

# Andy Spade, the Eclectic

Thank God for the Yale connection BY CAROL KINO



**JOHN BALDESSARI**  
Above, the work *Trophy: Red, Yellow, Blue* (2000). At right, the collector Andy Spade.



**I**f one word could describe the art collection of Andy Spade—co-founder and creative director of Kate Spade—it would be “eclectic.” Magazine articles have celebrated his collection’s brand-name, blue-chip side, which includes a 2001 oil slick drawing by Richard Serra and the 1991 lithograph of Gerhard Richter’s luminous *Betty* portrait. But Spade is also a devoted fan of emerging and lesser-known work, much of it with a surprisingly funky, down-and-dirty feeling. “This is what I love about him,” said the art consultant Kim Heirston, who has worked with Spade since 1995. “He’s definitely not trying to create a cookie-cutter *Who’s Who* for his collection.”

Art has been part of Spade’s life since 1986, when he moved to New York with his girlfriend, Kate, who is now his wife and business partner. He was working as a copywriter at TBWA/Chiat/Day when a friend at Yale suggested he come to New Haven to look at the art school studios. That was where Spade struck up friendships with MFA students, including the painter Lowell Boyers—a close friend today—and Matthew Barney, whom he met “in the days when he was playing football and was a J. Crew model.” His first art purchase was Boyers’s *Swing King* from 1988, a painting of a monarch sitting in a swing.

The Yale crowd introduced him to downtown New York artists and dealers, and Spade began collecting the early drawings of Donald Baechler and the paintings and drawings of Robert Hawkins and the critic Rene Ricard. But his first really substantial work was *Party Santa*, a William Eggleston photograph from the 1960s, which Kate gave him for his 30th birthday. (It now hangs in his office.)

In 1995—after the couple had married and their handbag company was on its way—Spade began collecting seriously. (He hired Heirston to help him beef up his art historical holdings.)

*‘I’m perceived as a collector, which is a byproduct of following the things you love.’*

Much of the work he owns today is representational, including a 1996 John Currin drawing of a model, a Karen Kilimnik watercolor landscape and, more recently, the delicate ink-and-water-color drawings of Ernesto Caivano, who was born in Madrid. But he also has abstract work, including a 2005 dark-green, foil-relief piece by the ultrahot Berlin-based neo-Modernist Anselm Reyle, and a 2004 work by Koen van den Broek, a young Belgian artist who shows with White Cube. (Van den Broek makes minimalist renderings of architectural and landscape details.)

Spade feels a deep connection with conceptual work “just because I grew up in advertising,” he said. He has a 1965 neon word piece by Joseph Kosuth and three photo-based works by John Baldessari, one of which, Heirston told him, recalled the aesthetic of Jack Spade, the men’s accessory company he started in 1999. Called *Trophy: Red, Yellow, Blue* (2000), it pictures a suited man dangling a blue fish from a string, his face concealed by a large yellow dot. Another Baldessari is now in the SoHo branch of Jack Spade, along with a 1995 Chris Burden sculpture made from toy guns called *A Young American’s Arsenal*.

His most recent major purchase was Alex Katz’s *Ada in Woods*, a 1960 portrait of the artist’s wife with a brunette bob, looking strikingly like Kate Spade. He has also become a fan of the mixed-media collages of Dash Snow, whose work is in the Saatchi Collection’s *USA Today* show at the Royal Academy in London. “The big pieces are few and far between,” Spade said.

He collects on a more modest level on his own. Through an artist friend, he became acquainted with the Pierogi gallery in Williamsburg, and spends time mulling over the paintings and drawings in the gallery’s famous flat files. “I’m perceived as a collector,” he said, “which is a byproduct of following the things you love.” ■

# Jim Dorment, in Context

Following in his father's footsteps BY CAROL KINO

**F**or Jim Dorment, buying art has always been a family activity. His father is a longtime collector who focused on the emerging artists of the day, starting with Julian Schnabel and Jean-Michel Basquiat in the early 1980s and moving on to John Currin and Elizabeth Peyton in the early 1990s. Throughout his childhood in New Jersey, Dorment said, "When other kids were playing in suburban parks, my brothers and sisters and I would get put in the car and dragged around SoHo."

