

# CREATING SPACE

By Julie Catalano Photography by Casey Woods



*An artistic young couple — photographer Suzanne Koett and painter Camille Woods — needed more room than their cozy 1950s cottage in south Austin could offer, so after going through their options of moving or adding to their home, they came up with a creative solution: build their dream studio space in their backyard.*



“By the time the homeowners approached me, they were really clear on what they wanted,” says architect Erica Keast Heroy AIA. “They needed a space that could do double duty — as a studio and a place to stay when they rented out the main home for festivals.”

Heroy designed the new studio from the ground up to be more contemporary than the original dwelling. “The design is a departure from the main house,” she says. “As a humble mid-century cottage without a lot of character or detailing, there wasn’t a lot to respond to and the owners were on board with the finished product being more contemporary.” And fortunately, the steeper studio roof structure is not visible from the street.

Modern, clean, bright and open. Heroy ticked off the boxes using unfussy built-ins, a white palette and an open floor plan that made the most of a compact 1,087 square feet. “I think the tall ceilings and lofted sleeping area are what makes the space unique and a surprise when you come in,” she says. “I knew if we could vault the studio ceiling and have a big window, we could grab some great Northern light and tuck the sleeping space in the roof framing.” The design, says Heroy, “kept the footprint small while still providing the aesthetic and function my clients needed from the space.” Paint colors are soft and



subtle, with Benjamin Moore® Chantilly Lace for the walls, and Benjamin Moore Castle Walls for the interior doors.

A small kitchenette tucks under the stairs, with room for just the essentials of short stays and quick meals. In front of the kitchen is a 60 x 30-inch maple butcher block workbench from [www.globalindustrial.com](http://www.globalindustrial.com). “We didn’t plan for any stationary furniture other than the one big workbench/dining table,” says Heroy. The light fixture over the workbench is the Open Weave Pendant from West Elm.



Concrete slab flooring helps keep clean-up simple, echoing the equally simple exterior materials — fiber cement siding, shingle roof and vinyl windows. Inside, laminate counters and painted plywood flooring in the loft are also low maintenance. The staircase leading to the loft features painted plywood stairs, while the wood along the stair rail all the way to the loft is whitewashed pine “for a decorative touch,” says Heroy.

Despite its diminutive size, Heroy maintains that the studio is accommodating of the pair’s paintings and paints, easels, carts, lights, photographic supplies and equipment and other tools of their trades. A full bathroom, darkroom and storage space round out their office needs with functionality and convenience.

The homeowners could not be happier with the result, claiming that “it gives us the creative space we need and a space we love to be in.” A minimalist yet livable space, the artists look forward every day to working in a sleek, sophisticated studio perfectly suited for a creative pair. ♦

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Across from the workbench and to the right of the main entry, the duo works in an office area at side-by-side work stations constructed from off-the-shelf cabinetry blended with custom cubbies to get the right sizes for their respective equipment. Corkboards keep inspiring images close at hand.

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