

# New England HOME CT

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

## Calm & Collected

# Statement Piece(s)

What was once an ode to traditional design morphs into a contemporary gallery.

BY ERIKA AYN FINCH

**W**hen designers Meghan De Maria and Courtney Yanni with Southport's Moss Design first stepped foot into their client's Fairfield home, they were struck by the traditional aesthetic, which didn't match the homeowner's vibrant personality. "We really had to get her out of her comfort zone," says De Maria, Moss Design's principal designer. "Once she believed in what we were putting in front of her, it was like an explosion happened. She's originally from New Jersey, and



**ABOVE:** The homeowner graduated from University of Notre Dame, thus the green (it's Benjamin Moore Vintage Vogue on the walls), blue, and gold palette. **LEFT:** From the foyer, it's possible to see the artwork in the dining room and office. That silver-leaf tree-trunk table comes from Phillips Collection.

I like to say we brought in a little Jersey glitz to the space."

The other thing the firm brought: art. De Maria and Yanni both collect fine art, and De Maria was an art history major. (Yanni started her career as a producer for Food Network.) When art consultant Lisa Cooper, owner of Elisa

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—MEGHAN DE MARIA,  
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Contemporary Art, showed the designers *Gold Rush* by James Rieck, which Cooper had discovered at Lyons Wier Gallery in New York City, the pair knew the painting was destined for their Fairfield project. “It’s our client,” says De Maria. “It’s her blond hair; it’s how she would have dressed and worn her hair in the ’50s. I knew that by hanging it in the dining room, guests would talk about that art the entire dinner party.”

Yanni says the client quickly understood the importance of having fine art in her family’s home, but purchasing the right



**ABOVE:** *Gold Rush*, an oil on canvas by James Rieck, was completed in 2015. **LEFT:** The dining room table, site of many dinner parties, was designed by Moss Design and fabricated by Old Mill Road Company. Moss Design also created the plush chairs, which are covered in upholstery from Schumacher and Kravet. The glam light is from Arteriors.



pieces doesn’t happen overnight. It was seven months later that everyone involved fell under the spell of an abstract painting for the formal living room. Serendipitously, the painting comes from artist Willie Cole, who also works as a photographer and who photographed the home. The painting, *Series 1*, worked well with the room’s saturated greens, golds, and blues.



**ABOVE:** Wallpaper from Thibaut adds interest to the his-and-her office space. **LEFT:** *Will Be Home by 5 P.M.*, a painting by emerging artist Hiejin Yoo, has already significantly increased in value, says designer Meghan De Maria. “Our financial clients always appreciate that.”



**INTERIOR DESIGN:**  
Meghan De Maria,  
Courtney Gianni,  
Moss Design

The final piece to the art puzzle didn’t fall into place for another year. Moss Design reached out to New York-based art advisor Betsy Biscone to help find the perfect piece for the his-and-her office space. Biscone presented *Will Be Home By 5 P.M.*, a semi-figurative Flashe-and-oil painting by emerging artist Hiejin Yoo. “They initially passed on it,” remembers Biscone, “but they kept coming back to it. They loved the story

behind it—the car pulling away from the home, reluctantly waving goodbye to go to work.”

Each painting makes an impact in its space, and though two of the three can be seen from the foyer, they don’t compete but rather complete the home. “A space isn’t finished without art,” says De Maria.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details about this home, see *Resources*.