**COLORADO'S DESIGN MAGAZINE** 

**FUSE STUDIO TOMECEK STUDIO RENÉE DEL GAUDIO BARI ARCHITECTURE** 



ART IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

A look into the living history of site-specific land art across the Rocky Mountain West. p. 74





TRAVEL BY DESIGN

**HEAD TO THE DESERT!** The hotels and motels of Palm Springs p. 116

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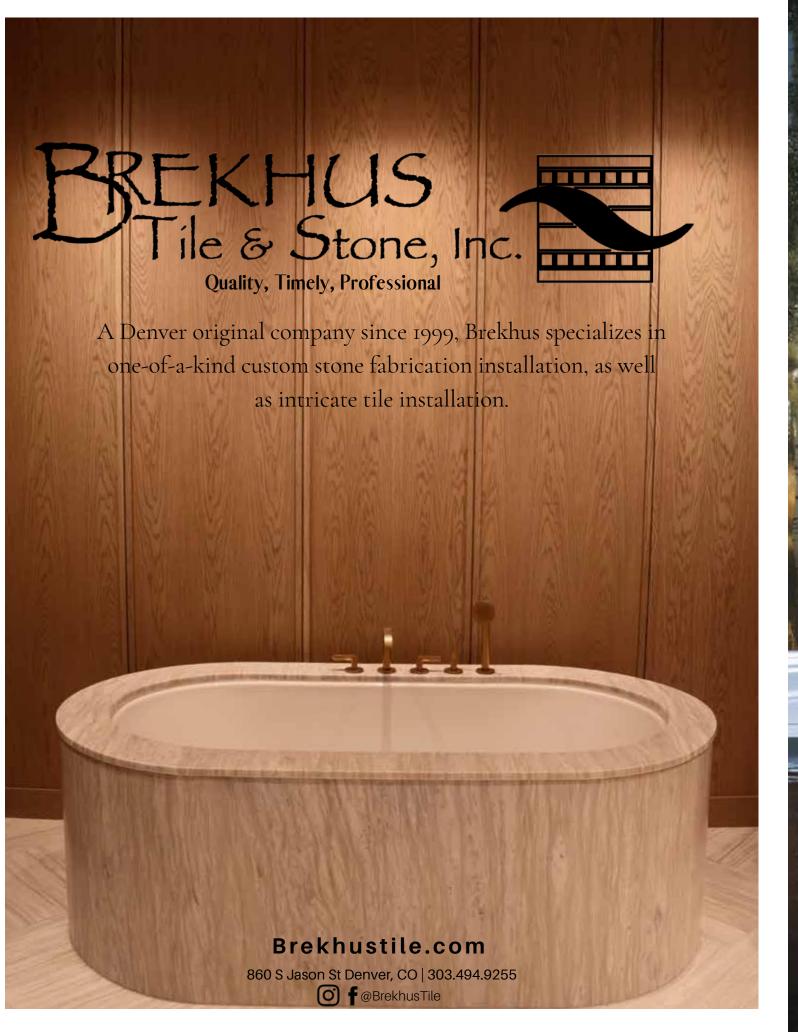




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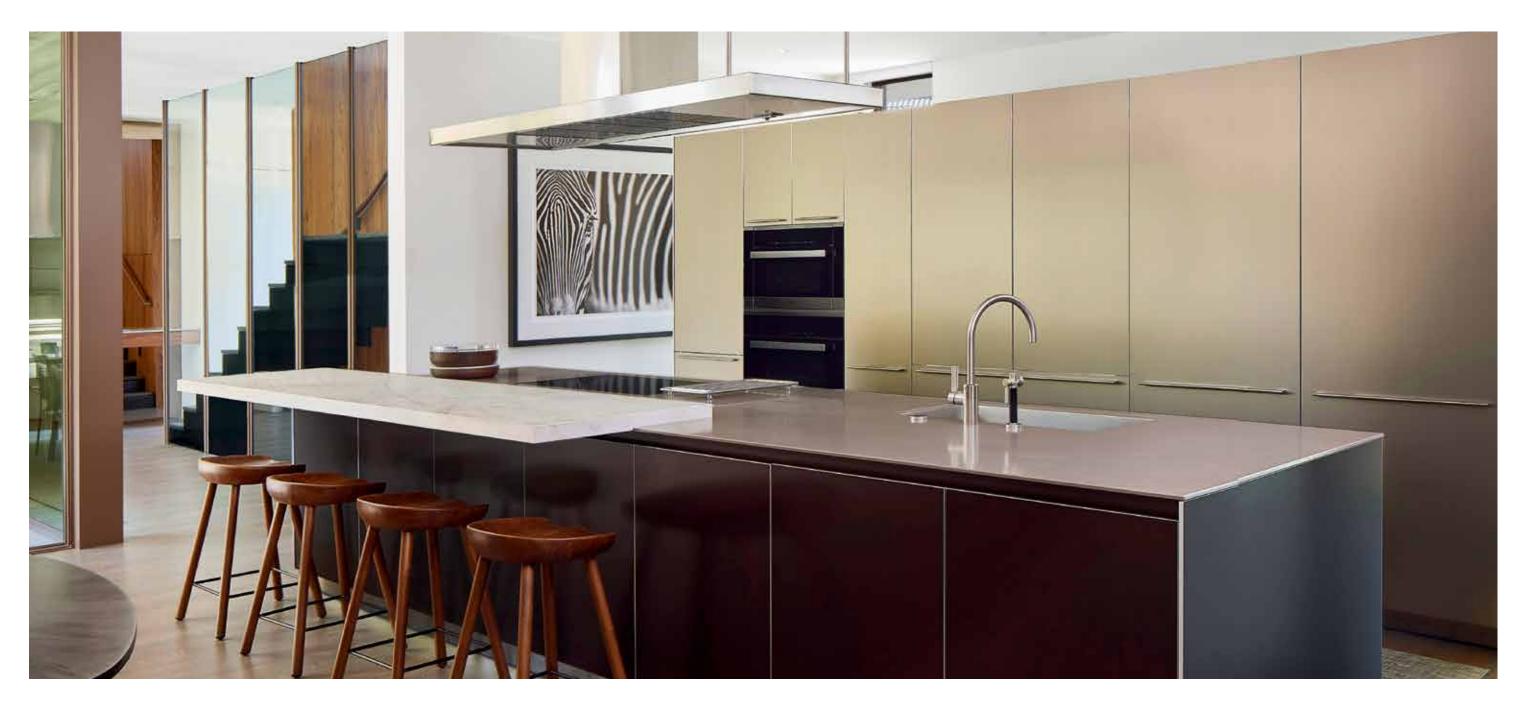
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### MODERN IN DENVER

MESSAGE / MATERIAL / TEXT / IDEAS / SUBSTANCE

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### 88 INTO THEIR OWN

Tomecek Studio celebrates their 20-year firm anniversary while moving into their new LoHi office space, designed to showcase what they do best.

### **102 FORESITE**

Motivated by her unwavering respect for site-specific design, architect Renée del Gaudio acquires, develops, and designs a residential property ahead of taking on clients.





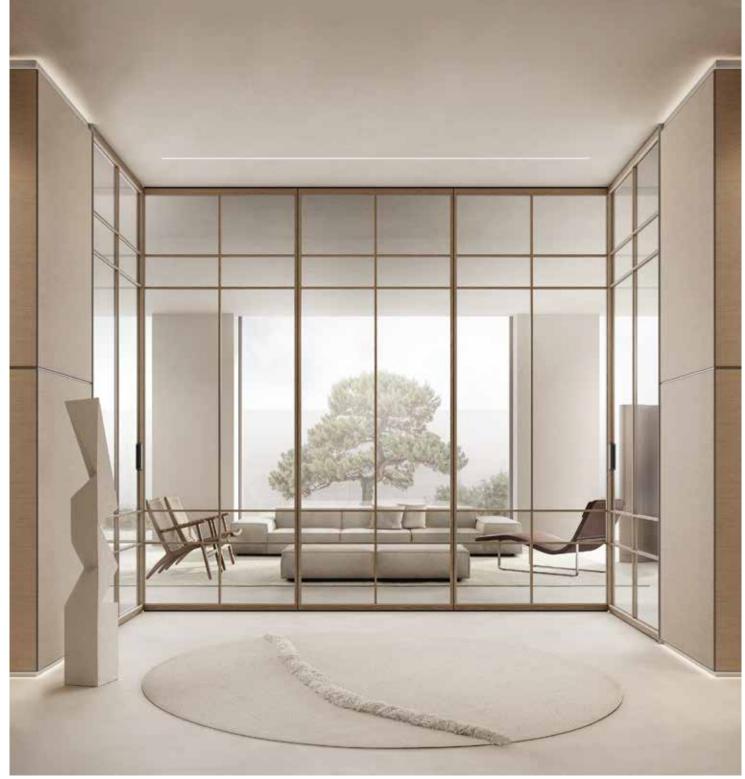


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Project: Gusto Lakehouse





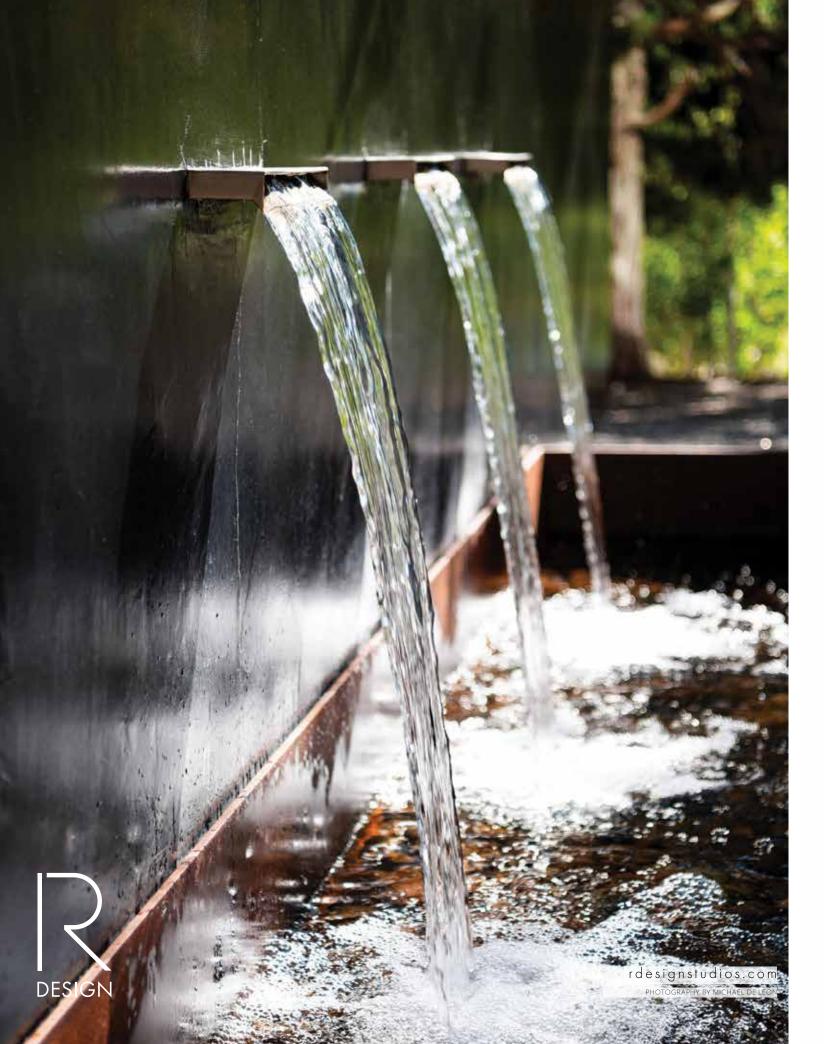


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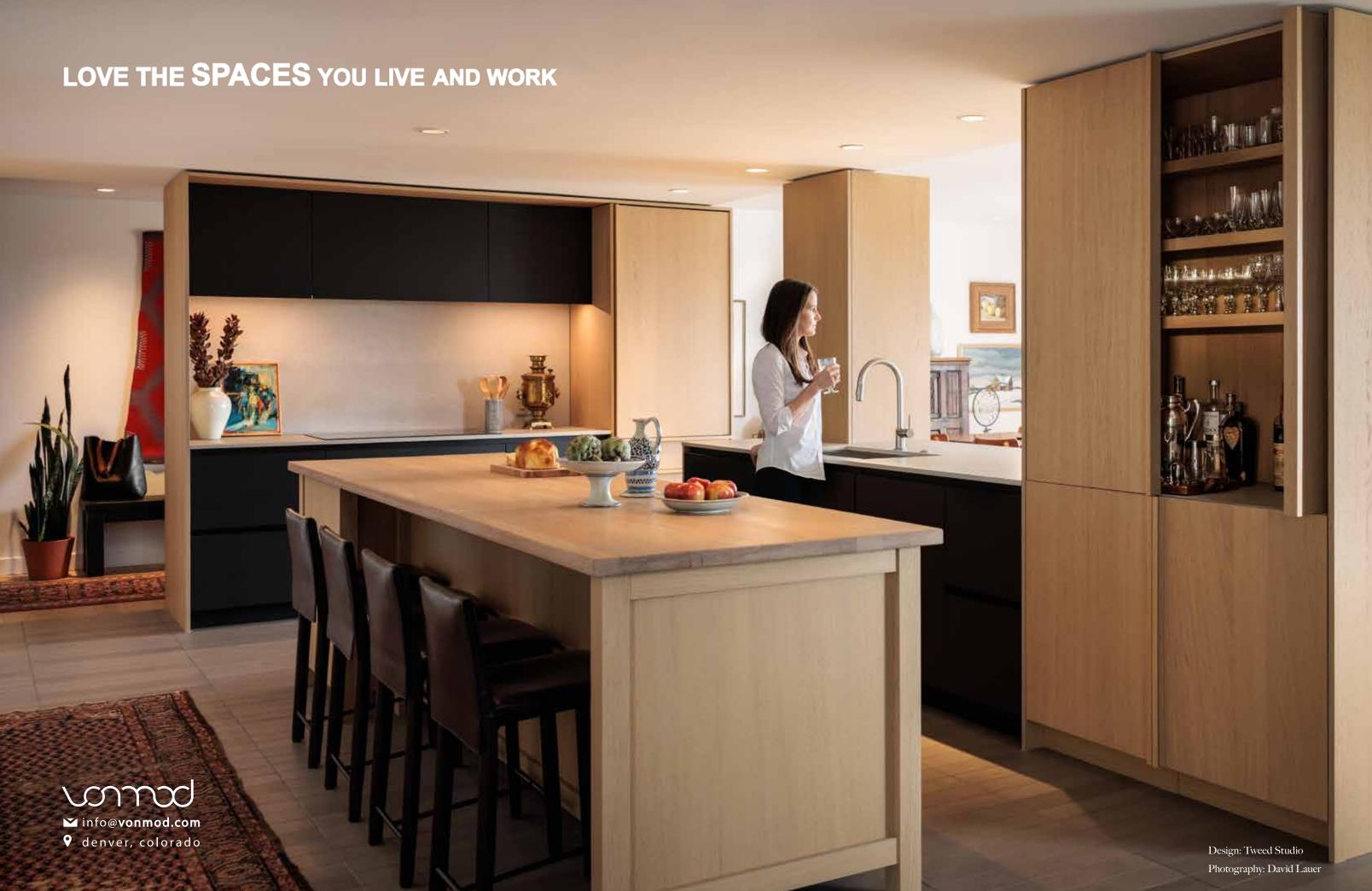




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ll architecture—whether humble or heroic—begins with a piece of land. How the architecture responds to slope, topography, sun exposure, and history are among the most important questions a designer must answer. Early modernist architecture, with its focus on universal principles and standardization, often downplayed the significance of place. But over the past 125 years, that mindset has evolved. Today, place's power is apparent in the best of modern design. Geography, culture, and climate have become essential ingredients in the architectural process. Site is no longer a backdrop, it's a collaborator—especially here in Colorado.

In our Summer 2025 issue, we hold place at the center.

We begin with a new residence by Renée del Gaudio Architecture above Boulder's Betasso Preserve. The home's design responds directly to its elevated, wooded site. Three distinct structures with asymmetrically sloping rooflines and expansive glass windows embrace southeastern views while shielding against strong northwestern winds. These forms don't just sit on the land—they sit with it. The result is energy-efficient architecture in harmony with its surroundings. Read the full story on page 102.

In downtown Louisville, BARI Architecture approached context from a different angle. Working within the area's historic code, they created a net-zero home that's both modern and rooted in the scale and rhythm of its older neighbors—a thoughtful fusion of past and present.

Our *Travel by Design* feature takes us west to Palm Springs, where photographer Mickkail Cain explores the evolution of the storied desert hideaway's iconic hotels and motels. These buildings are not just places to stay—they're part of the region's design DNA, and an enduring testament to the meaning of place in hospitality.

