

DESIGN & REALTY

home



Unique pavers make for modern and green entry way to this elegant West University home.

STATE OF THE ART

A local boutique owner shares her recently sold West U home, a creative space she now passes on to another young family.

By Michele Meyer
Photography by TK Images

Stand closer. That's great advice at museums—and a must when visiting interior designer Karen Pulaski's West University home or her luxury linens boutique, Tribute Goods (tributegoods.com). "I love layers of little pretty details that you barely see at first," she says. "And I don't worry about rules."

Thus, her 4,770-square-foot manse on Sewanee Avenue became a bold art installation as well as "a nurturing cocoon filled with treasures," says the mother of two. She bought the five-bedroom home in 2009 for its open floor plan and proximity to West U schools, and it became her empty canvas.

Pulaski eschewed paint and wallpaper, opting instead to let an artist compose something unique for her front parlor and dining room. She naturally turned to the Glassell School of Art core program, which she ardently supports, choosing artist-in-residence Marco Villegas. Because he'd never painted beyond canvas, it was an adventure for them both. "I gave him a few ideas, and we just let it happen." In three weeks, Villegas created a massive patchwork quilt of bold colors, mementos, stencils, papier-mache and thread.

"Karen was brave. I didn't know what it'd look like at the end," the artist says, "and neither did she. I sometimes doubted myself, but she was always encouraging." Pulaski's contractors may have been baffled, but she never lost courage. "My girls couldn't wait to swing open the doors to see what he'd done that day."

Taupe silk curtains throughout the ground floor may seem simply a backdrop, but upon inspection, they reveal threads of gray with hints of barely-there blue. Nancy Ruby—who also adds an artist's touch to Tribute Goods' Frette-caliber bedding—used a syringe for her handiwork.

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