

MHD

MAINE HOME + DESIGN

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THE MAN BEHIND THE GLASS:
JIM NUTTING'S
ILLUMINATING CREATIONS

Single Family Residential



Dojo, Owls Head Winkelman Architecture

Merit Award for Excellence in Architecture

Project Architects: Will Winkelman, AIA, Joanna Shaw, AIA

Illustrator: Natalie Chalfant

Landscape Architect: Todd Richardson, Ken Studtmann, Richardson & Associates

Structural Engineer: Albert Putnam Associates

General Contractor: Nate Holyoke Builders, HEWN Builders

Photographer: Jeff Roberts



From the Jury:

The details on this structure pay homage to traditional Japanese buildings without being maudlin. The materiality reinforces this notion.

Project At-a-Glance:

A dojo is a place for learning, practice, meditation, and connection to martial arts traditions. This dojo is designed to inwardly inspire calm and contemplation while outwardly honoring its natural setting. The result is strength centered in its expression, with submission to its wild site.

Project Summary:

Nestled into the wild of a vast coastal Maine site, this dojo for a single-family retreat is one of a collection of uniquely crafted buildings. The clients sought to create a space for learning, practice, and immersive meditation. In designing the space, the architects sought to embrace the traditions, respect, and trust embedded in practicing judo. The structure and the rituals that inhabit its space are equally rooted in honor and respect.

The heart of the dojo is the physical practice of judo. Its goals were simple: a 20-by-20-foot uninterrupted area. A central mat floor

is enveloped by raw, peeled log columns that reach upwards to a lantern of glass and rhythmic exposed timber framing. In its design, this core breathes with an elevated ceiling canopy filled with natural light. The central space invites clarity and an upward connection to nature, while the surrounding lower roof reaches horizontally outward to the site.

Below the lower roof canopy, an interior walkway wraps the mat, creating areas for rest and the rituals of preparing tea, as well as simple but organized storage for robes and mats. A surrounding timber bench, with components borrowed from the structure, is versatily used as a platform for spectators, meditation, and sleepovers, and as a plinth for a wood stove.

Captured within solid corners, a series of custom-crafted pocket glass and screen doors transform the dojo into a breeze-filled, screened pavilion inviting nature into the experience. An outer walkway connects to the site's distant views. The topography gently slopes downward, sweeping below the overhanging lower roof and revealing a deck scribed to the grounding ledge. From its core outward, the buildings' symmetrical character shifts subordinate to the natural ledge.