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IN BLOOM!

May 23, 2024

## Adaptable Design

Flower Architecture uses modular design principles  
to create an open, inviting home. P. 86



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Studio Gang's Populus hotel, currently under construction, is designed to activate the corner of 14th and Colfax in downtown Denver. Rendering © Studio Gang.

**THURSDAY, MAY 9 | 11:30AM**

DENVER ART MUSEUM

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**TABLES & VIP TICKETS AT**

[denverartmuseum.org/luncheon-by-design](https://denverartmuseum.org/luncheon-by-design)

PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT THE EXHIBITION *BIOPHILIA: NATURE REIMAGINED*



## Biophilia

NATURE REIMAGINED

**DENVER**  
**art**  
**MUSEUM**

MAY 5 – AUGUST 11

*Biophilia: Nature Reimagined* brings together more than 80 imaginative works, including architectural models and photographs, objects, fashion, digital installations, and immersive art experiences that collectively highlight the transformative power of nature. The exhibition features an international roster of designers and artists including Iris van Herpen, MAD Architects, Studio Gang, teamLab, Joris Laarman and DRIFT, among others.

INCLUDED IN GENERAL ADMISSION.

### A TALK BY DIXON LU, MAD ARCHITECTS

SATURDAY, MAY 4 | 11AM

Sharp Auditorium – Hamilton Building, Lower Level

Dixon Lu serves as an Associate Partner at MAD Architects' Los Angeles office and oversees the firm's array of U.S. projects, including One River North in Denver's RiNo neighborhood. This presentation will explore how MAD aims to redefine the boundaries between architecture and the natural world, fostering a stronger connection to our broader ecosystem.

TICKET REQUIRED. DISCOUNT FOR MEMBERS. FREE FOR STUDENTS AND MUSEUM FRIENDS

*Biophilia: Nature Reimagined* is organized by the Denver Art Museum. It is presented with generous support from the Adolph Coors Exhibition Endowment Fund, the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign, and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine* and CBS Colorado.



Nacho Carbonell, *One-seater Concrete Tree*, 2022. Metal mesh, cork, steel, concrete, and light fittings; 139 ¾ × 74 ¾ × 112 ¼ in. © Nacho Carbonell. Photo by Ronald Smith, courtesy of Carpenters Workshop Gallery.





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*"If people did not love one another, I really don't see what use there would be in having any spring." – Victor Hugo*



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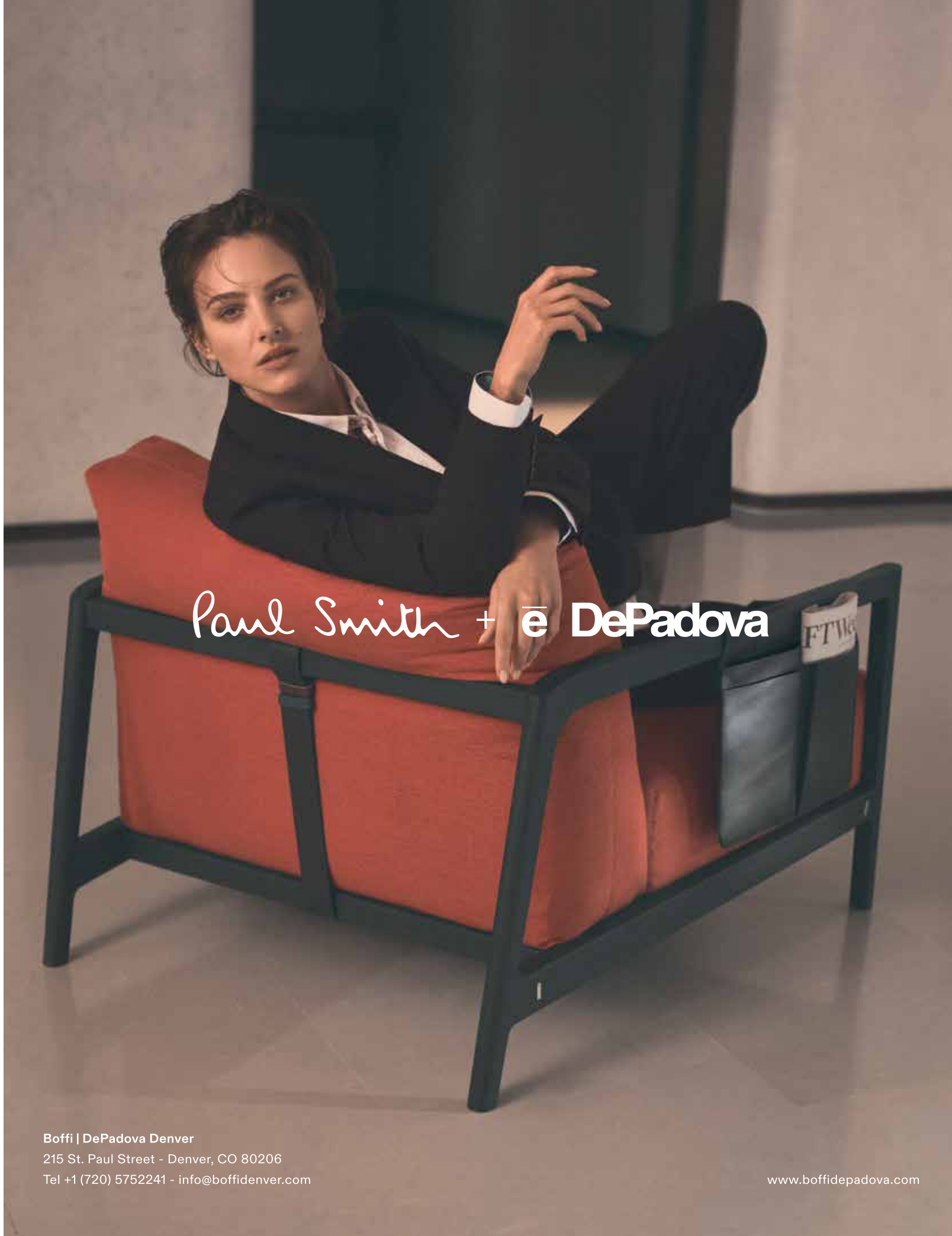
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hello.

Our Spring Issue / 2024

## THE ADAPTABLE DESIGNER

**WE** are what we are because of adaptation. To survive, our species has adapted to withstand harsh environments, limited resources, and turbulent social structures. Across several revolutions—from the agricultural and industrial to current day globalization—we’ve had to think creatively to endure and thrive. Adaptability is integral to our humanity, and we utilize it in every facet of our lives, including in architecture and design.

There’s been much discourse in the last century about the adaptable building. In design, spaces that can shift to meet various needs have proven valuable. Early in the 20th century, Le Corbusier’s “Five Points of Architecture” promoted flexible and functional “open floor plans” that could serve multiple purposes. Similarly, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe advocated for open and modular buildings that responded to changing conditions. His design for the 1929 Barcelona Pavilion demonstrates how a space could be easily reconfigured over time.

We celebrate and appreciate the value of the adaptable building, but the adaptable architect, while less apparent to the public, is no less important to the advancement of great architecture. Responding to unexpected constraints, evolving needs, and unforeseen limitations presented along a project’s journey takes resilience, creativity, and a willingness to adapt. Without this, many notable buildings would not have been made. One World Trade Center in New York City, the Sydney Opera House in Australia, and the Walt

Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles all underwent significant design changes during their development—and became more architecturally distinct because of them.

Habitat 67 is another example. Designed by Moshe Safdie for the 1967 World’s Fair in Montreal, Habitat 67 is an expansive and innovative housing complex that introduced new paradigms for communal urban living. As it was being created, the project was forced to adapt to several constraints, requiring Safdie to modify his original drawings, streamline the building’s number of units, reduce the variety of materials, and revise exterior and interior finishes. The young architect’s original vision was dramatically altered, but he made continual adjustments to see the project through. Today Habitat 67 is an important example of groundbreaking modern architecture.

Local architect Nicholas Fiore, principal at Flower Architecture, has the same adaptable, resilient, and creative character. A residence he designed for a family in Boulder features as this issue’s cover story. Appreciating the flexibility that modular design allows, and the shortened construction time that comes with a prefab build, Fiore felt he had achieved the perfect blend of design and efficiency for his clients. But as the project progressed, the prefab approach the clients had hoped for was found to be untenable. Fiore had to adapt, and did—modifying the plans so the home could be a traditional site build. While the design itself didn’t need extensive revision, Buildwell’s Ryan Wither said “it became a whole new job.” In the end, the home only benefited from the team’s ability to embrace the new circumstances and make necessary modifications. The nimble adaptation afforded the project more time to unfold, allowing for customization and finish

details that elevate the finished residence further. You can read this story on page 86.

Also included in our spring issue is a fun yet sophisticated interior renovation designed by Damn Good Interiors for a Castle Pines home. We explore two other renovations: a mid-century ranch in Wellshire reconsidered by ArcDen Studio, and Follow Architecture’s refresh of a 1970s mountain house outside of Boulder. We talk to the director of sustainability at Room & Board about the company’s new B Corp Certified status, and we visit the studio of Denver artist Derrick Velasquez. These stories, along with product spotlights, an air purifier roundup, favorite plants picked by top landscape architects, and a preview of the upcoming Denver Art Museum exhibition *Biophilia: Nature Reimagined*, bring this issue into full bloom.

Speaking of which, we would like to officially invite everyone to one of *Modern In Denver*’s signature events. Design In Bloom will be held on May 23, 2024, at Room & Board Cherry Creek, after a nearly four-year pause. The event showcases beautiful and unexpected floral arrangements created by some of our region’s top architecture firms and design studios. Design In Bloom is always a great time—and a perfect way to welcome a warmer, greener season. For more details and to let us know you’re coming, visit [modernindenver.com](https://modernindenver.com).

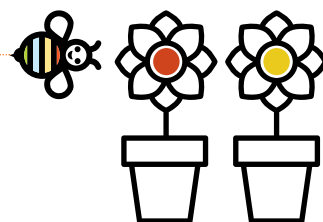
Until then, **happy spring!**

Willam Logan

## THE COVER



Shown on the cover of our spring issue is James Florio’s photograph of a Boulder home designed by Flower Architecture. Responding to the homeowners’ interest in modular design, principal Nicholas Fiore configured the layout to span six modules cohered by an exceptionally high level of finish, unique building materials, and numerous custom built-ins. Read the story on page 86.







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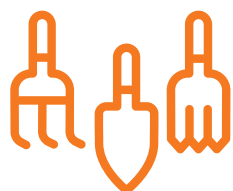
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*Modern In Denver is created by our dexterous hands and sometimes agile  
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*Spring 2024*  **MODERN IN DENVER**

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# Where art blooms.



*Getsuen (Lily) Chair*, c. 1990  
designed by Masanori Umeda (b. 1941)



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WORDS: Tamara Chuang

PLUGGED IN VINTAGE

Mid-century style continues to influence the look of objects that haven’t been updated for decades. Take portable amplifiers, for example. Guitarists have lugged around the same black boxes for years to practice and gigs. But the SongBook Max by Tivoli Audio is barely recognizable, with its retro-modern style and simple knobs that look as classic as an Eichler home. SongBook is quite the Luddite, though, and keeps music simple with an analog equalizer, toggle buttons to power on, and even an antenna for FM radio. At least it runs on a rechargeable battery that provides 10 hours of life.

+tivoliaudio.com



FILM IS NOT DEAD

Kodak’s relaunched Super 8 Camera brings back the feeling of recording videos on a dedicated piece of technology. It’s also a return to something called...film. It’s a modern hybrid of the super popular camera that inspired countless amateur filmmakers from a company that never quite gave up on film. Yes, Kodak still manufactures the artifact for a niche market that swears film produces a superior quality that digital photography just can’t capture. The new Super 8 does offer some modern updates though, like a charging cable, SD-card reader, and a pop-out LCD viewfinder with an interactive menu. But film, even for a limited audience, is what made Kodak Kodak. Perhaps that’s why the Super 8 is not just for any hobbyist, but one who can spring for a \$5,495 camera.

+kodak.com



VISION & SOUND

With all the advances in digital audio, Samsung is taking a different approach with its new Music Frame. Sure, it’s a speaker with the company’s technology. But it’s also disguised as a working picture frame to display actual art and photographs. Music Frame builds on Samsung’s popular Frame TV that disguises electronics as home decor. And being Samsung, the speaker has all the essential audio needs: it’s wireless, has woofers, and integrates Samsung’s Q-Symphony technology to provide better surround sound, especially when paired with a Samsung TV or soundbar.

+samsung.com



SCREENLESS UNLIMITED

Touch the wood slat to see the digital magic appear. The mui Board from Japan’s mui Lab is a smart-home controller disguised as a simple piece of wood. Mui uses technology known as “material user interface” to translate finger touches into words that send messages to other members in the home. A touch also controls smart plugs, lights, music, and other internet-connecting things. Get the family back by reducing screen time without going cold turkey on technology.

+muilab.com







PERENNIAL FAVES

Flowers are timeless motifs used on all sorts of objects, like these glass containers by Hikaru Sugimoto, a designer at Ishizuka Glass Co. in Japan. The design could be from this year, or last, but as you may have guessed, they're from the mid 20th century—1961 to be exact. Sugimoto revived the pattern from the Aderia Retro line of glasses that were all the rage in Japan at the time, used to serve plum wine or store small items. Ishikuza offers the vintage collection once again.

+[moma.org](#)



TEXT STYLE

If there's a good reason to bring back mobile phone keyboards, the team behind Clicks picked the right message: on-screen keyboards take up too much screen. Click's keyboard occupies none of that valued real estate and instead, adds a QWERTY keyboard to the bottom of an iPhone case. No batteries or Bluetooth are needed, because Clicks plugs into an iPhone's energy for an instant connection. But the team behind Clicks, which includes former BlackBerry employees, didn't stop there. The keyboard has buttons like CMD so common Apple shortcuts work. Another button launches the microphone or backlight for the keyboard. Numbers are in a line on the top row, just like iOS's on-screen keyboard. While this may not help the fat fingered, it's aimed at creators who yearn to type legibly and longer.

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HIP HOP

The next all-star app may not be an app at all, at least that’s how the team at the buzzy company called Rabbit envisions its technology. Rabbit created an AI-based operating system called Rabbit OS, which combines the ease of a tool like Chat-GPT with real-life action. Train it by letting it peek into how you book a vacation on your Airbnb account, and next time, it’ll book it for you on your voice command. To personally train it, there’s the new R1, a palm-sized orange “pocket companion” that could replace your iPhone someday. Skeptics worry about privacy, which isn’t clearly explained by the company and could turn into a nightmare for a wascally wabbit. The hot-selling R1 is priced at \$199 and estimates (fittingly) an Easter 2024 delivery.

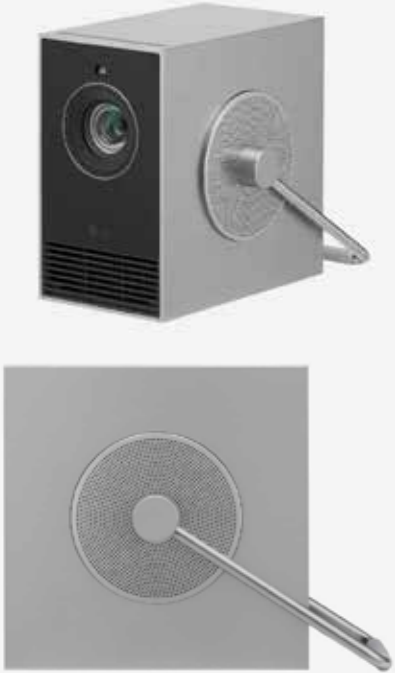
+rabbit.tech



LIGHT BEAM

The diminutive CineBeam Qube projector from LG gives a design nod to retro box cameras. Hardly larger than two iPhone 14s placed side by side, the petite 4K projector can throw out a massive 120-inch screen.

