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## MANSION

### BALANCE SHEET

# A Penthouse Fit for Their Art Collection

A \$620,000 renovation gave these Raleigh, N.C., homeowners space for their paintings, pottery and textiles—without feeling like a museum



Benjamin King, left, and Alan King didn't want to live in a gallery-like white box.

BY SARAH PAYNTER

Curating a 120-piece art collection was easy. Displaying it at home? That was the hard part.

Color and architectural ornamentation in a home can compete with paintings, photographs, sculptures, textiles and pottery. But Alan King and his husband, Benjamin King, said they didn't want to live in a sterile, gallery-like white box.

"This is our home. We've never wanted to live in a museum," said Alan, 65, chief executive of Workplace Options, a provider of employee well-being perks.

So in 2023, when they

bought a \$1.4 million penthouse in downtown Raleigh, N.C., they opted for textured decor in neutral colors that wouldn't compete with their contemporary art collection, said their interior designer, Sally Williams of Colorful Concepts Interior Design in Raleigh. The renovation for the three-bedroom, roughly 2,500-square-foot condo cost double what they expected, about \$620,000, and took nine months, said Alan.

"If art is the focal point, it's really easy with design to have things compete so that each piece doesn't get a chance to speak for itself. It just sort of gets jumbled up together," said Benjamin,

a 61-year-old retired flower-shop owner.

One of the home's most striking features is the roughly \$30,000 electric fireplace in the double-height great room. The bottom portion of the custom, floor-to-ceiling fireplace is made of black Venetian plaster with walnut accents. The upper portion is white slatted wood with recessed areas, a textured design that adds visual interest without relying on color. Williams said the neutral palette allows attention to remain on the portrait hanging on the fireplace, a roughly 5-by-6-foot black-and-white photograph of geometric patterns projected on a man's profile by New York-based artist Sarp Kerem Yavuz.

A roughly \$30,000 oak accent wall unites the dining room and loft areas of the open-plan great room. Its fan pattern created visual interest but wasn't too busy to serve as a place to hang three more pieces of art, she said.

They also added warmth to the condo with wood details on handrails and drawers, displayed pottery on vertical walnut live-edge shelving, and commissioned



A photograph by artist Sarp Kerem Yavuz hangs over the roughly \$30,000 electric fireplace.

MANSION



custom walnut and oak furnishings. In the foyer, a recently purchased oil painting of a woman in black by Washington, D.C., artist J. Rodney Dennis hangs over a custom-made \$11,000 walnut foyer credenza, and in the loft, they hung a textile piece over a roughly \$13,000 custom walnut television cabinet. The third bedroom functions as an office and has a \$40,000 walnut Murphy bed for visits from their adult children, said Alan. The primary bedroom has a \$30,000 oak headboard with

marble and brass details. “It’s probably the most expensive Murphy bed that has ever been created, but you walk into that space and you see a beautiful office. There’s no way you look at it and assume that this is actually a fully functioning bedroom with a queen-size bed,” said Alan. They spent about \$250,000 on furnishings. They picked out three neutral and light-blue Tibetan-style rugs made in Nepal, about \$21,000 total, for the living room, dining room

An oak accent wall, above, and headboard of oak, marble and brass, below, add warmth without competing with the art. Marble-like wallpaper highlights a Clarence Heyward painting, at right. The home has a loft, at left.



and hallway. The living room’s white, woven sofas cost about \$18,000 total, and the loft has a \$13,000 chenille sectional, said Alan. “The space was very white and very blank. We needed things that would

give it some warmth and give it some gravitas but not challenge the art,” said Alan. “It was an exercise in really learning how the design complements the art and vice versa.” The stairway to the loft

portant that it not just feel like a blur of color and images in that small area,” said Williams, adding that the wallpaper helps draw attention to the prize painting by North Carolina-based artist Clarence Heyward.

became a gallery-like space for six paintings and a \$4,000 glass chandelier. They were nervous about so many paintings in the stairway, but Williams used wallpaper with a taupe and cream marble-like pattern, about \$1,000 including installation, to break up the walls. “It was im-

The condo is designed to spotlight 60 of their 120 pieces, said Alan, and the rest are displayed at their mountain house in the town of Beech Mountain, about 200 miles west. Even before the work was complete, they had to re-engineer the design to feature 10 new pieces purchased during last year’s renovation, and the Kings have since added four large pieces purchased at the Art Basel art show in Miami Beach, Fla. The Kings are storing several paintings in the guest room until they can bring them to the mountain house. As their mountain house fills up, they’ll distribute art to their children and stash pieces in storage units. “We are adding to our collection more rapidly than we had envisioned,” said Alan.

BALANCE SHEET

- Furnishings \$250,000
- Bang & Olufsen sound system \$50,000
- Murphy bed \$40,000
- Fireplace \$30,000
- Oak accent wall \$30,000
- Headboard \$30,000
- Light fixtures \$26,000



ABIGAIL JACKSON (4); © CLARENCE HEYWARD, "PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM PAUL THOMAS," 2020 (STAIRWAY PAINTING)