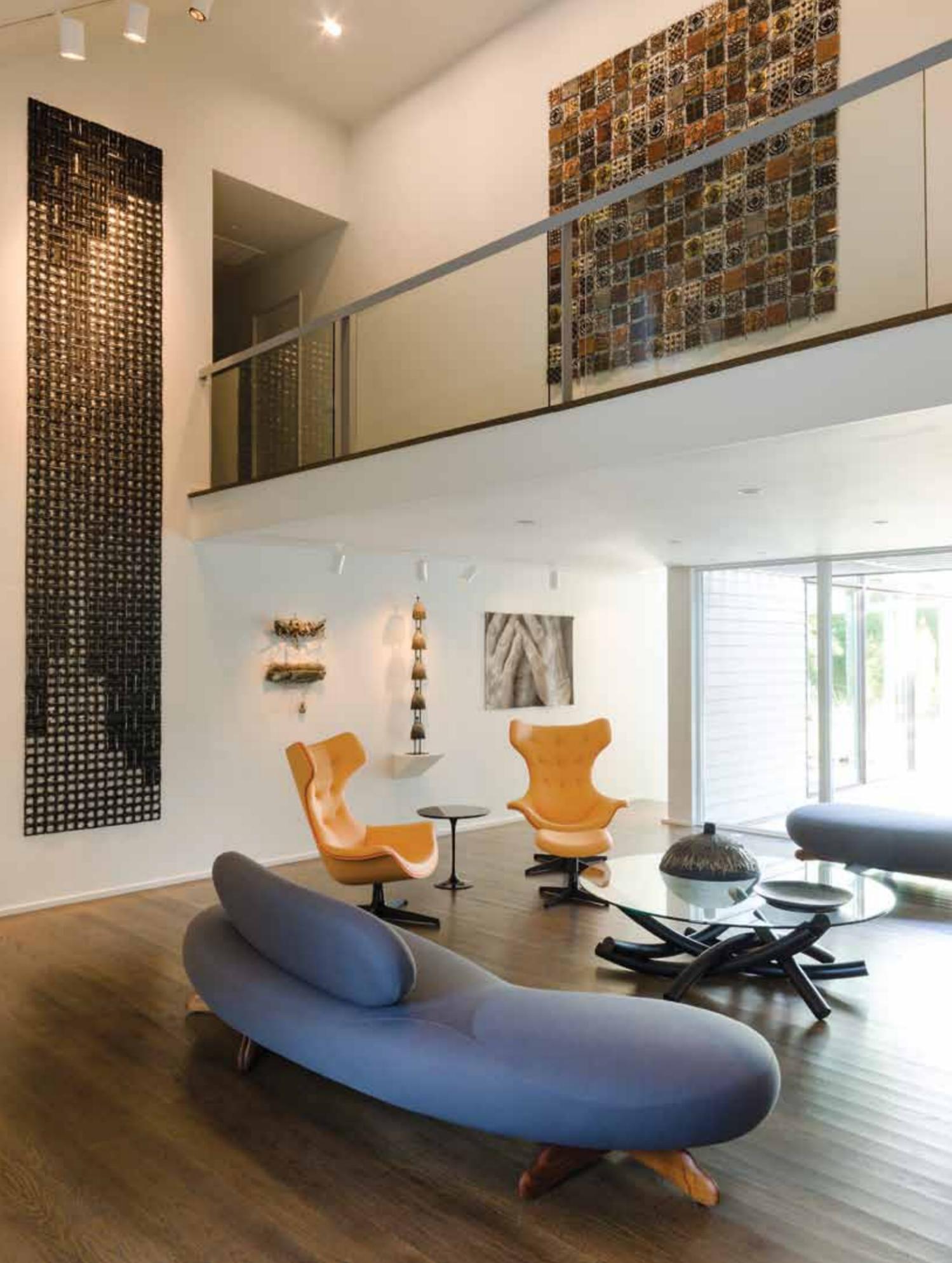


all about **ART**

A dramatic renovation transforms
Judy Weisman's modest Cape Cod
into a soaring home that
celebrates contemporary craft

BY TINA COPLAN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN MAGOR

The renovation opened up the original home to the garden, integrating interior and exterior spaces. The glass-walled kitchen addition projects into the landscape, with the master bedroom above.

