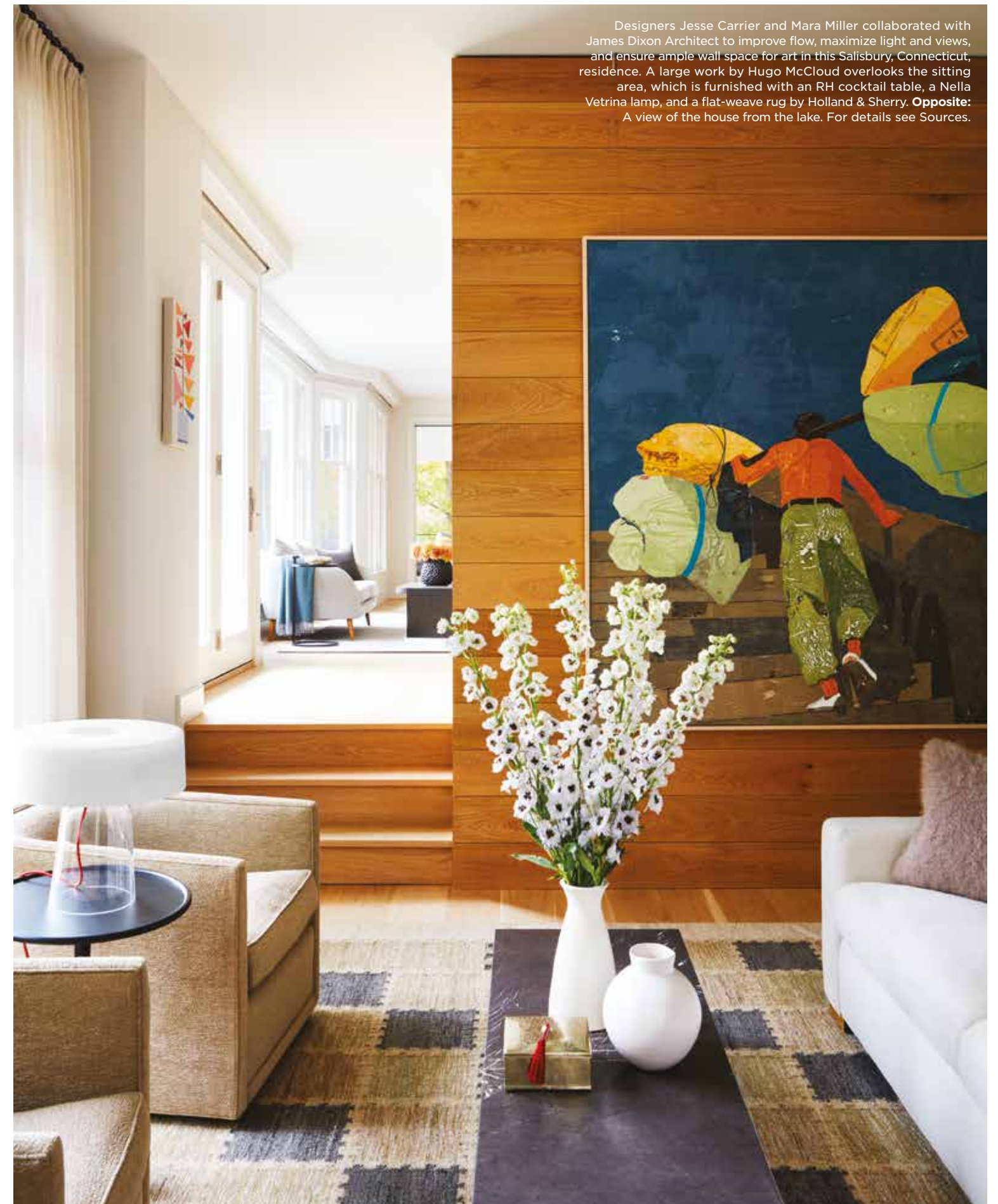


# artful escape

In bucolic western Connecticut, Carrier and Company radiantly revamps a lakefront hideaway for a couple and their adventurous collection

BY RAUL BARRENECHE PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM LENZ



Designers Jesse Carrier and Mara Miller collaborated with James Dixon Architect to improve flow, maximize light and views, and ensure ample wall space for art in this Salisbury, Connecticut, residence. A large work by Hugo McCloud overlooks the sitting area, which is furnished with an RH cocktail table, a Nella Vetrina lamp, and a flat-weave rug by Holland & Sherry. **Opposite:** A view of the house from the lake. For details see Sources.



The couple's mini Australian Labradoodle keeps watch beneath a work by Deborah Roberts in the entrance hall, which features a conical light sculpture by Olafur Eliasson and a Hilary Pecis painting mounted above a tiered table by Noir.

**Below:** In the sitting area outside the office, a Naula sofa accented with pillows in a Les Indiennes fabric is paired with a table by Arteriors beneath a work by Hank Willis Thomas; the sculpture at the end of the hall is by Otani Workshop.

**Opposite:** A Petrit Halilaj wall sculpture strikes a wry note above the custom-made limestone fireplace in the living room, which is anchored by RH sofas.