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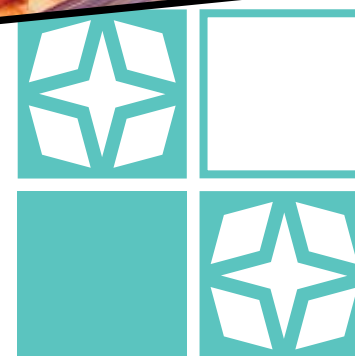


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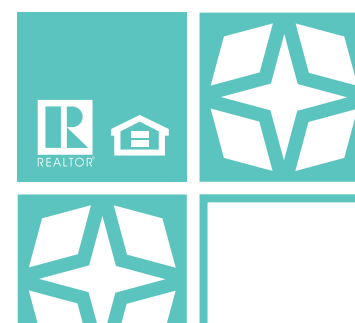


  
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# A WORLD OF PURIFYING COLOR!

WORDS: Sean O'Keefe

Innovative Singaporean company Gush introduces an interior paint line whose active agents passively—and colorfully!—clean the air around you.

Modern living might be continually rejuvenated by design trends, exotic building materials, and the latest furnishings, yet many of us still experience a sense of stagnation we can't quite place. Trapped within the walls of our homes, offices, and indoor environments are various volatile organic compounds (VOCs), excess moisture, carbon monoxide, and other environmental pollutants that accumulate in the air we breathe, compelling a continual malaise.

Latent air quality contaminants from materials like carpets, flooring, glues, caulks, paints, and solvents are released in a slow process called off-gassing. Toxic components commonly off-gassed include formaldehyde, benzene, and toluene. Each poses a threat to our health and wellness. But thanks in no small part to the COVID-19 pandemic, a plethora of products designed to enhance indoor air quality are making their way to market as the new normal has rejuvenated ambitions to improve human and environmental wellbeing.

Introducing Gush Interior Paints, an innovative air-purifying product that is easily applied, requires no maintenance, and works on a round-the-clock basis without light or electricity. Gush paint not only looks nice, it works hard so any wall in a home, office, classroom, or workshop is transformed into a pollutant-neutralizing, passive air purifier that is as simple as a fresh coat of paint. The difference between Gush and conventional interior paint is their use of specialized Gush Proprietary Catalyst (GPC). GPC acts as a catalytic agent, cutting the organic chemical bonds of most VOCs when they contact the painted surface, and thus cleaning the air.



Sold in a range of hues, Gush interior paint offers an innovative, passive air-purification system that requires no more than a fresh coat of paint. Gush's Proprietary Catalyst organically disrupts the chemical bonds in most VOCs, rendering them inert.





Carpets, flooring, furniture, stoves, household cleaning products, and more contribute to home air contamination. Tests show that a wall painted with Gush will remove mold and commonly occurring bacteria 24/7 without supplemental light or electricity.

GUSH'S PASSIVE AIR-QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS ARE MEASURABLE. ONCE THE PAINT IS APPLIED, THIRD-PARTY CERTIFIED LABORATORY TESTING SHOWS THAT THE GPCS IN GUSH BEGIN TO BREAK DOWN VOCs IN THE AIR AND DEODORIZE THE SPACE OF CHEMICAL FUMES WITHIN THE FIRST 21 HOURS.

Gush's passive air-quality improvements are measurable. Once the paint is applied, third-party certified laboratory testing shows that the GPCs in Gush begin to break down VOCs in the air and deodorize the space of chemical fumes within the first 21 hours. Gush also stops microbial growth with an absorption element that keeps molds and common bacteria from sprouting on the painted surface. Testing reveals that a surface painted with Gush will remove 99 percent of commonly occurring *E. coli* and *S. aureus* bacteria, and 100 percent of mold. And the effects are cumulative. Over six years, air quality improvements in a space painted with Gush show dramatically lower levels of formaldehyde, compared to a room painted with other leading consumer brand paints.

A Singaporean company, Gush is a member of the U.S. Green Building Council and has received accreditation as a GreenLabel Singapore Product. It is also GREENGUARD Gold certified. In addition to paints, the company makes a line of window films called Gush ClearCool that passively reduce indoor temperatures during hotter months.

Available in over 60 hues, Gush interior paint can be purchased online and is sold in one, five, or 20 liter increments (one liter costs roughly \$28 USD). It's the perfect aid for your spring cleaning, promising to detoxify your space before the paint is even dry. ■

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# FINE FOOD ART

CHEF DANIEL HUMM USES DRAWING AND JOURNALING TO GROW A NEW RESTAURANT CONCEPT FROM THE DUST OF THE PANDEMIC.

WORDS: Heather Shoning

What do you do when you've reached the pinnacle of your career and you're only 40?

Chef Daniel Humm wrote a new recipe for success, taking a massive gamble on a new concept that could have destroyed his three-Michelin-Star iconic New York restaurant, Eleven Madison Park. The famed restaurant was named No. 1 in the world on The World's 50 Best Restaurants list in 2017. Three short years later, the bottom dropped out of the restaurant industry, and Humm found himself facing bankruptcy as he marinated on the culinary world and its place in the world at large. Throughout the pandemic, he opened the doors not for the \$300-per-plate dinners, but instead as a commissary kitchen feeding \$2 boxed meals to 3,000 New Yorkers per day. Humm says he felt more connected to cooking than ever because of that mission.

What came out of this time of reflection was a shock to the culinary community, not to mention a possibly fatal risk for his business. Humm stripped Eleven Madison Park's menu of delicacies such as duck, lobster, and foie gras, reinventing his concept to be 100 percent plant based. He felt a strong need to use his platform—his restaurant—to promote a more earth-friendly way of eating. His latest book, *Eat More Plants: A Chef's Journal*, captures the process of making that decision and cultivating the menu.



Part of Daniel Humm's menu-making process includes sketching and making notes about dishes and ingredients. It was a natural way for him to cultivate his ideas for transforming his restaurant's menu to a solely plant-based concept.





Although it was never intended to become a book, the colorful drawings and journal notes were part of Humm’s creative process as he tended the sprout of an idea about plant-based eating and a new vision for his career. A childhood trip to the l’Orangerie in Paris fostered a hunger for creative expression, and Humm says he probably knows more about art than he does about cooking. So, it was a natural way for him to express his ideas as they grew.

Following the seasonality of a plant-based menu, the book is divided into four sections: spring, summer, fall, and winter. Pop-off-the-page colors depict popular produce such as zucchinis, cucumbers, and peaches, while others illustrate more elusive crops such as elderflowers and matsutake mushrooms. Musings and



ALTHOUGH IT WAS NEVER INTENDED TO BECOME A BOOK, THE COLORFUL DRAWINGS AND JOURNAL NOTES WERE PART OF HUMM’S CREATIVE PROCESS AS HE TENDED THE SPROUT OF AN IDEA ABOUT PLANT-BASED EATING AND A NEW VISION FOR HIS CAREER.

meditations—in his own script—from Humm’s journal are peppered throughout. The coffee table-style visual diary is not the first time the chef has used a medley of journaling and art. Humm says each season, when he plans a new menu, he draws ingredients and scribbles thoughts and feelings about the food. Ingredients are like old friends. He says he knows each one a little better every year.

Embarking on this artistic process in his endeavor to reinvent his restaurant opened his eyes—and palate—not only to new possibilities for creativity in food, but also to the understanding that remaining within the regular conventions of the fine dining experience was the most robust limitation of his career. ■



Each page of *Eat More Plants: A Chef’s Journal* features Humm’s drawings and notes, including this spread demonstrating his characterization of the weight of the decision he was making: “This is anything but a linear process. This is a complex network of roots.”



yes, it's a party.

hello spring.

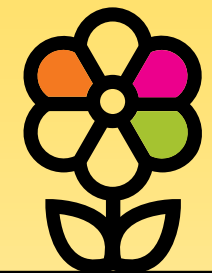
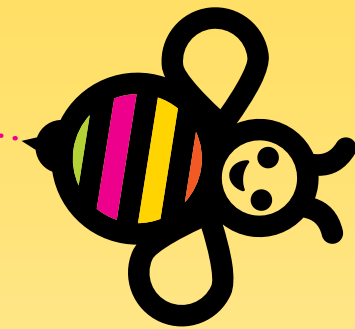
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# A RIVER RUNS OVER IT

Textured by the riverbed it was extracted from, Abonos wood is front and center in Italian designer Paola Lenti's new Taol table.

WORDS: Heather Shoning

**L**onging for a dining table that's high-quality, unique, design-forward, *and* sustainable? It's a tall order that Italian designer Paola Lenti is ready to fulfill. She recently released her new Taol table with the option for a truly one-of-a-kind design using Abonos wood tabletop material.

Abonos. It's a mysterious word. The literal translation from Spanish to English is fertilizer. It doesn't appear to have meaning in Italian. However, the Italian designer has embraced it in her latest designs. The trademarked version of the word means "a wood of fluvial origin," and that definition is even a bit slippery. For this product—and the tables Lenti creates from it—are nothing short of material magnum opus.

With its T-shape and modified cylindrical base, Lenti's Taol table is like a visual representation of the letters in its name. The hefty stainless-steel base follows the graceful silhouette of the top—square (or rectangular) with rounded corners that are finished in corrosion-protected varnish in black or white. It's simply a refined pedestal for the star of the show. The Abonos top.







As the definition suggest, the wood is indeed of fluvial origin, delicately extracted from its aquatic deathbed. Its unique fossilization process from being buried in riverbeds—sometimes dating back to the great glaciations—translates into a texture and density that reveals the thousand tiny fingerprints of its water, sand, and gravel bedfellows.

Abonos's born-again ethos is typical of Lenti's design philosophy. Lenti founded her namesake business in 1994, first as an outdoor furniture manufacturer and later expanded to indoor furnishings. She was joined in the venture by her younger sister, Anna, in 2000, and credits her with the company's international success. Innovation with an eye toward sustainability is the foundation of the business, which today has work in more than 60 countries and 300 international showrooms.

The Taol table uses extricated Abonos timber that bears the fruits of its internment through its varied color

and texture. Warmer, orangey tones indicate it came from a riverbed laden with clay, while cooler gray tones tell the story of a rocky riverbed resting spot. Because of this varied history, no two pieces of wood, and hence no two tabletops, are alike. Creating the final product from this precious and precarious wood involves a layering process with linen fabric, resulting in a highly stable top at a whisper-thin gauge. Although the wood is naturally hard, it is treated to be water- and oil-repellant—perfect for design-minded individuals, even in a home with small children.

Additionally, the ages-long submersion makes the wood resistant to humidity and other challenging climate conditions, rendering it suitable for rebirth into outdoor furnishings like Lenti's Taol. However adaptable it may be, the design-forward styling of this unique piece says, "I belong front and center." ■

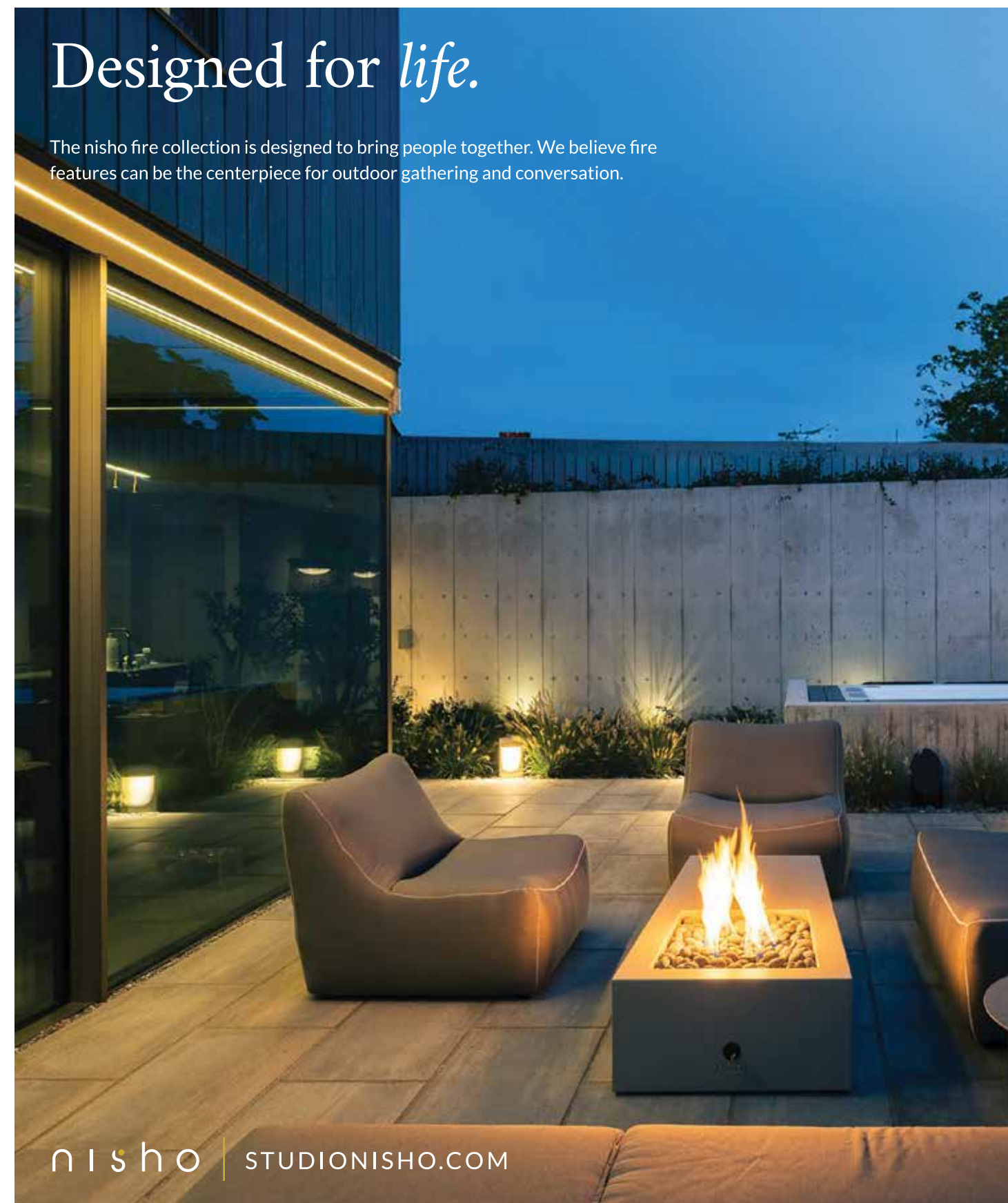


Organic fingerprints from years of caresses by underwater debris create a unique patina on Abonos wood. Paola Lenti uses this material in her latest creation, the Taol table, whose simple shape honors the ornamentation of its once-underwater top.

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# UP LEG A

WORDS: Cory Phare

Paris-based furniture company TIPTOE builds on a foundation of modularity, European craft, and sustainability, bringing its brand of accessible luxury to Colorado—and proving it’s got more than one leg to stand on.

**I**N France, a table leg is known as a “table foot.” So when Vincent Quesada and Mattieu Bourgeaux founded their Paris-based furniture company in 2015 and launched its first product—their spin on a uniquely French modular support system affording customization and interchangeability for customers who might frequently change their tastes alongside their Parisian apartments—the name they chose for the company was a shoo-in.

