

IN THE LIVING ROOM OF THIS NEW YORK TOWN HOUSE, A REGENCY-STYLE MANTEL AND AN ANTIQUE STUDDED BUFFET MINGLE WITH A 1902 MOSQUE CHAIR BY CARLO BUGATTI, A MIRROR BY MISHA KAHN, A CIRCA 1960 MASK BY JACQUES SAGAN, AND A COCKTAIL TABLE BY ADO CHALE. THE PAINTING TO THE LEFT OF THE FIREPLACE IS BY FRIEDRICH KUNATH.

In this West Village town house, architect *Steven Harris* and designer *Julie Hillman* create a spirited harmony of old and new

TEXT BY HANNAH MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY BY MANOLO YLLERA

HOUSE BLEND

FRIEDRICH KUNATH.



BELOW IN THE ENTRY, A CIRCA 1911 ARMCHAIR BY HANS GÜNTHER REINSTEIN SITS WITH ART BY (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT) CHRIS OFILI, MATT CONNORS, MICHAEL KREBBER, AND WILL BOONE. RIGHT THE CALACATTA ICE-CLAD KITCHEN IS TEMPERED WITH A WOOD DINING TABLE FROM TUCKER ROBBINS, A BODY BUDDIES BREAST BOWL BY BNAG, AND LIGHTING BY ATELIER VAN LIESHOUT. ALL FITTINGS ARE BY DORNBRACHT.



S

trolling the shady, brownstone-lined streets of the West Village, every now and then you get a peep at what exists behind those stately, centuries-old façades. Maybe it's the glowing sphere of a Noguchi lantern, lit up at night. Or a cozy library lined in books.

But a glimpse inside one of the neighborhood's historic 1830s town houses just might stop you in your tracks. Picture this: a bronze, balloon-like Misha Kahn mirror, a plywood-and-alabaster daybed by Rick Owens, a fringed chair by the Italian Art Nouveau master Carlo Bugatti, and perhaps, amid it all, a teenage kid headed upstairs to do homework.

"I mean, Bugatti?" gushes AD100 interior designer Julie Hillman, who met her aesthetic match in this up-for-anything client. "Very few people even understand Bugatti, much less will put Bugatti with an antique fireplace, a Misha Kahn mirror, and a French country studded cabinet. But that's who she is. The more experimental we got, the more the client liked it."

After raising their three kids in an apartment on the Upper East Side, the clients—a family of five—sensed a kind of gravitational pull downtown. "We just felt the energy of the city," recalls the wife. Her husband was nostalgic for his salad days, when, as a graduate student at NYU, he spent hours playing chess in Washington Square Park. Every weekend the family found themselves heading toward those

CHRIS OFILI, MATT CONNORS, MICHAEL KREBBER, WILL BOONE.

lower Manhattan blocks, beloved for their bustling bric-a-brac of shops, restaurants, and charming old homes.

When they settled on a 19th-century Greek Revival town house, complete with an erstwhile musical composer's studio overlooking a 90-year-old sycamore tree out back in the garden (Rees Roberts + Partners would later revamp that space), they tapped AD100 architect Steven Harris to recalibrate the floor plan. He and his team knew the house well—after all, they had been consistently working with its different owners over the past 25 years. For this family, Harris explains, "we took advantage of every square inch available, redeploying bits of space here and there." An addition on the back of the house allowed the kitchen and main bedroom to extend over the garden, under which they carved out a basement space for a

music room and gym. Somewhere along the line a homeowner had scrapped the front stoop, meaning visitors entered at the garden level; Harris kept it this way, making the south-facing parlor-floor living room, with its tall ceilings and gracious scale, "the best room in the house."

But while the architecture prioritized function and maximizing space within the nearly 200-year-old structure, the interiors were far more fantastical, highlighting the homeowners' art collection and developing taste for bespoke design, none of which were sacrificed for that more conventional notion of "a family home."

