# MAGNIFISSANCE

Timeless Beauty from East and West

REFINING ONE'S THOUGHTS THROUGH THE WAY OF THE FLOWER 一花一世界

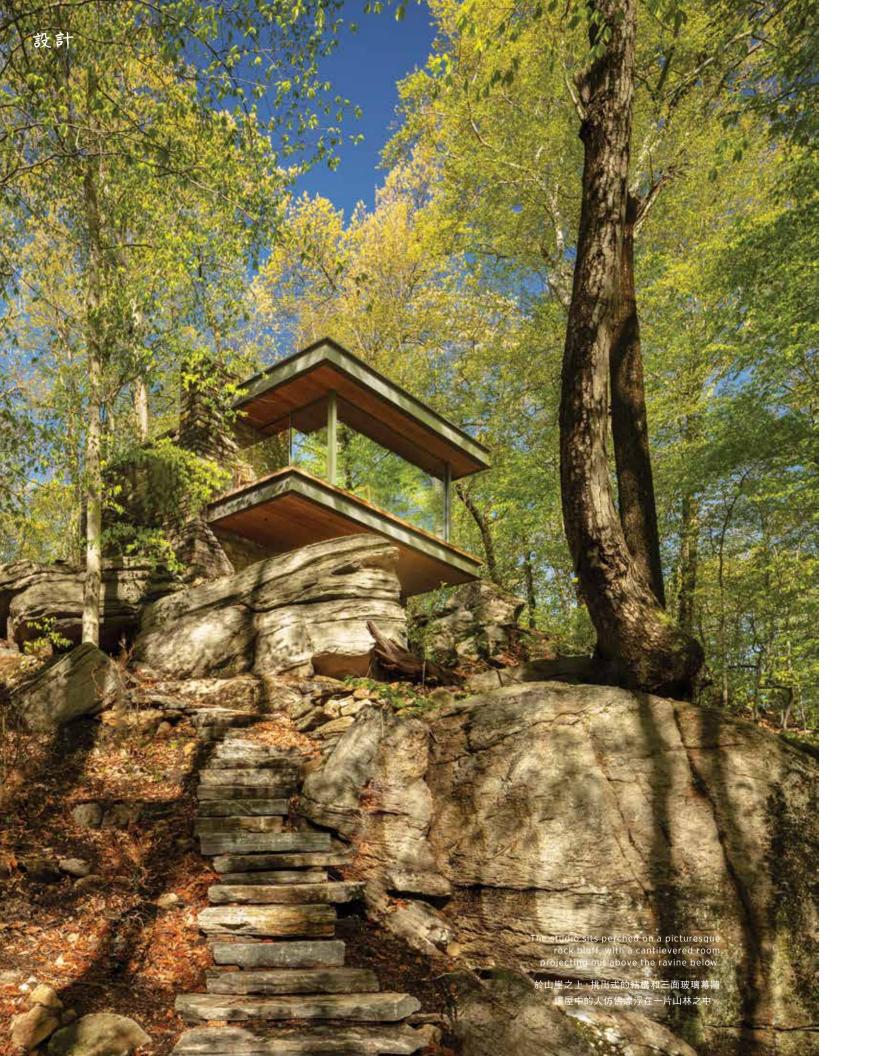
ROWLAND RICKETTS HARVESTS ORGANIC INDIGO USING ANCIENT JAPANESE METHODS 永不褪色的藍

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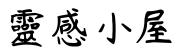


## The Poetry

## of Architecture

### A Connecticut writer's studio becomes a metaphor for creativity itself

English text by James Dolan Chinese text by Cherry Chen Photos by Durston Saylor



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#### "You're in a 180-degree glass box.

You feel that you're not tethered to the ground at that point."

A pen. Some paper. A bit of inspiration. A quiet place to think. Of all the things a writer needs, it's the last one that's the hardest to come by.