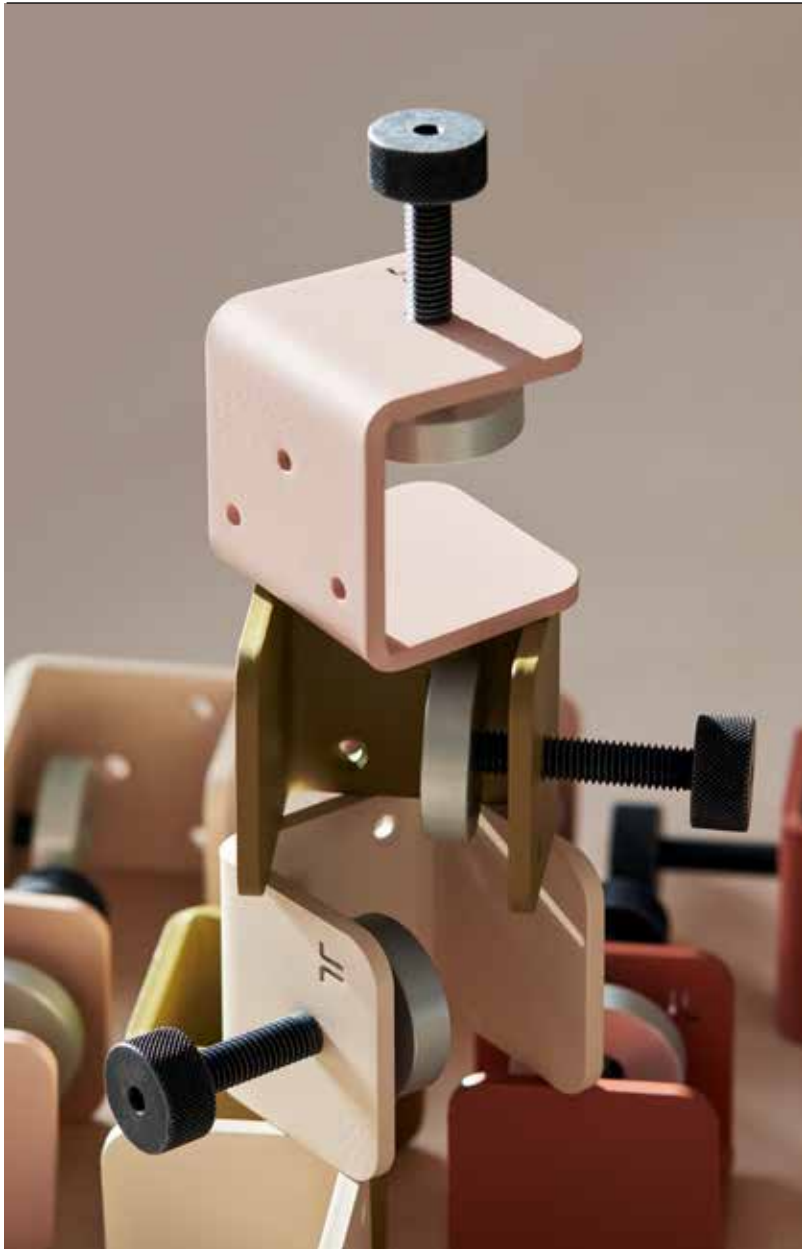
“TIPTOE started as a silly little pun, but was something we thought could work well abroad, eventually,” Quesada says.

They were right; TIPTOE has found solid footing. Over the past eight years, the company’s emergence as a 20-employee-strong success story has seen their tables, chairs, and furniture systems launched worldwide, from countryside homes and Hermès storefronts to museums such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris and high-end New York City restaurants.

The company eschews operating in a business-as-usual fashion, instead combining their history of precision craftsmanship with a personal touch for a final product that balances function, aesthetics, and durability. TIPTOE touches down this year in Colorado via Denver-based agent ModMobili.

TIPTOE’s signature system—a modular table leg fastened with clamps—continues a classic element of French design, dating back to 1972 when designer François Arnal introduced the “serre-joint T9” support. The concept was later revisited by designer Philippe Nigro in the 2000s, with his creation of the T.U. table.





“WHEN I SAW WHAT THEY WERE DOING, I THOUGHT, ‘I WANT TO HELP CHAMPION THIS BRAND IN THE STATES.’ THEY’RE SMART. THEY’RE INTERESTING. THEIR USE OF MATERIALS IS REALLY COOL. THE QUALITY IS SUPER HIGH, BUT THE PRICE POINT IS APPROACHABLE. I THINK OF TIPTOE AS AFFORDABLE LUXURY THAT WILL LAST THE TEST OF TIME.”

-Jonathan Auty

Available in a variety of colors, TIPTOE’s signature bracket is a riff on the precisely crafted hallmark of French modularity. Their interpretation affords TIPTOE customers a world of customization.

The distinction TIPTOE brings to this historic offering is in quality and color, according to Quesada, who notes prominent 20th century artist Yves Klein and the company’s Parisian roots as sources of continual inspiration.

“Being located in Paris is a true opportunity for us; Paris moves fast and so much is happening here across all creative fields—such as product design, architecture, photography, gastronomy, music, and fashion,” he says. “Yet, in a way, things move within the limit of what Paris is—it has to be French.”

Coming to the United States, Quesada was impressed by the sense of action and optimism he saw reflected in the design of hotels, restaurants, and workspaces. He felt a harmonious fit for his company’s three-pronged commitment to form, function, and lifecycle.

Jonathan Auty, founder of Denver-based ModMobili and representative for TIPTOE U.S., Mexico, and Western Canada, felt the confluence too. He was able to partner with the company soon after connecting with them in New York last fall, where they met through a connection at the Danish furniture company Normann Copenhagen.

“It was the combination of several small things—the company, the people behind it, and their sustainability ethos,” Auty says of the initial impulse he felt with TIPTOE. “When I saw what they



were doing, I thought, ‘I want to help champion this brand in the States.’ They’re smart. They’re interesting. Their use of materials is really cool. The quality is super high, but the price point is approachable. I think of TIPTOE as affordable luxury that will last the test of time.”

As evidence, Auty points to TIPTOE’s philosophy of modularity, which extends beyond the table leg to the production itself. TIPTOE’s main manufacturing partner is Bourgeaux’s family metal processing factory. Working within a familial chain provides greater latitude for innovation and quality

control, as opposed to having to work with a separate commercial facility that might outsource components globally. Efficient warehousing for meeting on-demand fabrication and flat-pack delivery also afford TIPTOE volume-based savings and greater profitability.

Another critical component is full-lifecycle sustainability. As a certified B Corp and “entreprise à mission” (a French certification for purpose-driven companies), TIPTOE’s polestar remains its five principles for suitable design: make things simple, make more with less, use the right materials, build to last, and

TIPTOE’s commitment to sustainability results in durable products that are designed to last for decades, and that can also be easily repaired or replaced if needed, thanks to their component based approach.





design for disassembly. In practice, that means planning for decades—not obsolescence—and prioritizing reparability, replaceability, and durable, recyclable materials.

FSC certified oak is used in many of the company's offerings. Other products use reclaimed wood from demolished European buildings and barn doors, the imperfections providing character and capturing the material's organic evolution over decades.

The powder-coated steel found in their original table leg system has a legacy that extends back even further. Cofounder Bourgeaux's grandfather owned a metal workshop in the French Alps; the region's manufacturing history reaches back to the 18th century, when farmers would collaborate with Swiss watchmakers during the wintertime, and subsequently developed world-renowned techniques for high-quality production. Quesada notes how this familial industrial design

legacy, of combining standardized and one-of-a-kind elements, informs TIPTOE's precision-driven approach today.

TIPTOE has also worked hard to grow their ability to utilize recycled plastics in their products. In addition to breathing new life into yogurt cups, flowerpots, and plastic bags, one recent project saw old McDonald's Happy Meal toys shredded and melted into a multicolored children's tabletop. Quesada attributes the joyful problem-solving in that project to his own childhood "imagineering" with LEGO.

"Our products tell a story—a narrative of creativity and color and playfulness," he says. "Sustainable design can mean a lot, or it can mean nothing. For us, it's about quality and what we owe the customers."

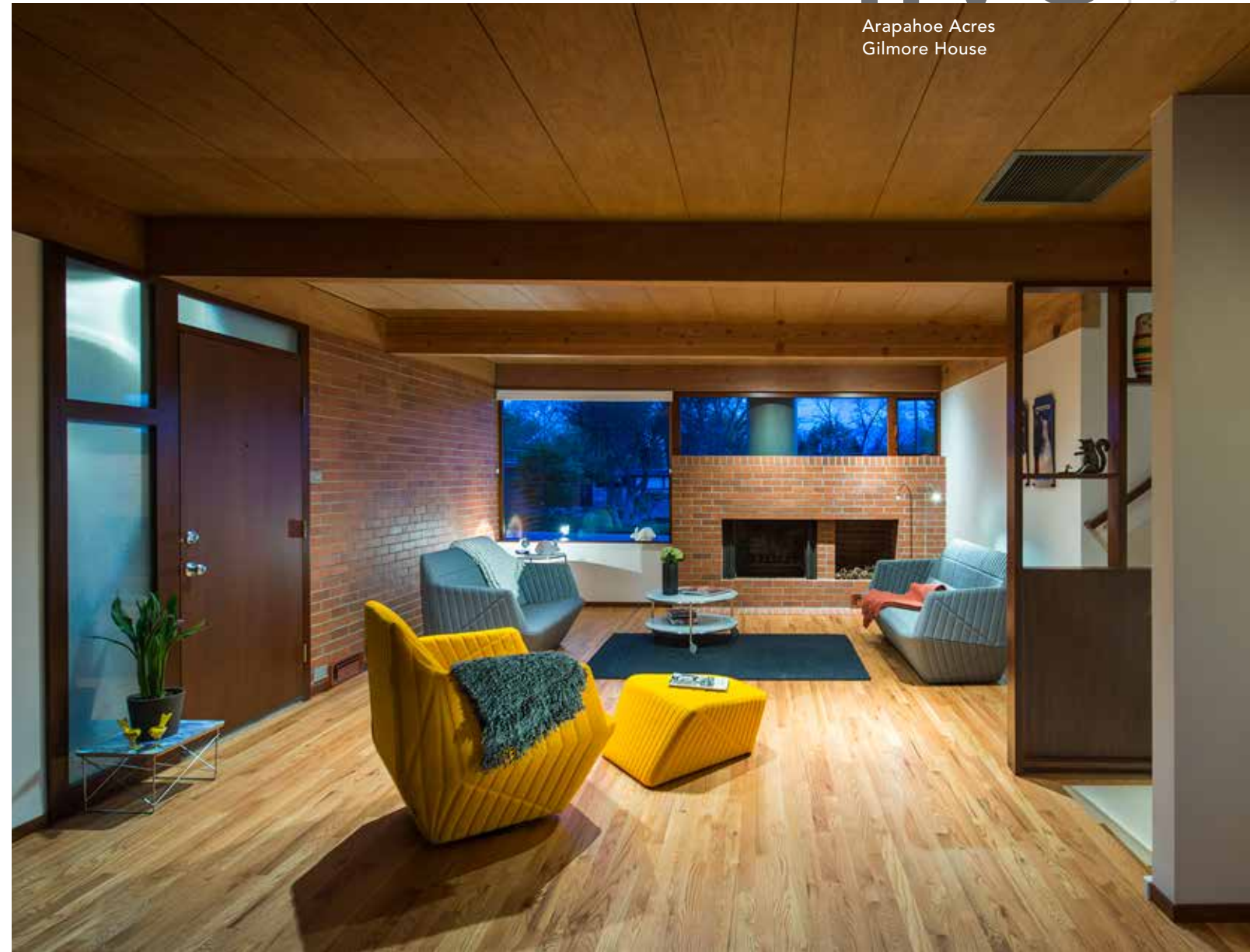
Utility, beauty, and longevity are critical to a successful furniture company's long-term impact and sustainability efforts. But too

TIPTOE cofounder Vincent Quesada attributes the confluence of art, music, fashion, and product design as TIPTOE's inspiration. "It's always intriguing to see how people use our products within their space to make them their own," he says.

often, we think of sustainability in terms of what is being done to the world beyond, and not how design sustains us—our sense of home, our humanity. What Quesada and Bourgeaux's company embodies is the belief that we can and should fill our homes with pieces that are as adaptable and timeless as we are.

"Do we feel a responsibility for the design we bring into the world or are we just looking at better looking landfills?" asks Auty. "Selling a chair is not interesting—there are a million chairs out there. But selling a product where consumers have the opportunity to connect with the people and the ethos behind the company? I think that's something pretty special." ■









# INNATELY CONNECTED

*Biophilia: Nature Reimagined* at the Denver Art Museum explores the powerful connection between humans and the natural world through art, design, and architecture.

WORDS: David Hill

When the celebrated biologist and writer Edward O. Wilson popularized the term biophilia, he wasn't thinking about art and design, but the notion infuses a new exhibition at the Denver Art Museum.

Wilson, who died in 2021, defined biophilia as “the innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes,” an instinctual human need to connect with nature. “Humanity,” he wrote in his 1984 book *Biophilia*, “is exalted not because we are so far above other living creatures, but because knowing them well elevates the very concept of life.”



*Biophilia: Nature Reimagined*, on view from May 5 through August 11, 2024, showcases the work of dozens of contemporary artists, designers, and architects who have embraced the concept of biophilia. Organized by Darrin Alfred, the museum’s curator of architecture and design, the exhibition brings together more than 80 works—including physical objects, sculptures, digital installations, architectural models and photographs, furniture, clothing, and multisensory experiences.

The exhibition, Alfred writes in the accompanying digital catalog, serves as a reminder that “nature’s principles and pleasures can enrich our lives and reconnect us with our natural environment.”

“We’re living in an age of hyper urbanization and hyper digitalization,” Alfred says. “We’re losing our connection to the natural world. We’re on our phones all the time, using different devices that separate us from nature. Kids aren’t spending as much time outdoors as they used to. How can we use design, architecture, and fashion to talk about that and look at how some creative practices are in many ways trying to reconnect us with the natural world?”

Alfred had been working on the show’s concept for several years when the COVID-19 pandemic upended the museum’s schedule of exhibitions. “At first, it was frustrating to put things on hold,” Alfred says, “but then I realized the theme of biophilia had become even more relevant. Tragic as it is, the pandemic highlighted the innate human desire for connection.”

*Biophilia* is organized into three themes:

**Natural Analogs: Form and Pattern**, which Alfred calls “a testament to nature’s shapes, structures, and geometries, both living and inanimate.”

Nervous System design studio’s *Floraform Chandelier*, for example, takes its inspiration from the biomechanics of growing leaves and blooming flowers. The hanging light, developed with generative algorithms and fabricated using a 3D printer, casts what the artists—Jessica Rosenkrantz and Jesse Louis-Rosenberg—call “a dense forest of shadows.”



Nervous System design studio’s *Floraform Chandelier*(TOP) is a hanging light inspired by the biomechanics of growing leaves and blooming flowers. Developed with generative algorithms and fabricated using a 3D printer, the light casts what the artists call “a dense forest of shadows.” *Nana Lure Chandelier*(ABOVE), by Brooklyn-based design studio PELLE, features cast paper that’s been hand-painted to resemble banana fronds. Previous page: *Meadow*, by Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta of DRIFT.



ABOVE: Populus, a new Denver hotel designed by Chicago-based architecture firm Studio Gang, is scheduled to open this summer. The building’s distinctive window shapes were inspired by the characteristic patterns found on Aspen trees. RIGHT: *Desert Paper 09*, made of creosote and jute, is one of several experimental baskets in the exhibition created by Tohono O’odham artist Terrol Dew Johnson and Aranda\Lasch Studio.



A modular screen called *Algues* (French for algae), by the brothers Ronan Bouroullec and Erwan Bouroullec, was inspired the marine plant’s intricate patterns. Made of individual pieces of injection-molded plastic, the result is “a chaotic ensemble of small shapes which becomes a piece of embroidery.”

**Natural Systems: Processes and Phenomena** focuses on “nature’s dynamic processes and captivating phenomena.” One of the highlights in this category is *Meadow*, by Dutch artists Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta of DRIFT. It’s a kinetic installation that features suspended mechanical silk flowers that open and close at different times. “For this installation,” Alfred says, “the artists chose colors that are based on wildflowers found in Colorado.”

Like many of the works on display, *Meadow* employs technology to re-create the natural world. Alfred acknowledges the contradiction. “Technology separates us from nature,” he says, “but at the same time, it allows artists and designers to create patterns and forms and structures that reflect the natural world.”

*Flowers and People – A Whole Year per Hour*, a digital installation by the Tokyo-based art collective teamLab,

uses six video screens to compress an entire year of flowers blooming into one hour. Depending on where visitors stand, they can affect the rate of growth. “Stand still at a certain distance and the flowers grow more profusely,” Alfred says. “As you move away, the flowers start to wither and die and then blow away.” The implication: people are not separate from nature but are an integral part of it.

