

# INTERIOR DESIGN<sup>®</sup>

SEPTEMBER  
2017



soaking up new york



**After decades of dedicating**

the September issue to New York, *Interior Design* is for the first time devoting a whole section to real estate. Sure, the city has long possessed beaux arts grandes dames and pioneering modernist towers.

But for many years, while the Middle and Far East were building like crazy, it was quieter on the Big Apple front. Many of the best architects

were busy far away from home. Not so today.

**this city runs on real estate**

If one thing has become crystal-clear during the current boom, developers have come around to the value of good design. Observers point to *Interior Design* Hall of Fame

member Richard Meier's twin Greenwich Village apartment towers, completed in 2002, as a turning point. Until then, while Meier had designed museums from Los Angeles to Barcelona, Spain, not to mention government and commercial buildings in California and the Czech Republic, he'd never completed a ground-up structure in his hometown. So everyone in the real-estate world sat up and took notice. Developers are now turning to top local firms as well as superstars from abroad for buildings that are making singular contributions to the skyline.

Just consider SHoP Architects's American Cooper Buildings, two copper-clad towers by the East River in Midtown that lean toward each other as if engaged in a tango. A connecting sky-bridge looks like an arm flung around a dance partner—kick it, baby. It's not all about good looks, either. Sustainability has become the watchword for projects large and small. Of course, some firms have been attuned to these issues all along. But today, with LEED fully entrenched and evidence of green design's health benefits mounting, a certification program called WELL hopes to do for interiors what LEED has done for architecture.

Although many of the maneuvers that LEED and WELL require remain hidden to the buyer or renter's eye, plants are very much in evidence. Terraces and rooftops have come alive with landscaped lounges, lovely to look at and linger on. Interiors are just as imaginative, as designers experiment with materials and showcase original art. In apartment buildings, lobbies are being reinvented as community hubs, and coworking areas are cropping up for the benefit of the freelance workforce. Amenities are ever more plentiful: billiard rooms, wine cellars, hammams...or all of the above.

Designers new to the development game seem to enjoy the change of pace. Brian Messana and Toby O'Rourke sat in on meetings for the Upper East Side building that Messana O'Rourke is helping convert from a rental to a condominium—and discovered a talent for marketing and branding. "Before this, we'd always done very personal, one-on-one residential projects, never multi-family residential," Messana says. "But see? We're already talking like developers." And no marketing executive could have done a better job than the namesake principal of Andre Kikoski Architect, which is designing the interiors of Davis Brody Bond's apartment building 1 Hudson Yards on the edge of Midtown. Leading a tour that began in the lobby, he pointed out wall panels made by pouring molten bronze over linen.

Then there's always the possibility of impressing the family. Meyer Davis Studio's Will Meyer was recently watching the U.S. Open on television with his children when a real-estate commercial flashed onto the screen. His kids turned to him and asked, "Dad, isn't that the building you're working on?" —Jane Margolies

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project 520 West 28th Street,  
Chelsea  
developer Related

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## 100 ARCHITECTS &amp; DESIGNERS

**Foster + Partners** and  
**William T. Georgis**  
project 100 East 53rd  
Street, Midtown  
developer RFR Realty





# Zeff + Foster = Fabulous

Mark Zeff's apartment design in Norman Foster's Chelsea tower is more than the sum of its parts

text: jesse davis  
photography: nic leignei







The place where Manhattan's concrete meets the surrounding rivers has, over the centuries, inspired poets, painters, and dreamers. Walt Whitman's poem "Mannahatta" famously tied New York's very essence to the water: "City of hurried and sparkling waters! city of spires and masts!" Those masts might not be as plentiful as they were in Whitman's time, but we are certainly at Peak Spire, with starchitect creations rising at unprecedented rates, including on the Hudson River edge of Chelsea. Particularly prized, in a prime location just off the High Line park, is a Foster + Partners tower, its crisp grid of white concrete outlined with anodized aluminum. "It's a very swish building," Mark Zeff says.

When a longtime client asked Zeff's firm, known as MarkZeff, to finesse a 3,900-square-foot three-bedroom near the top of the tower, he knew just where to look for inspiration. "The idea was the river," he says. "The view is 240 degrees of the Hudson and downtown, with almost no buildings in front. So instead of trying to fill the place up, we went spare to keep the view as the main moment." Norman Foster's architecture already underscored the view's primacy, in fact, with windows framed in anodized aluminum and surrounded by a curved treatment in fiberglass-reinforced gypsum. "The technology is really brilliant," Zeff says. "It must have taken many tries to get right."

