

WANT vs. NEED: How the recession will (hopefully) lead us into a new design paradigm.

loftlife

THE LOFTSTYLE GUIDE TO LIFE IN THE CITY

- (No Sleep Till) Brooklyn Loft Party
- The Wallpaper Comeback
- Top Ten "Ruppie" Cities Revealed
- Green Lightbulbs: Hot LEDs
- Tons of Cool Stuff You Will Want

THOM FILICIA'S SECRET PAGE 66

SOHO'S BEST LOFT PAGE 38

ULTIMATE LIVE/WORK PAGE 56



TRIBUTE LOFTS PAGE 72



STUDIOPLEX PAGE 56



DESIGN LEGEND PAGE 48



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“We are the slaves of objects around us.” —Goethe



Extraneous design is dead.

Its demise was signaled when logos—the badges of brand names posing as symbols of status—fell out of favor. A year ago, Philippe Starck single-handedly checked the kind of design he put within reach of everyone into hospice when he told *Die Zeit* that he found everything he’s ever made (from resin fly-swatters to swanky residences) “unnecessary.” “Structurally seen,” he added, “design is absolutely useless.” And now, the final blow: a full-blown recession. But there’s no time for funerals. Designers and architects need to explore what we need (now), not what we want (on layaway).

Might we first suggest: No more “bells and whistles”? It’s hard to believe they were ever wanted. After all, who needs a camera in a phone? Or an MP3 player? Or the Internet? Wouldn’t a phone be easier to operate, more compact, more attractive, possibly even more receptive if it served its purpose, plain and simple, as a way to make and receive calls? The tendency to over-design has always seemed unwarranted. And the fact that one can’t find a simple cell phone without 28 other applications is warrantless. Same with webcams on every laptop or media screens in the backseats of taxis. Other than wasting our time, what function do such things serve?

Second: How can we expect our lifestyles to be sustainable, when our lives are uncontrollable? Regardless of income, square footage, or location, location, location, we consume so much there’s a constant need for space just to put things in. As George Carlin used to say: “Your house is a just pile of stuff with a roof

on it.” It certainly would make for an interesting study: Just how much is spent each year by Americans storing away things that can’t fit into their homes? And not just the overflowing, hot suburban messes on *Clean House*. After all, in order to have a minimalist interior, you must have places to hide things.

Just as the Japanese did during their Lost Decade, designers and architects need to concentrate on designs for living, not consuming. In the stark light of recession, concepts like ethical design, universal design, and sustainable design might even get the chance to thrive. And the execution of such concepts might bring us something like a new modernism or, possibly, turn the economy around.

On January 4th, in *The New York Times*, Michael Cannell (founder of thedesignvote.com) asked Paola Antonelli (senior curator of architecture and design at MoMA) if designers will rise to the challenge of the new recession. “This might be the time when designers can really do their job and do it in a humanistic spirit,” she answered. “There will be less design, but much better design.”

So for this issue, we say: less is better. Or as the modernists would say, “Time to bring form and function back.” In this vein, we revisit the last great design movement, and see how the work of the modernists still determines the stuff around us. We also visit with two of this century’s top stars of interior design, Clodagh and Thom Filicia, who explain how the stuff around us keeps evolving. And, as always, we peer into some of the best lofts we could ever want, or need—stuff included.

Enjoy.



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SPEAKS TO THE LARGER ENVIRONMENT

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CONTENTS

Letter/6

Experts/10

Loft List/13

Statistics, specifics, & stuff.

City Issue/15

Le Corbusier's legacy.

History Of.../17

The chair that set the standard.

Eco-Centric/19

LEDs: a bright choice.

Wanted/23

Bamboo, Steel, & Gadgets.

Loft Party/29

Avant-garde Brooklyn theater.

Big Blank Wall/31

Don't call it a comeback...

The Pioneer/38

SoHo sculptor casts her family in cast-iron.

Mother Nature Knows Best/48

Design legend Clodagh celebrates 25 years of design.

Where Creativity Lives/56

Live/work lives (& works) at Studioplex.

Design for the Birds/66

Thom Filicia reveals his secret nest.

Model Loft/72

A fashion & furniture showcase at Tribute Lofts.

Travel/80

Victorious Vancouver: Canada's design & architecture capital.

My Downtown/88

Young love in San Francisco.



SPRING 2009



ON THE COVER: Thom Filicia uses safety glass to create an innovative optical illusion in his lower Manhattan apartment. Photo by Tom Ackerman

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Feeling Listless?

No longer guilty of passive aggregation, the *LoftLife* List is ready for your review . . .