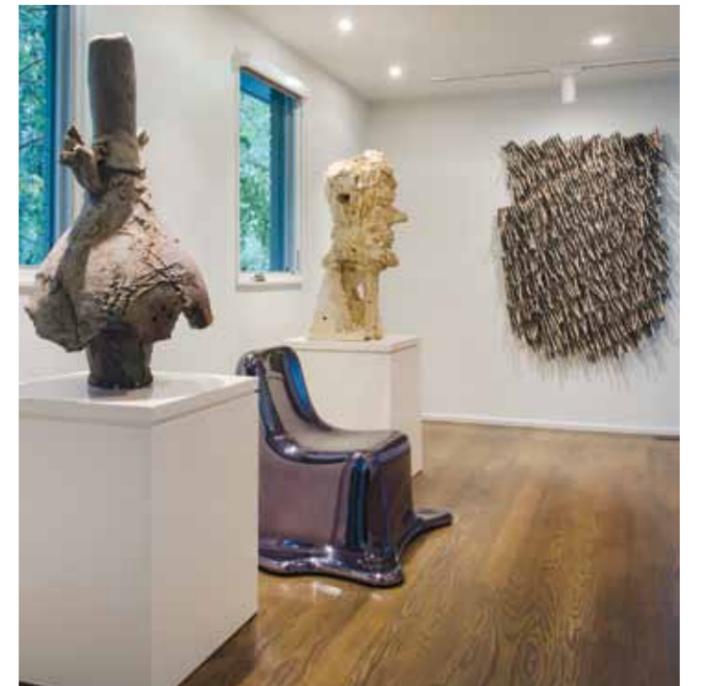


Approaching the home of collector Judy Weisman, few clues appear to distinguish it from neighboring houses along a tree-shaded street in Chevy Chase, Maryland. But once the front door opens, all resemblances fade, as visitors enter a lofty sanctuary studded with major works of contemporary craft. Harmony prevails, from towering fiber works punctuating the entrance to smaller objects aligned on living room walls to sculptural ceramics showcased in fitted shelves in the family room. The overall unity suggests a small, modern museum—a serene, residential one.

“Some people think you can only create a beautiful environment and not live in it,” says Weisman, seated in a shapely swivel chair facing some of the exceptional fine craft pieces she has gathered over 25 years. “It’s a joy to live here,” she beams. An interior designer and art consultant who helps others stage their collections, she understands the dilemmas passionate collectors face. “I integrate art in a way that’s comfortable to live with and not just to look at,” she observes. “You don’t have to be afraid of it.”

Weisman lives by the design principles she preaches: All projects should be calm and beautiful; group like objects by color, size or theme; every piece needs space around it; and look at all spaces as possible opportunities for display.

RENOVATION ARCHITECTURE: BEN AMES, AIA, Amestudio, Arlington, Virginia.
 RENOVATION CONTRACTOR: THE LEY GROUP, Washington, DC. INTERIOR DESIGN: JUDITH S. WEISMAN, Judith S. Weisman Interiors, Chevy Chase, Maryland.
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE: KEVIN CAMPION, ASLA, Campion Hruby Landscape Architects, Annapolis, Maryland.



Removing part of the second level created a dramatic entry and mezzanine (top and opposite). Weisman displays Sonya Clark’s 16-foot-high assemblage made from plastic combs in the living room and a mixed-media work by John Garrett above (opposite). Flanking the entrance, the former den (top) and kitchen (above) provide intimate galleries for smaller works.

On that last point, limited space in part prompted her decision to renovate the modest Cape Cod house where she lived for more than a decade. Weisman's first priority was greater wall height to better display large-scale pieces. Her second was a bigger kitchen. And she wanted to accomplish those objectives while retaining the home's basic footprint.

