

ON LOCATION

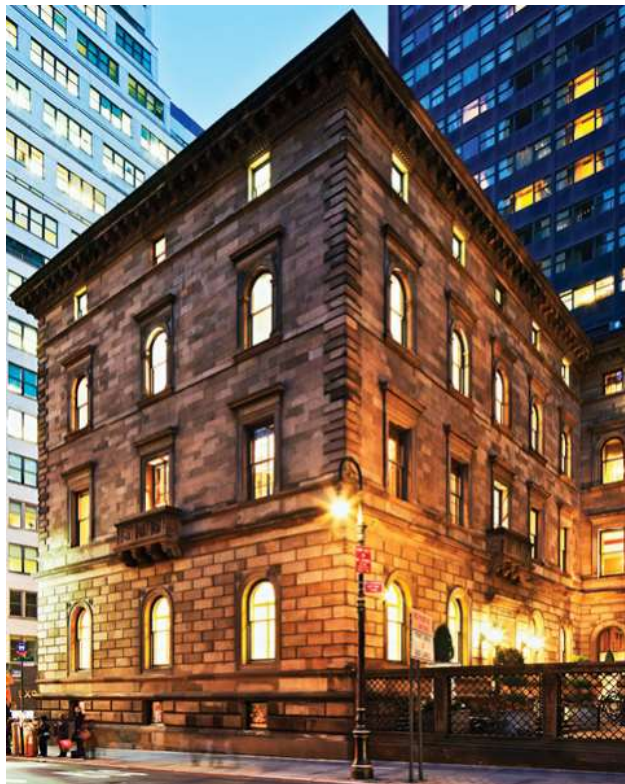
Kips Bay

DECORATOR SHOW HOUSE

Filling a beloved landmark on Madison Avenue, this year's stellar outing boasts spectacular rooms that illustrate what's new — or soon-to-be-trending — in contemporary interior design.

by Jorge S. Arango

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A more venerable landmark could hardly be imagined for this year's Kips Bay Decorator Show House, which opened on May 1 at McKim, Mead & White's 1883 Villard Houses on Madison Avenue between 50th and 51st streets in Manhattan. (It runs through the month; proceeds from the \$35 entry fee benefit the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club.) But conjuring fresh, modern spaces out of interiors steeped in Beaux Arts-era detail — acanthus moldings, marble fireplaces, recessed paneling — posed a formidable challenge. This year's all-star designers have proved themselves more than up to the challenge, however, decorating the rooms with a flair (many sourcing from Istdibs member galleries) that offers a versatile and dazzling array of perspectives on what constitutes contemporary interior design today.

The high-style rooms of this year's Kips Bay Decorator Show House occupy the interiors of McKim, Mead & White's 1883 Villard Houses, a Renaissance Revival multi-residence palazzo on Madison Avenue. Previous page: Kirsten Kelli's third-floor room features many vintage pieces from Istdibs gallery John Salibello Antiques. All photos by Timothy Bell for Kips Bay

MIX MASTERS

"Modern can be anything," says Randy Kemper of Ingrao Inc. "It's the mix that makes it modern." For this year's show house, he and his partner, Tony Ingrao, created a living room that functions as a sumptuous survey of design through the ages. It begins with Han Dynasty pottery and proceeds through ornately carved marble-topped 18th-century consoles and a late Paul Dupr -Lafon parchment-swathed console, culminating in a spectacular 15-foot sculptural fire screen by Ron Arad and a massive glass ceiling fixture by contemporary lighting designer Jeff Zimmerman and sourced from R & Company.

The show house living room created by Randy Kemper and Tony Ingrao of Ingrao Inc. features an array of pieces from a variety of time periods, but none proves more prominent than the 15-foot sculptural fire screen by contemporary designer Ron Arad from 1stdibs gallery Friedman Benda.



William Georgis's library includes seating of his own design, available through 1stdibs gallery Maison Gerard. Right: a Gentleman's Study by Markham Roberts, once again featuring pieces from John Salibello.