"Some clients might say, Well, let's do collectible design in the formal living spaces," explains Hillman. "With this client, we did it in every single room." As a result, the home reads like

IN THE DINING ROOM-SLASH-LIBRARY, A NACHO CARBONELL CHANDELIER CROWNS A CUSTOM DINING TABLE WITH BRONZE BASES BY ERIC SCHMITT AND VINTAGE CHAIRS BY AXEL EINAR HJORTH AND PIERRE JEANNERET. A SNAKE SCULPTURE BY JENNIFER GUIDI AND PAINTING BY JOHN ARMLEDER.



JENNIFER GUIDI
JOHN ARMLEDER

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT AN ERIC CROES BENCH IN THE VENETIAN PLASTER-ENCASED MUDROOM. IN THE DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM, A CUSTOM BED IS FLANKED BY DOUG JOHNSTON PENDANTS. THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE IS ACCENTED WITH A BRASS HANDRAIL AND BESPOKE LIGHTS BY ROGAN GREGORY NESTLED INTO THE WALLS.



“The more experimental we got, the more the client liked it.”
— Julie Hillman



©GÜNTHER FÖRG 2021 / ARTISTS' RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK. JOSH SMITH.

ABOVE AN AFRA AND TOBIA SCARPA FLOOR LAMP, CAMPANA BROTHERS ARMCHAIR, AND WENDELL CASTLE COCKTAIL TABLE IN THE LIVING ROOM. PAINTINGS BY GÜNTHER

FÖRG (OVER THE CUSTOM SOFA) AND JOSH SMITH. RIGHT AN ALABASTER PENDANT BY BRUNO MOINARD ÉDITIONS AND MIRROR BY LIND + ALMOND IN THE POWDER ROOM.





ABOVE THE MARBLE-CLAD MAIN BATH FEATURES A MIRROR BY EILEEN GRAY, A PENDANT BY DAVID WISEMAN, AND A HORSEHAIR STOOL BY J. M. SZYMANSKI. FITTINGS ARE BY FANTINI RUBINETTI. **OPPOSITE** PAINTED A HIGH-GLOSS BENJAMIN MOORE BLUE, THE HOMEWORK ROOM IS ACCENTED WITH CHARLOTTE PERRIAND SCONCES AND A SHAGGY RUG BY SWISS ARTIST CHRISTOPH HEFTI.

a roster of today's top design stars: a fluffy Campana Brothers chair in the living room, a sculptural Nacho Carbonell fixture above the dining table, a hulking Haas Brothers fireplace in the main bedroom. When tasked with lighting the spiral staircase, Hillman commissioned sculptor Rogan Gregory to carve out glowing, site-specific niches in the walls. And even in the mudroom, elegantly coated in matte-black Venetian plaster, a solid bronze bench by Eric Croes was a perfect fit for the petite entry.

One thing the client had specially requested was a dramatic entryway. And just past the mudroom, Hillman delivered: a soaring gallery with a graphic marble floor that offers a taste of her clients' expansive art collection—an eye-popping sculpture by Matt Connors; paintings by Michael Krebber, Chris Ofili, and Will Boone—assembled with the help of Jodi Dady and Maureen Mahony of Mahony Dady Art Advisory.

Around the house, more of that blue-chip art and design mixes effortlessly with custom-made upholstered pieces and lots and lots of high-impact marble. The client was involved

in all of it—"I had her go to the upholsterer," explains Hillman. "We wanted her to sit on everything to know exactly what she was getting." The same went for the stone yard where Hillman and her client went for gutsy specimens, like the kitchen's Calacatta Ice island, which Hillman softened with a raw-edge wood table from Tucker Robbins.

Somehow the spaces never get too precious. Upstairs, when Hillman noticed the way the eye was drawn to the small anteroom at the end of the hall, she gave it a coat of blue lacquer and turned it into a homework room—complete with Charlotte Perriand sconces and a shaggy rug by Swiss textile designer Christoph Hefti. On the ground level, around a site-specific, Jean-Michel Frank-inspired plaster fireplace, the family gathers to hang out and watch TV. And below that, in the basement, the husband holes up in his ultimate man cave: a soundproofed music room. "It's like a wine cellar, but for guitars," dishes Hillman.

As New York emerges from the global pandemic that shuttered restaurants and bars for more than a year, this family can't believe their luck to have a town house at the center of it all. Now, the client reports, "we want all our friends to move downtown." **▲**

