

The Artful Traveler

A wandering patron finds you can go home again, bearing suitcases full of new art



Bobbie Foshay stands in her hallway holding Lucy. In the left foreground are two polyethylene sculptures by Roxy Paine that the artist made at SITE Santa Fe. Acrylic cubes by Teresita Fernández hang on the wall above the ledge, and, to Foshay's left, a Jeff Koons porcelain *Puppy* holds flowers.

Bobbie Foshay welcomes a visitor at her wide front door, where a pair of canine greeters—a wire-hair dachshund, Lucy, and a white porcelain Jeff Koons *Puppy*—are the household gods overseeing the view into rooms hung with major works of art. The collection and the woman who has assembled it speak to the synergistic ways that great collectors and great institutions grow up together. Foshay's name in Santa Fe is synonymous with SITE Santa Fe, the contemporary art *kunsthalle* founded here in 1995 to sponsor an international biennial—a once-every-other-year art extravaganza, of a genre that critic Peter Schjeldahl has dubbed “festivalism”—and to fill a niche for art exhibits by players on the global circuit.

A slim, intense woman in her early sixties, Foshay has been a contemporary art aficionado since the 1970s. A resident of Santa Fe since '95, she has been a major champion of SITE since the beginning: She was board president from 1995 to 2004 and chairwoman until 2006. She now chairs the investment committee and is honorary chairwoman of the board. SITE has been Foshay's passion, an unpaid full-time job to which she has dedicated herself vigorously. She characterizes her decadelong involvement as “quite an adventure.”

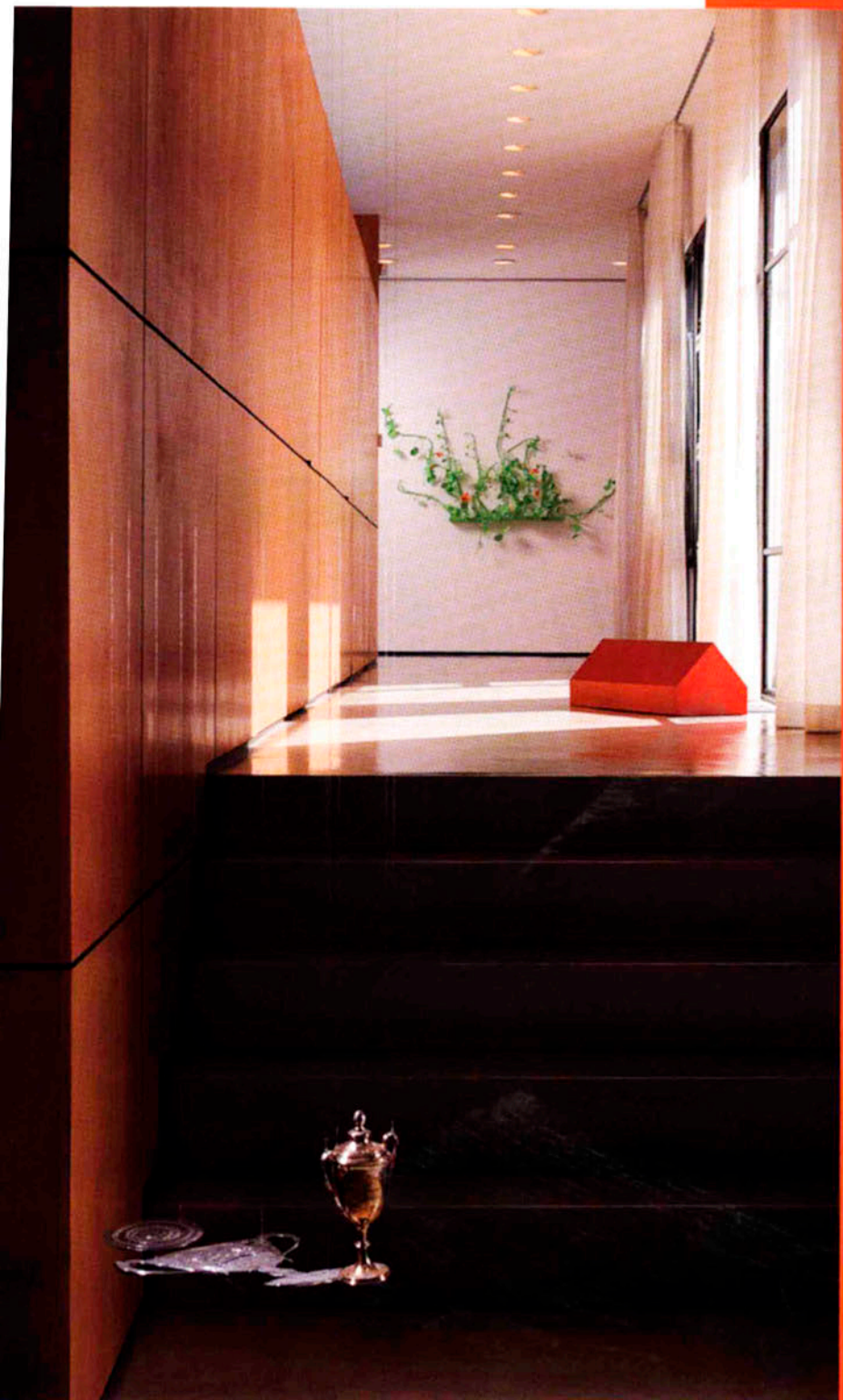
A tour of her eastside Santa Fe home offers a visual feast and a short course in new art and more new art. A native New Yorker, Foshay still spends time in New York City, where she keeps an apartment. She travels—usually in the company of SITE's director and board members—to art events, and often comes back toting artworks in her suitcase.

