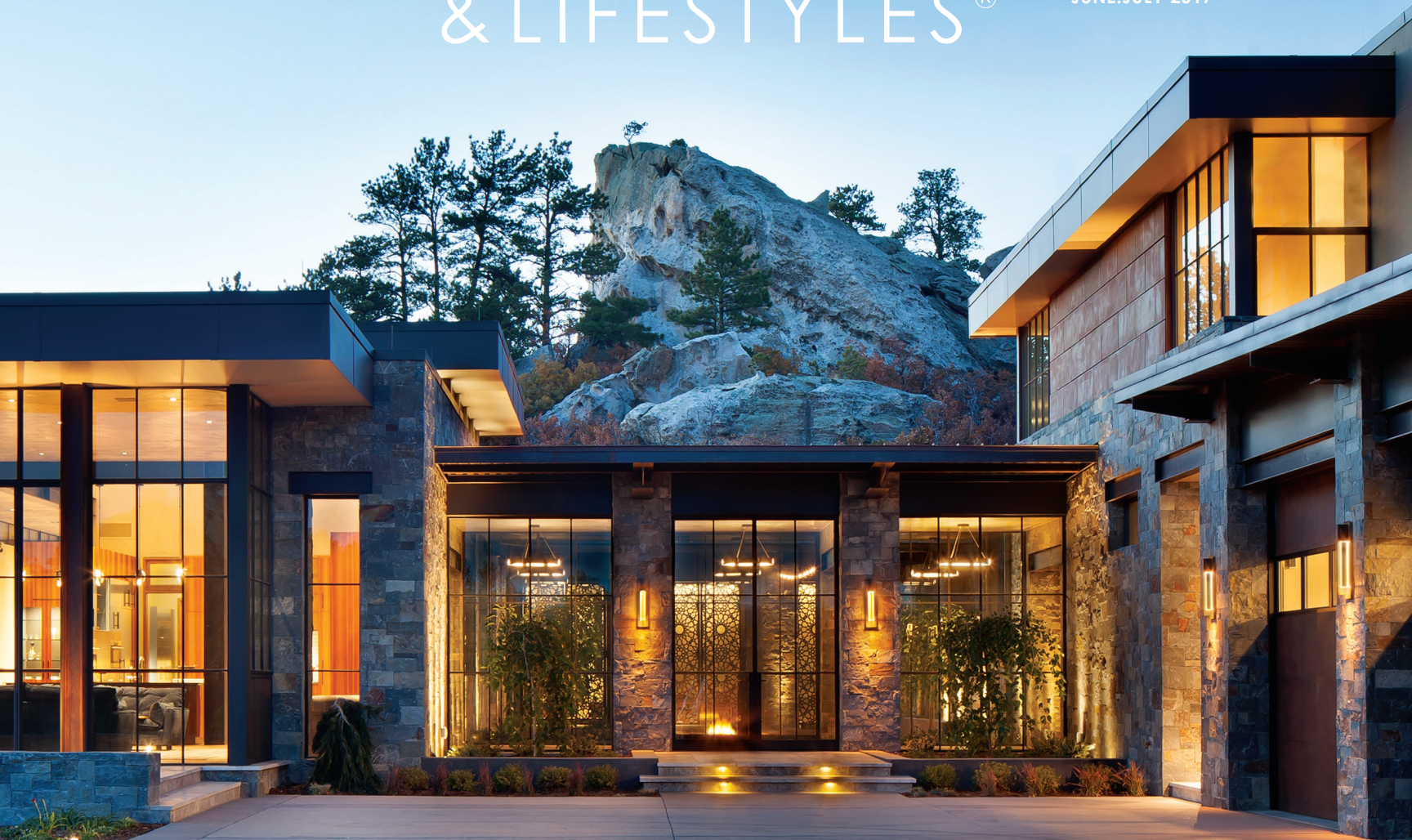


COLORADO HOMES

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JUNE/JULY 2017



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Nestled into the hillside, the gallery's boxy façade was designed to blend into the land. Two stories were built completely or partially underground, while the top-floor library (center) peeks out above the landscape. The Hermit, a crouching metal sculpture by Jaime Plensa, keeps a watchful eye on the entry.

