

## A Major Andy Warhol Collector Claims 1,389 of His Artworks Are Held Hostage by a New Jersey Storage Facility

Yesterday afternoon, art collector David Mugarbi filed a lawsuit against Mana Contemporary for "holding captive" nearly 1,400 artworks worth more than \$100 million

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David Mugarbi (left) with gallerist Larry Gagosian. Photo: Patrick McMullan via Getty

Sticky storage in New Jersey has caused a hostage situation for a \$100 million art collection. David Mugarbi, the son of famed art collector Jose Mugarbi, who owns the largest private collection of works by Pop artist Andy Warhol, filed a lawsuit with the New York State Supreme Court yesterday afternoon against [Mana Contemporary](#), claiming the defendants are "holding captive 1,389 important works of art" in their storage facility. He alleges that an initial agreement between the two parties stated that the works would be stored free of monetary charges and solely in exchange for Mugarbi's referral of clients to Mana Contemporary; however, after a second agreement modified some terms (not including those regarding the payment plan) the storage facility sent a bill for over \$500,000 and is refusing to release the works it holds.

Mana Contemporary's "conversion and breach of contract has paralyzed MAB [Mugarbi Art Business], blocking it from delivering and selling almost 1,400 important works of art, valued at more than \$100,000,000, which is its lifeblood, and destroying MAB's economic goodwill and business relationships by preventing it from delivering works of art that, prior to the illicit embargo, MAB had sold or promised to various museums and galleries for exhibition," reads the filed memorandum. Mugarbi claims that Mana Contemporary employees began prohibiting the collection of artworks from leaving the storage facility as early as September 13. The stakes have been upped on Mugarbi's end as one of the works in the facility must be delivered to a "major museum" by Friday, October 27, or it will not appear in an

upcoming exhibition. He also alleges that a gallery has already canceled the consignment of a sculpture because its delivery was blocked.