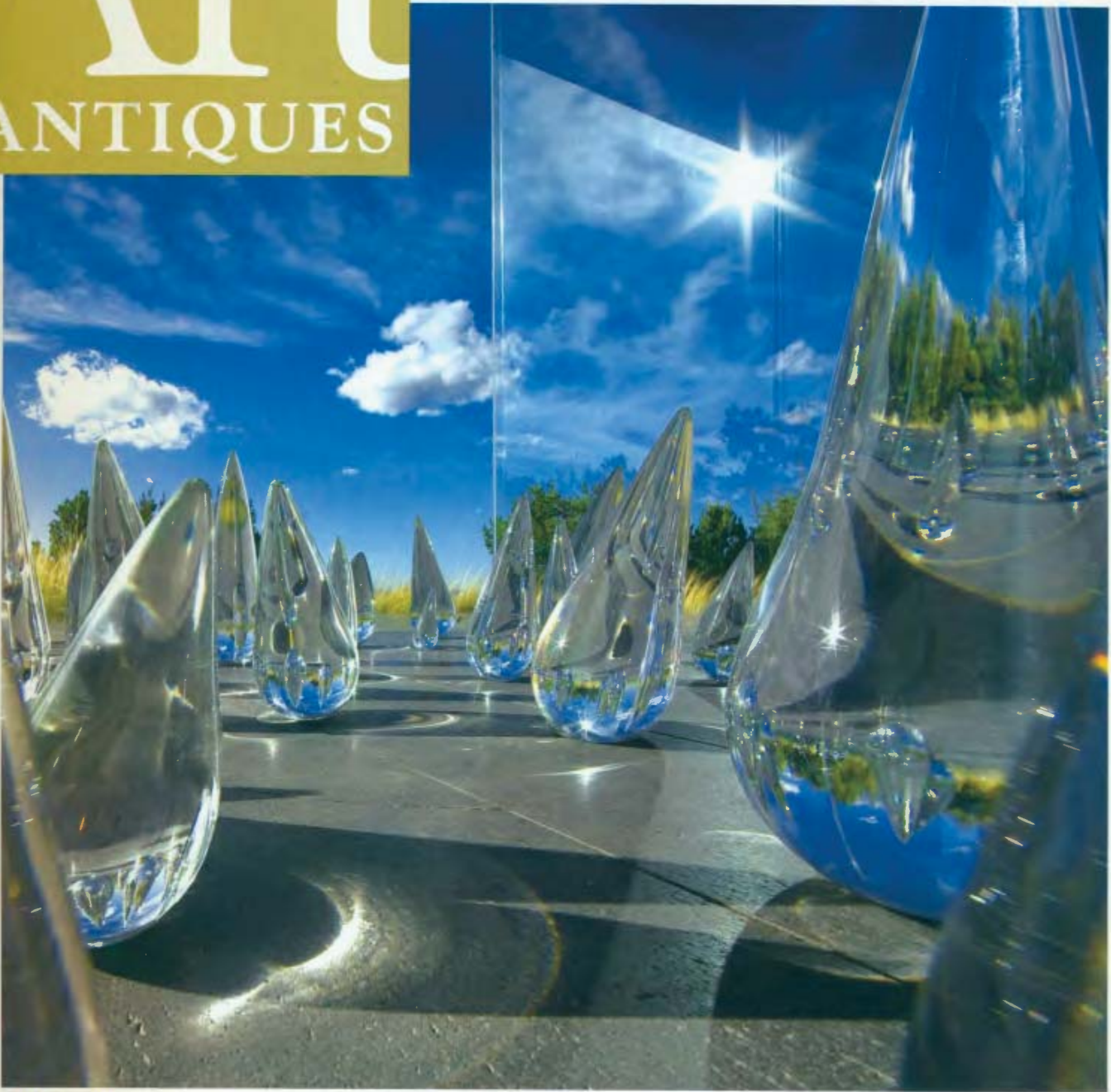


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# Art ANTIQUES

FOR COLLECTORS OF THE FINE AND DECORATIVE ARTS



JAN LIEVENS | METEORITE COLLECTING | ADAA SHOW | QATAR MUSEUM | AUDUBON

ART HOUSE



# Desert Rays

A Sante Fe dwelling reflects the beauty of the homeowners' contemporary art collection.



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**ALTHOUGH BUILDING** a contemporary art oasis in the middle of the desert seems like a daunting task, it was a dream that Jeanne and Mickey Klein had always hoped to bring to fruition. Rather than create a white-cube gallery space, which would have allowed the couple to control the inherent fluctuations in humidity, temperature and light, the Kleins decided to embrace the environment of the Santa Fe, N.M., foothills. They coupled this attitude with a desire to keep their museum-quality art in the forefront and created an exquisite home that was designed not for, but around their collection.

The linchpin of the project was a new commission—one of James Turrell's *Sky-spaces*. These magical works invite viewers

to enter monastic-like cells and experience the changing light of day through an aperture cut in the ceiling. Because they remain open to the elements, they are traditionally designed as self-contained buildings, but the Kleins chose to integrate their *Sky Space* (2000) into the heart of the house.

"We interviewed a number of architects and we asked each of them, 'Can the art come first?'" explains Mickey. "Every single person said yes, but then it didn't happen." Given their support of young artists, many of whom they've met through the Core Artists-in-Residence Program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's Glassell School and at ArtPace in San Antonio, where Jeanne is the president of the board, it is not surprising that they chose a rela-

tively unknown architect, Mark DuBois, for the task. He listened attentively as the Kleins explained the prerequisites for the design.

