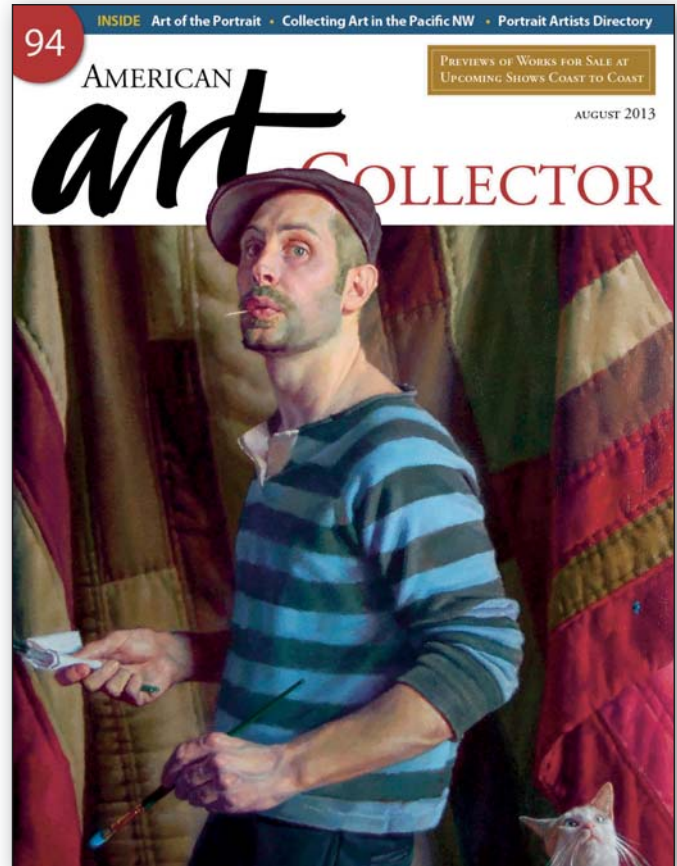


As seen in the  
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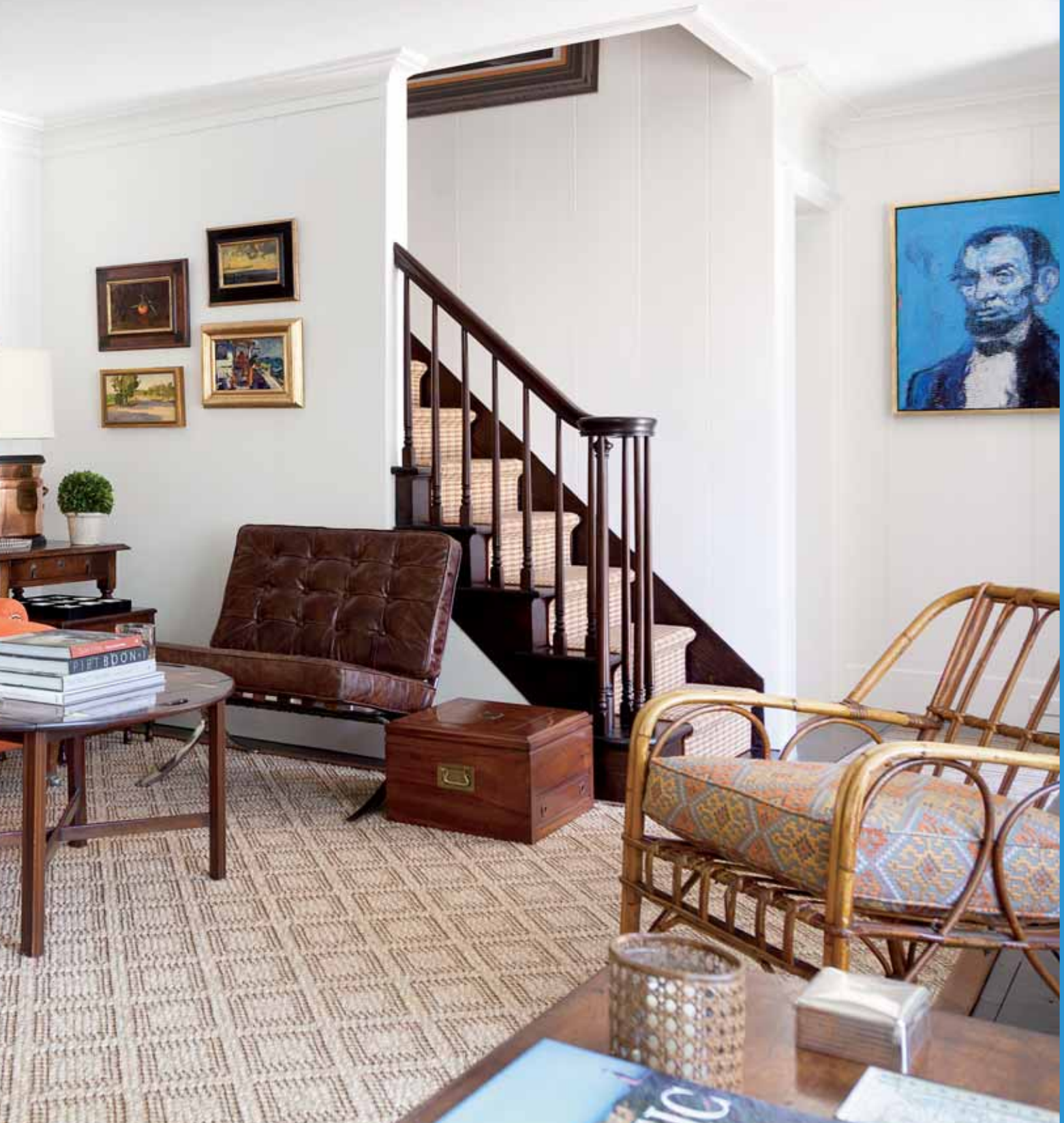
# INSIDE OUTSIDE

