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ART IN DESIGN





Layered / Effect

INTERIOR DESIGN: DAUN CURRY

TEXT: LAURA MAUK

PHOTOGRAPHY: EMILY GILBERT



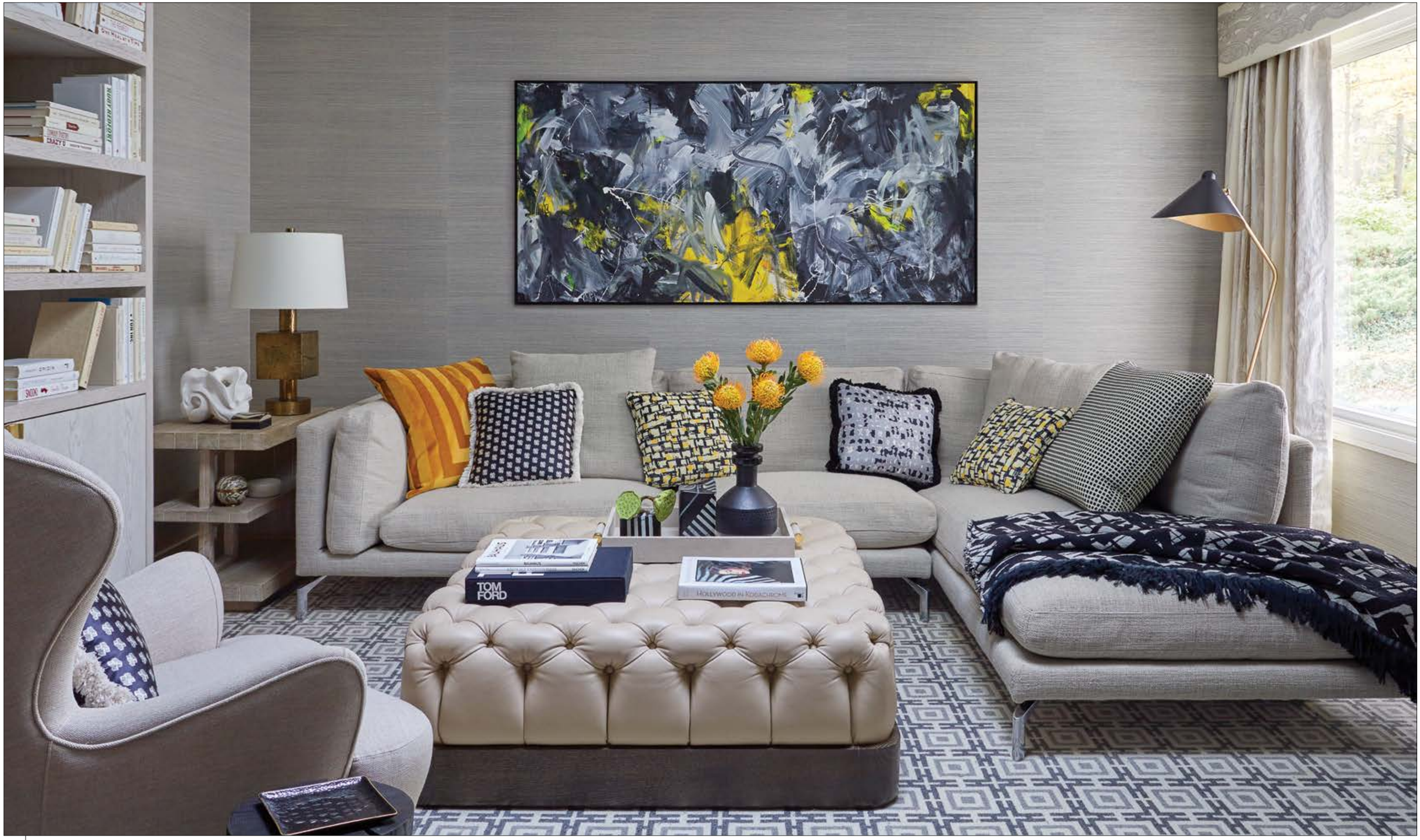
My best work happens when I really understand who my client is," says New York–based designer Daun Curry. And when it came to understanding Tracy Richelle High—who commissioned Curry to recreate a 1980s ranch-style home in Rye, New York—there was a lot to discover. High and her husband, Roman Johnson, a model who also works in events production, purchased the ranch-style residence with ideas of retreat and added space in mind. "We liked that it's secluded," High says. "I commute to Manhattan for work so it's somewhat of an escape."