Contextual sensitivity isn't limited to architecture, it's also central to large-scale environmental art. For our cover story, photographer Daniel Jenkins hit the road to capture site-specific artworks that draw directly from

their surroundings. His and writer Cory Phare's journey includes a visit to the Resnick Center for Herbert Bayer Studies, where the exhibition *Sculpting the Environment: The Three-Dimensional Art of Herbert Bayer* opens June 10. Bayer's *Marble Garden* and other works highlight his legacy sculpting the landscape.

The story then takes readers to the eastern plains of Colorado to visit Last Chance Module Array by M12 Studio—an installation so attuned to its setting, its wood components could be mistaken for bygone agriculture structures. Its desolate location lends the piece an ambiguous power—mundane and mythic all at once. Other stops on the trip include land art pioneer Nancy Holt's Sun Tunnels—which have resided in Utah's Great Basin Desert since the mid-1970s—Andrew Rogers's Elements in Green River, Utah, and James Turrell's Skyspace outside of Colorado Springs. All are within a day's drive from Denver, and well worth the trip. Turn to page 74 for the full story.

Also in this issue, we celebrate 20 years of Tomecek Studio, whose new live/work space in the Highlands reflects the award-winning firm's continued evolution. For two decades, Tomecek Studio has exercised an exploratory and intellectual approach to design, and we take a close look at how their ethos manifests in the customization of their own office space.

And finally, if you're feeling hands-on this summer, we're spotlighting a handful of community ceramic studios where the public can take classes and workshops or utilize open studio time. It's the perfect time to get a little muddy making a pot, plate, bowl, or vase for fresh-cut flowers from your garden.

Wherever this summer takes you, we hope this issue inspires you to see the land—and the work that rises from it—with fresh eyes.

Enjoy! William Logan









**INTERIORS** 









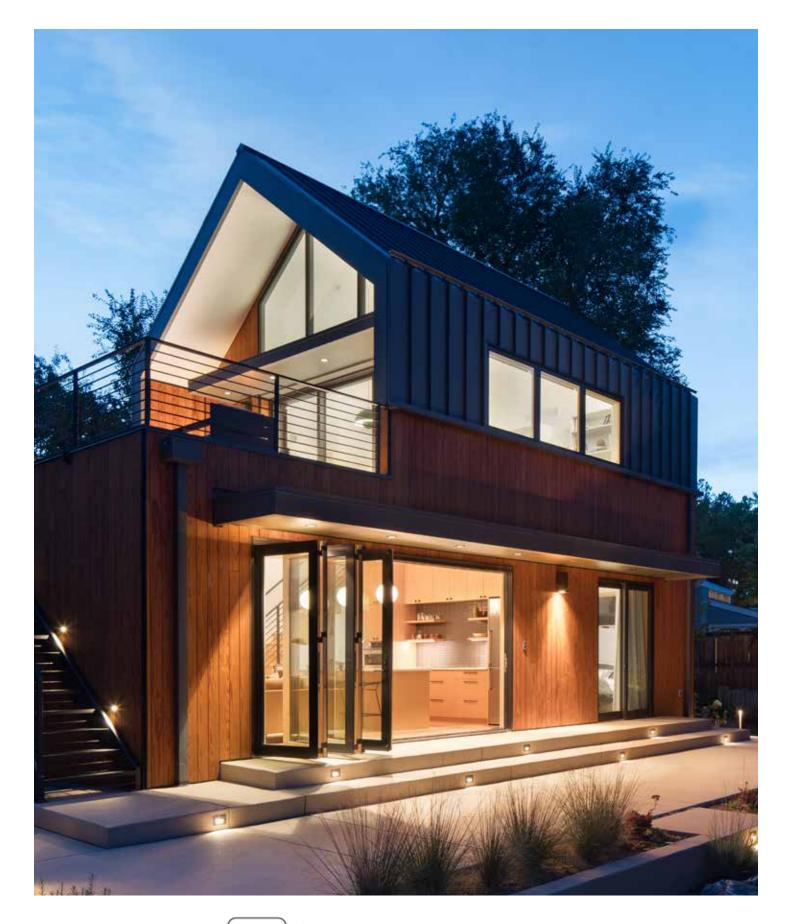


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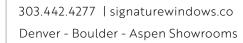


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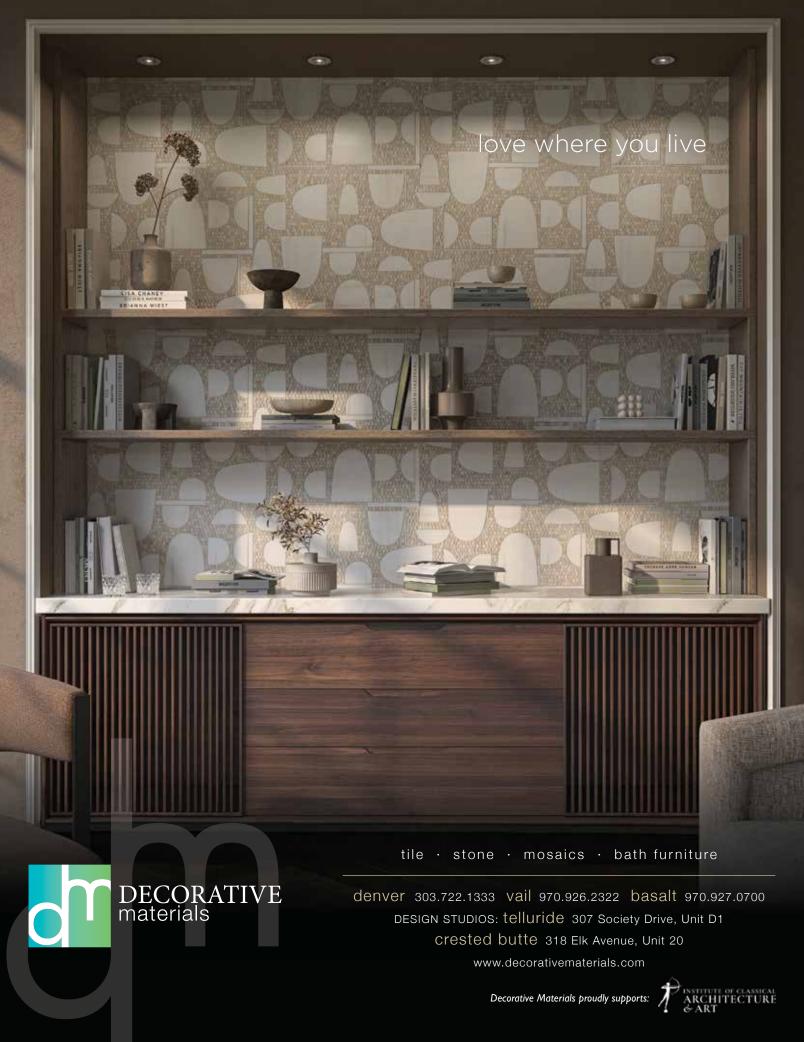
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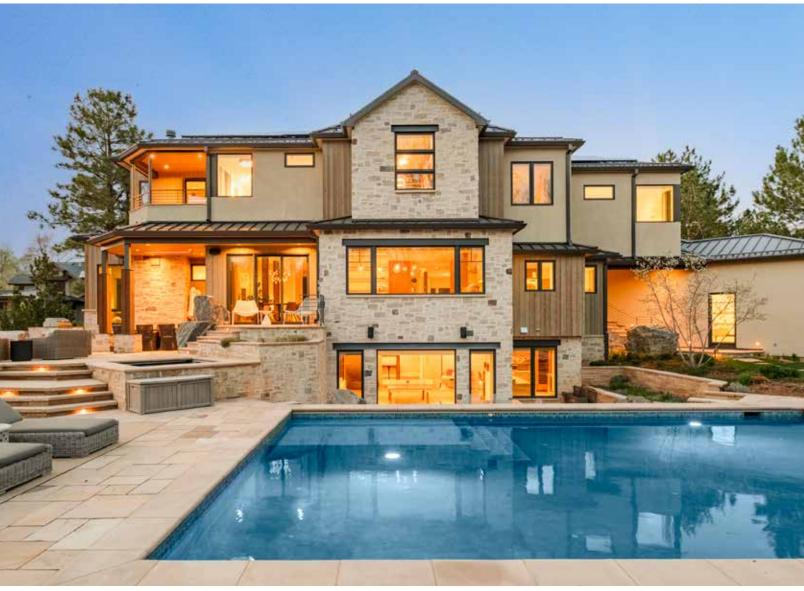


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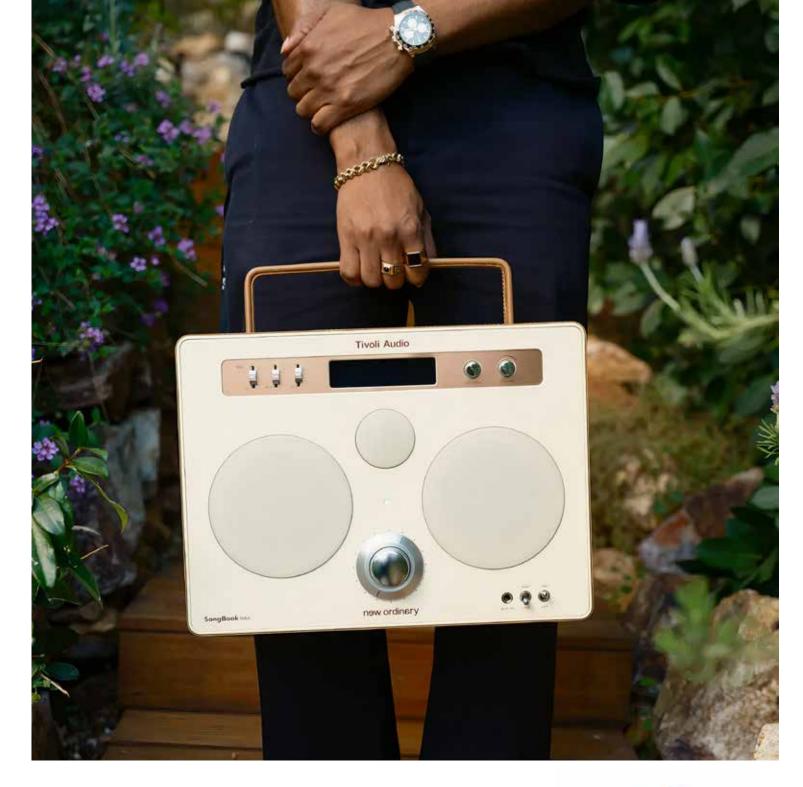
BOULDER
5 BEDROOMS
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### **PRIME PAIL PAL**

The childhood summer beach pail gets a grown-up makeover from Hachiman-Kasei, a longtime Japanese home goods designer. And by grown-up we don't mean boring, adult-y colors like gray and beige. The Hachiman Buckets come in an array of colors. It's the durable polypropylene (made from recycled materials) and multiple sizes—up to 5.3 gallons—that gets our attention. With matching or contrasting lids available, the buckets come in three sizes and can support up to 330 pounds. That's a lot of sand!

+chilewich.com/store/hachiman

### **MUSIC BOX**

Tivoli Audio's SongBook Max is one of the most vintage-modern music systems we've seen in a while. Beyond modern touches like Bluetooth, it has an FM radio and a manually adjusted equalizer for musicians who prefer more control. That's who this musical throwback system was designed for: musicians. SongBook is a collaboration between the longtime audio company and Sounwave, an American record producer and songwriter. Bonus: an auxiliary port turns it into a guitar amp.



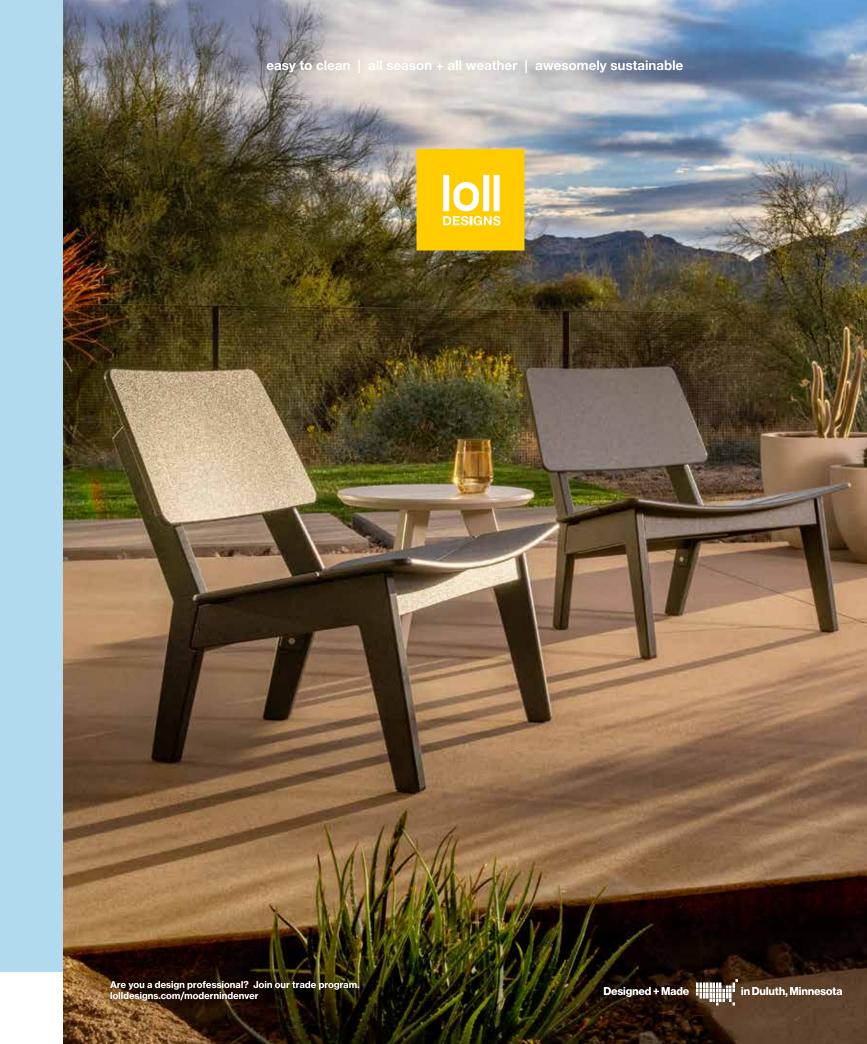
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Finding new purpose in old things, like synthetic nautical rope, became a guiding principle for London design studio Shore. They first wove the silicone material into mats and rugs, then pillows and seat cushions, and even furniture. The latest? Slip-on shoes, which are also made from woven, recycled silicone ropes. Their booties, slippers, and sandals are simultaneously sturdy like boat rope and pliable for unexpected comfort.

+shore-studios.com





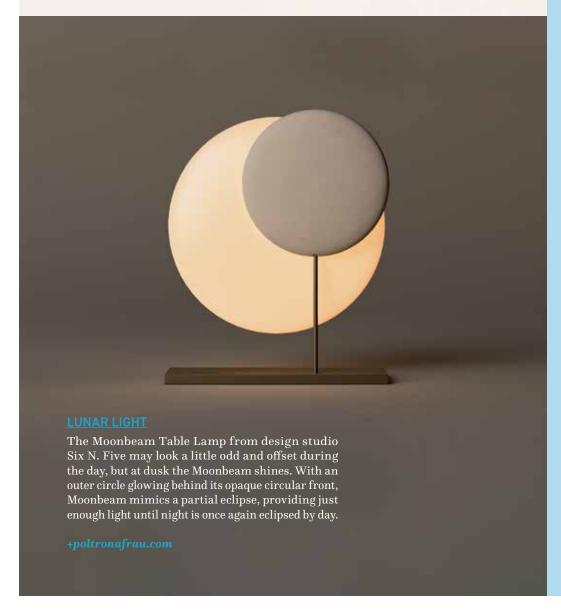
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### **JUST ADD H20**

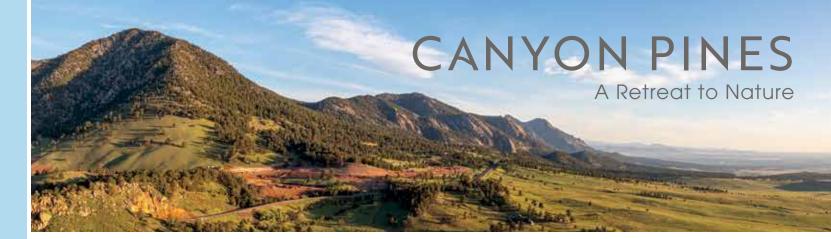
The irony of cleaning product bottles is that they can leave a mess when empty and, ultimately, wind up in the trash. New York-based Blueland offers a better alternative, with buy-once bottles and your choice of concentrated soap in tablet form. Add water and tablet together and you're back in the cleaning business. Blueland's cleaning kits are available for dishes, laundry, toilets, and surfaces, with refill tablets available as one-time purchases or a subscription.



