



ART ATTACK!

THESE O.C. ART PROS DON'T JUST WORK AT THEIR CAREERS, THEY LIVE THEM—LITERALLY!—WITH INTERIORS THAT DISPLAY THEIR CREATIVE OBSESSIONS

O.C. interior design is too often beige, bland and banal. If over-the-top Tuscan, silly shabby chic and maxed out Mediterranean is leaving you feeling overstuffed and underwhelmed, never fear! On the extreme edges of the local decorating palette we've discovered three very different designs that share a single-minded mission: showing off their owners' obsession with art. We get the goods on an artist's color-crazy home in luxurious Emerald Bay, a couple's eerily inspiring loft/art gallery in downtown Santa Ana and a gallery owner's starkly sophisticated peninsula pied-à-terre. But beware: these are all interiors with an attitude."

COUCH SURFING: Chris Gwaltney in his E-Bay element. The painting above is by him.

STEP INTO COLOR ARTIST CHRIS GWALTNEY'S EMERALD BAY HOME IS A RAINBOW-HUED HAVEN OF LIGHT, SPACE—AND SURF!

Laguna Beach artist Chris Gwaltney uses color in his paintings "to drive the eye around the canvas. I guess we do the same thing here," he says, looking around the expansive Emerald Bay home he shares with wife Jill and teenage son Cooper (daughter Dylan is away at Stanford). "We use spots of color off of neutral areas. The dining room has big color chairs, with the surroundings muted and low-key," he says. "It's an aggressive color relationship, and from my work I know the eye is drawn to that."

The Gwaltneys' ocean view home is open, almost loft-like, with rooms broken up by modular appliances, furniture that's more about function than form and pocket doors that slide away completely, leaving nothing but space. Utilitarian, Gwaltney calls it. All the better to show off the art inside, an eclectic collection dominated by SoCal locals, including Jane Bauman, Jorg Dubin and Cheryl Ekstrom, though

it also includes work by Bay Area figurative master Nathan Oliveira. The home's casual creativity reflects Gwaltney's passion for surfing and art, with the line between the two as ethereal and hard to define as the place where sea and sky meet on a foggy day.

Exhibit A: The art hanging in the couple's home includes an O'Neill-shaped surfboard from the early '60s. "It's an art piece. I'd never ride it," he says of the board, which was a gift from his wife—with a selection assist by Bob McKnight. The Quiksilver CEO is a neighbor, friend and major collector of Gwaltney's art. His recent work reflects "the wonderful chaos of my life right now," including the growing dependence of his father, who had a stroke recently, and independence of his 16-year-old son. "My work is a lot less restful than it's been. I'm revisiting the fundamentals, and enjoying the tumult of life."