**For designers Jesse Carrier and Mara Miller, a long relationship with one New York City-based family started with a summer camp.**



The clients, avid art collectors with adventurous tastes, first hired the husband-and-wife team behind Carrier and Company to convert the buildings of an old campsite in the rolling hills of Litchfield County, Connecticut, into a stylish compound for hosting family and friends. Located across the road from the couple's lakefront country house, the multiyear project saw the post-and-beam main lodge turned into a dining and entertaining hub and surrounding cabins into tasteful bedroom suites.

Next came an expansive renovation of the couple's art-filled Manhattan townhouse, and not long after that the clients tapped Carrier and Miller for a third project: a total reimagining of their Connecticut lake house, originally built in the 1990s. "The wife got the itch to make this house commensurate with their other homes, which have a clean, contemporary, upbeat vibe," says Carrier. "They survived two other renovations with us and just couldn't quit."

To update the three-level, cedar-shingle residence, Carrier and Miller collaborated with James Dixon Architect, a firm in nearby Chatham, New York. Although they preserved the house's footprint, a number of spaces were reconfigured to make them "less jagged," as Carrier puts it, and to improve the flow and views out





to the lake. Every door and window was replaced. Some were enlarged to let in more light and enhance the sense of openness. “Now when you enter, you’re instantly drawn to the view of the lake through big rear windows, with the light sparkling off the water onto the ceiling,” says Carrier. “It’s really quite beautiful.”

Balancing the husband’s preference for rustic and traditional and the wife’s penchant for a sleek, more contemporary look, the designers kept finishes elegant and neutral: wide-plank oak floors, steel-framed glass doors enclosing a lakeside office, handrails of steel and bronze for the graciously redesigned main staircase, and, of course, ample whitewashed walls for displaying art. With the furnishings they emphasized distinctive texture over color and pattern: off-white linen sofas, midcentury Brazilian chairs in taupe mohair, a hand-knotted bedroom rug woven from heathered yarns. “It’s all meant to be very simple and quiet, so as not to compete with the art,” notes Carrier. The soft, luminous spaces and sophisticated decor are typical of the timeless, effortlessly refined style that Carrier and Miller have created for tastemakers like Anna Wintour, Annie Leibovitz, and Jason Wu.

To assist with new art acquisitions, the homeowners turned to their adviser of nearly 20 years, Lowell Pettit of Pettit Art Partners. “I buy what I like and what I want to live with,” says the wife. “I like more figurative work, not abstraction. We also gravitate toward younger, emerging artists.”



**“It’s all meant to be very simple and quiet, so as not to compete with the art,” says Jesse Carrier**



Tech Lighting pendants hover over the kitchen’s marble-top oak island and Palecek stools; the range is by BlueStar. **Above:** The owners keep a Boston Whaler at their dock for excursions on the lake. **Opposite:** In the family room, Hancock & Moore armchairs flank a Jiun Ho cocktail table, the lamp is a Carrier and Company design for Visual Comfort, and the rug is by Stark; a work by Daniel Gordon makes a chromatic splash in the adjacent dining room, where Palecek chairs surround an Eero Saarinen table from Design Within Reach.





A Pollack | Weitzner wall covering serves as the backdrop for a Hannah van Bart portrait in the primary bedroom, while a work by Lily Ludlow is visible through the doorway; Foscarini pendants hang above RH nightstands on either side of the Avery Boardman bed with Matouk bedding, atop a rug by Loloi. **Opposite (clockwise from top):** The home's lakeside vantage offers views of rolling hills beyond. A Joe Bova wall sculpture is mounted above a Tuareg chair from Morocco in the primary bath, which has Ann Sacks tile flooring. In a powder room, a work by Carl Johan Högborg is reflected in the Umbra mirror.

One of her favorite additions is a work depicting a laborer shouldering heavy bundles by Hugo McCloud, a Black American artist, who composed the scene using pieces of colored plastic bags that mimic pigment. Usually displayed in a main-floor sitting room, the work is now on loan to McCloud's first solo museum exhibition, at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut, through early January. Another new highlight is a collage by Deborah Roberts, an artist the wife met at a 2017 exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem and whose notable collectors include Barack Obama, Beyoncé, and Ava DuVernay.

Perhaps the wife's most beloved recent acquisition is *Prince*, a ceramic sculpture by Japanese artist Shigeru Otani, who makes art under the name Otani Workshop. Sporting a jaunty little crown and an expression of childlike wonderment, the larger-than-life bust sits prominently outside the couple's home office, bathed in daylight reflected off the surface of the lake. "I really like large pieces," the wife says. "I like to be enveloped in the art."

All of the new art was installed at the beginning of 2020, just weeks before the country went into pandemic lockdowns. Holed up in the house for months, the couple got to spend lots of time with their latest purchases. "We don't have any art in storage, and we've never sold anything," says the wife, explaining that she's not one to swap out treasured pieces to make room for new acquisitions—meaning, more is more. "The art is all out there, to be enjoyed." □



**“I buy what I like and what I want to live with,” the wife says of the couple’s art collection**

