

Business

But is it art? A painting is investment alternative

By JONATHAN AUERBACH

The jury seems to be out on a new twist to making investment an art form.

After about a month, the first-of-a-kind offering of shares in a painting has yet to sell the minimum amount of stock needed to consummate the deal.

However, an executive at the firm floating the deal insists that the private debt placement will succeed.

If successful, the offering will give artists a powerful financial tool to fund their work and maintain a say in marketing it.

Robert Cenedella, a renowned satirical artist, is seeking to raise \$200,000 through a highly ambitious private offering of

notes in one of his paintings, "2001, a Stock Odyssey."

No, that's not where he thinks the stock market is heading, but rather the year in which the work will be auctioned off.

The offering went out on March 17, and has yet to book the minimum \$100,000, required by federal law. The subscription is set to expire May 17, but may be extended.

"We haven't hit that yet, but we're doing very well. We have commitments for over \$100,000," said Chris Concannon, president of Contemporary Art Shares, the company making the offering.

The 53-year-old Cenedella has been active in the art world for more

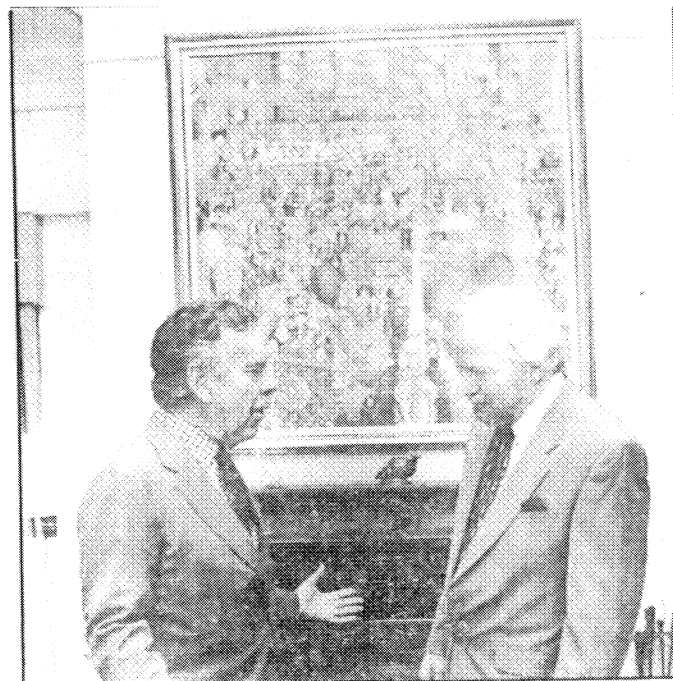
than 30 years. He created one of the popular Absolut Vodka ads.

Under terms of the highly speculative offer, investors can buy a seven-year, non-interest-bearing note in units of \$1,000.

In return for their investment, patrons receive a 39- by 37-inch high-quality silk-screen print, or serigraph, of the painting.

The oil work, 58½ by 56½ inches, has been appraised for \$50,000. Cenedella's other works have sold for between \$5,000 and \$50,000.

If the painting is sold, investors would receive either \$125 or 1/200 of the net proceeds from the sale over the appraisal price, whichever is higher.



New York Post: Bolivar Arellano

ART OF THE DEAL: Artist Robert Cenedella (right) discusses his painting, "2001, a Stock Odyssey," with television journalist Morley Safer.