

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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THE ART ISSUE

AT HOME WITH
TODAY'S TOP
COLLECTORS

8

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IN THE HILLS
OVERLOOKING
LOS ANGELES,
ART PATRON
CHARA SCHREYER
COMMISSIONS
A SENSATIONAL
SETTING FOR HER
ELECTRIFYING
COLLECTION

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The architecture firm McRitchie Design collaborated with Gary Hutton Design on the renovation of collector Chara Schreyer's gallery-like Los Angeles home, which has expansive views of the city. In the family room, a multipanel collage work by Mark Bradford and one of Donald Judd's Stack sculptures overlook a sofa designed by Piero Lissoni for Living Divani, an angular Council bench, a pair of Poul Kjærholm steel-and-rope chairs by Fritz Hansen, and a B&B Italia cocktail table; the carpet was custom made by Tai Ping. For details see Sources.



WHEN YOU'RE A PROMINENT COLLECTOR

and your house is full of works by major artists, one nice perk is that if you invite those artists over for a cocktail party, they are likely to show up. Of course, one risk is that they might not appreciate the way you've chosen to display their work. This was a concern for collector and museum patron Chara Schreyer recently, when she hosted a gathering at her new Los Angeles home for a group that included photographer Catherine Opie. Among the Opie pieces Schreyer owns are two haunting images of L.A. freeway overpasses that she had hung not in her airy, pristine living spaces but in a small room upstairs—the laundry room, to be exact.

"I'm not sure Cathy was so happy when she realized where they were, but she was very gracious about it," recalls Schreyer with a laugh. Opie no doubt understood that her work is in exceptionally good company, joining important pieces by such artists as Donald Judd, Lee Bontecou, Andy Warhol, and Robert Gober. Indeed, Schreyer, who is based in the Bay Area and has much of her collection spread between four other gallery-like California homes, says she chose this house in part because it had the perfect wall for a beloved Judd sculpture, a stack of reflective steel-and-Plexiglas boxes that comes fully alive when natural light hits it from both sides. →

Clockwise from above: A bronze sculpture by Stephen de Staebler stands next to the pool, which is sheathed in Sicis glass mosaic tile; William Peters Landscape Architect oversaw the plantings around the terraces. Artists Wade Guyton and Kelley Walker created the sculptural light fixture that hangs above the entrance hall stairs, while an installation by the duo is visible at the end of the hallway. Canvas-and-aluminum leaves by Pae White are arranged into piles along the terrazzo steps.





At the edge of the dining area, a hanging sculpture by Ruth Asawa is displayed opposite an Andy Warhol Rorschach painting; a multipart work by Richard Artschwager lines the wall behind a custom-designed table by Gary Hutton and de Sede chairs. **Opposite:** Schreyer commissioned the purple aluminum sculpture by Aaron Curry that graces an upper terrace.

Not that the residence looks much like it did when she bought it. A spec house built almost eight years ago, the structure had a simplicity that appealed to Schreyer, who was also captivated by the views spanning from downtown to the Pacific Ocean. Best of all, the building codes allowed her to completely overhaul the place as long as she kept its existing footprint.

For that job she called upon Gary Hutton, the designer of all her homes over the past three decades, and architectural designer Joe McRitchie, a new collaborator. Both men knew that Schreyer—a trustee of several museums, including L.A.'s Hammer and Museum of Contemporary Art—has one primary rule: The art always gets star billing. “Essentially the house is a museum,” McRitchie says, “but it had to have a softness that allows people to live in it.” That meant adding warm touches like the slats of Douglas fir on the façade and ceilings to balance the expanses of concrete, Corian, and glass.

Given that the project stretched to nearly four years, it helped that Schreyer, whose father was in the building business, relishes

the process. “I love the smell of construction—it brings back fond childhood memories,” she says. Born in Germany to parents who were both Holocaust survivors, Schreyer immigrated with them at age five to Southern California, where her father began buying up land at the early-1950s price of a dollar an acre and made a fortune developing it. Later, the family’s success allowed her to pursue her passion for art by supporting museums and amassing a formidable collection.