Brass shows up on the living room's spiky chandelier, with white sails for diffusers, and on the masts of a pair of floor lamps. In the dining area, the chandelier is also brass, in this case burnished. A paler metal plays a part as well—a specific request from the owner, who had admired a collection of white-bronze furniture that Zeff launched a couple of years earlier. "When I was developing the Bronze Age collection, everybody in the world was doing dark bronze," he says. "We came up with this manufacturing concept where the patina is on top of the bronze, which makes it



**Previous spread, left:** In the foyer of a Chelsea apartment by MarkZeff hangs an artwork that Derrick Velasquez composed from strips of marine vinyl.

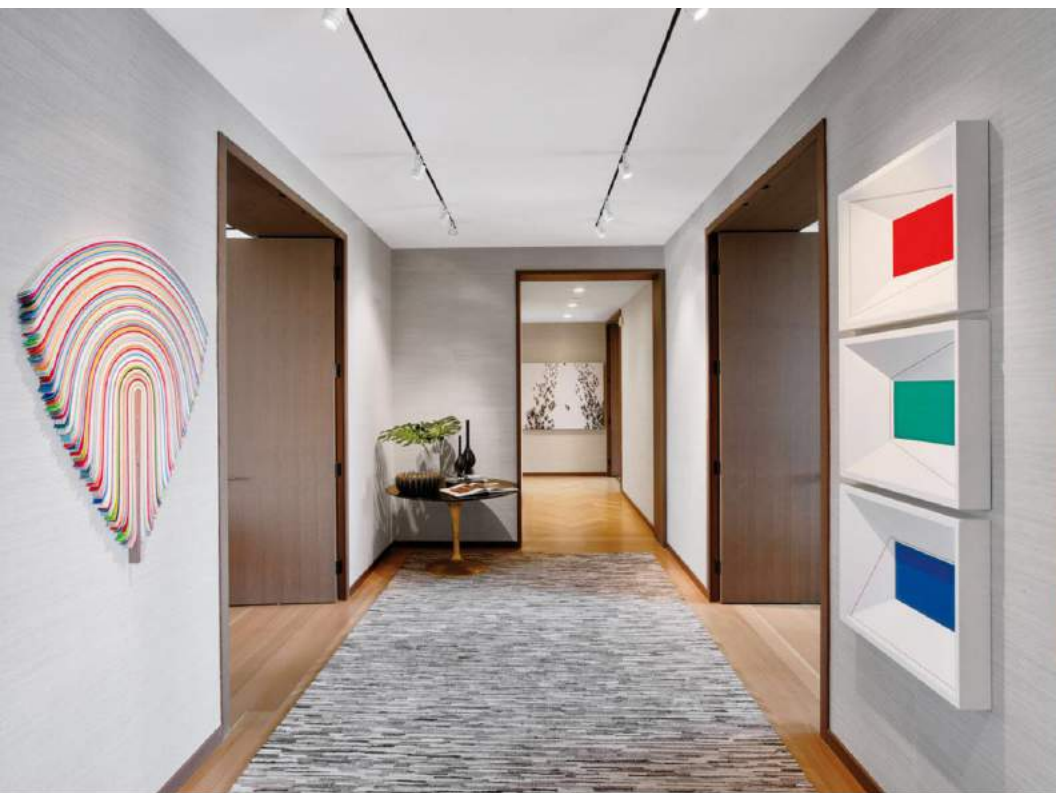
**Previous spread, right:** A choice by Konstantin Gric Industrial Design takes in the view from the master bedroom.

**Opposite:** The living room's David Weeks Studio chandelier hangs above a custom sofa and club chairs with white-bronze bases.

A mixed-media painting by Mary Weatherford dominates the end wall.

**Top:** In the dining area, the burnished brass chandelier is by Jonathan Browning Studios. **Bottom, from left:** The living room's Vladimir Kagan armchair is accompanied by a drinks table with a lacquered top. A chair by Charles and Ray Eames pulls up to a desk by Kai Kristiansen in the library.





**Opposite:** A cowhide rug softens the foyer's oak floorboards.

**Top, from left:** This surfboard leans against a foyer wall. A nickel task lamp lights a guest room. Also in the foyer is a painting in acrylic by Juan Genevès. **Bottom:** Stained oak veneers another guest room's dresser.

look almost like nickel. It's a really exciting look, something you haven't seen before." Here, it appears on the bases of an oversize sofa and club chairs.

Metallic finishes aside, Zeff restricted himself to a maritime palette of watery blues and grays. In the living room, that sofa is upholstered in a sumptuous pearl-gray velvet, while gray-and-cream cowhide covers the Vladimir Kagan armchairs. A cocktail table has a laquered top and antiqued brass legs, bronze pulls accent a leather-fronted credenza... and that's more or less it. "If I lived here, this room would be full of stuff," Zeff admits with a laugh. "But the owner prefers it very purposefully pared back." The library is particularly understated. A Danish mid-century sled-base desk—positioned perpendicular to the window to keep the view accessible but not distracting—sits on a gray wool rug. "We were going to put all sorts of things on the wall behind the desk," he says. "Instead, we kept it even-keeled. We just went with beautiful linen screens that look very masculine. It was about staying in control and following the architecture."