**Topophilia: People and Place** explores the emotional connection between people and their physical environment.

Conveniently, Chicago-based architecture firm Studio Gang designed a new downtown Denver hotel, Populus, scheduled to open this summer. For *Biophilia*, Alfred has included a large-scale model of the project, located at the corner of 14th Street and West Colfax Avenue, along with architectural renderings and drawings. The building’s distinctive window shapes were informed by the characteristic patterns found on Aspen trees. As they grow, the trees shed their lower branches, leaving behind eye-shaped markings—familiar to most Coloradans—on their trunks.

“I’m thrilled that we have a project in the exhibition that visitors can go see for themselves,” Alfred says.





“HUMANITY IS EXALTED NOT BECAUSE WE ARE SO FAR ABOVE OTHER LIVING CREATURES, BUT BECAUSE KNOWING THEM WELL ELEVATES THE VERY CONCEPT OF LIFE.” -Edward O. Wilson

The work of another firm, Beijing-based MAD Architects, is included in the exhibition, but not for its local project, One River North, currently under construction. The RiNo apartment building features a prominent gash in its façade that will be filled with greenery. However, for *Biophilia*, Alfred has showcased the firm’s Nanjing Zendai Himalayas Center, a mixed-use complex with mountain-like structures that evoke a traditional Chinese landscape painting. According to the architects, the center’s design “maintains and develops the philosophy of cooperation between humanity and nature, albeit in a modern setting.” The project “seeks to restore harmony between humans and the environment by creating integrated, contemplative spaces that still meet the material needs of modern life.”

Alfred believes that *Biophilia: Nature Reimagined* will be especially meaningful to Colorado residents. “We love the

outdoors, hiking, getting up to the mountains,” he says. “There’s this general feeling that we’re connected with the natural world in some way. But I don’t think many people really understand the science behind that connection—that it’s an innate, genetic kind of connection.”

As Alfred explains in the digital catalog, the exhibition “reminds us that the path to reconnection is ever-present, and artists, designers, and architects can unveil the wisdom and beauty of the natural world.” For him, *Biophilia* is “a call to action, urging us to embark on a journey of reconnection with nature, not only for ourselves but for future generations. This is no small thing. Our well-being, identity, and the survival of our planet depend on it.”

*Flowers and People – A Whole Year per Hour*, an interactive installation by the Tokyo-based art collective teamLab, uses six video screens to compress an entire year of flowers blooming into one hour. Visitors can affect the rate of growth depending on where they stand. The takeaway: people are not separate from nature but are an integral part of it.



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PHOTO: Kevin Philip Williams

Local landscape architects, designers, and horticulturists share insights on the intrinsic relationship between humans and plants, recommending a few of their favorite flora for home gardeners.

# HAND IN GLOVE

WORDS: Laurie Lauletta-Boshart

**WHY ARE HUMANS SO DRAWN TO PLANTS?** Research shows that plants reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve mood. This interdependent relationship is crucial for the survival of both species on physiological and psychological levels. And, for those like landscape architects who work to enliven the built environment, plants are an important design tool. These professionals’ intimate experience with, and knowledge of plants provides a unique window into the botanical world. “When humans interact with plants, we recognize the importance, presence, and agency of the non-human,” says Ashley Ingraham, principal and owner of Evoke Landscape. In turn, relating to the non-human reinforces our humanity.

Plants induce emotional and spiritual experiences for humans through their seasonal evolution of living, changing, growing, and dying. “Plants have been intertwined with human culture, rituals, and aesthetics throughout history,” says Chris Turner, Elevate by Design cofounder and principal. Plants can also be associated with memorable life experiences, such as “a childhood memory of swinging on a century-old oak, a walk in a golden aspen forest at peak season, and a drive in a seemingly endless tallgrass prairie,” says Design Workshop principal Mike Albert. Plants have character and adaptability beyond anything humans can design or construct. “Simply put, plants add life,” says Ransom Beegles, principal of R Design in Denver. “While plant material is not the solution to every design problem, it is a critical part of changing a place into a habitat.”

Selecting plant species that thrive in Colorado’s dynamic climate is not for the uninformed. Knowing which plants thrive where is imperative to design that is both aesthetically and ecologically pleasing. Tapping into the vast knowledge of landscape professionals who have plied their craft through Colorado’s ever-changing seasons is a good place to start. Here, we talk to several prominent local landscape architects, designers, and horticulturists who share the what and why behind their favorite plants.





HAND IN GLOVE



**KEVIN PHILIP WILLIAMS, HORTICULTURIST**  
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[+denverbotanicgardens.org](http://denverbotanicgardens.org)

Shrubs from the steppes, mountains, and deserts throughout Colorado and the American Southwest tend to be critically overlooked for their beauty, resilience, and adaptability to the designed landscape. Our shrublands often occur in environments even too extreme to host other plant types, so using these shrublands as models for our built environments we can see that there are shrubs that will thrive in any growing condition. Our regional shrubs offer various flowering, fruiting, and seasonal leaf-color, and their ever presence provides a consistency and focal point in the garden that persists even when other plants have withered. The rose family’s *Fallugia paradoxa* (pónil) simultaneously holds delicate white blooms and feathery pink plumes, creating a stunning display. *Ericameria nauseosa* (rubber rabbitbrush), a type of aster, has stems that range in color from yellowish-green to bluish-white and explode with late-season acid-yellow blooms that support birds and pollinators.

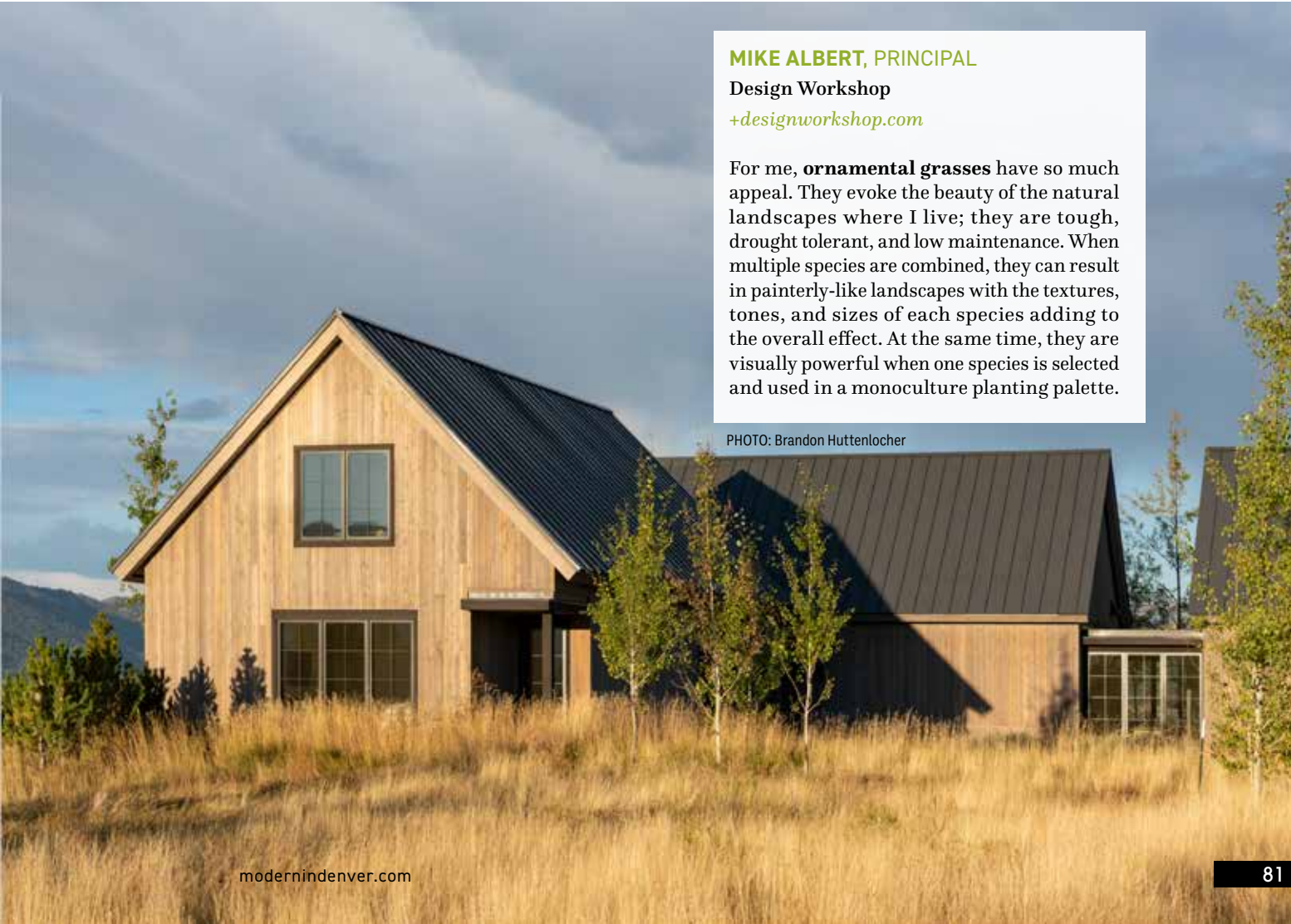


PHOTO: Kevin Philip Williams



**PAUL WRONA**  
COFOUNDER, PRINCIPAL  
Elevate By Design  
[+ebdstudios.com](http://ebdstudios.com)

One of the qualities I love about plants is the whimsical nature of some of them. The **Maiden Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)**, in particular the variety “Morning Light,” is a prime example. Its arching form with feathery plumes flows effortlessly in the breeze like a choreographed dance. As its name describes, the plumes catch the light, creating a captivating effect.

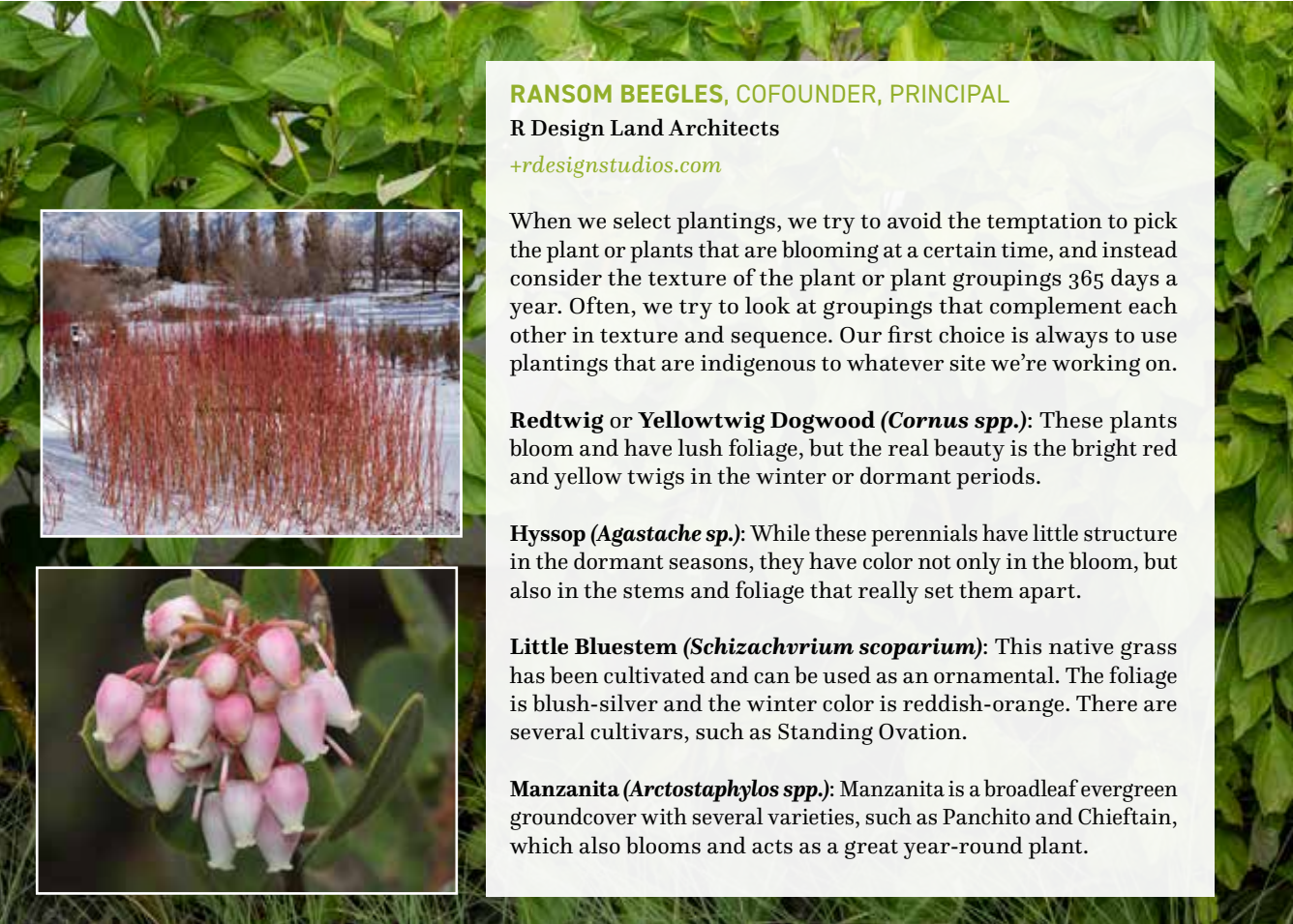


**MIKE ALBERT, PRINCIPAL**  
Design Workshop  
[+designworkshop.com](http://designworkshop.com)

For me, **ornamental grasses** have so much appeal. They evoke the beauty of the natural landscapes where I live; they are tough, drought tolerant, and low maintenance. When multiple species are combined, they can result in painterly-like landscapes with the textures, tones, and sizes of each species adding to the overall effect. At the same time, they are visually powerful when one species is selected and used in a monoculture planting palette.

PHOTO: Brandon Huttenlocher





**RANSOM BEEGLES, COFOUNDER, PRINCIPAL**  
R Design Land Architects  
[+rdesignstudios.com](http://+rdesignstudios.com)



When we select plantings, we try to avoid the temptation to pick the plant or plants that are blooming at a certain time, and instead consider the texture of the plant or plant groupings 365 days a year. Often, we try to look at groupings that complement each other in texture and sequence. Our first choice is always to use plantings that are indigenous to whatever site we're working on.

**Redtwig or Yellowtwig Dogwood (*Cornus spp.*):** These plants bloom and have lush foliage, but the real beauty is the bright red and yellow twigs in the winter or dormant periods.

**Hyssop (*Agastache sp.*):** While these perennials have little structure in the dormant seasons, they have color not only in the bloom, but also in the stems and foliage that really set them apart.

**Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*):** This native grass has been cultivated and can be used as an ornamental. The foliage is blush-silver and the winter color is reddish-orange. There are several cultivars, such as Standing Ovation.

**Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos spp.*):** Manzanita is a broadleaf evergreen groundcover with several varieties, such as Panchito and Chieftain, which also blooms and acts as a great year-round plant.

 **HAND IN GLOVE**



**CHRIS TURNER, COFOUNDER, PRINCIPAL**  
Elevate By Design  
[+ebdstudios.com](http://+ebdstudios.com)

One plant family that stands out for its adaptability, diversity, and widespread appeal is the **Asteraceae** family, commonly known as the aster, daisy, or sunflower family. This family encompasses an incredible range of plants with diverse characteristics, shapes, and sizes, showcasing remarkable adaptability to various climates and ecosystems. Asteraceae's ability to thrive in different environments, from deserts to alpine regions, and their varied growth habits—from small, delicate flowers to towering sunflowers—make them captivating and versatile. Many members of this family bloom across multiple seasons, providing a visual spectacle and ecological support throughout the year. Their resilience, aesthetic appeal, and ecological importance make Asteraceae noteworthy and fascinating to observe.



PHOTO: Kevin Philip Williams



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## IN EVERY DIMENSION

Initially designed to be a modular prefab, an inviting modern home by Flower Architecture shows how sustained flexibility leads to greater, more meaningful permanence.

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly

IMAGES: James Florio



Multiple textures cohere on the custom Boulder home's exterior. One portion is clad in extra-long handmade brick, while another incorporates a diagonally-detailed wood screen that both protects the deck above it and, as Flower principal Nicholas Fiore shares, "creates a nest or basket-like effect that relates to the trees around it."





