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By Hilarie M. Sheets

SHOW US YOUR WALL
CANDACE CARMEL BARASCH

Hollywood at Home in New York

By HILARIE M. SHEETS

"I hope you don't have a seizure," Candace Carmel Barasch playfully warned a visitor entering her Park Avenue apartment, where many of the vibrantly hued artworks blink and buzz on the walls. Alex Da Corte's theatrical tableau of a candle in a window is outlined in neon tubing so intensely colored it almost hurts the eyes. Cory Arcangel's portrait of Miley Cyrus on a flat-screen TV uses obsolete technology to create a rippling lake effect that could induce wistfulness — and a touch of seasickness.

Recalling her renovation of the apartment 15 years ago, Ms. Barasch, a Manhattan native, said, "I should have put a plug at every single station."

The bold, contemporary works all refer to Hollywood in some way. They include Sam McKinniss's large-scale painting of Lana Del Rey on the stage of "American Idol," a selection of Rob Pruitt's photographic pairings of art-world notables with their celebrity doppelgängers and Alex Israel's oversize self-portrait in profile, which he commissioned from the last prop painter employed at Warner Bros. as a comment on digitalization putting people out of jobs.

"Is it a prop or a piece of art?" Ms. Barasch asked.

More soothing pieces, including photographs by William Eggleston, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Irving Penn and Adam Fuss can be found in the master bedroom. Photos, first in black and white, were what Ms. Barasch collected in the early years, but her tastes have grown ever more adventurous since then. Before her children were born, she worked in commercial real estate.

She has something from every series by Israel and also collects works in depth by Arcangel, Da Corte, Pruitt, Arthur Jafa, Anicka Yi, Josh Kline and Wade Guyton.

Although Ms. Barasch and her husband, a lawyer, once collected together, now her "partner in crime," as she put it, is her art consultant, Lisa Schiff, whom she met about 15 years ago. "It can be a very difficult arena to crack through when you're first a collector," Ms. Barasch said.

Together they have built up the collection, now numbering some 600 pieces, and they rehang the entire apartment at least once a year to showcase themes running through the works, from contemporary politics to artificial intelligence.

"I think of my collection as a snapshot of what's happening today," said Ms. Barasch, a trustee of the Sculpture Center and member of the Chairman's Council at the Whitney Museum, where she's a lead sponsor of "Rachel Harrison Life Hack," running through Jan. 12.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIZ CLAYMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, Candace Carmel Barasch at home with, from left, "Alex Israel, Self-Portrait (Multiples)" and, on table, his "Syz's Frozen Yogurt," both from 2017. Right, Alex Da Corte's "Good Window With Candle (Purple)," from 2018.



Following are edited excerpts from the conversation.

How does it work between you and Lisa Schiff?

It's a shared vision. Hopefully, we'll put this story together so down the line there's a coherent idea about where we are as a society.

Isn't it a lot of work to rehang the apartment?

It's like an actual nightmare, the planning! I try to showcase new artists with more established artists. Things also rotate to my home in Connecticut, and there's always something on loan to museums.

What attracts you to the Hollywood theme?

It's the American dream to move to Hollywood and become a star. There's something so engaging and uplifting about that and yet there's this dark underbelly — the narcissism, all these tragedies that happen. [She singled out a large-scale drawing by McDermott and McGough of Marilyn Monroe weeping.]

Besides galleries, where do you buy work?

I recently bought a masterpiece by Cory Arcangel at Frieze London. He created a game of chess through Instagram with two

screens. It's on a 40-minute loop but you can have it play live. It says so much about what's going on today.

Auction is tricky. I try and stay out of that. I wish it wasn't the metric by which people valued art.

This wall of Rob Pruitt's look-alikes is pretty great.

He did one for every day of the year, 365 pairings. It's kind of performative because people come in and have this anxiety: Am I important enough to be here? And if I am, who does he think I look like? Some are very comical and spot on, like [the artist] Alex Katz and Squidward or [the artist] John Baldessari and Papa Smurf.

Do you have any sentimental favorites?

This driver's license of the McLovin character in "Superbad" is something I would take with me in a fire. Alex Israel made it for me for my 50th birthday. There are only two; he and I have them.