MICHAEL AND  
DWYER DERRIG'S  
ART COLLECTION  
EMBODIES THEIR  
LOVE FOR THE  
OUTDOORS.

By John O'Hern | Photography By Francis Smith



*Sag Harbor* (2008) by Ben Fenske hangs above the sofa in the Derrig's living room, with a grouping of smaller paintings by Fenske and a portrait from Hunt Slonem's *Lincoln* series.



Michael and Dwyer Derrig were in Paris when the largest exhibition ever of Claude Monet's paintings was on display at the Grand Palais featuring 160 paintings. Michael Kimmelman of *The New York Times* wrote, "It happens to be ravishing."

Michael, always a fan of impressionism and Monet in particular, exclaims, "It was amazing! It was the greatest exhibit! Monet painted the same subject at different times of day and different times of the year. With all the paintings there, you got to see all the seasonal characteristics."

Seasonal characteristics are familiar to Michael who, as "a landscape architect who actually landscapes," has designed and tends some of the most notable gardens in the Hamptons.

Michael visited the South Fork and fell in love with the light and the trees. The Derrigs

and their young daughter moved to the Island. He eventually formed his own company, Landscape Details.

Two years ago, the couple purchased a 1940s Cape that, Dwyer has noted, they intended to "tweak." Ten months later the tweak had resulted in the addition of a family room, mudroom, laundry room, garage and a complete lower level. They added a pool, and Michael designed and added a half-acre garden. Dwyer worked with Hamptons designer Tom Samet to assemble the interiors.

Michael's company has worked with the likes of Chuck Close and the late Lisa de Kooning as well as major art collectors in the region. A sculpture garden he designed has an allée that would be at home in any Parisian park and a stark white Sol LeWitt sculpture in a wide expanse of lush green grass. He also has installed works by Joel Shapiro, a three-

figure work by George Segal and a Fernando Botero in his clients' landscapes, and is working on the placement of work by Anish Kapoor.

Proximity to great art and his and Dwyer's professional and social relationship with other area collectors helps define and refine their awareness of trends in art. "We're involved with a lot of very creative people," Michael notes. "It's pretty amazing. They're people who appreciate art as well as good design and architecture."

"Our kids think the art is cool," he says, "and they've taken art classes here in the Hamptons."

