



Designer Gary Hutton, art collector Chara Schreyer and architect Timothy Gemmill (opposite, from left) created a pied-à-terre at the Four Seasons Residences in San Francisco for Schreyer and her collection of contemporary art. Hutton used Venini light fixtures to divide the living room and the dining area, where *Nine*, 1985, by Carroll Dunham, and *Etc.*, 1990, by Ed Ruscha, hang near Mies van der Rohe-designed chairs and a custom table that displays a John Baldessari sculpture.



an Francisco Collection

Reconfiguring a pied-à-terre with dramatic city views to serve as a soothing and functional envelope for Chara Schreyer's important array of contemporary artworks

photography by Matthew Millman/text by Laura Mauk



there's never enough wall space," says Chara Schreyer, a San Francisco Museum of Modern Art board of trustees member who, according to *ARTnews* magazine, has been one of the world's top two hundred collectors for a number of years. "I've been collecting all of my adult life," she says. "My parents are Holocaust survivors, so I'm interested in artists who have changed the course of art history with the idea that life can change on a dime."

To accommodate a portion of her ever-growing modern and contemporary art and photography collection, which includes works by Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra, Ed Ruscha and Richard Prince, Schreyer purchased a pied-à-terre at the Four Seasons Residences in San Francisco and once more enlisted designer Gary Hutton—the two have collaborated on a total of six projects for Schreyer, including her main house in the Northern California town of Tiburon (see *Western Interiors and Design*, July/August 2004). To select which unit she would call second home, Schreyer and Hutton rode the construction elevator in a then unfinished structure until they arrived on the twenty-fourth floor, the same level as the dome of the neighboring landmark Humboldt Bank Building (now framed by the unit's living-room window wall). "I loved the contrast of

LEFT AND ABOVE: Hutton complemented armchairs by Jean Prouvé with a leather side table in the living room. A Thomas Struth photograph hangs near Minotti side chairs and a table that holds Rachel Whiteread's *Door Nob*. The Hutton-designed sofa is covered with Glant fabric, and the custom wool rug is by Hokanson.



OPPOSITE, LEFT: A Richard Artschwager sculpture dominates the living room. Julie Mehretu's *Untitled (with a piece of sky)*, 1999, hangs on a wall near Schreyer's office, which also functions as a guest room. OPPOSITE, RIGHT: Schreyer selected *Untitled (Girlfriend)*, 1993, by Richard Prince for the office, where Hutton arranged tables designed by Paul McCobb and a Tacchini sofa and chair. The custom wool-and-silk carpet is from Martin Patrick Evan. THIS PAGE: Artwork fills the hallway that leads to the master bedroom. Rudolf Stingel's *Untitled (White Panel)*, 2000, is across from a group of Richard Prince photographs. Works by Cheyney Thompson hang at the end of the hallway.

the baroque cupola with the contemporary art," Schreyer says.

Shortly thereafter, Schreyer called Timothy Gemmill, the architect who would transform the pied-à-terre. "He imposed a new geometry," explains Hutton. "The other apartments in the building had herringbone cherrywood floors. Chara needed interiors with an organized cleanliness because her rotating art collection was to be the focus." The 2,700-square-foot unit originally consisted of three bedrooms, three baths and a powder room. They were cramped rooms that made for awkward circulation. Gemmill's solution was to create a box-like volume that would house the kitchen and the powder room and float within an expansive open space. His first challenge was to convince Schreyer to sacrifice a bedroom, convert the existing powder room into an open pantry, turn one of the existing full baths into a new powder room and greatly reduce the size of the kitchen. "Once Chara saw the opportunities the new design scheme offered for art hanging and installation, including a gallery, she was on board," he explains.

The designer and the architect worked together to develop a neutral palette that would pique interest but not fight with the artwork. "I used texture without color to create a sense of luxury," says Hutton. He customized a beige-and-black Hokanson wool rug, patterned like a warped grid, to integrate the obtuse angle of the living area's main corner into his design and to help anchor the room. Gemmill selected Eurospan, a commercially used fabric, for the raised ceilings in the living and dining bays. "It provides much-needed sound absorption and is separated from the surrounding plaster wall by quarter-inch

reveals," he says. "It looks like an artist's freshly stretched canvas." Gemmill applied glossy textures, too, including white, seamless epoxy resin flooring and columns lacquered with a high-gloss cream-colored paint.

