



COURTESY ALICE SACHS ZIMET

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arts funder

To the general public, Alice Sachs Zimet is unknown, but to art-world insiders, she is a patron saint. As vice president of the Chase Manhattan Bank in charge of cultural affairs, Zimet is responsible for managing the bank's worldwide cultural sponsorship programs. Translation: She arranges for Chase, the nation's largest bank, to give money to groups that support artists, including photographers. Considering the dwindling of government art support, her role has become critical.

"We work in a very serious institution," says Zimet. "It's our function to create a vehicle for risk-averse bankers to support risk-taking artists." In 1996 alone, Chase gave \$6.1 million to arts organizations. Chase has maintained a close relationship with the International Center of Photography since 1979; the bank has sponsored the museum's prestigious Infinity Awards, provided money for exhibitions of William Klein, Horst, and Man Ray's fashion photography, all at ICP, and for a national tour of Helen Levitt's photographs.

Zimet, 48, has a pair of degrees in art history, including a master's from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts. Prior to joining Chase she worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and at the ICP. She's a passionate photography collector whose tastes range from Brassai and Man Ray to Robert Mapplethorpe, Bill Jacobson, Luis Gonzalez Palma, and Andres Serrano. "It's my job to match the needs of the art world to those of the commercial world," says Zimet. "Arts institutions have a lot of value to a corporation like Chase; it's just a matter of thinking big to create partnerships. If everyone doesn't win, we haven't done our job." —P.H.H.