



A rare Helen Frankenthaler painting is a stunning focal point in the living room. A substantial chandelier of Murano glass is perfectly scaled to the dramatic 21-foot ceiling.

# COLLECTED, CHERISHED, AND ONCE MORE NEW

*Written by Joan Lerch / Photography by Alise O'Brien*

After almost four decades in a beloved family home, how do you say goodbye and then make a new home— not just for yourself, but for all of your beautiful things curated over a lifetime?

While the challenge may have been emotional, the solution was pretty simple for this homeowner. “I met Ken a few years ago when I saw his work at a local show house, and it was just luscious. So when it was time to do this, I grabbed him!” With twinkling eyes surveying her new (and stunning) home, her delight is evident. “My family comments on things I’ve had for years, but they’ve never noticed before. Ken brought it all together.”

The “Ken” responsible for this enthusiasm is Ken Stückenschneider of Stückenschneider Decoration & Design. A

graduate of Washington University and New York’s Pratt Institute, his work has been featured on the cover of *Architectural Digest*, and his international portfolio includes projects in London, Barbados, Montreal and Hong Kong.

When the homeowner fell in love with Stückenschneider’s artistry at the show house, neither one of them knew just how ideal their collaboration would turn out to be. The designer’s degree is in art history, and he was formerly a docent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. So who better to understand the best way to incorporate the homeowner’s important collection of paintings and antiques into her new home, a 1982 Higginbotham-built beauty with good bones but a tired interior?

Hand-painted wallpaper shimmers in light from one of two arched windows flanking the front door. Here and throughout the home, a high-gloss lacquer adds elegant polish to moulding and trims. The fine finishes are the work of Koch Brothers Decorating.





Original built-in shelving in the formal dining room was painted a soft celadon and lit from within. The lush rose centerpiece is the work of award-winning artist and floral designer Melinda Roeleveld, owner of Les Bouquets.



Awash in Benjamin Moore's "Touch of Pink," the dressing room features a custom armoire, grosgrain-trimmed window treatments on brass rods, and a treasured Chagall.



Transformation of the expansive living room began with color. Generic beige was replaced with a luminous celadon on walls and crown molding. In one corner of the light-washed room, two glass-shelved *étagères* display an international collection of antiques, including African money, Chinese vases, Picasso plates, and an 18th-century jade box from France.

While many of these pieces were acquired on a trip to China, the homeowner purchased almost all of the paintings in New York, at the gallery of the late André Emmerich. The influential Manhattan dealer represented, among others, Color Field painter Helen Frankenthaler, and he also handled the estate of Abstract Expressionist Hans Hofmann, one of the most important influencers of postwar American art. Hofmann and Frankenthaler are two of the artists in the homeowner's collection, which also includes works by American painter and printmaker Frank Stella, American Modernist Milton Avery, and Russian-born painter Marc Chagall.

Helen Frankenthaler pioneered a "soak-stain" technique of painting, pouring thinned paint on to unprimed canvas that she laid on the floor. This created canvases awash in fields of translucent color, and the technique is exquisitely evident in the rare Frankenthaler work above the living room fireplace.

A mathematician and inventor, as well as an artist, the German-born Hofmann was also an influential teacher to many

artists, including Helen Frankenthaler. Two exuberantly colorful Hofmann paintings, centered on layered mirrors, are displayed on opposite walls in the formal dining room.

Describing the transformation of the dining room, Stückenschneider says, "When we began this project, the dining room was just dead. The mirrors were designed and crafted to create dimension. They look beveled, but they are actually built-up layers of glass." Reflecting light from the exquisite Baccarat chandelier, the custom mirrors provide illumination for Hofmann's works and the homeowner's collection of fine porcelain. A bespoke crewel-border rug, created by Edward Fields from Stückenschneider's design, adds warmth and texture, and English regency chairs surround a conversation-friendly round table. The once-dead dining room is revived and ready for its dinner-party close-up. (And if a certain adorable canine joins the guests, they are sure to notice how well she matches the gorgeous handmade rug.)

In every room of the home, an often-overlooked necessity was given a subtle but sublime makeover. Dated metal register covers, which had been painted to match the wall color, were replaced with elaborately scrolled covers in unlacquered brass. Stückenschneider chose unlacquered because "it weathers over time, and acquires a beautiful patina." No longer wallflowers doomed to disappear into the woodwork, the covers are functional and fabulous.



A separate dressing table, also custom-built and finished to match the armoire, is accompanied by an Egyptian revival chair. The dressing table and armoire were designed by Strücker-Schneider and then built to his specifications.



Picture frame molding surrounds the 18th century chinoiserie secretary and a collection of antiques from around the world.

Fittingly, the entry hall that introduces these beautiful spaces is also a work of art. Regal arched windows flank the front door, welcoming the sun through divided lights from floor to ceiling. Intricate crown and base molding and white wainscoting, all finished in a glossy oil, adds classic style. But the undisputed star of this space is the exquisite custom wallcovering from New York’s Gracie studio, hand-painted in shades of charcoal and white on antiqued silver paper. Film stars can only hope to stage such a grand entrance.

With a Higginbotham pedigree, the stately home had weathered the years in style, so Stückenschneider’s fine-tuned eye for proportion and scale was key to refining the interior layout without major changes to the original footprint. Working with general contractor Nate Markway of Markway Construction, the designer eliminated three doorways, combining them into a single hallway. Other doors were raised from their original standard heights, fitted with substantial hardware and painted with the same glossy lacquer used in the entry hall. The result is striking, luxurious and, in the designer’s words, “Hollywood glam.”

The glam factor increases exponentially in the owner’s ultra-girly dressing room, a dreamy confection of color, texture and thoughtful detail. Created from a spare bedroom and bathed in filtered light from four delicately dressed windows, it’s the perfect

place to plan the day or get ready for a night out. (Or perhaps just curl up on the plush pink sofa with Jane Austen and a crystal flute of something bubbly.) Above the sofa, Chagall captures a couple embracing in the moonlight.

To accommodate the owner’s wardrobe, Stückenschneider designed a custom 3-door armoire finished in the same luscious shade as the walls, ceiling and trim— Benjamin Moore’s “Touch of Pink.” Full-length, mirrored armoire doors reflect the yummy pastel, further enhancing the delicate mood. For up-close-and-personal pampering, the designer crafted a traditional dressing table, also finished in pink and paired with an Egyptian revival chair. A leopard-upholstered seat adds just a touch of wild to the mix.

And while another closet displays an enviable collection of shoes, sometimes a girl just wants to pad around barefoot, and a soft Aubusson rug in watercolor florals is just the thing for toe-scrunching fun.

Film buffs know the sequel is seldom as good as the original, but this second act might just be the exception. Even though it broke her heart to leave her previous home, the lady of this house offers the ultimate compliment to Stückenschneider and his team, declaring with confidence, “You know what? I’ve never looked back!” **sl**