Hutton made a statement in the living room with reproductions of clean-lined chairs designed by Jean Prouvé but, again, let the art take center stage. Similarly, a modernist Hutton-designed sofa upholstered with Glant fabric and a sleek pair of Minotti side chairs covered with Ultrasuede are high-style yet understated. A Thomas Struth photograph shares the room's spotlight with a sculpture by Richard Artschwager. Acting as a screen, Venini glass light fixtures—affixed to floor-to-ceiling stainless-steel poles—separate the living room from the dining area, where Ed Ruscha's 1990 painting *Etc.* hangs near a custom quartered-ash table and Mies van der Rohe-designed chairs reissued by Knoll.

"Chara doesn't cook much here," Hutton notes. As a result, Gemmill significantly downsized the kitchen, another area that's used mostly to display art. Outlets and appliances are hidden from sight. The powder room, along with the kitchen, occupies Gemmill's floating cube. Wallpaper by artist Robert Gober was the starting point for the conceptual design of this small space. A circular mirror is framed with fiber-optic cables, a sculptural floor-to-ceiling rectangular steel vessel contains rows upon rows of perfectly aligned toilet paper rolls and a glass door turns opaque when its latch is flipped.

In the master bedroom, a sizable Corian windowsill holds a *Puppy* sculpture by Jeff Koons. Jim Hodges's *A diary of flowers (lover)*, 1993, hangs beside the Hutton-designed upholstered adjustable



The French ash of a side table (left) and a credenza (below) in the master bedroom maintains a sophisticated and textured palette. A *diary of flowers (lover)*, 1993, by Jim Hodges (above) and a 1960s Dan Flavin light sculpture (below) hang near the bed. A Jeff Koons *Puppy* sculpture is perched on the Corian windowsill (left).

bed, and a 1960s Dan Flavin light sculpture is installed above a built-in credenza created by Gemmill. Schreyer's husband, who has spent time in Japan, wanted a Japanese-style soaking tub for the master bath. Hutton offset the acrylic and marble of the Ann Sacks tub with one-by-one-inch porcelain tiles. "It's the kind you see in public restrooms and gas stations," he explains. "There's not one piece of cut tile in this entire apartment. The craftsmanship is impeccable." Each element was adjusted by Gemmill and the builders, Wedge Woodworks, so that all of the edges are flush.

"This project was about art," Schreyer says. "Everything else needed to work, but it wasn't about decorating. I wanted the least amount of visual noise." Collaboratively, Hutton and Gemmill achieved exactly that with varying textures, clean lines, minimalist forms and a monochromatic palette. "The only art-specific location that I was asked to incorporate into the design was a wall for the Sol LeWitt," says Gemmill. The wall terminates at the end of the gallery and is framed by half-inch reveals. "I love this LeWitt," he says. "It's so subtle. You might not notice it if you aren't paying attention. When you do see it, you're engaged and in awe." +

ABOVE: For the powder room Hutton and Gemmill conceived a steel vessel that holds rows of toilet paper and playfully evokes a modernist sculpture. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Hutton outfitted the walls and the floor of the master bath with one-by-one-inch porcelain tiles. Gemmill designed the Carrera-marble-topped vanity, which is made of French ash.

DESIGN DETAILS

- Collectors can let artwork be the focus by sticking to a neutral background palette of whites, creams and beiges.
- Avoid ruining walls with hooks. "I customized art-hanging clips that fit into hidden tracks in the tops of panels and doors," says Gemmill.
- Protect artwork with safe light systems. Lighting designer Hiram Banks created extruded-aluminum ceiling boxes that contain recessed track fixtures with MR16 IR bulbs (the heat flows from the back of the lamp instead of the front) and Bausch & Lomb Optivex lenses that cut out most UV light.
- Keep clutter behind closed doors. Gemmill concealed Schreyer's storage needs within structural columns, or what he calls "functional towers," which he also used to display artwork.
- Reinforce the continuity of a loftlike open space. Gemmill used seamless epoxy resin flooring and Eurospan (a commercially used fabric) ceilings, which also absorb sound.