And sometimes leaving well enough alone. Foster's oak-veneered shelving for the library remains. He also specified master bathrooms with vast freestanding tubs and great slabs of black granite for the floors. "Keep it pure, keep it Foster, and keep it moving forward" was the strategy, Zeff notes—the "forward" part being represented by Italian alabaster bath accessories as a finishing touch. He scrapped an initial plan for a glass wall to separate the dining area from the kitchen. The work of visual separation is now done by the deep-brown oak of the dining table and the black leather of the chairs, dark contrasts to the cerused oak cabinetry and gray-veined white polished marble counters beyond.

Bedrooms occupy half the apartment. The master bedroom's walls are finished in stormy-gray Venetian plaster, warmed by the glow of Lindsey Adelman Studio's







branching chandelier. Guest rooms are simpler, with white walls and some mass-market furnishings. Blackout curtains on the north-facing windows can block the ever twinkling skyline.

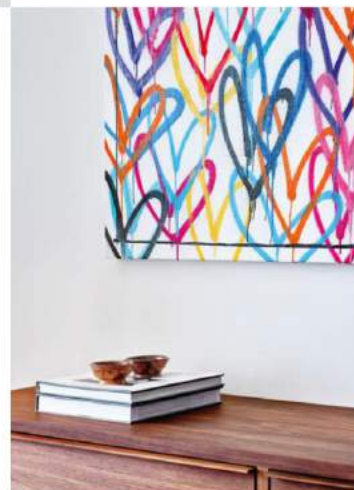
In both the private and the public zones, art is eye-popping. Zeff says he got his client "energized" to start a collection. Discoveries include a guest room's graffiti-heart composition, the living room's sky-blue painting resembling a giant Rorschach inkblot, and the foyer's rainbow wall sculpture, created by draping strips of colorful marine vinyl. Knickknacks, too, are bright and cheerful. To adorn bedside tables, for example, he supplied oversize red versions of children's jacks. They came from his own store, Blackburn, across the East River. 🍷

#### PROJECT TEAM

CATALINA CASTANO: MARK ZEFF. THAMES BUILDERS: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

#### PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT TREXES: WALL COVERING (FOYER, GUEST ROOMS). MASSIS: CHAISE (MASTER BEDROOM). DAVID WEEKS STUDIO: CHANDELIER (LIVING ROOM). BEDDING: CREDEXIA. ROMO GROUP: CLUB CHAIR FABRIC. TIBETANO: RUGS (LIVING ROOM, LIBRARY, FOYER). CORAGGIO: SOFA FABRIC, PILLOW FABRIC. CURTAIN FABRIC (LIVING ROOM, CURTAIN FABRIC (MASTER BEDROOM)). HOLLY HUNT ENTERPRISES: TABLE, CHAIRS (DINING AREA). RESTORATION HARDWARE: CHANDELIER (DINING AREA), DRESSER (GUEST ROOM). RALPH PUCCI INTERNATIONAL: ARMCHAIRS (LIVING ROOM). HERMAN MILLER: CHAIR (LIBRARY). THROUGH REFINE LIMITED: DESK. DCW EDITIONS: LAMP (RALPH LAUREN HOME). TASK LAMP (GUEST ROOM). ROOM & BOARD: NIGHTSTAND, DRESSER. THROUGH BLACKBARN: ACCESSORIES (GUEST ROOMS). CIRCA LIGHTING: CHANDELIER (GUEST ROOM). ARCHITEX INTERNATIONAL: CURTAIN FABRIC. SACCO CARPET: RUG (GUEST ROOM). CARPET (DRESSING ROOM). BRIGHT GROUP: BENCH (MASTER BEDROOM). LINDSEY ADELMAN STUDIO: CHANDELIER. RESIDENT THROUGH MATTER: CHANDELIER (DRESSING ROOM). AMERICH: TUB (BATHROOM). DORNBRACHT: TUB FITTINGS, SINK FITTINGS. DUPONT: VANITY COUNTER MATERIAL. WATERWORKS: ACCESSORIES. THROUGHOUT FRETTE: BED LINENS, TOWELS.



**Opposite:** Venetian plaster and a chandelier by Lindsey Adelman Studio distinguish the master bedroom.

**Top:** The master suite's dressing room runs between the bedroom and bathroom. **Bottom, from left:** A spray-painted canvas by JG Goldcrown enlivens a guest room. African granite paves the master bathroom.

[interiordesign.net/zeff/](http://interiordesign.net/zeff/) for more images of the apartment