



# A CANVAS FOR CREATIVITY

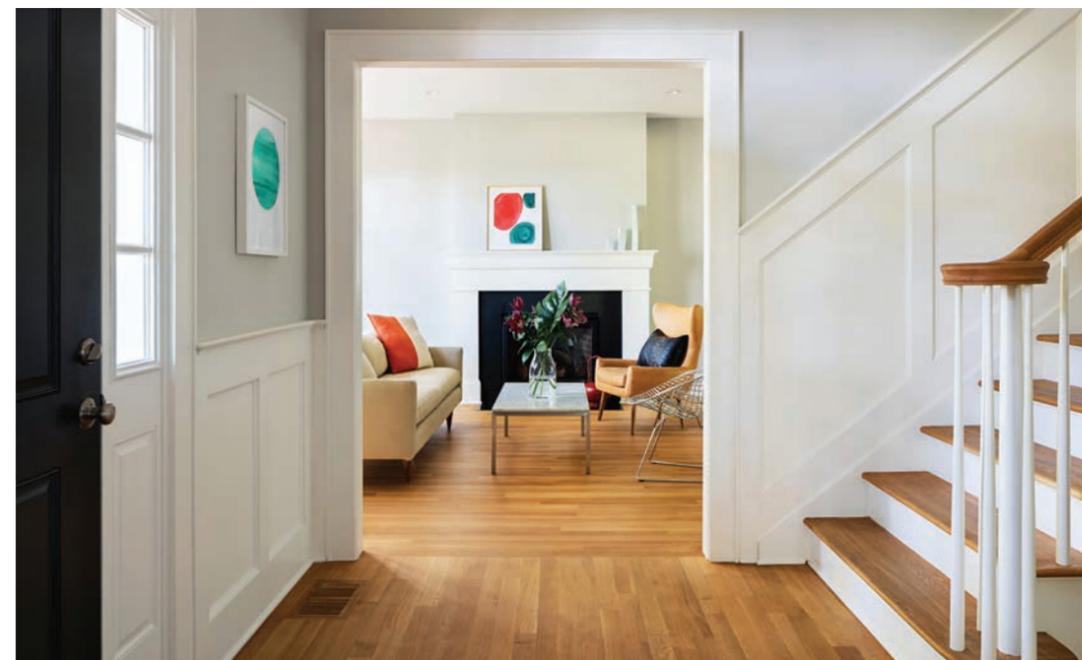
Architect's simple design is a backdrop for personal touches

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**W**hen residential architect Ying Li designed the house in Millburn that she and her family of five would be moving into after outgrowing their starter home, she applied the same rules that she uses with her clients.

Her website best describes its sensibility: "A modernist at heart," she writes, "my design emphasizes movement, flow and use of natural light. At the same time, I am sensitive to the character of the community where the project is."

In her case, that meant planning a house that looked traditional on the outside and fit in with the others in the neighborhood but was open and airy on the inside to allow for a modern lifestyle. "Some of the proportion and details are from homes of the 1920s and '30s," she says. But the cool gray tones and the HardiPlank siding combined with stone on the house and retaining wall are contemporary. Throughout the house, the neutral palette and simple, clean lines invite Li and her family to add their own dashes of color and creativity.



## LESS IS MORE

To the left side of the entryway, a living area with fireplace beckons. "It's a simple, open plan, accentuated with pop-up color accents," says Li. >



**AN EVER-CHANGING PALETTE**

(Clockwise from top) The dining room receives ample natural light from its southwestern exposure. "In place of a chair rail or molding, I play with sheet rock, and use it instead of wainscoting to add richness," says Li. The wall niche allows family members to alternate artworks; the one hanging here is an acrylic work painted by Li, though she says that everyone in her family is artistic. The monarch dining table from Crate & Barrel features solid walnut planks; the Jensen dining chairs from Room & Board were chosen for their Danish-inspired simple form. The kitchen, with its southeastern exposure, features clean lines throughout, including the aluminum drawer pulls. The color accents of fresh-cut flowers and artwork by family members stand out against the Carrara marble island top and the absolute black granite perimeter with its leathered finish. The Philippe Starck Emeco stools are durable, yet light. (Above) The living room media wall has open shelving to display photos and a rotating series of family artworks. >



### CLEAN AS CAN BE

(Above) The master bath is well-lit, with makeup lights integrated into the mirrors. The clean lines and neutral tones of Scandinavian design can be austere, says Li, but the wood veneer on the custom-made vanity warms it up, as do the pops of color that brighten and personalize the space. (Right, top) The bedroom of Thomas, 6, sports neutral Chelsea Gray walls that show off the artwork above his bed. The bedding, as on his twin sister's bed pictured below it, is from the Land of Nod line from Crate & Barrel. (Right, bottom) Leila's bedroom has a tray ceiling painted in a bold color that's uncharacteristic for the house. Her artworks appear on the left; over her bed hangs a Lino print purchased at CSM Art in Chatham. (Left) The children's bathroom has gray wainscot-height tiles, and an overhead light that Li's husband, also an architect, fashioned from a \$20 Home Depot lamp with a shade made from rice paper. As for the artwork, Li used a paper punch to cut out circles of watercolor paper; her kids painted them, and she mounted them on the wall — easy, yet one of a kind. ■

