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studio with a view

A couple of New York artists
put down roots upstate.
Alix Browne visits their green acres.



1. Garth Weiser and Francesca DiMattio, at their upstate New York studio compound.
2. The gravel courtyard, with planters by DiMattio. 3. Weiser's studio. 4. Components of a tea set in progress in DiMattio's studio.
5. Weiser's music collection. 6. Weiser's test piece for sculpture.



work in progress

On a sweltering afternoon in August, when I visited them in bucolic Hillsdale, New York, about two and a half hours north of Manhattan, the artists Francesca DiMattio, 34, and Garth Weiser, 36, had more than a few irons in the fire. She was working on a series of ceramic sculptures for an October show at Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, in London, and had yet to really think much about the two paintings she had also committed to making; he had a handful of canvases in progress in anticipation of a show early next year at Simon Lee Gallery, in Hong Kong. At the same time, they were in the throes of building and landscaping a 17-acre studio compound. And, not least, they were expecting their first child, a boy, due in January. "I love being up here," DiMattio exclaimed. "You can really physically shape your world."



studio system

The couple bought the property in 2011, and initially, DiMaggio was working out of what she calls "a disgusting barn." Weiser, meanwhile, toiled away in a wedding tent he'd bought online and pitched nearby. The last straw might have been when a storm blew the tent—along with several paintings—down a hill. "The good news is that the paintings turned out to be more durable than we thought," Weiser said. With the help of Sotirios Kotoulas, a designer friend they'd met when they were all students at Cooper Union, in New York's East Village, they erected three generous studio buildings, outfitting them with a high-tech spray booth for Weiser and a hoist for DiMaggio's increasingly large sculptures. There are top-notch sound systems with vintage hi-fi equipment (though both admit to listening more to audiobooks than music while they work) and expansive views of the surrounding valley. A gravel courtyard is dotted with quirky, almost primitive-looking planters DiMaggio made using detritus from the construction—cardboard boxes, plastic tarps—and opens on what might be the couple's biggest extravagance: a swimming pool. "For years I was running around all over to make work," DiMaggio said. "It is amazing to be able to produce everything in my own space—and then get to have dinner with Garth afterward."



1. Weiser working inside the spray booth in his studio. 2. The exterior of his studio. 3. A drawing of Weiser's. 4. Weiser with an unfinished painting. 5. The couple has a thing for vintage stereo equipment and vintage sports cars.



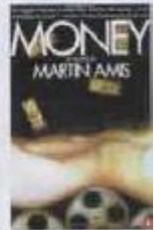
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6. DiMaggio goes through countless thrift store mixers when making her sculptures. 7. Weiser often listens to audiobooks in his studio. 8. An informal composition in Weiser's studio. 9. DiMaggio with reference materials, in her studio. 10. DiMaggio's *Bioenerthouder II*, 2015, for her London show.



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strong signature

Both artists have studio uniforms: She favors a mechanic's jumpsuit and beat-up clog boots, and he wears blue overalls he bought in bulk at a hardware store in Greece. "One of the things I miss being in the country is high-heel shoes and getting dressed up," admitted DiMaggio, who had not ventured to the city—where they keep an apartment in Chelsea—in months. (Her most recent "accessories" purchases: a weed wacker and a little "lady" chain saw.) When she does make it out of the studio, she likes to change things up. One evening she'll opt for a tailored pantsuit; another, a gold lamé gown. There are two constants—red lips and a signature braid, which she's worn every day since high school. "Fashion for me is an opportunity to be different people on different nights," she said. "I just did a fashion-y thing," Weiser chimed in, referring to a recent commission by the Saint Laurent designer Hedi Slimane to make two paintings for the Paris house's new couture atelier. But in case you were wondering...no, he did not trade them for a new wardrobe for himself and his wife. ♦