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### **FACE TIME**

Hidden faces in Hayon Studio's Danza collection really make us smile. Danza, which means dance in Spanish and Italian, is a good word to capture the energy of Spanish designer Jaime Hayon's collection, made for Italian ceramic brand Bosa. Tables, clocks, and other pieces are full of details in painted swirls and shapes. Such a fun find, and a bit reminiscent of influential 20th century great Alexander Girard.

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### **UPDATED SHOOTS**

Yes, the Polaroid camera is still around. But in its latest iteration, the original instant camera doesn't want to be so automatic anymore. Instead, the new Polaroid Flip wants to help users take better photos, with its manual adjustment for exposure levels and "Scene Analysis Feature" that indicates if you're too close to an object, or if there's too much or not enough light. Not quite the insta' cam your mom grew up with, but at the price of instant film these days, users should appreciate the photo-taking tips.

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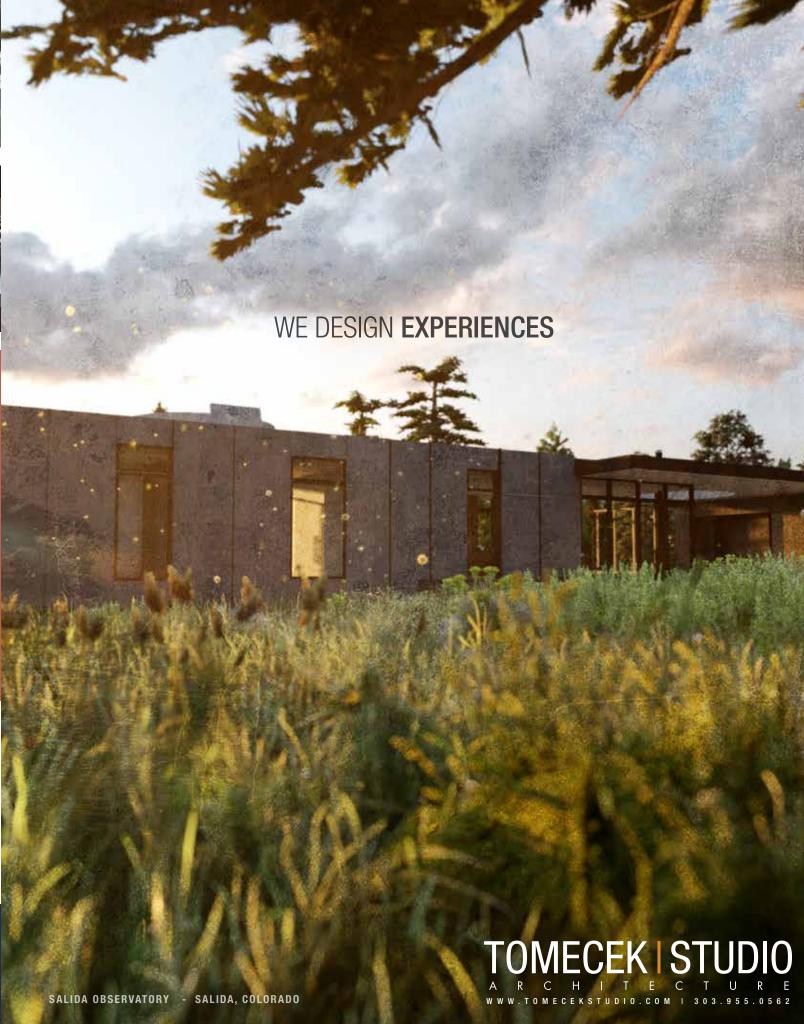
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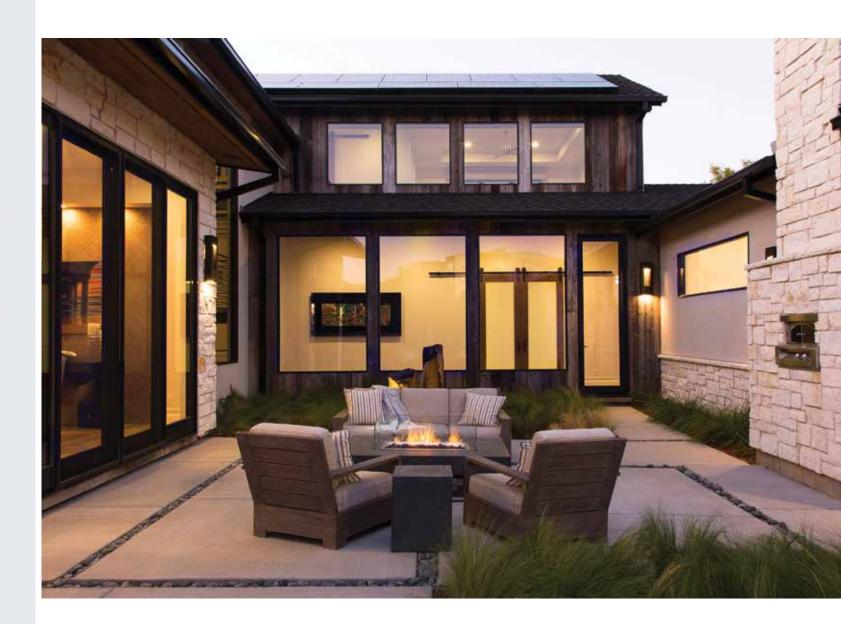
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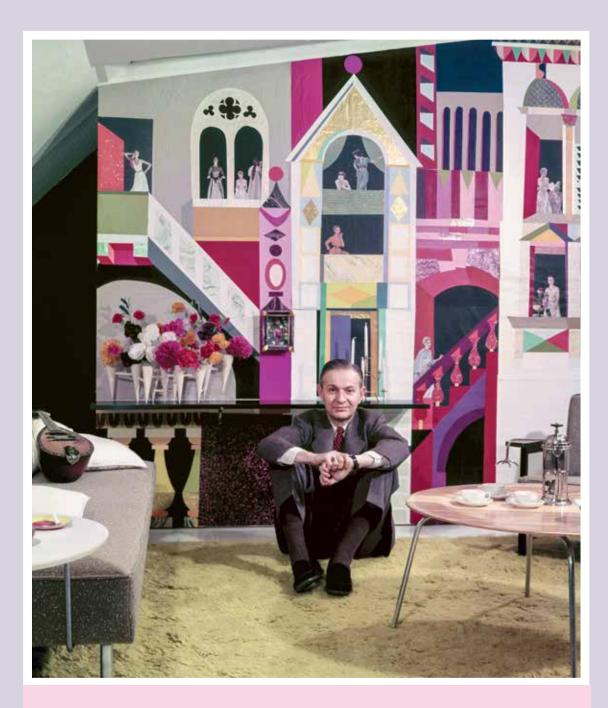
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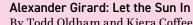


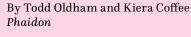
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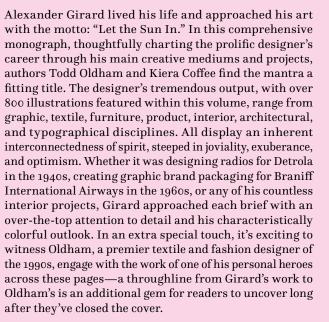


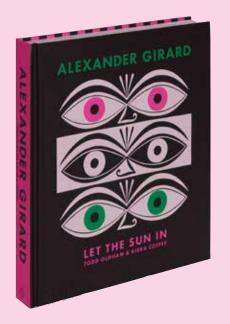


A rchitecture, design, and art are meant to solve problems and take a stance, but they're also intended to fill our environments with beauty—and maybe even bring a smile to their audiences. Three new book releases from Phaidon celebrate a more playful, colorful, and fun side of design, offering us a reminder that we don't always have to take ourselves and our craft too seriously. Defining Style: The Book of Interior Design, Alexander Girard: Let the Sun In, and Mid-Century Modern Designers lean into creative delight and exultation. The trends and careers explored in these titles operate from the principle that great design is most satisfyingly achieved when we showcase our distinctive inner visions and unique styles to the outside world—when we let the light in and lead with personal expression.











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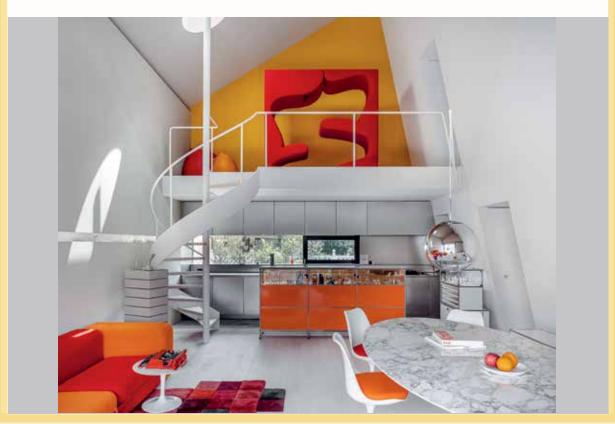




### **Defining Style: The Book of Interior Design** By Joan Barzilay Freund *Phaidon*

Defining Style: The Book of Interior Design offers a breakdown of the 21st century's most popular and enduring design trends. The author, design expert Joan Barzilay Freund, identifies 25 distinctive styles and highlights each with its own dedicated chapter and real-life interior examples from the world's leading designers. Some featured styles, such as Rustic, Coastal, or Minimal, are widely known and colloquially defined, while others, like Biophilic, Collected, or Moody, are more nebulous in characterization. In the book's introduction, former ELLE Decor editor-in-

chief Asad Syrkett credits the continued growth of social media platforms like Pinterest and Instagram as having supercharged the public's interest in and access to design information. While these days it can feel like there's a new internet-based micro-trend every day (think "Cottage Core" or "Coastal Grandma"), this book provides the context and history for these aesthetic movements in a visually stimulating format, approachable for even the casual design appreciator. And both Barzilay Freund and Syrkett praise the mid-century modernists for democratizing design in a manner that allowed greater playfulness and fun in the industry ultimately leading to the eclectic spirit and variety of trends we see today.



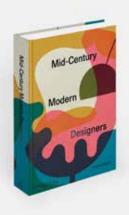


### Mid-Century Modern Designers

By Dominic Bradbury *Phaidon* 

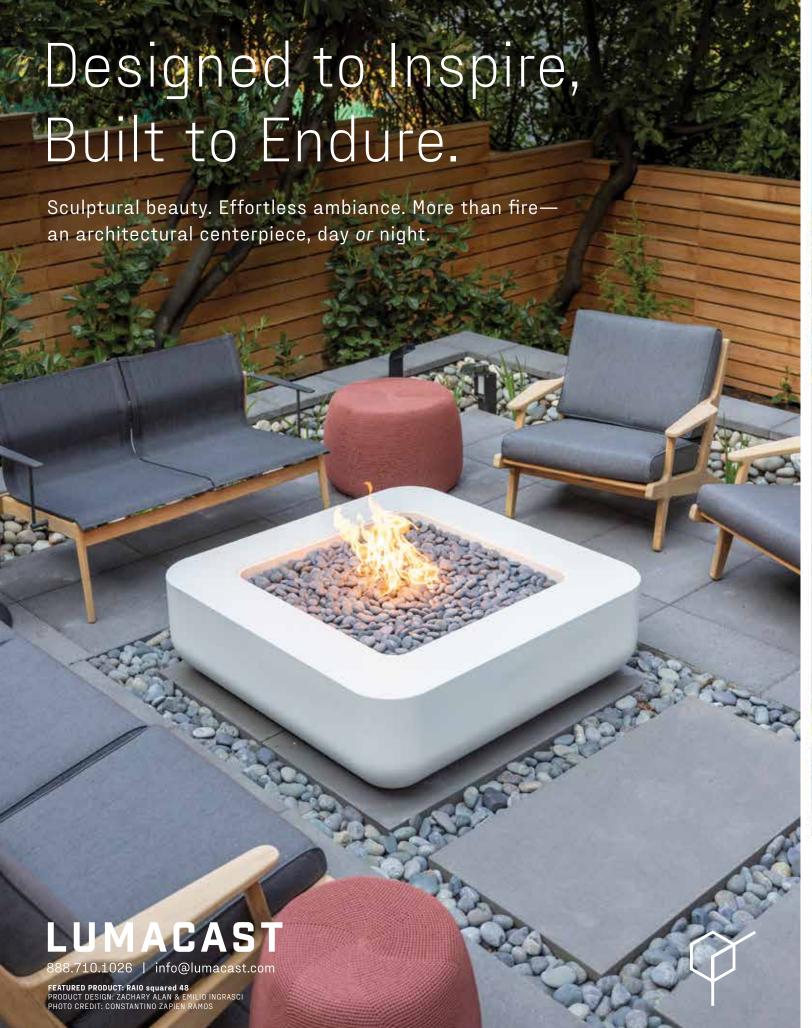
The latest retrospective tome on mid-century design chronicles a wide-ranging view of the practitioners who created the movement. Journalist and author Dominic Bradbury highlights 300 of the era's most influential furniture, glassware, ceramics, and textile artisans who each played a part in building the principles and aesthetics of Modernism—from the golden age's biggest stars (think Charles and Ray Eames or Le Corbusier) to its lesser-known heroes (think Dorothy Wright Liebes or Muriel Coleman). While the profiles in this book are limited to a single page, Bradbury does an excellent job of summarizing each maker's

personal philosophies, stylistic legacies, and integral contributions to the post-war generation. Bradbury touches on the movement's inherent dualities; while born out of a consumer-led boom with the need for functionality, efficiency, and affordability at its heart, modernist designers always celebrated a spirit of playfulness, vibrant color, and idiosyncratic joy at the foreground. Told in an approachable A-Z format with crisp visuals, and spotlighting the movement's underappreciated global scope, *Mid-Century Modern Designers* offers readers a new take on the ever-popular period.





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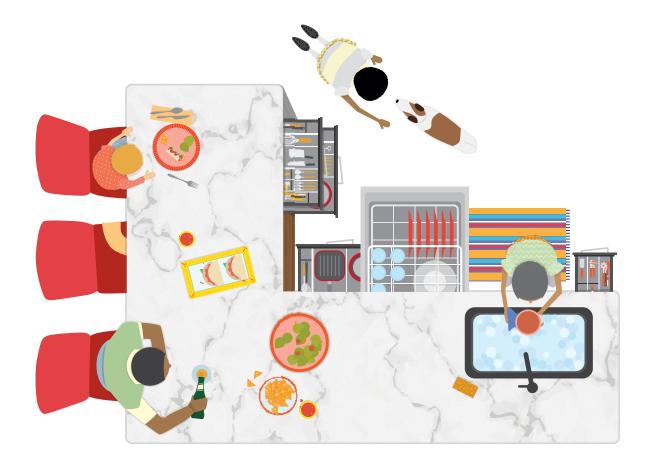
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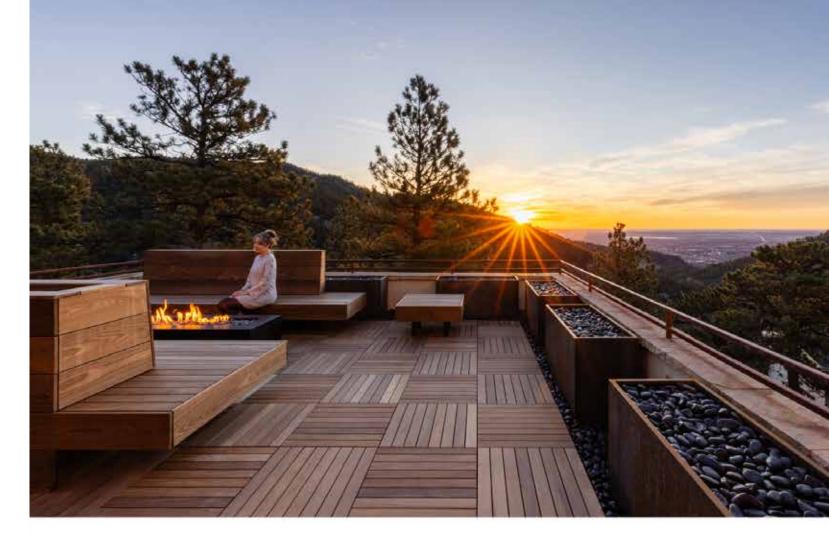
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might seem like a pretty normal kitchen—albeit a beautiful one—if you don't look up. But there, suspended above the kitchen island underneath a giant skylight, floats a 17-by-7-foot cargo net: a kid-friendly lounge space that doubles as an unexpected moment of architectural delight. It's not visible from the front door or the street. It doesn't shout for attention. Instead, like many features of this Denver home, it reveals itself at just the right time.

Designed by architect Chris Jahn of Fuse Studio for homeowners Matt and Kelly Ruhland and their two children, the Skylight House is a study in restraint, playfulness, and purposeful living. With hidden nooks, a calming material palette, and highly personalized space plan, it balances modern design with the rhythms of a real family.

"They wanted a home that was modern and simple with clean lines," says Jahn. "They wanted it to be contextual, not over the top or demanding attention, but special."

