

Honey, I Shrank the Collectors

"You look at these people; you read about them in magazines.

Their taste has such a huge effect on what art is popular or praised—yet they're inscrutable to us," says installation artist Jennifer Dalton of the collectors on the annual *ARTnews* Top 200 list.

With last year's names in

hand, Dalton made models of the collectors by affixing

gold-painted action figures from DC and Marvel comics to wood bases, each covered to indicate the source of the collector's wealth—

for instance, a dollar bill represents inheritance. Tiny shopping bags dangle from

their wrists show the type of art they collect, such as photography or Old Masters. Dalton placed them in five glass-fronted cabinets; a lone collector selected at random every day by her two-year-old son is featured in front on a pedestal. The result, *The Collector-ibles* (2006), will be on view at New York's Plus Ultra Gallery from September 7 through October 7 as part of Dalton's solo show.

Dalton debuted *The Collector-ibles* at the PULSE art fair in New York last March, an event attended by some of the collectors in the installation. "One teenager

ran up and said, 'Hey, Dad, it's you!'" says Ed Winkleman, codirector of Plus Ultra, who manned the gallery's booth during the fair. Though Dalton says that she initially "wondered if collectors would be offended by being made small by these little, cheap figures," according to Winkleman, the only complaints were from collectors wondering why they hadn't been included.

"It's just like being an artist," says Dalton. "All these people are like, 'How come they're in, and I'm not?'—it's like their Whitney Biennial."

—Rachel Somerstein



Models of collectors Debra and Leon Black in *The Collector-ibles*, 2006, by Jennifer Dalton.