In her intimate, wood-paneled library, a Duratrans light box by German artist Kota Ezawa, *Central Park Zoo from “The History of Photography” Remix*, revisits a setting of Foshay's Manhattan childhood. Ezawa “remixes,” in a grayscale animation, a scene the great photographer Garry Winogrand framed at the zoo in 1957, of an interracial couple incongruously holding a pair of chimps. Foshay bought the piece in 2005 at Art Basel Miami Beach. New media abounds in this cozy room furnished with black leather Mies daybeds and chairs that Foshay has punctuated with red pillows. A few running cords prove the contemporary collector can never go entirely wireless.

A flat-screen monitor projects new artists' videos. A spongy white head atop a tripod makes an ovoid projection surface, where a grimacing face of a Tony Oursler video—a man's head

In Foshay's library, Kota Ezawa's *Duratrans* light box is part of a multimedia array that includes Tony Oursler's *It Never Happened* video. Robert Motherwell's *Study for an Elegy* sits on the bookshelf. On the table is Liset Castillo's *The Grid*. Charlotte Hall's *Orange Record* hangs in the stairwell.







Above: In Foshay's living room, left to right, a Richard Serra oilstick, *Django Reinhardt*, hangs over the fireplace; Niizeki Hiroma's *Moka Moka Windows #5* is beyond the window; and Agnes Martin's *Untitled #6* hangs above the piano. A Christopher Bucklow photogram is on the wall at right. A 1978 Juan Hamilton ceramic, *Untitled*, makes a statement in black. Opposite: The collection includes a silver-plated sculpture by Cornelia Parker, *Alter Ego*; Wolfgang Laib's beeswax floor sculpture, *Rice House*; and Lucrecia Troncoso's wall relief of green kitchen sponges, *Nasturtium*, on the far wall.



Three paintings by Sandra Scolnik, left to right: *Self-Portrait as Double Twins*; *Katrin*; and *Self-Portrait in Pink Bedroom*



Two Students, a chromogenic C-print by Tina Barney

moaning, “It hurts inside here”—materializes. Nearby, three small paintings by Sandra Scolnik—“Every face is hers,” Foshay relates—dialogue with a quirky silver-plated sculpture by Cornelia Parker, titled *Alter Ego*, hanging by slim threads into the space.

If art since the 1970s has been in the business of taking the traditional media of painting, sculpture, and photography into unexpected new combinations, Foshay’s collection reflects the postmodern hybridism. Her new house, finished by New York architect Brendan Cotter two years ago, on the other hand, stands firmly grounded in modernism. A U-shaped plan of angles, intersections between walls and long planes of glass, and an interior courtyard that allows you to see through and encounter the house itself as a viewing platform, it all realizes Foshay’s lifelong ambition. “I always wanted a contemporary house and an all-white bathroom,” she says with a smile. She put those wishes off while living in a pitched-roof house in pastoral Galisteo for a decade.

The new house in plan reflects the use of gallery spaces to connect living spaces



Red figures made of lipstick are Rachel Lachowicz's *Conscious/Unconscious*. Marc Quinn's mercury glass sperm, *Intuitive Monopoly I*, are on the left. The row of small paintings on the right, by Peter Dreher, came home from Art Basel Miami Beach in Foshay's suitcase.



