

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

NextGen, art and making an impact



Rachida Tournier
Deputy CEO of BNP Paribas Wealth Management
Picture: Antoine Doyen

The “Great Wealth Transfer”—the largest intergenerational shift in financial assets in recent history—is an ongoing topic of discussion in financial circles.

In 2004, BNP Paribas Wealth Management launched its NextGen program to support the new generation as they assume challenging responsibilities in a dynamic environment.

Rachida Tournier, Deputy CEO of BNP Paribas Wealth Management, talks to **Alison Leslie**, Head of Art Advisory at BNP Paribas Wealth Management, about engaging with a younger generation and their perspectives on art and its potential.



Alison Leslie
Head of Art Advisory at BNP Paribas Wealth Management
Picture: Stéphanie Fraisse

Twenty years of NextGen programming

Alison Leslie:

Rachida, you are in charge of NextGen programming at BNP Paribas Wealth Management, a program that started over 20 years ago. What is the program about, and how has it evolved over the years?

Rachida Tournier:

The program is designed to help a new wave of clients understand their wealth and how it is managed. The first edition took place in Hong Kong, and we now hold an average of three sessions per year in three different locations worldwide, with 50 participants in each.

Since the program’s launch, almost 2,000 children of our major clients have taken part from over 20 countries around the world, including from Europe, the Gulf Cooperation Council and Asia. The themes have varied over the years, but they usually focus on investment, entrepreneurship and new technology.

Alison Leslie:

How does art fit into this?

Rachida Tournier:

Some participants and their parents were asking questions we had not considered addressing. What about looking beyond pure finance and investment? What about millennial and Generation Z clients, who are searching for different avenues of expression and other ways to put **inherited wealth to work?**

We decided it was time to adapt the NextGen program to help this generation find their voice and work with subjects they are passionate about. As art was high on both our list and theirs, that's where you came in, Alison.

Art for impact: Combining passion with action to make a difference

Alison Leslie:

In 2022 BNP Paribas Wealth Management started sponsoring the Villa Medici's *Festival des Cabanes* in Rome, and through this partnership, the NextGen program exploring art, finance, and impact at the Villa was born.

Since that first edition, art has very much taken center stage. Participants are fascinated to learn about how art has impacted a city like Rome over the centuries, and how it continues to shape our appreciation of the places we live in or visit today. The new generations are very interested in how they can combine a passion for art with making a real impact on a community they love.

Given that much of this new generation's wealth is inherited, many feel driven to continue developing their family businesses. However, there is also a desire to contribute something new to a community, to **give something back**. Art is clearly an avenue that many young people want to explore to achieve this goal.

Philanthropy

Rachida Tournier:

Philanthropy allows the new generation to turn this desire—to make an impact through art—into a reality. Practically speaking, it's about what structure may be best suited to a particular family according to their circumstances and what they want to achieve.

Instead of merely making donations, we are finding that millennials and Gen Z are interested in taking action and being part of the process. The key aspect is understanding the level of support that a family wishes to provide and the extent to which they want to be personally involved.

Alison Leslie:

The speakers garnering the most interest from participants are those who share their experience. For example, how they have put their ideas into action and cleared administrative hurdles to move forward, or how artists have kickstarted their careers thanks to a generous benefactor.

Connections and collaborations

Another major point of interest is the new generation's appetite for subjects that embrace **collaborative working**. Unlike the older generation, where the family environment may impose loyalty to existing advisors or systems, younger family members will almost always choose to open the conversation, looking for the best expertise.

Making connections, seeking innovative collaborations and finding new ways of working together are essential, especially in the art space. Much like the Villa Medici's work, we are seeing examples where accessibility and public-private partnerships are actively sought to make a real, long-term difference.

There is a definite shift from the aesthetic pleasure of experiencing artworks in the comfort of a private setting toward altruism and a **desire to share**.

Rachida Tournier:

The future impact of current initiatives and their sustainability over time are certainly important, and this generation wants to be able to **measure and quantify achievements** to see if a project is really making a difference. Keeping things **fluid and flexible** to enable adjustments as a project evolves is key.

To return to the Great Wealth Transfer, how are millennials and younger generations looking at the value of art they may have inherited or are thinking about buying?

Inheritance and investment

Alison Leslie:

In terms of inherited art, it depends on the context, geography and local taxation policy. In countries like Italy, where the art may have been in the same family for many generations, every effort is made to keep the collection intact; selling will not be an option if it can possibly be avoided.

On the other hand, in France, because of Napoleonic law, such situations are rare because inheritance has been split equally among family members over successive generations.

For more recently created wealth and collections, two subjective considerations are in play: **personal attachment and taste**, as well as the **value**.

Should we keep or sell? The value of a beloved collection could turn out to be nowhere near its purchase price. The reverse can also be true, and yesterday's risky avant-garde has become highly sought-after. If we look back at the history of art and taste, it has always been this way.

As for buying art today, motivation is hugely varied and very personal, with some younger people valuing memories of shared experiences over physical possessions. Buying art purely as an investment has its champions, which can mean digital art tracked with blockchain technology or different forms of fractional ownership.

Once purchases exceed a certain level, there is a real **willingness to take advice** and seek out **informed opinion**, often from several sources. In my experience, pure investment is rarely the declared objective; however, there is a certain expectation that informed choices should at least hold value.

Managing art collections

When it comes to managing art collections, it is difficult to make general statements, as it is such a personal subject. Family strategies concerning existing collections may change between generations, especially if a "road map" for the artworks' future has not been agreed on before decisions need to be made.

Collectors are well advised to keep accurate records of the pieces they own and to plan gifts or philanthropic structures as far in advance as possible. Interestingly, it is often the younger generation who drives this process, either initiating proper record-keeping from scratch or improving what already exists. As their interest deepens, they may gradually become involved in the acquisition process itself.

To conclude, my most impassioned conversations with this new generation often center on the joy of living with beautiful works of art, the powerful attraction of ownership, and the meaningful desire to **share the privilege of possession with others**.