Now 33, Dorment never particularly aspired to follow in his father's footsteps. But when he became a research analyst at a leading New York wealth management firm and moved to Manhattan about six years ago, he began going with his father to galleries in Chelsea.

The first piece he bought was a funky, loosely painted portrait by Katherine Bernhardt. The next was a 2001-2002 C-print from his father's collection—one of Gregory Crewdson's *Twilight* series that pictures a sulky-looking family sitting around the kitchen table as the mother stands naked and haggard by the doorway. "To this day," Dorment said, "I never tire of looking at it."

For the most part, though, Dorment is focused on emerging artists, just like his father. So far, it has meant mostly figurative work. He owns two paintings by Justin Faunce—a labor-intensive, dazzlingly detailed collage piece and a portrait of Michael Jackson as Che Guevara. "I've come of age during the era of figurative painting," Dorment said, "and my collection reflects that."

But lately he has begun buying abstract works, including Daniel Hesidence's swirl

paintings and an intricate geometric painting by Zak Smith, known for his candy-colored portraits. He is also becoming interested in digital video. His epiphany came when he discovered the low-tech videos of Nathalie Djurberg, which present dark, surreal scenarios enacted by Claymation figures. When he saw her work at the Zach Feuer Gallery last spring, "I remember looking at those," he said, "and by every benchmark it was quite literally a moving painting, a motion picture." Since then he has been drawn to others who push the medium's boundaries, like Michael Bell-Smith, who creates paintinglike digital loops, often using material borrowed from iconic video games and Web sites.

His favorite Chelsea haunts include Bellwether, Leo Koenig, Team Gallery, the Zach Feuer Gallery and some of the younger spaces clustered on 27th Street, like John Connelly Presents, Derek Eller Gallery and Clementine Gallery. He regularly attends Art Basel Miami Beach, but he does not necessarily buy there. "I find it a very difficult venue in which to evaluate art," he said. Dorment views himself as a patron, buying early work and supporting the artist through subsequent shows. Though he would like to imagine that his collection will remain intact—a time capsule of his interests—he believes he will probably sell some work if the collection evolves to where a particular piece no longer makes sense.

He is already purchasing work in the context of what he owns. But his collection for now remains a work in progress. "There's more to be gained out of the process, the dialogue and the involvement," Dorment said, "than there is just acquiring works, throwing them up on the wall and putting them in a trophy case." ■

*A Gregory Crewdson work portrays a sulky-looking family and a naked mother. 'To this day,' he said, 'I never tire of looking at it.'*



**FOCUSED ON EMERGING ARTISTS**  
Jim Dorment with some of his collection

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH

# John Morrissey, in Search of Post-Feminist Girlie Art

He wants to say, 'Yes. I am a genius.' BY CAROL KINO

**A**sk John Morrissey why he collects, and he's likely to talk about cultural importance. "I want to have historically significant paintings on my walls," he said. "I want to be able to say, 'Yes. I am a genius. This is my trophy.'" His collection is sexy, substantial and especially rich in the work of young women—including Hilary Harkness's all-girl Boschian fantasies; Su-en Wong's nude self-portraits and Carol Bove's *Playboy* drawings.

Now 38, Morrissey began his romance with art while in law school at Georgetown University, where he developed a habit of flipping through art magazines in the library during study breaks. "What's easier on the eyes than to look at images after reading boring and tedious cases?" he asked. By the time he passed the bar, he owned two Keith Haring prints and was itching to buy more, and maybe some Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Luckily, his first job took him to Florida, where he became friends with Jason Rubell, who had just opened a gallery on Lincoln Road. "I told him about my interest in Haring and Basquiat," Morrissey said. "His response was, 'You're not going to be able to make an impact.'" Rubell advised him to go for young and emerging artists instead, and Morrissey has never looked back.