The solution, she believed, could happen by focusing on what she considered the property's greatest potential—its sizable garden with a perfectly formed Japanese maple as its centerpiece. "I was set on opening up the house to the garden and integrating interior and exterior spaces," she says. "That offered an opportunity to make the space feel larger—in essence, adding another room."

To help realize her vision, Weisman turned to architect Ben Ames. He suggested removing part of the second floor to create a two-story entrance, a scheme that added height and space for displaying art on a new mezzanine facing the entrance. At the back of the house, Weisman proposed removing the living room fireplace and back wall to gain a full-height garden view. To exhibit smaller works more intimately, enclosed galleries were refashioned from the former kitchen and den on opposite sides of the entrance.



A full-height view of the garden from the living room focuses on a perfectly shaped Japanese maple (above). The family room in the new kitchen wing pairs a B&B Italia sofa with a chair and ottoman by Vitra (right). Outside, the Yin & Yang dining table, sectional and club chairs are designed by Kenneth Cobonpue (top), as is the tall Lolah capsule (opposite, top); both collections are available at JANUS et Cie.

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—JUDY WEISMAN



“Each design decision related back to her collection,” Ames recalls. “That was the litmus test—to create spaces that would make sure the work was properly displayed.” To accommodate the new kitchen and dining area, a glass-walled addition projects like a private greenhouse into the garden. Further viewing perspectives are available from the master bedroom above.

Landscape architect Kevin Campion worked closely with Weisman on the garden plan. The stunning Japanese maple became the focal point, set off by plantings in masses and orderly hardscape surfaces. Views from the house change with the seasons, as the tree’s lacy leaf mound transitions to a barren winter trunk that Weisman compares to a wooden sculpture. The striking impression is doubled when reflected in the still waters of a two-tiered

A tall mixed-media work by John Garrett welcomes guests into the new open kitchen (this page) and dining area (opposite). Poggenpohl cabinetry and Caesarstone countertops create a sleek backdrop for Weisman’s artwork. “Celestial Body,” a hanging piece made by Lanny Bergner of bronze, brass and an aluminum screen, hangs behind the dining table.

fountain. “Every element had a purpose,” says Campion. “There wasn’t one plant that we didn’t talk about. It’s a better space because of our challenging each other.”

Weisman agrees. In her professional role, she often collaborates with artists on special furnishings; during construction of her home, she invited artist Sonya Clark to select a spot for a commissioned piece. Clark’s 16-foot-high assemblage—made from ordinary



plastic combs—now rises beside the front door. “It’s the first thing people see when they walk in, and they’re fascinated,” says Weisman. “I like when an object draws you in, and you have to stop and think about it.”

