

A large, multi-story house with a prominent gable roof, stone accents, and a turret, set in a lush forest. The house features a mix of materials, including light-colored wood siding, stone, and large glass windows. A prominent stone turret with a conical roof is attached to the side. The house is surrounded by tall trees and a green lawn.

living art

ELIZABETH FERGUS-JEAN CREATES ART THAT IS EQUALLY THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND BRILLIANTLY BEAUTIFUL. AND THAT'S JUST THE WAY SHE DESIGNED HER HARBOR SPRINGS HOME AND STUDIO.

TEXT BY ELIZABETH EDWARDS // PHOTOS BY DAVE SPECKMAN



ARTIST ELIZABETH FERGUS-JEAN'S MEMORY BOATS "FLOAT" BELOW THE CEILING IN THE STUDIO SHE SHARES WITH HER HUSBAND, PHOTOGRAPHER AND MASTER PRINTER, JOHN FERGUS-JEAN.



ELIZABETH DESIGNED THE LABYRINTH THAT SHE WALKS AS A PART OF HER DAILY MEDITATION.

“

Our team thoroughly enjoyed the one-off design requirements Elizabeth brought to us. Throughout the project we manifested her ideas; at times we were pulling items out of storage to measure them to guarantee their fit into the new space. The finished structure is one we are proud to have our name on and a gorgeous backdrop for her creativity and art.

—Melissa Adelaine-Supernault,
Project Coordinator/Partner,
Adelaine Construction.

The journey (yes, that is what it is) into the home of artists Elizabeth Fergus-Jean and her husband, John, begins at the pale aqua, wood-slat front door that is set in a stone tower—a tower that is, and is meant to be, reminiscent of Bollingen Tower in Switzerland, built by the famous psychologist Carl Jung. Enter the tower and look up to the peaked clapboard ceiling where tiny colored boats (that are in fact hung from the ceiling) seem to float in the air. They are a part of a project-series Elizabeth calls Memory Boats. “Boats being a metaphor for the journey through life and onto the next life,” she explains.

Through the doorway and into the spacious studio, more boats greet you; most are life-sized and hung on thin wire from the ceiling. Each is unique, colorful and meant to convey a message. The boat Elizabeth is working on the day I visited, Pining, is painted with ochre squiggly marks weaving across the brown, bark-like boat, to resemble what happens to a tree when a pine beetle attacks it. Like all of Elizabeth’s art, the boat is an environmental statement about the perils faced by our planet. When Pining is exhibited, it will hang from the ceiling. Huge photographs of ravaged forests—photos that Elizabeth has taken and that John, a master printer, has printed, will surround the boat.

To stand in the big, open studio (with a fire dancing in the field-stone fireplace on the cool autumn day I visited) is to understand that there is so much more here than meets the eye. A fact that is not surprising given that beyond her Masters in Fine Art and her subsequent career as an exquisitely skilled artist, Elizabeth has a Ph.D in Mythological Studies—a degree that emphasized depth psychology, defined loosely as the study of unconscious mental processes. Which brings us back to the tower, and its “shoutout,” as Elizabeth calls it, to Carl Jung.

Beyond all of that, Elizabeth also studied architecture. Which is why when she and John had the chance to build the home and studio of their dreams in the forest north of Harbor Springs, she knew she would design the structure, in her inspired and meticulous way, right down to every last piece of molding, window placement and storage cupboard. She even developed a Sherwin Williams paint color for her walls that is called Trance Gray—a color that plays off the shades of bark on the trees in the forest outside the banks of 6-by-6 foot windows that line the walls and bring the outdoors into this room. “I call this my dream studio home as it combines all the elements I’ve been dreaming about for 35 years,” she says. ➤



ELIZABETH FERGUS-JEAN AT WORK IN HER STUDIO.

“

Adelaine Construction did an outstanding job with their craftsmanship, timelines (Melissa is remarkable at keeping all of us on task!), and cleanliness! Noah and the crew were thoughtful, friendly, took pride in their work, and were great to work with. The end product is a testament to what fine builders they are.”

—Elizabeth Fergus-Jean.

From the studio with its lofty view of the woods and its many inhabitants including deer and turkeys, the home cascades down to a small, perfectly efficient and perfectly enchanting living area. This space shares many of the elements of the studio, the silver-gray stained maple flooring, soft-sage colored cabinetry with beautifully silver sparkled quartz and those magnificent 6-by-6-foot windows. But Elizabeth kept the ceiling lower here as if to mimic the lower elevation outside the windows. The effect is a striking intimacy with the forest. One more metaphor for the human connection to the natural world, in a home and studio that is rich with them. 🌿

Elizabeth Edwards is managing editor of *Northern Home & Cottage*. lissa@traversemagazine.com
 // Photos by Dave Speckman

CLOCKWISE: THE JUST-RIGHT-SIZED MASTER BEDROOM IS OUTFITTED WITH FAMILY ANTIQUES. // SPARKLY QUARTZ-COUNTERTOPS ADD A DASH OF DAZZLE IN THE SERENE HOME. // THE SECOND SIDE OF THE TWO-SIDED FIREPLACE FACES A DECK THAT LOOKS OUT OVER THE FOREST. // ELIZABETH'S MINIATURE MEMORY BOATS HANG FROM THE CEILING IN THE ENTRY THAT IS DESIGNED TO EVOKE CARL JUNG'S BOLLINGER TOWER.



NORTHERN
Home & Cottage
resources
Living Art, page 12

CONTRACTOR
Adelaine Construction, Inc.,
231.439.0027, adelaineconstruction.com

WINDOWS
Marvin Windows, Preston Feather
Building Centers, 231.347.2501,
prestonfeather.com

QUARTZ COUNTERTOPS
Preston Feather Building Centers,
231.347.2501, prestonfeather.com

CABINETS
Woodharbor, Preston Feather
Building Centers, 231.347.2501,
prestonfeather.com

FIREPLACES
Emmet Brick & Block, 231.348.5959,
emmetbrick.com

APPLIANCES
Ferguson, 231.487.1630, ferguson.com

STEEL ROOF
Norm's Roofing, 231.347.6978,
normsroofing.com