FEEL THE NEED TO TELEGRAPH YOUR DEEP, UNCONFLICTED CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

Why not name your new child (or more sustainably, new pet) with one of the following EPA-conscious acronyms? **AMOS:** Air Management Oversight System **BOD:** Biochemical Oxygen Demand **CHAMP:** Community Health Air Monitoring Program **CHIP:** Chemical Hazard Information Profiles **COCO:** Contractor-Owned/Contractor-Operated **CORINE:** Coordinated Information on the European Environment **CZARA:** Coastal Zone Management Act Reauthorization Amendments **ECHO:** Enforcement and Compliance History Online **ED:** Effective Dose, or Environmental Damage **FRED:** Flexible Regional Emissions Data **IRIS:** Instructional Resources Information System, or Integrated Risk Information System **JESSICA:** Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas **LUIS:** Label Use Information System **MAC:** Mobile Air Conditioner **MOE:** Margin Of Exposure **NOEL:** No Observable Effect Level **OTIS:** Online Tracking Information System **PAM:** Pesticide Analytical Manual **PAT:** Permit Assistance Team **PATS:** Pesticide Action Tracking System, or Pesticides Analytical Transport Solution **PIP:** Public Involvement Program **SAMI:** Southern Appalachian Mountains Initiative **TAD:** Technical Assistance Document

The modernist mantra "form follows function" was coined by architect Louis Sullivan (by way of the American sculptor, Horatio Greenough). But the philosophy behind the phrase was first posited in 1750 by Carlo Lodoli, an Italian monk. These days, it seems function isn't the only thing guiding form.

FORM FOLLOWS...

FINANCE

1995, book about "Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago," Carol Willis

FICTION

2002, art exhibit, essay, catalog, Deitch Projects

FASCISM

2005, *New York Times* editorial, Phillip Johnson

FUN

2007, book about "Modernism and Modernity in British Pleasure Architecture 1925-1940," Bruce Peter

LIBIDO

2007, book about "Architecture and Richard Neutra in a Psychoanalytic Culture," Sylvia Lavin

PERFORMANCE

December 2008, *Metropolis* cover story

FLOW

Current advertising tag line, *Lauffer Bathrooms*

LIFE

Current advertising tag line, *Snaidero Kitchens & Design*

In 2007, consumers discarded

4 billion

pounds of non-biodegradable polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic. It takes about

700 years

before PET begins to decompose.

To make a PET water bottle, manufacturers must use

3 times

the amount of water the bottle will eventually hold.

(*bottledwaterblues.com*)

Top 10 Cities for Retirees

Columbus, OH
Dallas, TX
Minneapolis, MN
Houston, TX
Salt Lake City, UT
Indianapolis, IN
Denver, CO
St. Louis, MO
Atlanta, GA
Nashville, TN

(*Forbes*, December 2008, "America's Best Places To Grow Old")



\$2.5 MILLION

Amount that a private collector paid for one of Marc Newson's 1986 aluminum Lockheed Lounge prototypes; a record price for a living designer.

(*Azure Magazine*, Nov/Dec 2008)

RUPPIE (ruh-p' ee) *n.* retired urban professional, used to describe the movement of successful retirees to big cities.

(coined by Steven Kleber, Kleber & Associates, Atlanta)

75%

of the contents of our landfills are building materials.

(Crandon Gustafson, Sustainable Interior Design & LEED Building Certification)

During the first three months of 2007, Americans took 2.6 billion trips on public transportation, an increase of 85 million more trips compared with the same period in 2006.

(*American Public Transportation Association*)

The price of a one-way base fare in cash:

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WASHINGTON, DC	\$1.35 (bus) \$1.65-\$4.50 (rail)
CHICAGO	\$2.25
BOSTON	\$1.50 (bus) \$2.00 (subway)
NASHVILLE	\$1.60 (bus local) \$2.10 (bus express)
ATLANTA	\$1.75
PHILADELPHIA	\$2.00
SAN FRANCISCO	\$1.50 / \$5.00 (cable car)
PORTLAND, OR	\$2.30