To showcase parts of that trove in L.A., Schreyer insisted that everything in the house be done to museum standards. Top of the list was lighting, which was overseen by Hiram Banks of the firm Banks|Ramos. Banks devised a medley of recessed bulbs and track lights that are all adjustable yet unobtrusive. In the dining area, for example, he installed LEDs behind a circular fabric panel that’s flush with the ceiling; by day it virtually disappears, but in the evening it casts a soft, flattering glow upon the curators, artists, and fellow collectors who are Schreyer’s frequent guests. “A lot of

people would argue that you should have a chandelier over the dining table,” Hutton remarks. “But not Chara—she’d complain that it would just get in the way of the Richard Artschwager piece!”

While many designers might feel constrained by an edict to keep the walls and fabrics neutral so as not to compete with the art, Hutton says it’s hard to object when you’re crafting settings for such powerful works as Mark Bradford’s *A Thousand Daddies*, a multipanel collage in the family room that incorporates posters for child-custody attorneys. Hutton, who likes to mingle different styles and materials in subtly playful ways, composed a sitting area next to the Bradford with a crisp Piero Lissoni sofa, leather armchairs designed in the ’20s, an angular wool-upholstered bench, and a pair of midcentury Poul Kjærholm chairs with rope seats. “To my eyes, it’s a crazy mix of styles,” Hutton says.

More overtly whimsical is the cozy media room, where Hutton clad the walls in panels made of scrub-brush bristles. The space is equally appealing for screening a Bruce Nauman video work,

say, or watching a Pixar movie during one of the regular visits from Schreyer’s two daughters and young grandsons.

Upstairs, a room the collector calls the art gallery serves as a pure exhibition space, featuring multiple works with political overtones, such as Glenn Ligon’s celebrated neon piece *Double America*. Schreyer’s commitment to talents from L.A.’s own thriving art scene, meanwhile, is reflected in creations like the exuberant mixed-media work by Elliott Hundley that hangs in a nearby hallway and the bright-purple biomorphic Aaron Curry sculpture she commissioned for a terrace. Bradford, one of the city’s most acclaimed artists, attended a dinner at Schreyer’s this summer and found that the art, architecture, and setting make for a compellingly harmonious whole. “It’s amazing how the inside becomes the outside, how the architecture becomes the landscape,” he says. And Bradford had no complaints about the conspicuous placement of *A Thousand Daddies*, a 2008 work he hadn’t seen in years. “That was an exciting surprise,” he says. “It was like seeing an old friend.” □



Clockwise from far left: In the living room, a Lee Bontecou wall relief, a Robert Morris felt piece, and a towering Louise Nevelson sculpture surround a modular Living Divani sofa. Sound-absorbing brush-covered panels serve as a backdrop for a Mark Grotjahn drawing in the media room; the sofa, which is clad in a Pierre Frey fabric, and the side table are both by Flexform. A grid of Sol LeWitt prints presides over a guest room furnished with a recliner by Design Within Reach. The kitchen, which features a Jean-Michel Basquiat drawing, is appointed with Caesarstone countertops, KWC sink fittings, and a Wolf microwave.

“ESSENTIALLY THE HOUSE IS A MUSEUM,” SAYS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER JOE MCRITCHIE. “BUT IT HAD TO HAVE A SOFTNESS THAT ALLOWS PEOPLE TO LIVE IN IT.”



Works by Allen Ruppersberg are mounted above the master suite's Gary Hutton-designed bed, which is upholstered in leather and has a built-in TV lift; the large papier-mâché sculpture is by Vincent Fecteau. **Left, from top:** A Matthew Ritchie painting makes a splash against the master bath's Corian walls; the Caesarstone-top vanity is equipped with Toto sinks and Lefroy Brooks fittings, and the stool was custom designed by Hutton. The space's Boffi tub enjoys natural light and views of the greenery outside.

