

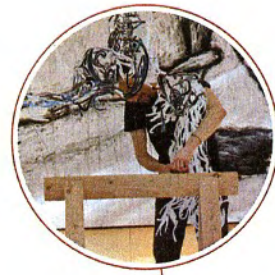
The painstaking process of installing E. V. Day's 2002 *Winged Victory* in Robert and Jereann Chaney's Houston bedroom involved transferring delicate filaments from a numbered wooden disk to a hanging oval attached to the ceiling. A mirrored base, opposite, top right, rests at the bottom.



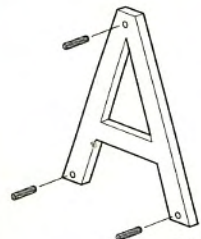
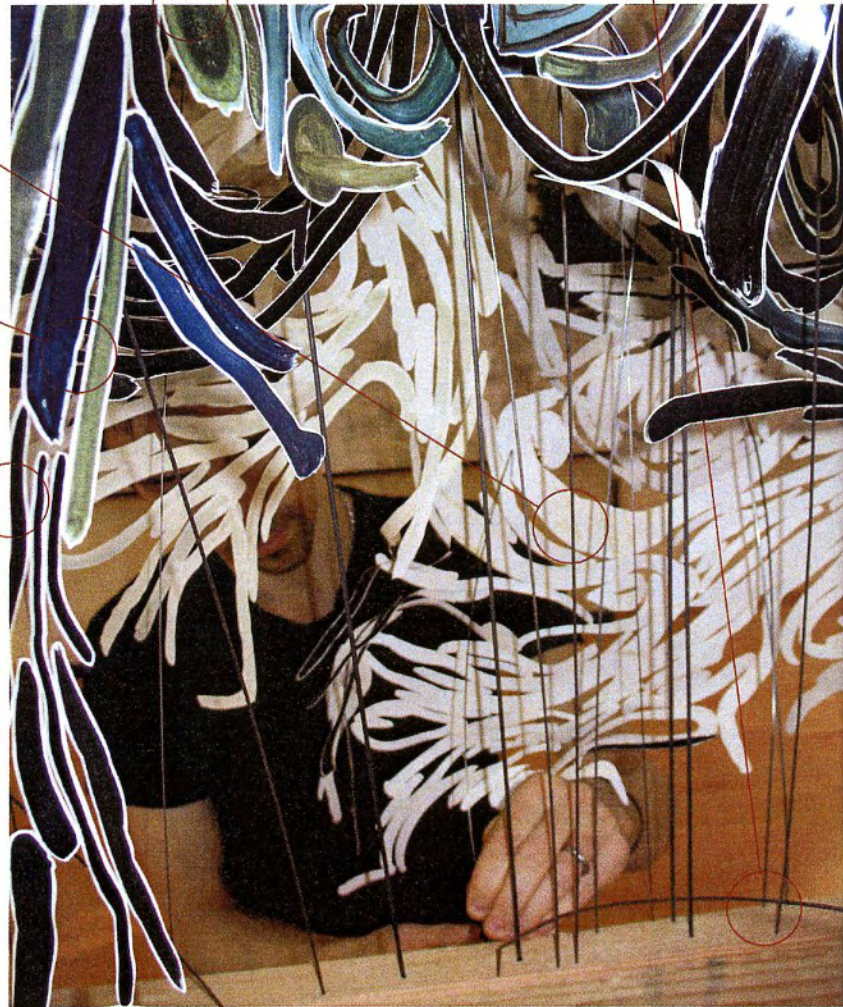


COLLECTORS ARE RAISING THE BAR WITH ARTWORKS THAT ARE ESPECIALLY CUMBERSOME, FRAGILE OR DIFFICULT TO ASSEMBLE. BUT WITH THE AESTHETIC PLEASURE COMES THE PAIN OF INSTALLING AND MAINTAINING THEM. HERE'S HOW SOME AFICIONADOS ARE COPING.
 BY EVE KAHN





When the artist Mark Fox installed *Black Sawhorseman* in the Bay Area home of Harry and Mary Margaret Anderson this year, the couple's collection manager documented every step. After unpacking the sculpture's flat paper sections, top left, Fox attached the cutouts to a sawhorse with steel wires.

