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How to Spiff Up Your Patio With Outside Art

The next step in decorating your outdoor space with personality before you entertain again? Filling it with paintings, sculptures and more.

By *Christina Poletto*

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AS WE CONTEMPLATE hosting get-togethers this summer, you might be eyeing your patio and wishing, after a year of relative confinement, it were a bit more remarkable, a bit less overfamiliar. Festive, even.

One answer, say interior designers, is art, a therapeutic fix for spaces we've spent too much time in. Emily B. Collins, director of the New York Design Center's Gallery at 200 Lex, has noticed intense interest in "items that contribute to a beautiful, functional setting outdoors."

Homeowners and design pros are discovering that outdoor spaces are loaded with blank walls waiting to be decked out with paintings, mirrors, sculpture, decorative tiles—the same arsenal of art you'd use inside.



Interior designer Miles Redd asked ceramic-sculpture artist Carlos Otero to transform a naked courtyard wall in Los Angeles.

PHOTO: TREVOR TONDRO

Wall sculptures of metal, wood or fired clay can dress up naked swaths of siding and fences. For a home in Los Angeles, New York designer Miles Redd invited ceramic sculpture artist Carlos Otero to reimagine a blank courtyard wall. "It called for something spectacular," said Mr. Redd. The artist delivered a cream-colored conglomeration of textures that evokes the surface of the moon, inspired by bas-relief panels of the 1960s architecture in Buenos Aires, Mr. Otero's childhood home.

"Ceramics can live safely outdoors in most climates given some degree of protection," said Juliet Burrows of New York's Hostler Burrows Gallery, which represents Mr. Otero. History is full of examples of ceramics-ornamented architecture, she noted.