His first major purchases were four paintings by Karin Davies and a big chalkboard piece by Gary Simmons, all from Rubell's gallery. Then he moved on to buying in New York, just as the art market was emerging from the early 1990s slump. His early purchases make a savvy snapshot of the era: three Karen Kilimnik drawings, three Jack Pierson word pieces, two paintings each by Sue Williams and Brad Kalhammer, and one each from Cecily Brown and Inka Essenhigh.

These days, Morrissey likes to discover artists while they are still in school. He invested in Ted Mineo's food drawings and Elif Uras's fantasy scenes just after the artists had emerged from MFA programs, at Yale and Columbia respectively. He began snapping up Natalie Frank's allegorical nudes while she was still at Columbia.

He's a fan of what he calls Post-Feminist Girlie Art—artists like Harkness, Wong and Frank, who are "reveling in a woman's physicality from a woman's perspective," he said. He's dubbed another trend he sees as Urban Chic—a concept that covers Kehinde Wiley's



**SLEEPING BEAUTIES**  
John Morrissey wants something 'historically significant' on his walls in Palm Beach.

*'There's no way I call someone on the phone and say, 'What should I buy next?'*

baroque hip-hop portraits, and Mickalene Thomas's sequin-and-rhinestone-studded paintings, which explore African-American female identity.

Morrissey prides himself on doing his own legwork. "There's no way I call someone on the phone and say, 'What should I buy next?'" he said. He discovered Frank by reading about her on Artnet and in *The New York Times*, then checked her out exhaustively with dealer and artist friends, as well as a *Wall Street Journal* reporter who called to inquire about his Mineos. Four paintings later, he is now running his new interests past Frank. "Who knows the art better than the artists themselves?" he said.

Most of his purchases have appreciated wildly; he bought a Cecily Brown painting from her second show in 1998 at Jeffrey Deitch for \$11,000. "One just sold for \$968,000 from the same show and the same size,"

he said proudly. "I'm the envy of every broker around here. Why switch to stocks and bonds with that kind of appreciation?"

The talk is that, some years back, Morrissey's Cecily Brown painting paid for his Trump Plaza condo, and that he routinely puts up work for auction. But he would rather not discuss the idea of selling art. "My goal in life is not to own a million pieces of artwork—one day I'd like to own maybe 10 paintings by 10 of the most substantial painters during my life."

Meanwhile, he rotates his holdings in and out of storage. For the most part, his guy artists, like the California-based talents Todd Hebert and Ben Peterson, are kept in his Clematis Street office in West Palm Beach. He keeps the Post-Feminist Girlie work at his home four blocks away. In his bedroom hangs his current *pièce de résistance*: five photographs of naked women from the ex-Yalie Katy Grannan's *Poughkeepsie Journal* series. It's nice, Morrissey said, to "have these not entirely unattractive half-clothed women eyeing you from every corner of the room as you're falling asleep." ■

PHOTO BY JESSICA KLEWICK

LOOKING FOR MR. GOOD ART

Stefan Levine in front of *Mandala of the B-bodhisattva* by Sanford Biggers, a break-dance floor he puts on his wall in Tequesta, Florida.



PHOTO BY JESSICA KLEWICKI

*‘Some of the best and most important learning I did in my school years was not always on campus,’ he said.*

# Stefan Levine, Gas Man

From Philly to Tequesta BY CAROL KINO

**T**hough Stefan Levine grew up visiting museums in Philadelphia, he never considered buying art until just after he graduated from college in the mid-1980s. He was visiting New York and happened into the Knoedler Gallery on East 70th Street. “They had the Rauschenberg bicycles in the front room and Diebenkorn and Stella in the back room,” Levine said. “I suddenly knew if I had \$175,000 I’d want to own one of these bikes.” The operant words were “if I had...”

