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Hernan Bas**

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A Wifredo Lam painting and sculptural seating by Gio Ponti and the Campana Brothers animate a New York aerie by Brian McCarthy.

Features

130 EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED

Brian McCarthy devises a New York City duplex with glamour at every turn, installing eye-catching contemporary art in spirited conversation with collectible design.

By Stephen Wallis

140 THESE WALLS CAN TALK

In Essex, England, artist Grayson Perry, in conjunction with architect Charles Holland, conjures an entire house as a living work of art.

By Dominic Bradbury

146 BOLD AND BALANCED

Fisher Weisman Brugioni reworks a collecting couple's vacation home in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, mixing vibrant paintings with artisanal masterpieces and custom accents.

By Jill Sieracki

154 DEAR MR. FANTASY

Artist Hernan Bas opens the door of his Miami studio, offering a preview of the imaginative portraiture on view in a new exhibition at The Bass Museum of Art.

By Hilarie M. Sheets

158 LIFE IMITATES ART

Art, design, and fashion converge in moments of unexpected visual synchronicity.

By Stefanie Li

166 HIGH IMPACT

In a sky-high Manhattan residence, DHD Architecture + Interior Design provides a stylish backdrop for a client's collection of bold canvases by cutting-edge talents.

By Vicky Lowry



FRANCESCO LAGNESE

Everything Is Illuminated

Designer Brian McCarthy's transformation of a New York City high-rise duplex is a tour de force of exquisite texture and refined detail



*By Stephen Wallis
Photography by Francesco Lagnese
Styled by Howard Christian*

A Glenn Brown painting, mounted above a Philippe Antonioz console table, is given pride of place in the living room of a Manhattan apartment designed by Brian McCarthy in collaboration with architects Alexandre Gamelas & Catarina Santos Arquitectos and Andrew V. Giambertone & Associates, Architects. Arrayed around a Fredrikson Stallard acrylic table from David Gill Gallery are a vintage Gio Ponti armchair, a 1980 Philippe Hiquily table, a custom sofa and armchair by Jonas, and a Campana Brothers mohair-upholstered sculptural chaise. For details see Sources.

A Frederik Molenschot chandelier hangs in the vaulted library, which features paneling with straw marquetry by Ateliers Lison de Caunes, a Kam Tin pyrite mantelpiece, and curtains in a Claremont fabric embroidered by Lesage. An Hervé Van der Straeten cocktail table is joined by a round side table by Mattia Bonetti and a Galerie Diurne rug. OPPOSITE: In the bar, Atelier Mériquet-Carrère applied gold leaf to the ceiling and crafted the lacquer woodwork; Based Upon fashioned the panels inset with resin. A Drift light sculpture hovers overhead, while Hervé Van der Straeten sconces frame a painting by Marc Chagall.



What's the most seductive spot for cocktails in New York City?

It might just be a bar that designer Brian McCarthy recently created on an upper floor of a Park Avenue high-rise. The cocooning room, its arched floor-to-ceiling window framing a glittering downtown view, is lined in gold-dappled, coral-lacquer paneling with insets of swirling, smoky resin embellished with bronze details. Descending from the gilded barrel-vaulted ceiling is a Drift light sculpture whose intricate bronze lattice contains delicate, light-emitting dandelion seed heads. The curved bar, topped with marble and trimmed in brass, features a marquetry front of dyed wood veneers composed in a painterly feather pattern. As refined as anything conjured during Art Deco's heyday, this jewel-box space exudes echoes of earlier eras but also feels decidedly fresh.

"It's very sumptuous, very glam," says McCarthy, whose distinguished portfolio attests to the fact that he knows a thing or two about glamour. He devised the room for repeat clients who love to entertain family and friends. Lucky them.

The bar is just one highlight of a duplex apartment McCarthy masterminded for the couple, whose close-knit clan includes three adult children who are now having kids of their own. A decade earlier, McCarthy designed the family's Long Island home, an "18th-century-inspired, very

neoclassical house," he explains. "And I wanted this, with their blessing, to be a very different experience."

