

The Urban Pioneer

Infinite Simplicity for a Designer's Seattle Loft

INTERIOR DESIGN BY TERRY HUNZIKER
TEXT BY HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN VAUGHAN



SEATTLE-BASED interior designer Terry Hunziker believes that the best rooms reveal themselves slowly, like memories or the story of an interesting life. "When you walk into a room, you should never really understand it right away but be able to discover things over time," he says. "That's difficult when you're doing it for someone else. You can't get that inti-

mate with a client unless the job is over a period of years."

Hunziker became his own client in 1985. The subtle challenges of creating his "personal space" became evident as he transformed a converted brick warehouse in Pioneer Square.

His first decision was to alter the dark, rustic character of the loft. "After working in Pioneer Square for

years, I wasn't that crazy about the brick walls of the warehouse," he explains. He painted panels of canvas in tints of light gray and beige, then hung them like large neutral paintings. The solution lent an urbanity to the 1,200-square-foot loft, while the exposed, rough-hewn ceiling beams maintained a connection to the wooded Northwest landscape.



"The space is designed for an expanding art collection and changing furniture," says Terry Hunziker of his Seattle apartment, a converted warehouse in Pioneer Square. "I've used it as a place to try things out." LEFT: Mimmo Paladino's *Settimana Ottomana I*, 1986, is suspended on steel rods in the living room; to the right is a Hank Murta Adams sculpture. A circa 1840 Swedish Biedermeier armchair stands in the foreground. Hunziker designed the sofa, covered in S. Harris mohair plush; saber-leg chair and corroded-steel low table. A 19th-century Japanese grain grinder is displayed on the table; in the corner, a 19th-century Japanese bronze bowl from George Subkoff Antiques is used as a planter for a Ming tree. ABOVE: Philip Guston's *Elements*, 1975, hangs in the dining room, which offers a view of the library beyond. On the far wall is a panel of Michael Spafford's triptych *Europa and the Bull*, 1986. Cassella lamp.





"I wanted to open it up and present the art and the forms of the furniture to best advantage," says Hunziker. "To keep the apartment light, I used large painted canvas panels in two of the rooms and a four-panel glass screen in the dining room." Cheryl Laemmle's *Woodpecker with Target*, 1987, dominates one wall of the dining room, which he often uses as a study. Swedish Biedermeier chairs and 19th-century Japanese objects are juxtaposed with the Hunziker-designed tables and bench.



ABOVE: In the bedroom, circa 1820 Russian Neoclassical armchairs stand before a panel of Michael Spafford's *Europa and the Bull*. INSET: A Kurt Beardslee-designed aluminum-and-Carpathian-burl-elm chest in the living room features unusual side drawers.

OPPOSITE: A pair of lithographs by Cy Twombly, *Natural History, Part I, 1974*, is mounted before a painted glass panel in the bedroom. A 19th-century Japanese *tansu* rests at the foot of the bed; atop it is a 19th-century Japanese painted horse on a wood stand.

The panels lighten the living and dining rooms, acting as backdrop for the rich woods of his Swedish Biedermeier and Russian Neoclassical chairs, as well as the pieces of furniture he designed for himself.

Significantly, both the furniture and the panels grew out of Hunziker's early interest in art, which he studied in college in Washington before settling on the field of interior design twenty years ago. The rounded, sensuous forms of Constantin Brancusi and of African art are apparent in a

floor lamp and ceruse-rubbed oak bench in the dining room. The corroded-steel low table in the living room is reminiscent of the materials and the Minimalism of Richard Serra. "I'm fascinated by shapes," admits Hunziker. "I like thinking about defining and distilling a simple form, and my furniture comes from that."

Having created his gallery, Hunziker achieved the artist's ultimate revenge when he started collecting art two years ago. One of his first major purchases was a painting by contem-

porary Italian artist Mimmo Paladino that hangs over the living room sofa. "I love being around the Paladino," he says. "The figure has a wonderful presence in the room." Hunziker has gone on to buy works by Cy Twombly, Cheryl Laemmle, Michael Spafford, Philip Guston and others.

When he first began to buy art, Hunziker says, his approach was to think big. "The only thing I knew I could do was to buy large-scale things for the big walls. Something happens

continued on page 242



Intuitive Simplicity for a Seattle Loft
continued from page 214

when you are sitting in a room and the wall is practically all painting. You're almost living in it."