In 1999 he had a chance to move to Chelsea just as the gallery scene was taking off—as was his telecom business development career. “At lunch, I took walks and went to look at art,” he said. Through his sister, he had already met and become friends with the artist Sean Mellyn, known for his surreal, hyperrealist portraits of children. Levine bought a small etching from him very early on, when Mellyn was just out of art school.

He set about meeting more artists. One of his first substantial purchases was a 1995-96 photograph from Warren Neidich’s *Camp O.J.*, part of the artist’s *Beyond the Vanishing Point* project. “He recreated Jack Kerouac’s trek across America and ended up in Los Angeles at the time of the O. J. Simpson trial,” Levine said. “It’s photographed like a rock concert, with a fisheye lens.” He was drawn by the historical perspective. “Warren really captured that in the photographs,” he said.

Since then, Levine, now 42, has collected plenty of paintings and works on paper, including the dreamlike gouache portraits of the British artist Neal Tait; a painting of a snowman by Todd Norsten, and drawings by Kojo Griffin, Marcel Dzama and the bipolar indie musician Daniel Johnston.

Levine also has a strong interest in sculpture. One of his favorites is Hope Atherton’s 2003 *Pegasus*—the head of a winged horse made from goose wings, burlap, mud and a bridle. When he wasn’t in a position to buy a Rob Fischer junkyard installation, he bought a 2004 barrel drawing by the artist instead. “It was a way that I can participate and support someone I know,” Levine said.

In 2004, he gave up his desk job and bought a gas station in Tequesta, on the coast north of Palm Beach. “I was ready to make a change,” he said. He used to attend Art Basel Miami Beach every year, from the first, but now it’s even easier. He doesn’t get to Chelsea as often, but that has not stopped him from buying.

One recent acquisition is the 2000 *Mandala of the B-bodhisattva* by Sanford Biggers. The break-dance floor is made from colored linoleum tiles and arranged in the shape of a mandala was meant to sit on the ground, but he displays it on the walls of his apartment in Tequesta. He has also bought two paintings by Philip Estlund, the young Florida-based artist he hired to help him install the Biggers piece. “In the course of spending a couple of hours with him,” Levine said, “I knew I would be interested in seeing his work.” Luckily, the artist was then in a group show at Gavlak Projects in West Palm Beach. “He’s doing some really smart, consistent work,” Levine said. “I wanted to buy it before there was a waiting list.”

Levine is in the process of financing a scholarship at his alma mater, Penn State, to help art and curatorial students travel to see exhibitions. “Some of the best and most important learning I did in my school years was not always on campus,” he said. “You never know when an experience is really going to turn a student’s life around.” ■

# Veronica Webb, Art Smart

Keeping ahead of the Temple of Dendur BY CAROL KINO

**T**he life of Veronica Webb, the former supermodel, is entwined with art. As a child, she would spend afternoons gazing at the Henry Moores and the Rosenquists at the Detroit Institute of Arts. When she moved to New York in 1983 to study fashion at Parsons (she dropped out after a semester to become one of the great models of the era), art was really in the air. “Traffic stopped for Andy Warhol,” she said. “The seas parted at Mr. Chow’s for Basquiat. Every girl at Area wanted to dance with Clemente.”

Webb, now 41, visited dance clubs with Keith Haring and attended the same dinner parties as Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat. In 1993, she failed in her first attempt to buy something at auction, a Picasso drawing called *Le Meurtre*, even with her sometime boyfriend, the art dealer Larry Gagosian, helping her. “I was outbid by someone bidding on the phone, who tripled what I wanted to spend,” she said.

Nonetheless, by the time she met her husband, George Robb, in 1996, she had bought drawings by Haring and Basquiat. Webb and Robb met through a mutual friend, the artist Victor Matthews. The first work they purchased together was Francesco Clemente’s 2000 oil painting *Prophesy*. It now hangs in the living room of their Key West house. The year they bought it, the house burned to the ground, taking Webb’s couture collection and Hercules, her longhaired dachshund, with it. The painting survived unscathed.