His aim wasn't to abandon classicism entirely but to strip it down and give it a more contemporary feel, with Italian postwar architect Carlo Scarpa, who was known for his obsessively detailed modern interiors, as a primary inspiration. "When you really get into it, the level of detail and the finishes we chose are off the charts," McCarthy says of the three-year project, which he oversaw in collaboration with architects Alexandre Gamelas & Catarina Santos Arquitectos and Andrew V. Giambertone & Associates, Architects. "But you have to really look. Nothing is in your face."

That is not to say the apartment lacks for high-impact moments, starting with the double-height stair hall. McCarthy transformed the entry into an elegant elliptical shape, while replacing the staircase with one that has a more graceful sweep and a balustrade that plays off the marble floor he designed in a "sort of Renaissance spirit, with the geometries blown up to make it much more modern," he explains. For this residence the clients committed to focusing on modern and contemporary art, and one of El Anatsui's shimmering tapestries made from cast-off bottle caps is mounted above the stairs, helping to set the tone. A boldly faceted Hervé Van der Straeten chandelier and a curvaceous Wendell Castle concrete chair, both works of art in their own rights, add sculptural presence.

When it came to the apartment's furnishings, apart from a number of choice vintage pieces, everything was custom designed by McCarthy and his team or commissioned from one of his go-to artisans. In the sprawling, sun-splashed living room, the mix features one distinctive piece after another, from midcentury Gio Ponti armchairs and a 1980 Philippe Hiquily biomorphic side table to a Campana Brothers Brazilian Baroque lounge chair and chaise, the latter specially designed for this project.

An avid collector of contemporary art himself, McCarthy assisted in guiding the clients' art acquisitions, accompanying them to galleries and fairs such as Art Basel in Switzerland, where they purchased the Glenn Brown painting of a twisting, statuesque female figure that hangs prominently in the living room. "That was the first piece of art that we bought, and it led to



Wrapped in decorative plaster panels by Atelier Mériquet-Carrère, the dining room is outfitted with Pollaro Custom Furniture chairs and a Vosges lacquer table that McCarthy enlivened with a François-Xavier Lalanne centerpiece beneath an Ingo Maurer chandelier. OPPOSITE: An El Anatsui tapestry overlooks the staircase that McCarthy redesigned, and the Hervé Van der Straeten chandelier plays off the marble floor, on which a concrete chair by Wendell Castle rests.



“The level of detail and the finishes we chose are off the charts,” says designer Brian McCarthy. “But you have to really look. Nothing is in your face”



Artist Nancy Lorenz created lacquer panels embellished with mother-of-pearl and silver leaf for the primary suite's sitting room, where Ayala Serfaty ceiling lights float above a custom-designed L-shaped sofa by Jouffre and a rounded Elizabeth Garouste chair. The desk by W. P. Sullivan features Atelier Viollet straw marquetry and is topped by a lamp made with an Edouard Cazaux vase from the 1930s; the rug is by Beauvais Carpets.

every other decision,” he says, noting that the couple is drawn to figurative works, including the more abstracted Wifredo Lam canvas displayed opposite the painting by Brown.

A number of rooms throughout the apartment don't really call for art, thanks to decor that delivers its own visual oomph. Take, for example, the dining room, where McCarthy enlisted Paris studio Mériquet-Carrère to create wraparound plaster wall panels with tropical birds, trees, and flowers carved in relief. “It eliminates the need for, beyond the furniture, anything else that is art,” says McCarthy. This is especially true with one of Ingo Maurer's fantastical chandeliers with exploding porcelain plates and flatware suspended over the custom lacquer table.

In the library, which features a handkerchief-vaulted ceiling inspired by John Soane's 19th-century dining room, McCarthy clad the walls in cognac-hued lacquer paneling inset with sunburst-like expanses of straw marquetry. “The room's lacquer is Jean Dunand inspired with the warm

buttery caramel colors,” says the designer, who also outfitted the space with a dazzling mantelpiece made of cubic pyrite.