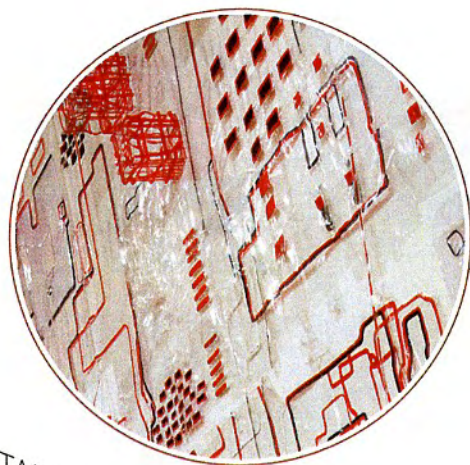


Artists can often be found wandering around Robert Chaney's 12,000-square-foot home in Houston, tapping the walls to test their strength and clambering up ladders to string up gauzy materials. Chaney, a venture capitalist, has commissioned half a dozen sculpture installations since he and his wife, Jereann, moved in three years ago. They own some 500 examples of post-1990 art, most of them relatively low maintenance: paintings by Lisa Sanditz and Corinne Wasmuht, photos by Gregory Crewdson and Nan Goldin. "But if you want to be a major player in contemporary art and build a world-class cutting-edge collection," Robert says, "you have to buy installation art."

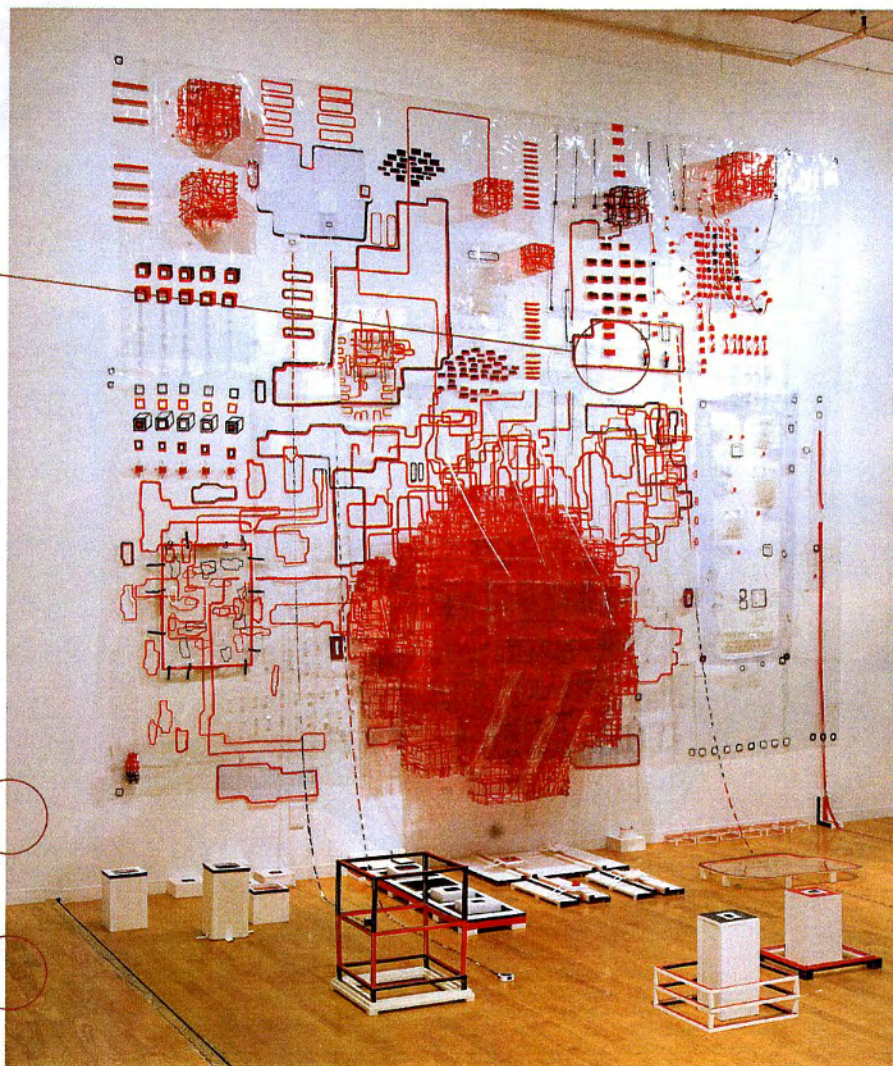
So he and Jereann fly in artists, usually from New York, to fill rooms with white walls up to 24 feet tall. E. V. Day has strung monofilaments across the living-room ceiling and a master-bedroom corner, as supports for her ghostly resin-coated fragments of women's clothing. In the living room, Diana Cooper

