



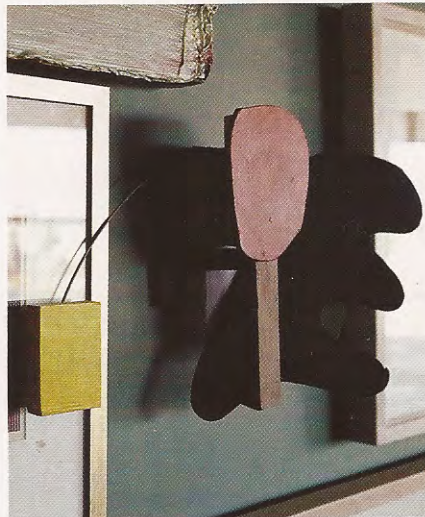
## for art's sake

Portable, changeable, rearrangeable – art on any scale makes a powerful difference to the spatial dynamics.

A Sydney apartment. Behind a Verner Panton 'Pantella' floor lamp (enquires to Louis Poulsen) is *Canopy #1* by Justin Balmain. On the wall above (clockwise from top left) is Steven Harvey's *Coastal Walk 'Apostle'*; Sol Lewitt's *Bands of Equal Width of Color*; Minnie Pwerle's *Awely-Anemangkerr*; Steven Harvey's *Coastal Walk: Lavender Wave*; *Billabong in the Rain* by Elizabeth Cummings; an untitled screenprint by Helicopter and Kate Turner's *Menindee Lakes*. On the table is a Jan King sculpture. Eames chair enquiries to Living Edge. Details, last pages.



## ART IN FOCUS



On the sideboard, ABOVE LEFT, in Benedict and Weinstein's apartment are two glass paintings by WJ Nagomara and W Nanala. Leaning on the wall is *Ladie's Men's Kid's* by Jon Gintzler; beside it is a Malcolm Chesney sculpture, *Prelude #2*. On the wall above (clockwise from bottom left) is an untitled work by Fritz Haeg, Jon Gintzler's *FR31*, Ken Reinhard's *NYXDB cat 8*, *Currumbin Window* by Elizabeth Cummings and an untitled work by Nicole Gurran. To the right of the sideboard are three Gail English works in a frame above Paul Connor's *Island Edge*. TOP RIGHT: *Cow Tree*, *Lavender Sky* sculpture by Dave Hickson. BOTTOM RIGHT: Bronwyn Kemp ceramics.

LIMITED WALL SPACE, open plan living, low ceiling heights – choosing art for an apartment poses some critical questions. Big or little? Less or more? “It depends on the apartment, and the person’s aesthetic,” says Caroline Gibbes of Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney. “Some people buy smaller works and do an interesting arrangement of them on a wall – so it becomes a wall sculpture of its own.”

Sydney collectors Richard Benedict and Richard Weinstein consider art – not in any pejorative sense – as wallpaper. Their inner-city apartment walls are hung from floor to ceiling with artworks. One wall is devoted to abstract landscapes, another to miniature works (“The monitor

phone was so ugly, we surrounded it with artworks of about the same size to disguise it,” says Benedict). Each wall is painted a different colour and the ceiling is about to become the paler lilac tone in a large Gail English painting. “The wall colour seems to bring out the colours in the paintings, and vice versa.”

Passionate about art (they recently curated a show for LA artist Jon Gintzler at Sydney's King Street Gallery on Burton; in January 2005 they bring out American artist Fritz Haeg), the pair have an active relationship with the works. “With each new piece we bring everything down and rehang. When you put works together differently, you see different things in

them – and the space seems to change.”

The collection includes art students' maquettes and functional art – vintage furniture, and ceramics by Bronwyn Kemp, which go in the dishwasher. “We have our morning cereal in a beautiful bowl, and tea in her exquisitely engraved porcelain cups.” The ceramics are often grouped together as an installation.

Others prefer one signature piece. “Certainly one powerful painting can look amazing in a big, light room; it focuses the eye,” says Gibbes. “But it can also work really well in an older-style apartment with antiques. A big work can create a sense of space. Ildiko Kovacs's works, for instance, are enormous, you're enveloped >



## ART IN FOCUS



*Paperform*, ABOVE, by Peter Atkins, a 2004 oil on canvas diptych (204 x 204 cm), on wood panels; enquiries to Sherman Galleries. BELOW RIGHT: *Shipsape Splash*, a copper wire sculpture by Denese Oates; enquiries to Stella Downer Fine Art. Details, last pages.

### art-smart installation

Have a plan of action for manoeuvring large works into place. Measure doors, corridors, lift openings, stairwells; each is a link in the chain from where the work is unloaded to its final position.

**Consider other options:** a crane to lift awkward artworks through a window; having a large painting unstretched before despatch and then re-stretching it in the room; or partially unstretching it so it folds in half for ease of transit.

**Choose a space** to display fragile items, works on paper and delicate textiles that should be kept away from strong light. Two Sydney collectors had a coffee table custom-made with drawers at the sides to hold works on paper. Some are displayed under the glass top; others are brought out for viewing.

**If you haven't** the room to display your whole collection, consider storing some and rotating them from time to time.

**Try before you buy** Gallery spaces can be deceptive; a large painting may fit on your wall but it may overwhelm the room. Many galleries will allow you to take the work for a couple of days to see it in situ before purchasing.

by them. [Kovacs's *Playground* is pictured at Martin Browne Fine Art at The Yellow House, page 115.] Neil Frazer's paintings have the same power; they create strong emotional reactions, which is what you want with art. In terms of visual impact, the large signature work is very strong."

Says Guy Abrahams of Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne, "With a lot of glass [typical in many modern apartments] there's generally limited wall space, which lends itself to a single, large-scale painting, whether it's bold, or very subtle – a Thornton Walker, for example.

Sculpture can look marvellous near windows, particularly sculpture with a transparent quality so you look through it to the view. Lenton Parr's black ribbons of steel are like drawing against the skyline.

Bronwyn Oliver's sculptures are light in form, they don't impose themselves, but nevertheless are a beautiful presence in a room. Placing sculpture outside on a terrace or balcony will reinforce the connection between the exterior and the interior – a bright and colourful Deborah

Halpern work, for example, either sitting below the balustrade or rising up above it. "With high-rise apartments there can be a sense of isolation when there's the distant view and nothing in between. Something in the middle ground reconnects you visually and psychologically with the rest of the world. It's important that big areas of glass are not just a vessel for the view to pour in. You need a reflective, internal focus as well, otherwise there's the 'fishbowl' sense that everything is looking at you." The cocooning areas – bedroom, study, hall, bathroom – lend themselves to more intimate works: small sculptures, found objects, miniatures, watercolours.

Don't let lower ceilings dictate the choice of artwork: horizontal works can accentuate the problem. "They can in fact bring the ceiling down," continues Abrahams. A more vertical work, going close to the ceiling, gives a better illusion of height and space."

As Richard Benedict says: "You can't control the dimensions of your apartment, but you can control the visual space within, with the hanging of art." BETSY BRENNAN

