

DESIGN



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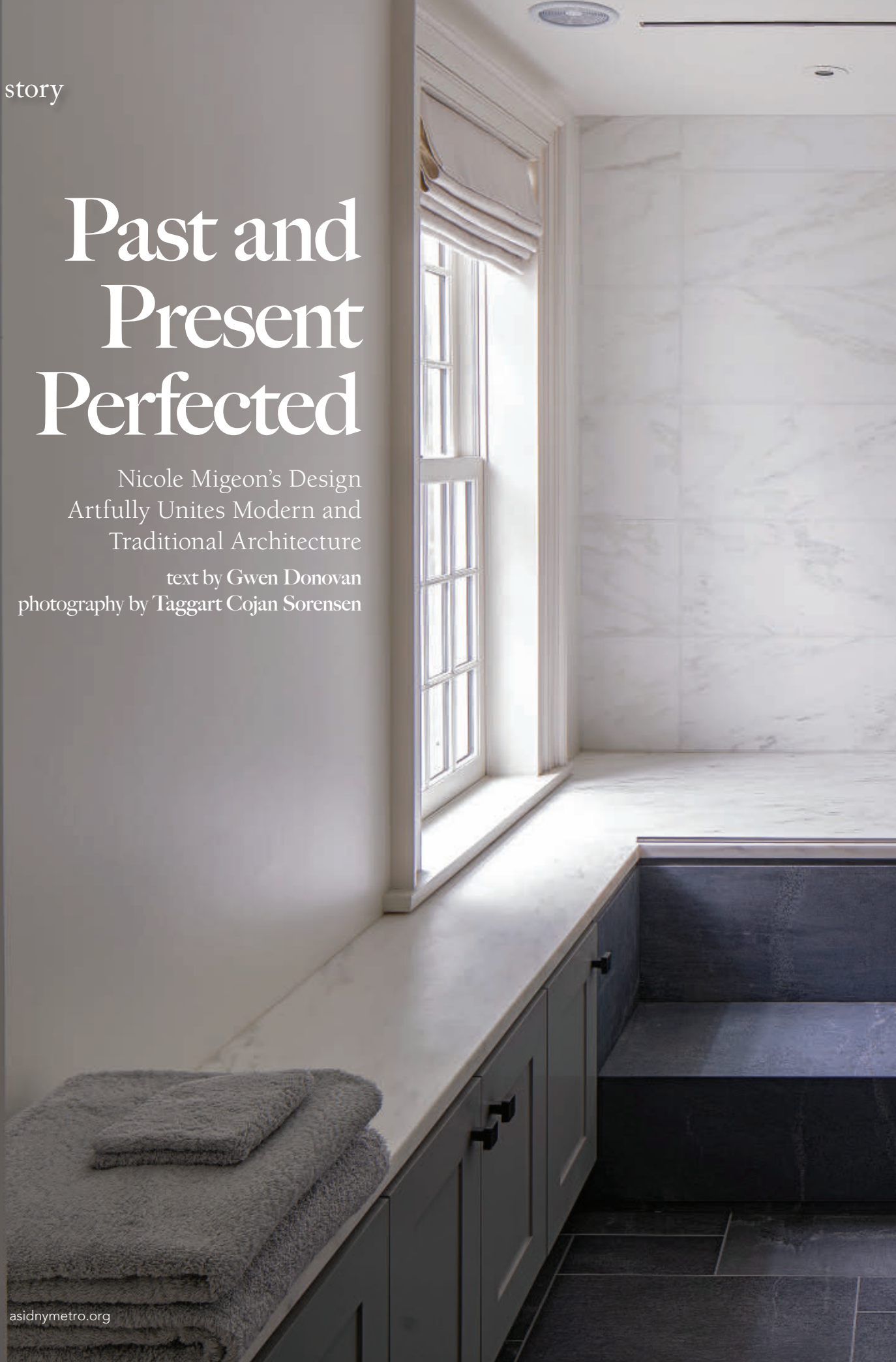
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cover story

Past and Present Perfected

Nicole Migeon's Design Artfully Unites Modern and Traditional Architecture

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ASID New York Metro Chapter member Nicole Migeon is the founder of New York-based architectural firm NMA, a role that draws on her background in the fine art field at Sotheby's and Phillips International Art Auctioneers. Her love of art extends to NMA's headquarters, a gallery-style studio space which showcases Migeon's clean-lined furniture and lighting collection called Dual Function. Additionally, she is a tenured adjunct assistant professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology, training the next generation of practitioners and involving her students in numerous community-based design projects for non-profit groups. With all her creative experience, it's not surprising that Migeon is drawn to out-of-the-ordinary ventures in architecture.

cover story

Welcoming (Guest) Home

Adaptive and intuitive describe Migeon's approach to every project, especially an undertaking in Western Massachusetts that thoughtfully united an antique farmhouse with a contemporary addition, resulting in an eye-catching guest house. "Adjacent to the clients' private home, the Guest House is a retreat where their friends and family could reside for extended vacations," Migeon explained. "The Guest House was a

two-phase project: the first part was to renovate the 18th century wood farmhouse of approximately 3,500 square feet, and the second was to construct an approximately 1,500 square-foot addition attached to the original farmhouse." Built using locally sourced materials and craftspeople, many of whom were women, the Guest House is as multi-functional as it is welcoming.

