

BY THE AUTHORS OF AT HOME WITH BOOKS

ESTELLE ELLIS CAROLINE SEEBOHM CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES

At HOME with ART

How

ART LOVERS

Live with

and Care for Their

TREASURES

ESTELLE ELLIS CAROLINE SEEBOHM CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES



To my daughter, Nora, and to Harriet and Miki for their friendship and gentle counsel. To my son, Ellis, for sharing the pleasure of art at home.

— E. Е.

For Morley and Renee, my favorite artists.

-c.s.

For my brothers and sisters.

-C.S.S.

This book is also dedicated to the memory of philanthropists and art lovers

David and Penny McCall

HALF TITLE

Cross Aweigh (1967) by Alfonso Ossorio. Collection of Ted Dragon.

FRONTISPIECE

A world of art meets on a mantel in the Dunlops' London flat: a painting by Scottish colorist Francis B. Cadell, torso by British sculptor Stephen Cox, Mughal miniature, South Indian mounted figure, two Congolese sculptures.

CHAPTER OPENERS

Details of paintings (various) by Max Gimblett.

Permissions are on page 247.

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At HOME with ART



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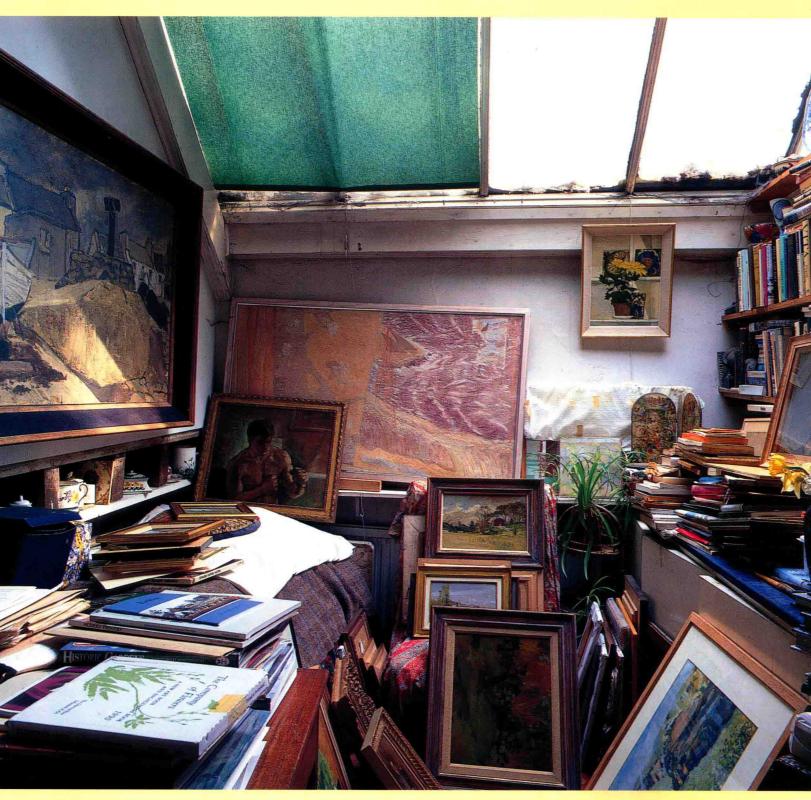
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The Hampstead studio-living room of British artist Derek Hill is proof that he feels very much at home with his art.

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Roz Jacobs's collection of antique irons, begun with Man Ray and including his Le Fer Rouge, climb the staircase in her New York apartment.

TOP

Undine by Boris Lovet Lorski from John Axelrod's mantel.

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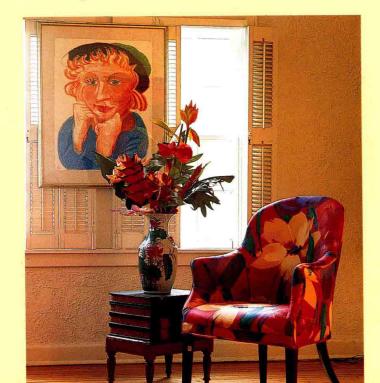
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David Hockney's portrait of Celia is hung over a window (why not, since there is no view?), in Barbara Davidson's color and light-flooded Florida living room.



INTRODUCTION



n 1994, when three explorers discovered the Chauvet cave in southeast France, which contained more than three hundred paintings and engravings of bears, lions, mammoths, and rhinoceroses dating from over 30,000 years ago, the emotion that gripped them made them incapable of uttering a word. They felt "as if the tens of thousands of years that separated us from the producers of these paintings no longer existed. It seemed as if they had just created these masterpieces." These awestruck explorers were surely witnessing the dawn of art.

The presence of art in the cave sanctuaries of our earliest ancestors connects us with these artists in a way that is more moving than the mere revelation of their talent and skill. "Our humanity derives from shared

experiences in the remote past," writes John D. Barrow in *The Artful Universe*, "when many of our propensities were acquired as adaptations to a universal environment." Art, then and now, reflects those distant experiences by producing images that flicker across our universal consciousness, resonating visually, emotionally, and spiritually from a common pool of experience and a need for larger meaning.

