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ASIA 2015
24-page Trend Report
Pictures tell a thousand words, and so designer John Beckmann let the artwork guide his design for this New York condominium.
Housed in a historic building located along Bond Street in New York, this three-bedroom condominium embodies a wealth of impressive attribution that would woo any art collector. Built in 1871, the building features an ornate cast iron façade and stunning blue mansard roof. Recent addition from previous owner includes a concrete feature wall and a master bath enveloped in hot-rolled steel. Aesthetics aside, the building also has remarkable provenance – it accommodated a manufactory of watch cases. It was these unique attributes that enticed the current owner, a director of a global hedge fund to make it his home.

An art collector himself, he desired a luxurious and liveable space that emphasises his growing collection of young emerging artists the likes of Aaron Curry, Jonas Wood, Hugh Scott Douglas and Adam Pendleton. Thus, a luxury minimalist backdrop with a neutral palette was his main requisite. Liking the way Axis Mundi’s clean modern interiors always provide a flawless canvas for contemporary art, the owner hired John Beckmann, the principal of the inter-disciplinary design firm to renovate his home.

AN APARTMENT FULL OF PROVENANCE, THE NEW OWNER COULDN’T LAY HIS EYES OFF ITS FOREGOING CHRONICLES AND UNIQUE AESTHETICS.
An art collector himself, Michael sought assistance from Director of Metro Pictures to curate the art collection for his new home.

Pretty much a clean canvas to begin with – all the main works were already in placed aside from repainting and removing some wallpaper – the main design challenge lied in achieving a sense of scale in such a colossal space that could easily feel cavernous, or somewhat dismal. On top of that, John had to create a social area decked with a variety of seating options.

Unfazed, John and his team devised a two-pronged approach. One: break the 3,400 square feet floor plan into more intimate gathering areas; and two: organise proportioned furniture that filled out the space. As suggested by the owner, a muted colour palette was used. The warm greys, taupe and beige furnishing tones of the furniture lend a refined materiality with the condominium’s salvaged elements (concrete wall, cast-iron columns and steel details).

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Imbuing some glamorous pops of colours within the clean-lined contemporary furnishings helped enlivened the condominium too. The B&B Italia Metropolitan swivel chair in lively canary yellow is accompanied with punches of turquoise cushions in the living room; and Poltrona Frau Ginger chairs covered in Hermes-like orange leather at the dining.

With that, every artwork takes center stage in the dwelling space. The Adam Pendleton’s enigmatic mirror painting of a woman takes on a powerful graphic quality in the living room; Seascapes photographs in the master bath lend a tranquil ambience; and a surreal Jung Lee photograph dominate above the bed.

But what makes the project successful is neither the high-end furnishing nor the colourful artwork. It’s the unpretentious and seemingly positive manner that tied everything together - contemporary without being cold and glamorous without being overly decorated. It’s a purposeful and artistic abode that will soon acquire its own distinct provenance.

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