Migeon collaborated closely with her clients to determine how the living spaces would be utilized. "We agreed that

the older house, because of its small rooms and lower ceiling heights, would be used for quiet individual activities like sleeping or reading. The addition would house public spaces, and these areas would be open with easy access to the outdoors. It was agreed that the new addition would not aesthetically replicate the older house but should complement it. We were also designing a place for our client—an artist—to create her work; this studio could be accessed both from the interior and exterior of the

house so she could slip into it whenever she wanted."

Achieving Authenticity...

Authenticity and durability were other important aspects of the Guest House design, Migeon noted. "We tried to restore or replicate construction materials as much as possible for the older farmhouse and use natural durable and sustainable materials for the addition." Client goals included restoring the original farmhouse with four bedrooms and five bathrooms, while the addition





“For students attending in person, rigorous testing and mask mandates allowed a taste of normalcy during the last school year.”

provided open spaces for cooking, entertaining and creativity. This was achieved in the addition’s expansive dining area, bar and lounge areas, massive stone fireplace with gas logs, dual entertainment spaces, a roomy art studio, a two-story screened porch, plus indoor and outdoor kitchens.

The restoration of the vintage home involved careful planning and preparation. “We started the renovation of the farmhouse by removing all portions of the existing house that were not part of the original late 1700s design,” Migeon said. “All the old painted horizontal siding was replaced with new, we replaced the roof, and restored the original glass transom above the front entry door.

All the older wood windows were replaced with Marvin historical wood replicas using the same amount of window light panes.”

In the farmhouse, the contractor retained the old wood plank floors by sanding and re-staining them and restored existing plaster walls and ceilings. The walls received historical-style wallpaper and ceilings were tea stained, in keeping with homes built during the late 1700s early 1800s. The original moldings, door and window frames, stone fireplace mantels and decorative patterns on windowsills were all skillfully renewed. Each of the farmhouse baths was fully modernized using local

Galaxy Schist stone and Vermont marble.

...With A Modern Addition

Architectural inspiration for the modern addition came from New England hay barns and tobacco drying barns dotting the region. “To help distinguish the new addition from the old farmhouse, we used a bleached gray vertical cedar siding for the exterior and larger window and wall openings,” Migeon noted. “There is a full-sized movable glass NanaWall separating the outdoor screened porch and the entertainment area, which permits the whole entertainment area to be located inside or outside, depending on the user’s preference. Two hidden doors

connect the entertainment area to the large outdoor back porch and the outdoor kitchen, fire pit and lounge chairs. Here, one can sit and look at the property with the river and mountains in the background.”

Among the notable elements in the new addition are a series of oversized, custom ceiling trusses emphasizing the idea of repetition while creating a visual interest overhead. Their scale lends drama to the addition without obstructing views of the entire property, Migeon noted. The “slot stair” is a poetic moment architecturally; it gives the artist access to her studio space from the outside as it connects the old barn to the new addition. Another innovation is the brise-soleil effect

accomplished by filtering natural light from the exterior screen of sustainably grown cedar, the wood-framed insect screen, and then the metal-framed glass NanaWall. “Each of these three layers have a different level of transparency which lets the light into the space in varying amounts,” Migeon explained. As far as furnishing the interior, Migeon sourced older pieces for the farmhouse and newer items for the addition. “We installed a mix of custom-made and bought furniture, lighting and millwork, using a combination of antique and contemporary styles.”

Leaving Her Mark

Migeon’s distinctive imprint is seen throughout the Guest House, reflecting a perspective that has become her design hallmark for over 20 years. “From the view of aesthetics, I am interested in timeless design that is high quality and has craftsmanship,” she revealed. “We wanted to keep the integrity of the old farmhouse while building the new addition and achieved this by using complementary architectural detailing and materials to make the Guest House feel like one unit.”

Presently, NMA is working on new construction homes in Cape Cod and Lenox, Massachusetts. “NMA’s scope of work for both these houses includes architecture, landscape design, interior design and lighting design,” she said. “Upcoming projects starting this Fall include a beautiful 1830s townhouse renovation in Brooklyn Heights. Also, I am really excited about the ground up lake house retreat which we are calling ‘The Fishing House’ in Western Massachusetts. I am excited for both and lucky to be working with great repeat clients on both projects. My highest priority is to deliver high-quality, sustainable design that pleases clients and enhances their community.” ■



Getting to Know

Nicole Migeon

What do you enjoy most about your career?

I enjoy architecture and design because of its flexibility. The career has led me to do many different types of design (architecture, interiors, furniture, lighting, furnishing, etc.). It also lets me get involved in teaching design. Design provides the opportunity to work in several different industries from art, medicine, spa, residential and retail with a variety of people. I always learn something new during each project. I feel very fortunate that my career makes me like what I do every day!

Tell us a few things about your Dual Function collection.

NMA’s Dual Function is a line of original furniture and lighting units that serve multiple functions while remaining clean, simple and stylish. Our minimal design philosophy prioritizes efficiency and comfort. Blending form and function, Dual Function designs are customizable to suit the needs of each individual client and are designed with the intention of serving at least two functions.

Do you have any advice to share with up-and-coming architects or designers?

As a tenured adjunct professor at FIT where I teach interior design studios, I often tell my students that while this profession is not easy, if you work hard and really enjoy design and problem-solving, it can be a very fulfilling career.

I try to advise my students to have empathy for others so they will better understand how to design for the users of a space. I also advise younger professionals to remain open to learning from those they meet in school and the industry. If you can take criticism of your work and allow yourself to learn from others and be collaborative, you will succeed in this profession.

If you weren’t an architect, what field would you be in?

There are so many! If I were not a full-time architect, I would spend more time designing jewelry. I would consider being a floral designer or I might be still in the art world selling modern and contemporary drawings and paintings.

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