

■ Creative Coupling

by Jane DeLynn

entire day trying to put through a call to Milan.

In contrast to Sol's very precise and exacting art, the LeWitts live in what Carol calls "visual hysteria," not so much because they're inherently messy but because Sol's collecting obsession is at war with his compulsion to be neat. In their Connecticut house it is possible to discern Italian antiques, late Viennese pieces by Josef Hoffmann, and Weiner Werkstatte objects amidst the jumble of books, Sol's collection of more than 3,500 records and tapes (mostly classical), wires from five sets of speakers strewn across the floor, debris from the dining room ceiling (which, although it collapsed eight months ago, they're only now getting around to fixing), and toys and clothing from the seven children (two of the LeWitts' own, five of Carol's colleagues') who spend most of each day in the house under the care of two nannies.

Sol Lewitt, like many in the art community, makes a point of supporting the work of younger artists—because he likes it or, sometimes, simply to help the artists pay the rent. He is such a fanatic art consumer that a primary reason for living in northern Connecticut was so he could be near the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, where most of his extensive contemporary art collection is temporarily stored.

Nonetheless, Sol LeWitt still sees himself as an "old proletariat." No matter how valuable his collection, he still refuses to take the Concorde or fly first-class, and he still has the clothes he bought in 1968, when he began making money. His values are so entrenched that Carol worries she might offend him by buying—out of her own earnings—an overly-expensive CD changer.

GRACIOUS LIVING

JANET FISH
AND
CHARLES PARNES

Although painter Charles Parness, forty-four, isn't as successful as Janet Fish, fifty-one, with whom he has lived for more than a decade, he doesn't mind. "It's nice for me because I don't

have the burden of providing," says Charles. Janet, who executes luminous watercolors, was once married to someone because he could provide "for her needs" while she painted; she has since decided that "if I wanted success, I should get it for myself." She was never willing to define her success as a person by the success of her mate.

It is Janet who owns both the city loft and the Vermont country house with its separate studio. The loft shows evidence of their predilection for *tchotchkes* of all sorts: both authentic and Boy Scout totem poles; Mexican folk art statues; masks from almost everywhere *but* Bali; and a huge variety of toys, both old and new, windup and stationary, inflatable and not, often used by Charles in his fantastical self-portraits. Janet helps promote the work of female artists she likes, but both she and Charles have decided that it's better for her to stay out of his career. "It's lucky I don't despise his work," she says.

Charles does much of the shopping,

ROBERT MILLER GALLERY NEW YORK



THE SETUP: *Painters Janet Fish and Charles Parness are comfortable with her greater renown; her watercolor "Pansies and Boxes" (1989)*



PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIGRID ESTRADA