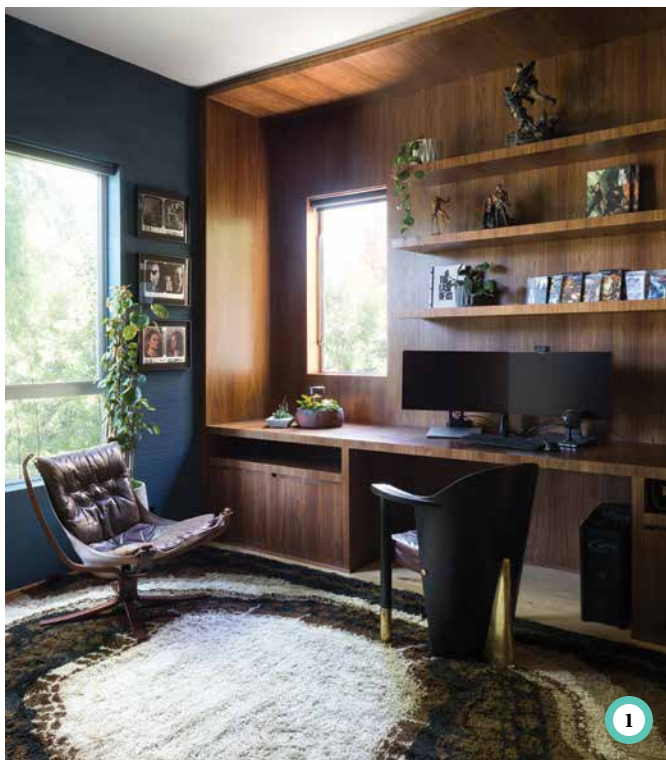


Style

Design



HOLLYWOOD HOME

Turning a White Box Into a House With Character

'It looked like I was in prison,' *The Last of Us* game developer and HBO series co-writer Neil Druckmann says of his Santa Monica residence before it was transformed by designer Kim Gordon. *By Abigail Stone*

Neil Druckmann gestures toward his giant comic book collection. "That's something Ellie would appreciate," says the co-president of video game developer Naughty Dog, name-checking the female lead in *The Last of Us*. He'll see the character come to life starting Jan. 15, when she's portrayed by **Bella Ramsey** in the upcoming HBO series adaptation of the popular PlayStation 3 title Druckmann conceived and wrote.

The nine-episode show also stars **Pedro Pascal** as Joel, the smuggler who shepherds her across a postapocalyptic United States. "My hope is that it completely changes how non-gamers view what games are capable of when it comes to deep narratives," says Israel-born Druckmann, the show's co-writer and a director and executive producer.

He's sitting in the TV room of his four-bedroom, five-bathroom Santa Monica residence, a contemporary two-story he purchased in 2019 that reflects his rich inner life and vivid imagination.





1 In Neil Druckmann's office, Kim Gordon painted a grass-cloth wall covering by Phillip Jeffries with Farrow & Ball's Hague Blue and unfurled a vintage Scandinavian rya rug across the floor. A vintage Sigurd Ressel lounge chair is paired with a custom built-in walnut credenza that serves as Druckmann's desk. **2** Druckmann in his video arcade. The red enameled Icon bar stools are by Matthias Demacker. A video console by Polycade holds his collection of vintage video games, including *Street Fighter 2*, the title that jump-started his obsession. The rug was discovered at L.A.'s Blue Parakeet.

But this incarnation of the house is new. "I was operating out of a white room — this is peak pandemic, peak Zoom — and people kept commenting that it looked like I was in prison," says Druckmann.

Enter interior designer **Kim Gordon**. "I was just like, 'No, no, no. This won't work,'" she says. Hired initially just to zhuzh up his office, Gordon ended up reimagining the entire house. "When we first started, I think he thought of home as being just the place where he sleeps," says Gordon. "That changed as he started to consider what he wanted to be surrounded by. How can you tap into your creativity if a place doesn't nourish you?" That desolate office became a warm, welcoming space. Gordon brought in softness via a vintage rug, textured navy walls, thick curtains and a curvaceous couch. She filled wooden bookcases with Druckmann's favorite tomes and intriguing memorabilia.



Gordon

A display of his guitars alongside a distressed leather chair became an invitation — now, when work feels stressful, Druckmann noodles on them. "And then I can jump back into work, calmed," he says. He found the transformation enlightening. "It's funny because I'm so steeped in game and environment design, but for some reason, I never made that crossover to interiors," he says.

Now the home is a testament to his passions. The stairwell showcases a video game console. In the dining room, the zoomorphic chairs, a horse-skeleton print and a light fixture that resembles a grouping of cells speak to his fascination with anatomy. The living room's wall unit holds his record collection, and instead of a TV, there's a large slab of stone over the fireplace. "I wanted one room that was analog, that didn't have a TV," says Druckmann. "When guests come over, this is where we sit and talk." Upstairs, Gordon turned a pair of awkward bookcases at the end of a hallway into a nook that's become a pre-bed-time hangout space for Druckmann and his children. The video game developer has even come around to the couch Gordon suggested he install in the primary bath. "The kids are always coming in here to brush their teeth, and we'll just hang out," he says. "Now I can't even imagine a bathroom without a couch."

"Like in games, a lot of design is problem-solving," he adds. "So I really liked that Kim focused on what was important to me. She came up with some very fantastic ideas and made the house truly livable." **THR**



3 In the living room, a custom couch (covered in Hella Jongerius Borders for Maharam wool fabric) backs up to a caramel leather sectional by Timothy Oulton. Instead of a TV on the wall, Gordon hung a piece of Dalle de Margot limestone from Rock Mill. The hide and vintage rugs are from Blue Parakeet. **4** In the dining room, Gabriel Scott's Welles Steel chandelier illuminates a table surrounded by vintage chairs found at Pop Up Home. Underfoot is Kelly Wearstler's Wake rug. **5** Bedroom furnishings include a vintage Scandinavian rug, a throw blanket made of fabric sourced from Vintage Venice, bedding from Parachute Home and Menu Design's Knitting chair.

GORDON: COURTESY OF SUBJECT DRUCKMANN; PHILLIP NGUYEN; HOME: AMY BARTLANI (2)