

Rattray Marsh House

J O H N M C M I N N

Aerie for an Art Collector

The Rattray Marsh House by McMinn + Janzen Studio incorporates gallery areas for an art collector, overlooking a maple forest conservation area on the Lake Ontario shore, west of Toronto. Designed around the owner's extensive photography collection, including pieces by Bernd and Hilla Becher, Edward Burtynsky, Cindy Sherman, and Thomas Ruff, the house is comprised of a series of neutral interconnected volumes, and floor to ceiling glazing, leading to outdoor terraces on the ground and lower floor and an indigenous wildflower planted roof at the upper level. Rattray Conservation Area is the last remaining extensive lake-edge marsh between Toronto and Burlington, providing habitat to beaver, fox, deer, and numerous bird species, allowing the building to double as an observation perch, overlooking its woodland neighbors.

A muted palette of slate cladding, with steel detailing and anodized aluminum windows, allows the building to sit quietly within its leafy suburban context. From the street, the house is entered through a north facing courtyard, leading to a double height entry foyer, providing access to the upper and lower floors. The primary rooms of the house face south, planned for summer shading by tiers of louvers, roof overhangs and surrounding deciduous trees, while winter light is allowed to penetrate deep into the building. Planned for ground source heating and cooling, solar hot water and PV roof panels once the economics justify its use, the building incorporates radiant floors, and relies on robust insulation, passive heating, cooling and ventilation with south glazing regulating the thermal mass of the exposed concrete floor slabs, mediating diurnal temperature cycles.