## ENVELOPED IN HANDMADE BRICK, WHITE OAK, AND OFFSET BOARD AND BATTEN, THE WARM AND

modern residence designed by Flower Architecture on Boulder's western edge is as sophisticated, intentionally-crafted, and personable as every other designed by principal architect Nicholas Fiore. But it's not the house anyone involved first thought it would be—not the clients, architect, builders, nor the city reviewers. Because everyone was able to stay present to an unfolding creative process, this house has become something better than first imagined: a thought experiment carried through to its full physical expression.

When the clients, who are soon-to-be empty-nesters, hired Fiore to design them a house that could accommodate their family's current and future configurations, they had a modular, factory-built structure in mind. And they'd even selected a company in the Pacific Northwest who they wanted to manufacture, ship, and crane it into place on their sloping one-third acre lot. To literally concretize the home, they hired Boulder-based construction firm Buildwell to pour a full foundation and build a garage, patio, and deck.



Shinnoki oak veneer from Belgium features in the lounge-like living area in its wall paneling, built-in sofa, and operable wooden window screens. The same wood wraps the ceiling and is repeated in the exposed beams and custom vents. Each of the home's many built-ins were designed by Fiore in close collaboration with Buildwell's Ryan Wither and interior designer Kate Moore.



The approach excited Fiore, who has in recent years found himself holding the tension of creating beautiful, meaningful, and ethical custom architecture within increasingly constricted (and well-understood by him) systems—like Boulder's rigorous building codes, adaptations for improved energy and carbon usage, or individually determined budgets of money and time. Always willing to experiment, he saw how design constraints like those a modular prefab project invite could actually significantly ease the others.

In design, modularity is loved for its flexibility, prefabrication for its speed. Modular home design relies on a handful of same-sized rectilinear forms that can be variously ordered, stacked, brought together, and pulled apart—like boxes—to address particular wants and needs. With the prefabrication aspect reducing

construction time (but usually not cost, Fiore explains) more of it can be given to design and the life it houses.

“The homeowners wanted efficiency and utilitarianism in a smaller footprint without giving up high-end finishes, which checked all the right boxes for me,” Fiore explains (pun maybe or maybe not intended). He designed the 2,800-square-foot, finely detailed home to include their stated program: three bedrooms; two and a half baths; an open living, dining, and kitchen area; and a downstairs family room—all neatly configured within six modules that are each no larger than 15' x 45'.

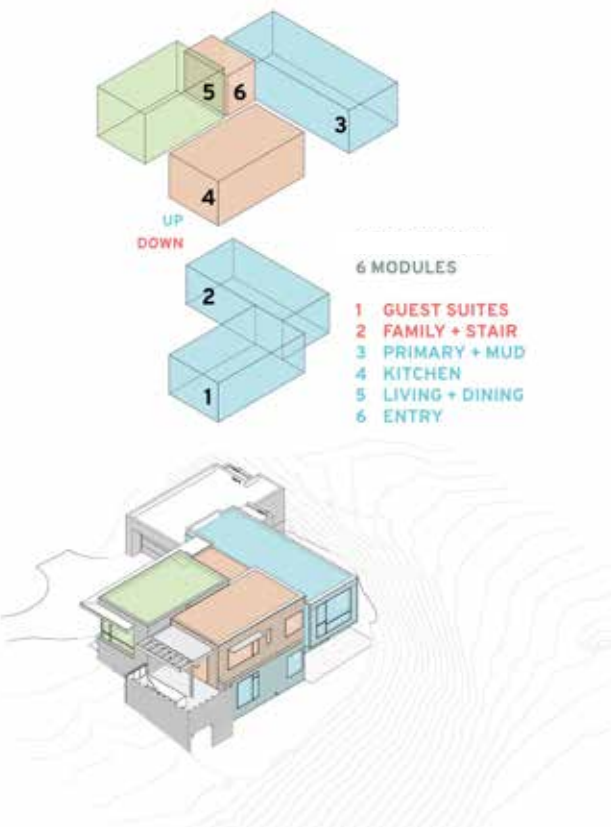
One of the biggest design challenges Fiore faced in the prefab approach was window placement. “Modules have to be structurally sound enough to be hoisted 30 feet in the air, swung around on straps, and driven long distances





Interior designer Kate Moore selected finish materials and furnishings that would emphasize the home's specificity and let the homeowners' collection of paintings by Milton Wilson shine. The dining room table was specially made by Boulder Furniture Arts in order to fit the space and accommodate large gatherings.

IN EVERY DIMENSION



on trucks—that's real," he says. "It was a good and hard exercise to make sure each module had its wool coat on, so to speak, with sufficient insulated values and just enough subtracted out in the right places for views and that floor-to-ceiling glass we modern architects like. I felt a lot of accomplishment after figuring that aspect out."

But you know what they say about best laid plans. As the design phase was wrapping up, the cost prospectus from the manufacturer revealed a significant and unexpected swell in freight fees, as well as double taxation from having the modules produced in one state and the home built in another. "The clients decided to forgo the original prefab plan," Fiore explains. "They had the time to wait out a site build, so we all made a decisive pivot."

Prefabricated or not, the clients were thrilled with Fiore's design, and so—with permits already in hand—Buildwell went to work framing the house onsite. Although the architectural plans remained intact, "it became a whole new job," says Buildwell owner Ryan Wither. Initially deterred by the double-wall construction (because each module has four walls, there are always two parallel walls where modules meet) he soon came to see it as a benefit. "It was actually nice to have those double walls, because they give the space better soundproofing and attenuation, and more real estate for running utilities," he explains.



“I’VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT WHEN THE THINGS YOU TOUCH IN A HOUSE FEEL SOLID, IT DOES SOMETHING TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH IT. THERE’S A PSYCHOLOGICAL MANEUVER THERE.”

—Nicholas Fiore

Staying true to the design despite the construction changes was important to the clients, and also Fiore. “This house was built as a modular thought piece, and we didn’t modify that—except to push some of the redundancy out of the structural plans,” he says. “There are things we would’ve done differently if it was a site-built from day one, but we were too far down the path already—and it was a good path—so we just kept running toward the boxy modularity.”

But, as a devotee of mid-century modernist Louis Kahn, Fiore could never just let a box be a box. The home is crafted with an unsparing level of attention, and finished with specialty materials like Belgian Shinnoki oak veneer cupboards and wall panelling, terrazzo countertops, and a dining area fireplace surround laid in the same extra-long handmade bricks that clad a portion of the exterior. Several custom elements were executed in collaboration with Wither and interior designer Kate Moore, principal of Kimball Modern. Moore designed a built-in bed system for the primary suite, engineered by Boulder Furniture Arts, and suggested a wraparound sofa for the living room while she was in the process of selecting furnishings. Fiore designed the sofa so that it would seamlessly integrate into the interior architecture and complement the room’s operable wooden window screens.



“We’re in the business of building custom homes, but this house is hyper custom,” says Wither. “Nick really follows that Frank Lloyd Wright program, where he sees how everything interacts in a space. There’s incredible specificity, and he taps into traditional materials in a very different way.”

This level of customization was always in Fiore’s plan, but afforded with the extra time of onsite construction, he and the clients were both able to introduce and push new ideas in response to the architecture as it was being built.

“Nick is a deep thinker and likes things to percolate so that they can evolve and be reimaged as they develop,” says Wither. “The contractor side of me is efficiency driven, but I’ve grown to really appreciate architects like Nick, who truly care about how the details feel in three dimensions. This kind of work is a huge investment—it’s worthwhile to take the time to address what can’t be considered on paper.”



OPPOSITE: A lower-level family room is a cozy multipurpose space that looks out to new landscaping by Marpa. ABOVE: Fiore’s attention to how different materials can speak to and strengthen each other gives the home layers of depth. Moving the living room window screens not only changes the interior atmosphere, but also the home’s appearance from the outside.







A subtly-patterned grasscloth wall covering made from agave fibers is used in the primary suite to add texture and visual interest while maintaining a serene sensibility. A custom-made bed system goes wall to wall and incorporates a nightstand on either side with push-open drawers.



One such serendipitous addition, Fiore shares, was the window screens. “When the living room frame was going up, the owner felt an uncomfortable exposure to the neighbors, so we came up with the idea of making sliding screens using simple pocket door hardware tracks,” Fiore explains. “It became a really cool feature that adds another level of architectural depth and offers the homeowners a way to physically manipulate their space. I’ve always believed that when the things you touch in a house feel solid, it does something to your relationship with it. There’s a psychological maneuver there.”

The experiential approach was a draw for Moore. Her initial focus was on bathroom tiles, wall coverings, and countertops, but she soon became heavily invested in the integrated furniture pieces—where she, Fiore, and Wither exchanged expertise—and she found particular satisfaction working within the home’s modest size.

“This house really feels like a home,” she says. “The ceilings are high and overall it’s very modern, but because of the smaller footprint and Nick’s spatial planning, we got to be very intentional with clean lines and organic, handmade materials. In a modestly sized house, you have the opportunity to make more of an impact. You’re physically closer to the architecture, the objects, the textures, and because of that are able to have a more intimate relationship with all of it.”

Fiore hasn’t given up on the idea of the custom modular prefab. If anything, designing this home has motivated him to seek out other projects like it. He believes that the doubling up of high-end custom architecture and prefabrication processes could meet a significant need in the Front Range’s accelerated housing market. “We successfully moved through every step,” he says. “The expertise and interest are here.” ■

#### PROJECT CREDITS

**ARCHITECT:**  
Flower

**INTERIOR DESIGNER:**  
Kimball Modern

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**  
Buildwell

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:**  
Ashley & Vance Engineering

**FURNISHINGS:**  
Kimball Modern

**LIGHTING:**  
Flower + Kimball Modern

**COUNTERTOPS:**  
Moros

**CUSTOM MILLWORK DESIGN:**  
Flower

**FLOORING:**  
Custom Builds,  
Garland Hardwoods

**WINDOWS + DOORS:**  
Marvin, Modern Series

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE:**  
Marpa

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# A LAYERED APPROACH

Denver-based artist Derrick Velasquez plays with material, texture, and space to bring his work off the walls and invite the community in.

WORDS: Cory Phare



**I**n late June 2021, the world was stirring. With pandemic restrictions easing on public gatherings, artist Derrick Velasquez decided to rent gallery space in the historic Evans School building across from the Denver Art Museum. There, he transformed what had been a sparsely populated location into a creative nexus, the open school environment affording the opportunity for hundreds to wander through and reconnect with their shared sense of humanity through art.

“It was a pretty important time for me, personally,” Velasquez says. “I’ve always been interjecting myself into communities, regardless of where my own creative energy is. A large part of my practice is not just showing my own work, but trying to get other people out there and bring diverse communities together.”

Cultivation and discovery amidst uncertainty has become a hallmark of Velasquez, who has risen to national art world prominence. A common throughline of his work is constructing an ethos of collective inquiry, often juxtaposing unexpected materials and styles in thought-provoking ways. Just take his large-scale installations at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver and Black Cube Nomadic Museum, where he superimposed rococo ornamentation on Brutalist structures. His ambitious work exposes the sociocultural context of the built environment and invites viewers to peel back layers of superficiality to examine the bones on which they stand.

But the path to success was far from a straight line for the creative who describes himself as “mostly trying to avoid making art for a while, honestly.” Originally from Lodi, California, and having spent time in Columbus, Ohio, where he got his MFA, Velasquez has established himself both locally and further afield, showcasing work in Montreal, New York, and recently closing out a return to Philadelphia’s Pentimenti Gallery. Among prolific gallery and DIY exhibitions and awards, he is also the founder of Denver-based Friend of a Friend and serves on the Tilt Advisory Board and Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs. He was previously on the Redline Exhibition Committee.





## A LAYERED APPROACH

Landing in Denver in 2008, Velasquez described the difficulty of finding work in the midst of the “Great Recession.” He took up bookbinding and selling products on Etsy at the tail end of the online craft market’s golden era, alongside teaching sculpture and design at Metropolitan State University of Denver, the University of Denver, and CU Boulder before eventually transitioning to being a full-time artist in 2017. Now he’s represented locally by Robischon Gallery.

“It was tough; I was working 80+ hour weeks,” Velasquez says. “And I didn’t realize it at the time, but [moving to Denver] was probably one of the better decisions I could have made for what I needed. I’m always attempting to evolve and change—that’s reflective in my materials and practice.”

This additive, iterative process is front and center in his signature Untitled series. Featuring strips of colored vinyl draped over wall fixtures made from various types of wood, the pieces elicit a multisensory experience.

Velasquez’s inspiration for the series came from his bookbinding practice of creating leatherbound journals. As a self-described “sketchbook factory,” he was crisscrossing the country as a craft fair vendor in addition to selling his work on Etsy; the request for more vegan-friendly bindings led him to dabble in plastics before landing on vinyl as an alternative material.

While pre-cutting vinyl strips to use on the sketchbooks, he placed them onto a screw in his small home studio. As an origin story it was haphazard, but the discovery formalized a structured approach for a new body of work. He started to interleave layers with varying widths, which eventually took on a form much like “when you open a book and the paper bends to either gravity or the force you exert upon it,” he says.

Derrick Velasquez attributes his background in bookbinding as a source of inspiration for his Untitled series. The work began as he was laying strips of vinyl over a screw in his studio and noticed the way gravity interacted with it like pages in an open book.



PHOTOS: Parrish Ruiz de Velasco





"IT WASN'T REALLY PRE-PLANNED AT ALL. IT WAS MORE JUST, 'OKAY, WELL, THIS IS THE NEXT COLOR, THIS IS THE NEXT COLOR,' AND THEN I STARTED TO SEE HOW EACH ONE RESPONDED TO THE PREVIOUS, AND IT EVENTUALLY MADE A WHOLE PIECE." –Derrick Velasquez



In addition to the Untitled series (TOP), Velasquez likes to use architectural ornamentation seen in foam-trim molding (ABOVE AND OPPOSITE BELOW), inviting viewers to consider historical, sociocultural, and class connotations.

PHOTOS: [TOP] Courtesy the artist and Carvalho Park; [ABOVE] Courtesy the artist and Robischon Gallery.

"It wasn't really pre-planned at all," Velasquez adds. "It was more just, 'Okay, well, this is the next color, this is the next color,' and then I started to see how each one responded to the previous, and it eventually made a whole piece."

The layered pieces are not dissimilar to transparencies within an anatomy textbook, reminiscent of a central spine with respective bone, muscle, and tendons. They have a tactile, human sensibility Velasquez says is apparent when people approach the work with a curiosity and desire to interact with it. "They want to touch it and smell it and feel it in a way that's hard to capture in photos," he notes.

Today, Velasquez is exploring another medium: stained glass, specifically the meticulous lead-channel came method. This material affords him an additional element of translucence to overlay with architecture and sculpture, further building upon his multidimensional approach to light, which he utilizes to reveal underlying historical, religious, and cultural implications.

"I would say I'm an observational artist," he says. "I'm curious and observe how various things could work their way into either my material choices or larger themes I'm interested in."

A forthcoming Milwaukee exhibition in September will showcase his stained glass work, and he also anticipates a future Denver show. Meanwhile, he's further cultivating the community he's made a habit of giving himself to, sometimes literally: When an area gallerist was declining from a hereditary disease six months ago, Velasquez donated 60 percent of his liver after discovering he was a match.

"It's all been a strange, mysterious, amazing experience," he says. ■



PHOTO: Parrish Ruiz de Velasco



PHOTO: Courtesy the artist

A self-described "slow worker," Velasquez attributes his observational approach to a summer job he had in his youth working in a cannery, where he studied the peeling, cooking, slicing, and sorting of peaches and apricots into a finalized product. "To this day, I try to visit factories to see how crude materials are transformed into something else," he says.



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# A CUT ABOVE

Home furnishings company Room & Board receives B Corp Certification in recognition of their longstanding and ongoing commitments to social, environmental, and operational best practices.

