

# A CLEAR VISION

LISA AND RICK SHIRLEY ENJOY ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND THE PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE GREENBELT SURROUNDING THEIR HOME.



The Shirleys added a pool and pool house to complement the original architecture by Ralph Kelman.

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This page: An important Gene Davis, *Edges-Solar Beat*, 1961, Magna on canvas, 96 x 127 in., Carson Hall Fine Art; Marla Ziegler, *Between the Raindrops*, low fire clay, Craighead Green Gallery. Opposite: On wall, Kevin Box, *Star Mandala*, cast aluminum, 27 x 40 in.; standing sculpture, Kevin Box, *Duel*, cast aluminum, bronze, stone, 80 x 36 in., both Craighead Green Gallery.



What introduced me to a whole new world (of contemporary art and design) that I knew nothing about. That has been the fun aspect of the house. You grow in areas you didn't know about," said Rick Shirley who, with his wife, Lisa, moved from their Georgian home in Highland Park to their contemporary oasis in Far North Dallas.

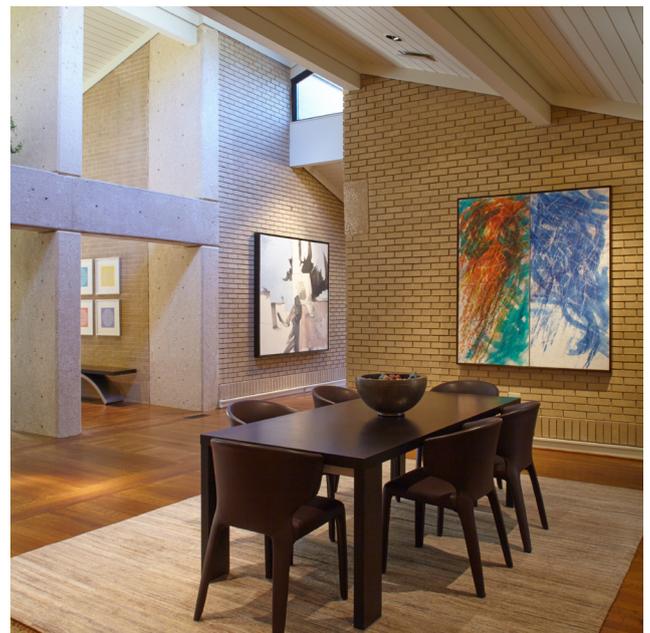
When Lisa found the house 15 years ago, it was not the idyll that it is today. But she knew intuitively that it had good bones. She told her husband, "This is very cool architecture. I think if we just strip it down it has incredible potential." She was also drawn to the city-owned greenbelt surrounding it, saying, "It was just so calming. I thought, 'What a wonderful way to live in the city.'"

While Rick was initially unimpressed, he trusted her judgment. They hired interior designer Neal Stewart of Neal Stewart Designs to bring forth the home's original elements. "Neal started helping us with furniture and ended up helping us with everything from architecture to paint color," said Rick. To get there, they had to remove wood paneling from one room, and yards of fabric from everywhere else, allowing the exposed brick walls and poured concrete beams to re-emerge. "We tried to carry it back to its authentic, original beginnings," explained Stewart. They even uncovered windows that they had not known existed. "There were surprises everywhere," Lisa said of the renovations. It had been a long process. Each of the four phases of renovation had been done in two-year increments since they initially moved in with their two young sons in 1999. Through it all, Lisa said, "We tried to keep the integrity of the house."

The home was originally built in the early 1970s. According to Lisa, the original architect, Ralph Kelman (In 1967, Kelman was



Dining chairs, Florence from the Lockwood/Boone Collection at David Sutherland; David Crismon (left), *Portrait of Van Berestyn*, oil on metal; (right) *Portrait of Aletta Haneman*, oil on metal, both 57 x 84 in., both Craighead Green Gallery.