That was the challenge posed to New Yorkbased architect Eric J. Smith by one of his long-time clients: build a writer's studio that would function as a tranquil sanctuary where he might fully embrace a lifelong love of the written word. In so doing, Smith created not only the perfect place to write, but a fourwalled metaphor for the act of writing itself.

"The building represents the creative process," Smith says. "You approach it from what's a very solid, almost impenetrable structure-there's only one portal going through."

As Smith points out, that effort to open the door (whether literal or figurative) will be immediately familiar to anyone who has stared at a blank page. "When you're looking at a blank piece of paper, you have to find your way in: What's the inspiration; what's the thought?"

For Smith, that parsing started with a proper consideration of what had come before. Smith's firm had already worked on two previous projects on the 25-acre estate, about an hour northeast of Manhattan, renovating the main house in a grand, 1920s New England style, which honoured the design traditions of the region.

This time, however, the owner shared a distinctly different vision: a small, strippeddown, essentialist space whose sole purpose would be to enhance and amplify the work going on inside.

Smith faced two diverging roads: he could design a bold, bauhaus-inspired monument that would dominate the landscape and stand outside the property's existing design language. Instead, he opted for a road less travelled: bring

traditional and contemporary design together in a way that respected not only the client's vision, but the rich history of the region, as well as the ebb and flow of the land itself.

"That was an interesting dichotomy," Smith says. "It was as if maybe we had discovered the remnants of an old springhouse, or root cellar, or some other building that was there, and it was kind of in ruin, and we kind of restored it, and then we repurposed it. [The idea] was to strip it all down to just stone, wood, steel, and glass. Each of those are honoured into themselves, as if [the building] had been there for a long time and the forest grew up around it."

From the outside, the studio is a study in architectural counterpoint, with modern elements interacting with traditional materials to create a beautiful harmony with the surrounding site.

On one hand, a solid, levelled-off cube clad in traditional stacked stone gives the studio a feeling of mass and substance-a thickwalled, castle-like feel intended to shelter the poet from the distractions of the everyday. On the other hand, exposed steel beams create a cantilevered room surrounded on three sides by floor-to-ceiling sliding glass panels-an airy, floating feeling intended to open the mind and help the imagination soar.

The glass offers a view of a picturesque wood, where a gently flowing brook chatters and babbles in the hollow below the studio.

"The cantilever allows you to project yourself out into the future, out into the space," Smith says. "You're in a 180-degree glass box. You feel that you're not tethered to the ground at that point. You're in the middle of the woods-you [feel] breezes there, you can hear what's going on. It's very exciting that way."



The end result is a kind of creative refuge from the hustle and bustle of modern life, a place where the action of entering in and moving through serves as an echo for what happens in the mind. "The idea is that you decide to enter into this kind of creative space by leaving everything behind you," says Smith.