fastened innumerable bits of acetate, vinyl and foam core to the floor and a wall to create *Hidden Tracks Sabotage the Random*. Andrea Cohen stacked branches and Styrofoam into a refrigerator-size assemblage, *After Snow Landscape*, near Tara Conley's 24-foot-long fabric tendrils, titled *All the God I Can Get*.

Not only are these works costly and difficult to bring in and hang, but they also require vigilant supervision once installed. The Chaney's change their ventilation-system filters monthly to minimize the dust that settles in hard-to-reach crannies and have taught their daughter Holland, age 13, and her friends to keep clear of fragile surfaces. Even the family dachshund, Sam, has been art-trained: He was suitably scolded for chewing on some clear-acetate cubes scattered at the foot of Cooper's piece. (The artist graciously supplied replace-



"CERTAINLY THEY'RE A CHALLENGE FROM THE INSTALLATION POINT OF VIEW BUT THE FRAGILITY IS PART OF THE APPEAL."



Diana Cooper's *Hidden Tracks Sabotage the Random* has journeyed from the Chaney's Houston house (bottom left, with the artist in 2004) to the premises of Houston Installation outfit TYart (bottom center) and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Cleveland (right). The 2001-02 work incorporates such materials as red tape, Velcro, acetate, paper, vinyl and foam core.

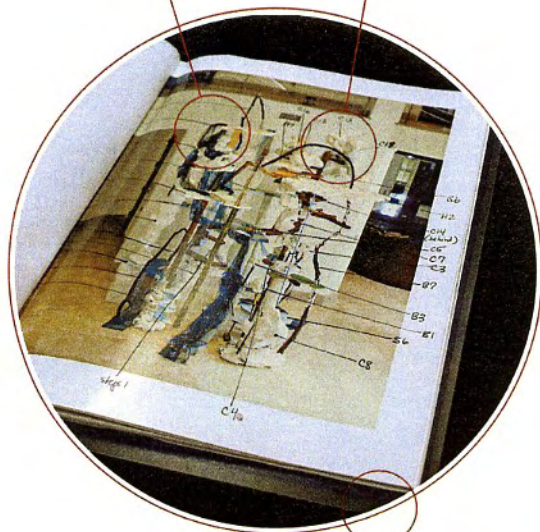
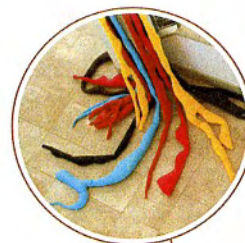
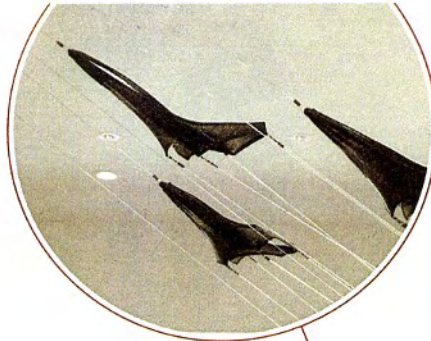
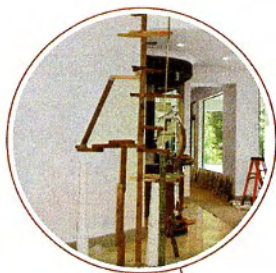
ment parts, thus insuring the sculpture's integrity.)

