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# SPACES

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# NEST

# modern

A Midtown Manhattan loft inspires  
designer Michael Cox to move Modern

DESIGNER MICHAEL COX WAS LIVING IN A CLASSIC SIX ON THE UPPER WEST Side, complete with crown molding and paneling, when he fell for the 18-foot ceilings and sunlight-drenched rooms of a new construction. The duplex loft on East 53rd Street that was more modern than his traditional Foley & Cox style. But it was just the blank canvas that Cox and his partner, Michael Sullivan, had been looking for: a place where they could rotate art and sculpture languishing in storage, properly live with Sullivan's vast accumulation of books, and entertain without guests' being boxed into rooms.

"The uniqueness of the space was really attractive," says Cox of the double-height two-bedroom, which has an airy open plan on the first floor and master suite in the upstairs loft. Also inviting were the top-quality finishes. "They were using doorknobs that we've used at Foley & Cox," says the designer, "and running oversized ceramic tile vertically in the guest bath—things that we had done in our own projects." *CONTINUED*



## living library →

"Real, not decorative," is how Michael Cox characterizes the reading matter stored in the Vitsoe 606 Universal Shelving System from Moss. A long-armed Jean Prouvé Potence lamp swings to accommodate various tasks. Left: The Cité armchair is a re-issue of a 1930 Jean Prouvé design.





telling details →

"They're kooky Pop, and I just loved the acidity of the colors," says Cox of the Ganesh pillows he found in Los Angeles. Mindful of their chocolate Labrador, Athena, the owners added a black stripe to the three-cushion sofa. Stainless bar stools by Mark Albrecht have woven-leather seats.



↑ chic

sleek

Cox didn't alter the kitchen's contractor-specified finishes: a statuary-marble backsplash; countertops that wrap the side of the island; and built-in cabinetry with metal-framed, frosted-glass fronts.

Cox knew that no matter how close to "move-in condition" the finished project turned out to be, he would soon be eyeing new furniture and art—especially when traveling abroad. "One of the hazards of this job is that you're constantly finding things you fall in love with," he says. So a neutral palette was a must in order to provide a gallery-like setting for the Thai naga architectural elements that he mounted as sculpture, the Buddha statues from Thailand, and the colorful beaded boxes from Bali. Re-editions of midcentury furniture and lighting classics from Jean Prouvé and Mies van der Rohe suited the Zeitgeist of the modern loft, and helped balance Cox's international treasures.

The designer also played with the scale of the living areas by mixing undersized and oversized furnishings. In the living room, a low, 14-inch high cocktail table and a 16-inch-high sofa (three inches shorter than standard) help ceilings soar; and in the master bedroom, a massive leather headboard and large bedside chests "shrink the space—making it more nestlike." — See Resources.

inner beauty →

inner

Buddha statues from Thailand are surrounded by orchids on the cocktail table. Cox's credo: "Create a space that allows you to add your personality."

CONTINUED



"It's all about the CRAZY, HUGE scale of that table. IT'S ONE SOLID SLAB OF ACACIA that follows the natural outline of the tree."



matters of scale →

A Turkish textile drapes a monolithic Ralph Lauren saddle-leather headboard. Cox designed the white-laminate bedside chests with walnut drawers. Terracotta horses from the Han Dynasty share real estate with a Jacques Adnet lamp—"my absolute, absolute favorite," says Cox of the Paris flea-market find. "That tiny lamp with that enormous headboard."



← on the surface

Rebecca, an oil portrait by Santa Monica-based artist Jennifer Nehrass (like Cox, a Ralph Lauren alum) hangs over the dining-room table, which the designer uses to display his collection of Indian temple toys. "It's another surface opportunity—like the cocktail table—where I can play around with collections and switch things out."