

My favourite things

The collectors' collections: Sarah Jane Checkland talks to four very different buyers about their private passions

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, a Mexico-born, Canada-based electronic artist, has an installation at the Barbican Art Gallery until January 18, and another in Trafalgar Square from November 14 to 23. Three of his new interactive works open at Haunch of Venison, London, on Wednesday.

My home in Montreal resembles a set from a 1970s porn movie. Open plan, low ceilings, brown-painted walls, different levels, swimming pool. Not that what goes on in here is steamy these days. I'm a family man with three kids.

I find the idea of collecting objects problematic; vampiric. The obsessive filling of gaps; the desire for things to be preserved. So I collect insubstantial things like superstitions. My favourite is the Spanish practice of throwing your underwear out of the window at New Year, just before the chimes. I've also assembled a collection of embarrassing dance moves, top one being the "contemptuous back kick". I also collect artists' manifestos – starting with the Futurist Manifesto of 1909 and finishing with my own OK ART manifesto. Not the actual manifestos, of course, but their contents. They're bombastic, totalitarian, politically incorrect. I love the way they crystallise an artist's passions.

The actual, physical art I own is by my friends. In the dining room I have wonderful, phantasmagoric photographs of hands by the Spanish photographer Daniel Canogar, covering an entire wall almost like wallpaper. My living room is dominated by a beautiful steel sculpture, "Explosión", by the Mexican artist César Martínez Silva. In order to generate the beautiful, anthropomorphic, violent shapes on its surface, he painted the steel with dynamite before burying it in the ground and detonating it. In my bathroom I have a photograph of a disgust-

ing bathroom in Moscow taken by a friend in 1981. Thankfully my real bathroom is very clean. I also have lots of my own work around the place. "33 Questions per Minute" is a sculpture in which liquid crystal displays are programmed to ask 55bn different questions, just fast enough for you to read a given question, but not long enough for you to answer. Here's one: "Will you bleed in an orderly fashion?"

If the house was on fire, I'd grab my painting by the British-born surrealist Leonora Carrington, given to me by my mom. It shows an outrageous, sexy woman, sitting before a galaxy background. When I get round to hanging her, I'll put her in the bedroom, where she belongs.