This sort of time travel is everywhere at Kips Bay this year. In William Georgis's library, for example, a contemporary "Whalebone" sofa and armchairs of his own design keep company with a George II bureau cabinet, circa 1730, from Carlton Hobbs. Designer John Douglas Eason, meanwhile, couldn't touch the 19th-century limestone staircase and banisters, but he managed to infuse the stairwell with modernity by hanging an Ingo Maurer chandelier. And, in Markham Roberts's library, a 1948 Gino Sarfatti chandelier from John Salibello Antiques illuminates furnishings as diverse as a Biedermeier desk chair from Newel and a Louis XVI cabinet from Daniel Barney.

PLAYING THE COLOR CARD

Contemporary tastes in color are confident, wide-ranging and adventurous. "The color is certainly of this era," says Alexa Hampton of her Moorish-flavored sitting room, which is saturated in periwinkle, violet, teal, rose pink, lichen green and royal blue. Variants of teal, in fact, make frequent appearances throughout the show house: in Gideon Mendelson's "Lady's Lair," Markham Roberts's library and on a lacquer bed in Cullman & Kravis's bedroom (against copper and rose gold walls). Christopher Peacock contributed a lady's dressing room lined in bubble-gum pink lacquer shelves and closets filled with Emilio Pucci togs. And Vicente Wolf painted two facing walls tangerine in a room titled "Orange is the New Black."

For the Lady's Dressing Room, Christopher Peacock installed bubble-gum pink lacquer shelves and closets, filling them with equally brightly hued clothing and accessories by Emilio Pucci.



A so-called Lady's Lair by Gideon Mendelson combines pieces from 1stdibs galleries L'Art De Vivre, Bernd Goeckler Antiques, Le Lampade, H.M. Luther, Maison Gerard, Newel, John Salibello, Sebastian + Barquet and Craig Van Den Brulle.



Even when the color used is white, its nuance is completely modern. Edward Lobrano's bedroom, for instance, subtly traverses through the palest beige to creamy white, creating a handsome and soothing chamber. Of his sitting room, Darryl Carter says, "I tend toward white space, as it generally demurs to the historic backgrounds." But Carter virtually records the passage of time by carefully calibrating his white palette to modulate light throughout the day. The effect is poetic, and, like the best poetry, it feels timeless.



In bedrooms by both Edward Lobrano and Darryl Carter (left), rich and warming shades of ivory and beige rule the roost.

THE BOLD GESTURE

A number of the designers decided to make rather audacious moves this year, incorporating oversized furniture, bold art or architectural interventions in their spaces.

Juan Montoya hung a gargantuan circa-1830 Spanish crystal chandelier from **Mallett** in the middle of his 700-square-foot "Untitled" room ("It took three days to assemble and three days to hang," he says), overlaying the original ceiling frieze with a much larger one because the existing version was "not forceful enough." He also built a dramatically swooping temporary wall to hide some of the wainscoting on one side, and populated the room with a 12-foot polished steel desk of his own design as well as a diverse array of modern art by Sol LeWitt, Olga de Amaral and Korean sculptor Byung Hoon Choi, among others.

In Juan Montoya's "Untitled" room, a ca.-1830 Spanish crystal chandelier from 1stdibs gallery Mallett joins pieces from Maison Gerard and Friedman Benda.





Orlando Diaz Azcuy titled its room "Tête-à-Tête," taking inspiration from the pair of Stanford White-designed recamiers at its center.



David Oldroyd of Orlando Diaz Azcuy used Abstract Expressionist-style scrims to hide heavy paneling and create a more energetically charged space for his "Tête-à-Tête" room (so named for twin recamiers in the center designed by none other than Stanford White, vantage points from which Azcuy's fictional collector client can enjoy his artworks).

Two stair landings employ graphic interventions that make traditional circulation spaces worth lingering in: SPAN Architecture created a sharp tension between old and new by building box-like structures within the neoclassical envelope that introduce a new angular geometry, then suspended minimalist lighting by Bec Brittain and Roll & Hill overhead. And Meyer Davis Studio converted their landing into a gallery for edgy works by such Brooklyn artists as Dustin Yellin and Bosco Sodi.

Left: Meyer Davis's stairway landing becomes a gallerylike venue for contemporary art. Right: SPAN Architecture's similar space involves some surprising interventions, not least of all dramatic contemporary lighting.



