

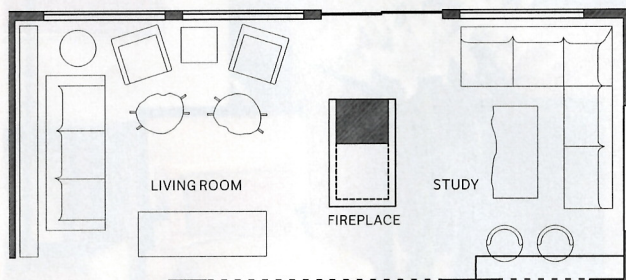
# MAKEOVER ANNIE SELKE

## PART 6

### The Living Room

By simply taking down a wall, Annie Selke creates a room that seems to go on forever.

Interview by  
CHRISTINE PITTEL



**1.** There's a flexibility to the furniture arrangement—small wooden tables can move wherever they're needed. Mod Squad sofa in Navarro linen and Amoeba chairs in Light Brindle cowhide by Annie Selke Home for Vanguard Furniture. Vintage Poul Kjaerholm bench from Porter & Plunk. **2.** A touch of orange on the vintage mirror accents walls painted Benjamin Moore's Atrium White. **3.** This side of the room is a little more casual. The Mod Squad sectional sofa is perfect for curling up and watching TV. Rug by Dash & Albert. Nantucket window shades by Hunter Douglas.

#### WHY DID YOU TAKE DOWN THE WALL THAT USED TO SEPARATE THESE ROOMS?

**ANNIE SELKE:** It was an ugly built-in thing that went from the fireplace to the windows. Didn't make sense. And we enlarged the door behind it and put in a slider, to continue the wall of glass.

#### HOW DID THAT CHANGE THE SPACE?

It made it feel so much larger. You can circulate through both rooms, which really works nicely and makes entertaining easier. It's all one big space.

#### DID THE NEW OPENNESS AFFECT THE FURNISHINGS?

Definitely. Because you see one room from the other, they have to relate. I used the same style sofa in both—the sectional version in the study and the sofa version in the living room. And they're upholstered in the same fabric, a grayish-taupe linen.

#### PLAIN. NEUTRAL. WORDS I DON'T ASSOCIATE WITH YOU.

It was hard for me to be that restrained. I thought the furniture needed to be neutral so your eye would go to the view. But I'm just not a neutral person. That's why

those paintings make me so happy. I took the colors off them for the pillows. The palette is hotter in the study, with orange and pink, and cooler in the living room, with more turquoise and blue.

#### AND CHARTREUSE RUGS HELP UNIFY THE ROOMS.

That's one of our indoor-outdoor rugs. Very practical in mud season, with three dogs. I can take it up, hose it down, and hang it out to dry on the deck.

#### WHAT ABOUT MUD ON THE SOFAS?

The first day the sofas were here, the dogs went swimming and sat down. Even though I had covered the cushions with a bedspread, everything got wet, and it left rings. I just turned the cushions over and thought, 'I'm lucky to be in the fabric business.' I quickly had some white matelassé slipcovers made.

#### THAT LEATHER BENCH IS GREAT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK AT THE BACKS OF CHAIRS AS YOU COME IN.

And it doesn't block the view of the fireplace when you're sitting in the dining room.

John Gilmer, my architect, felt I had to have it. It's an iconic piece by Poul Kjaerholm that immediately says you're in a midcentury modern room. It's also the most expensive dog bed available. My dogs love it because it's low to the ground. One of them is always lying on it when I come home.

#### WHERE DO YOU LIKE TO SIT?

I sit in one of those wing chairs in the morning. I'll have my coffee, answer e-mails. When I was looking for fabric for them, I found these animal hides—very unusual and subtle—so I upholstered them in cowhide. Some of those great modernist chairs were upholstered in hides, and it's a bit of a nod to that. My dogs think they're some kind of big, quiet animal and behave better around them.

#### I'M CURIOUS ABOUT THE COFFEE TABLES. WHY DID YOU WANT ROUGH-HEWN WOOD?

It adds an organic touch. All this 60s architecture can get too straight-lined. I had them made, and I went to Berkshire Products to pick

out the wood. It felt like going underground in *The Hobbit*. There were so many incredible woods. Then John said the tops should float, like the Kjaerholm bench. Not so easy, but we did it in the living room.

#### WITH ALL THIS GLASS, DO YOU EVER FEEL EXPOSED?

No one can see in from this side. I thought about curtains, but they would have interrupted the view. So I went for these Hunter Douglas shades that practically disappear but filter the light when you need it. They're incredibly versatile. I can pull them all the way up or down, or just keep them hovering over the transom. I always thought, 'Blinds? Never!' But these are terrific.

#### DID YOU EVER THINK ABOUT COLOR ON THE WALLS?

I looked at a few colors but then said, 'Nope, it's white. Don't overthink it.' And it would have looked blotchy if I had used color, because there are so many windows. Now the walls kind of disappear and you're really aware of the outside. When the leaves are out, it's like living in a tree house. ✨

#### Get It Right

- Take another look at sectionals. You get the maximum amount of seating for a group, or two people can stretch out and relax.
- Go neutral for the big things and save color for the accessories. "I may change the rugs in winter and do pillows in darker shades like eggplant, red, persimmon," Selke says.
- Think about what's going to be reflected in a mirror before choosing a shape: "A Baroque frame would have messed with the visual of the painting."

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THE LOWER LEVEL