The Chaney's are part of a small but growing group of collectors who favor what could be called "commitment art": works that are intimidatingly huge or delicate, especially heavy or treacherous to live with. "There's a very aggressive and passionate pool of collectors who embrace the spectacular effects of ambitious, demanding installations—the ones requiring vast amounts of preparation, rigging and upkeep," says Robert Manley, the head of Christie's postwar and contemporary art department in New York.

Commitment art, frankly, indicates status: It shows that the owner can afford the shipping and maintenance, not to mention the space—and the

means to customize the space—needed to accommodate art with diva demands. Of course, that's been true for centuries. Renaissance aristocrats imported ivory and ostrich shells at great expense for their *Wunderkammern*, the czars inlaid amber on palace walls and American moguls like William Randolph Hearst and Armand Hammer had entire wings of European buildings dismantled, carried off and reassembled under daunting conditions. Today thorny logistics of transport and mounting can sometimes push total costs into eight figures, especially for contemporary art.

At Sotheby's New York last November, Larry Gagosian, reportedly on behalf of the Ukrainian oligarch Victor Pinchuk, paid \$23.6 million for Jeff Koons's 2006 *Hanging Heart (Magenta/Gold)*, a 3,500-pound, nine-foot-tall hunk of glossy steel. Just getting it to the preview from Europe cost more than \$100,000—an "enormous amount of money, but not much compared to what it sold for," says Alexander Rotter, the head of Sotheby's contemporary art department in New York. He arranged for the heart to be hauled on a flatbed truck from JFK airport in the middle of the night, to avoid stop-and-go traffic; the wooden shipping crate hung over the sides of the vehicle. A gallery wall was razed so that the piece could be rolled into the showroom, where carpenters cut a hole in the ceiling, clamped the heart's suspension ribbons to a steel beam and then rebuilt the wall to meet fire codes. If Pinchuk is the lucky owner, he will need to not only consult a structural engineer but also engage a dedicated cleaning



Things suspended on monofilaments in E. V. Day's *G-Force over Texas*, 2004, appear like fighter jets over the Chaney's staircase, while colorful ribbons of fabric fall from the ceiling in Tara Conley's 2004 *All the God I Can Get*. Above: Andrea Cohen's 2005 *After Snow Landscape*, with installation book.



