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ART IN DESIGN



If These
Walls Could
Talk

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Centering the home is a new glass-enclosed gallery that Fabio Berg (in right) of Domani Architecture helped integrate as a buffer between the interior courtyard and the house. A promenade through the gallery reveals a museum-quality gathering of works by Roy Lichtenstein, Ed Ruscha, John Baldessari, Ruben Toledo, David Rockney and others. Russell Young's whimsy Pop Art manipulation of a 1954 photograph of Marilyn Monroe crying moves around the space as the homeowner sees fit. "She just started seriously collecting when we began the project," Berg says. "It was her full-time job for more than two years while we were doing the house." The homeowner was not just engaged when it came to the art; she provided Berg inspiration and freedom from every angle. "She was so open," says Berg. "When a space was looking too pristine, I would say, 'We need to mess it up—it needs to get farked up with some vintage or something.' And she would understand. It was a great project and so fun to do."

In addition to the contemporary artworks, the owner took a deep dive into black and white photography, collecting photos from Julius Shulman to Harry Benson to Ruth DMN. Several hang in the dining room, their light and shadows reflected in the abstracted farmhouse Congolese drapery fabric resembling the needle makings of an active Richter scale. The gallery's charcoal and white stone checkered floor and the gray of the master bath's Greek key mosaic floor from Ann Sacks seem to carry a similar nail scheme. "We went to galleries together and I learned a lot about photography," says Berg. "I am so much better versed in it all now." The art continues throughout the house, and it's well edited. There's a Calder in the family room, and a W. Buhwaldt and a Jeff Koons puppy in a bedroom. "A work makes a room," says Berg. "It changes the vibe and takes it from good to great."

Outside, the house benefits from a verdant screen of mature trees—some of which are old enough to have shaded Power and Chelton—combined with new, abundant plantings in the backyard. The original pool and poolhouse still hold court here, the latter covered in slowly creeping vine tendrils. Faithfully retained and restored, they are another reminder of the house's glamorous history. In fact, Power's signature remains immortalized on the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety permits for the exterior improvements. Notes the homeowner, who echoes a common sentiment among those who own stately houses once inhabited by colorful characters: "If these walls of the poolhouse could talk." ■ Carl Berg Interior Design, carlberginteriordesign.com



