

by Tim Maloney. Photography by Jaime Lagdameo

## A WORK IN PROGRESS

It's hard to pigeonhole Houston arts avatar Deborah Colton.

She's high-energy and low-key. She's all about Eastern art and antiques and yet committed to contemporary design. She's been a dutiful corporate spouse and an independent trailblazer for cross-cultural understanding. She's reluctant to put her own name on anything and yet is launching an eponymous gallery. And she wouldn't have it any other way.

"My journey, literally and figuratively, has been an interesting one," she admits, standing in the light-filled warehouse loft that's home to Iklectik Designs and the highly anticipated **Deborah Colton Gallery**. "I have an artistic side and a business sense, and I'm not the kind of person who can just work out for three hours a day and go to lunch with the girls. I've done that, and it's not me."

Colton founded Iklectik Designs in 1996 in Tokyo, where her husband was working for Exxon. As a former product and marketing manager for 3M, she found the expatriate life of leisure a little, well, limited – so she and a partner created a business importing Korean and Chinese antiques to Tokyo. "We'd pre-sell a container of merchandise to about 14 customers, and then the giant container would arrive at my house and we'd unpack it in my living room. What a mess!" she laughs.

But her success was no joke. Before long, with her discerning eye and her solid reputation, she was doing business with clients all over the world. And even with her commercial success, she never lost her appreciation for the pure art of a culture. In fact, soon after Exxon transferred her husband to Bangkok, she became one of Thailand's leading arts patrons. "To me, especially from a corporate perspective, there is nothing more important than supporting ingenuity, creativity and cultural expression, especially when you are a guest of another country."

In mid-2000, Colton's journey brought her to Houston, and Iklectik began to take shape at 2500 Summer Street. Today, it's a thriving business fusing rare and unusual antiques from Thailand, Korea, China, Japan, Vietnam and Burma with innovative contemporary home design and avant-garde art and photography.

Housed in the same complex where David Adickes creates his giant American presidents' heads, which ring the parking lot like silent, noble sentries, Iklectik features more than 4,000 feet of space where the unexpected always takes center stage. In addition to her striking selection of antiques, Colton also features the fashion-inspired textiles and home accessories of European designer Cebuan de la Rochette and the groundbreaking color-tinted black-and-white photography of Pierre Poretti, whose subjects include images of Bali, Thailand and Cambodia, plus a special series on seminal music icon Grace Jones. Colton also showcases the work of Polaroid documentarian Maripol, whose photographs capture the comings and goings of 80s bold-faced types like Madonna, Keith Haring, Andy Warhol, Jean-Paul Basquiat and other New Yorkers in the post-punk era.

Colton's next step? Two important photography shows. As part of FotoFest



2004, the Iklectik Design Gallery will feature "Waterworks," the newest photography series created by international design powerhouse Vicente Wolf, and the newly inaugurated Deborah Colton Gallery will display an exclusive exhibition of Maripol's most recent work.

"I never wanted to put my name on something. I'm really sort of a modest person," Colton protests. "But people kept telling me, 'Look, Deborah, you have a great reputation and great connections – your name means a lot. If you want to be successful as a gallery, you'd better use your name.'" So she took the plunge and now the challenge is to get the gallery up and running in time for the March show.

"Leading off with Vicente Wolf and Maripol is huge!" she exclaims, her eyes wide with excitement. "Vicente is one of the top five designers in the world. When he had his book signing a few months ago at Iklectik, he told me that ours was one of the greatest spaces he's ever seen," she says with a mixture of pride and disbelief. "And Maripol, she's a legend. Her work is usually only shown in New York, Paris and Berlin, but her latest work, 'Reviving Downtown,' an essay on New York before and after September 11 that features friends, family, artists and acquaintances, is premiering here." The show features large-format black-and-white Polaroids, accompanied by quotes from her shooting subjects.

What can we expect from Colton next? "I don't know, I have some ideas," she says, gazing out the floor-to-ceiling windows with a sweeping view of downtown Houston. If her track record is any indication, something big is taking shape inside that creative mind. After all, the journey never ends for Deborah Colton – she's truly a work in progress.





