



# COMMUNICATION IS KEY

STUDIO SAGE INTERIORS WORKS WITH CLIENTS EARLY ON TO DELIVER DESIRED OUTCOMES

PHOTOS BY ROBYN IVY PHOTOGRAPHY



**Above:** Rich with history, this Boston church converted into a private residence is all about natural light and cozy texture. Group of three framed photographs by Debbi Krim, gray glass vessel under the framed photos by Toots Zynsky. The right wall features an ink and resin on panel by Estelle Chojnicki.

**Right:** Layering, Studio Sage's secret to success, makes this marble-top dining table the topic of conversation at dinner.



We asked Amanda Raymond, principal designer at Studio Sage Interiors in New London, New Hampshire, to explain how she approaches a project and how her design process unfolds.

**How and where do you start?**

Often with renovation/remodeling projects we are involved from the very beginning. Whenever possible we communicate directly with contractors alongside our clients to determine the scope, work out prices, and make collective decisions. Ideally, we discuss the project with the client and plan these elements with them before any work begins, accounting for every detail, large or small. Sometimes we come in before a contractor has been selected to develop plans to then give to a contractor to review, price, and ultimately work from. We remain that contractor's point of contact throughout the building process, as renovations are notorious for unseen challenges and opportunities.

**How do you communicate what will be happening to the homeowner?**

Communication with the homeowner is constant and thorough. It's truly the most important task we perform. We do a combination

of email threads, phone conversations, and in-person meetings, depending on the client's preferences and availability to manage the project expectations. Many of these conversations involve all three parties—designer, contractor, and

client—to make sure everyone's input is heard and all details are accounted for. We make sure that the homeowner is happy with all choices being made and knows where the project stands at every step.

### How do you work within their budget?

We always discuss budget at the inception of the project in order to help them build a scope of work that will fit within it. We provide the homeowner with



The dream team, Amanda Raymond, Studio Sage (left) and Candita Clayton, Candita Clayton Gallery.



## Fine Art Meets Fine Interior Design

There are many ways your home speaks to your personality. The colors you choose, the style of furnishings, and the accents you decorate with all play a role in telling your story through the presentation of your space. However, fine art may be the most personal expression of taste and style and one of the keystones of your home. This is why Candita Clayton of Candita Clayton Galleries has made art her business. She's teamed up with local interior designer Amanda Raymond of Studio Sage Interiors, and these women have very quickly become the local authority on marrying fine art and fine interior design.

"I began seeking partnerships with designers early on in my art career. It became clear to me that the design community was hungry for options to present to their clients," says Candita. "When designers can introduce an amazing signature piece into a project, their client instantly becomes a collector. Buying art is addictive and fulfilling. We love introducing our clients to the work of both regional and national artists."

The two began selecting artwork for clients in 2017 and have since been curating personal collections of art throughout New England. "Once we began integrating original works of fine art into our designs, our projects went to another level," says Amanda. "One-of-a-kind pieces that our clients connect with are profoundly impactful on the personalization of their project and ultimately how they feel when they enjoy their space. It's truly one of the things that we look forward to most about what we do."

We've recently found ourselves in the unique position of being confined to our homes. You could call it a state of next-level nesting. As we spend more time at home, everything that makes us feel good or bad about our space stands out and forces us through the editing process of what is truly important. This time of confinement creates the opportunity to see the importance of creating a sanctuary of sorts right at home. **TW**

**Center:** The composition of a space is determined by details, such as plants, accents, and personal objects. Amanda and Candita hang a black and white enamel on canvas by Ben Pell.

**Below:** Original art by Mimo Gordon Riely over this vintage sideboard adds color and whimsy to a lakefront dining room.



pricing as we decide on materials, so they have a clear idea of how much everything costs and where things can change if needed. Our clients often like to be very involved in the process and we make informed decisions as a team.


**Tell us why it's better for you to come in sooner rather than later.**

A huge benefit of having a designer in your corner early on in the process is our extensive knowledge for scale and human factors. As the perimeters of spaces are being allocated in the building envelope, a conceptual layout of furnishings and traffic patterns is very important to be sure the spaces are neither undersized nor oversized. Room adjacencies, function, and sizes are important factors to consider and are tailored to the way our clients use their home. It is determined by a series of meetings and discussions and lays the groundwork for a successful finished project.

Being involved in the project sooner rather than later means that every decision made contributes to the homeowner's ultimate goal. We're there to make sure their ideas become reality; we determine their style, budget, and functionality needs, and then make sure the materials and design achieve all three. By combining our design experience with the contractor's expertise, we account for every detail, plan for potential issues, and help the homeowner make informed decisions. **TW**

*Studio Sage has been selected by Architectural Digest as one of four New Hampshire designers considered to be leading the interior design industry. A full-page studio feature will be included in the June 2020 issue of their national magazine.*

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