



LOFTY IDEALS
Caroline Herron and Jon Canis renovated their home to display an impressive modern art collection. A floating wall of silk-covered copper boxes by Carrie Seid is the backdrop to a dining room table by Italian glass artist Carlo Scarpa.

COLLECTORS' HAVEN

A ROCK CREEK MASTERPIECE IS CREATED WITH A MODERN ART COLLECTION IN MIND.

By Jennifer Sergent
Photography by Greg Powers

Caroline Herron and her husband, Jon Canis, had known each other less than a year before they made their first art purchase together in 1989. “It became a passion after that,” Herron says. But it would take more than 20 years before the couple would have an appropriate home for their now significant collection of modern art, sculpture and blown glass.

Not that they purchased anything new. Herron and Canis have owned their Washington home in a leafy neighborhood off Rock Creek Parkway since 1994, and they describe years of patience and planning before they could remake it to reflect their modern vision—and properly display all that art.

In the beginning, Herron says, they bought the house strictly for its location; the aging wood-and-brick house had been abandoned for five years, and the lot was covered with ivy.

By the late 2000s, the couple met Jonas Carnemark of Carnemark Design + Build. Thus began a relationship that would last more than five years, as Carnemark helped them navigate the path toward creating a modern home for themselves and their art.

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GALLERY LIFE

Clockwise from top: A Sam Gilliam painting presides above the sitting area; towering works by Marlys Powell and Russ Vogt define the great room; a SieMatic kitchen takes center stage on the main floor.



...CONTINUED “What was really exciting to me was their passion for art,” Carnemark says. “I love designing around it. I really enjoy doing something that feels warmer than a museum, bringing art into the home and having you live around it and in it.”

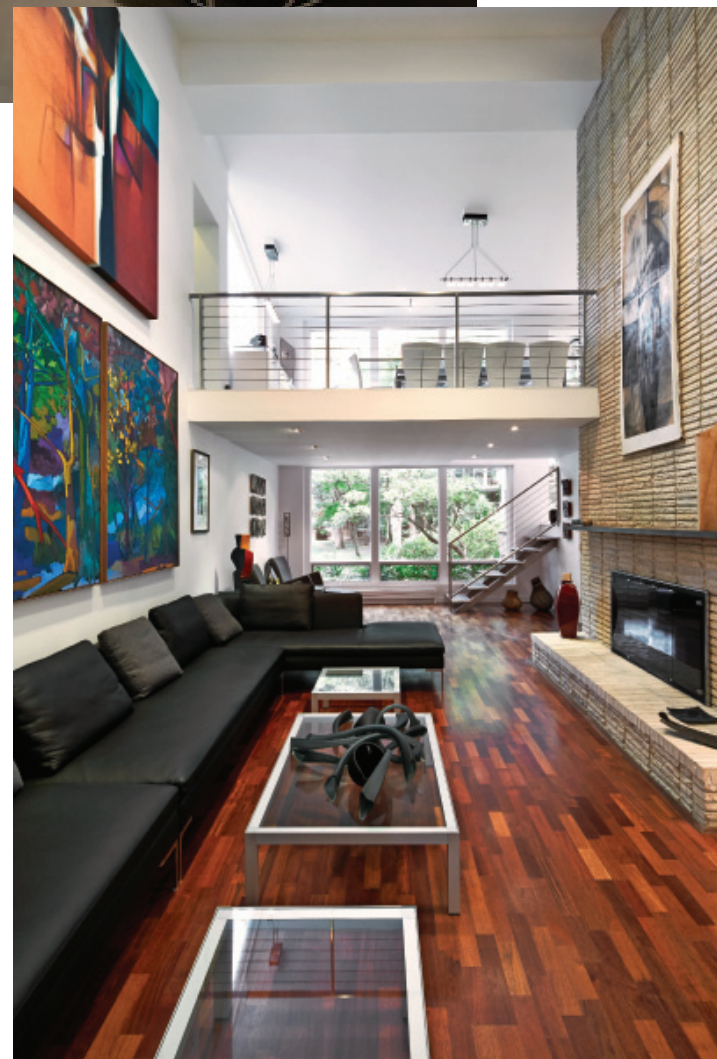
The first step was transforming the exterior. The old wood along with the brick “didn’t look as modern as we liked, and it didn’t look like an integrated whole,” Herron says.

Carnemark was able to use the wood as a substrate for a durable gray stucco that now covers the entire house. He also designed a

new entry and added a huge grid of windows onto the front that captures a dining-area loft on the second floor, with a soaring, two-story great room beyond. “I love doing that—especially in terms of programming the view,” Carnemark says of the window placement.

The exterior “gave it a true modern look and a real cohesiveness,” Herron says. By 2010, it was time to start imagining how the interior could be brought in line.

Immediately apparent in the new design are custom niches throughout the home that display much of CONTINUED...





LIGHT FANTASTIC
Clockwise from top: Enormous windows make the Herron-Canis home glow; ceramics and glass live on pedestals and in corners and niches throughout the home; a glass panel by Giles Bettison catches the dappled light.



“I really enjoy... bringing art into the home and having you live around it and in it.”
—Jonas Carnemark



...CONTINUED the couple’s glass collection. “It’s really about sculpting the inside of that space,” Carnemark says. “It’s a visual texture that makes the house more interesting.”

Ceilings went up and walls came down “to get as clean, modern and open as we could,” Herron explains. Now, an art-filled sitting room extends from the new SieMatic kitchen and holds custom shelving for art books. More shelving was installed in the kitchen’s eating nook to hold the couple’s whimsical teapot collection, and a niche in that space features an amusing glasswork covered in pop-art images.

The only thing remaining from the old kitchen design is a dumbwaiter, which they use to carry

groceries upstairs and transfer meals downstairs for casual eating near the TV. The space between the dumbwaiter shaft and an original brick wall enclosing the fireplace and chimney is now a two-story, lighted display for much of the owners’ colorful glassworks.

Art is in view from any direction one looks, save for one wall in the kitchen, which awaits the next purchase. It was reinforced with metal studs and plywood to support something heavy—perhaps a glass triptych.

Carnemark praises his clients’ common vision for what their house could be. “I knew their goal in this house was to create something wonderful all the way though,” he says. Mission accomplished. ■