# artshouston

MAGAZINE

Houston's monthly guide to the performing and visual arts



An interview with style icon and photographer

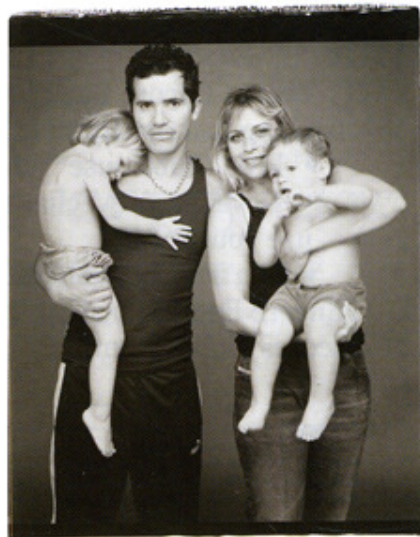
**MARIPOL**

as part of our expanded issue on

**FOTOFEST 2004**



A FotoFest Retrospective  
VBB and Foto Fest Film Festival  
The Texas Coast through the  
Lens at the HMNS  
ArtistTalk with MANUAL



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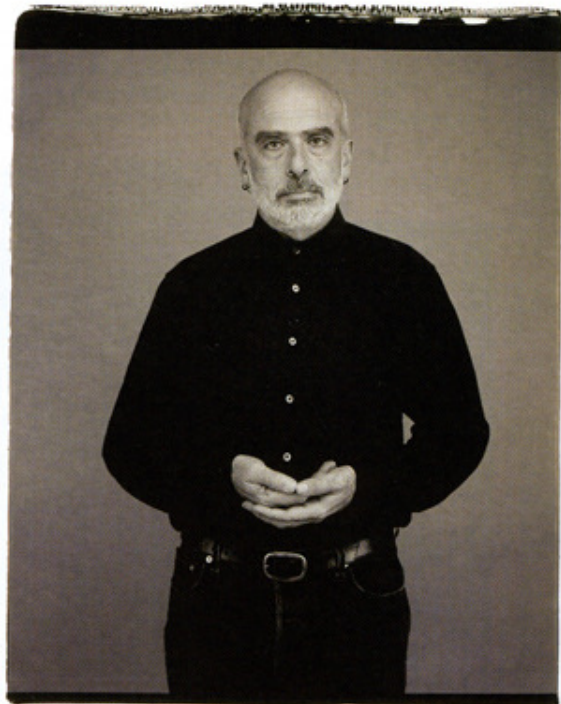


# MARIPOL:

## New York in Giant Polaroid

Interview by Rosemary Ponnekanti

Maripol thinks image, lives image, is image. From the little girl styling dolls in the souks of Morocco to the 80s fashion icon behind Fiorucci and Madonna to the producer of New York club-scene film *Downtown 81*, this friend and colleague of Warhol and Basquiat has always been both in the frame and behind the lens. Her 80s color Polaroids conveyed the style and excess of the post-punk era; in the wake of 9/11, the French-born artist turned again to Polaroid – but this time without the glamour. Calling friends (who were mostly artists, musicians and designers) for sessions before a rare Giant Polaroid camera, Maripol created a portrait gallery of celebrities as real people, of New York without the hype. The show – *Reviving Downtown: My Address Book* – will be presented by the Deborah Colton Gallery during FotoFest 2004 this month. In the sunlit gallery, an elegantly understated Maripol in fur-trim and retro trainers explained why New York, and why Polaroid.



### How did you experience the events of 9/11?

I was in my New York apartment, on Broadway and Bleeker. My kid had had a bad dream that night about atomic bombs – like an idiot I didn't listen to him, and took him to school. When I was back at the apartment, and looking out the window, I saw the first plane flying really low, and suddenly there was a boom and the whole building shook. I realized we were under attack. I always thought it would happen, sometime. I could almost see the pilot from where I sat. I started to shake, went to the TV and saw the second plane live – then I knew it was true. Taking my camera, I went up to the roof with everyone else. It was macabre to film it; I'm not sure why I did it except that I'm obsessed with images. I filmed the tower burning in the wind – it was a beautiful day, blue sky. Then I saw the other tower collapse – whoomp – and heard a screaming roar from everyone in the street. I ran to get my kid from school, taking just a bag with toothbrushes, passports, money, his Rollerblades and my camera – I didn't know if I'd come back.