### A VISION ROOTED IN FAMILY

After losing out on offer after offer in Denver's ultracompetitive housing market, the Ruhlands finally found a lot that fit their needs, even if it came with size constraints. Their search for an architect was an easier endeavor. They discovered they both admired projects by the same architecture firm, with many of their favorite builds designed by the same architect: Chris Jahn. His clientfocused approach and collaborative style won them over, and the team began dreaming up possibilities.

Jahn had been an architect with Davis Urban at the time, but as the project progressed, he re-launched his own firm, Fuse Studio. Davis Urban architect Grant Evert remained on the Ruhland project, and was integral to bringing their

WORDS: Rachel Walker Youngblade

IMAGES: Daniel Jenkins

### **NOTHING BUT NET**







vision to life. Partnering with general contractor Squareroot Construction was "perhaps the best decision we made," Jahn reflects. He credits their "enthusiastic and fearless embrace of the unique aspects of the house" as key to the project's success.

Their first meeting took place in lawn chairs in the empty lot. "We sat there and just started talking about ideas," Matt recalls. Jahn suggested a skylight. Then a net. Neither of which the homeowners had imagined. But they were open to exploring. "We realized quickly that this wasn't going to be a cookie-cutter house," Matt says.

The family's goals became clear: a house contextual to the neighborhood, with durable

materials, a calm and clutter-free aesthetic, and features that encouraged memory-making. "Everything was designed for how we as a family want to use this space," Matt adds. "Not how someone else would do it, what we were 'supposed to do,' or because it's how things are normally done."

### A HOME THAT UNFOLDS

From the sidewalk, the home respects the neighborhood's scale and character, thanks to its gabled form, brick and wood exterior, and thoughtful massing. Inside, the house begins to reveal itself in layers.

"The experience of walking through the house and how it unfolds is incredibly important," Jahn explains. "We wanted to give a glimpse of the A white oak slatted screen along the stairway turns a transitional space into a focal point that adds warmth and drama. "It's a design element that's doing a multitude of things right," says architect Chris Jahn, who praised the homeowners' ability to identify highly impactful secondary elements. "We had proposed a couple more budget friendly ideas, but they felt it was too special a spot."







"THE EXPERIENCE OF WALKING THROUGH THE HOUSE AND HOW IT UNFOLDS IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT. WE WANTED TO GIVE A GLIMPSE OF THE NEXT SPACE, OR AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING INTERESTING THERE, BUT NOT TO GIVE IT AWAY." -Chris Jahn





A concealed door hides board game storage, keeping the living space calm and clutter free—key goals for the homeowners. "They wanted warmth in the things you touch and walk on," says Jahn, pointing to the custom woodwork that blends function with feeling.

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### **NOTHING BUT NET**





next space, or an understanding that there was something interesting there, but not to give it away."

Consistent materials—white oak, thermally treated wood, glass, black brick, and steel—create a quiet cohesion. Durability and low maintenance were priorities, but so was soul. "Steel has its own patina and character to it," Jahn notes. Wood was incorporated on surfaces you touch and walk on to add additional warmth and avoid an overly industrial look. The brick wraps from the exterior to the interior, connecting the indoor and outdoor spaces and adding visual texture.

Despite the compact lot, Jahn found creative ways to maximize space. A narrow side yard was transformed into a lounge zone, complete with patterned steel paneling and hanging chairs. What could have been a leftover space became a favorite hangout.

In the backyard, a sunken firepit with a built-in TV continues the family's long-standing tradition of outdoor movie nights and nods to the "modern seventies" aesthetic they love.

Matt's love of cooking led to the choice of an oversized Thermador range, which influenced the kitchen's layout. The dining room is tucked away to

allow for a calm mealtime experience without sightlines to dirty dishes and used pots. The basement includes a guest suite, lounge area, and an office for Matt behind a partitioned glass wall.

### **DESIGNED TO DELIGHT**

The team seized every opportunity to turn underutilized spaces into delightful moments. The suspended cargo net, sourced from catamaran suppliers and made from Dyneema fiber (15 times stronger than steel), is the boldest example. Others include a hidden bar tucked behind wallpapered doors in the dining room, loft play spaces in the kids' bedrooms, and a petite office for Kelly, tucked behind oak pocket doors.

Jahn ensured the fun was always in service of the clients' core needs. "We knew an idea wasn't good enough until it answered three or four different questions well," says Jahn. "It couldn't just be playful. It had to be livable and beautiful too."

The net, for example, was not only engineered for strength ("You could park a car on it," Jahn jokes), but also designed to wear well over time, resisting sagging and drywall cracks.

While the fun elements often steal the spotlight, Kelly was equally focused on calm and order. →68

A cozy side vard extends the kitchen's footprint, maintaining privacy with custom metal screens by R Design. "Because of our constraints, the side yard became a place that we decided to activate," says homeowner Matt Ruhland. "That turned out to be one of the cooler things about the house." Built around the homeowner's love of cooking, the kitchen is functional, sleek, and personal.



"WE KNEW AN IDEA WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH UNTIL IT ANSWERED THREE OR FOUR DIFFERENT QUESTIONS WELL. IT COULDN'T JUST BE PLAYFUL. IT HAD TO BE LIVABLE AND BEAUTIFUL TOO." -Chris Jahn



At the top of the stairs, Kelly's hidden office is cleverly tucked behind white oak pocket doors. "Some design choices were driven by the space that we had," Kelly notes of adjusting plans along the way. "We had to be a little flexible with what we envisioned in our heads versus what we could do in reality."



If you're adding something interactive like a net, slide, or loft—it must be supported by serious structural planning. Squareroot Construction over-engineered the cargo net's frame, adding heavy-duty

**ADD PLAY TO** 

LVLs (laminated veneer lumber) to anchor into, and ensured it was tied off every eight inches. Talk to an engineer early, don't skimp on the bones, and work with a reliable contractor who won't take shortcuts.

### **DESIGN WITH PURPOSE, NOT JUST NOVELTY**

Fun works best when it serves more than one function. The Ruhlands found playful ways to incorporate features they desired for functional reasons. Think about how the feature will enhance the flow, light, or utility of your space, not just the "wow."

### NON-STANDARD BUILD OUTS TAKE MORE TIME

Quirky features often mean custom solutions. From access ladders and safety railings to how a hidden door opens cleanly within a wallpapered wall, these elements don't just "plug in." Expect extra design and construction time, and work with a builder who embraces collaboration.

### **PLAN FOR A REVEAL**

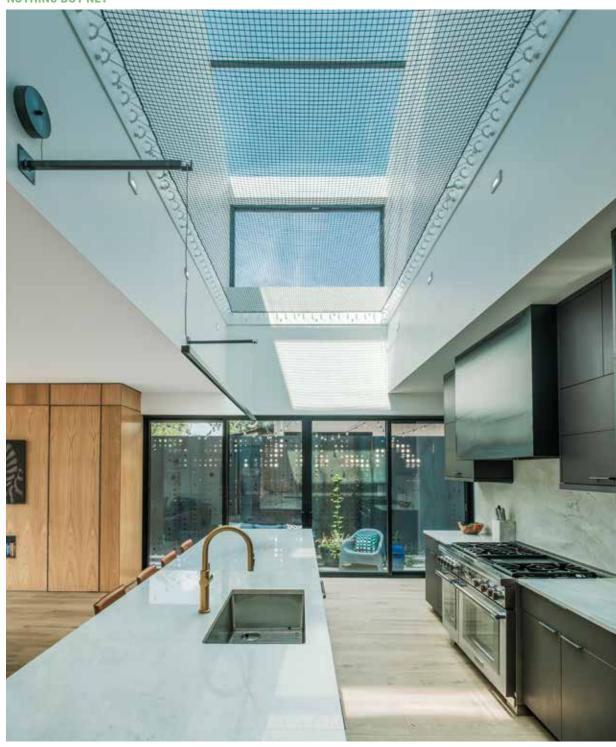
A playful home doesn't have to feel like a theme park. In the Skylight House, the suspended cargo net is hidden from the front entry, and storage doors blend into wood paneling. Let unique elements be discovered, not in your face.

### **GET CREATIVE WITH SOURCING**

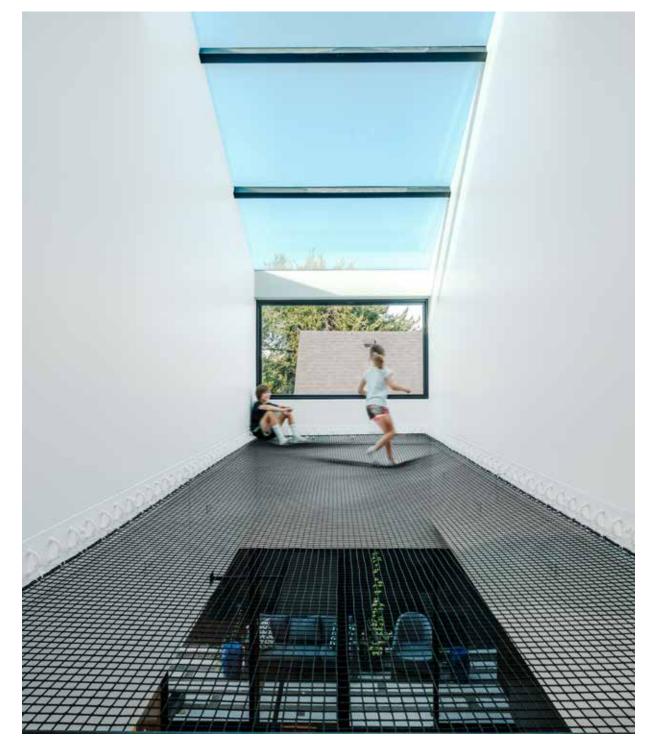
Your solution might not live in the home aisle. Many playful features aren't off-theshelf products—they require ingenuity. The cargo net in the Skylight House is used on catamarans, chosen for their durability and light-filtering quality. Whether it's marinegrade rope, industrial hinges, or climbing holds, unexpected materials often unlock the most imaginative designs.



### **NOTHING BUT NET**



Suspended beneath a 17-foot skylight, the cargo net lets in copious light thanks to the transparent effect of the finely woven but super-strong Dyneema material. Sourced from a catamaran supplier, it was one of several materials Jahn and the homeowners tested before landing on the right fit. The only house rule? "You can't go up there when I'm cooking. I didn't realize how much dust and dirt comes off little kids," Matt laughs.



"IT'S COOL THAT THE FEW BIG ITEMS WE TALKED ABOUT IN OUR FIRST MEETING ENDED UP EVOLVING AND BEING CORE PARTS OF THE HOME. YOU SPEND MORE TIME IN YOUR HOUSE TOGETHER THAN YOU DO ON VACATIONS. SO IF YOU CAN BUILD MEMORIES IN YOUR HOME, THAT'S SPECIAL. WE'RE FORTUNATE THAT WE CAN DO THAT." -Matt Ruhland



"I like things clean and uncluttered," she says. "My office has pocket doors so I can close it at the end of the day. That was important to me." A sleek paneled wood door in the living room conceals board games and toys, another sneaky functional addition.

### **COLLABORATION AND CRAFT**

Throughout the process, the homeowners leaned on Jahn to navigate their options and make choices aligned to their goals. Having never built a home, they weren't quite sure what to expect. Jahn regularly walked them through his own home, which was being constructed at the same time, to show them ideas and construction approaches in person.

"Chris and Grant were always thinking through how things relate—inside to outside, big moves to small details," Kelly shares. "They helped us make decisions that felt both intentional and personal."











Jahn, who has a background in psychology and a history of building art installations, encouraged the family to trust their instincts and focus their attention on what they would appreciate. They met regularly with their builders to problem solve and turn issues into opportunities, like the HVAC bump-out in the dining room wall, which became a clever spot for the hidden bar.

"It's one thing to design something, and it's another thing to build it,"

Matt says of a close partnership with their builder, Squareroot Construction, being critical to the home's success.

### PRIMED FOR MEMORY MAKING

"It's cool that the few big items we talked about in our first meeting ended up evolving and being core parts of the home," Matt reflects on the three-year process. The Skylight House is already serving its purpose. The family has hosted birthday parties, movie nights, and soon,

### **PROJECT CREDITS**

ARCHITECT

Chris Jahn, Fuse Studio + Grant Evert, Davis Urban

GENERAL CONTRACTOR + BUILDER
Squareroot Construction, Inc.

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Architects, builders, homeowners

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER IMEG

CIVIL ENGINEER

Proof Civil

MILLWORK

WOW Interiors + Elevations Design

WINDOWS + DOORS

Signature Windows + Doors, Marvin

OUTDOOR METAL SCREENS

R Design, H+H Metals

TILE + FINISHES

Porcelanosa

KITCHEN + BATHROOM FIXTURES
Ferguson Plumbing, Rampart Supply

SKYLIGHT

DaLyte USA

LIGHTING Galleria Lighting

CUSTOM WOOD SIDING

Wood Source, Inc.
AUDIO / VISUAL

Blend A/V

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE R Design

OUTDOOR FIREPIT

Colorado Hearth + Home

CARGO NET

Sunrise Yacht Products

A sunken conversation pit in the backyard brings a dream to life. "If we had a 10,000-square-foot lot we would have put a ranch house on it with a sunken living room from the seventies," Matt says, admiring Jahn's ability to deliver on their desires with creative solutions.

their niece's graduation celebration. And there's more to come.

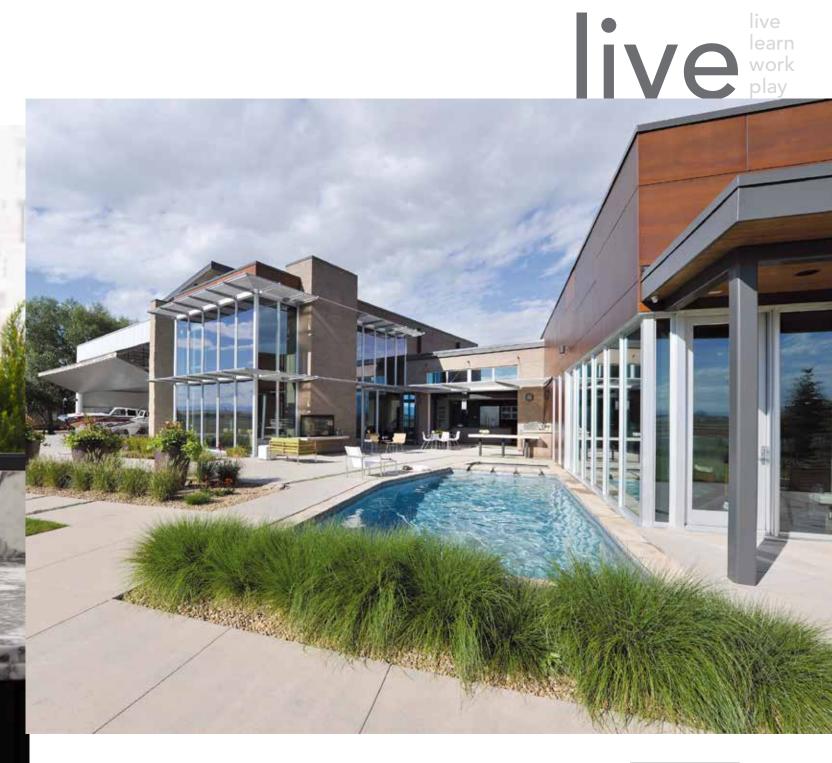
"You spend more time in your house together than you do on vacations," Matt says. "So if you can build memories in your home, that's special. We're fortunate that we can do that."

Just like the home itself, those memories will unfold in the years to come, one joyful moment at a time.

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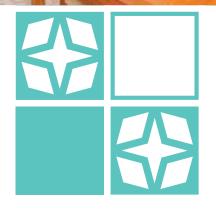




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wenty-one geometrically shaped pieces of marble lie scattered around Herbert Bayer's Marble Garden landscape sculpture on the Aspen Institute campus.

Once detritus left over from industrial production, the marble was repurposed by Bayer who made them into provocatory obelisks that prompt contemplation among the sprawling topiary. The land served as the canvas for the Bauhaus-trained icon to transform a corner of an old mining town into "Aspen Meadows," an international oasis of mind, body, and spirit. A small reflection pond sits at the center of the 1955 work.

For Koko Bayer, artist and granddaughter of the design polymath, it's a place-based invitation for onlookers to examine and scaffold their own meaning.

"I've been around the Meadows since I was a kid...rolling around and playing, and thinking of [the sculptures] as part of the landscape," she says. "I didn't fully understand that they were works of art until later on."

#### A SITE FOR SOARING EYES

Site-specific art, often called "land art" or Earthworks, emerged during the 1960s and 70s, when artists began creating large-scale pieces unique to and inseparable from their environment. Figures like Robert Smithson, Nancy Holt, and Walter De Maria rejected gallery strictures in favor of remote, open landscapes. Frequently linked to the American West, Herbert Bayer's proto-exploration of the approach—evident in pieces like *Marble Garden*—took root decades before the formal movement, which continues to grow today.

The act of reorienting the relationship between objects and environments over time is at the center of Sculpting the Environment: The Three-Dimensional Art of Herbert Bayer. Opening June 10 at the Resnick Center for Herbert Bayer Studies in honor of the Aspen Institute's 75th Anniversary, the exhibition is the most comprehensive look to date at Bayer's environmental sculptures and site-specific work.



