



Picture It

A NEW VIRTUAL CONCEPT HOME FROM THE **BLACK ARTISTS + DESIGNERS GUILD** IS TURNING THE CLASSICAL IDEA OF A SHOWHOUSE ON ITS EAR.

BY KELLEY CARTER

LAUNCHING IN JANUARY, THE OBSIDIAN VIRTUAL CONCEPT House will transport online visitors to the future of decor and design, with curated rooms, architecture anchored in the African diaspora, and a special focus on Black families. Conceived by the members of the Black Artists + Designers Guild pictured here, in cooperation with the magazines of Hearst's Luxury & Design Collection (*ELLE DECOR*, *House Beautiful*, *Veranda*, and *Town & Country*), the 3D visualization will explore the ways artistry and ancestry dovetail with design.

Everything about the virtual experience, including its imagined Oakland, California, location, is deliberate. The birthplace of the Black Panther Party—for whom access to quality housing was a central tenet—serves as the stage for a futuristic home set in 2025 that marries cultural touchstones with sustainability and technology. “The house is our collective story of the Black family come to life,” says Nina Cooke John, a co-architect of the project. “It is a collage of personal and collective memories we each share.” On exhibit will be a multitude of interpretations of Black family life beyond preconceptions.

Some thoughtful elements throughout Obsidian—which is sponsored by international design brands like Caesarstone, Fiskars, Pottery Barn, Resource Furniture, S. Harris, Stark Carpet, and Thermador—include living quarters created with multigenerational families in mind, a contact-free area for receiving deliveries, and green walls with plants designed to filter air and lift spirits.

With the use of solar power, rain harvesting, sustainable systems, and smart-home technology, the interiors will be as innovative as they are aesthetically rich. “I created reading capsules against the windows to take advantage of the views,” says Lisa Turner, who designed the concept house’s “Umoja family room.” The reading capsules serve as both functional pieces of art and furniture. “You can climb into them and connect with Bluetooth monitors and speakers that are made of ash wood, formed and manipulated to create a continuation of the ceiling design.” She also placed a modular sofa in the room to ensure that the interior would be adaptable to various family activities.

An additional focus for Obsidian is on health and convalescence. Linda Allen, who designed the art studio and garden areas, says: “The future of living will also be about healing spaces that help us become our better selves.” After a year like 2020, that premise is hard to reject. badguild.info ■



COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Leyden Lewis, Nina Cooke John, Cheryl Umbles, Malene Barnett, Lisa Turner, Kelly Finley, Laura Hodges, Danielle Fennoy, Anishka Clarke & Niya Bascom, BOA, Christina Casañas-Judd & General Judd, Everick Brown, Linda Allen, Bernadette Berry, Marie Burgos, Sheryl T. McLean, Linda Hayslett, Lynai Jones, Cheryl R. Riley, Kiyonda Powell, Nikki Klugh, Casi St. Julian & Penny Francis, and Erin Shakoor.