

ARTIST TODD SELBY INTRODUCES US TO PEOPLE THROUGH THEIR STUFF.

Home is Sweet



MICHAEL STIPE'S SPARKLY SHOES.

I first met Todd Selby last summer when, after stopping by my office with his pal (and my friend) Mark Hunter (aka The Cobrasnake), he politely asked if he could photograph my home for a project he was launching on his website. Although I hadn't yet seen Selby's site and didn't really understand what he wanted to do with the pictures, he seemed like a nice enough guy, and Mark kept assuring me he was great, so I said OK. On the day Selby showed up, my house was a slight mess, but he respectfully crept around, snapping away super casually—no lighting, no tripod—for a little less than an hour, after which he scribbled

BY KIM HASTREITER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD SELBY



JONNY MAKEUP'S BEDROOM.

some questions on a piece of paper, handed me the paper and a marker for the answers, and then left. No biggie.

About a week later, I received an email with a link from Selby, thanking me for the session and asking if I would take a look at the photos before he put them up live, just to make sure I felt OK about them. I remember feeling relieved and thinking, "this guy really has his shit together." And when I clicked on the link, I loved what I saw. His



JENNIFER EARLE & MIKE GABEL'S LOO.

eye was quirky and astute, and the dozens of pictures he'd posted of my home were interesting, smart and funny, and completely captured my personality. During that short time in my messy house, he'd managed to take a wonderfully telling portrait of me just by shooting my home. I began to explore his site further and discovered more eclectic people that he'd visited and documented, and with whom he'd done the same. Great stuff.

Throughout the year, I followed theselby.com regularly and through it got to know a bunch of new and super-interesting people via images of their environments. Some of Selby's

RENEE (GRANDMA COBRASNAKE) IN HER FABULOUS DIGS.



JENNIFER EARLE & MIKE GABEL'S KITCHEN.

I FEEL LIKE PEOPLE ARE GIVING ME THEIR TIME AND SHARING THEIR FRIENDS WITH ME, SO I WANT THEM TO MEET THE OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE IN THIS COMMUNITY," SELBY EXPLAINS.

the Parisian shop Colette, where he opened a little "store" during an exhibit he was having there. If Selby seems to want his photographic subjects to meet each other, there's a reason for that: "I really take my time trying to think about the people that I shoot. It's not just about their house or about who they are—it's also about me being interested in getting to know them

subjects, like Erin Wasson or Michael Stipe and his partner Thomas Dozol, were more well-known, while others, like Renee (the grandmother of Cobrasnake, whose digs were outrageous), were less so. But everyone I saw seemed to be offbeat, interesting people whom you might want to know. Which is exactly Selby's intention: "I feel like people are giving me their time and sharing their friends with me, so I want them to meet the other people who are in this community," Selby explains. "My work has a collaborative aspect."

After my home was photographed, I heard from Selby every so often—he would invite me, and all of the people he'd photographed, to a get-together or a potluck dinner so that we could meet each other and stay connected. He recently invited us all to send wares to

SOFÍA ACHÁVAL & THIBAUT DE MONTAIGU'S LIVING ROOM.



RENEE (GRANDMA COBRASNAKE'S) EXERCISE BIKE.



“MY WORK HAS A COLLABORATIVE ASPECT.”

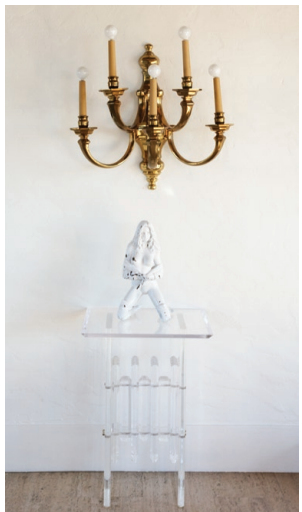
personally at almost a friendship kind of level. I really work hard to develop ongoing relationships with the people that I photograph.” It is a community that keeps on growing—theselby.com currently gets up to 35,000 daily visitors, probably because the people he chooses to feature, who end up serving not only as viral ambassadors for his site but also as connectors, turn Selby on to friends they think might also make interesting subjects.



MELIA MARDEN & FRANK SISTI, JR.'S (AKA KID AMERICA) MANTLE.

AARON ROSE'S BEDROOM.

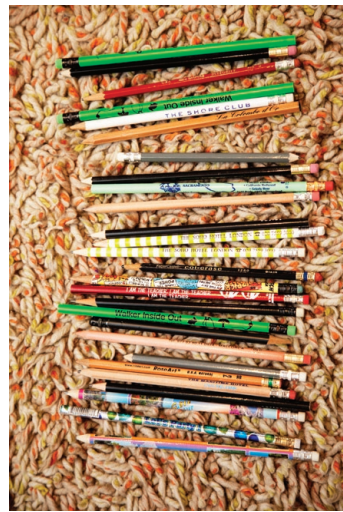




JONNY MAKEUP'S GOLD CHANDELIER.



MICHAEL STIPE AND THOMAS DOZOL'S PILE OF WHATEVER.



MICHAEL STIPE AND THOMAS DOZOL'S PENCILS IN A ROW.



CHRISTINA, LOWE & SWAIM HUTSON'S ART AND LUGGAGE.



LOWE HUTSON'S COLORFUL BEDROOM.



MELIA MARDEN & FRANK SISTI, JR.'S PUMPKINS AND BOOKS.

“SOME PEOPLE’S HOMES MAY JUST BE A PLACE WHERE THEY SLEEP ... BUT MANY PEOPLE DO TAKE A LOT OF TIME ORGANIZING, DECORATING OR DECIDING WHICH POSSESSIONS OR BOOKS TO HAVE IN THEIR HOMES—EVERYTHING TELLS A STORY.”

What I love most about Selby’s work is how he shows us through his photographs that a great home reflects the emotion of the people who live there. “It is so interesting and funny for me to see people’s personalities and character come out in their homes, whether it’s an A-type personality with a quite

slick house or a madly creative person’s wild-looking house,” he says. “Some people’s homes may just be a place where they sleep or share with some other people, but many people do take a lot of time organizing, decorating or deciding which possessions or books to have in their homes—everything tells a story.” When I asked him if he thinks the current economic crisis is causing people to stay home more, he responds, “Sure, staying in is the new going out.”

Since his Colette show closed, Selby has been shooting like a madman all around the globe for his upcoming 300-page tome, to be published next spring by Abrams. “I love printing things and am a book fanatic,” he tells me. He has even started work on what he calls “book porn” videos for his site. BOOK PORN???? Yes, book porn, which Selby explains is “like a pornographic movie shot with someone flipping through full-frontal naked books and talking about them—not just any books, but the most amazing books in the world being flipped through and talked about by people that have amazing book collections filled with books you would never, ever see.” It makes perfect sense. 🍂

Visit www.theselby.com or www.colette.fr to see more of Selby’s work.