The emphasis on exquisite detail continues on the upper floor, which McCarthy completely reconfigured, giving over nearly two-thirds of the area to the primary suite. In addition to his and her baths and dressing rooms, there's a home office for the husband and a lounge that has a sitting area as well as a desk for the wife. Anchoring that space is a series of atmospheric lacquer panels created by artist Nancy Lorenz using indigo-toned lacquer speckled with mother-of-pearl and silver leaf, while cloudlike Ayala Serfaty lights float above.

“It's a rich apartment, but there's a human quality to the feeling you get, being so warm and so welcoming,” says McCarthy. “Every room is one where you feel comfortable sitting down anywhere.” An exception, of sorts, is the lovely bar, which the designer says was conceived primarily as a place to mingle during cocktail parties. Though McCarthy did furnish it with a plush, scallop-back banquette. Just in case anybody swoons. □



FROM TOP: Mark Brazier-Jones pendants dangle above a velvet-clad Elizabeth Garouste chaise and a Jallu Ébénistes vanity in the wife's dressing room, which McCarthy accented with verre églomisé details by Miriam Ellner. The primary suite's bespoke bed is dressed in Vis-a-Vis bedding and bordered by Alasdair Cooke nightstands and Barbara Palatin-Doyle lamps from Liz O'Brien; the chandelier is by Robert Goossens from Maison Rapin.

ARTFUL EYE

1 Modern glamour gets a Baroque twist in this Manhattan residence by Brian McCarthy, who furnished the living room with a matching chair and chaise by the **Campana Brothers**. "The bronze frame is made up of hundreds of pieces arranged like marquetry and soldered together," says McCarthy. Sculptural Gio Ponti chairs and a canvas by Wifredo Lam add to the alluring mix. davidgillgallery.com

2 The dining room walls are sheathed in elegant plaster carvings conjured by **Atelier Mériguet-Carrère** in Paris. "It references Armand-Albert Rateau and the beautiful bath he did for Lanvin," explains McCarthy of the bespoke, exotic design. "We wanted to capture light and shadow in here." ateliermeriguet.fr

3 A tapestry by Ghanaian sculptor **El Anatsui**, who recently unveiled a monumental commission at London's Tate Modern, makes a powerful statement in the entry hall. The artist is revered for meticulously weaving recycled materials such as bottle caps into stunning wall works (like this 2016 piece, *Trova*). "The space needed something textural and asymmetrical to break it from the walls," says McCarthy. jackshainman.com

4 "I'm a marble freak," admits McCarthy, who deployed two richly veined varieties from **BAS Stone** for a powder room's walls and flooring. "I wanted the stone to be the artwork." He also tapped **Fornasetti** to create the lacquer cabinet, a nod to the classical design preference of the clients. basstonenyc.com, fornasetti.com



6



(1, 2, 4-6) FRANCESCO LAGNESE; (3) © EL ANATSUI, COURTESY OF JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK; (7) © GLENN BROWN, ROB McKEEVER, COURTESY OF GAGOSIAN

5 Brooklyn talent **Misha Kahn** devised the primary bedroom's custom table using a 1,400-pound hunk of South African rose quartz as a sculptural base. "The wife loves crystals, and I share that love," says McCarthy. "The way Misha works the bronze over stone feels so natural and organic." friedmanbenda.com

6 Composed like a jewel box, the luminous bar area features a gilded ceiling by Atelier Mériguet-Carrère and a stunning **Drift** chandelier made with real dandelion seeds. Anchoring the space is intricate cladding by British studio **SilverLining**. "It's very multilayered," says McCarthy. Additionally, British

firm **Based Upon** created the sophisticated wall panels, which are composed of resin and bronze inset into lacquer. "It's a yummy, delicious space that's super sexy." studiodrift.com, silverliningfurniture.com, basedupon.com

7 An exuberant painting by renowned British artist **Glenn Brown**, who recently opened his own museum called The Brown Collection in London, hangs in the living room. "His body of work is very contemporary, but there's an art-historical aspect in the manner in which he paints," says McCarthy. *Wild Horses*, a 2007 work, illustrates his method of distorting classical motifs. gagosian.com