In the car I was still filming. Millions of people were walking, haggard, with no expression. Finally I reached the school. We went out of town for a week, but I committed to staying in the city, pretending it was okay. I think it's important to live your life as usual, to turn the TV off, but it's very hard to do.

### How has New York changed?

When I arrived in 1976, the city was in depression – but it came up. Then there were the crime years – but it came up again. Broadway used to be full of sweatshops until artists like me changed the zone by fighting with the landlords and just hanging on. Now, though, it's a cautious city. You miss the towers. The economy is down: I see a lot of people struggling.

### So how did you get the idea for *Reviving Downtown*?

At the time I was archiving a collection of my 80s work, and knew I had to do something new. Then I realized – this was it. I wanted to document my community, where people were at after 9/11, what the city was like. So I called everyone from my address book. I asked people to come to the Polaroid studio just as they were, no styling, outside the fashion world, and I worked to catch their expression, how they were living their lives. There are celebrities there, but only because they are my friends. The sessions were like a party – everyone was here together,



Actress Silvia Miles (left), and writer Francesco Clemente (top).

and some hadn't seen each other for twenty years. Nobody refused me. People were very kind, and when I told them we were invited to FotoFest in Houston they were excited.

#### Why Polaroids?

The Polaroid is an incredible invention. The Giant Polaroid camera is a huge, expandable box with a film roll inside. I had taken a class a few years before, so I went down to the studio where they keep the camera and asked if I could use it for this project.

All my life I shot colors, but now I decided to do black and white. The Giant Polaroid takes nearly life-size shots. The quality of portraits is incredible, the lighting is real. And the great thing about it is that I'm actually inside the camera, so the subject looks through me instead of at the camera. I only took one shot per person, unless there was a technical fault. I believe the Polaroid is an instant medium, that there should only be one take.

I'm not a regular photographer. I'm a producer - I create. With Polaroid, there's a tangible moment that you capture - the art is waiting for it.

#### Does art such as yours help create the image?

The New York image helps to create the pictures, not the reverse! I came to New York as Eurotrash, and I became a stylist because of how I dressed. I created fashion. So I was a voyeur. My idea, my vision of New York through my own eyes, is what has created my pictures.

#### Do you have a favorite portrait?

I like them all. But I really like the one of my friend Claude Sabbah, the designer: he was very nervous, and was stretching his face to decompress it and relax. I caught that moment!

#### What have been your friends' reactions?

Some people don't like seeing themselves the way they actually are. But some people are really happy, and have commissioned portraits. Polaroids are interesting for the public, but also very narcissistic for the individual.

#### What have you discovered about New York through your photos?

I've learned that New Yorkers are very strong. There is nothing that could defeat them.

Maripol: Reviving Downtown: My Address Book will be on view at the Deborah Colton Gallery at 2500 Summer St, 77007 from March 13-April 30, with opening reception for the artists and many of the New York subjects from 6-10pm, March 13. A session of commissioned Houston Polaroid portraits is planned for New York in June. For information call 713.869.5151.



# PAPER CITY



HOUSTON MARCH 2004

STYLE | FASHION | SOCIAL

## arthopping

A ROUNDUP OF THE SPRING SCENE IN HOUSTON

### Museums & Institutions

**Artcar Museum**, 140 Heights Blvd., 713.861.5526; [www.artcar-museum.com](http://www.artcar-museum.com). HQ for those wacky, wondrous autos.

**Blaffer Gallery**, The Art Museum of the University of Houston, 120 Fine Arts Building, 713.743.9530; [www.blaffergallery.org](http://www.blaffergallery.org). Contemporary vortex. April 24 – June 13: Daniela Rossell, Margo Sawyer.

**Contemporary Arts Museum Houston**, 5216 Montrose, 713.284.8250; [www.camh.org](http://www.camh.org). Art nexus. Through March 14: Matthew

Will Michels, Susan Dunkerley, Misty Keasler.

