

A modern living room with wood-paneled walls and ceiling. The room features a fireplace with a white mantel holding several colorful vases. To the left is a light-colored sofa with three orange cushions. In the center is a dark wood coffee table with a patterned ottoman. To the right are two armchairs with light-colored upholstery. The room is lit by recessed ceiling lights and two tall, rectangular floor lamps. A large window on the right side offers a view of greenery outside.

perspectives
ON DESIGN
CALIFORNIA

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leading design professionals

Kip Kelly's interest in architecture took root at a young age. He grew up next door to an abandoned thoroughbred farm, the grandstand alongside the running track still intact. Enamored by the structure, he dismantled one of the grandstand's triangular platforms and reconstructed it 50-feet up in a eucalyptus tree, where he would sit and enjoy the view and a sense of accomplishment. That was his first project.

The same enthusiasm for creating something and being able to enjoy the fruits of labor resonates in him today. Such instincts toward height and loftiness, along with the interplay of natural light and water, continue to anchor Kip's architectural philosophy. Having grown up in a tract house with standard six-foot eight-inch doors, few windows and eight-foot ceilings, he noticed how loftier ceilings and taller doors—and techniques like integrating transom glass between the two—made spaces feel lighter and uplifting.

He strives for structural minimalism, integrating large expanses of glass—smoothing transition between interior and exterior spaces—and water features to reflect the architecture. Floor and ceiling planes are designed to feel as if they're floating. Space and light are the essential elements of architecture; the solid materials of construction simply serve to give these elements shape and definition.



“The steep canyons of Los Angeles present unique challenges and opportunities. Carefully choreographed openings infuse the interiors with natural light and provide dramatic views of the surrounding topography.”

—Kip Kelly



NEST ARCHITECTURE





ABOVE: The double cantilevered floor and roof planes allow full-height corner glass in almost every room, blurring the line between the home's interior and exterior—connecting living spaces to the outdoors. Floating planes protect interior spaces from sun and rain, providing shelter without an overbearing sense of enclosure.

Photograph by Julius Shulman

FACING PAGE: A water wall and reflecting pool provide the illusion of depth, and multiple sliding glass panels provide a 15-foot wide clear opening to the private outdoor entertaining areas. The clean lines and smooth surfaces of both the great room and the foyer emphasize the sculptural quality of the house, providing the perfect canvas for modern furnishings and art installations.

Photographs by William MacCollum

PREVIOUS PAGES: Sliding panels and transom glass open the living room to the garden on three sides at the rear of the house. Frameless fixed glass permits light to flow across the floor and ceiling, creating a light, airy interior. A six-inch-thick horizontal transom beam wraps around the house, providing a subtle sense of enclosure and allowing the use of standard eight-foot tall sliding doors. At the front of the house, stepped planes and folded voids create a balanced geometric composition. The lively articulation of the massing opens the interior rooms to light and spectacular views while adding visual interest and maintaining privacy at the street's edge.

Photographs by William MacCollum



“Floor-to-ceiling glass eliminates dark corners, mitigating the heaviness of the structure. Light washing across the ceiling and floor erases the line between inside and out, immersing the living spaces into the garden.”

—Kip Kelly



LEFT: A bridge connecting the north-side master suite to the his-and-her studies on the south floats across the two-story great room, capturing the sunlight as it splashes in through the skylight above. Interior windows provide a visual connection between rooms, allowing views from the master bed to the Pacific Ocean, and strengthening the illusion that the great room is on the outside.

FACING PAGE: Despite the dining room’s location on the street side of the house, the openness of the rear facade and the stepped-down living room allow dramatic panoramic views of the Riviera Country Club. Clean lines continue from the kitchen cabinets through to the generous fenestration of the family room, connecting the kitchen to the garden. Skylights above the oversized double sink balance the natural light within the space.

Photographs by Julius Shulman





ABOVE: Channel-set, full-height glass allows the plywood ceiling panels to flow from inside to out, dissolving the line between house and garden, and promoting four-season outdoor living in the Southern California climate.

Photograph by Julius Shulman

FACING PAGE: The high-ceiling entry transforms what was once a low-lying ranch-style structure into a provocative, modern composition, maximizing natural lighting without sacrificing privacy. Floating planes hover above dense beds of foliage insulating the exterior rooms from the street. At the back of the house, large sliding glass panels open the great room to a reflecting pool. The existing wood-framed roof was jacked up on each side of the ridge, creating a low-slope roof with minimal pitch. Eight-foot-tall walls were replaced by 12-foot-tall columns and steel beams to maximize openness and draw in transom light.

Photographs by William MacCollum



“The most important ingredient for a comfortable environment is the integration of natural light, especially into the heart of the structure.”

—Kip Kelly



ABOVE: Transformed from a pedestrian 1950s' rancher into a modern gallery, the house features 12-foot ceilings, wall-to-wall glass and boldly framed mirrors—all of which create a grand scale for entertaining. Natural light from the entry on the north balances exterior fenestration to the south.

FACING PAGE: We transformed a mediocre ranch-style home on a postage-stamp sized hillside lot into a mysterious, seductive Hollywood getaway—sliding glass doors bring the garden inside: the oversized sculpture in the small rear yard provides the illusion of depth.

Photographs by William MacCollum