Left: Auckland lounge by Jean Marie Massaud for Cassina collection from Scott+Cooner; sectional sofa from the DeSede Collection from Scott+Cooner; Jeri Ledbetter, *Sahbe Reserve IV*, mixed media on canvas, 48 x 72 in.; David Brown, *Silver Circle* (series of four) silver gel on paper, 16 x 16 in. each, Craighead Green Gallery. Right: Late-breaking dining chairs in Pare Hola designed by Hannes Wettstein from the Cassina Collection at Scott+Cooner; Stanley William Hayter, diptych, 1963, acrylic on canvas, 63-3/4 x 54 in.; in the hallway, Hassel Smith, C 1960, oil on canvas, 67-3/4 x 69-1/2 in., both Carson Hall Fine Art, Dallas.

Console, Time in Macassar ebony from the Giorgetti Collection at Scott+Cooner; Paul Shapiro, *Music of the Spheres*, 2003, mixed media on canvas, 60 x 72 in., Carson Hall Fine Art, Dallas.



the original architect for Mockingbird Hilton, now Hotel Palomar.), wanted every room to have a view. Even through several additions and renovations by previous owners, including Nancy and Norman Brinker, outdoor vistas remain a key element to the house.

For Stewart, one of the biggest challenges was to make it look cohesive. But first, he had to transform the Shirleys into devotees of contemporary architecture. “They really took a leap of faith because they were coming from a traditional background,” said Stewart. The Shirleys have been willing students. “I wish we had let him push us more,” Rick said, adding, “(Stewart’s) stamp is everywhere in this house.” It is clearly reflected in the furniture, much of which comes from the contemporary showroom Scott+Cooner. There is a blend of Knoll Classics, Italian design and French designer Christian Liaigre.

The house is also a perfect backdrop for contemporary art. The couple moved in about the time that the Murchison art collection came onto the market. Being in the neighborhood, they stopped in to see if there was anything they might like. It was there that they met Carson Hall of Carson Hall Fine Art. “That was Art 101,” said Lisa. It has been another enduring relationship.

Hall led them to the work of top 20<sup>th</sup> century artists, including Gene Davis, Larry Poons and Sam Francis. He also directed them to work by lesser-known artists such as Stanley William Hayter. While not a household name, Hayter was a printmaker who lived in Paris in the 1930s and ‘40s where his students included Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró. After moving to New York, he taught prominent Abstract Expressionist artists, including Jackson Pollock and Willem DeKooning. The Shirleys own a rare painting by Hayter. It is one of Lisa’s favorite works.

Bazane stools from Christian Liaigre from George Cameron Nash; Paul Shapiro, *Meta Scape #1*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 102 x 84 in., Carson Hall Fine Art, Dallas.



Neil Stewart Designs collaborated on all the interiors for the Shirleys. White Latin chair, Beluga sofa, tan Buddha chair, all by Christian Liaigre from George Cameron Nash; Carolyn Brown, *Anemone*, photograph, 72 x 72 in., Craighead Green Gallery.

Hall's involvement with the Shirleys has extended far beyond the Murchison's collection. He has since helped them with acquisitions directly from living artists such as Michael Wright and Paul Shapiro. As with everyone with whom they work, they continue to put their trust in him.

Hall's special fondness in Color Field painting is a preference that has been transferred to Lisa. She says, "I like the abstract. Rick likes the old European art." About four years ago, Stewart suggested they visit Craighead Green Gallery, and it was here that they continued their quest to buy what appeals to both of them. In the dining room, for example, two paintings by David Crismon are riffs on old master portraits, skillfully melding past and present.

Kevin Box's two sculptures in the front hall also resonated with the couple. Fashioned from stainless steel and cast aluminum, respectively, one depicts a life-size origami bird while the wall-mounted piece behind it shows how the paper would look when unfolded. According to gallerist Kenneth Craighead, this was an epiphany for Rick. In the fifth grade, he had a teacher who taught his class how to fold origami. It is a hobby that he pursues to this day. Seeing this work done in metal made it an intensely personal decision.