Subtle details prove that DuBois was absorbing their needs: The halls are just a little wider than usual so one can get a better perspective on larger pieces that flank the walls; the materials, while warm and textural, create an almost monochromatic background for the art; and even the room proportions were considered carefully. Jeanne recalls looking over the plans and being startled, saying, "I called him and I said, 'Mark, the living room is too big.' And he said, 'Jeanne, you and Mickey told me that the Ellsworth Kelly had to go in the living room, and if you want that piece to go there, that room has to be that size.'"



From left: The living room features Ellsworth Kelly's 18-foot bronze wall sculpture, 1997-98, and a George Nakashima coffee table; Ernesto Neto's untitled wall sculpture, 2003, releases a lavender scent.

DESERT RAYS



Fred Sandback designed this string installation, 2003-04, to help separate the dining from the living room, which also includes Louise Bourgeois' *The Fingers*, 1968, and Kiki Smith's *Tears*, 1994.





The house is filled with floor-to-ceiling windows that allow huge vistas of the nearby Santa Fe National Forest. Unlike a gallery or museum, where the light levels remain constant, pieces often shift from shadow to light throughout the course of the day, radically changing their appearances. Kiki Smith's glass installation, *Tears* (1994), nestled in the corner of the living room floor, is a good example. In the morning the individual forms absorb a level bath of indirect light, highlighting their distinct shapes. When the brilliant afternoon rays flood into the room, tiny points of light

bounce off every surface, melding the forms into a pool of glimmering sunlight. In the foyer a mobile by Gego (also known as Gertrude Goldschmidt) becomes active without even a gust of wind as the setting sun pushes its shadow up the adjacent wall. Nowhere is this change of light more apparent, however, than in Turrell's *Sky Space*. As twilight fades to night, the painted white ceiling frames a rectangular patch of luscious blue sky that slowly recedes into a deep, velvety black.

"In the process of building, we've learned to have artists come into our lives

in a bigger way to do installations," Jeanne says. When faced with the challenge of how to demarcate the space between the living and dining rooms without having to construct another wall, she recalls, "Mickey had the idea to commission Fred Sandback to do this (string installation). That's what his work is all about: creating different spaces." Teresita Fernandez created an elegant glass installation for the master bath that explodes like a shimmering reflection above the sculpted tub, and Richard Tuttle, who lives nearby, installed his own works in the guest bedrooms, their



bright colors punctuating the monochromatic furnishings.

While the artists whose works are displayed are not all from the same generation, many of their pieces share a simple elegance with minimal decoration, whether it is a Giuseppe Penone painting or a series of Hiroshi Sugimoto seascapes. "Almost everything you see now in the collection was purchased after living with our Agnes Martin," says Jeanne, referring to the artist's *Untitled #5*, which the couple purchased in the late '80s. "That one painting had a lot to do with changing our aesthetics."

The Kleins also credit the late collector and philanthropist Dominique de Menil, whom they got to know quite well during their 30 years in Houston. "We would travel with her to wonderful, different places in the world and we would have the benefit of her thoughts," says Mickey, who remembers walking through the Piet Mondrian exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art with De Menil and John Elderfield, "listening to their dialogue and then going to Chicago and listening to her and Walter Hopps speak about different works of art or architecture."

Both works on the walls of the guest bedrooms were installed by fellow New Mexico resident Richard Tuttle, from his *Six Yellows* series, 1970-74.




"Art has brought more to us than just an object," Jeanne says. "We have met so many wonderful, interesting people and enriched our lives in educational ways that have nothing to do with art." One of the most significant learning experiences has been their relationship with the British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy, who created a three-part site-specific installation that requires visitors to wander through the landscape in order to experience the piece. At each site a wall enclosure is dug into the ground and a shape or pattern is molded into a cement base. The base is covered with a shallow layer of mud that, when exposed to varying temperatures and rainfall, guarantees that guests will view a new pattern of color and cracks in the sun-baked surface during each visit. "Andy has given us a gift of under-

standing our own land in a way Mickey and I couldn't, or didn't," says Jeanne. "By having him spend about a month with us each summer, he has opened a new horizon of not only understanding it but a different way of living it."

The Kleins also asked Danish artist Olafur Eliasson to create a piece for the home; he was intrigued by the high desert winters, where the nights are very cold and yet the sun makes the days warm. In response to this, Eliasson erected a dome-shaped metal armature with a small sprinkler system at its top between the main house and guesthouse. Turned on only in the winter months, the piece becomes an ever-changing sculpture as the water freezes each night onto the armature, and every day different areas melt when hit by the sun's rays.

No matter what season or what time of day, there is some location in the house or on the property where artworks can be seen and experienced. Even in the dark of night, the Kleins can sit outside in the courtyard on Jenny Holzer benches and watch videos on an outdoor screen.

In a time when many private collectors are converting windowless warehouses or building museum-like spaces to house their works, the Kleins' house provides an alternative paradigm. There, the art fights for attention with the gorgeous views, deals with shadows cast by the changing sun and rises above the din of elegant architecture and furnishings. Amid the raucous chorus, the Kleins have created a home where their collection has the enviable quality of feeling alive. 

From left: Throughout the day, sunlight and shadows interact with Kiki Smith's *Tears*, 1994; Dan Flavin's *Untitled (To Caroline)*, 1987, Giuseppe Penone's *Pelle di Marmo e Splne D'Acacia (Vera)*, 2002, and John Chamberlain's *Lilith Half Moon*, 1967-68.

