over the past decade, the Sandors have donated nearly 100 photographs to the University of Oklahoma's Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. In spring 2007, the Fred Jones opened an

exhibition of works from the Sandor Family Collection, featuring photographs from Henri Cartier-Bresson to Mary Ellen Mark.

"Everything the Sandors have given us is such quality work that we want to show as much of it as we can," says Gail Kana Anderson, interim director of the Fred Jones. "A Sandor exhibition was a wonderful way to do this."

Among the photographers featured are James VanDerZee, who chronicled the spirit and energy of Harlem for more than 50 years, and Alfred Eisenstaedt, who in his day earned the cover slot on more than 70 issues of *Life Magazine*.

Nearly an entire wall of the Sandor Gallery is dedicated to Hollywood icons, including James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Marlena Dietrich and Greta Garbo. Yet, perhaps the most famous and valuable photograph in the collection is the 1926 portrait of artist Piet Mondrian by André Kertész.

Although born to another century, the Hungarian photographer shared similar traits with both Sandors. Like Richard, he once made a living in the exchange world and, like Ellen, he was an artist known for pushing the envelope of established technique and convention. Among his most celebrated and controversial works was his "Distortion Series," in which he used a funhouse mirror to elongate and distort his subjects.

One of the most captivating works in the Sandor Collection

is a photographic collage that utilizes one of Kertész's original funhouse mirrors. When the Sandors learned the historic mirror was in Chicago, they got permission to use it during an afternoon portrait session with photographer and sculptor Jim Zanzi, Ellen's mentor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The resulting PHSCologram, *The Other Window*, is a personal and playful work, both an homage to Kertész and a modern 3-D tour de force that



Ellen and Richard Sandor pose in front of a photograph by Edward Burtynsky at the office of the Chicago Climate Exchange. As both environmentalists and collectors, the Sandors value the artist's large-scale photographs of "manufactured landscapes," showing the tragic aftermath of landfills, factories, mines and dams.

Lynette Lobbian

engages and moves with the viewer.

The process of layering images to achieve the 3-D effect was invented by Ellen in the early 1980s. She coined the term "PHSCologram" as an acronym for the technique that combines photography, holography, sculpture and computer graphics. A PHSCologram (pronounced skol-o-gram) is made by dividing slightly different views of one subject into thousands of very thin vertical columns. The columns are layered in a process called "interleaving" to make a single, slightly blurred image, which is laminated onto the back of a Plexiglas panel. A barrier screen



Image provided

*The Other Window*, which pays homage to the distortion technique used by photographer André Kertész, is one of nearly 100 works of art given to the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art by the Sandors. The PHSCologram was created by photographer Jim Zanzi and Ellen Sandor with special thanks to Janine Fron and Lisa Stone.

made of black film with thin, clear vertical lines then is laminated onto the front of the Plexiglas.

"The slits in the barrier screen allow the columns from only one of the original views to be seen from a particular angle," explains Ellen. "Each eye sees a slightly different view of the subject, and the brain condenses these two views into a three-dimensional image. As you scan across the image, the changing views from each column further enhance the three-dimensional effect."

Two other PHSColorgrams, *No Fumare, Por Favore* and *Self-*

*Portrait in Red* by Edward Paschke and the (art)n Laboratory, anchor the west wall of the photography gallery.

The newest additions to the Sandor Collection include the signature high-contrast, black and white portraits by Harry Callahan of his wife Eleanor, and several works from Aaron Siskind's road series, which brings elements of abstract expressionism to weathered asphalt and tar.

"The joy of giving to OU is that our work gets seen and appreciated," says Richard. "If you give a gift to a museum and it goes in the basement, it does nothing for the artist and nothing for the public, so we have changed our pattern of giving significantly."

Although not OU alumni, the Sandors became acquainted with the University through OU President David L. Boren. Richard met then-U.S. Senator Boren at a function at the Chicago Board of Trade, and the two hit it off immediately.

"I find David one of the most rare and unique people I have ever met in general," says Richard, "but more specifically, even rarer among those with political experience. His integrity is unquestionable, as is his desire for truth and Molly's [Shi Boren] love for beauty. They are a true Renaissance couple."

Both couples share a love of public policy and a love of art, a combination that has drawn the Sandors to the University of Oklahoma for events from museum openings to environmental conferences. Richard, a featured speaker at climate summits from Kyoto to Rio, brought his message of voluntary greenhouse-gas emissions trading to OU for a presidential foreign policy conference. In 2005, OU became the first public university to join the Chicago Climate Exchange.

Richard Sandor believes that universities make the perfect partner for the kind of research that will help industry lower their carbon emissions.

"If you want to affect transformational change, a critical part of that success is to provide educational aware-

ness and faculty involvement," says Richard. "A nice side effect is that it inspires new research and technologies. Industry looks for new ways to cut their use of energy and subsequently their emissions because they can make money by doing so."

"The CCX operates on the premise that while people are generally good-natured, if we really want to change behavior into a positive social objective, we really need personal financial incentives. It's that simple."

—Lynette Lobban