**Houston Center for Photography**, 1441 W. Alabama, 713.529.4755; [www.hcponline.org](http://www.hcponline.org). Required stop for photophiles. March 12 – April 25: Gay Block, Françoise and Daniel Cartier, Joy Gregory.

**Lawndale Art Center**, 4912 Main St., 713.528.5858; [www.lawndaleart-center.org](http://www.lawndaleart-center.org). Legendary space. Young talent. Through March 27: “Word!” April 9 – May 1: Rice Design Alliance Exhibition. May 8 – 9: Modern Market.

**Orange Show Center for Visionary Art**, 2402 Munger, 713.926.6368; [www.orangeshow.org](http://www.orangeshow.org). Famed folk-art site. April 11: Easter Orange Hunt

**De Santos Gallery**, 1724-A Richmond, 713.520.1200; [www.desantos-gallery.com](http://www.desantos-gallery.com). Photo focus. March 13 – April 12: Clyde Butcher.

**Dean Day Gallery**, 2639 Colquitt, 713.520.1021; [www.dean-daygallery.com](http://www.dean-daygallery.com). Contemporary, impressionistic, representational. March 20 – April 17: Mark Netoskie.

**Deborah Colton Gallery**, 2500 Summer St., 3rd Floor, 713.864.2364. New downtown destination. March 13 – April 30: Maripol, Vicente Wolf.

**Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery**, 4520 Blossom St., 713.863.7097. Enlightened stable. Exquisite setting. March 1 – 31: James Lee Byars. April 3 – May 20: Melissa Thorne.

**Inman Gallery**, 214 Travis, 713.222.0844; [www.inmangallery.com](http://www.inmangallery.com). The first to take on the Core kids. March 5 – April 3: “Double Exposure” and Duncan Ganley. May 14 – June 19: John Pomara.

**Jack Meier Gallery**, 2310 Bissonnet, 713.526.2983; [www.jackmeiergallery.com](http://www.jackmeiergallery.com). Bissonnet mainstay. March 20 – April 10: Ray Donley, Deborah Ballard.

**Joan Wich & Co. Gallery**, 402 Main, 713.227.2480; [www.joanwichgallery.com](http://www.joanwichgallery.com). Sweeping downtown space. Texas contemporary. March 6 – April 10: “Our Town.” April 17 – May 22: John Sturtevant.

**McClain Gallery**, 2242 Richmond Ave., 713.520.9988; [www.mcclain-gallery.com](http://www.mcclain-gallery.com). A temple to cool minimalism. March 11 – April 10: William Beckley. April 17 – May 15: “Brave New World.”

**McMurtrey Gallery**, 3508 Lake St., 713.523.8238; [www.mcmurtrey-gallery.com](http://www.mcmurtrey-gallery.com). Abstract and figurative painting. Important photography. March 20 – April 17: Keith Carter. April 24 – May 29: Robert Kinsell, Marianne Green.

**Meredith Long & Company**, 2323 San Felipe, 713.523.6671; [www.meredithlonggallery.com](http://www.meredithlonggallery.com). Established 1957. The ultimate blue chip. March 4: Helen