WORDS: Sean O'Keefe

**I**F you want to know what a company is made of, look at how they make business decisions. For modern furniture mainstay Room & Board, a commitment to benefiting both people and the planet has been the basis of decision-making since the company was founded in 1980. An American-made icon of retail home furnishings, Room & Board has partnered with furniture manufacturers across the U.S. for over 40 years, driving a business ecology that harmonizes people, planet, and profit in the pursuit of elegant, modern living. Emily McGarvey, the company's director of sustainability, is proud to be a part of it.

"Room & Board's primary purposes are people and doing what is best for the planet," says McGarvey, who is honored to be the first to fill the sustainability role, a position she assumed in January 2022. "Ninety percent of the products we sell are manufactured in the U.S. and 80 percent of the wood we use is sustainably sourced from North American forests."

Having started her career as a buyer for a major American consumer goods retailer, McGarvey understands the intricate causality that ripples around the world when sourcing materials for contemporary American life. She has since spent more than a decade honing her expertise in corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability positions, carving a career out of a personal passion for shaping business to be a force for good. The most recent recognition of what's possible for McGarvey and the company's workforce of like-minded altruists is Room & Board's newly minted status as a Certified B Corp™.

"The B in B Corp stands for benefit," says McGarvey. "The certification is issued by B Lab, a nonprofit network that aims to transform the global economy for the benefit of all people, communities, and the planet. B Lab's standards are at the heart of a movement that defines social, environmental, and governance best practices for businesses."



B Labs was established in 2006 with the idea that a different kind of economy was not only possible but imperative to regenerative human ecology. Inspired by determination, B Labs believed that businesses could lead the way toward a new stakeholder-driven model by launching the B Corp Certification Program. Looking to change the rules of business-as-usual from a profit-centric algorithm that benefits a few to a circular ecosphere that benefits all, B Corps embrace the inherent interdependence of humankind. Their work rethinks the principles of wealth concentration tearing humanity and the planet apart.

“The B Corp process assesses a company on five impact areas,” McGarvey shares from Room & Board’s Minneapolis headquarters, “Environment, Workers, Community, Customers, and Governance. I’m happy to share that Room & Board scored pretty evenly across all five categories to earn this certification. However, this process also becomes a vital guide for continuous improvement, which is always a central objective of good business.”

In addition to operating within American manufacturing systems and using sustainability sourced wood, Room & Board’s Environmental commitments include achieving 100 percent recyclable packaging by 2025, diverting over 90 percent of operational waste from the waste stream, and using 100 percent renewable energy for operations by 2030. The company also donates 2 percent of profits to support nonprofits focused on the environment, communities, and the arts annually.

In the Workers category, Room & Board’s dedication to fostering a culture of inclusion, opportunity, and wellbeing scored high in B Labs’s assessment. Results from a survey of the company’s 1,100 employees in 2022 for the Inc. Best Workplaces found that 91 percent of Room & Board’s employees feel they are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, or other personal differences. The company’s holistic investment in wellbeing includes generous personal, sick, and vacation time, domestic partnership benefits (offered since 1994), profit sharing and 401K matching, mental health resources, and individual wellness accounts to reimburse healthy activities.



As Room & Board’s first director of sustainability, Emily McGarvey is honored to be surrounded by dedicated professionals with a long-standing commitment to doing the right thing. Her days are never dull, spending time on initiatives like increasing operational solar in the morning, improving equity and inclusivity at mid-day, and considering new sustainable materials in the afternoon.



The five fundamental measures required for B Corp Certification have largely been the basis for business-as-usual at Room & Board since the company’s 1980 founding in Minneapolis, MN. In 2024, Room & Board employs 1,100 and operates 22 retail stores nationwide, along with global fulfillment of online ordering.



In assessing a company’s commitment to Community, B Lab evaluates engagement and impact on the communities in which it operates, hires, and sources from. Topics include diversity, equity & inclusion, economic impact, civic engagement, charitable giving, and supply chain management. Room & Board received 27 points in the Community category, and 80.6 points overall. The Governance portion of the program evaluates a company’s overall mission and engagement with its social and environmental impacts, ethics, and transparency. The final category, Customers, evaluates a company’s stewardship of customers through quality products and services, ethical marketing, data privacy and security, and feedback channels.

“The positives here are tremendous,” continues McGarvey in quantifying what the designation represents for the brand. “Above all, this will help us attract and retain amazing talent. These are the people who will help solve challenges like how we can use less energy, source more sustainable materials, and develop circular waste streams. When Room & Board began the certification process in fall 2022, there were less than 100 B Corp companies in furniture, and we were only one of two with more than 1,000 employees. So, we’re very excited to be a part of this.”

“THE B IN B CORP STANDS FOR BENEFIT. THE CERTIFICATION IS ISSUED BY B LAB, A NONPROFIT NETWORK THAT AIMS TO TRANSFORM THE GLOBAL ECONOMY FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES, AND THE PLANET. B LAB’S STANDARDS ARE AT THE HEART OF A MOVEMENT THAT DEFINES SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND GOVERNANCE BEST PRACTICES FOR BUSINESSES.”

–Emily McGarvey





A CUT ABOVE



At Room & Board employees reside at the center of any meaningful conversation on design. Over ninety percent of the products sold by Room & Board are manufactured in the United States, and 80 percent of the wood used is sustainably sourced from North American forests.



As of February 2024, B Corp’s website reports that a total of 8,163 companies in 161 industries across 95 countries are now certified. Representing some 748,000 employees around the world, these companies have all taken a pledge to demonstrate high social and environmental performance, making a legal commitment through their corporate governance, and exhibiting transparency by allowing their performance to be measured against B Lab’s standards.

B Lab’s Standards Advisory Council is an independent, global, multi-stakeholder group that brings together a diverse range of experience and expertise on a wide range of topics associated with evaluating a business for good.

Regionally focused Advisory Groups provide continuous input on B Lab’s standards as they relate to context, relevance, and best practices locally and from around the world.

“Consumers have always known Room & Board for high-quality modern home furnishings and decor that is timeless and beautiful,” says McGarvey. “By certifying as a B Corp, Room & Board joins an international community of like-minded businesses committed to doing good. Whether it’s about paying our retail staff a good, non-commission wage, sourcing materials sustainably, or choosing a non-toxic manufacturing process, Room & Board will always aim to be a cut above.”

By cementing its status as a Certified B Corp, Room & Board joins a like-minded global business community connected by the ethos of people, planet, and profit. Transparent business practices, quantifying the impact of decision-making, and corporate accountability bind these businesses together to become something more than any of them can be on their own.



Designed by Andy Morter, the new Hubbardton Forge Glissade pendant features a large, hand-poured, hand-shaped glass that is heavily fritted for a one-of-a kind, contemporary elegance. “Glissade” can be translated into “a skillful glide over ice in a steep descent.” Gracefully suspended with criss-crossing curved glass elements, it is perfect for dining or entertainment spaces, or over a large kitchen island or bar.



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A collaborative approach helped one Colorado couple see the fun reflected back to them through designer Eli Hariton's eye.

WORDS: Rachel Walker Youngblade  
IMAGES: Fernando Gomes



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But thanks to a deep and trusting partnership that developed over the course of their full home renovation, the result is a fresh and very personal take on that mandate.

Kyle and Shelly Belvill purchased their Castle Pines home in part because of its blank canvas potential. After living there for 15 years, they were finally ready to undertake a large-scale renovation and reached out to Denver firm TVL Creative, where they connected with Hariton. His warmth and enthusiasm easily won them over. TVL closed its doors soon after they met, but the Belvills continued working with Hariton at his own interior design firm, Damn Good Interiors.

At their kickoff meeting, a look around the home quickly surfaced evidence that this couple was not boring. A penchant for gnome statues, a stockpile of modern art with no good wall space for display, bold colors, and funky furniture were clear clues that any interpretation of serene would need a good dose of fun.

Phase one of Hariton's design process, and where he spends the most time, is discovery—a joint exploration of possibilities. To him, the clients' inspiration images felt more neutral and blander than what he was seeing in their current home. And he told them so.





The downstairs bar is one of Hariton’s favorite spaces in the home. The blue and white tile backsplash paired with the blue slatted island creates a striking focal point—a trick pulled from his commercial design and restaurant ownership past. Hariton is vocal about the evolution of his career, his gratitude for clients and mentors who supported his work, and the difficulty (and reward) of trusting his gut along the way.

“The process was a team effort that pushed us to create a space that truly reflects our family,” Kyle says of Hariton’s ability to absorb their needs and wishes and imagine them in new ways.

“It was like a game of catch,” Hariton says about the evolution of the design and his boutique approach. “Bringing the original vision through to the final product was highly collaborative. What we wound up with is nothing like what they expected, but it feels way more like them.”

As they moved from the discovery phase into making design decisions, the homeowners got a look inside Hariton’s process through his appearance on HGTV’s *Design Star: Next Gen*, which began airing at the same time. With a background as both a restaurateur and commercial designer, Hariton brings the bold

choices and functional layouts found in commercial spaces into his residential work. The show’s challenges gave Hariton, the eventual runner-up, free rein to be himself—to go big with design choices. The Belvills loved what they saw. As work progressed on their home, they encouraged Hariton to get even more creative. He had the opportunity to put his “commitment to avoiding uniformity” on full display.

In the Belvill’s home, this translated into a dramatic kitchen upgrade where everything has its place, food is easily prepped, and movement flows naturally. While most of the home’s original layout remained the same, the kitchen saw significant change. A dividing wall between it and the dining room was removed, making an open flow that allowed for two islands, a large peninsula, and dedicated coffee and wine bars. The kitchen’s material choices → 118



Moving away from sharp rectilinear shapes to more organic forms, like the Roche Bobois Bubble 2 sofa in the Belvill’s living room, is something Hariton plans to incorporate into his next projects. More color is also on his roadmap: “We’re slowly moving out of this all-neutral household.”







“BRINGING THE ORIGINAL VISION THROUGH TO THE FINAL PRODUCT WAS LIKE A GAME OF CATCH. IT WAS HIGHLY COLLABORATIVE AND WHAT WE WOUND UP WITH IS NOTHING LIKE WHAT THEY EXPECTED, BUT IT FEELS WAY MORE LIKE THEM.” - Eli Hariton



**OPPOSITE:** The Sumi design from Calico Wallpaper draws the eye like a magnet in the primary bedroom. Named after the Japanese tradition of Suminagashi marbling, where inks are swirled on water to create one-of-a-kind patterns, the design is a subtle nod to the homeowners’ love of Japanese culture. Hariton’s favorite wallpaper sources include Jupiter 10, Walnut Wallpaper, and Milton & King.

A glass shower enclosure removes all visible obstacles to the outdoors, creating a serene atmosphere. “Maximal-ish” is the moniker Hariton chose for his design aesthetic while on HGTV’s *Design Star: Next Gen*. In the primary bath, he demonstrates the ability to exude calm without dulling down the design.





THE KITCHEN, LIVING ROOM, AND PRIMARY SUITE ARE THE FIRST ROOMS HARITON TACKLES ON WHOLE-HOME PROJECTS. AS THE HEART OF THE HOME, THEIR DESIGN DRIVES CHOICES IN THE REST OF THE SPACES AND ALSO TAKES THE MOST ENERGY TO COMPLETE.



also balance beauty and function. Black leathered granite counters frame the perimeter with polished white marble on the center islands. Custom cabinetry by Vonmod in a rich walnut conceals drawer organizers and small appliances. Reshaping the ceiling and covering it in wood over the breakfast table created more intention, and carried a noticeably gos design into the present.

Time spent in Japan heavily influences the couple’s design aesthetic. Hariton helped them reinterpret an overflow of Buddha statues into a more nuanced and elegant take on Japanese design. He refinished the fireplace himself using shou sugi ban, a Japanese charred wood technique. Moody floral wallpaper in the primary bathroom water closet, a find by Shelly, reveals a subtle geisha pattern on closer inspection.

“A lot of what we did with our design was pull out the personality that was



already there,” Hariton says of why, in this client relationship and others, he always prioritizes developing a close relationship. “I want my client’s vision to be pulled through me and pushed back into them.”

The primary bedroom and bathroom are the closest to what most people would think of as clean and serene. Muted color palettes, organic shapes, and calming nature views take center stage. But there’s nothing boring about these rooms either.

Marble tile set in a herringbone pattern covers the bathroom floor and solves for a design challenge tackled throughout the project: the home is still shifting thanks to the soft Colorado clay foundation. The smaller tiles in this space minimize the risk of cracking and amp up the interest. A floating vanity with a polished marble countertop and brushed gold Kohler fixtures add warmth and a luxurious touch. Behind the bed, large format wallpaper captures attention in



Built-ins in the office allow the homeowners to put their art collection on display in a less cluttered, more intentional way. From KAWS to Calder, their art collection and the element of fun found in each piece was one of Hariton’s first indicators that his clients would appreciate a bolder vision.



The guest bath is an explosion of color and pattern, featuring Gucci’s Tiger Face wallpaper on all walls and the ceiling. The homeowners offer encouragement for those considering a renovation: “Trust the process and be patient. Always remember, the end result will be a space that truly feels like home.”



organic black and white swirls. One sneaky Buddha statue remains outside the large picture window, framing the freestanding tub.

The kitchen, living room, and primary suite are the first rooms Hariton tackles on whole-home projects. As the heart of the home, their design drives choices in the rest of the spaces and also takes the most energy to complete.

“Once you get past the kitchen and the primary suite, the client’s exhausted because they’re making decisions that they potentially have to live with for the rest of their lives,” he says of the lengthy process. Clients also trust the designer more at this point, having seen their vision become real in these key rooms. When the Belvills got past this stage, they happily gave Hariton

the go-ahead to get creative with the powder room, laundry room, and downstairs bar.

“Powder rooms are usually a place where clients can let their freak flag fly a little bit and really have fun,” Hariton says of why this space was a great one to do mid-renovation. Tigers mid-roar cover the walls and ceilings. In the laundry room, black and white hex tile from Tilebar is laid in a random, mismatched pattern. A bold blue and white tile backsplash matches the blue fluting on the island in the downstairs bar.

“Our home now is not just a place to live in, but a sanctuary that caters to all our needs,” Kyle says of the end result. A forever home nearly 20 years in the making, he says, was well worth the wait. ■

PROJECT CREDITS

INTERIOR DESIGN:  
Eli Hariton,  
Damn Good Interiors

CONTRACTOR:  
TVL Creative

BUILDERS:  
TVL Creative

MILLWORK:  
Vonmod, Tabor

CABINETRY:  
Vonmod, Ultracraft

FLOORING:  
Coretec, Natural Timbers

STYLING:  
Sarah Rice



# SYMMETRY & REFLECTION

By removing interior walls, vaulting ceilings, and making windows larger, ArcDen Studio transforms a 1955 Denver ranch-style home into a place where modern minimalism is abundant.

WORDS: Laurie Lauletta-Boshart   IMAGES: Reagan Taylor



Toronto residents Mark and Teri Aboud were regularly traveling to Denver to visit family when they decided to put down roots in the Mile High City. “Our son and daughter-in-law were living in Denver and that’s how we first became interested in buying here,” explains Mark. Since that time, the Aboud’s have become first-time grandparents, which solidified the decision to purchase. “Grandchildren are a whole other thing,” smiles Teri. “They have their own little personalities.” The Aboud’s grandson, Tommy, has his own space in the new house and instinctively heads right for it when he walks through the front door.

The couple began their Denver home search in early 2021, looking specifically for a mid-century modern, but availability was slim. “We searched for about six months before we found this place,” explains Teri. The 1955 mid-century ranch in the Southern Hills neighborhood of Wellshire was originally a model home, and had just two previous owners. The home went on the market, then came off. “We had to wait another two or three months for it to list again,” says Teri. But their patience paid off: their offer was accepted and the arduous work of remodeling began. The house was terribly dated—complete with carpet in the bathroom—but it was well looked after and had a solid structure. The three-bedroom, two-bath home also lacked flow and a private primary suite, and was disconnected from the outside.