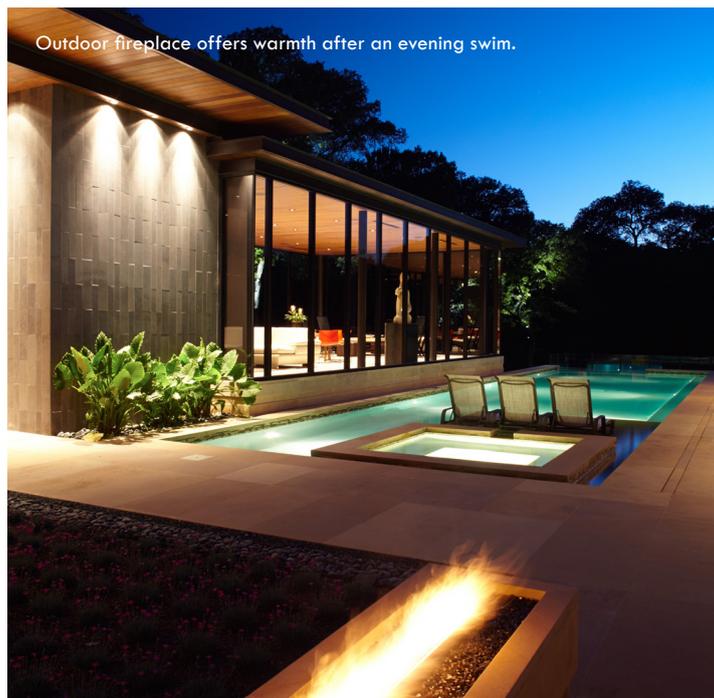
The Craighead Green Gallery has been a treasure trove for the Shirleys. They have a suite of four ink drawings on paper by David Brown. A ceramic sculptural installation by Marla Zeigler wraps around a corner in the entryway. Michelle O'Michael's high-gloss sculpture, placed outdoors at the back of the house, can be seen straight through from the front door. The Gallery is also represented by the work of Kendall Stallings, Carolyn Brown, Shawn Smith and Gary Schafter, among others.

Both the art and the architecture continue to be a source of wonder for the Shirleys. But not every inch of the residence is taken by art. Their most recent addition has been a pool house. Lisa came across an article about Philip Johnson's Glass House and immediately became inspired. Her pool house is a glass cube, surrounded by the greenbelt on one side and a re-imagined garden and pool, designed by Bruce Weber, on the other. It is an oasis of tranquility.

Between Stewart, Hall and Craighead, the Shirleys have a dream team of particularly qualified professionals. Craighead says, "One of the reasons I enjoy working with Lisa and Rick is that they go for the best of the best and then they put their trust in that person. They hire you to be creative." Stewart concurs: "I began to expose them to art, and then to see them appreciate it to the level that it is, is gratifying." Through it all, they continue to enjoy one another's company. Lisa said, "We're like a big family."

Even after 15 years, the house continues to be an inspiration. "Everybody who comes here loves the house. It hit just exactly the theme we wanted it to have. I will still see something new and enjoyable in it. I have never had that feeling about a house before," offered Rick. It is a sentiment echoed by Lisa: "It was the view, being in the middle of the city, having land and having the tranquility that make it special."

Do they ever miss that Park Cities Georgian? Lisa said, "In the beginning we were shell-shocked by everything." But it has been a gratifying odyssey. According to Rick, "Once Neal educated me on contemporary design, I don't think I can ever go back." And having created this paradise, why would they? **P**



Outdoor fireplace offers warmth after an evening swim.



Arresting views of the greenbelt from inside the pool house; sofa with chaise by Cantoni.

Specializing in water environments, the Shirleys' pool house was designed by Bryan Weber, Water + Structures.

