



En Plein Air

IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY, painters who were moving towards Realism and eventually Impressionism — painting with loose brushwork and soft, natural forms — migrated from painting in the studio to working in nature itself. The migration to *plein air* or “outdoors” painting caught on like wildfire in bucolic settings like the French countryside or the Hudson River Valley.

A parallel can be drawn with the work of exceptional architects of the mid-20th century and beyond who — thanks to manufacturing techniques — replaced walls of brick and concrete block with walls of glass, inviting nature inside. This innovation took off in Southern California and South Florida and continues to be experimented with to this day. Case in point: the brilliant configuration of this kitchen in Bay Harbor Islands, designed as part of a new construction home by SDH Studio, based in North Miami Beach.

According to Stephanie Halfen, principal with SDH Studio, this home was designed for a family that enjoys outdoor living, the intimacy of family life, but at the same time loves to entertain. The design takes full advantage of the lot's lush greenery, blurring the lines between the interior and exterior... according to Halfen, their number one design goal.

A ribbon of glass, both above and below the cabinetry fills the space with natural light, yes, but also frames a view of the brilliant yellow-green leaves of *Clusia* growing just outside, bringing nature into the workspace. The kitchen is absolutely Minimalist in detail, with handle-free cabinetry and white on white finishes... allowing required fittings like switches and electrical outlets to fairly disappear.