

FINANCIAL TIMES

Lisa Perry: ‘This is a gorgeous white box for anything I want to do to it’

Her Modernist Palm Beach home is a blank canvas for the designer and collector’s trove of art, a mesh for her creative patronage and political fundraising — and the pristine nexus for a rotating cast of visitors. ‘Do you want to stay for lunch?’



Lisa Perry’s palette throughout her home is white with pops of colour © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2025

Charlene Prempeh / Photographed for the FT by Josh Aronson
Published Mar 11 2025

When publisher Assouline approached Lisa Perry in 2018, its pitch was succinct: “We love your style. We love your vibe. We love your homes. This should be a book.” The result was *Lisa Perry: Fashion, Homes, Design*, with a foreword by Hillary Clinton. Perry has a “strong visual signature”, according to Clinton. And makes a mean hot dog.



The home was built by Robert W Gottfried, who designed around 400 homes in Palm Beach

Today, we're sitting in Perry's Palm Beach home (she has others in the Hamptons, New York and Villefranche-sur-Mer). Nearby is a guest house that Perry has filled with works by artists involved in Onna House, a hub she created for female artists to collaborate, and where collectors can discover their work. Between 2006 and 2011, Perry became known for her eponymous 1960s-inspired fashion brand; today she describes herself on Instagram as curator, gallerist and designer.

Perry and her husband, investor Richard Perry, are enthusiastic hosts. My first experience of the house was in December 2023, when she held a brunch for New Wave Art Weekend to raise money for artist residencies, offering mimosas to the invited guests and explaining the provenance of and story behind her many artworks.



The living room features chairs by Pierre Paulin and artworks by (left to right) Doug Ohlson, Damien Hirst, Tadaaki Kuwayama and Katrien van der Schueren © Doug Ohlson; Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2025; ARS, NY and DACS, London 2025

The Modernist home, built by Robert W Gottfried in the 1970s, is the perfect nexus for a rotating cast of visitors. Perry has an enduring relationship with mid-century architecture: “My upbringing in Chicago really set the tone for my whole love of design and homes,” she says. When she was 15 her family moved into a mid-century home “that was very modern, Japanese-inspired and built by one of the great architects of the Chicago area, George Frederick Keck”, she says.

Perry’s mother was a gallerist, her father a painter, and the family business was textiles — it was a household where the beautiful was venerated: “Mum wore Missoni kaftans, and I had Marimekko in my bedroom.”



'The ocean is the star of the show here,' says Perry; on the table, an artwork by Deborah Kass © Deborah Kass. ARS, NY and DACS, London 2025



Artwork by Doug Ohlson © Doug Ohlson

At 21, she moved to New York to study at the Fashion Institute of Technology, imagining that she would later join the family textile business in Chicago. But the city proved irresistible. "Once I got to New York, I wasn't leaving," she says. Her studies were put on hold to raise her twins, and when she returned, it was to complete a major in women's studies.

She became committed to "helping more women get elected to public roles" and was introduced to Clinton in 1998, at a time when Perry was realising the importance of female advocacy. "There were 91 men and nine women in our Senate at the time. I didn't understand how all these men were making decisions about our bodies. I thought, let me try and do something to change that."

She was one of the original fundraisers for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee's Women's Senate Network. "I would get everybody that I could to really rally behind this cause of getting women elected." During her time with the network, an additional five women including Clinton, Maria Cantwell and Mary Landrieu were sworn in to the Senate.

In parallel, the Perrys have been supporting the art community and growing their collection. “When Richard and I met in the early 1980s, we gallery hopped in SoHo. First we bought local New York artists such as Jenny Holzer, Jennifer Bartlett and Walton Ford,” she says. Later, the focus was on 1960s Pop art and more recently, minimalist works and colour field artists such as Ellsworth Kelly, Frank Stella, Alexander Calder, Larry Bell and Donald Judd.

Perry’s Palm Beach home is reminiscent of a white cube gallery space. She remembers having a very clear vision on first seeing the house in winter 2010, although it took some imagination to overlook the previous owner’s fussy decor. “There was fabric everywhere. They even had tented ceilings,” says Perry. “It was insane.” Gottfried had built about 400 houses on the island and she was familiar with his work: “One of the things that he did in his contemporary houses is very high ceilings and beautiful, symmetrical square rooms. I was like, this will be a gorgeous white box for anything that I want to do to it.”



With such a pared-back decor, the art dominates: (left to right) works by Tadaaki Kuwayama and César © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2025; SBJ / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2025

Though the entrance to her neighbourhood is currently an assault course of security barriers — Perry’s house is a stone’s throw from President Trump’s Mar-a Lago home — once inside, there’s a tranquillity to the residence itself. Sliding glass doors at the rear of the living space provide an unobstructed view of the pool and sweeping vistas of the ocean. “The ocean is the star of the show here,” she says.

Working with architect Christine Harper, Perry created an interior that foregrounds carefully selected vintage designs. “We are in sync,” Perry says of Harper. The brief was to strip everything away so they could start with a blank canvas. “It was a dream to work with a space that I could keep so minimal,” she says.

There are injections of colour, which stand out from the white walls and sparse selection of furniture. “It’s the sofa, it’s two Pierre Paulin chairs, it’s these built-in daybeds: That’s the living room,” she says. The ground floor is open plan and to the left of the living room, Perry’s dining room is similarly stripped back, with a vintage glass table and yellow chairs by Georg Appeltshauser.

The white palette extends through the home. In the master suite, a sunshine yellow Pierre Paulin chair appears. There are eccentric touches: the guest bathroom is full of egg motifs, with shiny 3D tiling by Ann Sacks and an egg toilet from IL Bagno Alessi by Laufen.



Lush greenery and a work by Doug Ohlson on the wall complete the bathroom's look



An outdoor shower

With such pared-back furnishings, it is Perry's collection of abstract wall works, including five Damien Hirst spot paintings, that command attention. Three untitled early paintings of Doug Ohlson are defined by saturated colour, as are works by Kenneth Noland in the master bedroom. A green striped geometric painting by Tadaaki Kuwayama in the dining room is a rare instance of muted colour.

Onna House was started by Perry in the Hamptons in 2021, in a 1962 Paul Lester Wiener-designed, Japanese-inspired Modernist house" — a mesh of her creative and political ambitions. It began as a response to the dismantling of Roe vs Wade: Perry decided that it was time to shift her focus from national politics to supporting women locally. "I could focus on just helping women artists exclusively. This is a place where I can help artists who are lesser seen: women artists who have no visibility, who work hard every single day in their studios just because it's their passion."



Perry has used frequent injections of yellow: in the bedroom hangs a Kenneth Noland work © Estate of Kenneth Noland/VAGA at ARS, NY and DACS, London 2025

Perry launched Onna House Palm Beach, a gallery space at The Royal Poinciana Plaza, in 2023. It's one of many art and design projects that have sprung up on the island in recent years, including The Bunker, a contemporary gallery showing works collected by Beth Rudin DeWoody. "You can really give Beth credit. A cool arts community has been built. There are phenomenal collectors that made galleries want to come here."

As our conversation ends, a guest arrives and immediately comments on the Pierre Paulin chairs. More friends soon return from surfing. "This is what I love about Palm Beach," she says with a smile. "It's the beauty. Do you want to stay for lunch?"

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