#### This must be the PLACE



Photo: Daniel Bayer, courtesy of the Aspen Institute

More than 100 pieces, including drawings, models, maquettes, and archival photographs—some never-before-seen—reveal a lifelong pursuit of what Bayer called "the extension of my work into many areas of space."

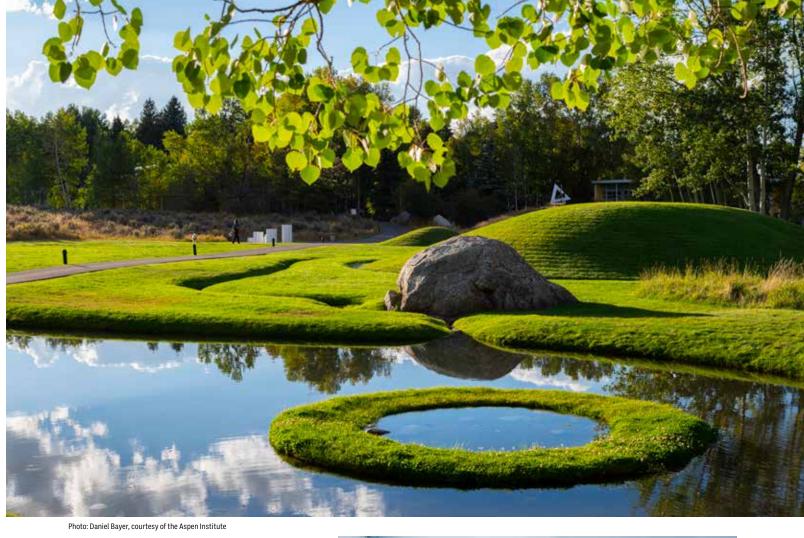
Curated by Koko and the Center's Adam Thomas, the show elevates Bayer's legacy beyond his lauded contributions to typography, painting, and graphic design. In Aspen, he worked with the support of industrialist Walter Paepcke to sculpt the land itself—creating a gesamtkunstwerk, or total work of art, that fused the Bauhaus spirit with the Rocky Mountains' vast natural landscape. His interventions stretch across the Aspen Institute's campus as a contiguous livingthought, not unlike the city's dendrological namesake.

Relocating to the region from New York City likely (re)ignited Bayer's connection to the natural realm, something that can be traced back to his own childhood spent "with skis on his feet" in the Austrian Alps, according to Koko. Resulting works like *Grass Mound* (1955), widely recognized as the first modern Earthwork, and *Anderson Park* embody Bayer's radical approach: art not as object, but as environment.

"You can really think of the whole campus as a work of his," Koko says. "He was so connected to the earth. This was where he brought all of his passions together."

That ethos of immersion and ecological thinking, so central to Bayer's vision, continues to ripple through a new generation of artists rethinking what site-specific art can be. In the Rocky Mountain West, a constellation of contemporary works explores the genre's evolution, challenging assumptions about art, access, and place.

In 1955, Herbert Bayer visited Marble, Colorado, and selected 21 weathered remnants from the Yule quarry; these geometric throwaways would form the Aspen Institute campus' *Marble Garden*, one of the earliest land-art installations. The piece was restored in 2021 by Design Workshop.





Bayer envisioned the Aspen Institute campus [TOP] as a comingling of art as environment and vice-versa. The way the sunlight interacted with similar structures he saw in Morocco led to the creation of *Four Chromatic Gates* [ABOVE], located just outside of the Resnick Center for Herbert Bayer Studies.

This must be the PLACE



#### SCULPTING WITH FUNCTION: COMMUNITY FORMS

In Denver's RiNo district, just off the South Platte River, Matt Barton's Community Forms appears at first glance like a public plaza, a modernist skatepark, or a sculptural playground—sometimes all three. That ambiguity is by design.

"I've always wanted my artwork to have the energy of a live performance," Barton says. "Where people have agency. Where they take up space."

Barton, a sculptor and installation artist with a DIY-bent, created *Community Forms* in partnership with Black Cube Nomadic Art Museum and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The project serves a dual purpose: inviting play and community interaction while mitigating runoff in a flood-prone area.

Built from sculpted concrete and nestled in a stormwater path, the piece draws aesthetic inspiration from Monument Valley and the plateaued geology of the American West. It also channels Barton's punk and skateboarding background, where marginal public spaces were reinterpreted into sites of movement, resistance, and belonging.

"The whole place flooded after a storm," he recalls. "We cut through the curb, and I watched the parking lot drain through the sculpture. It was like—wow. This artwork actually found its spot."

#### GHOSTS OF THE PLAINS: LAST CHANCE MODULE ARRAY

About two hours east, on the windswept high plains of Colorado, another site-specific work invites a very different kind of encounter. Last Chance Module Array, created by M12 Studio founder Richard Saxton, is a large-scale rural installation perched near the tiny town of Last Chance (population: < 30). Charred black from a woodburning process that nods to the region's wildfire history, the piece evokes both ruin and rebirth; it's equal parts collapsed barn and space-age sentinel.

"We asked ourselves, 'If this had been there before the fire, what would it look like afterward?" Saxton says. "It's a piece about duality. The terrors that come with environmental devastation—and the resilience, too."

M12 Studio's work is grounded in rural identity and site specificity, developed in collaboration with local governments, planners, and residents. Saxton rejects the "plop art" model of much public sculpture: airlifted into place without regard for context. Instead, he says, true site-specificity means the entire being of the work comes from the place itself: wind patterns, soil, stories.

"It looks different to everyone," he says. "Some see quilt squares. Ranchers see brands. Road-trippers think it's a building going up—or falling down."

Like Bayer, Saxton appreciates value in ambiguity, scale, and viewer interpretation. He calls Bayer "a huge influence, an artist who trusted the viewer, who wasn't so controlling about how things should be read." It's an ethos M12 carries forward, building works that are intentionally open-ended and inseparable from their surroundings. →85





"I'VE ALWAYS WANTED MY ARTWORK TO HAVE THE ENERGY OF A LIVE PERFORMANCE. WHERE PEOPLE HAVE AGENCY. WHERE THEY TAKE UP SPACE." -Matt Barton





Green Box Arts in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, is home to several renowned land art installations, including the technicolor tapestries of Pard Morrison's *Loveletter* [TOP LEFT] and Yaacov Agam's *Communication X9 in Green Mountain Falls, CO* [TOP RIGHT], as well as the welded steel *Skye* by Brian Wall [ABOVE]. OPPOSITE: Matt Barton's *Community Forms* is an exercise of "making a space where people themselves are part of the art."













Top Photo: David Lauer

#### A REGIONAL CONVERSATION

These aren't the only works sculpted into the Mountain West. Others invite similar experiences of perception and presence:

**James Turrell's** *Skyspace* in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, offers meditative openings to the sky through precise manipulations of light and color.

Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* in western Utah align with the summer and winter solstices, offering a celestial portal through concrete cylinders in the desert.

Walter De Maria's *Lightning Field* in New Mexico stages weather itself, with polished steel rods spanning a mile-long grid—visible only to those who stay overnight.

**Andrew Rogers's** *Elements* series, built with local communities in Utah, continues his global exploration of geoglyphs and land inscriptions.

Each invites what Bayer sought in his own work: an experience in and of the landscape, not just upon it.

"He wasn't making things to impress people," Koko says. "He was building spaces where people could feel something—and maybe see the world a little differently."

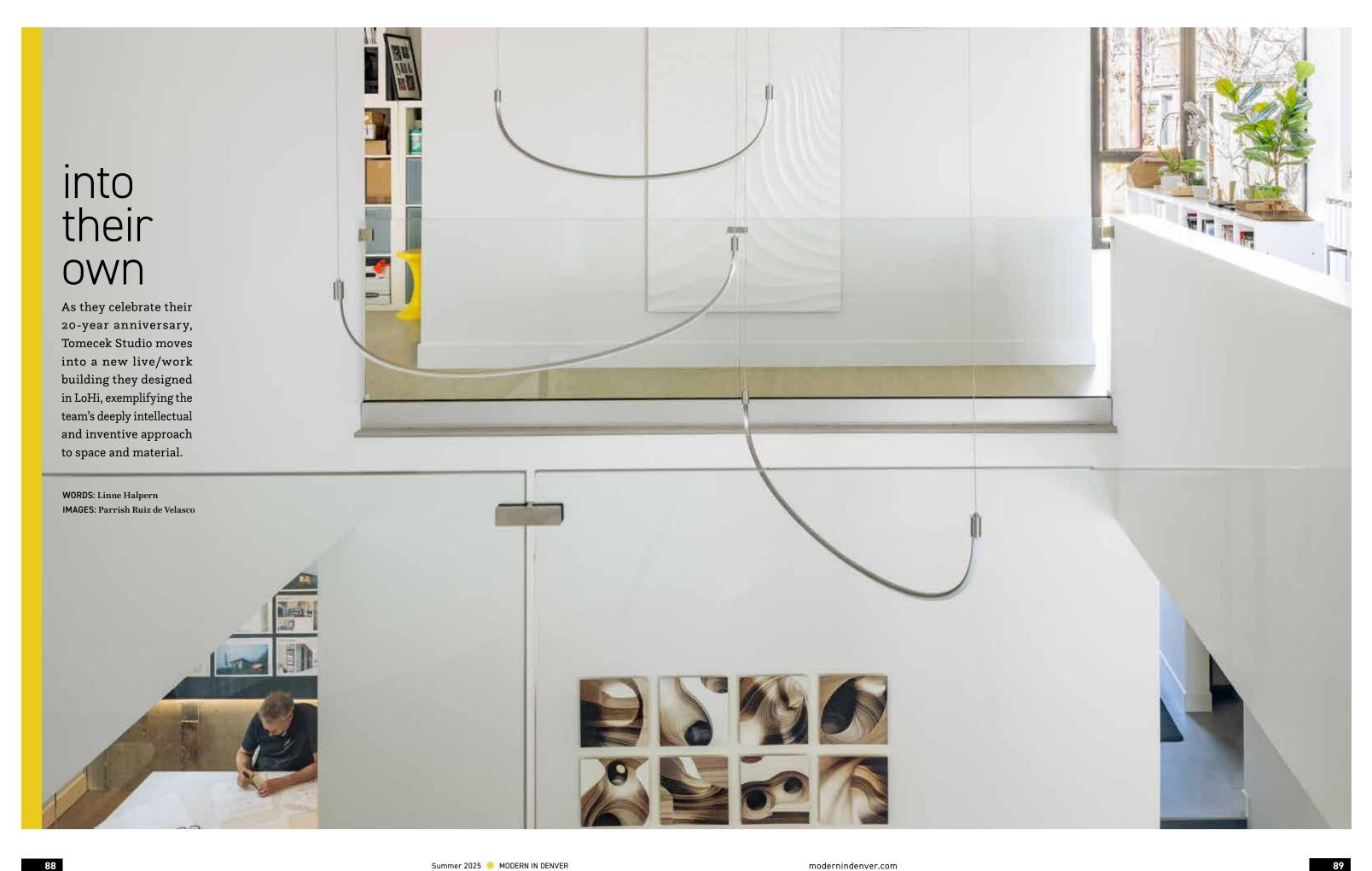
#### **LEGACY OF THE LAND**

In Colorado and beyond, Bayer's influence echoes through these newer works—not through direct imitation, but in a shared commitment to place, process, and public engagement. It remains an art of attention and access, where the land is not merely backdrop, but collaborator and co-creator.

As climate, culture, and community collide in new ways, site-specific art offers something increasingly rare: a pause; a chance to inhabit time and place with presence. And within that space, next to the Roaring Fork in a deafening quietude under lapis lazuli sky, an invitation to look more closely at where we are—and where we're going.

"The discovery process was baked into the Bauhaus methodology," Koko says. "Instead of just imposing will, it implores us to ask what's already great about our environment and work with it."





# TOMECEK STUDIO IS KNOWN FOR ASKING THE BIG QUESTIONS.

Within the Denver community, the architecture firm has gained a reputation for its intellectual approach, inventiveness with space and material, and responsiveness to natural environments. "In our projects, we're always searching for the DNA," says founder and principal Brad Tomecek. "What does the space need to help it come into being? What does it want to become?" he asks. These are the ideas that guide the practice.

Recently, the firm has moved into a brand-new office—a combined live/work space in LoHi with rental units attached. The urban infill structure exemplifies the team's ethos: mixing straight edges and sweeping, rounded shapes, the design simultaneously fits into the existing infrastructure of the block and pushes the neighborhood forward in an appropriately modern direction.

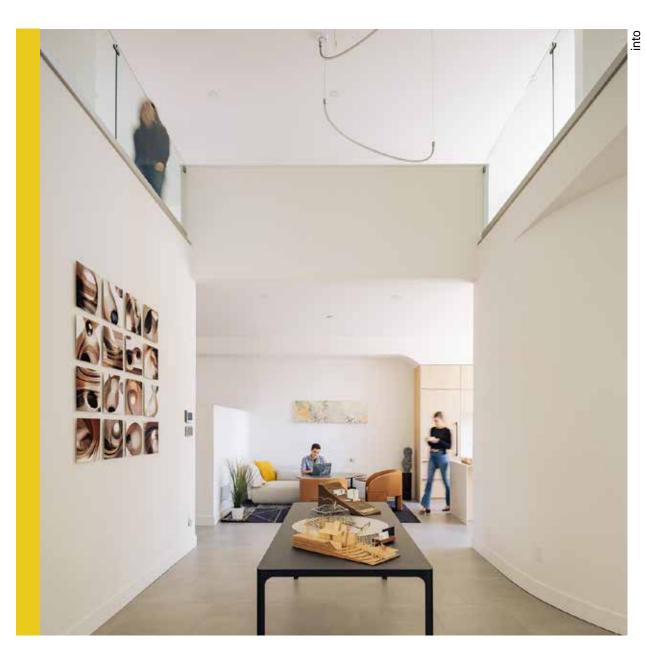
While all Tomecek Studio projects are personal to the team, this time, the architects became their own clients. They began the process as they always do, with a site analysis—seeking to understand how to orient the build, where the light falls, who the neighbors are, what the viewpoints are, and so on. Ultimately, inspired by the lot's required alley site triangle, they decided to plant their footprint with a curving eye toward the downtown skyline. Instead of repeating the Highlands' traditional, blocky 1930s geometry, the team's imagination led them to a spherical perspective, an allusion to layering and interlocking forms.

"With this project, maybe the question is: does it look forward without ignoring the past?" says Tomecek. "We never want to replicate what already exists. There's too much technology and building wisdom out there. But, does it feel good? Does it fit?"

The two-story outer volume juxtaposes against the 45-foot recessed form in scale and material, organically blending old and new, hard and soft, active and passive modalities. The high ceilings and large windows lend themselves to an airy feeling, bright with natural light and a serene interior aesthetic ("clean, but not static," according to Tomecek). Altogether, the space is ideal for both sides of the live/work brief—productivity and restoration. "We needed this space to live well on both fronts, and to work well," he says. Now ready to welcome clients and guests on West 30th Avenue, the space offers a fluidity of use and sensibility, a showroom that illustrates the overall Tomecek essence. →95



An evening view of the new Tomecek Studio workplace exterior highlights the building's expansive windows, architectural curvature, and organic urban infill placement. "We aim to solve the problems of geometry artistically," explains founder and principal Brad Tomecek. "To create a fluidity—you see how things start to peel away...then there's a contextual overlay with the city."

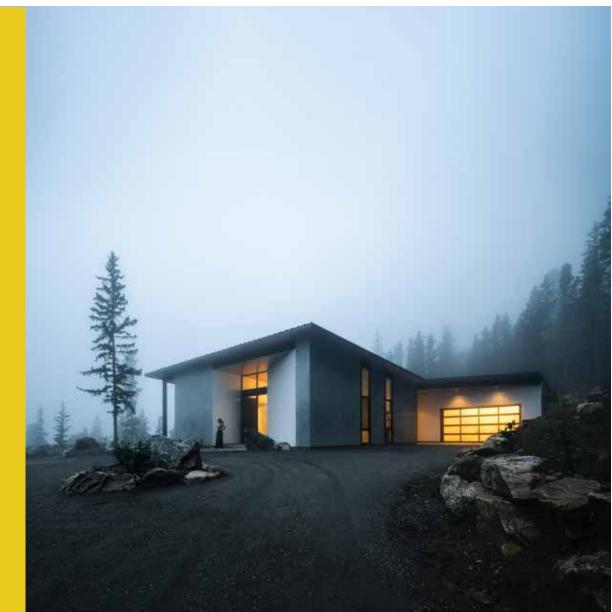


The office's curved volumes allow for moments of both integration and relief. While the various spaces are acoustically connected across the floor plan, privacy and reflective work can also be achieved.