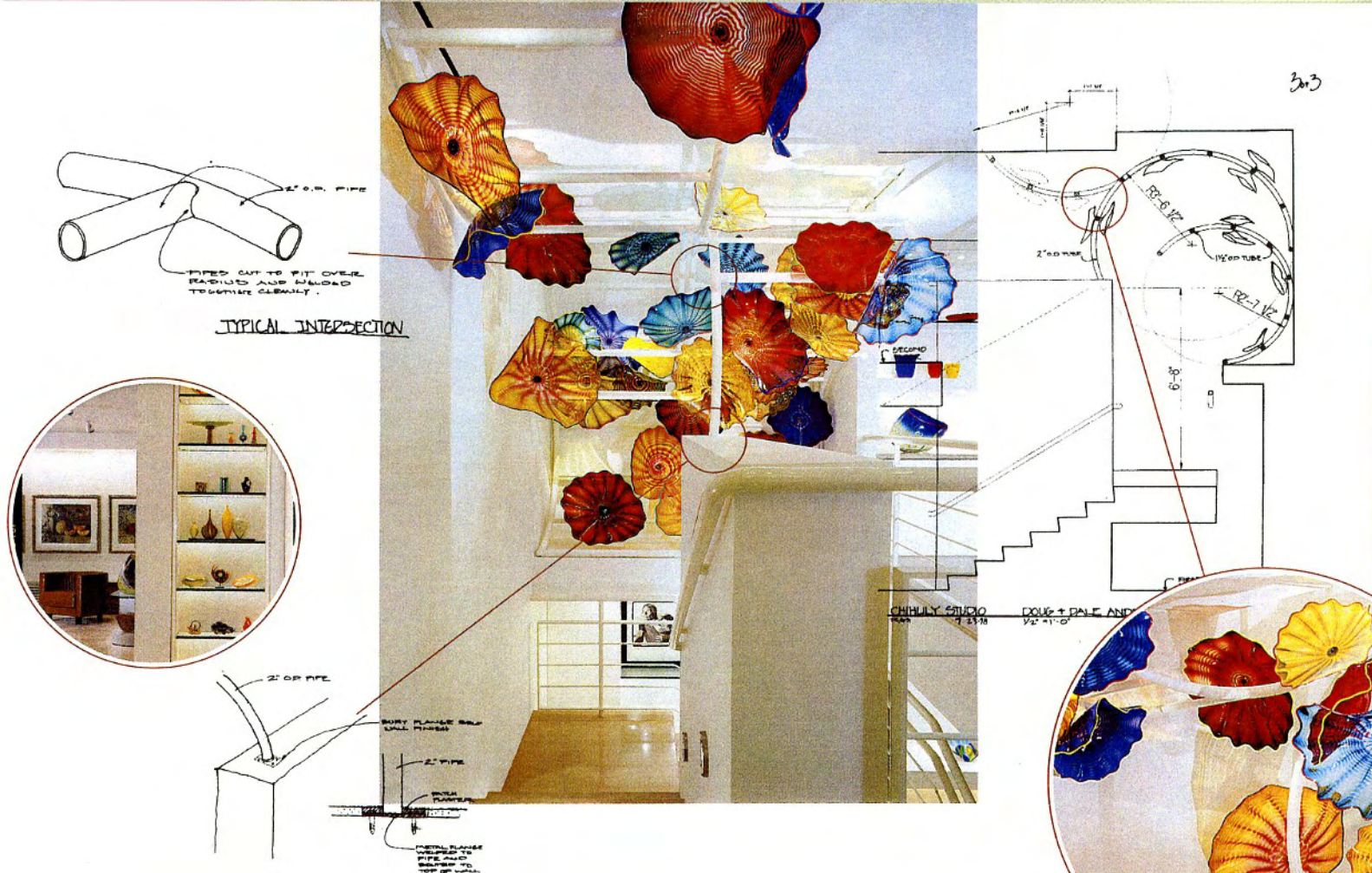
staff. "The steel attracts dust. It should be wiped off daily with a tissue or very soft cloth," Rotter says. At least, he adds with a laugh, "it's flexible"—that is, the ribbons can be extended with chains to suit ceilings up to 50 feet high.

Commitment art is also attracting buyers with long-standing tastes for blue-chip paintings. Harry and Mary Margaret ("Hunk" and "Moo") Anderson, who have spent decades stocking a 1960s ranch house in northern California with canvases by the likes of Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Morris Louis, have been branching out into seemingly ephemeral 21st-century sculpture. In the past year, they have bought two five-foot-wide clusters of taped-together paper cutouts by the Manhattan sculptor Mark Fox. The artist spent hours at the house pinning one artwork to a wall and wiring the other together over a sawhorse. "Certainly they're a challenge from an installation point of view, but the fragility is part of the appeal," explains Jason Linetzky, the Andersons' collection manager, who photographed Fox's every move on-site. The works,

Linetzky adds, "are so special, unique and important the Andersons were willing to take the extra steps."

