

Home is a Gallery

A COUPLE'S COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS, SCULPTURE AND UNIQUE FURNITURE IS THE INSPIRATION FOR ONE BEND ARCHITECT



A client's Japanese screen painting inspired the use of black granite slab countertops with glints of green.

Architects often see the buildings they design as a collection of art. So what happens when an architect is asked to design a home around an art collection? Bend architect Cheryl Heinrichs faced this interesting challenge in designing a home for a couple with a collection of paintings, sculpture and unique furniture.

Story by John Martin
Photos by Lyle Cox



"There were a lot of different agendas that I had to satisfy in this house," Heinrichs says. At the beginning of the design process the couple, who were then living in another state, sent her photos and dimensions of the paintings and furniture that they intended to have on display. Heinrichs, working from her own preference for a relatively modern style with strong lines and forms and a minimum of ornamentation, came up with eight possible schemes for the house.

From that point, with Heinrichs and the clients e-mailing back and forth, it took a few months to come up with a plan that met all of the design criteria. And the list of criteria was not a short one. Besides having plenty of well lit wall space for paintings and alcoves for sculpture, the clients also wanted to take advantage of the dramatic views of the Cascades to the west. The house is sited on a small rise to maximize the views but the clients wanted the building to fit into the landscape rather than stand out. The house also needed to accommodate the frequent entertaining that the clients do.

For her part, Heinrichs tried to include a passive solar component, as she does with every house she designs. She also had to convince the clients, who had previously lived in older homes with more traditional ornamentation and arrangement of space, that an open, modern look would best serve their purposes.

As it turned out, Heinrichs says, "it was a pretty easy, pleasant design process. I think that was at least partly because everybody involved — the clients, myself, the contractor — was so excited about the project. There was a real synergy."

In the finished house all the different elements do seem to support and enhance each other.

The elegant front door hand made by the building's general contractor, Dave Jasper, opens to a large, colorful painting of flowers on an angled wall that leads into the great room. The light, expansive room is big enough for large paintings, large windows, and a large group of guests. Another painting that hangs over the fireplace and above a seating arrangement is hinged on one side so that it can swing back and reveal an impressive plasma screen TV. The minimum of trim wood in the modern design emphasizes the art and the views out the windows rather than drawing attention to itself. The kitchen is at one end of the great room for ease of entertaining, while the dining room, with its own sink and dishwasher, is at the other end of the room, providing a separate focus for large parties. Midway between the two, in its own alcove, is a baby grand piano.

And all these individual elements seem to luxuriate in a wealth of open space.

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Light bamboo flooring and a lack of wood trim make this baby grand piano and artwork from Cambodia really stand out.

Gallery House

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The view windows to the west are another example of design synergy. They extend high enough to show the mountain vistas and fill the room with light, but not so high that they needlessly compromise the thermal efficiency of the house. This limited height also serves to emphasize the sense of the windows as frames for the art of nature.

The light bamboo flooring in the great room adds to the clean, modern look, while covering a solar powered radiant heating system that also heats the domestic water.

Heinrichs believes that the spare, open spaces she's designed not only emphasize the art and the views, but make the house seem larger than it really

FROM THE OUTSIDE, THE HOUSE'S SIMPLE LINES AND FORMS GROUND THE STRUCTURE IN THE LANDSCAPE WHILE ALSO GIVING IT A SCULPTURAL QUALITY.



Impressive art, unique furniture and an oriental rug in this dining room bathe in just the right light.

is. In fact, it's a relatively modest 2,765 square foot structure with a master bedroom suite, an upstairs guest bedroom, three baths, a small utility room and a similarly small study or media room.

One of several pocket doors in the house can

close off the master suite from the rest of the house if desired. In the master bath, the tone is set by a black and green Japanese screen painting above the tub. Green glints in the black granite slab countertops and iridescent black sinks reflect the theme,

while the west and north facing windows bring the outside views in. Upstairs in the guest bathroom, a bold Chinese red wall sets off a verdigris colored antique wooden cabinet.

From the outside, the house's simple lines and forms ground the structure in the landscape while also giving it a sculptural quality. "As you approach the house you see different roof areas with different pitches," Heinrichs says. "I wanted the different angles to give a sense of the structure dancing as you move around it."

Whether the house manages to dance or not it's definitely satisfied Heinrichs' clients. As one of them says, "This house is functional and artistic at the same time. It's everything we wanted and more."

THE PAINTING THAT HANGS OVER THIS FIREPLACE IS HINGED ON ONE SIDE SO IT CAN SWING BACK AND REVEAL A PLASMA SCREEN.