Although the designer researches trends in contemporary art, he buys intuitively. "I don't analyze what I do," he insists. "I relate to Paladino, who says he paints in a way that is more visceral, more instinctual, than by plotting and analyzing. I'm careful about what my feelings are, and I have a sense of what works with one thing or another."

That sensitivity is salient in the way that objects from disparate cultures and periods achieve a certain harmony in his loft. "Japanese pottery and Biedermeier furniture are both simple," he explains. "You can always put them together because of the forms." His selection of artwork demonstrates similar restraint.

Hunziker also believes that antiques become the soul of a room. "Part of the appeal of antiques is that you're not the only owner. They have built-in character, a former life, layers of experience and unknown memories. The lingering aspect of a good room is that it has history."

Hunziker thinks of chairs as little beings or animals and often upholsters them in leather, like the leopard-stenciled calfskin that matches the hues of the Biedermeier. Occasionally he uses old fabrics, but he avoids relying on what he calls "yardage." "Fabric is only the background for what makes a room work—tying together the art, the forms, the books, the light, the architecture," he says.

"People often ask me to describe my 'look,' but I believe if you can describe your 'look,' there is something wrong with it," he continues. "It's just something that comes from my feeling about a space. Once you understand what it is about any space that makes it feel the way it does, you can interpret it any way you want."

"The difference with this house is that everything is personal to me," he says. "It's a growth process. Every painting is from a different time in my life. You edit as you grow." □

Honoring a Tradition of Superlative Draftsmanship
continued from page 220

ning public life almost to the point of being a recluse. Like her brother, though, she was among the most gifted artists of her generation. All of her work is intimate in character, and her small-scale drawings and watercolors often find her at her best.

In any discussion of British draftsmen of this period, the Slade School figures again and again, a fact that is explained by the emphasis on drawing that had been established there by Sir Edward Poynter, the school's first professor and himself a superior draftsman in the classical tradition. This emphasis continued well into the twentieth century, and among those emerging from the Slade a decade or so after Augustus John was Stanley Spencer, an artist who grafted some of William Blake's mysticism onto everyday events. Spencer's paintings are often elaborately eccentric, but they are always rooted in firm draftsmanship.

A slightly earlier graduate of the Slade was Wyndham Lewis, the most notable rebel of his generation and an ever-present thorn in the side of the cultural establishment. Lewis was to achieve his greatest success as a satirical novelist and polemicist, but at the Slade he was hailed as Augustus John's heir apparent, displaying a comparable brilliance as a draftsman. He also matched John in his flair for self-dramatization, and for a while he shared the older man's predilection for Gypsies and saltimbanques. His exposure to the French avant-garde, however, persuaded him it was time for British artists to join the modernist fray. By 1913 he was making pictures that were close to abstraction, and as the founder of Vorticism and editor of its journal, *Blast*, he briefly brought a small coterie of British artists into the vanguard with him. World War I sapped Vorticism's energy, however, and after serving as an Official War Artist, Lewis adopted a more conservative, though still modernist, style.

It can be argued that Lewis never reached his full potential as a paint-

er perhaps because so much of his energy was channeled into his prodigious writings. He remained a magnificent draftsman, however, the master of a line as incisive as any in the history of British art. Not incidentally, the emphasis he placed on draftsmanship had its impact upon Vorticist associates and fellow travelers such as William Roberts, Frederick Etchells, Edward Wadsworth and David Bomberg, while Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, the French-born sculptor, produced wonderfully economical drawings that mark him as one of the great stylists of the period.

Artists such as John and especially Lewis continued to exert an influence in the period between the two world wars, but British art entered a new phase in which there was a strenuous effort on the part of younger artists to reconcile traditional English themes with the inescapable achievements of the School of Paris. Again drawing played a significant role in these explorations. Paul Nash (another Slade alumnus) and Graham Sutherland began their careers as draftsmen steeped in the mystical art of Blake and Samuel Palmer. They found these roots not at all incompatible with some of the aims of Surrealism, and in the thirties and early forties they made highly individualistic drawings and watercolors in which Palmer's pantheism was given a novel and wholly modernist twist. Sutherland went further by anthropomorphizing objects from nature in such a way that they sometimes took on the appearance of forms invented by Picasso in his neo-Cubist mode.

Other artists, such as Henry Moore and Ben Nicholson, were nudging their contemporaries toward the modernist mainstream, but progress was slow, and for a little longer British art remained in a twilight zone, a singular place illuminated by the vanishing sun of another era. It was a doomed environment, but until the last rays faded, it produced often ravishing works that belong to no other place or time. □