



SHOWHOUSES NYC

Inside the 2014 Kips Bay Decorator Show House

Thursday, May 1, 2014, by Amy Schellenbaum



All photos by Will Ferla

This week the 42nd annual Kips Bay Decorator Show House, the big kahuna of design events, opened in a landmarked Madison Avenue mansion, revealing interiors that have been lacquered, paneled, leathered, and marbled by designers such as Martyn Lawrence Bullard, Vicente Wolf, and Christopher Peacock. The **Mansion on Madison**, a 28,190-square-foot house labeled by the *New York Times* as “finally, the showplace [Kips Bay] deserves,” is one of midtown Manhattan’s Villard Houses built by prominent NYC firm **McKim, Mead & White** in the early 1880s. Participants got their paws on three of its six floors, making good use of those 16-foot-tall ceilings, original wood paneling, limestone walls, and stairwells larger than many New Yorkers’ entire apartments. As grand as the bare bones may be, this is, in fact, a decorator’s showcase—and decorate they did. Markham Roberts’ “gentleman’s study” includes lacquered turquoise walls, cork ceilings, and narwhal tusks; Gideon Mendelson’s “lady’s lair” boasts live tulips with razor-sliced petals and a rubber doormat made of Barbie dolls; Alexa Hampton’s “sitting room folly” displays lanterns she bought in Chinatown for \$2. And that’s not even mentioning William Georgis’ crucifixion-themed table. Intrigued? Take a full tour, below.



† **Ingrao’s A Study in Contrast** all began with one question: “How can we get this fireplace in the room?” The texture of the sculptural mantelpiece, which sluices into a fire grate and bench, was then mimicked in the gray combed plaster finish on each wall panel.



↑ The fireplace's artistic elements continue into the rest of the room, where the (sinfully soft) Francesco Binfaré "On the Rocks" sofa "floats in the room like a sculpture," according to Ingrao's rep, Rob Johansen.



↑ Ingrao brought in much in the way of colorless, manmade creations replicating nature. For example, Dutch artist Joris Laarman created scars of metal on this resin table to mimic the veiny patterns on a leaf.



↑ The lighting fixture looks like a cluster of jellyfish.



↑ Laarman also created the *Oumulus* coffee table, which plays with perception by recreating the shape of a cloud in heavy stone. The painting is a 2014 oil by Mark Wilson called "Cosmic Energy."



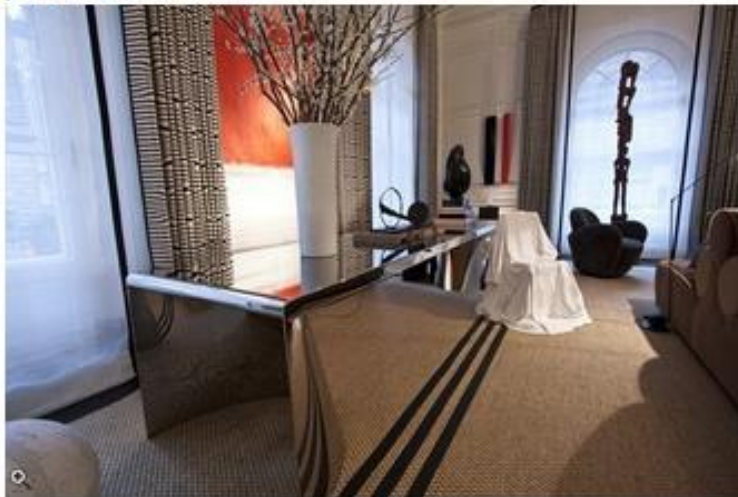
↑ For his *Untitled* living area Juan Montoya created a space "where every piece speaks for itself," according to Montoya's rep Charlie Martial. This includes chairs by Vladimir Kagan, a shapeless custom-built fireplace and wall panel, and an eight-foot-tall, 300-pound chandelier that had to be packed one crystal at a time. "I wanted to pull the rest of my hair out," Martial said.



↑ A vignette in Montoya's room.



↑ This coffee table is made from one solid piece of basalt rock. It weighs 2,000 pounds—a literal ton.



↑ The 12-foot-long polished stainless steel "desk" was designed for the space, while the leather-trimmed carpet is by Stark.



↑ Young Huh transformed what was originally a freight area into ladies-and-gents dual powder room and a lounge. She upholstered the wall in stamped fabric—two of the 38 stamps required are on display at the window's ledge—and coated the ceilings in goldleaf to create a space that, according to Huh, is "moody and glamorous and cozy at the same time."