Art, along with music, literature, and science, also offers the promise that some sort of order can be created out of our chaotic world. The artist reconciles opposing forces, producing harmony out of conflict, offering us an escape from confusion. Art in this sense is a pathway to consolation and the soul's peace.

Our appreciation of the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., for instance, is the greater when we

ABOVE

Sally Epstein chose a quiet entryhall corner for these lithographs by Edvard Munch. On the floor is John F. Graney's metal sculpture, Cattail. learn that it was inspired by the tragic loss of Duncan Phillips's father and brother. Phillips wrote:

I TURNED TO MY LOVE OF PAINTING FOR THE WILL TO LIVE. ART OFFERS TWO GREAT GIFTS OF EMOTION—THE EMOTION OF RECOGNITION AND THE EMOTION OF ESCAPE. BOTH EMOTIONS TAKE US OUT OF THE BOUNDARIES OF SELF. . . . AT MY PERIOD OF CRISIS I WAS PROMPTED TO CREATE SOMETHING WHICH WOULD EXPRESS MY AWARENESS TO LIFE'S RETURNING JOYS AND MY POTENTIAL ESCAPE INTO THE LAND OF ARTISTS' DREAMS. I WOULD CREATE A COLLECTION OF PICTURES . . . LAYING EVERY BLOCK IN ITS PLACE WITH A VISION OF THE WHOLE EXACTLY AS THE ARTIST BUILDS HIS MONUMENT OR HIS DECORATION.

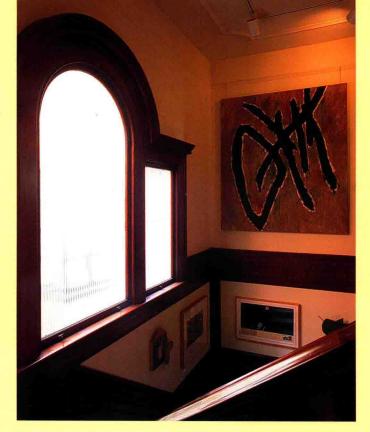
Every spectrum of the search for spiritual as well as visual gratification is reflected in *At Home with Art*. We were constantly confounded by the variety and eclecticism of the art lovers we encountered, from the almost accidental discovery by Jason Vass that political posters were more important to him than any of his other youthful interests, to the lifetime commitment of Dorothy and

Artists Gilbert & George have chosen to live in their small East

London house surrounded by nineteenth-century pottery by

Christopher Dresser and Sir Edmund Elton, rather than paintings.





Architecture (arched window with moldings) and art (by Mark Katano) work well together in this stairwell in the Hobsons' San Francisco townhouse.

Herbert Vogel, who set aside half their income to buy conceptual art when it was considered obscure and esoteric. Some, who inherited art, developed an early awareness of its joys and the historical meaning of their legacy, and are now pondering the complexity of its passage to children and/or museums. Others, who received gifts from artist friends, create surroundings that extend the pleasure of their company. Still others simply started out with bare walls and made impulse buys that later turned into love affairs. These often included the work of young artists, who discovered they had eager patrons.

Many developed an involvement with art that has required commitment, energy, courage, vision, and a reordering of priorities. John Axelrod gave up a legal and business career to become a full-time art collector. He filled every room in his spacious floor-through apartment with an idiosyncratic mix of paintings, sculpture, furniture, and ceramics, knowing he would have little room left for entertaining and no room at all for overnight guests. Ramón and Nercys Cernuda risked controversy



Ellsworth Kelly's Diagonal with Curve VI hovers like a bolt of blue lightning over the Katcher family (Jane, Elizabeth, Katherine, Gerald, and Margaret, in front) in their Florida living room. "When I look at it," Gerry says, "I remember what Kelly said to us about it, where we bought it, and how deeply Jane felt about it."

and faced legal and social harassment to claim their right to live with Cuban art. Partnership in marriage produced a dynamic alliance for Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro; her modern masters cohabit harmoniously with his Chinese and African antiquities. Civil rights lawyer Eric Robertson turned to the art of his ancestors to satisfy his desire to give his life and work equal meaning. Mary

Jane Harris fell in love at first sight with Italian baroque painting and has lived with it happily ever after. Her romantic attachment reflects the feeling of Phyllis Rose, who, in her memoir, *The Year of Reading Proust*, admits that "I have reached the age when collecting is the stage on which I enact desire."

The second life that art has given so many in this book is illuminated by Edward Albee's decision to create a foundation and an artist-writer colony to support aspiring creative talent. Unabashed art lovers, our contributors derive much of their pleasure from the process of educating themselves. Over and over again, we heard, "The

education of the eye is an ongoing process. You have to look, look, look, read, and experience." In several cases, spouses educated each other to respect and even grew to love each other's taste. Parents engaged their children in the experience of choosing art for their walls. In almost every room we found shelves filled with books, catalogs, and magazines on art.