"IT'S A HOUSE, UNTIL IT ISN'T...UNTIL YOU BRING SOMETHING TO IT THAT'S BEYOND STANDARD. YOU CAN PUT A ROOF ON IT, YOU CAN PUT A FIREPLACE INSIDE IT...BUT, ARCHITECTURE CAN BE SO MUCH MORE. THAT'S HOW I THINK ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY OF SPACE." -Brad Tomecek





Echo Mountain Retreat, located above Echo Pass in Idaho Springs, Colorado, showcases Tomecek Studio's deep and masterful integration of nature's landscapes, solid volumes, and holistic materiality.

The building marks a milestone for Tomecek Studio, as the firm celebrates its 20th anniversary and begins its next chapter, informed by a continuation of their original philosophical agenda. "This is the trajectory we've been working on for over two decades now," says Tomecek. "Funny enough, they say that architects begin their careers at 50. So, I feel like I'm just at that halfway point," he jokes.

While the founder has a growth mindset about the work itself—a desire for the challenge and rigor of the firm's projects to constantly evolve—he isn't interested in team expansion at this juncture, preferring to remain lean and closely involved in all day-to-day operations. The uniquely hands-on approach renders the studio distinctive amongst its peers, motivated more by exploration than profit. Rather than big budgets or institutional prestige, Tomecek cites his main drivers for taking on new clients as: Are we going to have fun doing this?

"It's a journey that you take with people, pulling out what they're really looking for, uncovering their needs," he says. The architect finds so much passion in the problem-solving and puzzle-piecing of the craft, creating a poetics far beyond the mechanics.

Over the years, Tomecek's most thrilling briefs are the ones that allow for divergent thinking and open-ended interpretation. Some of the architect's favorite projects have included a Salida, Colorado, residence atop a cemetery property, and a Sunset Pavilion for a local parks system in Firestone, Colorado. The Cemetery Residence looked to traditional forms of burial to inform its programmatic design, invoking symbolism of life, death, and transformation through liminal space. Meanwhile, the Sunset Pavilion utilized a carefully diagramed set of perforations to highlight the sun's movement through the equinox seasons, encouraging visitors to pay closer attention to Earth's natural elements. While differing in form, both projects respond to their environment's site-specific needs in creative, intentional, and organic ways.

Looking ahead, the firm is excited by upcoming projects that bring new challenges. A community center for a church asks questions around gathering spaces that foster spirituality and communion, while a multi-generational, multi-family home invites inquiry around the distinctions between shared space versus



**ABOVE:** The Shield House, located in Denver, offers another take on spherical solutions to urban infill questions—this time intended to provide privacy and shade, the curved metal wall redirects light and viewpoints with imaginative flair.

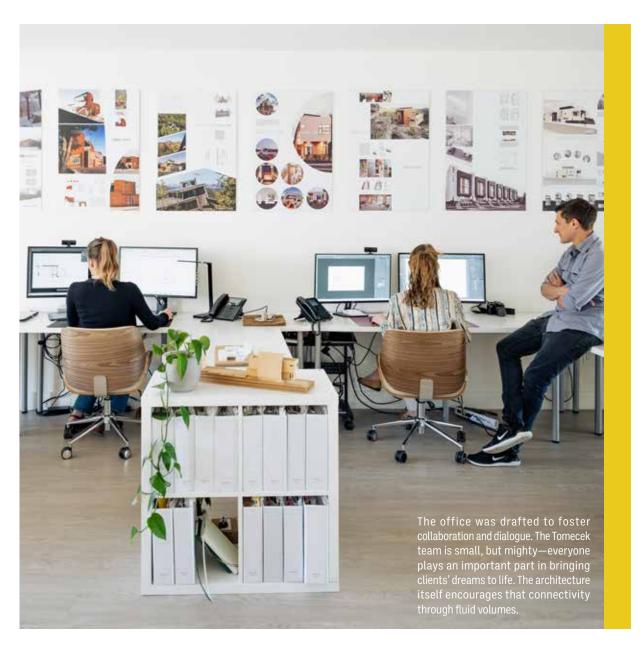
**BELOW:** The Sunset Pavilion, commissioned for a parks system in Firestone, Colorado, features carefully diagrammed perforations intended to act as a lens to view the sun's changing movements. By design, visitors are encouraged to engage peacefully and thoughtfully with the landscape.



Photos: Top, Raul Garcia, Above, Tomecek Studio



"WITH THIS PROJECT, MAYBE THE QUESTION IS: DOES IT LOOK FORWARD WITHOUT IGNORING THE PAST? WE NEVER WANT TO REPLICATE WHAT ALREADY EXISTS. THERE'S TOO MUCH TECHNOLOGY AND BUILDING WISDOM OUT THERE. BUT, DOES IT FEEL GOOD? DOES IT FIT?" -Brad Tomecek



privacy in the domestic realm. Ever innovative with technology and sustainability initiatives—ranging from prefabricated units to alternative building systems and net-zero energy usage—the studio plans to continue exploring untapped possibilities with their signature curiosity, placing the beauty of nature at the soul of all their work.

To Tomecek, a house is never just a house. As an adjunct professor at the University of Colorado College of Architecture and Planning, he's concerned with imbuing this message to his students—always seeking depth through semiotic meaning and material transcendence. "It's a house, until it isn't," he says. "Until you bring something to it that's beyond standard. You can put a roof on it, you can put a fireplace inside it... but architecture can be so much more. That's how I think about the opportunity of space." Now, he and his team have created the perfect place to explore all its possibilities.

#### **PROJECT CREDITS**

#### ARCHITECT

Tomecek Studio

#### BUILDER

One Residential

#### CABINETRY

 $Thurston\ Kitchen + Bath$ 

#### APPLIANCES Roth Living

URNISHINGS

#### Rifugio Modern EXTERIOR

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#### FORE**SITE**



#### "IT WAS AN ABSOLUTE EXPERIMENT,"

architect Renée del Gaudio says of her recently completed project sited above Boulder's Betasso Preserve. The residence is unconventional, with three separate cabin-like forms—one for working, one for living, one for sleeping—connected by glassenclosed passageways. It's also 100 percent gas-free, operating net zero through geothermal energy and electric appliances. But it's not the structure, nor the energy rating, del Gaudio means when she calls the project experimental—it's how it came to be there.

Rather than take the typical route of being hired by a client to design a custom home—a process del Gaudio, who has been making award-winning architecture through her namesake firm since 2011, is very familiar with—she decided to buy, develop, design, and permit a property on her own before selling the land and plans to a client. The reason? Site specificity.

"Site-specific design is so important to me. I don't believe in creating hermetically-sealed projects that



OPPOSITE: Overlooking Boulder's Betasso Preserve, three interlinked volumes comprise a net-zero residence designed by Renée del Gaudio. ABOVE: The middle volume is home to the kitchen and living area. Consistent throughout all three volumes are hemlock ceilings with Douglas fir rafters (strengthened with embedded steel flitch plates), Henrybuilt cabinetry, and concrete floors—a nod to the surrounding pine and granite landscape.

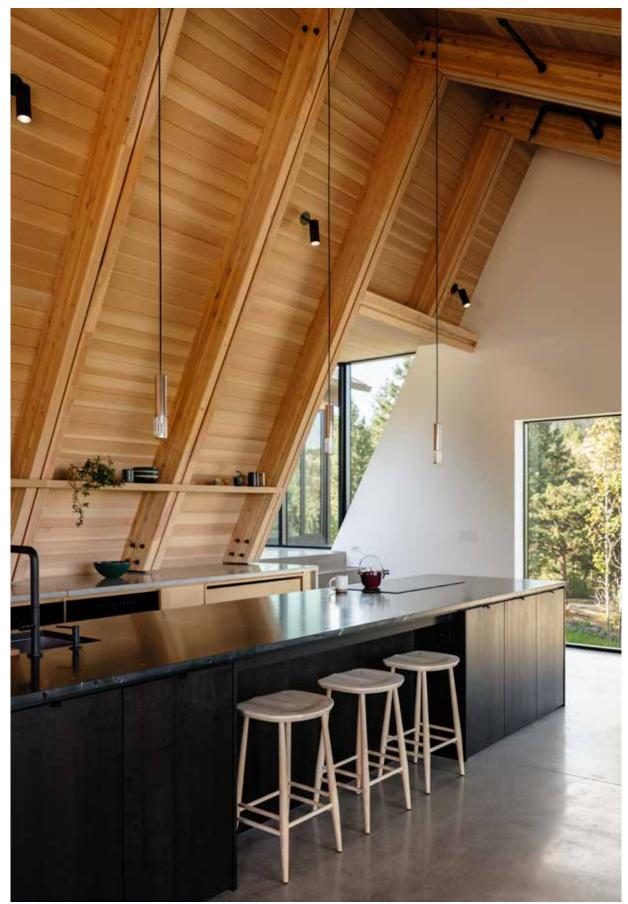
block out all of the factors inherent to the place you live," del Gaudio says, explaining that her architectural school experiences included work in remote areas of Mexico, Cuba, and Kenya, where she learned to design with, not against, local talent, labor, materials, and climates. "But making successful site-specific design here in the traditional way can feel like trying to find a needle in a haystack—you need a client who not only thinks in the same vein as you do, but also already has the right property in place."

Well versed in assessing grade, aspect, access, and views in mountain properties, del Gaudio sought land that would inspire and inform a new residence's typology and program, rather than working conversely to manipulate a site to accommodate certain design

specifications. "Going this route removes the potential disconnect that can happen between what a designer or client wants and what a piece of property is telling you it needs," she says.

The property del Gaudio found was on a gently sloping site at 6,800 feet in elevation, subject to strong northwestern winds and graced by sweeping southeastern views of Betasso Preserve. This told her that the residence should be shut down to the north (conveniently, the direction of the road), and open to the south for exposure and views. The narrow parcel meant she'd have to be creative with how the form played out spatially, leading her to design the program across three separate yet connected volumes that stagger down the site vertically, each getting their own slice of sun.

#### FORE**SITE**





opposite: The asymmetrical roofline invited del Gaudio to design a kitchen without upper cabinetry. Kitchen storage and appliances are all under-counter, with the exception of a full refrigerator kept in the adjacent office and utility volume, connected through a glass hallway. ABOVE: "This project gets all four seasons," del Gaudio explains. "In the summer, you can open up the pocketing wall panel, and in the winter you can close it down and rev up the stove." Simple furnishings were selected to support everyday living while allowing the site's natural elements to be the primary experiential focus.

"This way, everything could face out to the nature preserve while fitting within the constraints of the property setbacks," del Gaudio explains. "I love the idea of breaking a bigger program into smaller volumes to reduce impact and bring it down to scale. You always feel good when you're in a one-room cabin—it just feels like you're on vacation, right? Conceptually, each volume of this residence is its own cabin."

In the upper cabin is an office and utility space, the middle has the kitchen and living area, and the lower is home to three bedrooms. Enclosed glass walkways bridge the volumes, each dropping three feet in grade. The main entryway is positioned between the upper and middle cabin. The exterior is clad completely in black standing seam metal. "The wall is the roof, the roof

is the wall," says del Gaudio. "The restrained palette shows deference to this beautiful landscape."

After purchasing the property in 2019, del Gaudio began Boulder County's complicated and time-consuming process for getting a site plan review permit. "I spent about a year going through that process—testing soil and getting well, septic, and driveway permits—and then another year developing the design to the point of construction drawings and structural engineering to submit for a building permit," she explains.

Having saved the future homeowners over two years in pre-construction—even more if you count the time spent finding and hiring an architect—she put the property and highly detailed renderings of the design on the market in 2021. She left

#### FORE**SITE**





"I LOVE THE IDEA OF BREAKING A BIGGER PROGRAM INTO SMALLER VOLUMES TO REDUCE IMPACT AND BRING IT DOWN TO SCALE. YOU ALWAYS FEEL GOOD WHEN YOU'RE IN A ONE-ROOM CABIN—IT JUST FEELS LIKE YOU'RE ON VACATION, RIGHT? CONCEPTUALLY, EACH VOLUME OF THIS RESIDENCE IS ITS OWN CABIN."

-Renée del Gaudio



OPPOSITE: Lowest on the hillside is the third volume, dedicated to rest. It has three bedrooms, one of which is a bunk room with custom beds made by Marc Hunter. ABOVE: The first volume is a utility and office space. Easily accessed from the kitchen, this cabin has additional pantry storage and full-size refrigerator and freezer.

some elements of the design, like interior materials and finishes, undetermined so the clients could make the home their own. After it sold, she proceeded to work closely with the new owners for 22 months, until the project was completed in the summer of 2024.

While emotional connectivity to place ranks high on del Gaudio's list for why to design site-specifically, "reduced energy expenditure is the biggest benefit," she says. Her designs respond to the elements and this residence is no different, using the sun to naturally heat through floor-to-ceiling glass while the opposing side has solid, continuously insulated walls that break the wind.

A ground source heat pump, 9kW photovoltaic array, and all-electric appliances mean the house operates 100 percent gas free.

The new owners, a couple with three grown sons relocating to Colorado from downtown Chicago, were not afraid of unconventional architecture, del Gaudio shares. "They were sold on the idea of living in the mountains, which they had never done, and having a totally different way of being. They were really drawn to the idea of going 100 percent electric."

They did ask del Gaudio to make one adjustment to the design and install air conditioning, something she's





only done once before in her many years of practice. "Recognizing that they are from Chicago, I agreed to it," she shares. "I prefer not to use mechanical energy to cool in the mountains, and told them I hope the performance of the house is successful enough that they rarely use it. So far, I believe this is the case."

The couple chose hemlock tongue-andgroove ceilings and walls with exposed Douglas fir rafters, and worked with interior designer Kate Kimball Moore, owner of Kimball Modern, to select tiles. Formerly the owner of a lighting restoration company, one of the homeowners made 40 ceiling lights to del Gaudio's specification, and restored a handful of vintage Danish fixtures used throughout the home. Del Gaudio specified white oak Henrybuilt systems for the kitchen and other cabinetry, and concrete floors across the three cabins, as well as in the connecting passageways, for cohesion.

"It turned out beautiful and, with their selections and contributions, it's really theirs," del Gaudio says.

The experiment was such a success, del Gaudio is already in the midst of doing it again for a residence in Nederland, with plans to continue intermixing self-led project development with client-driven work. "These projects have been instructive to how I design," she says, sharing that by acting as owner through the development and design phases, she learns how to be especially conscious of cost and budget.

"This approach creates a strong sense of place. There are many things in a community that can do that, but architecture's a big one. People want to feel like they're in the place that they live."

#### PROJECT CREDITS

#### ARCHITECT

Renée del Gaudio Architecture

#### **GENERAL CONTRACTOR**

Dan Flohrs, Coburn

#### STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Joel Ambrosino, Gebau Engineering

#### **GEO-THERMAL SYSTEM**

NoCo Solutions

#### ROOFING

Z-Craft

#### WINDOWS + DOORS

Signature Windows + Doors, Marvin Modern

#### COUNTERTOP + TILE SELECTIONS

Kate Kimball Moore, Kimball Modern

#### CUSTOM CONCRETE COUNTERS

Irving Lopez + Ivan Olivas, Concrete Polish

#### MILLWORK

Henrybuilt

#### FLOORING

Arrigoni Woods

#### LIGHTING DESIGN

Selected and handmade by homeowner

#### **CUSTOM BUNK BEDS**

Marc Hunter, Hunter Woodworking

#### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Lucas Coker, Evoke Landscape

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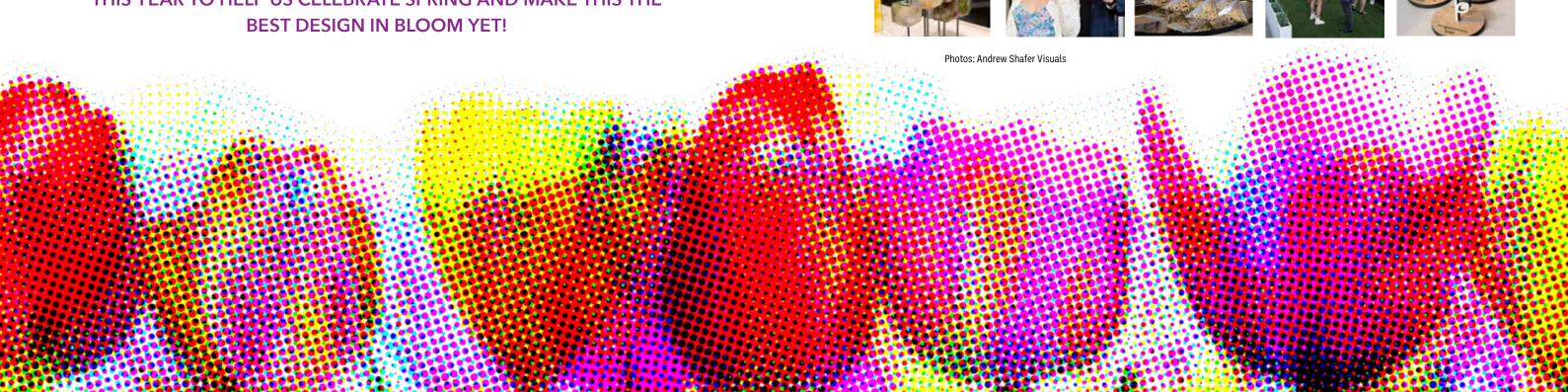
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At the Mesa, dusky desert roses, sage greens, and sandy neutrals create a sun-washed palette that feels playful and serene—and decidedly Palm Springs. Echoing the curves on the arched doorway and fireplace niche are plush, sinuous furnishings.





