

FINE ART



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached house built in around 2000

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner/family area, four bedrooms, three bathrooms, outdoor courtyard, rooftop deck. There is also a sitting room and bathroom in the basement

LOCATION Chicago

Interior designer Amy Kartheiser reimaged this home in Chicago using the family's much-loved art collection as the starting point

FEATURE RACHEL CHRISTIE | PHOTOGRAPHY WERNER STRAUBE PHOTOGRAPHY

SITTING ROOM

'This features a range of artwork dotting the walls, most notably above the black marble fireplace, where a showstopping piece made from recycled magazines hangs,' says Amy.

The Izzy three-seater sofa, Sofa.com, has this look. Benton floor lamps, Visual Comfort & Co. The Leven large drum pendant by Tom Raffield, is similar. Pixel round art, sourced from Myanmar



SITTING ROOM

A functional and fun secondary seating area used for family games and puzzles is home to another colourful piece of art and plush pink stools.

Carnaby footstool, Atkin and Thyme, would work. Try Oka's round Callanish table. Round art, UTSS Charity

DINING AREA

This leads to an outdoor courtyard, offering an additional space for entertaining.

Franco dining chair, Andrew Martin, is a good match. The Orlan 8 seater dining table in Black Ash, Danetti, has the look of this custom made one. Chandelier, Visual Comfort & Co. Artwork (just seen) by Erica Jane Huntzinger

FAMILY AREA

'This is a favourite gathering spot for the homeowners,' says Amy. 'Swivel chairs on either side of the sofa allow more people to sit here and watch TV. The artwork adds a punch of colour.'

Allegra Hicks rug, The Rug Company. For similar swivel armchairs, try the Chiswick swivel chair, Darlings of Chelsea. The cocktail unit is custom made. Red painting by Carolyn Cole

'OUR AIM WAS TO HAVE THE FURNITURE AND WALLS BE SECONDARY TO THE ARTWORK'





HOW DID YOU COME TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?

The contractor who did our house is a friend of the family, and he asked us to come in and gut their basement. It was a fairly small project including a small sitting room and bathroom, but they wanted to create a private space with its own entrance for their parents, who visit a lot. I was then asked to walk through the rest of the house and pick five things I'd change. I mentioned the hood in the kitchen and the outdated sitting room fireplace and before I knew it, I was renovating the whole house. We didn't leave an inch of the house untouched; it was a rolling stone that became a giant boulder, and we had to keep up with it.

DESCRIBE THE HOMEOWNERS' STYLE.

It's very cohesive; they have this beautiful art collection and we knew from the get-go that we wanted it to shine, so we made sure we left plenty of negative space and the walls are generally white, bar a couple of wallpapered rooms. The furnishings, in general, are intentionally quiet so that the art takes centre stage.

WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE SCHEME?

The overall vision was a quietness in letting the art stand front and centre, but updating the home in a way that was aesthetically pleasing and functional for their family. The house hadn't been touched in 20 years, so we had a lot of updating to do.

WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST PRIORITIES FOR THE HOMEOWNERS?



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HALLWAY
‘We’d looked at 30 different staircase designs with the contractor and nothing was working, so we just painted the railings black, put in a new runner and called it a day,’ says Amy. ‘It means the homeowner’s mother’s art steals the show.’ Orange painting by Judy Norris. Stairs in Black 2132-10 in matte finish, Benjamin Moore. Colson Slate runner, Stark

MAIN BEDROOM
‘The priority was for it to feel calm and serene. We used pops of pale blue for interest,’ says Amy. ‘Doors off the bedroom lead to a little seating nook, offering another place to read and enjoy quiet time.’ Isola large ottoman, Heal’s, has this look. Wayfair has similar seagrass chandeliers. Bradford table lamp, Visual Comfort & Co. For a similar swivel armchair, try the Missouri by Sofology

MAIN EN SUITE
‘The whole bathroom was gutted. We changed walls in the main bedroom to make the walk-in closet bigger,’ says Amy. ‘There was a tiny shower originally, so we redesigned it to incorporate a tub, creating a spa-like feel.’ Find the Visual Comfort & Co. Morris pendant lantern at Lightsource. Lusso has a wide range of similar freestanding baths

TOP-FLOOR TERRACE
This was created at the time of lockdown, providing extra outdoor space to enjoy safely. The wild grasses and plants blend in beautifully with the elevated 606 path and trail that runs right next to the house.’ Sectional furniture, Harbour. The tiered rattan pendant light, Flo & Joe, would work here



Their art collection was the most important, as well as having different spaces to entertain in, as they love hosting. There are several areas to entertain, including the patio with BBQ, firepit, wine and champagne chiller, the dining area and the top floor deck. There's space for everyone to spread out.

WHICH ROOM WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT TO THE HOMEOWNERS?

Probably the kitchen-diner and family area, because they're a very tight family with four grown-up children. They spend a lot of time together, including family dinners every Sunday.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE? Keeping up with the scope of the project, until eventually the whole house was updated. It meant there was no real cohesion or overall scheme, but keeping the walls neutral and making the art the focal point naturally pulled everything together.

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL SCHEME?

To always understand your clients, their lifestyle, priorities and how they like to live, so that you can understand the functionality of the rooms and make sure that the house suits them – that it's actually a place they want to be in every day. 🍷

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