Robb, a former Wall Street investor turned underwater archaeologist, has more abstract and intellectual tastes, which has helped her appreciate artists like Cy Twombly. “I always loved Twombly,” she said. “But I never really had an understanding of him until my husband told me how he looks at it, that to him it looks like his thought pattern on a piece of paper.”

They travel widely and attend Art Basel Miami Beach. Their recent purchases include photographs that evoke water, like Nan Goldin’s turquoise *Aqua Sea, Mykonos, Greece* (1995) and the abstracted *Freischwimmer #47* (2004) by Wolfgang Tillmans.

For his birthday last year, Webb bought her husband a mesmerizing stone tablet piece, *Migrash Harusim* (2004) by the Israeli artist Michal Rovner. Housed in a glass vitrine, the stone appears to be wriggling with hieroglyphs that, on closer inspection, turn out to be video projections of people in motion. “He’s spent a lot of time in Israel and the Holy Land,” she said of her husband.

As well as two children from Robb’s first marriage, the couple has a pair of young



**BUYING FOR THE AGES, OR AT LEAST HER CHILDREN'S AGES**

Veronica Webb, above, at home in New York in front of *Prophesy*, an oil painting by Francesco Clemente.

*‘Traffic stopped for Warhol. The seas parted at Mr. Chow’s for Basquiat. Every girl wanted to dance with Clemente.’*

daughters. Each was given a Jeff Koons balloon dog at birth by Webb’s good friend, the art consultant Kim Heirston. For now, the works are housed in a glass vitrine, just in case, Webb said, the girls “start throwing My Little Ponies around the room.”

Last spring, she took her daughters, 2 and 4, to PaceWildenstein in Chelsea and saw a work by Alex Katz. On the way home, the girls picked out *Dog at*

*Duck Trap*, a 1975-76 Katz lithograph, at a West Village poster shop.

“I always let them pick a poster, as a way for them to start figuring out what they like,” Webb said.

Even the couple’s major purchases are made with their children in mind. The parents try to buy, Webb said, “what they’ll want to have in their house once we go to the big Temple of Dendur in the sky.”



PHOTO BY JESSE HARRIS

**PREGNANT PAUSE**

Damien Hirst's 35-foot-high bronze *Virgin Mother* (2005) welcomes visitors to the plaza outside of Lever House in New York City.

# Buying Art For Art's Sake

In the 1980s, corporations invested in blue-chip art; today they are doing something riskier, supporting contemporary artists **BY CAROL KINO**

**D**uring the last art-market boom, in the 1980s, businesses that wanted in on the action tended to build corporate collections. Companies like Alcoa and IBM were buying up Picassos and Frida Kahlos, the better to decorate their headquarters. The 1990s were marked by the rapid dispersal of many of those collections as the art market slumped.

The hopping art market these days has big business moving to a different beat. Even when there's a corporate collection involved, companies seem to be putting their money into commissions, collaborations and large-scale public projects. And the emphasis, just as with the art market itself, is on contemporary—usually a far riskier enterprise than collecting blue-chip Impressionism.

That is certainly true of the corporations behind Art Basel. Since UBS became a single brand in 2003, its collection has been focused on contemporary work. And then there's BMW, which revved up its occasional art program last year by commissioning Olafur Eliasson to create its 16th Art Car (Alexander Calder produced the first in 1975).

Often, when a company hitches its star to art, it means someone at the top is an aficionado. Take the real estate tycoon Aby Rosen, the president of RFR Holding LLC in New York. He is a leading contemporary collector and the motivating force behind the celebrated installations at Lever House on Park Avenue—a modernist gem by Gordon Bunshaft, one of many in Rosen's portfolio. (RFR also owns Mies van de Rohe's Seagram Building.)