The Chaney's have enlisted TYart, a Houston art-installation outfit, to document the arduous, hours-long process of installing their major pieces—information that's essential when the sculptures are moved. (The Andrea Cohen and Diana Cooper works were de-installed in 2007 and 2008, respectively.) The couple rotate their collection, displaying only a quarter of it at a time in their house while loaning out the rest to such institutions as Houston's Museum of Fine Arts and Cleveland's MOCA.

Art buyers are going to ever more drastic lengths to take home, put up and move around treasures, reports William Stender, who owns the New Jersey art-installation service 10-31 Industries. He travels worldwide devising pedestals and brackets for everything from Buddha statues to chunks of terra-cotta build-



ings. Last year, for a surgeon in the Midwest, Stender led a 10-man team that spent a day maneuvering a thousand-pound slab of Roman mosaic, depicting Triton terrorizing a sea nymph, onto a support network of wall bolts and cleats, a wooden pedestal and a steel floor plate. The living-room sofa conceals the reinforcements. “When I’ve done my job well, no one sees it, no one knows the forethought that went into it,” Stender says.

Fortunately the mosaic fit into the surgeon’s apartment-building elevator. Plenty of commitment art is too large or heavy for elevators, says Graham Enser, the managing director of Cadogan Tate’s fine-art division. The London-based company routinely arranges for apartment windows to be temporarily removed so that artworks can be craned up building façades or lowered from rooftops—maneuvers that can cost tens of thousands of dollars. “We’ve even helicoptered pieces onto balconies,” Enser says.

To shore up interior walls for these imposing objects, says Tom Zoufaly, the head of Art Installation Design, in New York, and the go-to consultant for the Lauder family, collectors should slip sheets of 5/8-inch plywood behind their drywall. Zoufaly has torn up wooden flooring as well, to sneak steel I beams below a 6,000-pound stone fireplace mantel carved by Brancusi. “As long as the collector’s willing to tolerate what might be a temporary mess,” he says, “there’s hardly anything that can’t be mounted safely now, anywhere you want.”

Thirty-two glass blossoms by Dale Chihuly float above the staircase in the Palm Beach home of Doug and Dale Anderson. The artworks are anchored to a custom-made metal armature, diagrams of which are shown. Left: A display case in the bedroom with glass works by such makers as Chihuly, Dick Marquis and William Morris.

Insurance brokers are likewise becoming comfortable with commitment art. “Collectors in these niche areas, who are passionately focused on sometimes quirky objects, develop a lot of expertise,” says Katja Zigerlig, the director of fine art insurance for AIG Private Client Group. “They have a lot of awareness about the additional care, research and expense that’s needed, and we can complement that with advice on the technical details of maintenance, transit protocols, installation or customs issues.” (Among other insurers that commitment-art collectors recommend are the AXA Group, Chubb Group, Huntington T. Block Insurance Agency and Wells Fargo Insurance Services.) Claims are most likely to arise, Zigerlig adds, when pieces are handled or moved.

That’s just what Doug Anderson, a glass collector in Palm Beach, has been chagrined to discover, having broken a couple of acquisitions over the years. He and his wife, Dale, have filled their duplex apartment with hundreds of vessels, windows and sculptures by prominent glassblowers, including William Morris, Paul Stankard, Ginny Ruffner, Dick Marquis, Paul Marioni and Ann Troutner. Over the stairwell, Dale Chihuly, in collaboration with the local architect John Colamarino, dangled 32 glass blossoms on a metal armature. Doug scarcely risks touching his glass anymore—“I’ve been asked not to,” he says ruefully.

Once a year, a construction manager climbs scaffolding in the stairwell to clean the Chihuly assemblage. “We leave the apartment for that,” Doug says. “It would freak us out to watch—we don’t even ask how it’s done.” There are rewards: “When the sun streams in, the whole apartment sparkles or glows, depending on the time of day. Our possessions give us such pleasure.” But in his next life, he adds, only half joking, “I hope to be collecting stones.” ☐