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PHOTOS: ROBERT MILLER



Untitled (30 tumblers) by George Stoll

and showcase art. Colored concrete floors, aluminum steps, and unadorned woodwork, including ten-foot-tall pocket doors, delineate spaces. Floor-to-ceiling windows with translucent curtains of parachute fabric transmit soft light throughout. Ceilings rising 10½ feet to 13½ feet expand the sense of openness, as does the minimal décor: Most rooms feature a single accent color, placing primary emphasis on the art.

An eye-popping, name-dropping array punctuates her room hangings, where major-name artists' works often hang next to unknowns. In the living room a gray-and-black Agnes Martin grid painting and a black-and-white Richard Serra oilstick drawing consecrate the minimal palette. Nearby hangs a multi-hued paper tapestry on Mylar by Korean artist Niizeki Hiromi that Foshay bought for \$800 at the Armory Show in New York. The room's furniture is white, with cornflower-blue touches—selected to accentuate the tones of a Christopher Bucklow photogram featuring a woman's silhouette. A Takashi Murakami sculpture was a Christmas present from mogul-art collector Peter Norton. ("In an edition of 5,000," Foshay jokes.)

In the courtyard with a lap pool suggesting a David Hockney painting that hasn't yet been made, a bumpy Juan Muñoz sculpture stands moodily near an array of nine Maya Lin stools in muted tones. Foshay's current favorite object, hanging in the entry hall, is a wall piece by Argentinian-born Lucrecia Troncoso: An organic, plantlike sculpture made of pieces cut from bright green kitchen sponges, it rests between aquarium and mural in the way of new art to confer a fresh identity on a mundane material.

The very long slot gallery hosts work like Marc Quinn's *Intuitive Monopoly I*, puffy shapes of mercury glass representing more than slightly giganticized sperm. Equally unexpected are the red group of cartoonish, headless figures made of melted lipstick, by Rachel Lachowicz, in the gallery, or Polly Apfelbaum's roundel of dyed fabric atop a table in the living room.

It's a far cry from Foshay's earliest encounters with art: Her mother collected French impressionist paintings ("Major impressionist names but minor paintings," Foshay says). After graduating from Barnard College, Foshay worked at the Frick—the East 70th Street home to the incredible collection of paintings assembled by Henry Clay Frick. In 1980 she signed on at the International Center of Photography as coordinator of museum education and stayed 13 years.

Given her ICP experience, and photography's ascendance in the 1980s, contemporary photography is a big part of Foshay's collection: "Two Students," by Tina Barney ("She's a friend," notes Foshay), was a purchase encouraged by another friend, Peter Galassi of the Museum of Modern Art, when he was buying the same piece for MOMA. A large black-and-white view by Spencer Tunick of so many nude New Yorkers lying around like a herd of cows in Times Square was an acquisition jogged by meeting Tunick through SITE when he did a project here.

It's a fact of the art world that institutions benefit from patrons and vice versa. Foshay explains that her real introduction to new art came when she was asked by Donald Marron—the former chairman of the MOMA


board and himself a major art patron—to help take the young members' group at MOMA to a new identity as the Contemporary Arts Council, a group that she chaired from 1988 to 1996.

"A group of us started exploring contemporary art," Foshay recalls. This was, of course, in the heyday of East Village pioneers such as Gracie Mansion, who started a gallery in her Avenue A bathroom. "I used to go downtown on Friday afternoons with Barbara Schwartz—we'd go into Gracie Mansion, Paula Cooper [in Soho]. We'd look at the show that was up, and Barbara would always say to the dealer, 'Let's see what you've got in the back room,'" Foshay says with an easy laugh. "Now they see me coming, and they don't even ask. They take me right into the back."

Her arrival in Santa Fe in 1995 coincided with the move by SITE founders John and Anne Marion to sign up board members and search for an executive director.

Foshay became board president and "found" SITE's executive director Louis Grachos, who had been curator of the La Jolla, California, branch of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. The duo became good pals, traveling together often from 1996 to 2003, when Grachos decamped to Buffalo, New York, to head the Albright-Knox modern and contemporary art gallery. "Bobbie was the dream board president," Grachos remarks. "She understood the complexities of the international art world."

Foshay continues to buy objects—sometimes, she acknowledges, on impulse—but says now they have to be things she hasn't seen before. That would describe the five paintings of water glasses by Peter Dreher, who was Anselm Kiefer's teacher, that she bought last December at Art Basel Miami Beach. It also describes those works in her house that create her private moments with art, like the peephole into the closet that looks deeply into Mark Shetabi's highly illusionistic shadow box of a parking garage, rendered in a tiny, tiny scale—like cars seen from an airplane. "Look back here," Foshay says, happily rounding the corner. She throws open the cabinet to reveal the illusion that, clearly, has never stopped delighting her. ♦



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