

Neverending Glory's hand-blown La Scala pendants, from Lasvit, lighten the drama of the kitchen's dark upper cabinetry. The appliances were purchased at Pirch.



A Clean SLATE

Studio Life/Style designs a fresh start for a bicoastal family's permanent collection

story by *ABIGAIL STONE* photos by *STEPHEN BUSKEN*



The furniture, which clusters around a custom firepit, is from Serena & Lily.

How do you take a traditional home and give it a contemporary spin that will imbue it with the style and panache necessary to showcase your modern art collection? That was the dilemma that faced the owners of this Brentwood home.

Although the bicoastal New York family had relied on the Los Angeles home as their summer vacation spot for a half-dozen years, when they decided to make their move West permanent, they knew that the house would need a significant refresh. Avid art collectors with an affinity for elevated designs, they wanted a clean yet distinct backdrop that would suit their museum-worthy collection. They turned to Shannon Wollack and Brittany Zwickl of Studio Life/Style to solve their dilemma. With offices in the heart of West Hollywood's Design District, the team is known for blending clean-lined furniture with sumptuous textures for a look that's dramatic yet comfortable.

Wollack and Zwickl had already been working with the family for a while, beginning with small projects. They'd restyled the wife's office after she'd fallen in love with their work for the Sugar Paper store, then created a wrapping paper room for her. They'd supervised the family's annual decampment to Southern California over the past few years and, when the family made their first tentative steps toward making Los Angeles their permanent home, they'd relied on the design duo to renovate the backyard. The team had designed a pool house that does triple duty: as a stand-alone guesthouse, a changing room and an onsite getaway, and they had divided the sprawling backyard into manageable and inviting spaces, including an outdoor dining pavilion, a cozy fire pit and a bar, which amplify it as a year-round spot for entertaining and relaxing.

Now the family turned to Wollack and Zwickl once again to take on the



In the husband's office, painted in Portola's *In The Navy*, New York-based artist Jacob Hashimoto's *On a Pitch Black Lake*, suspends small "kites" created from Japanese paper and bamboo from wooden dowels protruding from plexiglass wall-mounts, dominates the serene space.



Nina Beier's *Untitled*, 2010 hangs over the fireplace.

challenge of transforming the interiors. The duo started with a few tweaks. A powder room received a stylish makeover that included custom wallpaper by Fromental, a floating marble sink and Alison Berger's intriguing Cage Pendant light, a detail that hints at the sculptural statement fixtures that would eventually be woven throughout the house. The dining room also received an update. Another hand-painted wallpaper, also by Fromental and dotted with gold leaf, covers the ceiling, Phillip Jeffries grass-cloth walls tone down the room's formality and an exuberant Lindsey Adelman light fixture dangles above a custom table.

The project slowly gathered momentum as the family settled into life in their new environment. "It started on a smaller scale and then it just kind of snowballed," says Zwickl. "It's hard to do partial things," says Wollack, who understands that an interior designer is always one step ahead of the client, anticipating their needs and being prepared when the scope of a project grows, as it often does. "We think cohesively and then work on certain parts and then gradually grow as we add more," she adds. In this case, because the scope of the work increased in almost imperceptible stages, that meant that the family was living in the house while the work was being done. Although navigating demolition and construction schedules while keeping the family's comfort and livability in mind was challenging, the two managed to pull it off without a hitch.

With the objective of showcasing the clients' art uppermost in their minds, a significant portion of Wollack and Zwickl's work involved stripping the home of its fussy details and paring down the home's finishes in an effort to make it feel clean, bright and modern. "There was wainscoting and chair rails, the floors were dark, the walls all had color on them—just lots of layers and very



busy,” Wollack recalls. Rooms were cleared of their moldings and painted in neutral, soothing colors, floors were lightened and the rear of the home was opened up to the backyard. In place of plain windows and regulation sliding doors, Wollack and Zwickl installed steel casement models with striking black frames, washing the space with a slight industrial vibe that recalls the family’s former home in Manhattan.

An ornate mantle in the master bedroom was swapped out for a clean marble surround, above which hangs a photograph by Nina Beier. “Here we wanted the art to feel calming and zen. The goal was to have it blend into the room and feel like an added touch and not a statement,” says Zwickl. That’s also true of the husband’s office, where Jacob Hashimoto’s *On a Pitch Black Lake* is a soothing addition to the tranquil workspace. In the breakfast nook, a bold, graphic, custom piece by Adam Daley Wilson, a custom table with a distinct base and Palecek’s oversize Wisteria pendant ease the transition between the imposing black-framed steel French doors, which open the room onto the backyard, and the newly renovated kitchen, an arresting study in black and white. “They’re from New York so they’re a little bit about taking risks,” says Wollack. “We wanted to bring in the black, which relates to the windows, but we didn’t want to make it all dark and heavy, so this is the perfect balance.” Classic Shaker-style cabinets in white, elegant Waterworks fixtures, smooth Carrera marble countertops and stainless steel appliances are animated by black upper cabinets and Neverending Glory’s oversize La Scala pendants. Further referencing the windows, one similarly styled cabinet, which holds the clients’ collection of glass and crystal, is as striking as it is useful.

THIS PAGE, LEFT: In the library, Jeppe Hein’s *You Are Special* neon sculpture joins a Kelly Wearstler chair and a table by Cisco Home.

RIGHT: Alison Berger’s cage light hands over a floating marble sink and illuminates the powder room’s custom wallpaper by Fromental.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Lindsey Adelman’s Branching Bubbles chandelier brings a note of playfulness to the formality of the dining room. The rug was discovered at Woven Accents.



In other rooms, the art takes center stage. In the entry, bold pieces—Richard Prince’s *I’m Not Linda* and Idris Khan’s *Eternal Movement*—greet visitors. They’re balanced by the theatrical cluster of Lariat light fixtures from Apparatus and a vivid patchwork rug by Marc Phillips. “The art has always been the really fun part of this project,” says Zwickl. “Usually art is something that you wonder and worry about all through the project: Will we have enough in the budget? What do the clients like? But these clients have incredible taste and an incredible portfolio, so that was fun because we had this whole spreadsheet and were able to decide what should go where.”

The black casement windows find their repeat in the divider between the family’s sitting room just off the kitchen and the book-lined library, painted a soothing shade of gray, where a custom settee tucked into a nook offers a cozy place to read and a neon piece by Jeppe Hein fits seamlessly into the decor. “We wanted some kind of separation,” Wollack explains. “They had all these rooms and while we really wanted to open things up, we didn’t want it to be one big space where things weren’t divided and didn’t have a purpose.” The custom partition, a happy solution, strikes the ideal compromise.

The media room, washed in Farrow & Ball’s Hague Blue, is one of the home’s darker and moodier rooms. The use of statement lighting—here, buoyant custom ceramic pendants—keep the room lively and inviting; the family can often be found seated around a custom table working on puzzles.

“We had so much to choose from that we had the flexibility of being able to move things around,” Wollack says. “You end up putting something somewhere you would never have expected it and it’s perfect.” The perfect marriage of art and design.

THIS PAGE: Washed in Farrow & Ball’s Hague Blue, the media room is the ideal binge-watching spot.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Richard Prince’s *I’m not Linda* and Idris Khan’s *Eternal Movement* balance a cluster of Lariat light fixtures from Apparatus in the entryway.