Since December 2003, Lever House has commissioned four artists a year—including Jeff Koons and Jorge Pardo—to create site-specific works for the building lobby. Though the eventual aim is to build a collection that can be sent on tour, Rosen said his overriding desire is to make art publicly available. His initial impetus, he said, was the 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center.

"We were all a little bit dreary in those days and the idea was to use the art to pull you away from what we have experienced," he said. "Art is a healer."

After mounting a few group shows in other RFR properties, Rosen eventually held several loan shows at Lever House. The commissions program, run by the curator Richard Marshall, began with a neon sculpture by Keith Sonnier. More recently, visitors to Lever House could view a geometric abstraction painted on the ceiling by Sarah Morris. Damien Hirst's *Virgin Mother*, a 35-foot-



**GROUP EFFORT**

Aby Rosen and David Edelstein, partners on the W South Beach, seen here with Sam Keller, center.



**NOT ASKING 'IS IT BLUE CHIP?' ASKING 'IS IT FUN?'**

Folkert de Jong, who carves giant soldiers out of styrofoam, is represented by Peres Project in Booth N50 in the convention center. His piece *In God We Trust* opens on December 12 in Lever House.



**JURGEN TELLER FOR DORNBRACHT**

The bathroom fixtures company hired Teller for its first *Statements* in 1995. Not all showrooms were pleased.

*The hopping art market these days has big business moving to a different beat. And the emphasis is on contemporary.*

high painted bronze sculpture of a pregnant anatomical toy, stands on the plaza outside.

On Dec. 12, Lever House opens *In God We Trust*, an installation by the Belgian artist Folkert de Jong, which will fill the lobby with huge soldiers carved from Styrofoam. (A similar de Jong project will be on view during Art Basel; information is available at the Peres Projects booth.) "You are doing it for yourself, because you love the art," Mr. Rosen explained. "And you are doing it to give back."

Recently, RFR has also been involved with another interesting contemporary art project—the annual W South Beach Commission, which has sponsored Art Positions since last year. This year, as well, a panel of judges (including the curators Tom Eccles and Lisa Phillips) will award a prize to one artist in the Containers—a commission of up to \$75,000 to create an installation for the W South Beach Hotel. Other panel members include the hotel developers—Rosen and David Edelstein of Tristar Properties—as well as Ross Klein, president of W Hotels Worldwide.

"We really try to think of the properties as cultural centers and spaces," Klein said. Most W Hotels hold occasional exhibitions, which often show work by fashion photographers and emerging artists. The reaction from guests has always been positive. "We get ongoing letters and e-mails about it," Klein said.

Last year, the W South Beach Commission prize went to a sculptural installation by the Mexican artist Daniel Guzmán that required viewers to move through a dark labyrinth to see the work. Guzmán is designing a similar

work for the hotel gardens; his drawings will be on view at the W hospitality booth and this year's winner will be announced on December 9 at Collins Park.

Sometimes, a company's involvement with art arises organically, as with the private aviation company NetJets, a longtime Art Basel sponsor. As Richard Santulli, chairman and CEO, put it, "If you had to pick any kind of event that most mirrors the kind of customers we have, it's really art."

In 2002, the first year of Art Basel Miami Beach, NetJets decided to take a small sponsorship as an experiment. To their surprise, "we saw so many of our owners there," said Sandra Gibson, the company's vice president of events. One of the people she saw there was Mark Booth, chairman and CEO of NetJets Europe and a collector himself. The next year, the company took on a larger sponsorship role. Currently, NetJets supports both Art Basel fairs, Maastricht and Frieze, as well as museum events throughout the year. NetJets is also host to the Art Basel Miami Beach annual VIP cocktail party; this year's event, held on December 5, honors the artist Richard Prince. "It's a great opportunity for our owners to network with each other and to get to know our company," Gibson said.

