

Night Light

When designing the Santa Fe, N.M. house for Jeanne and Michael Klein, the architect Mark DuBois had two main issues to contend with: light and art. The light often was the art. The Kleins' substantial collection includes a fluorescent lightpiece by Dan Flavin, a large Jim Hodges piecemade up of different colored light bulbs, a James Turrell skyspace and video works like Kota Ezawa's "The Simpson Verdict" (2002). "We didn't want any space to be just about the art," says DuBois, whose plan included lots of glass in a variety of transparencies. Instead of annexing the Turrell skyspace to its own free-standing building, which tends to be the norm among collectors of his work, they decided to embed it in the middle of the house. And as anyone who has recently been to a museum knows, video art, too, is often relegated to its own windowless, occasionally airless, pitch-dark room, which makes watching it more of a chore than a pleasure. To accommodate – and ultimately integrate – video into the overall landscape, DuBois turned the front courtyard into an outdoor viewing area, with a projection screen stretched behind a sheet of glass (essentially a giant window). "Each part of the house comes alive at a different time of day," he says. "Late afternoon everyone moves west to watch the sunset. The Turrell skyspace comes alive when the sun comes down. Third stop after its dark, is the courtyard to watch videos on the outdoor screen." But DuBois points out, the screen also has a life – and a light – of its own: "At night, without art, it acts like a giant lantern."