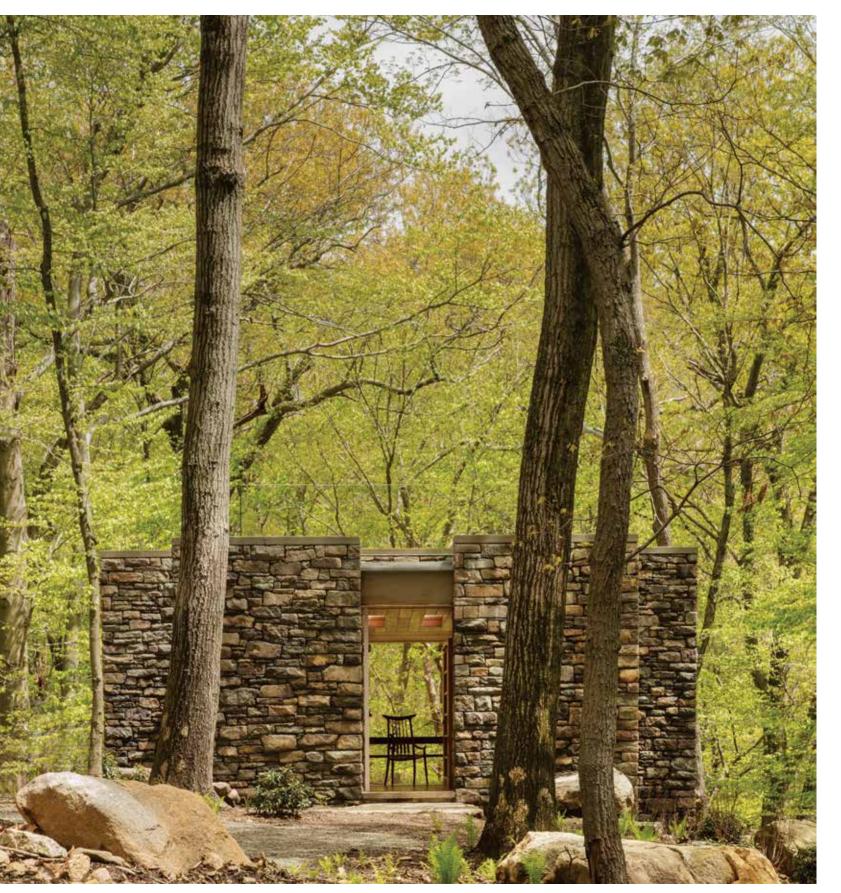
Walking past the built-in bookshelves in the narrow hall to stand in the spacious central room gazing into the woods beyond, you feel outside the realm of human endeavour: The walls sink into the ground, the glass melts away, and you become one with both the physical and the metaphysical. And as Smith says, that was the point.

Smith deliberately compressed the dimensions of the entrance hallway to better emphasize the expansive space of the writer's room beyond-a metaphor for the opening of the imagination. 穿過略微有擠壓感的書架走廊,進入到視野開闊的工作室時,會感覺面前豁然開朗,正如尋找創作靈感的過程。

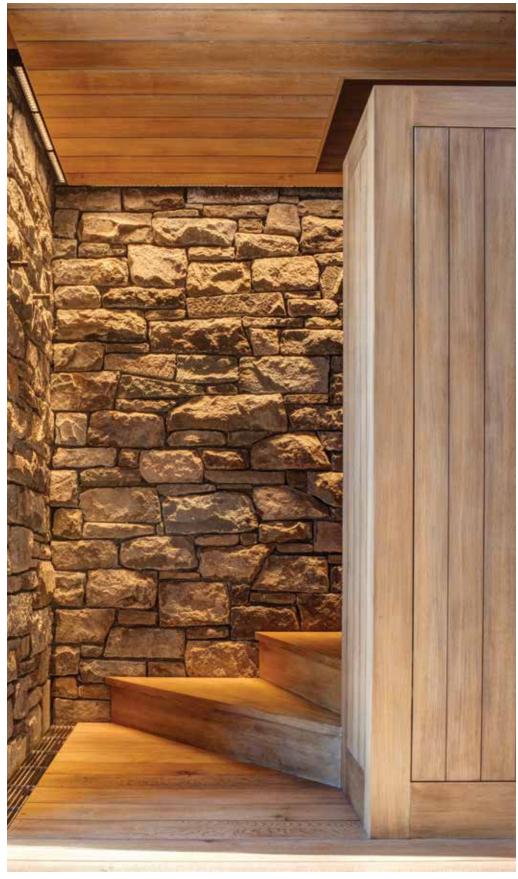
"[You] walk up through the woods, [then] you're forced into a very small pocket of space before it then expands back out. So your mind recalibrates. Everything kind of quiets and settles. And then it expands to bigger ideas."

Which, as any poet or architect will tell you, is a pretty good way to describe the act of creation. Your eyes wander into the woods (literal or figurative), and you notice something: a lonely cloud; a bird coming down the walk; a wet, black, bough; a red wheelbarrow.

