

ELLE DECOR

The background of the cover is a photograph of a modern interior. At the top, a textured, light-colored wall is visible, with a single pendant light fixture hanging from it. Below the wall, a dark blue, curved sofa is positioned against a vibrant red wall. A purple, patterned pillow rests on the sofa. The overall aesthetic is contemporary and bold.

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THE CHANGE ISSUE

INSIDE DESIGN'S
BOLD NEW MODE:
ARE YOU READY?

In Miami Beach,
Charlap Hyman &
Herrero Upend
Expectations

A Change in Perspective

The Peace Plan

The living room and kitchen of Carol Egan's 1960s modular glass home in Amagansett, New York, designed by the late Richard Bender. Sofa by Dimorestudio; kitchen island by Vipp; wall lights by Studin Carol Egan; vintage armchairs by Pierre Jeanneret. For details, see Resources.

For the designer Carol Egan, a glass house becomes the perfect container for a flourishing inner life.

By Paola Singer Photographs by Richard Powers

Some spaces dazzle with their opulence. Others dazzle with their simplicity, eliciting a longed-for sense of quietude or a reconnection to some of the more essential facets of life. The latter was the case for designer Carol Egan when she first saw the Amagansett, New York, property that would become her home. "I had a complete reaction to the building," she says of the minimalist structure, a 1,000-square-foot rectangle with glass walls. "And when I walked into the garden, it was a done deal."

Although simple in execution, the barely there construction was the result of deep contemplation. Originally designed in 1960 by the late architect and professor Richard Bender, the building was a prototype for the Amenity project, a utopian community of modestly priced homes set on 20 acres of woodlands near the beach. Bender took up residence here with his family for many years, mingling with other notable East Enders of the midcentury, people like Costantino Nivola and Saul Steinberg.

Egan has enjoyed learning about the home's history and former dwellers, even speaking to Bender on the phone not long before his death last year. Yet her connection to the space remains visceral, unrelated to narratives. "You become circadian here," she says. "You start living by the light." This new way of life, slower and more elemental, took root in 2020, when Egan left her apartment in TriBeCa to take shelter in the coastal spaciousness of Long Island. Initially conceived of as a weekend getaway, the home became her primary residence. "I watched the seasons change that year," she says. "It was an extraordinary experience. I had no idea I would ever live in a glass house."

A Dublin native, Egan grew up between Edwardian and Tudor spaces that were far from minimalist. Some of her earliest memories are of being on the factory floor of her father's jewelry manufacturing company. Those experiences nurtured in her "a curiosity for how things are put together." Today, she is known for designing sculptural furniture, pieces that look as if they could have been created 50 years ago or 50 years from now—a bit retro and a bit futuristic, yet timeless. She uses 3D software to render impossibly curvaceous shapes, then fabricates each piece using traditional woodworking and metal-casting techniques.

Currently represented by Maison Gerard in New York City (as well as Hostler Burrows in Los Angeles and Galerie BSL in Europe), Egan came to Manhattan right after college simply "to check it out." That was more than two decades ago. After stints at a couple of architecture studios she enrolled at Parsons School of Design, where she became fascinated with the American minimalist art movement of the 1960s and '70s: the works of Donald Judd, Richard Serra, Isamu Noguchi, and Carmen Herrera, among others. "As time went on, I found myself engaged with the idea that in New York City, the minute we stop, furniture is waiting," she explains. "Furniture holds the histories of its owners and environments, and for me it became the vehicle for sculpting new forms with advancing technologies."

The collected look of her home's interior, she says, "is very autobiographical." Except for a few contemporary pieces, including a bench seat from Milan's Dimorestudio and a 2013 portrait by local Hamptons artist Jack Ceglic, everything in the home is from the '50s, '60s, and '70s, bought during trips to Europe or at stateside auctions. Many of Egan's own designs are on display, including her Second Empress cocktail table, a gilded number made of silicon bronze, an alloy consisting mostly of copper. It has a thick cylinder at its center, with a *cachette* at the top that slides open to reveal a small coat of arms.

The table abuts Mario Bellini's iconic Le Bambole sofa and ottoman, upholstered in white cotton. Steps away, by the open kitchen—one of the only corners of the house she updated, replacing a vintage island with a black freestanding model from Vipp—are her Sovereign wall sconces, their winglike mesh backing echoing the motion of dragonflies. A bright powder-coated metal dining table holds court next to the kitchen, flanked by Pierre Jeanneret Advocate chairs upholstered in ivory linen. A rare Hôtel le Doron stool by Charlotte Perriand that Egan found at a flea market in Savoie, in southeastern France, completes the tableau.

And while Egan still spends plenty of time in Manhattan, the pull of the Hamptons keeps getting stronger. In fact, she recently hired an architect to design and build a studio on the property. "After living in the city for 20 years, starting to live back in nature [led to] a new relationship with my work," she says. "I wake up to birds chirping instead of drills and sirens. It's so calming." ■



A cone fireplace original to the house is the focal point of one corner of the living room. Vintage armchair (left) by Edwin Halseath; vintage side table by Jack Ceglic (portrait), Carmen Herrera (black and white print), and Larisa Sandich (archival print, below).



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ABOVE: In the living room, the sofa and ottoman are vintage Mario Bellini for Cassina. Silicon bronze cocktail table by Egan; desk chair by Knoll.

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT: The closet in the guest bedroom is sheathed in mahogany, with recessed hardware. Vintage Lustre floor lamp by Henri Mathieu; upholstered armchair by Egan.

OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT: Artwork by Willy Rizzo hangs above the bed in the primary bedroom. Steel bed by Wyeth; mattress, Hästens; bedding by Calvin Klein.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Japanese maple trees cover the shaded north garden of the home. Mahogany deck and stairs.