↑ The wainscot is in patent leather.



↑ One of the powder rooms is coated in a high-gloss wall finish colored by eyeshadow and layered on in translucent strokes. The tile is a stone-and-mirror mosaic.



↑ For his *The Grand Entry*, Martyn Lawrence Bullard, the Bravo-lebrity known for going all-out on his *Million Dollar Decorators*, relied on surrealist photography, zebra-patterned mirror, and marbled wallpaper of his own design for decorative fabrics giant Schumacher.



1 Another shot of Bullard's entryway, starring tufted ottomans with brass feet (of his own design), lacquer console tables (of his own design), and a tufted "Malibu Sofa" (of his own design). The brass table lamps, however, are from the 1960s.



1 On the ceiling, Bullard created a collage of his marble paneling.



1 A view into William Georgis' study from Bullard's foyer.



↑ Architect William Georgis had a very specific inspiration for his study: the deceased Cardinal Spellman, who once reigned at St. Patrick's Cathedral across the street. As his rep, Sara Farevaag, noted, Spellman was "a supporter of Richard Nixon, Joseph McCarthy, and Broadway choir boys," so the ultra dark and sumptuous reds ("claret, burgundy, oerise, Chinese and blood reds" are all here) ring with an almost disturbing opulence.



↑ Spellman was a cardinal after all, so Georgis brought in this custom table not-so-subtly referencing the crucifixion of Jesus, with blood spilling from raw wood and a centerpiece of large nails.



↑ Another shot of the console, which Georgis designed and named *Santa Sangre*.



↑ Also featured: a 19th-century Agra rug, an English Regency rosewood library table, and Georgis-designed sofas and club chairs done up in turquoise.



↑ In the stairwell, John Douglas Eason paired a goldleaf Baroque console with a fiberglass chair covered with silver leaf and set it on a background of asymmetrical panels of steel gray and bronze mirror.



↑ The walls of the stairwell were hand-painted canvas and the photograph, of the Max Planck Institute reactor core, is by famous contemporary German photographer Thomas Struth.



↑ The second-floor hallway, titled by its designer Meyer Davis as *Gallery of Curiosities: Bringing Brooklyn to Manhattan*, comes with art by a Brooklyn graffiti artist and lighting fixtures by Brooklyn-based studio Roll and Hill.



↑ Another shot of the hallway. Those blocks are a 3D mosaic inlaid in layers of glass.



↑ For the 25-foot-by-20-foot kitchen, designer Matthew Quinn took inspiration from the room's view of St. Patrick's, incorporating custom cabinetry that reflects the cathedral's quatrefoil.



↑ Corner sinks are a signature of Quinn's.



↑ The window valences are inspired by pipe organ.



↑ Villalobos Desio crafted this "studiolo" by bringing in leather floors in a herringbone pattern, silk wall coverings, and cork ceilings flecked with gold. Oh, and let's not forget the "little foxy over there peeking out and saying 'hello.'"



↑ "We are in love with stone," the designer says of the skull.



↑ In here, "it's all about playing with chiaroscuro," the designer says. The table-side vignette includes Art Deco bowls, French pottery, a huge chunk of raw emerald, and an ivory figurine. The ottoman is a six-sided die: "We like to include a little bit of humor," he says.



↑ Vincente Wolf's theme, "Orange is the New Black," was inspired by two chairs he found in Paris.



↑ The chairs that inspired the room flank a working, floating fireplace.



↑ The designers at ODADA designed this space for a hypothetical young couple who collects art.



↑ Featured: cardboard chairs and white wall panels painted by Matt Ackerly.



↑ Another shot of ODADA's space.



↑ Believe it or not, the fluorescent ring that lights up the room was here when the designers arrived.



↑ According to the designers' rep Dani Mazza, Cullman and Kravis' bedroom was meant to be "sexy but g-rated," with an obelisk motif.



↑ The walls, painted in copper metallic and gold for a "warm, rosy effect," play host to provocative works by contemporary artists, like the "real doll" pictured here. On the adjacent wall are nude portraits.



↑ Cullman and Kravis placed blue glass under the bureaus' regency grills to give it "contemporary flare," according to Mazza.



↑ The designers at Carrier and Company lined one of the walls in antiqued mirror to reflect the room's Juliet balcony. The other walls are marbled with metallic paint.