For the retail industry, becoming involved with art is a time-honored way to attract new clients. In January, Louis Vuitton opened a contemporary art gallery on the top floor of its new Paris flagship store, which also includes permanent installations by James Turrell, Olafur Eliasson and others. In September, Macy's Herald Square flagship store used its Broadway windows—some of the most valuable real estate in retail—to showcase contemporary artworks,



**ANDREAS DORNBRACHT**

His luxury fixtures company commissions projects related to "bathroom culture" and passionately supports art.

including Matthew Weinstein's video of a goldfish singing torch songs and a thread-and-steel sculpture by Brigitte Nahon.

The project, curated by the private dealer Gabrielle Bryers, was the brainchild of Nicole Fischelis, the store's fashion director and a contemporary art lover. "Macy's is a store that works on giving back," she said, "and I

PHOTO (OF ANDREAS DORNBRACHT) BY ROBERT FISCHER

# GOING ALL OUT

*Companies seem to be putting their money into commissions, collaborations and large-scale public projects.*



**SOME COMPANIES ARE PATRONS OF THE ARTS**  
César Manrique's 1990 art car for BMW

thought it was a natural for us to support the artist community by showing them in the window." While the work was up, she noted, it was seen by some half a million people—and Fischelis intends to make shows a regular event. It turns out it was important for Macy's, too. "We need to differentiate ourselves," she said.

Coach has also collaborated with artists, including Laurie Simmons, Marilyn Minter and Kenneth Noland, to make one-of-a-kind and limited-edition bags. The most recent creation, a canvas tote silk-screened with a Kiki Smith drawing of butterflies, birds and stars, is being sold at the Whitney Museum in conjunction with Smith's retrospective.

Though Coach also sponsors gallery and museum shows, Reed Krakoff, president and executive creative director, said his interest is not publicity. "I find a lot of inspiration in the art world," he said. "What it does for me is it just keeps my eyes fresh; it keeps me moving in terms of what looks right, what looks new. It's the fuel that keeps me excited about design."

A similar spirit motivates the accessories company Kate Spade, which has hired artists to make window installations in its flagship SoHo store, and contemporary photographers, like Larry Sultan and Jessica Craig-Martin, for its ad campaigns. "We're a creatively driven company," said Julia Leach, Spade's creative director for advertising, "so it makes sense to give texture to the company through people who inspire us."

Recently, the company has also collaborated with the Wolfsonian-FIU to design two events celebrating Art Basel: one heralded the 2004 opening of Richard Tuttle's "Beauty-in-Advertising" project, and the other will inaugurate this year's Lawrence Weiner text installation.

But among design companies, top marks for the innovative use of contemporary art must go to Dornbracht



**WINDOW SHOPPING**  
Matthew Weinstein's *Art Under Glass* display for Macy's in New York.



**STRONG SUPPORT**  
Reed and Delphine Krakoff (he's the design director of Coach) at the Whitney American Art Awards

GmbH, a leading German luxury plumbing fixtures manufacturer. Since 1996, the family-run firm has commissioned artists to make projects related to "the theme of bathroom culture," as their company handouts put it. Managing director Andreas Dornbracht, explained that the company's art program helps "figure out in which direction our brand should develop." In other words, it's not a public relations effort, but an R&D project.

"Artists have a very strong feeling about trends within society," he said. "They are maybe the antennae for the Zeitgeist."

So far, the artists—Rosemarie Trockel and Marc Quinn among them—have been given an unrestricted brief and the company has not shied away from controversy. They unveiled the first project, which included Jürgen Teller's photographs of naked people in bathtubs, at a plumbing trade show, and photographs of their commissions are now included in Dornbracht's fixtures catalog.

Dornbracht says that the company's first product inspired by the art program will be unveiled this spring. "Most companies support art for public relations or a sense of responsibility," Andreas Dornbracht said. "I think we are one of the rare companies who see this art program as strategic for developing the evolution of the company." ■



**IT'S IN THE BAG**  
Coach has collaborated with several artists on a series of limited-edition bags, including this python clutch by Marilyn Minter.