

CHANGE OF
Scenery

Bodron/Fruit works in concert with art advisor Michael Thomas to define a collecting couple's home.

BY PEGGY LEVINSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN SMITH



When Svend Fruit of the architectural and design firm Bodron/Fruit was chosen to design and build a modern home for his clients, he knew he wanted to do something a little different. The lot is on a street in Old Preston Hollow that is home to some of Dallas' modern architectural masterpieces, which stand in stark contrast to the more traditional homes of the neighborhood. Two of the modern white homes on the block are built around a center courtyard. Fruit decided to take a different approach.

On the 100 x 122-foot lot, which is replete with a generous tree, the home seems larger because of the direct sight line from front to back. Behind a street-side esplanade of magnolia trees, exterior wood and textured exposed stone bricks seem to blend with the site, and the substantial back lawn seems to go on forever, creating a sense of volume and airiness. The interior space continues that voluminous feeling with a high-ceilinged living room and lower ceilings in the adjoining rooms. Huge walls of glass to smaller rectangular windows in private areas fill the home with light. Fruit refers to it as "borrowed light." And, he says, "I worked extensively on hospitality projects in the South Pacific. I was particularly influenced by the private bathroom courtyards in Bali that let the outside in but still maintained total privacy."

Like the majority of Bodron/Fruit projects, the house is designed to accommodate a significant art collection, and the designers worked in tandem with art advisor Michael Thomas. Says Fruit, "We've worked with Thomas before, and in this project, more than others, the art really is the reflection of the homeowners."

Thomas is more than an art advisor—he is an art philosopher and subscribes to the notion that the artist's vocabulary will inform the collection. He chooses clients carefully for an abiding synergy; his relationship with his clients is for a lifetime and occasionally lasts through the next generation. And he believes that an important collection should only be passed between two generations before being donated to an institution so others may enjoy it. His knowledge of modern and contemporary art is encyclopedic, and he shares that with his clients. "I think a life changes through collecting art, a person grows along with his or her collections," he says. This philosophy is evident in how art is chosen for each client's home. And, he says, "Many times the collector develops a relationship with the artist that grows into a true friendship through time." Thomas also enjoys the dialogue art creates throughout a home. "The artworks are constantly talking to each other," he says, and that determines how artworks within the collection relate to and enhance other pieces in the collection. In this home, the concept of time permeates the

This page: Glandomenico Belotti for Alias, Green sun lounge in grey; Michele De Lucchi for Alias, dehors armchairs, Scott + Cooner, Dallas; Paola Lenzi, Float poufs and bench, Scott + Cooner; Alias, Segesta coffee table, Scott + Cooner; Richard Schultz, Petal end tables, Summit Furniture, Los Angeles; James Irvine, open-system side table, Scott + Cooner, Dallas. Opposite: On the living room wall: Jennifer Steinkamp, Orbit #11, 2011, computer video installation or single channel; table sculpture: Erick Swenson, Scuffle, 2012, acrylic on resin; Eero Saarinen, Saarinen Pedestal Collection coffee table, Knoll, Dallas; Sofa: Edward Wormley for Dunbar, Adeline, Dunbar; Theo Ruth for Artifort, club chairs, vintage 1950s, Netherlands Galerie André Hayat, Paris; Erba Italia, SASSI ottoman, Haute Living, Chicago; Antoine Proulx, CT-1 coffee table; Rug: Suzanne Sharp, Stupa Silver, wool and silk, The Rug Co., Dallas.





Aaron Curry, *Dead E*, 2012, ink, silkscreen, and spray paint on wood, silkscreen on cardboard.



Erick Swenson, *Kleine Schwärmer*, 2014, acrylic on resin, silicone, and other materials on back wall; Iran do Espírito Santo, *Bulb 4*, 2014, stainless steel and aluminum.

collection, and all the artworks, with the exception of one, are by living artists.

If Thomas is most discerning about art, Mil Bodron is his design counterpart. When Bodron and partner Fruit design a home, they don't necessarily know what artworks will be there—they don't need to know. They do know, however, where the art walls will be. Mil begins his spatial design early in the architectural-design process. Once walls are in place and sight lines are developed, he decides the contour of the design—exactly where furniture will be, what form, what size, and the details. "It's not about good or bad, it's about correct or incorrect," he says of his vision. He then goes on a hunt to find the precise pieces that fit his design. The plan is not married to a specific period of furniture, and the lines may vary, but is based on correct placement and use—how the room will be used, how conversation areas are configured, and where the walkways are.

