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## Art That Shines Without Reflected Glare

WHEN Dr. Louis Aledort, and his wife, Ruth, above, bought their six-room apartment on the Upper West Side in 2001, they interviewed several architects, and mentioned to each of them that they had an art collection. Only one architect, Richard Lavenstein, a partner at Bond Street Architecture & Design in Manhattan, asked to see the collection.

“No one else said, what kind of art? What period is the art?” Dr. Aledort said.

Mr. Lavenstein was hired.

The Aledorts, who own mostly lithographs, by Robert Rauschenberg, Elizabeth Murray and Jasper Johns, not only wanted to light their art well, they needed to compensate for the fact that part of the apartment faced a courtyard and had very little light.



They could have lowered the 10-foot ceilings to put in recessed lighting, but Dr. Aledort, a hematologist, and Mrs. Aledort, who works with breast cancer patients in a support group held at Mount Sinai Medical Center, didn't like that solution. Instead, their architect collaborated with Francesca Bettridge, the president of Cline Bettridge Bernstein Lighting Design in Manhattan, which handled lighting for most of the public spaces of the Time Warner Center.

Ms. Bettridge designed a lighting scheme that is “relaxed,” she said, and that “makes people comfortable.” She washed the walls gently with light, using tiny but elegant fixtures to create museum-quality lighting. Because most of the couple's art is under glass, she took care to minimize reflections.

In every room, she chose each light fixture to fulfill a specific function. There is not a random fixture in sight, and all of them are on dimmers.

In the foyer, which has black and white prints, “I wanted to add layers of light, and balance the room,” she said. A translucent torchier glows in the far left corner, spreading its diffused light on the ceiling and on the wall, while also lighting the art to its left. On the right side of the foyer, translucent sconces flank the entrance to the living room, creating more light on the ceiling and walls, while also shedding light on two pieces of art. The light is soft and warm. The foyer is clearly an entry, a hallway with art, but it is not an art gallery.

In the living room, top, she and the architect used low-voltage halogen track lighting covered with aluminum bands that were painted to match the wall. The light fixtures, called Valux, from Nulux, hold MR16 lamps, each with a reflector, so light from the bulb bounces off the reflector and shines down on the art.

Because the lamp also has a ribbed lens the light is spread more evenly. (The track was \$140 a square foot and the lamps were \$215 each.) “When you’re lighting a piece of art, you aim the light at 30 degrees, and if it’s a shiny surface you come at the art at an even steeper angle,” said Ms. Bettridge, who aimed the light in the living room at 15 degrees. “Here we are washing the wall to get a wide spread of even, soft light.”



The hallway, left, was too narrow for that approach, so Ms. Bettridge inserted track lighting in the center of the ceiling and pointed the lighting in two directions.

Mr. Lavenstein designed the dining room to open onto the same narrow hallway, and frame a lithograph by Susan Rothenberg in the hallway, extending the room and making the art more important.

The clients were willing to drop the dining room ceiling six inches to conceal structural beams, which allowed the use of recessed lighting. Ms. Bettridge used Edison Price quartz wall washers. Each lamp has a small, tightly wound filament and a reflector. The reflector provides an even wash from the top to the bottom of the wall. (Washers are \$260 each.) For the kitchen ceiling Ms. Bettridge used Leucos recessed lights with a translucent glass trim, and inserted MR16 low-voltage incandescent lamps. The light illuminates the glass trim and puts light onto the ceiling and floor. Under the cabinets for task lighting she placed incandescent tubular lamps.

It’s only in the kitchen that the Aledorts have no art. After all, food splatters.