Fresh from college where she studied literature and dance, Sally Levine performed in New York City while drawing and creating graphic designs. One day, she looked at the intersection of her passions. “The two dimensions of drafting plus the space, line, motion, and strength in dance led to architecture,” Levine recalls.

After architecture school and years at renowned Chicago firms, she opened Levine Architecture & Design, Ltd. in 1991 and relocated her studio to Cleveland in 2001. Three years later, she began teaching architectural design at Case Western Reserve University. Today, she is sought out for her expertise in universal design: a belief that buildings, products, and environments should be accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ability, or any other factor. She is celebrated for designing residential, commercial, and institutional spaces that embrace principles of inclusivity and green architecture.

“Human-centered design isn’t about meeting accessibility codes; it’s about creating environments where accessibility intervention is integral to the design,” says Levine. She points to a renovation for a family whose daughter has a movement disability. A state-of-the-art bathroom features a roll-in shower with stunning finishes, and the family room gracefully opens to the outdoor living space. “Inclusive design elements can be beautiful,” she adds.

Levine also designed the visible and invisible features in a whole-home renovation and master bath addition of a secluded home near the Chagrin River in Moreland Hills. Bringing city water to the home required deep trenches from the main road and geothermal engineering to navigate the vertical journey from ground to house. Today, this stunning home appears to roost among the trees.

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THE FINE ART OF INCLUSIVE DESIGN

AS SEEN IN Architectural Digest

FROM THE TOP: This living room features plenty of wall space for the homeowner’s eclectic artwork—and walls of windows that celebrate nature. Wraparound windows spill light into this stunning chef’s kitchen. The geometric play of wood ceiling beams, floorboards, and custom paneling fills this tranquil dining area with movement. Doors open onto the deck. This bathroom features a magnificent sunken tub and no-threshold shower.