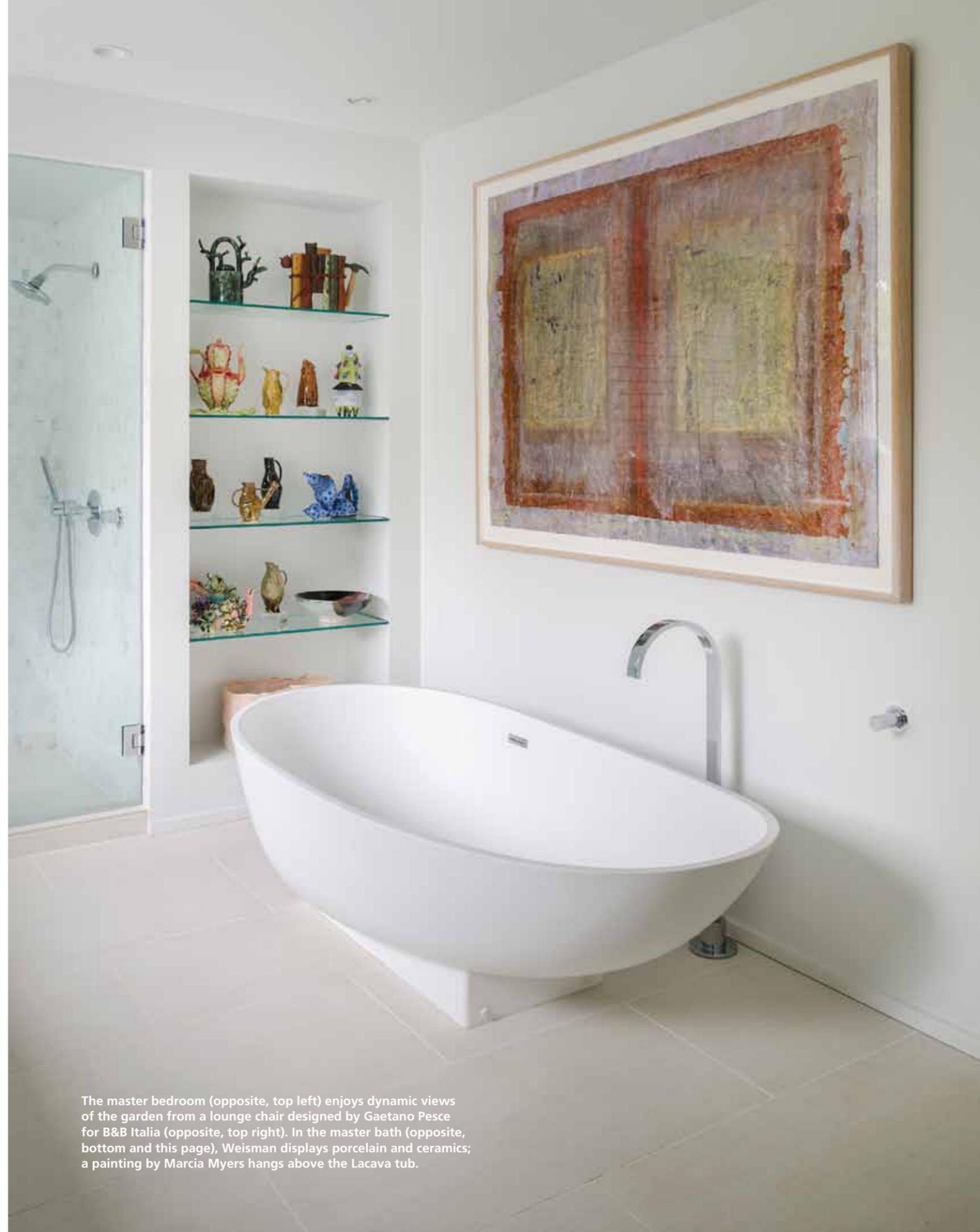
Adding new works required taking others away. “If you can’t see each piece in a peaceful way, it should be removed,” she declares. Biting the bullet, the designer gave away 50 works to her grown children or sent them to storage.

With her display spaces filled, Weisman still enjoys helping others make purchases. She advises clients and museums through her service in the crafts community, as acquisitions chair for the James Renwick Alliance, a nonprofit group supporting the Renwick Gallery, and on the acquisitions committee of the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton, Massachusetts. “I get as much satisfaction from that as I do from my own personal collecting,” she reflects.

With its breezy indoor-outdoor flow, Weisman’s home also becomes a perfect setting for entertaining arts groups. As day dissolves into night and the maple’s flaming crimson fades into darkness, lighting under each fountain step transforms the landscape into sculpture. “It’s magical,” says Weisman. “The garden is an art form. It’s about color and texture and scale. In the end, it’s all about art.” ❖

Writer Tina Coplan is based in Chevy Chase, Maryland. John Magor is a photographer in Stafford, Virginia.

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The master bedroom (opposite, top left) enjoys dynamic views of the garden from a lounge chair designed by Gaetano Pesce for B&B Italia (opposite, top right). In the master bath (opposite, bottom and this page), Weisman displays porcelain and ceramics; a painting by Marcia Myers hangs above the Lacava tub.