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Everything must go from the famed KGA artist compound

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Since 1980, thousands of Houstonians have been to the KGA Compound at 1907 Crocker.

The lavish home of artist Kelly Gale Amen has played host to many a soiree and gala. It has been the location of Mayor Bill White's campaign parties, AIDS Foundation Houston benefits and fundraisers for The Women's Shelter, to name a few.

One year, Amen estimated he had house guests for 320 days.

"Everyone always says, 'I was at his compound once,'" said Blakely Bering, a fellow artist and close friend to Amen.

But this weekend, the compound will have its last hurrah, with Amen selling off everything — even the kitchen sink.

After that, the 67-year-old, bungalow-style house will be bulldozed to make room for patio homes, one of which will be Amen's new residence.

"I'm no spring chicken," said Amen, who is 57. "I want what a lot of people in my generation are wanting — to downsize, to have an elevator. I don't believe you have to give up anything in life; it's redesigning what you already

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have." For Amen, that means clearing out his extensive art collection and starting from scratch. Bering and her husband, artist Austin James, have volunteered to help by conducting a sale from 1-9 p.m. April 20 and from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. April 21 at the compound. Paintings, sculptures, trees, plants and other home items will be marked starting at 40 percent off, and prices will range from \$20 to \$200,000. The inventory includes works by Daniel Adme,

Mark Carpenter, Scott Griesbach, Aram Nagle, John Palmer and Omar Perez, among others.

James said Amen has always had a knack for spotting up-and-coming artists.

Many of his collections reflect local and Southern talent. "Kelly has really opened himself to accepting emerging artists and thrusting their careers forward," James said.

Still, Amen said it is time for him to focus on his own art, which includes designing commemorative stone and metal benches for the city and non-profit organizations.



Examiner Staff Photo • Marianne Horton

Amen in the compound's glass walkway