#### The Mesa Bungalows



instagram.com/mesabungalows





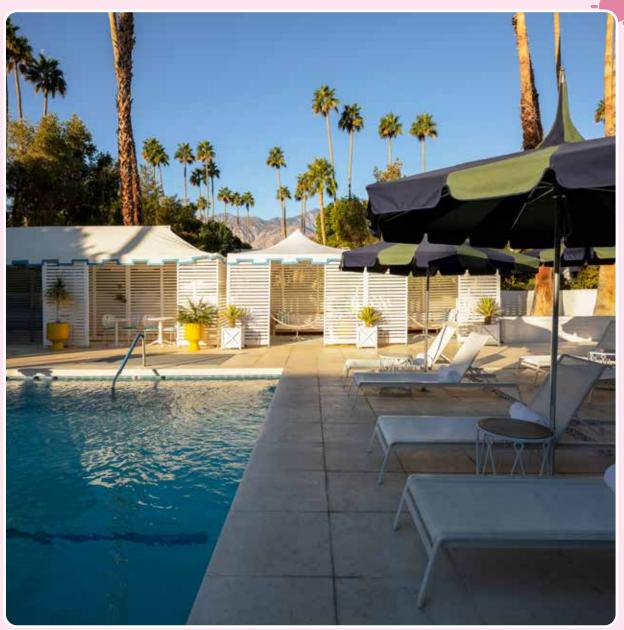
Built on the former estate of Gene Autry, the 144-room Parker Palm Springs is the unofficial grande dame of Palm Springs, with watering holes aplenty and interiors designed by cheeky-chic Jonathan Adler. While the grounds are lush and manicured, the interiors are just the right amount of campy, from the spa—ironically called the Palm Springs Yacht Club—to the onsite bars and restaurants (don't miss Norma's, where you can settle in on a sunlit, Crayola-bright banquette on the terrace for an exquisite Croque Manhattan and, often, some celeb spotting).







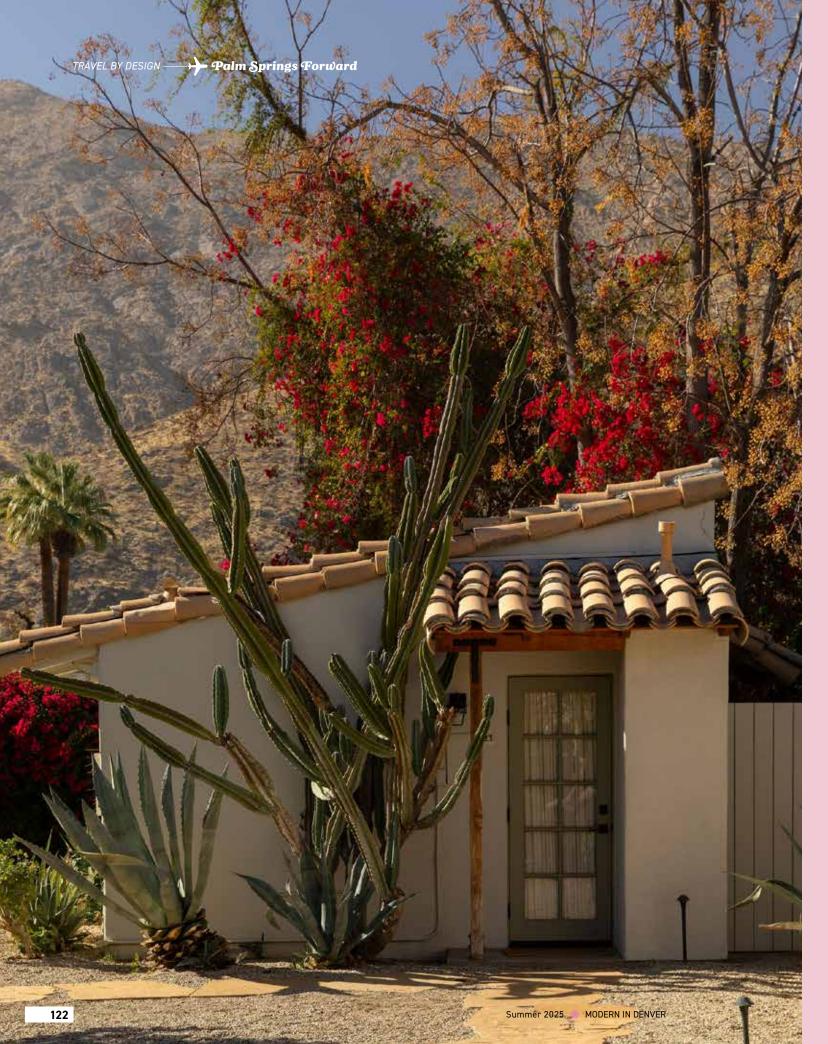








Jonathan Adler brought his trademark mid-century maximalist swagger to the design of the Parker Palm Springs, with saturated yet peppy hues and a dash of irreverence. Squint, and you can almost see Sinatra by the pool.











Everyone from Charlie Chaplin to Anaïs Nin once stayed in this 30-room hotel, originally built in 1920. "Designed by architecture and interior design firm Electric Bowery, Casa Cody's interiors are inspired by coastal Spain, composed of a rich palette of color and texture," says publicist Clarissa Martinez. "Warm coral velvet, and textured hunter green paired with deep navy accents and Otomi-patterned pillows imbue the interiors with depth." Zellige tile and rich blue millwork supply a whiff of Mediterranean style—but not too much. Says Martinez: "Dark wood tones balance vivid pops of color for a classic yet modern aesthetic that is as unique as the vibrant history of Casa Cody."

casacody.com





Timeless adobe bones and exposed beams meet glamour at Casa Cody, a lush 1920s desert hideaway where bougainvillea spills over terra-cotta rooflines.



modernindenver.com

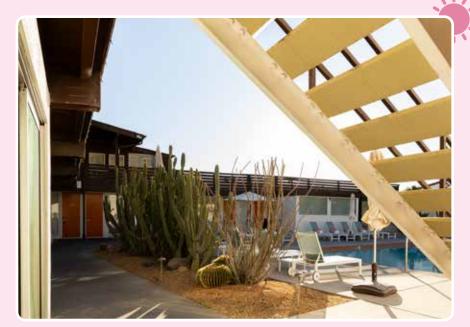




"Palm Springs has a few pioneers who shaped the city, and one of them is William F. Cody," says publicist Jen Ortega. Del Marcos Hotel, A Kirkwood Collection Property, was his first independent commission, and what launched his architectural career in the region. "Built in 1947, this property has won architectural awards and became a historic site in 2012. The 17-room hotel boasts architecture from the height of the mid-century modern movement using native stone and redwood. The hotel retains the spirit of the 1950s and 60s with retro furnishing and décor, with each room named after famous artists including Don Wexler, Nat Reed, Julius Shulman, and Shag." The Ocean's 11 studio suite has a prime panorama over the San Jacinto mountains.

delmarcoshotel.com











If the Brady Bunch treated themselves to a Palm Springs vacation, we think they'd want to check in to Del Marcos...and never leave. The geometry is sharp, the palette punchy, and the vibe pure poolside nostalgia. It's a love letter to the Atomic era—with just enough modern polish to keep it feeling fresh.







When 02 Architecture first began envisioning Drift Hotel, "We were seeking to keep the design clean and unadorned with inspiration from arid Mediterranean architecture," says Lance C. O'Donnell of the Palm Springs firm. "This architecture is naturally bright and health-promoting with interiors and exteriors utilizing white plaster, natural wood and textiles, metals and glass." It's also a visual standout, adding eye candy to the city's main drag. And that aesthetic allure continues indoors. "Typically, interior spaces from this region have high ceilings and modest windows to moderate outdoor temperatures and summer extremes. A few pops of color were inspired by the local flora, with their vibrant seasonal colors and fragrant scents." Don't miss the cabanalined outdoor pool, where cocktail service awaits.

drifthotels.co













Minimalism meets the mountains at the sleek Drift Hotel, where crisp white facades, sculptural cacti, and honeyed desert light turn heads. The dose of yellow supplies just enough warmth to make cool modernism feel delightful.

#### Mnow Before You Go

GETTING TO PALM SPRINGS: IT'S A ZIPPY 2 HOUR, 17 MINUTE NONSTOP FLIGHT FROM DEN TO PSP, WITH OPTIONS FROM UNITED, FRONTIER, AND SOUTHWEST.

#### Mid Mod Neighborhood Tours:

Fans of mid-century architecture may want to take the self-guided tour offered by Visit Palm Springs (visitpalmsprings. com). After all, this town holds the largest concentration of preserved mid-century modern architecture on Earth... including homes by everyone from Richard Neutra to Albert Frey. Rather tour with a pro? Book through Palm Springs Mod Squad (psmodsquad.com) for jaunts like the Essential Palm Springs Tour, a 90-minute whirl by the exteriors of the city's most iconic properties, or Interior Tour, in which you'll step inside three homes themselves, all steeped in decor history.

#### Hot Dates:

Palm Springs experiences a visitor boom during a few key dates throughout the year, for good reason. There's Modernism Week (modernismweek.com; October 16–19, 2025 and February 12–22, 2026), a festival that's been luring the design cognoscenti to town for 20 years. And Coachella (coachella.com), which in April 2025 saw Lady Gaga, Missy Elliott, and Green Day take the stage, among dozens of others.

#### Eat:

Set within Cary Grant's former guest house, Copley's (copleyspalmsprings.com) is the spot for celebrations of every sort, thanks to an indulgent menu that includes everything from pomegranate-glazed Scottish salmon to New York steaks served with truffle fries. For something more low-key, The Heyday (theheydaypalmsprings.com) is now a local favorite for its smash burgers—made from steak trimmings with caramelized onions and housemade Thousand Island dressing.

#### Play:

When in Palm Springs, three things are a must: Palm Springs Art Museum (psmuseum.org), which has 28 galleries and two sculpture gardens, as well as Albert Frey's own former Palm Springs home within its collection; Sunnylands (sunnylands.org), the sprawling A. Quincy Jones-designed home where the Annenbergs once hosted everyone from Queen Elizabeth II to President Barack Obama; and the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway (pstramway.com), where you can ascend from desert to Colorado-esque mountaintop in a matter of minutes.



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space is at a premium. A tiny one-bedroom home with long-term renters sat on the parcel, but the timing was serendipitous as the renters were vacating, paving the way for Walker to forge ahead on a new family home.

A landscape architect friend introduced the owners to BARI, a Denver-based firm founded by husband-and-wife team Bonnie Sen and Tom Milavec. "He told us BARI was creative and sensitive to how the interior and exterior tie together, and that was important to us," says Walker. The family was keen on maximizing the lot while incorporating their vision of a spacious and welcoming home where they could all gather.

The architects started by poring over the 50-page volume that outlines Louisville's strict historic district requirements, which ultimately led them to break the program across two volumes: a main and carriage house. "Our biggest challenge by far was how tight the pitch was," explains Sen. "It had to be a minimum of a 6'-12" pitch, which just didn't look good, so we broke up the design into two different forms to get the steeper pitch and the modern look they were after."

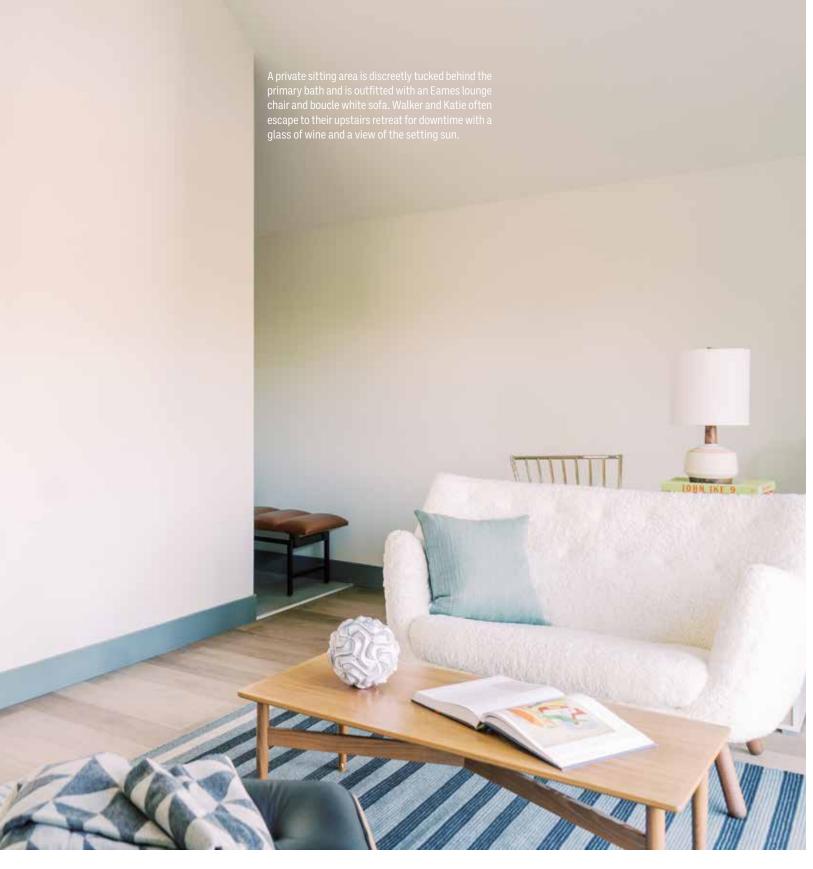
To maximize even more space on the tight city lot, the architects dug down, specifying a full basement to house the kids and a hangout space. "I don't think just anyone could have built on this site," says Sen. "But because the homeowner is very experienced in construction, they were able to maximize it."

Walker took a hands-on approach, self performing all of the 11-month construction work with his trusted, longtime crews. "The forms of the house were kept very simple on purpose. There are effectively two gables, so we got through the core and shell part of the house pretty quickly since we've dealt with challenging sites before," Walker says. The home also had to meet a net-zero energy rating, which the owners achieved by creating a very efficient building envelope and maxing out the number of solar panels on both structures.

"Getting to net zero with this house on this tight site was challenging," says Walker. "Every piece of the south side of the roofs has a solar panel on it."

Another hurdle was sourcing the exterior cladding post-pandemic, prompting a search for an alternative. The team landed on Lunawood Thermowood, a chemical-free, sustainable → 136

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#### **ALL TOGETHER NOW**





The second floor of the main structure is dedicated to Walker and Katie's primary suite, which is outfitted with functional, modern furniture. A floating vanity with dual sinks and black accents tie the space to the rest of the home. A solid stone countertop complements the stacked tile backsplash.

material that's thermally modified using heat and steam. The Finlandbased manufacturer was interested in penetrating the Colorado market, so the timing and price were right.

"I immediately liked it. It has the look of three-dimensional siding," Walker says. "We were trying to achieve the Scandinavian design and stay true to some of the original cladding, and this material accomplished that." The result is a clean, modern exterior that adds a rich, warm texture to the façade that will naturally patina over time. Black metal cladding was specified alongside the natural wood, creating a striking presentation of dark and light.

The same siding was carried inside the home to form a thread of continuity between the exterior and interior. The cladding was liberally applied to enhance ceiling spaces and the dining room. Pops of color punctuate the home to break up the clean white walls: an artwork the family picked up from Denver's Santa Fe Art District, a yellow barn door that conceals the entry closet, and a custom-made kitchen chandelier designed by a family friend. The entry vestibule includes a cherished abstract piece from New Orleans artist Thomas Mose.

The main floor living quarters comprises a generous open space with living, dining, and kitchen areas where the family gathers and spends most of its time. A 1920s Chickering baby grand piano—a family heirloom—and acoustic guitar are part of the conversation, as is a simple black-and-white artwork that expresses the family motto: "Work Hard and Be Nice to People." The living area with fireplace wall and large picture window is Katie's ideal spot to watch the morning sunrise.

The couple worked with kitchen designer Porcelanosa to create the sleek, modern kitchen with soft-close cabinets that conceal appliances and storage. A built-in coffee station was added to free up counter space and is one of the couple's favorite small luxuries. "Because the kitchen is so exposed, we didn't want it to feel like a traditional cabinet set with appliances and handles dominating the look," says Katie. A floating staircase leads to the top level and is reserved for the adults, with a primary suite and a restful sitting area that overlooks the tranquil backyard. "Katie and I can relax up there and have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee while the kids still have access to the main living space," says Walker.