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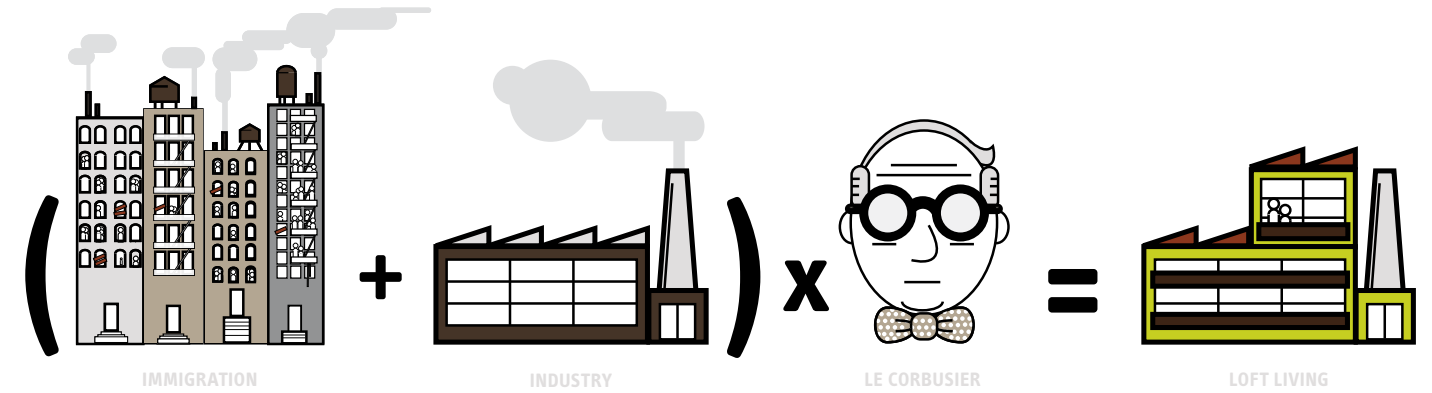
Modern Atlanta Home Tour
MA'ology and CARE Fundraiser
State of Design Panel Discussion at The High
Design is Human Kickoff, Social Mixer,
and Celebration at MOCA GA
Architect Models and Design Showcase at MOCA GA
Film Series at The High

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Thoroughly Modern Lifestyle

Adam Meagher explores how a French architect determined almost a hundred years ago the way you live today.

If you're reading this, chances are you're living—or looking to live—a lifestyle brought to you by long-dead modernist architects.

Look around, and you'll see that many of the values articulated a century ago are very much alive in your average loft today. Sparse simplicity in furniture and décor? Check. An open flow of space with few partitions? Check. A fondness for industrial and natural materials with strong tactile qualities? Oh, check. High ceilings, large windows, lots of light? Check. Mezzanines, or strategic changes in level? Check and check.

What you're seeing are the responses modernist architects offered to the rapid-fire questions posed by World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, dazzling new technologies, and mass production. Architects as geographically diverse as Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe took a hard look at their new, "modern" landscape and concluded that in a world so radically changed, the decorative traditions of the past would no longer do; instead, the world needed a new architecture that expressed the spirit of the times using the latest technologies and building materials.

In particular, the flood of immigrants into cities during the Industrial Revolution left millions living in crowded, unsanitary conditions. Architecture, the modernists declared, should rise to the task of providing housing

that served human needs as efficiently as a sleek sports car served the need for speed.

Armed with reinforced concrete and other advances in building technology, as well as a trendy scientific approach to the problem of human dwellings, modernist architects got straight to work, repositioning the basics of their craft: volume, surface, and light.

When it comes to understanding the legacy of modern architecture—and your humble place in it—we must give extra credit to its prime agitator, a French painter, architect, and urban planner born with the very un-modern name of Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris. So concerned with shaking off this musty tradition, he preferred to be known as Le Corbusier (the "crow-like one," in French). Just as he reinvented himself, Le Corbusier set out to revive architecture in two substantial ways: the pursuit of sublime beauty through rigorous order and an urgent brief for social betterment, aims he saw as deeply intertwined. "Architecture or revolution," he stated, was the stark choice facing liberal societies between the wars.

In his landmark 1923 book *Toward an Architecture*, the egomaniacal, but empathetic Le Corbusier famously wrote: "A house is a machine for living in," and one of the central points is that the people who do the work of modernity deserve to live in homes that provide the benefits of modernity, not the

"dirty old snail shells" and "stupid apartments" inherited from previous eras. In his Pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau and in his famous 1920s houses, such as Villa Savoye, Le Corbusier reimagined the domestic interior as a two-story space suffused with air and bathed in light, furnished with off-the-shelf and modular pieces. The furnishing arrangements were done in a way that suggested not a fixed work of art but an improvisation, a flexible and dynamic layout, suitable enough to adapt to changing circumstances—that is, to life.

But Le Corbusier wasn't satisfied with designing houses only for his wealthy clients. His priority was to see his designs adopted widely as public policy, so the benefits of modern housing could be enjoyed by the many, not just a privileged few.

If Le Corbusier's concepts seem unremarkable today, that just shows how thoroughly his ideas have come to define our expectations of what housing and cities should be. The irony is that in the US, when industrial efficiency was married to massive government subsidies, one result was not Le Corbusier's dream but his nightmare: a car-dependent, kitsch-loving suburban sprawl that's completely ill-suited to our needs as a diverse nation on an overcrowded planet in the 21st Century.