UNDERCOVER ART GALLERY

A private art space puts a world-class collection on display while blending seamlessly into its surroundings

STORY BY **MICHELLE JOHNSON**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KIMBERLY GAVIN**

WHAT: Three-story, 2,400-square-foot private art gallery

WHERE: Avon, Colorado

WHO: KH Webb Architects in Vail

DESIGN OBJECTIVE: In need of more square footage to display their renowned art collection, an empty-nester couple from New York called architect Kyle Webb to ask if he would design an art gallery next to their primary residence in Avon's Mountain Star community. "I was like, I can be there in an hour. I'll drop everything to do an art gallery," Webb recalls. »

small spaces

AVON



THE EXECUTION: Webb was challenged with creating a clean-lined, modern space that wouldn't disrupt the subdivision's more traditional design guidelines or overpower the main home. His solution: A triad of modules built underground and into the hillside. An earthy mix of zinc and naturally rusted Cor-Ten steel clad the exterior, while a sod roof disguises the gallery as part of the landscape. "Our vision was for it to be something that oozed into the land," Webb says.

Zoning rules required the gallery to be a technical "living space," so Webb built a kitchen and bathroom, a library that doubles as sleeping quarters, and an entrance big enough to pass as a garage into the floor plan. "Our joke was that it's a garage to park a Ducati motorcycle in," Webb laughs. On the interiors, a palette of white walls, natural light, local beetle-kill wood and polished concrete floors provide a blank canvas for the homeowners' vibrant art collection.

THE ART: With close to 500 works to their name—ranging from mixed-media sculpture to interactive video to portrait photography—the homeowners wanted a space where they could easily rotate pieces in and out. Electrical raceways were installed to power electronic art, and a pulley system can hang up to 1,200 pounds from the ceiling. Ample blank wall space and 15- to 20-foot ceilings allow the gallery to hold about 30 installations at a time.



Above: Positioned on a wall of local beetle-kill wood, a looped video by Jennifer Steinkamp documents changing foliage throughout the four seasons. On the back wall, a series of portraits by Zhang Huan takes inspiration from the "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" monkeys. A 700-pound block of gradient-painted lobster rope by Orly Genger sits below Huan's portraits. Huma Bhabha's landscape photo hangs on the right wall, next to a series of photos by South African artist Robin Rhode. A peek of a suspended hand-crocheted piece by Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto is shown to the right.

Left: A steel screen made of laser-cut words by Mark Fox and a solar-paneled kite by Tomás Saraceno (which has a built-in iPhone charging port) hang from the ceiling. On the walls are abstract paintings by (from left) Imi Knoebel, Frederick Hammersley, Karl Benjamin and Lorser Feitelson. »

small spaces

AVON



Top left: A spherical mirrored piece by Danish artist Olafur Eliasson hangs above the gallery's 12-foot glass entrance door. To the left of the door, an electronic installation by Julian Opie shows two figures walking from panel to panel.

Top right: In the gallery's upstairs library, a metal sculpture by Jason Dodge titled *Mobile* hangs above a yellow chair from B&B Italia. Environmental artist Andy Goldsworthy made *Self Portrait* (in the background) by lying down on canvas in a New York street on a rainy day.

Left: Even the fixed materials of the gallery count as art. The stairway's glass paneling was crafted by Lynnel Art to Form in Denver. »

small spaces

AVON



Clockwise from top left: Known for his interactive art, Ernesto Neto's woven piece acts as a hammock; the seat, made of plastic balls, is strong enough to hold a person's weight. A grouping of 32 jewel-toned slate tiles by Winston Roeth is a study in color. The homeowners bought Jason Middlebrook's painted driftwood at the Aspen Art Museum's ArtCrush event. The gallery's library overlooks the back side of Vail Mountain. ❖