In this house, the seating area in the formal living room floats, and rounded silhouettes fit handsomely in the rectangular room. Against the exposed stairway, a daybed and open armchairs offer unobstructed views from any direction. Bodron's choice of furniture is also mathematical, and selected pieces harmonize seamlessly with the extraordinary art in the room.

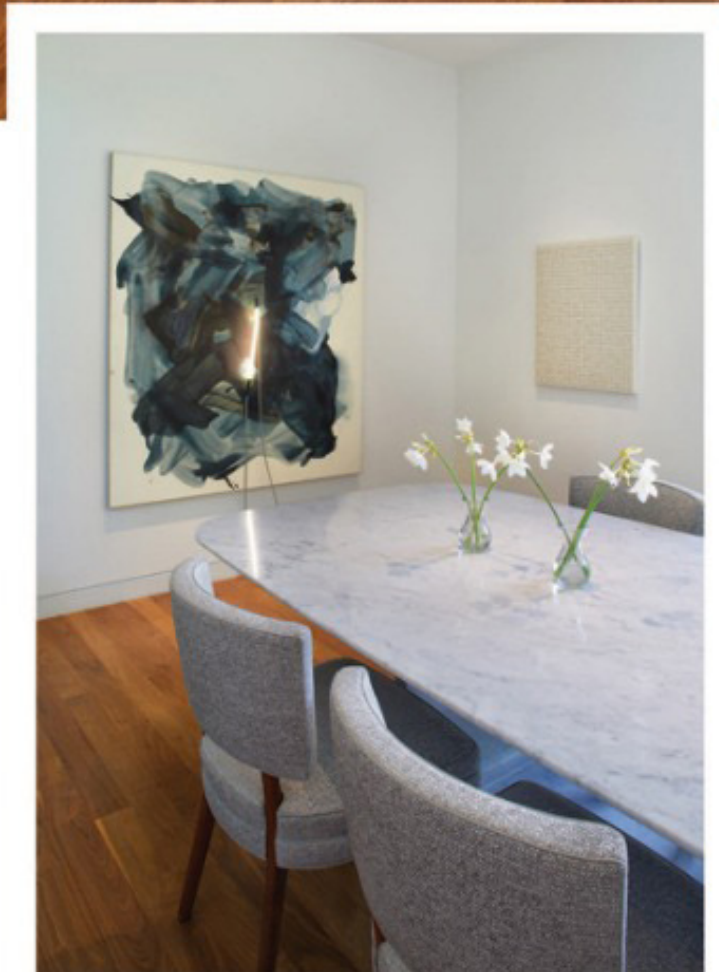
The living room is dominated by the floor-to-ceiling video



Elliott Hundley, *the sound of its own ringing*, 2014, wood, foam, paper, gesso on linen, pins, string.



Giuseppe Penone, *Spine d'acacia - Confetto 01 marzo*, 2008, acacia thorns on silk on canvas; Kaja Strunz, *Falling and Folding*, 2010, wood, paint.



Marsotto Edizioni, Toni, James Irvine, white Carrara marble dining table with matte polish finish with Edward Wormley for Dunbar vintage 1940s dining chairs, Sputnik Modern, Dallas; Mary Weatherford, *blue and black night*, 2014, Flashe and neon on linen; Kwon Young-Woo, *Unfilled*, c. 1980s, Korean paper.



Edmund de Waal, *five winter songs V*, 2016, six porcelain vessels and two alabaster blocks in an aluminum and Plexiglas vitrine.

Markus Amm, *Unfilled*, 2019, oil on gesso board.



Erin Shirreff, *A.P. (No. 12)*, 2014, archival pigment print; Sirtaki, Isabelle Sirtak and Emmanuel Levet-Stienne edition of 24 console table, Galerie Carole Decombe, Paris. On console: Iran do Espírito Santo, *Water Glass 2*, 2008, solid pure crystal.



Bodron/Fruit, custom bed, Doubitz & Sons Upholstery; Muse bedding; Elizabeth Garouste and Mattia Bonetti c. 1985 table lamps, gilt steel, polyester, Wright, Chicago; Tod Von Mertens, portfolio nightstands, steel-wrapped oak, Tod Von Mertens LLC, Hancock, New Hampshire; Ryan Gordon Jackson, Thomas Bench, oil-rubbed bronze, Studio Jackson, Inc., Los Angeles.

