

# MODERN MASTERPIECES

*Transformer's Victoria Reis on the art of collecting*

**T**ransformer, a Washington based non-profit visual arts organization, launched Collector's View in the spring of 2008 to pursue a better understanding of the artwork people collect, the relationships collectors have with artists, and why people live with certain works of art. This decidedly different series provides an opportunity to intimately view some of the city's best privately-owned contemporary art collections while engaging these visionary supporters in dialogue with artists, critics, and other patrons of the arts. The 2008 Collector's View hosts included: Heather and Tony Podesta, Shigeko and Tim Bork, Jan and Peter Hapstak, and Christine Varney and Tom Graham. This year's series' hosts included: Barbara and Aaron Levine, Farinaz and Dadi Akhavan, Lorie Peters Lauthier, and Paul Yandura and Donald Hitchcock.

These dynamic local collectors aren't just interested in what is "pretty," but in being surrounded with visual expression that will continue to keep them engaged. The 2009 views included works by such masters as Marcel Duchamp, Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, and Andy Warhol; renowned international artists William Kentridge, Tony Cragg, Wolfgang Tillmans, and Anish Kapoor; and local talents Colby Caldwell, Graham Caldwell, and Ian Whitmore. Collections also featured Chinese contemporary artist Gen Aihara, assistant to Hiroshi Sugimoto; emerging talents Benjamin Jurgensen and Trevor Young; and the work of folk art masters Mary T. Smith and Chris Clark.

The consistent message shared by all the committed, sometimes admittedly "obsessed" collectors on how and why works were acquired, is that they collect what speaks to them and continually peaks their curiosity.

*Below: Victoria Reis and Carlotta Hester; Right: Reis and Aaron Levine in front of a work by Chuck Close. (Photos by Santos)*



Of course, not many people can go out and purchase a Duchamp or a Richter, but several of the collectors' works by highly regarded names were purchased when the artists were just starting out. So, what's in vogue to collect right now? My best advice is to follow the lead of these exceptional collectors: Take risks, defy conformity, and keep experimenting.

Washington's contemporary art community is growing, and there are standout non-profit groups and commercial galleries presenting works by top artists. Come to Transformer, of course, but also visit our neighbors and colleagues, including: G Fine Art, Curator's



Office, Hemphill Fine Art, Adamson Gallery, Conner Contemporary, Civilian Art Projects, Honfluer Gallery, Washington Printmakers, Washington Project for the Arts, and DCAC. Visit individual artists' studios, too. And save the date: Transformer's 6th Annual Silent Auction & Benefit Party is taking place November 7th at the Mexican Cultural Institute. **WL**



Anna-Lena Wetzel and David Kamenetsky

Paul Yandura and Donald Hitchcock



"Mona Lisa Rock" by Danielé Donde



Grisella Martinez and Kate Damon



Anne Marchand, Dadi Akhavan, and Mel Hardy

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**TRANSFORMER COLLECTOR'S VIEW**

The Homes of Barbara and Aaron Levine, Lorie Peters Lauthier, Farinaz and Dadi Akhavan, and Paul Yandura and Donald Hitchcock

**PHOTOS BY SANTOS**



Lorie Peters Lauthier



Daren Thomas and Janice Kim



Allison Marvin and Tara Golden



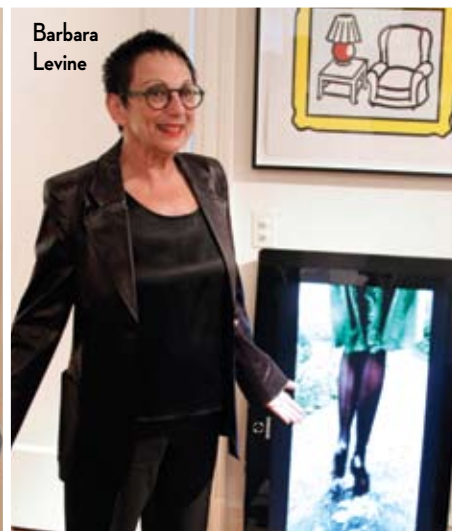
Shigeo Bork, Izette Folger, Farinaz Akhavan, and Janice Kim



Mark Ewert and Steven Sticher



Aaron Levine, Andrea Evers, Donna Evers, Transformer President James Alefantis, and David Brock



Barbara Levine



Mia Hayes, Brent Thomas, Jim Cassell, and Mike Johnson examine works by William Eggleston and Philip Guston