# ArtNotes

**A**pril's amazing news is **Caroline Wiess Law's** bequest to the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**. On view through April 25 are many of the more than 50 modern masterworks that the late Mrs. Law, the MFAH's angel (and life trustee), most recently left to our museum: sculptures from **Arp** to **Lichtenstein**; canvases by **Warhol**, **Motherwell**, **Mitchell** and **Still**; and an extraordinary 1927 **Picasso**. The total value is \$60 to \$85 million, making this one of the most important gifts in the MFAH's 100-plus-year history ... **FotoFest** wraps this month, so hurry to catch standout shows from Colquitt to downtown: **Sally Gall's** luminous subterranean landscapes at **Parkerson Gallery** (through April 17); **Sicardi Gallery's** politically charged solo for **Oscar Muñoz** (through April 24); a trio of water-themed exhibits by **Claudette Goux**, **Steve Harris** and **Linda Walsh** at **Koelsch Gallery** (through April 10); **Suzanne Banning** in dual views at **Art League Houston** (through April 17) and **Gallery 101** (through April 7); and **Nancy O'Connor** and **Michele Grinstead's** lyrical photo/video collaboration at **5004 Feagan** (through April 8); and New York lenswoman **Maripol** launches **Deborah Colton Gallery** with a haunting series of large-format Polaroid portraits of Manhattan's faces (through April 30) ... Video reigns at the **Contemporary Arts Museum Houston** as **Paola Morsiani** curates a peek at eight international notables ("Fade In: New Film and Video," April 3 – July 4). CAM's video exposé is paired with painter **Aaron Parazette's** liquid abstractions, often based on surfer notions of the "perfect wave" (April 16 – June 20) ... A must-see: **Arshile Gorky's** sensual surreal drawings at **The Menil Collection** (through May 9) ... At the MFAH, catch part two of "Beyond Ornament: Contemporary Jewelry from the **Helen Williams Drutt Collection**" (through June 27). FYI, the MFAH is still raising dollars for the acquisition of this world-class jewelry collection. For a modest minimum of \$600, you can gift a piece to the MFAH in perpetuity. Recently the **Art Colony Association** (presenter of the Bayou City Art Festivals) sponsored two bracelets from the Drutt Collection ... Crafts are hot on Colquitt. **Sharon Dennard**, Houston's Queen of Ceramics, shows at **Goldesberry Gallery** (April 24 – May 29), while glass shines at **Hooks-Epstein Galleries** with the works of **Dale Chihuly** and Italian master **Lino Tagliapietra** (April 24 – May 29) ... More glass: **Houston Studio Glass'** spring open house, April 3 and 4, features glass-blowing demonstrations. Information [www.houstonstudioglass.com](http://www.houstonstudioglass.com) ... **Texas Southern University's University Museum** highlights more than 50 years of collecting at the university, including art, artifacts and documents, with "An African Legacy: The TSU Experience," (April 23 through June 6) ... **ArtScan Gallery/Rudolph Projects** is on the move, relocating from downtown digs to 1836 Richmond. Gallerists **Sean Rudolph** and **Volker Eisele** reopen this month in a 1930s brick manse. Plans call for a sculpture garden, dual exhibition spaces and projects room. Opening information 713.224.7722 ... Other top stops include **Barbara Davis Gallery** for **Jesse Amado's** conceptually charged specific works (April 8 – May 8); New York painter **Gordon Terry's** sexy abstractions at **New Gallery/Thom Andriola** (April 24 – May 29); color-suffused landscapes by **Billy Hassell** at **Meredith Long & Co.** (opens April 15); **Helen Altman's** nature-versus-culture clash, employing moving blankets, tires and appliances at **Moody Gallery** (April 24 – May 22); and "Brave New World" at **McClain Gallery** (April 24 – May 22), featuring fantasy forms and personal narratives ... **Hollywood Frame Gallery's** "April in Paris" pairs Parisian views by photog **Robert Borne** with vintage movie posters from '50s flicks such as *Gigi* and *An American in Paris* (April 24 through 30) ... Speaking of film, our Heights microcinema **Aurora Picture Show** recently scored grants from the NEA and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Aurora's "Media Archeology" (April 14 – 18) includes a genre that transports you back to the weird reality of grade-school movies. Information [www.aurorapictureshow.org](http://www.aurorapictureshow.org). Catherine D. Ansporn

Horse by  
Helen Altman  
at Moody Gallery

## Camp Counselor

**B**reak out the brown bags and bug spray, because *The Summer Book* is back for 2004. In this day-camp directory, author Sarah Gish gives you the 411 on local escapes for kids ages 5 to 12. Your little one can explore nature at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center; science at the Houston Museum of Natural Science; art at the Glassell Junior School of Art, the Blaffer Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and education through The Kincaid School's summer classes, among others. For the musically inclined, there are camps dedicated to opera, musical theater, guitar and dance; for the sports enthusiast, gymnastics, ice skating, British soccer, fencing, lacrosse and horsemanship; and for those with eclectic tastes, chess, fire safety, SCUBA, foreign languages, weather, computers, acting, creative writing, cooking, yoga and filmmaking. *The Summer Book 2004*, \$9.95, at local booksellers. Megan McBride



Honey by Sharon Dennard at Goldesberry Gallery