As personal as the choice of art is the singular way these individuals incorporate it into their homes. The integration of art with living space is ultimately what this book is celebrating. The Key Biscayne condominium of Martin Margulies, for instance, was constructed to give his art dramatic dominance, thus furniture and color

schemes are sublimated to the paintings and sculpture. In the 1832 home of Harry van Dyke, on the other hand, the art is in harmony with authentic nineteenth-century furniture and decorative objects, appropriate choices for a landmark house that overlooks the Hudson Valley. Laurence Strenger's dazzling array of prints and drawings has in effect taken over his New York apartment like an invading army. John and Frances Bowes's house in Sonoma was specifically designed to encompass the large contemporary

The entryhall of Albee's Montauk home sets the stage for the African and contemporary artworks he enjoys. Lee Krasner's painting and Diane Mayo's ceramic dominate the far wall.







Charles I made sure that Sir Anthony Van Dyck included the royal spaniels in his portrait of the king's children.

canvases they love so much. For Anjelica Huston and Robert Graham, the house came first, and their pictures happily accepted this priority.

In some cases, the art becomes almost fused with its owner in an inseparable match. King Charles I, for instance, never went anywhere without miniature copies of his dog paintings. The seventeenth-century Chinese collector Zhou Lianggong installed his collection on a houseboat that served as his floating museum. When author James Lord visited Gertrude Stein in her famous art-filled Paris apartment, he was told by Alice B. Toklas to wait in the salon until his hostess arrived. "But she was already there," James Lord wrote in his memoir, Six Exceptional Women. "Whether present physically or not . . . Gertrude Stein always inhabited that room as long as it contained all the possessions that so vividly, historically, and imperatively substantiated her presence. These, above all, were the pictures. Where the pictures were, Gertrude Stein was."

So many different kinds of art, so many different ways of living with it. "Art has a chameleon quality," collector Jane Katcher said. "Where you see it changes how you see it." This is especially evident when the collector lives

in more than one place. Eugene Thaw explains that the old master drawings so prized by him and his wife Clare are very much at home in their softly lit European-style town house in New York, while their Native American art is well suited to their sun-filled Santa Fe retreat. "You see art differently," he said, "when you look out over skyscrapers, a mountain, or water."

How we wish to live with our art varies as much as our personal relationships. What is clear from the people who described their feelings to us in *At Home with Art* is that they all delight in the art they "possess or are possessed by," either making over their homes to its service or integrating it in such a way that life and art are one.



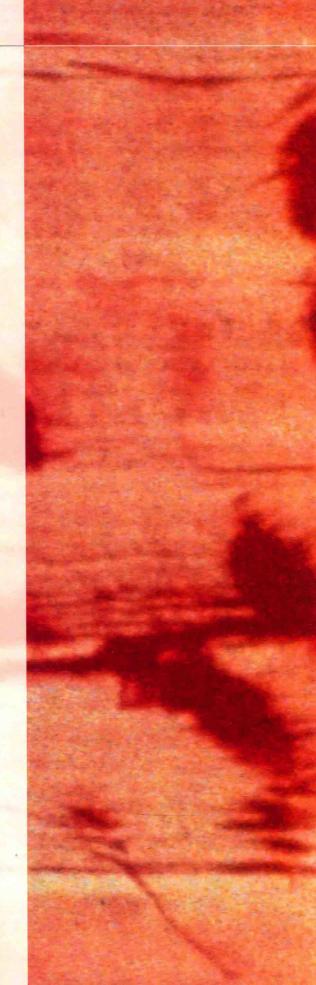
In the house of the late Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy, the many artworks are like the voices of all their friends.

ONE VISION

for Georgia O'Keeffe

SUSAN BARAN

What need have I of color except that which clings to the blue sky or streaked clay of the desert? I hoard the finest oils in tubes, mix and re-mix to capture the energy of this planet, the light that dances and darts from each object. I want the form of tears, not their melancholy. The earth is constant. We crave the color that surrounds us, steal the last, pink drop of sunset for a scarf to wrap our throat, wear a skirt of plum that hugs pale hips. Clothed in radiance and desire we pluck the sacred day. I want none of this-I am content in black and white, all absence, all presence. Only the joy of canvas helps me see a little clearer each time I paint, that others may know on dove gray walls in a city shaded by towers, obscured by the mist of a million breaths, the stars that shine above the desert. My pictures exist only for a brief moment in this world, then they dry and bleach like the bones whose scattered figures haunt these sands, and when I too have turned to bone, form will join form in the order of this universe. I will be that which I have struggled to know through my fingertips, to seesmooth and polished into final form like the black river rock that rests on a white shelf above my bed, I shall be alone and pure.



THE PASSIONATE COLLECTOR

