

NEW B&Bs • STONE GETS SEXY • KATIE UKROP'S STYLE

RHOMME

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS KOJCSICH

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the artist

After a return to the States,
Frankie Slaughter
reinterpreted her art
and surroundings.

When artist Frankie Slaughter returned to Richmond two years ago after living abroad in Hong Kong for nearly a decade, she was faced with reverse culture shock. She knew her family's nine-year stint in Asia had irrevocably changed not only her attitudes and world perspective, but had also deeply influenced her aesthetic and work as a mixed-media ceramicist and jewelry designer.

Colorful textiles and ancient artifacts, like these nearly life-sized statues used in an Indian festival, clearly indicate that this is home to world travelers.

Life in Hong Kong has not only affected Slaughter's outlook, but her aesthetic; Asian textiles embellish a line of coats she's creating (like the one she's wearing), Eastern pieces are used to make her jewelry, and her ceramics have been influenced by traditional Asian stoneware.



art at home

As she sipped tea in the colorful, light-filled living room of her Fan home recently, Slaughter explains her dilemma. "I was faced with this tremendous struggle not only to repatriate as an American," she says, "but to come back to this history of mine as a completely changed person. ... How do you marry your past with all of these new attitudes? There was conflict within my head and my house. ... I wasn't ready to just start where I had left off. ... The challenge has been to marry my Asian things with my current [Richmond] life."

A tour through Slaughter's exhilaratingly eclectic home shows that after two years back in the States, she seems to have conquered the challenge beautifully. Though she hid her Asian antiques and artifacts in a cupboard at first, today these objects meld seamlessly with a contemporary art collection. Sumptuous, embellished textiles from around the globe adorn windows and pillows piled on contemporary furnishings. Color and pattern abound, falling just beneath the threshold of sensory overload. Unique accessories and objets d'art, such as an antique Chinese ox cart wheel, a pair of framed earrings from Borneo, and two large, carved wooden Indian figures, clearly indicate that this is the home of a world traveler. Nothing quite "matches" in the traditional sense, yet everything works together due to a keen eye and well-honed aesthetic.

However, Slaughter's journey to create such a harmonious home was not an easy one. First, there were the seven months of renovations that began immediately after the family moved into their new stateside home. Franko-LaFratta Construction oversaw the project, which included the remodeling of three bathrooms and the construction of a two-story family room/master bedroom addition on the back of the house.

But what was especially challenging about settling into their new home, was melding the old with the new, says Slaughter. "There is so much ancient, old dark history with these [Asian] pieces, yet I think of myself as a contemporary, forward-thinking



These ceramic vessels, which Slaughter created while in Hong Kong, were inspired by Chinese funerary urns and sit atop a cabinet in the family room.



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This hallway mirror was made out of windows from an Indian temple and bought from an antiques dealer in China.





Faux-finisher Sunny Goode painted this sitting room's wasabi-green walls. The abstract diptych above the couch is by a Thai artist, and a Canadian artist Slaughter met through a workshop made the torso sculpture beside it.

The home's family room, which is part of a two-story addition, is noticeably absent of anything "ancient" at the request of Slaughter's two teenage daughters.

woman. It is a tough challenge to marry those two and have the aesthetic I want."

Slaughter's own art, much of which is on display throughout her home, reflects this same challenge. A trio of collages hangs in her kitchen, juxtaposing clippings she collected from Asian newspapers with old *Life* magazines and small, ceramic pieces of her own creation. A group of ceramic vessels she created in Hong Kong sits atop a cabinet in a corner of the family room. She says they were inspired by Chinese funerary urns. Her bold, chunky jewelry is almost tribal in feel – a reflection of the eclectic provenance of the beads she has collected in her journeys. The collection of one-of-a-kind jackets she is working on combine Asian and African textiles with Western materials.

A similar juxtaposition of East and West is evident in Slaughter's Fan home. The front parlor is the most "Asian" of all the rooms. Slaughter says it is "almost a recreation" of a room in the family's Hong Kong apartment.

Radiant ochre walls serve as a backdrop for exotic furnishings here. A Chinese drum is used as a base for a glass-topped coffee table. A Tibetan trunk serves as a side table. Antique Chinese bentwood chairs flank a contemporary sofa. A red lacquered Chinese cabinet is topped with Pan-Asian artifacts. Pillows and window treatments are fashioned from Indian and Chinese silks.

Behind this room sits the dining room, which is also heavily Asian in feel. Here, the mocha walls offset brilliant touches of red and gold in the art and antique jeweled sari fabric valances. Two nearly life-size human figures, statues used in an Indian festival, stand sentry in one corner, in front of a carved Indian door.

In contrast, the home's window-filled family room, which was added in the renovation, is entirely devoid of "ancient Asian things" at the request of Slaughter's two teenage daughters. This bright room is all sweetness and light, combining a sophisticated color palette of lavender, kiwi green and pink with shots of tan-

gerine. A lavender bordered leopard print rug covers the floor, and bright appliquéd pillows invite guests to linger.

The large abstract landscape that hangs over the room's fireplace inspired the room's color scheme. Slaughter commissioned the painting from her sister, San Francisco artist Lyall Harris. Smaller works by Harris hang in the room as well, as does a large abstract painting by Virginia artist Janet Dance, which Slaughter purchased after returning to the States. The room's window treatments, simple white linen panels appliquéd with a lavender flame pattern, are the perfect finishing touch to this dynamic, comfortable room.

Janie Molster, one of the interior designers with whom Slaughter consulted while working on the home's décor, designed the window treatments.

"I definitely had a vision of what I wanted," Slaughter says. The project was, "an evolution of one room bleeding into another." Because the family already possessed many furnishings, and even more art, Slaughter approached the house as a whole rather than working room-by-room.

Slaughter bounced her decorating ideas off of various designers to seek their input and expertise. She credits Molster, friend Kat Liebschwager of Ruth & Ollie and Beth Hewit at Williams and Sherrill as being especially helpful. "Oftentimes I was wrong, and I wanted them to direct me," she says. "They gave me some great advice." Yet Slaughter was not willing to relinquish total control, and it shows in the way the home reflects her artistic sensibilities. "I was a tough one to work with," she says, laughing.

Before Slaughter left Hong Kong, she and her husband commissioned a painting that now hangs in a corner of their dining room. Slaughter explains that the Mandarin characters translate to, "Eight Years in Hong Kong. New Life in America." Though this small work is somewhat tucked away, it's a subtle, sentimental reminder of what has been, and what is yet to come. ■