The main and carriage house forms are separated by an inviting outdoor space accessed through an accordion slider. An outdoor dining area and a conversation pit with hotel-grade fireplace accommodate gatherings. "We use the outdoor space yearround," Walker says. "It's really an extension of our home."



design and build a modern home

that is functional and efficient. "The

design is clean and uncluttered and

reflects the way we live," Walker says.

Katie agrees. "This is one of the most

functional houses we've lived in. It's

uncomplicated and works really well

for our family."



The carriage house includes Walker's studio office, stacked above a single car garage. The office neatly converts to guest quarters when family and friends are visiting. A murphy bed, full bathroom, and spare closet all fit in the snug space. The Thrash's oldest daughter takes up residence in the office and guest space when she is home from college. "We do have an office in Westminster, so I'm forced to go to a real office when my daughter is home," Walker laughs.

Despite the tight, narrow site, the architects and owners were able to

#### **PROJECT CREDITS**

ARCHITECT
BARI Architecture

GENERAL CONTRACTOR Vertikal

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Lindsey Nelson + Vertikal STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Apex Engineers

MILLWORK

Porcelanosa

FI OORING

Porcelanosa

LIGHTING Sunbelt Lighting

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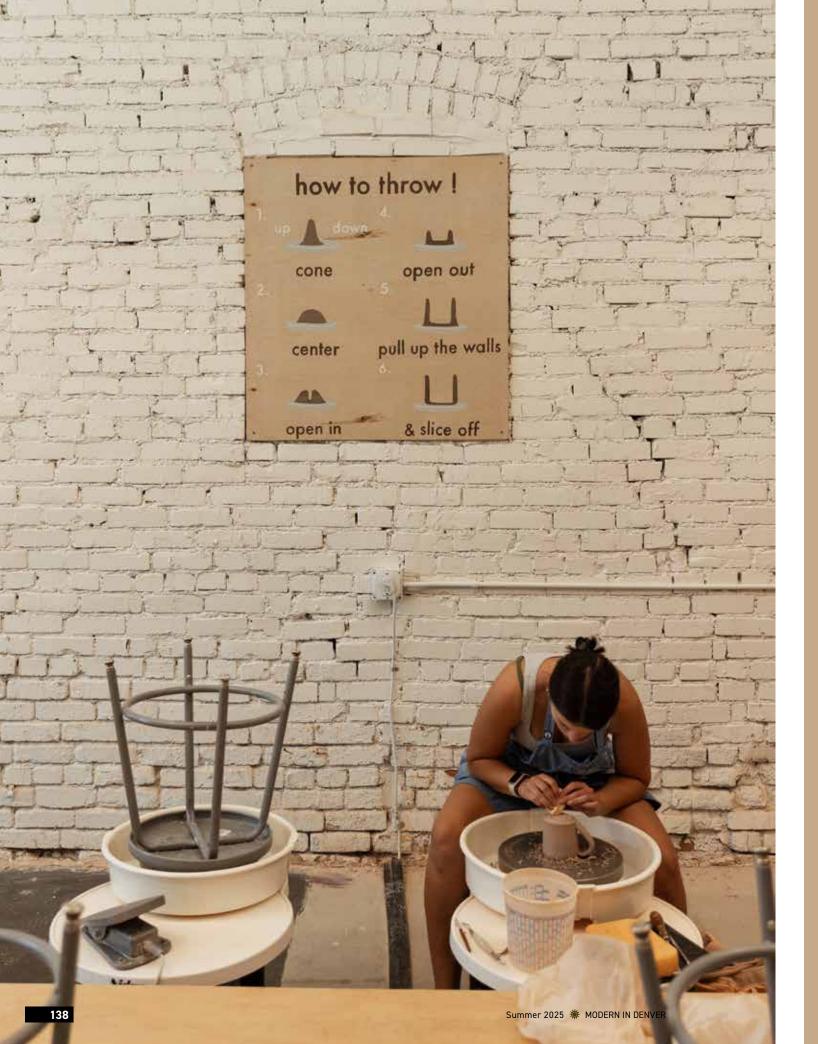
Ramirez, Johnson & Associates

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Oxbow Design Collaborative

STYLING

Adorn



## reinventing the wheel

As both a hobby and craft, pottery has seen an unprecedented rise in popularity in recent years.

These four Denver ceramics studios are meeting the community's needs in new and exciting ways.



A RE YOU READY TO TAKE A SPIN AT DENVER'S HOTTEST NEW CLUB? It's the wheel at your local ceramics studio. In recent years, pottery—as both a hobby and a professional craft— has taken off with skyrocketing popularity. Memberships and classes at the city's studios are selling out in minutes, as new communal spaces are continuing to pop up to meet the growing demand.

Local ceramics studio founders are interpreting the current uptick in interest in one of our civilization's most ancient art forms as a response to our hyper-digital and anxious world, particularly given the post-pandemic remote work lifestyle and subsequent loneliness epidemic. "The permanence and tactility of ceramics is the opposite of our fleeting, overstimulated culture," explains Friend Assembly founder Sarah Schreiber. "It requires you to sit down, be present, persevere, and work with difficult materials. I think it's gained popularity because people are craving connection—to other humans, to objects that matter, to themselves," she adds.

Opportunities abound for Coloradans to get outdoors and move their bodies—it's only fitting that meeting a similar need would manifest in new ways...indoors. "Pottery opens the door for people to be creative again," says City Mud founder Emily Fritze. "When we're in school, we're exposed to different ways of expressing ourselves. But in adulthood, we don't have that. I think people really miss it, and ceramics is a less intimidating way back in," she explains.

While a recurring membership at one of Denver's studios may be more of an investment, trying out a single class or signing up for an event is easy and accessible. And the benefits of sharing a communal space to create are evident. "It makes us all better to seek inspiration around the studio, and it's wonderful to be able to learn from each other, to ask questions, and be curious about ideas," says Fritze.

Ahead, we've chatted with the founders of four of Denver's most popular studios. Each spot has its own mission and ethos, so if you're looking to get out of your head and into your hands, find the one that best fits your energy and needs. There's a lid for every pot.

modernindenver.com

#### City Mud

3704 Osage Street citymud.com

ver dreamed of a ceramics studio that's open 24/7? City Mud is your spot. Inspired by the open-use arts spaces from their college days, cofounders Emily Fritze and Kyle Sayre wanted to create an environment that would feel like a home away from home for their community members. Now, four years into operating City Mud in the Highlands, Fritze and Sayre have achieved just that. "We've seen people create friendships here, and really take ownership of the space because, after all, it's theirs as much as it is ours," says Fritze. "We love that the studio is the place people come to on their weekend mornings, or at night after a long day at work," she shares. Drenched in natural light and featuring barn doors that open wide in the summer, the studio offers a bright, airy, and inspiring space to create and connect. City Mud is open to all skill levels, without a credential requirement to join. Additionally, the studio offers a work-trade program and a half-shelf membership option to provide accessible pricing variations. Fritze and Sayre enjoy forming bonds in the neighborhood with open studio Saturdays, annual member sales, and sidewalk grilling days. "We're all so caught up in productivity and output," says Fritze. "Ceramics is an amazing counterpoint to that. It's really about the process more than the pot at the end. Failure is baked into every step, it teaches patience and letting go of control," she says.









#### **Community Clay**

3349 Blake Street 2625 E. 12th Avenue communityclaydenver.com

fter nearly three years in their first A Congress Park location, Community Clay has recently expanded to a second (and larger!) location in RiNo. The new space, housed in a nearly 5,000-squarefoot, century-old home, features separate quarters for members, group classes, private lessons, and open-studio time. "We have accessible entry points for everyone from total beginners to more experienced potters," shares founder Roxane Ambrose. "At Community Clay, we believe in making pottery approachable and inclusive," she adds. With one of the most robust and diverse class offerings in the area for beginners, intermediate-level potters, and nonmembers, Community Clay walks that talk. Additionally, the studio collaborates with local organizations and corporate entities to host community events and creative partnerships that bring people together from all over the city. As a former software developer, Ambrose understands the desire to work with your hands as a visceral, grounding outlet in today's tech-driven world, believing that having spaces where people can come together to share and experiment are more important than ever. "I think the best art comes from a place of curiosity, not perfection, and that we all deserve a creative space where we feel welcome, supported, and inspired," she says. The airy, high-ceilinged studio (or their equally inviting Congress Park space) is just the place to do it.





"I THINK THE BEST ART COMES FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY, NOT PERFECTION, AND THAT WE ALL DESERVE A CREATIVE SPACE WHERE WE FEEL WELCOME, SUPPORTED, AND INSPIRED." - Roxane Ambrose







#### Friend Assembly

2501 Dallas Street friendassembly.com

riend Assembly brings the fun to the Denver ceramics community! With their funky location in Aurora's Stanley Marketplace, the studio offers an inspiring atmosphere with a sunny, lively energy. Founder Sarah Schreiber, a former arts educator, has a passion for instilling creativity in kids, making Friend Assembly one of Denver's only ceramics studios to welcome creators of all ages and provide youth-focused classes. "I wanted to open a space where people can explore their artistic side and have the support of teachers who want to be there, are excited to create alongside their students, and have the freedom to teach in an authentic way to their own beliefs," says Schreiber. And the fun doesn't stop with the kids. Friend Assembly boasts a unique bar setup so that adult potters can enjoy a cocktail while they get crafty. Schreiber encourages members and guests to make a special outing of the experience. "If you're wanting a unique date night, a bachelorette party, a kids' afterschool class, an ongoing session, or a membership to the studio, we've got you," she says. One-time classes, mug workshops, open studios, paint your own pottery, and six-week sculpture and wheel sessions are all on the menu at Friend Assembly.



"I WANTED TO OPEN A SPACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN EXPLORE THEIR ARTISTIC SIDE AND HAVE THE SUPPORT OF TEACHERS WHO WANT TO BE THERE, ARE EXCITED TO CREATE ALONGSIDE THEIR STUDENTS, AND HAVE THE FREEDOM TO TEACH IN AN AUTHENTIC WAY TO THEIR OWN BELIEFS." – Sarah Schreiber











#### Kinship

2433 Curtis Street kinshipdenver.com

Kinship opened in November 2024, making it the newest pottery studio in the Denver scene. Founded by two friends and fellow artists, Anna Clark and Carly Toppen, the RiNo studio is welcoming to potters of all levels, and prides itself on an open, sharing ethos intended to foster creativity and community. "We founded Kinship because we believe in sharing knowledge and empowering each other. We're creating a space where artists, regardless of experience, are encouraged to explore, experiment, and grow. No comparison. No egos," say the cofounders. The studio caters to intermediate and advanced potters through their membership model with open-studio hours from 6 a.m. to midnight. Meanwhile, beginners are currently encouraged to attend Kinship's monthly group class sessions—though, take note, group classes sell out quickly on their website! Clark and Toppen credit the remote work rise with Denverites seeking out more communal spaces. "It's clear that many people are feeling isolated and looking to get outside their home. Pottery is a great way to get out of your head and use your hands," they share.







# Ready-Made Home Smack dab in 18th-century and cafés—

Studio 5.5 and MUJI present the Manifesto House, a creative, eco-friendly, and frugal vision for living that illustrates "the importance of serenity in the commotion of the city."

WORDS: Alicita Rodríguez

mack dab in Milan's Brera District—known for its 18th-century architecture, galleries, fashion houses, and cafés—the curious will find a secret garden xeriscaped with gray pebbles, lava rocks, reflecting pond, and a winding cobblestone pathway, all set beneath sheltering shade trees. This is the Pippa Bacca Public Garden, and for one glorious week in April 2025, the municipal park hosted Manifesto House, a collaboration between Japanese brand MUJI and French design firm Studio 5•5.

When it was founded in 1980 as an antidote to showy consumerism, MUJI revolutionized the appeal of everyday objects by making "no-brand quality goods"—ushering in an era of *su* (meaning plain or unadorned). Known for their upcycled architecture and branding projects in

France, Studio 5•5 cofounders Claire Renard and Jean-Sébastien Blanc were the ideal designers for a structure that integrates responsible housing principles.

The exterior of Manifesto House resembles MUJI's simplistic packaging, which is all about transparency. Like a series of MUJI objects on a much larger scale, each module is a pared-down component of daily life: Entrance, Workshop, Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, and Garden. Its construction features biosourced materials, including recycled textile insulation, as well as practical, sustainable solutions, such as a white roof to combat heat and an integrated rainwater-collection system.

Hidden in plain view within the Manifesto House are what we might call Manifesto Objects. Officially titled the MUJI MUJI collection, these twelve ready-made objects are "a cleverly repurposed series using only MUJI iconic objects." Studio 5•5 provided detailed instructions for these ready-mades so everyone can create their own objects using MUJI icons.

"By offering a second life to these quality objects, through extending and transforming their uses, Claire Renard and Jean Sébastien Blanc are inviting us to reflect on our production and consumption patterns to reduce our impact on the environment," MUJI explains.

Favorite meta-MUJI ready-mades include a clever coatrack and minimalistic birdhouse. Components to build these include PET plastic bottles, L-shaped bookends, and a wooden dustbin lid.

The house is modular but also what MUJI terms "evolutive," meaning it can change over time. If you need more space, you can add modules. If you need less space, you can subtract units. Adaptability and sustainability are key. While Manifesto House was constructed for Milan Design Week, from April 8–13, MUJI might make it available for sale.

In Japan, MUJI launched prefabricated wooden homes in 2004, including the MUJI Hut and Plain House. To date, these house kits are only available in Japan. If Sweden has IKEA and Japan has MUJI, where is the U.S. FOUR-letter company willing to make our own Manifesto House?



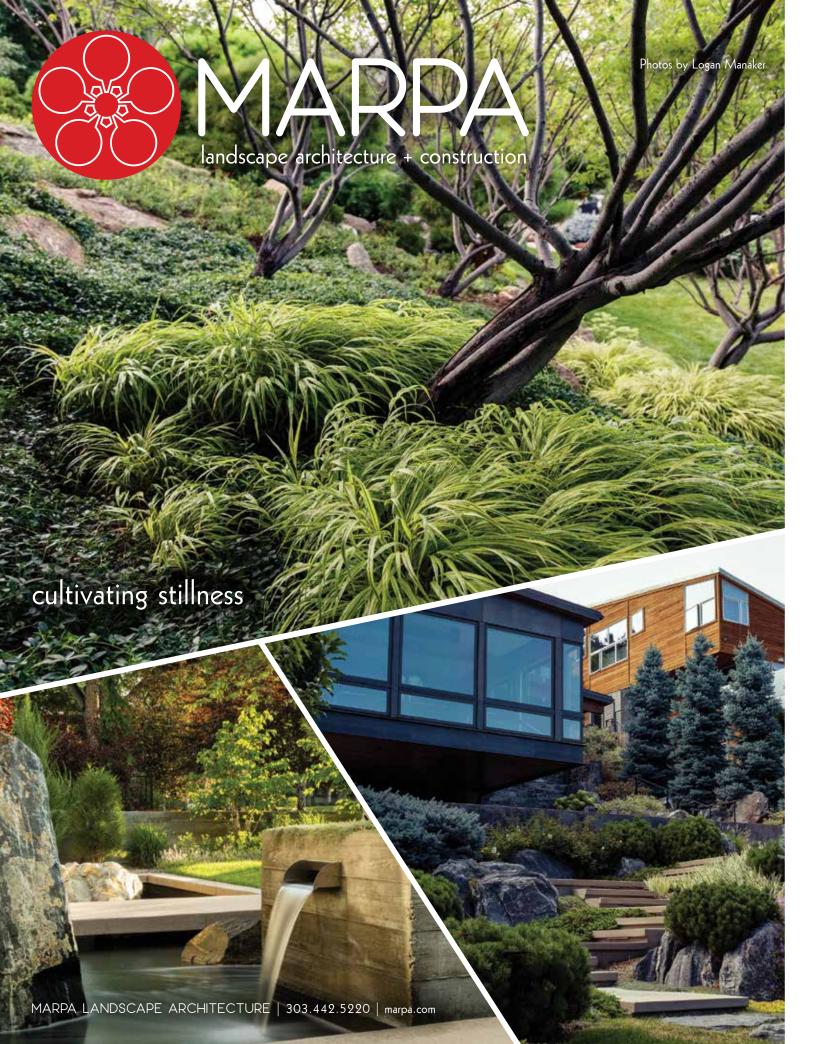


ABOVE: Manifesto House puzzles together rooms in whatever order people prefer. Like all MUJI products, modules are labeled very clearly: Entrance, Workshop, Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, and Garden. BELOW: The MUJI MUJI collection repurposes the brand's classic products. A shoebox with a pillow strapped to its top becomes a bench and a metal bowl and wooden spoon create an entrance bell—ding dong!











## Main Character Energy

It's your show. High-end homebuilding is one of the rare experiences in life where your priorities don't have to share the spotlight with anyone else's. After more than 30 years of effortless collaboration, our master builders will make sure that every characteristic you've idealized is realized. Whether you're building to make a scene or for quiet moments behind the scenes—we'll craft spaces that will support the kind of luxury you'll actually love living in. It's the part we were born to play.

Get on with the show at cadreGC.com