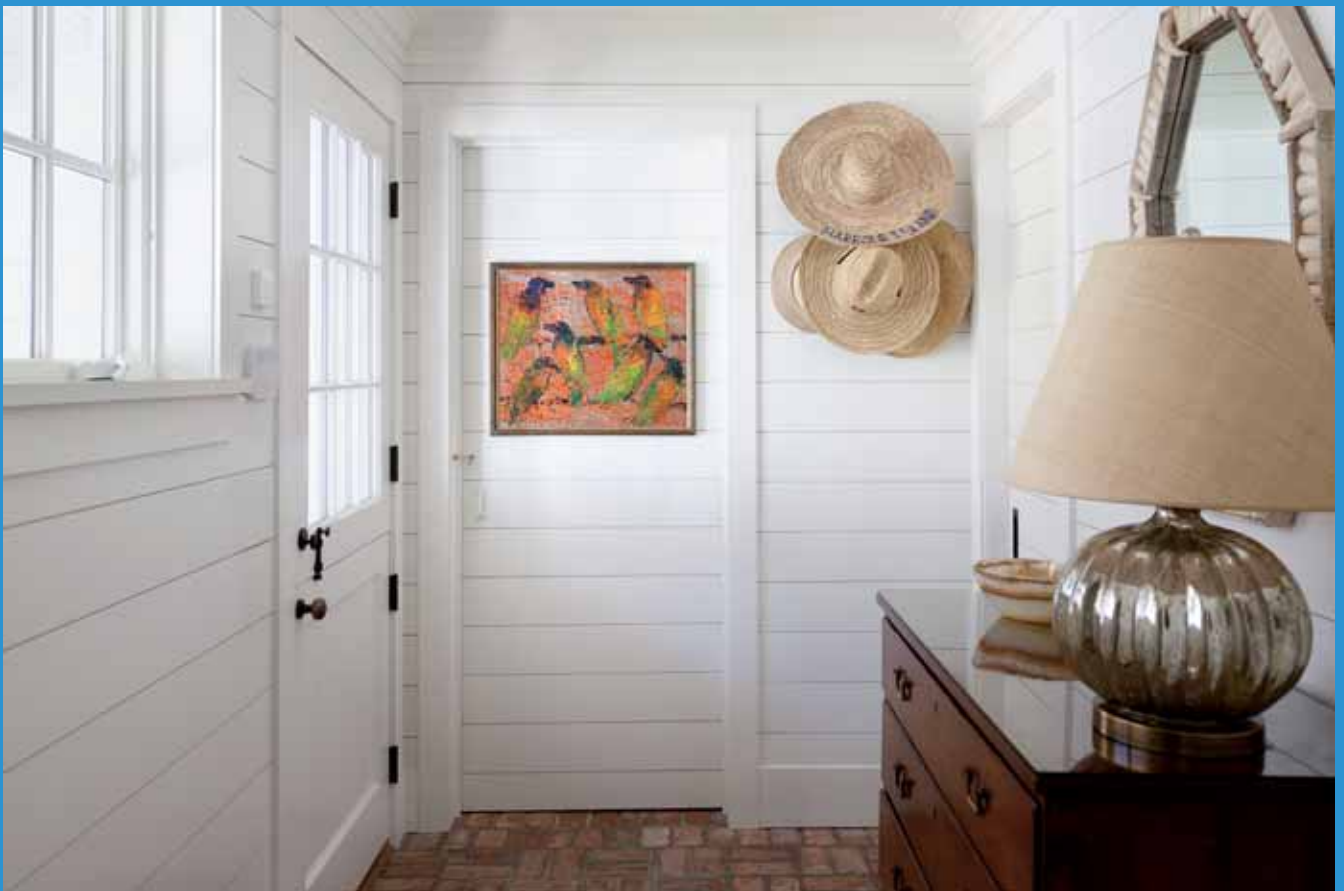
The major pieces of art in their collection have a distinctly local connection. Their love of the landscape where they are surrounded by water and gardens also attracted the painter Ben Fenske to the area. Born in Minnesota, Fenske studied at the Florence Academy of Art. He spends part



A painting by Hunt Slonem is reflected in the front hall mirror, which hangs next to another of Slonem's paintings.



Ben Fenske's *Ice Fishing* (2009) hangs in the family room.



Another painting of exotic birds by Hunt Slonem hangs in the rear hall next to a collection of hats.



A Hunt Slonem hangs in the guest room.



A grouping of four Ben Fenske paintings includes (left to right, top to bottom) *Clementine* (2008), *Sunset in Florence* (2011), *Long Shadows* (2007), and *Hauling* (2011).



A recent painting by Ben Fenske, *Lobster Boat* (2012), hangs in the sitting room of the couple's master suite.



Canadian artist Elizabeth Berry's painting *Harbour Island* hangs in the master bathroom beneath a collection of shells.



Michael and Dwyer Derrig's East Hampton home.

of the year on Long Island where he paints his characteristic loosely rendered impressionistic plein air scenes of the region including *Sag Harbor* that, at 44 by 72 inches, has pride of place in the Derrig's living room. He also spends part of the year in Italy, and a painting titled *Sunset in Florence* hangs on the adjoining wall.

Hunt Slonem was born in Maine, lived in Hawaii and Nicaragua, and now lives (among other places) in a massive studio in New York with a painted and living aviary of exotic birds. His paintings of birds enliven many spots throughout the Derrig's home.

Henry Geldzahler who was curator of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art at the Metropolitan Museum

and Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for the city of New York, wrote, "Slonem is a painter, a painter's painter with an enormous bag of technical tricks which become apparent to the viewer the longer he stands before the work."

Poet John Ashbery wrote, "From the narrow confines of his grids, half cage, half perch, Slonem summons dazzling explosions of the variable life around us that need only to be looked at in order to spring into being."

The Derrig residence gives substance to Slonem's view that "Art incorporated with furniture becomes a work of art itself." ●

*John O'Hern, who has retired after 30 years in the museum business, specifically as the Executive Director and Curator of the Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, N. Y., is the originator of the internationally acclaimed Re-presenting Representation exhibitions which promote realism in its many guises. John was chair of the Artists Panel of the New York State Council on the Arts. He writes for gallery publications around the world, including regular monthly features on Art Market Insights and on Sculpture in Western Art Collector magazine.*