WITTY AND WICKED

Private jests in interiors are not a new idea. Madame de Pompadour commissioned François Boucher to paint her half-nude figure into faux mythological works destined for the homes of her lover Louis XV, an erotic “in joke” that kept his appetite for her fresh. But modern wit is hardly so genteel. William Georgis, always a reliable source of the cheeky statement, imagined his study as a place where New York’s Cardinal Spellman — who lived across the street in the rectory of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, and whose archdiocese owned parts of the Villard Houses — could entertain in ways not exactly celibate. Against the windows he creates an irreverent homoerotic pairing: a 19th-century plaster cast of Christ’s torso and a 2nd-century torso of Heracles (“each with six packs,” he notes of their musculature). And a console he designed (to be sold in a limited edition through **Maison Gerard**) comprises a rough plank of wood with a river of red epoxy cascading over its edges to create legs. “The blood of Jesus holding up his cross,” says Georgis with a wink. Atop it? A dish filled with nails, of course.



In Georgis's edgy study, a \$7,1730 giltwood mirror from Carlton Hobbs hangs above the designer's Santa Sangre console for Maison Gerard.



In her Sitting Room Folly, Alexa Hampton incorporated deep, rich color and a Moorish flavor. The chaise is from 1stdibs gallery 145 Antiques.

Matthew Quinn's kitchen, meanwhile, features window treatments of brass pipes, a sly reference to the pipe organ across the street at St. Patrick's, and his glass-fronted cabinets echo a trefoil design visible on the church's windows. Alexa Hampton's room comments on the perpetual reinvention of antecedents with a large Massimo Listri photo of Casa de Pilatos, in Seville, Spain. "Buildings like Casa de Pilatos have that thread of Moorish DNA, but they're quintessentially European," she says. (The photograph is a modern reference to an Islamic North African style copied by white Europeans, then copied from them by self-made Americans, thus removing the style even further from its source. So it references a reference that references still another reference.) She also manages to poke fun at the pretensions of the design field and the austere elegance of the Villard Houses with paper lanterns she purchased in Chinatown for \$20. "A chandelier there would have no longer been playful," says Hampton.

FASHION CONSCIOUS

Art, design and fashion comingle so fluidly nowadays that boundaries between them often feel indistinguishable. In Cullman & Kravis's bedroom, for instance, the photography on the walls — by Laurie Simmons, Miles Aldridge and Daido Moriyama — is largely about women and clothes (in particular attire that arouses and provokes). Next door, Carrier and Company, whose clients include fashion designer Jason Wu and *Town & Country* editor Jay Fielden, designed a chic little sitting room. "We like to think it might look like Anna Wintour's office," says Jesse Carrier, referencing another of his firm's famous clients. The room includes hand-painted gold-marbled wallpaper, a mirrored 1940s console from **Kerson Gallery**, a 1950s Arredoluce floor lamp from **Bernd Goeckler** and a sexy Natasha Law nude.

The show house's Cullman & Kravis-designed bedroom is so commodious, it includes an entire living area, one complete with bergères from Bernd Goeckler Antiques and a coffee table from Craig Van Den Brulle. The photograph over the fireplace is *Short Breaths #5*, 2012, by Miles Aldridge.



Villalobos Desio's cabinet of curiosities-style room features pieces from Istanbul design dealers H.M. Luther and Maison Gerard and art galleries Paul Kasmin and Hirsch & Adler. Right: A chic little sitting room by Carrier and Company.



Where there's fashion, of course, there's bling. Dallas-based Kirsten Kelli LLC's office/sitting room feels like a highly accessorized beauty on her way to a party, jangling all over with bangles and jewels. Gold and brass are ubiquitous: they're found on the strié pattern of the walls, on a 1960s Italian chandelier and a Jacques Duval-Brasseur tree sculpture (both from **John Salibello**), on gilded Aerin Lauder desk lamps from Circa Lighting, on a custom mirror and on the nail-head trim of a custom sofa. Even the wheatgrass planters filling the shelves are polished brass. More subtly, Villalobos Desio has created a stylish black-walled *wunderkammer* in a minuscule room that boasts a black-painted cork ceiling flecked with gold.