Mark and Teri enlisted the help of Hans Osheim and Joana Emhof, principals of Denver-based ArcDen Studio, to help them transform their home into an updated space. They also brought on local builder Jake Hill with Hill Builders, whose work on extensive remodels and additions made him an ideal fit. “When we first met with the clients onsite, they were actually hoping to change the roofline and transform





the architecture to make it into a more modern mid-century,” says Osheim. “But when we saw the existing project, intuitively we didn’t feel like that was the right solution. We thought the budget would be better spent on the interiors and addition.” Plus, they learned that the neighborhood HOA had a height restriction, so popping the top was not an option.

To get a sense of Mark and Teri’s design style, the architects queried the couple for the types of furniture that would fill the home. They supplied the architects with a list of pieces they had acquired with the help of Toronto interior designer Gavin Posner with 1Build. “They have beautiful taste and furniture and a really minimalist aesthetic,” Emhof explains. Posner curated many of the pieces to work together in their Toronto home, including a buff-colored Italian leather sectional, a black Eames lounge chair and ottoman, a B&B Italia dining table,

and Foscarini suspension lamp. The clients selected their top Toronto pieces to repurpose in the new space. “It’s very simple, very minimalistic,” says Teri. “We put things away. It makes me feel calmer if there are minimal things around.” Significant pieces of art were also planned for the home, including works from Teri’s father, an accomplished artist.

“The challenge was to find the harmony between the client’s aesthetic and the warmth and lived-in feel of the existing architecture and tie those together,” says Osheim. That led the architects to precedent images of Japanese architecture, which establishes a strong sense of balance between interior and exterior, transparency and privacy, and grandiosity and quietness. Taking this inspiration, the main living area was completely reconfigured. Walls were removed, the ceiling was vaulted, larger windows were added, and ➔ 126

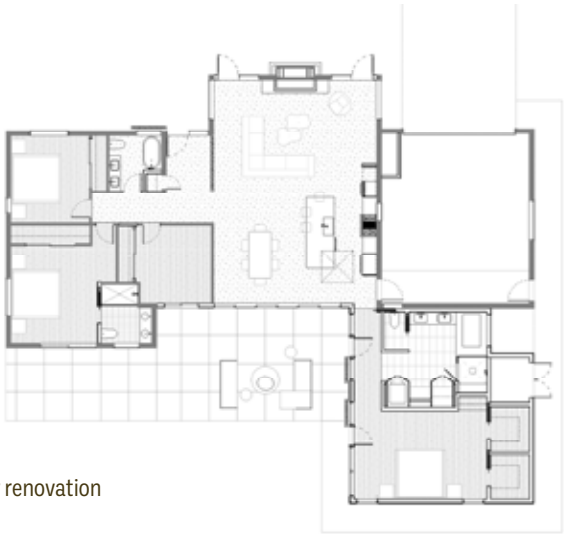
The exposed masonry of the one-time model home was preserved and combined with rich wood tones, including poplar-stained siding and privacy screens, and wide cedar-clad exterior soffits. Access to a front courtyard with oversized pavers leads to a firepit and additional outdoor seating.



Walls were removed, ceilings were vaulted, and significant amounts of glazing were added to turn the dated 1955 ranch home into a modern, mid-century residence.

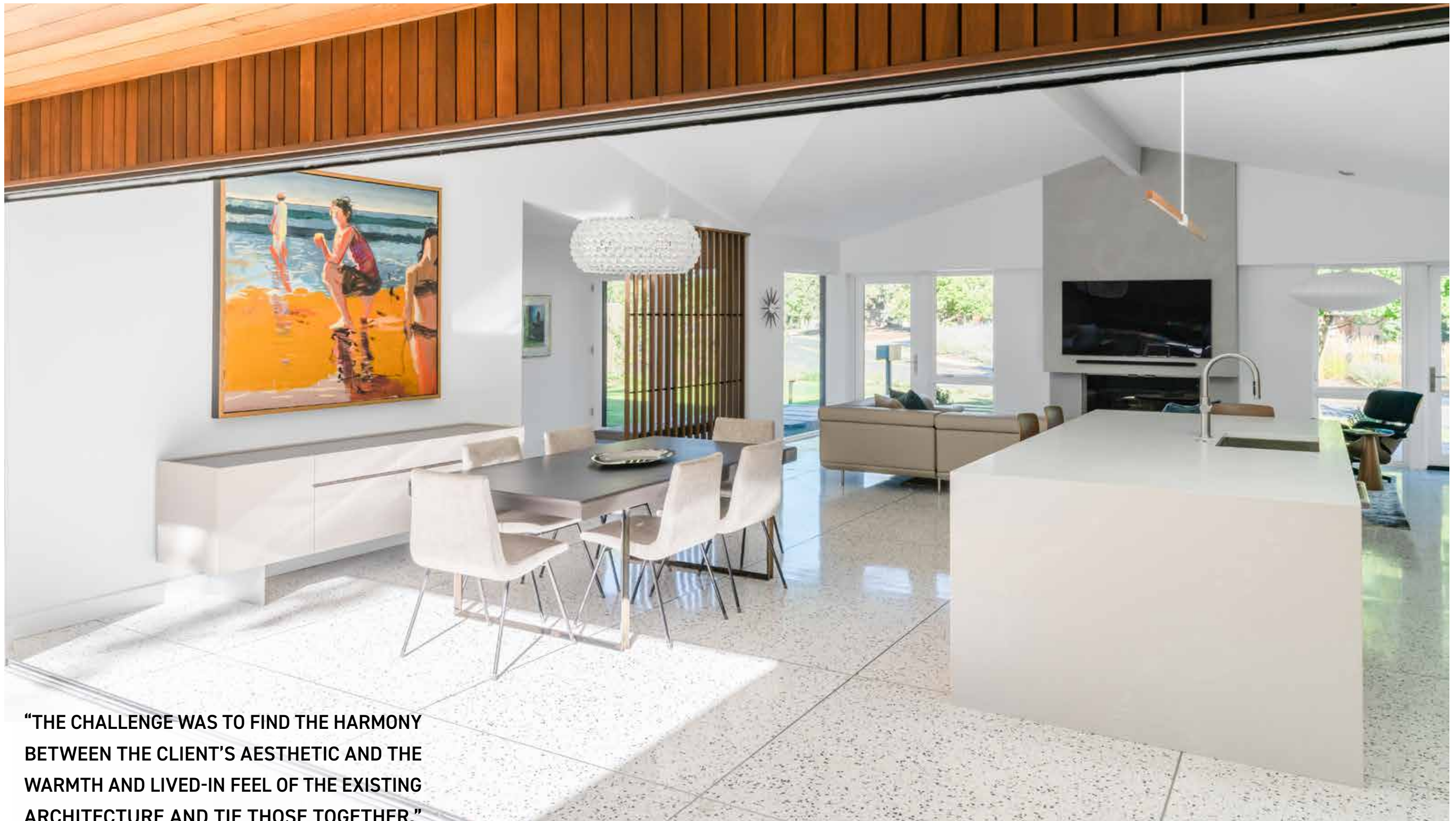


Before renovation



After renovation





**“THE CHALLENGE WAS TO FIND THE HARMONY  
BETWEEN THE CLIENT’S AESTHETIC AND THE  
WARMTH AND LIVED-IN FEEL OF THE EXISTING  
ARCHITECTURE AND TIE THOSE TOGETHER.”**

-Hans Osheim

SYMMETRY & REFLECTION





The updated wood-burning fireplace with polished concrete hearth serves as a focal point for the home's main gathering space. Minimalist furniture brought from the owners' Toronto home was repurposed in the new space. The entire back wall of glass panels opens to the private backyard.

walls of sliding glass were installed. "The whole back wall opens up to the rear courtyard," says Mark. "And the front living space opens out to a front courtyard and firepit. The indoor-outdoor concept was very important to us."

Flooring in the main living space is large 4'x4' terrazzo tiles with zinc-metal separators. "I desperately wanted a terrazzo floor; I had to have it," laughs Teri. "It's so beautiful to look at; the light comes in and hits the floor during the day, which is beautiful in Denver. It just sparkles." Cabinets throughout much of the home are white oak. "We worked with Hans and Jo to create the kind of modern living space that we wanted to function in, but used mid-century modern elements to bring it to life," says Mark.

The new primary suite was added to the back of the home without changing the existing footprint. A



The brand-new primary suite was added onto the back of the home without changing the existing floor plan, and is meant to be a refuge that promotes calmness and stillness. Floor-to-ceiling glass brings in copious amounts of natural light and provides easy access to the outside. Hand-crafted cabinetry and curated mosaic tiles were specified for the primary bath.





A connection between interior and exterior living spaces is materialized in the remodel with walls of glass that blur the lines between both. The kitchen and dining areas, new primary suite, and guest room all have direct contact to the extended courtyard and patio space with cozy seating and circular firepit from Studio Nisho.

simple pocket door closes off the new space from the rest of the house. A hallway flanked by floor-to-ceiling glass leads to a primary bedroom and bath with handcrafted mosaic tiles in blue and gray hues. Above the tub, a window frames a single Japanese maple tucked into a protected niche. A minimalist primary bedroom includes dual walk-in closets with access to the private backyard.

“The primary suite was really about creating that refuge, that calmness and stillness,” says Osheim. On the exterior, the architects maintained the exposed masonry and integrated some rich, warm wood tones with the soffits, siding, and screens. Generous cedar-clad soffits extend the overhang of the roofline, and thermally modified

poplar was used liberally for the siding and architectural privacy screens along the primary hallway and the main entry.

While both homeowners gush about the many beautiful features of the home, Mark does not hesitate to say that his favorite room is the garage. “It’s really clean and functional with a high-end epoxy floor and this really cool hand-blown yellow tile that is original from the 50s. It’s beautiful. It’s imperfect, but that’s part of the charm of it. It’s almost like a living space,” he says.

The entire process (including 12 months of construction), took nearly two years to complete, but included a building permit delay during

the pandemic, and navigating the process remotely. After moving in last September, several neighbors have stopped by to compliment the owners on the home and their approach. While Mark is still working, the couple are commuting between homes in Toronto, Denver, and Florida. But now, with another grandbaby on the way, the Abouds are planning to make Denver their permanent residence. “Now that the remodel is finished and we’ve had a chance to live in the space, we really can see ourselves settling here,” says Teri. ■



#### PROJECT CREDITS

**ARCHITECT & INTERIORS:**  
ArcDen Studio

**CONTRACTOR:**  
Hill Builders

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:**  
Apex Engineering

**EXTERIOR SIDING:**  
Cambia by NFP

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE:**  
R Design

**WINDOW WALL:**  
Panoramic Doors

**FIRE PIT:**  
Studio Nisho



1975  2024

# THE RIGHT CONNECTION

Follow Architecture brings a dated 1970s mountain home into the present with a renovation designed to create more space and capture sweeping views of Boulder's foothills. All it took was a bridge.

WORDS: Laurie Lauletta-Boshart  
IMAGES: Ian Warren



**H**usband-wife architects Andrea Mast and Colin Ostman spent years working for other firms before launching their own Boulder-based practice, Follow Architecture, in 2018. After spending time in Colorado, where they met in CU Boulder's architecture program, the couple worked and traveled apart before returning to the state for good. "We made the decision to settle here intentionally when we came back in 2016, specifically in Boulder because we had a connection from college and felt it was ripe for new firms," Mast explains.

Starting their own practice was always the eventual plan, but it happened organically. "We first took on smaller side projects, which led to getting connected with a few really good clients, and then starting our own firm," says Ostman.

One of those clients was a local Boulder investor-developer and his business partner, builder Isaac Savitz with Silver Lining Builders. The two had been working together for five years, and were looking for an architect to take the lead on a few projects. "The developer was referred to us by a friend and colleague," Mast says. "We met at a property he was working on and hit it off right away." Savitz was also impressed with Mast and Ostman. "We decided to work with them because of their personal involvement with their projects and unique architectural flavor that I think is not common in Colorado."





Follow was brought on to update a 1975 mountain home in the Pine Brook Hills neighborhood above Boulder. The developer had purchased the single-family residence in 2021 with the intent of renovating the property and listing it for sale. The home had good bones, but was in dire need of a refresh. “The house had vaulted ceilings and tiny clerestory windows, but it definitely needed to be opened up to accentuate the views,” says Ostman.

Everyone liked the structure, and wanted to keep some of the original rooflines and floorplan elements. “It was a typical closed-off 70s mountain funk house,” says Ostman, explaining how many 1970s mountain homes were designed with unpractical excesses “for undecipherable reasons, like triangular bay windows looking at the driveway of all things, stairs stepping up and then immediately back down, or multiple distracting rooflines.”

The team wanted to open the house to the outside and add on a primary suite. The objective was to create an open concept layout from the existing plan, and add glazing to turn the focus to the surrounding landscape. The idea of popping the

top and putting the primary suite above was considered, but it became clear that was not the right solution.

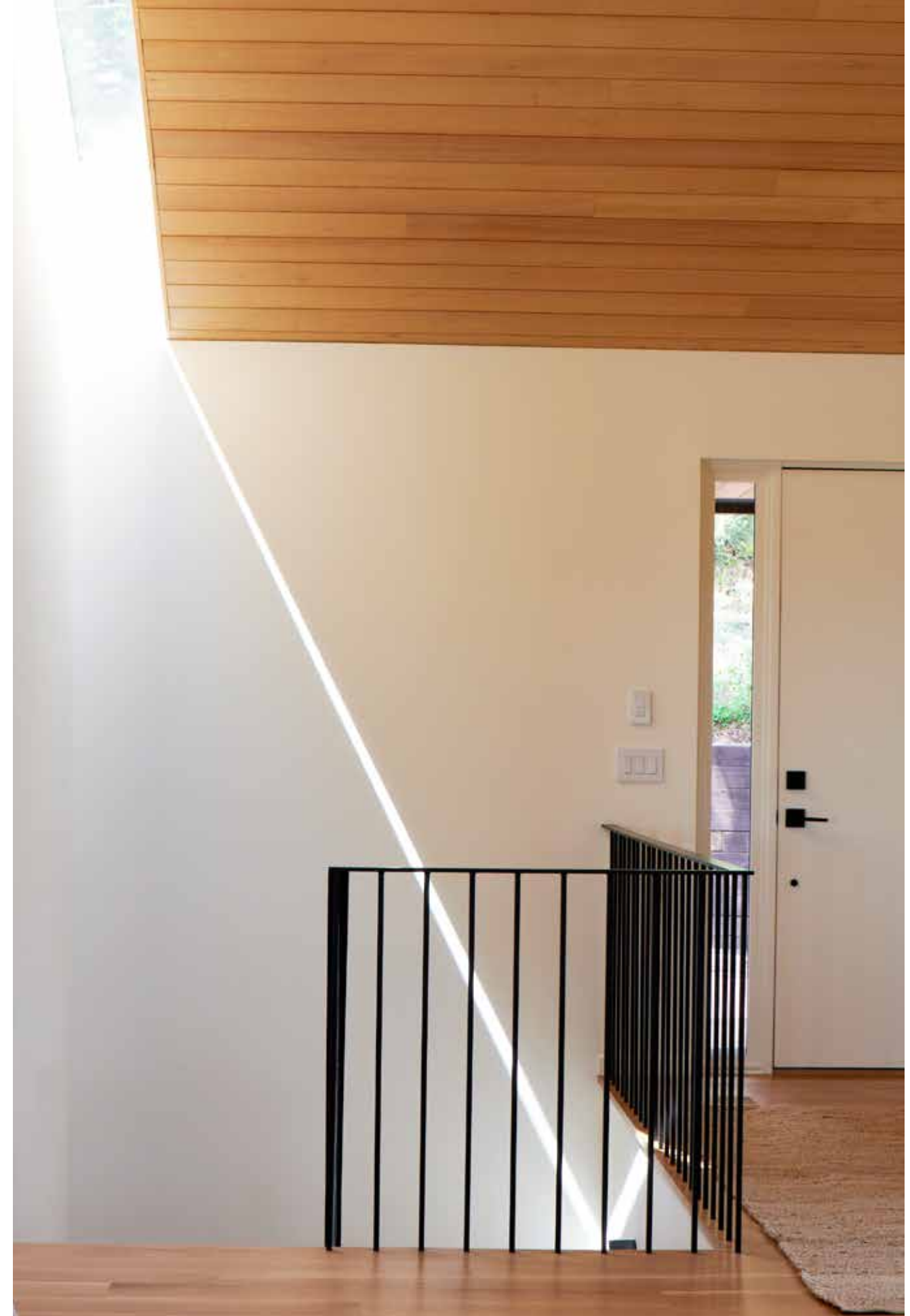
“It was going to be hard to make that look intentional and like it had always been there while keeping the integrity of the original 1970s roofline,” says Mast. Instead, they built a bridge.