On the wall, Vik Muniz, *Floor Scrapers*, after Gustave Caillabotte (*Pictures of Magazines 2*), 2011, digital C-Print; Viaski, Chicago sofa and chaise, Viaski, Inc., California; B&B Italia, Dandy chairs; Linteloo, Log Table coffee table, M2L, New York; (on the table) Tam Van Tran, *Ghost 1*, 2012, high-fire glaze, and glass on ceramic; Porada, Londra side tables, Scott + Cooner, Dallas; Sam Turner rug, The Rug Company Dallas.



by the Italian artist Giuseppe Penone is also displayed in the dining room. Penone's sculptures, installations, and drawings are distinguished by his use of natural materials such as clay, stone, metal, and wood; in this case, acacia thorns are applied to silk on canvas.

In the master bedroom, a small immersive abstract by Markus Amm hangs near the bed. The German artist, influenced by the Bauhaus style, creates a sculptured presence on the wall with luminous layered paint that is like looking into deep pools of water. Otherwise, the master bedroom is spartan and minimalist, and, at first glance, quite simple. The design thought process, however, was far from it. The '80s table lamps, bought at auction in Chicago, provide shape and a touch of formality to the bedroom—they are the “earrings of the room,” says Bodron. Since there is no other seating in the room, a bench provides a place to sit or spot for the duvet cover as well as softness, with its curved bronze base. The nightstands break up the materials in the room, and the custom bedding, woven with three different colored threads, gives the room elegant appeal.

Upstairs, in the cozy family study, hangs a colorful abstract by American painter Tomory Dodge, who melds American history, landscape painting, post-Internet aesthetics, and urban life with confident brushstrokes.

The entry creates a strong minimalist statement. A black-and-white photograph by Canadian artist Erin Shirreff blurs the lines between two- and three-dimensional space in a question of wholeness and incompleteness. Bodron found the edition console in Los Angeles; the flattened black cast-aluminum oval top was perfect for the short wall, and a solid white sandstone column base completes the sculptural aspect of the room, as does the solid crystal *Water Glass 2* by Iran do Espírito Santo. The three pieces were not necessarily selected to coalesce, but they nevertheless create an ethereal balance in the room. They are pieces chosen because they were exactly right for the space—just like everything else in the aesthetically precise design of this house. **P**

installation *Orbit #11*, of trees and leaves swirling and slowly changing colors with the seasons. It is at once mesmerizing and contemplative, hypnotizing and inspiring, and impossible to look away from. Its artist, Jennifer Steinkamp, professor of design and media arts at UCLA, composes site-specific installations that create the illusion of receding space. For this project, she designed a custom lens that unerringly fits the wall and projects from an upstairs bedroom. Because the projection comes from above, a person can walk in front of the image and feel part of the power and magnitude of nature as the video changes from blossoms to fallen leaves.

On an adjacent wall hangs *the sound of its own ringing* by Elliott Hundley. In his work, Hundley incorporates a diverse spectrum of materials, from photographs to flea market finds to newspaper clippings, drawing inspiration from his Southern heritage and references to Greek tragedy. A standing sculpture, *Dead E* by Aaron Curry, is beneath the stairs. Curry was trained as a painter, and his sculptures blur the boundaries between abstract and figurative. His use of flat, imaginatively cut pieces of plywood, cardboard, and aluminum reflect the influences of Cubism, abstract expressionism, graffiti, and cartoons.

Suspended from the ceiling above the staircase is a sculpture by the Argentine artist Tomás Saraceno, whose study of arachnology reflects the complexity of connectivity and the potential for airborne dwelling. Echoing a spider's web, *Q2343-BX442/M* is designed to appear as a unique, geometric galaxy floating in space. In the adjacent den hangs a photograph by Vic Muniz, the contemporary Brazilian artist known best for sourcing a wide variety of eclectic and found materials to recreate iconic historical artworks and scenes from popular culture. Here we see his reinterpretation of *The Floor Scrapers* by Gustave Caillabotte.

The dining room is also a walk-through gallery space; this purposeful use of square footage is found in many Bodron/Fruit projects. And, because it is a walk-through, the table is not centered in the room, so there is no ceiling fixture or rug, and Bodron had to be very discriminating about shape, size, and material for the dining table and chairs. For example, the split-back Dunbar chairs provide enough textile for pleasing acoustics, but the split backs keep the chairs from looking like a “fence around the table,” Bodron says. An abstract by Mary Weatherford provides contrast, with spontaneously applied paint on heavy linen and carefully placed neon tubing. *Spina d'acacia*

Tomory Dodge, *the day's long shadow*, 2012, oil on canvas; Molteni & C., H-Bridge chaise, Smink Inc., Dallas; Joe D'Urso, Square table, Carrara marble and polished chrome, Khalil Ward Bennett, landmark chairs, Gelger; Nicos Zographos, low table, polished stainless steel/polished plate glass, Zographos Limited Edition, fine opal grey cowhide rug, Scott + Cooner.