"Tracy is a boss," Curry says. "She does it all." It's a solid description of High, who's a mother to three-year-old son Christian and works as a litigation partner at Sullivan & Cromwell law firm, where she serves as co-chair of the Diversity and Women's Initiative Committees and oversees active networks for minority associates. She's also the co-chairwoman of the board of directors of the YWCA-NYC and a Trustee of the Federal Bar Council and Harvard Law School Association, New York City. "I see what she does and how it goes beyond her work," the designer says. "Including aspects of her culture as well as different cultures is important to her." Curry considered High's active professional life, but studied her personal preferences, too. "I always like to peek in a client's closet to see what they're drawn to," she says. "Tracy has everything from these beautiful Chanel and Dior tweed jackets to those Giuseppi Zanotti shoes with the spikes that Lady Gaga wore."

Culture, diversity, tweed and spikes inspired Curry to layer the rooms of High and Johnson's new home with varying textures, colors, forms and prints that speak to who they are and come together in a way that's nothing short of symphonic. And for however dynamic the assemblage appears, it lets the couple's art collection receive well-deserved attention. "Much of our collection is by artists who are women, people of color or gay," High says. "We want our art to be inclusive, to reflect the world we live in." Curry arranged sculptures by Jeffrey Gibson, including one of the artist's beaded punching bags—featuring lyrics from "Ain't Got No, I Got Life" from the musical *Hair*, covered by Nina Simone—in the entry, and hung a Miya Ando painting on metal in the dining room. In the living room and the master suite, there are works by New York artist Jake Blake. Entang Wiharso's *I Want to Live 100 Years: After Agreement*, a brass, color pigment, resin and thread wall sculpture, makes an especially powerful statement in the living room.

Before Curry balanced layers of furnishings with statement-making art, she enlarged the master suite, added glazing in the living and dining rooms, and sectioned the entry from the living and dining areas with custom glass-and-steel screens. "The house had good bones, but we made a few architectural changes to contemporize it," the designer says. Together, Curry and High selected marble for the fire surrounds in the master suite and the living room, where the stone also acts as a partial wall that divides the area from the dining space. The dining room is drenched in soft color and rich texture that lend ethereality. "There's a pair of vintage Viennese crystal chandeliers that are heirloom-quality pieces they will have forever," says Curry, who dressed the walls in cream-and-gray Phillip Jeffries wallpaper.


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TOM FORD
HOLLYWOOD IN KODACHROME







Once the rooms were appropriately sized and sunlit, Curry applied the layers of furniture and accessories. In the living room, she hung brass sconces designed by Kelly Wearstler on the marble of the fireplace wall and paid tribute to the home's modernist architecture by arranging a silvery velvet-upholstered 1970 Italian curved sofa, a Missoni Home pouf and an Adam Hunter–designed rug by The Rug Company that depicts an abstracted gray-and-white smoke plume. "There's a little bit of seventies nostalgia in there, but it's restrained so the look is more timeless," she says. The designer balanced the modernist elements with classic notes that include a set of chairs with a barrel silhouette upholstered in steel-blue Great Plains by Holly Hunt leather and another barrel chair covered in speckled pink, orange and cream bouclé that calls to mind a Chanel pink tweed jacket. "The curved pieces give the room a swanky, salon-like feel," she says.

With the idea of retreat in mind, the designer kept the palette calm throughout the home, employing prints and vibrant color judiciously. In the family room, there are patterned yellow-and-blue pillows on the neutral Design Within Reach sectional, and in the entry, there's a Curry-designed marble-topped table with a metallic purple base beneath a Gabriel Scott emerald-green-glass starburst chandelier with brass spikes. "I love doing color in unexpected places like lighting and that table base," Curry says. More rugs from The Rug Company lend interest with graphic patterns, including a David Rockwell–designed one in the master suite that mimics sunlight on the surface of water. Another rug in the entry, designed by Kelly Wearstler, displays bold black-and-white wavy lines, and like a pair of yellow silk-wrapped pillows with a geometric print in the living room sitting nook, those lines evoke the graphic quality of patterns found in traditional African textiles. "I didn't think specifically when I chose pillows or other furnishings," Curry says. "The design flowed creatively based on who Tracy is."

High's achievements and propensity for glamour emboldened Curry to design a master suite that's especially textured and compelling. "I brought the shine, but in a way that still goes with the rest of the house and isn't overdone," says the designer, who outfitted the room with a large midcentury-style Murano glass chandelier, a custom antique-glass television cabinet and a polished stainless-steel four-poster and reclaimed teak credenza wrapped in German silver, both from Bernhardt. To soften the glitz, Curry hung Holly Hunt's Gossamer Eucalyptus drapery fabric and placed the nature-inspired David Rockwell–designed rug. Like the other rooms, the master suite is a representation of High and her family. "There are so many layers to Tracy," Curry says. "Her credentials are incredible—she went to Yale and Harvard. She has broken through all of these barriers and she does everything she does with a huge amount of elegance and grace." ■ *Daun Curry, dauncurry.com*