The original 1975 mountain house had good bones, but was dated and lacked a true primary suite. The architects retained the original roofline and salvaged the existing chimney, painting it a dark gray to match the standing seam metal roof. Thermally-treated hemlock siding was added for weathering and fire resistance. The interior ceiling is clad in the same hemlock species.

The architects saw how by separating the new suite the entire home would feel more whole—each portion its own unique space and experience. That decision became the driving inspiration for the renovation’s entire design.

#### THE RIGHT CONNECTION







The home is now organized around a central corridor dotted by three skylights that draw natural light throughout all spaces. At the end of the corridor is the new suspended glass bridge that leads to the primary suite.

“The bridge became an axis that organizes public spaces on one side and closed-off, private spaces on the other,” says Mast. The sweeping horizontal views of prairie grass and ponderosa pines seen from the bridge lead to expansive views of the Front Range foothills in the vaulted primary suite.

The architects intentionally didn’t add outdoor patio space off the primary suite. “It’s a much more dramatic feeling when you don’t have anything between you and the view,” says Ostman. “You can feel that height and how high above the ground you are.”

Instead, large sliding glass doors were added to the main and lower living areas to take advantage of the existing capacious decks and to extend the living space outdoors.



**OPPOSITE:** White oak wood floors and soapstone countertops provide contrast in the kitchen and complement the full-height casework walls by Vonmod. Floor-to-ceiling windows provide an unobstructed view of the Boulder Valley.

**ABOVE:** The main living area was transformed from an uninspired, dated room to a warm space with abundant natural light and a modern soapstone fireplace. The fireplace wall is resurfaced with venetian plaster to provide a subtle texture. The hemlock-clad ceiling is carried throughout. A central corridor is lined with skylights to illuminate the space.

The architects specified abundant amounts of wood throughout the space as an homage to the 1970s modern mountain style. White oak wood floors and full-height casework walls by Vonmod anchor the kitchen and primary bedroom. The ceiling is clad in slats of hemlock that complement the home’s lighter wood tones. “We worked with samples and stains to make the woods match each other as much as possible,” says Mast, “so that it all felt quiet, even though there is a lot of wood.”

Skylights from the main corridor are repeated in the primary bath to maximize the natural light. The primary commode and shower rooms feature frosted glass walls; ceilings in these spaces were replaced by skylights to disseminate year-round illumination.

On the exterior, the existing chimney was salvaged and stained a dark gray to match the new standing seam metal roof and thermally-treated hemlock siding, which will naturally patina over time. The original landscaping remained undisturbed, except for the addition of small-scale retaining walls and native plantings.





Rather than add a new primary suite onto the existing home, the architects elected to separate and elevate the suite on stilts, and then connect it to the main level with a glass bridge. The bridge serves as an access between the public spaces and private spaces and highlights the views in bigger and more dramatic ways along the span.

As the two-year renovation project was nearing completion, the team listed the home with a local realtor and immediately got an offer. They later learned that an interested party had been following the project on Follow’s Instagram account from the start. “He was just waiting and watching,” says the developer. “He’s a very detail-oriented guy, and had been reviewing the building permit plans and the various changes.” The buyer flew into town the day after the offer was submitted and closed the deal. “It was kind of a nice surprise to know that someone who was watching the project develop is the one who bought it,” says Mast. “He’s happy with all of the choices we made.” ■

**PROJECT CREDITS**

**ARCHITECT:**

Follow Architecture

**CONTRACTOR:**

Silver Lining Builders

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:**

Gebau, Inc.

**MILLWORK:**

Vonmod

**LANDSCAPE:**

Silver Lining Builders

**WINDOWS + DOORS:**

Marvin, supplied by Signature Windows + Doors

**REALTOR:**

Emelie S Griffith with  
PorchLight Real Estate Group



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 **CLEAR THE AIR**  
Elevated air pollution and wildfire activity have made home air purifiers a necessity for many. Breathe easier with advanced technology that's decidedly easy on the eye, too.

WORDS: Rachel Walker Youngblade

**I**f you've ever climbed one of Colorado's many peaks, stood on top and taken a deep breath, you know the air up there has a smell all its own. And it's nothing like the stale stuff circulating in your living room.

Unfortunately, getting outside isn't a perfect solution to our clean air conundrum. With an increase in wildfire activity globally, the average person in the U.S. has been exposed to more smoke-related air pollution in 2023 than any other year since 2006, according to research by the Stanford Environmental Change and Human Outcomes Lab.

What's more, the release of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) from products like cleaners and paint react with gasses in the air to form ozone—a gas that protects us from UV radiation when it's in the stratosphere, but causes lung irritation, cough, and serious respiratory illness when we breathe it in.

According to the American Lung Association, 119.6 million Americans, or nearly 36 percent of the population, live in places with unhealthy levels of ozone or particle pollution. Measuring these two elements, Colorado's Jefferson and Arapahoe counties are in the top 20 of their list of most polluted counties.

Add to that your run-of-the-mill pollen, pet dander, dust mites, mold, bacteria, and virus particles, and the air we breathe is far from clean. Compounding the issue, new construction techniques do a better job of minimizing energy use by keeping air inside. Which is great, but only when advanced air filtration comes along with it.

Luckily, the options for functional and beautiful air purifiers have expanded as demand continues to increase. Today's models feature multiple layers of filtration to remove all those yucky things mentioned above.



#### **Dyson Purifier Humidify+Cool Formaldehyde**

An all-in-one option from a trusted technology brand, this air purifier uses advanced sensors to run on auto mode. Humidified and filtered air promotes lung and skin health. Voice control through Amazon Alexa, Siri, and Google Assistant earns bonus points for ease of use.

**+[dyson.com](https://www.dyson.com)**





## CLEAR THE AIR



### Coway Airmega Icon

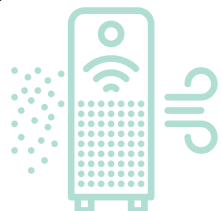
Coway's line of air purifiers tops many best-of lists. Their newest model won several design awards, for obvious reasons. Four layers of filters ensure looks aren't all this model delivers on. A built-in charging station on top for Qi compatible devices is an added benefit.

+[cowaymega.com](http://cowaymega.com)

### Alen BreatheSmart FLEX True HEPA

Interchangeable wood panels warm up this purifier's presence. Cleaning up to 700 square feet of air every 30 minutes, the BreatheSmart FLEX offers different filters for specific pollutants. A long filter life (up to 12 months) and app with air quality index data make this model convenient and beautiful.

+[alen.com](http://alen.com)



### Briiv Air Filter

Briiv promotes itself as "the most sustainable filter on Earth"—a believable claim since moss, coconut fiber, and biodegradable plastic are its main components. The beauty of a sleek bowl full of moss makes this one we won't mind seeing on our countertop.

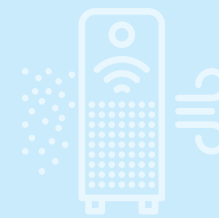
+[briiv.co.uk](http://briiv.co.uk)



### Molekule Air Pro

For those who like detailed information, the Air Pro tracks six pollutant types in real time and over time in the Molekule app. Designed for large spaces, the silver housing and vegan leather handle make this model an attractive beacon of health for your living room.

+[molekule.com](http://molekule.com)



### Rabbit Air A3 Ultra Quiet Air Purifier

If floor space is at a minimum, the Rabbit Air can be wall-mounted, enhancing its art-like image. Choose from a range of recognizable artworks and filter options to get the look and function you need. Reviews note that Rabbit delivers on its ultra-quiet promise, with decibel levels below a whisper even on the highest setting.

+[rabbitair.com](http://rabbitair.com)

WITH HUNDREDS OF MODELS AND AN ARRAY OF FEATURES, IT CAN BE TRICKY TO NAVIGATE YOUR OPTIONS. HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE YOU HIT THE BUY BUTTON.

**DESIGN:** Air purifiers are often large and located in visible areas of your home. Why not choose one that adds to your aesthetic and your health?

**COST:** Consider the price of the machine and the cost and frequency of filter replacements. Many companies offer subscriptions at a discount.

**COVERAGE AREA:** Air purifiers are designed for specific sizes of rooms. Will you need multiple, or just one?

**TYPE OF FILTRATION:** All best-in-class air purifiers use true HEPA filtration. Many also include a fabric pre-filter to catch larger particles, activated carbon to reduce odors and VOCs, and UV ionizers.

**NOISE LEVEL:** Most companies suggest leaving your air purifier on 24-7, so noise level, especially at night, has a big impact. Most models indicate the decibels emitted at each level.

**FEATURES:** Do you want a night light or dark mode for bedroom use? What about a timer, programmable schedule, auto setting? Some models also double as fans, humidifiers, and heaters.

**SMART TECH:** Wi-fi enabled, app-controlled air purifiers are the norm. Check reviews to get insight on ease of use, and look for integration with other smart home devices.







### Dupray Bloom Air Purifier

For a contraption that's often the size and shape of a large pot, it's a wonder the planter and purifier combo is not more common. The Bloom Air Purifier's HEPA-13 medical grade filtration is disguised behind pre-filters that come in a large range of colors. Add your favorite houseplant to increase the clean air vibes, or choose a wood top to turn this purifier into a sleek side table.

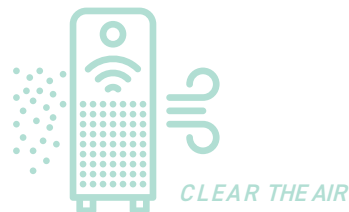
+dupray.com



### Blueair Blue Pure 411+

Washable fabric pre-filters in neutral colorways soften the look of this popular air purifier. A budget pick compared to others on this list, the Pure 411+ is compact and classic. New SmokeBlock filters with additional activated carbon fight air pollution from wildfires.

+blueair.com



### IQAir Atem X

Enjoy powerful air filtration, Energy Star rated efficiency, and a slim form factor that could pass for a sculpture or modern art. The Atem X works for large rooms and can expand to extra-large spaces by connecting multiple devices through the app.

+iqair.com



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# LOOK AGAIN

Charlene Prempeh's book *Now You See Me!* widens the lens to show and celebrate a century of Black designers.

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly

Many only see what they've been taught to look for. But if you're a devoted student in the school of life, the lesson is always to look and then look again. Charlene Prempeh's new book, *Now You See Me! An Introduction to 100 Years of Black Design*, teaches us to open our eyes and see not only the contributions made by Black designers in the last century, but the designers themselves.

Prempeh, who founded the creative agency A Vibe Called Tech in 2020, began the project when she identified a gap in her own knowledge of Black design history: the fashion designer Ann Lowe, who designed Jackie Kennedy's famous wedding dress. "For decades, Black designers have been sheathed in an invisible cloak," Prempeh writes in the introduction.



PHOTO: Serena Brown

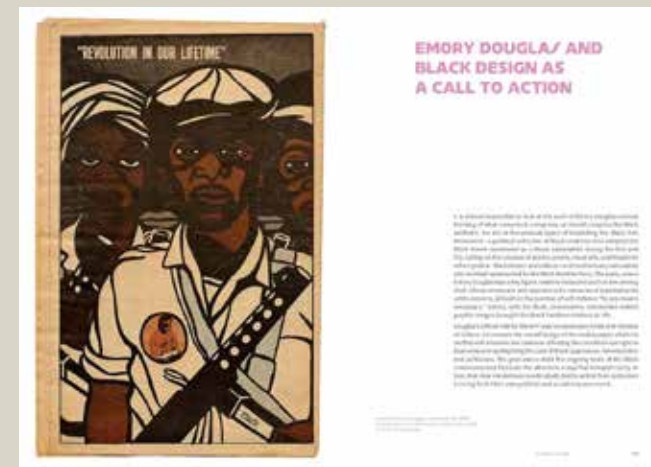
Divided into three sections—Fashion, Architecture, and Graphic Design—and filled with photographs and archival reproductions, *Now You See Me!* is a corrective for design history that has sought to minimize, obscure, or purposefully remove Black designers from the book. Not only have these designers and their work been undervalued, but so too have their far-reaching influence on cultural movements and industry growth.

Norma Sklarek, for example, featured in Prempeh's Architecture section, was the first Black female member admitted into the American Institute of Architects in 1959, and she took another first when she became the first Black female licensed architect in the state of California in 1962. Fashion designer Dapper Dan brought his remixed couture street wear from his Harlem boutique all the way to the mainstream. The work of illustrator Emory Douglas—who had the official title of Revolutionary Artist and Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party—is quoted in the book as saying, "We are creating a culture, a culture of resistance, a culture of defiance and self-determination." Prempeh reflects that this is a history that "still reverberates today when we consider the role of design and designers in a world cluttered with racial burden."

Published this year by Prestel, *Now You See Me!* is a welcome and much-needed addition to the design library. In the wake of George Floyd's death and the groundswell of the Black Lives Matter movement, Prempeh notes that there has been a seismic shift causing cultural mindsets to open and sharpen. There is, she writes, "a feeling of hope, the sense that things are moving, are becoming better, and that at some point Black people—designers or otherwise—might have the freedom and space to really be seen." **mod**



Charlene Prempeh's book *Now You See Me! An Introduction to 100 Years of Black Design* shines the spotlight on culture-defining Black designers. Above is graphic design work by Tyana Soto and residential design by Ghanian architect Joe Osae-Addo. Below is an Emory Douglas screen print from 1969; Douglas was the official Revolutionary Artist and Culture Minister for the Black Panther Party.



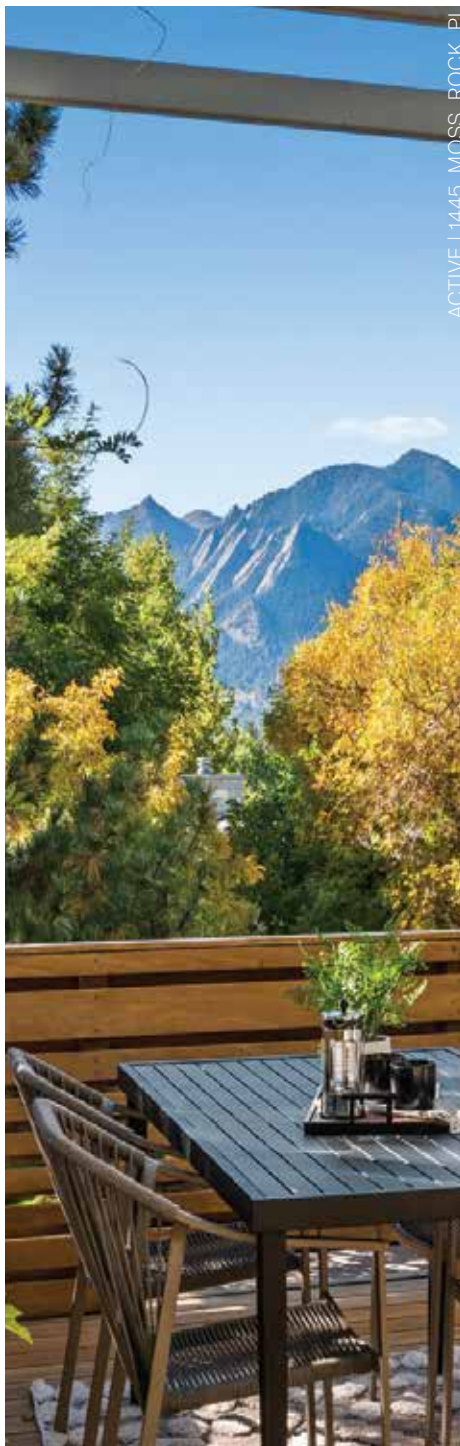




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ACTIVE | 1077 | GILBERT ST



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