↑ Another shot of Carrier and Company's space.



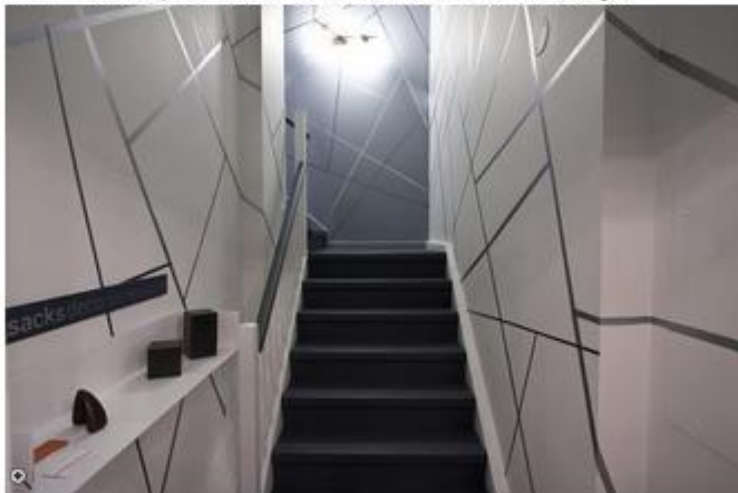
↑ Christopher Peacock's dressing room was inspired by the 1960s British TV show *Thunderbirds*, wherein the main character scoots around town in a pink Rolls Royce. Peacock's rep Robert Hughes called it "a whimsical theme room, but it's also very classic."



↑ The hardware is done up in 24-karat gold: "It doesn't have to be, but for Kips Bay we thought we'd go all-out." On the vanity are pretty containers full of Good N Plenty, but the designers "like to call them Prozac pills."



↑ Decorative painter Robin Sacks spruced up the industrial staircase with ombré, using three shades of gray and two different types of silver. "I knew when I saw the space I wanted to transition the color," Sacks says.



↑ "It's really fun to work at this scale," Sacks said. "I can react to the space."



↑ For her Moroccan-inspired *Sitting Room* Folly Alexa Hampton commissioned NYC-based studio Duggal to custom-print wall coverings based on tiles she spotted in Northern Africa. The lanterns she got for \$2 in Chinatown.



↑ The monochromatic image above the sofa is a blown-up photo of a Moroccan temple.



↑ Another shot of Hampton's space.



↑ SPAN Architects built wall panels and benches lined in paint and copper for the mansion's third-floor hallway.



↑ The design for Edward Lobrano's *Calming Oasis* began with this bed, which he also has in his own house.



↑ Inspired by an apartment he spotted in Paris, Roberts went for a lush, wet turquoise on the walls of his *Gentleman's Study*, which he punched up with natural history prints and antiques.



↑ Another shot of Roberts' study.



↑ Another shot of Roberts' study.



↑ Those big white spikes? Narwhal tusks.



↑ Kirsten Fitzgibbons and Kelli Ford of Kirsten Kelli are known for their love of gold and pops of neon, so it's no surprise their living area includes gold lamps, brass chandeliers, and gem-colored glassware.



↑ Also in the space: a portion of Matisse's *Jazz* series, on loan from a private collector.



↑ Gideon Mendelson crafted his *Lady's Lair* for a very particular woman: "she's powerful and still beautiful," Mendelson said, "and that's what I think this room is." The design is in many ways a story of dichotomies: hard woods and soft suede (both on the walls), angular geometrics (on the ceiling panel) and soft curves (on the mirror), as examples.



↑ The bull on the mantel is known as "the mascot of the room." The bull is a symbol of strength, "though this piece is almost lyrical, just like her." The bull is surprisingly heavy too, symbolizing, according to Mendelson, how "she packs a major punch."



↑ Another shot of Mendelson's "babe cave for the lady." The desk is German from the 1940s.



↑ This is the part of the room where Mendelson's imaginary client "invites the kid in to talk about college applications."



↑ The suede walls are trimmed with burlap embroidery.



↑ Darryl Carter was inspired by a concept known as "the collected home," one that is crisp and a little rugged, with portraits swiped with censoring white paint (a piece known as "The Happy Couple") and a gothic Revival chandelier. Fun fact: Carter often turns his carpets over to add more texture, as he did here.



↑ The sofa and daybed are both of Carter's own design.

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