

Art at Home

What makes the perfect collection? For the answer, just ask these noted collectors

MARTY AND JOSY COLLINS

"People collect for different reasons. My family and I like the whole idea of living and working in art and design," says Marty Collins, art collector and president/CEO of Gatehouse Capital, the largest independent developer of W Hotels and condominiums and the force behind Hollywood's posh, new W Hotel and Residences, scheduled to open 2009. "We like having it woven into the fabric of our lives."

As one half of the classic contemporary furniture design company Scott & Cooner, his wife, Josy Collins (formerly Cooner), has a background in design and art and holds an inherent sense of what works where. Together, the two have fused their expertise to assemble a formidable art collection at their home in Texas.

Described by Marty as "large, eclectic and original, centered at its core in form," the Collinses' collection was started by Marty in the 70s when, while traveling abroad, he "began collecting Persian tribal and city carpets, samovars."

"My wife and I live in primitive world," says Marty, commenting on the collection's emphasis on traditional and tribal art from Africa, Asia, and other locales. A primary consideration when the family recently remodeled their lakeside 1930s Texas ranch house was that Marty, Josy, five kids, two dogs and the diverse art collection cohabit harmoniously in the resulting abode. "The things that we're drawn to are more archetypal and occur in all different places," Marty enthusiastically asserts, referring to





the Jungian belief that in form “there are certain primal archetypes that transcend all cultures—like the circle—and, if you look at a Modigliani face or Picasso face, and then look at certain African pieces you can see where that mask form came from.”

“Form attracts—we like things that have significance that transcend a particular genre of art,” Josy agrees. “We’re attracted by beauty and fascinated with different cultures of the world.” Some unusual pieces featured in the collection include: special textiles from Kazakhstan and Persia; city or tribal carpets; dowry pieces; wooden slit gongs from New Hebrides; Hung-dynasty horses; shields from tribes of the south highlands of New Guinea (tribes that remained undiscovered by the outside world until the 1930s); and a rare African currency collection.

Add to this collection Josy’s knack for modern, high-end furniture and state-of-the-art design (Poliform kitchens, for example), and a unique visual vernacular evolves. Both Marty and Josy love the effect created by the juxtaposition of the primitive and the modern. A significant piece of furniture like a Gehry chair; when placed next to a thousand-year-old table or a beautiful old amphora, creates a beauty of contrast. “We’re modernists,” says Marty. “There’s nothing more interesting than juxtaposing contextually.” —Victoria Charters

(Opposite): Marty and Josy Collins at home. Pictured with them, from left to right: an early 20th-century South African Zulu hat from Joel Cooner Gallery; an early 20th-century “tam-tam” wood drum from New Hebrides, also from Joel Cooner Gallery; a contemporary piece by artist Hiroyuki Shindo from the artist’s *Shindigo Square* series, 1992, from Japoneseque gallery; a mid-20th-century Mendi shield from New Guinea from Joel Cooner Gallery; a 1970s-era cardboard chair by architect Frank Gehry; Photography by Nancy Newberry.

(Above): An assortment of bronze and copper African currencies. (Left): Pictured, back to front: Appliqué Suzanni from Uzbekistan, Central Asia dating from the early 19th century from Casey Waller with Caravanserai Gallery; excavated bronze currency from the Yoruba tribe, Nigeria, dating from the early 18th century. From Charles Davis Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana. Currency is seated on R1920 design made of 35,000-year-old Kauri wood that had been submerged in a swamp in New Zealand; from Scott + Cooner, Inc. Photography by Nancy Newberry.