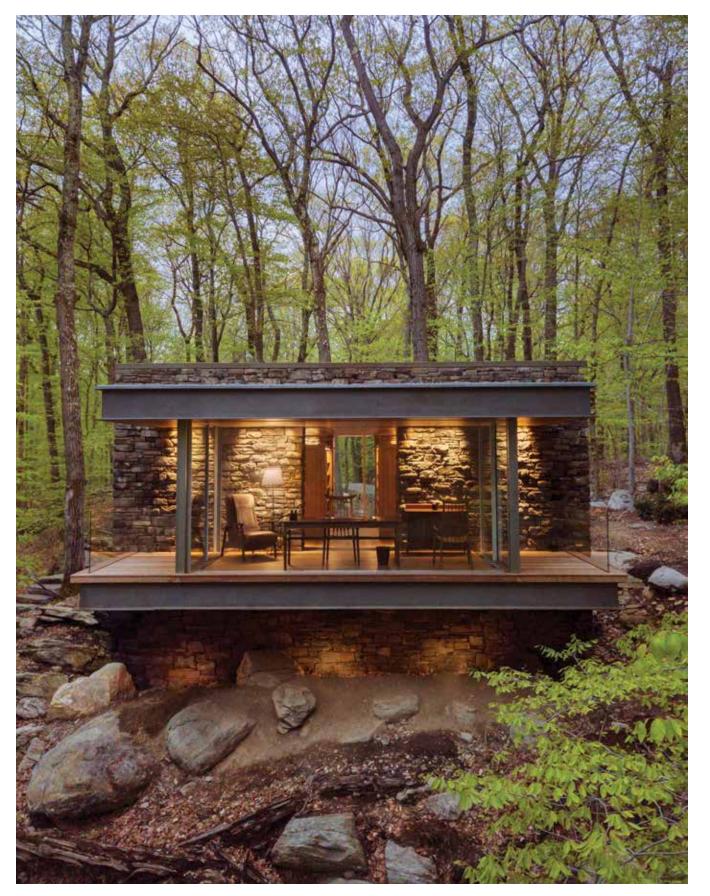
Your spirit wakes from its slumber. Your pen has motion now, and force. And you begin to write about the rocks, and stones, and treesand all the bigger ideas that come with them.



Above: The studio was built to resemble an old springhouse, a root cellar, or a farm outbuilding that had been repurposed and carefully restored. Opposite: The studio marries a clean, almost minimalist aesthetic with traditional New England materials such as stained wood and stacked field stone.



對頁:工作室的外觀設計著重在融入周圍的環境,像是舊建築被翻新了的感覺,完全不顯突兀。上圖:建築的整體結構 採用了現代的極簡主義設計,但材料選用了傳統的新英格蘭風格常用的木材和石材等,並刻意營造出古舊感。



"To me, the start of any project is the site. Success is that the building looks like it's always been there, and it was meant to be there." - Eric J. Smith 設計師Eric說:「對於我來說,任何一個項目都始於它所在的地點。成功意味著讓建築最終看上去就像一直都在那裏,就應該在那裏。」

