

CRAFTED LODGING

GREAT LAKES BY DESIGN

Estate in oasis

This secluded Houston, Texas estate set in a rich oasis near a bustling urban landscape was designed by Visbeen Architects Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Room reflections

Text: R.J. Weick



In the fashionable update of an existing unit in a high-rise overlooking Lake Michigan and the Chicago skyline, a rich interior vision of tonal texture, color, and light are intentional and reflective of the view beyond the glass-paned window. Interior elements and architectural structure court the onlooker in a visual dance as artwork, patterns, fabrics, bold finishes, and light and shadow dance throughout the space, culminating in a single, cohesive concept. It is a room with a view in more ways than one, striking a careful balance between the interior and outdoor experience.

Designed by L Rose Interior Design of Chicago, Illinois, this single-room redesign is a bright and understated, albeit elegant take on the apartment experience where its playful patterns and vivid finishes meet the architectural and water landscape beyond its walls.

“[The client’s] house was already beautiful before, but I think she wanted to refresh it and it started this long, beautiful process of just turning her living room upside down,” said Lakesha Rose, founder and interior designer at L Rose Interior Design. “She is one of those clients who has had global experience. She has traveled, she has bought art from all over the world, so her vision is clear. She wanted a different feel to how she wanted to be in this home and I just listened to her vision and walked with her.”

L Rose Interior Design is an Allied ASID, IIDA member, and a full-service interior design firm specializing in high-end residential and commercial build-out work informed by an understanding of the architectural and interior elements. By harnessing the creative and visual with an integration of interior and structure, Rose has built a portfolio of work reflective of timeless elegance and innovative simplicity. While much of the firm’s work can be found within Chicago neighborhoods, such as Lincoln Park, Bucktown, and Fulton Market, L Rose Interiors also manages projects throughout Illinois, Michigan, and around the country.

For Rose, an experienced industry professional of nearly 20 years, her signature is one of sophisticated use of texture, color, and light to imbue spaces of all architectural and vernacular styles with understated elegance—and yet it





is the trust and care bestowed upon her clients to bring their visions to life that truly inspires her day in and day out.

"You are only as good as your next client. You have to make sure you are focusing and listening to your current client before you move on to the next," Rose said. "Their happiness means everything to me. You can't do this for the money, you have to do it for the love of it, because it is so intimate. You are coming to these people's houses and they are picking you to say, 'design my space so I can feel good,' and they are trusting you with that. I take it very seriously."

For this particular client, whose artwork collection, select furniture pieces, and 30-year-old Steinway piano would carry over into the new design of the roughly 420-square-foot space, it was all about quality over quantity—and a 25-by-12.5-foot custom-made rug crafted in Nepal.

"We started there," Rose said. "Then, we wanted to make it lighter, we wanted to upgrade it, because her beautiful apartment is right on the lake and if you look south, you see the city. She has the lake and the city—one of the most gorgeous views in Chicago—and we wanted to

reflect that and bring the happiness in, so we used a lot of tonal textures, threw in fun colors of black, and then had this beautiful fabric for her draperies flown in from Belgium."

Using the custom-made, white-and-gray patterned rug as a touchstone and cohesive element for the room, Rose wove bold black accent pieces with contrasting patterns and warm metals. From the existing built-in cabinetry, silk lamp shades finished in different trims, and the piano, to the upholstered chairs, wood floors and tables, the room offers unexpected moments of delight. Foliage-inspired pillows and bird-patterned drapery imbues an element of the natural landscape within the space, while the soft creams of upholstered sofas and chairs strikes an elegant balance.

"We really wanted to do it right and do it once. She is probably one of the best clients I have ever had, because not only did we work so well together, as a designer, but I also loved hearing her design experience—she's not a designer, but she has designed a lot of houses—and I actually learned something from her in the process," Rose said.

"As I went to the Merchandise Mart, just having her thought process in my head start-

ed to reveal the different patterns, because we have a lot of pattern-on-pattern—things that you would not think would match, but look beautiful together. She's eclectic, but sophisticated," Rose added.

With a self-admitted instinctive knack for pairing fabric and patterns, Rose also noted a designer who understands the artistic feel of something moves through the room not necessarily trying to match everything, but rather trying to bring all of the tangible—and intangible—elements together in a way that is familiar and relational.

"If they are sitting together, they are understood," Rose said. "Anyone can make a room match. You don't have to be a designer to do that. It is making the room have feeling."

Though the room, which imparts a sense of two vignettes where the Steinway and bold cabinetry play opposite each other, delivers a new experience, there are elements that remain that offer continuity and memory. Rose noted a lot of the furniture was simply reupholstered and the artwork was given new matting to complement the room, while the lighting fixtures were given a unique and special touch in its new silk shades.

“She has the most glorious artwork from around the world and we changed the matting in the paints to reflect the new feeling of the room and it almost lit them up. It almost seemed like they were new,” Rose said. “We also took a lot of her old pieces, which is not something I do a lot, but in this case, I felt it was essential. She had quality pieces already that did not need to be tossed or given away; they just needed to be refreshed.”

Now complete—along with a foyer redesign—Rose has turned her attention to two additional spaces within the Lakeview apartment, noting that the other spaces will reflect the living room with a little different perspective. While the past year alone has introduced new challenges for the interior design field in product and trades availability as the industry responds to external disruptions—demanding a deft navigation to stay on budget and on schedule for clients—at the end of the day, Rose said design is all about emotion and the human experience.

“It is how you emotionally want to feel when you are in the space. The best example I can give is say you go to a fancy hotel. Why do you go to it? It makes you feel good, it makes you feel special; maybe it makes you want to sit up straighter, eat better, or order a beautiful bottle of champagne you’ve never ordered be-



fore. Why? Because you are sitting in a beautiful space that makes you feel good. That is why I think a well-designed space for your home is more important than that one-day-trip to that fancy hotel,” Rose said.

“[Design is] emotional happiness. It is really that simple, because that is what it gives to me.

For me, designing these beautiful spaces for my clients, it is just as important for me to be designing that inside of a beautiful space, so that is why my office is important to me, my home living is important to me, because it makes me be able to flow with whatever I am working on for that client,” Rose added.