對於一位作家來説,最難尋的是靈感,干擾。進入小屋那唯一的入口,巨大的鋼樑 而一個安靜舒適的空間無疑會有利於他們潛 挑起一座懸空的露臺,上面用玻璃牆圍出了 心思考,創作出精彩的作品。紐約建築設計 一間書房。這種彷如漂浮在空中的感受,確 師Eric J. Smith便遇上了這樣一個富有挑戰的 實令人有種想要放飛思想的衝動。 項目,他的一位老顧客是位作家,需要打造 一間特別的工作室。 體是封閉起來的,只有一個入口可以進入其 可以聽到流水的潺潺聲。Eric説:「這樣懸空 中。」也許因為身為建築設計師的Eric也經常 需要尋找靈感,他非常理解作家顧客的需求 打破了空間的桎梏。你在一個全景的玻璃盒子 和感受。當工作室最終完成時,所呈現的效 中,周圍是綠樹叢林,微風輕拂。」 果像是將作家的心聲用石材、木頭和玻璃構 建到了現實中。 搜刮些東西出來,靈感在哪裏?有甚麼好點 子?」幸運的是,Eric之前總是能想出不錯 這個空間,所有其它東西都拋在身後了。」 的方案。他的公司最近經手了一個項目,在 曼哈頓東北方大約一小時車程的一塊二十五 英畝的土地上,一幢新英格蘭風格的二十年 大的、原木的書架,天花板上鑲嵌著玻璃, 代老宅在Eric的精心打造下焕然一新,同時 讓光線自然投射下來,像是行走過一片散發 還保留了舊有的時代特色。 宅顯然是完全不同的類型,一個宏偉,一個小 正像在苦苦思索,尋找靈感的時刻。然後, 巧;一個醒目,一個私密。但相同之處在於,兩 當來到露臺上的玻璃書房時,視線又陡然開 者都有對舊建築的尊重和敬意,而不是單純打 造一座滿足功能性和便於建造維護的新房子。 Eric認為好的建築需要尊重所在的環 境,正如那幢二十年代的老宅,只有修舊 了玻璃牆和天花板,視線更加開闊,完全身 如舊才能融入當地社區一直保存和延續的風 貌。這座作家工作室所在的地點,相比之下 歷史更加悠久,是一片茂密的山林。「我們 意到一些平日裏容易忽略的東西。把目光投 的設計思路非常有趣,假設樹林中的那處山 向山林,也許草叢中會突然蹦出一隻野兔, 崖上曾經有過一座廢棄的建築,已經破敗不 大概《愛麗絲夢遊仙境》就是以此為靈感 堪,我們對它進行了翻新。最終,它又恢復 的吧!也許天空中正漂浮著一朵形狀酷似航 了當初的樣子,像是矗立在那裏很久了,周 船的白雲,它又會駛向何方呢?小溪中的水 圍的樹木都長成了一片森林。」 由石頭砌成的小屋,像是一座隱藏在山林中 覓,它一直隱身在周圍的環境中和日常的生 的堡壘,方方正正,踏實堅固,為房主提供 活中,只是需要一雙善於發現的眼睛和一間 了最可靠的保護,讓他寫作時免受各種俗務 牆壁由玻璃圍成的書房。 📾

#### 「這樣懸空的設計,讓你像是將自己投射進了未來,

#### 像是打破了空間的桎梏。」

更驚喜的是,這裏不僅有便於張開想象翅 膀的地形,還有實際存在的靈感源泉。小屋的 「這幢房屋代表著創意。」Eric説:「整 下方有一條在山谷中流淌的小溪,安靜下來, 的設計,讓你像是將自己投射進了未來,像是

在這樣一個空靈的空間裏,儘管你獨自一 人,卻仿佛不是一個人在思考。你的身體和思 「當一張白紙擺在你面前時,你不得不 想都像是融入進了周圍的自然環境中,可以自 由呼吸它的能量,汲取它的智慧。「當你來到

站在大門前,小巧的屋子內部一覽無 餘。在通往露臺書房的走廊兩側,是兩排高 著書香的森林。「穿過走廊時,你會感覺像 不過,這個作家工作室的新項目與傳統大 是在擠過狹窄的通道。」Eric解釋説,「這也 闊。」像是在這個小小的空間裏演繹了一回 「山窮水盡疑無路,柳暗花明又一村」。沿 著進門處左側的樓梯還可以走上屋頂,沒有 處在周圍的自然環境中。

當心融入自然,平靜下來,你會開始注 流似乎比往常更湍急一些,是因為昨夜的那 透過一排排挺拔的樹幹,這座外牆主要 場雨嗎?玄妙的靈感也許並沒有那麼難以尋