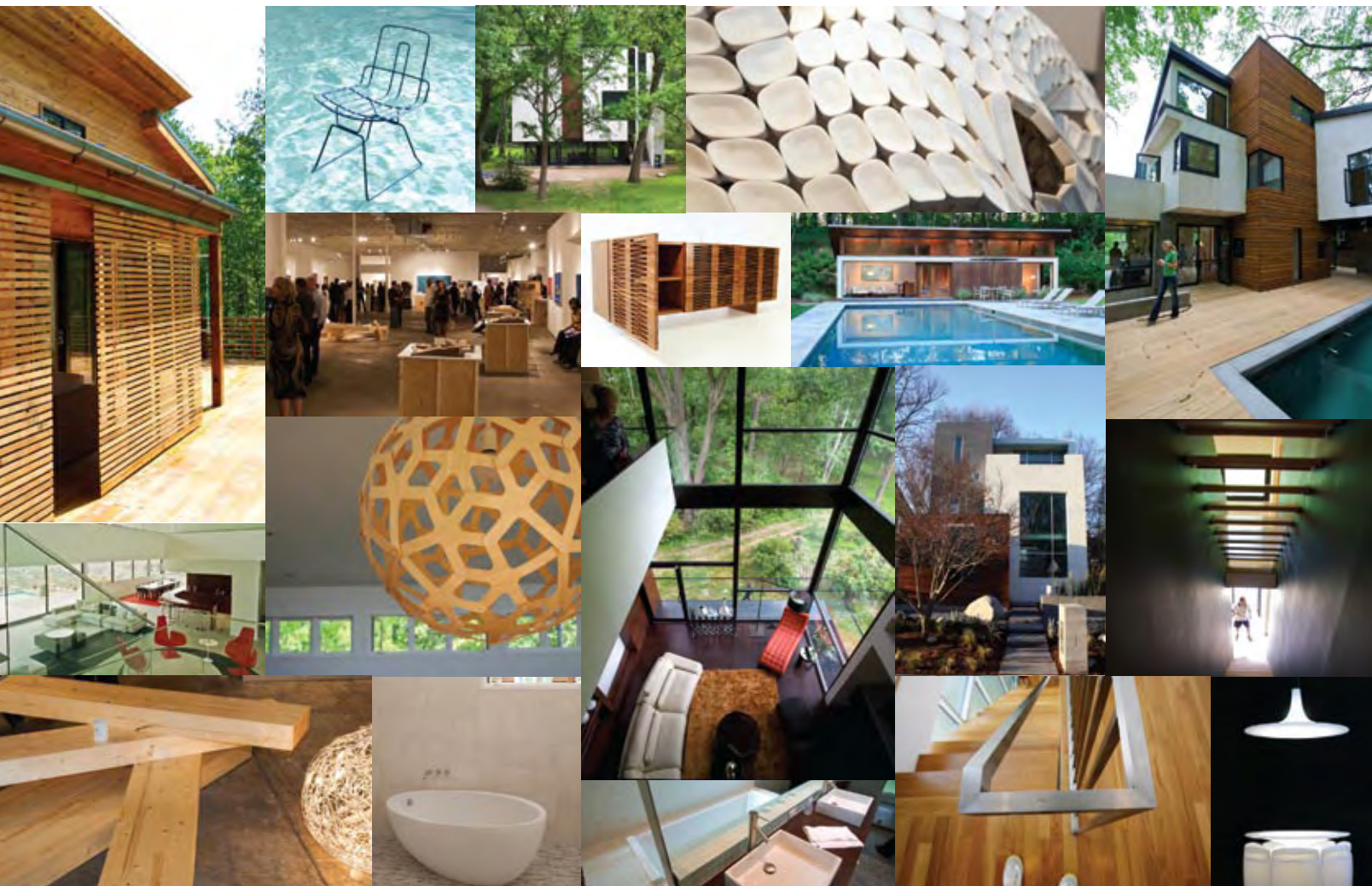


Illustration by Vincent Sacco

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Getting a Green Light

Jim Hackler investigates the ever-increasing options for LEDs in your home.

Those standard incandescent light bulbs of yours are so 1879. Although it's a credit to Thomas Edison that the technology behind his invention has changed so little in the last 130 years, such heat-driven bulbs are environmental albatrosses. The standard light bulb converts only five percent of its electricity into light—the rest turns into heat (which makes your air-conditioner work that much harder).

While compact fluorescents (CFLs) are an eco-step up from incandescents, light-emitting diodes (LEDs) are seen as the newest green option on the market. "I am astounded at how quickly they are improving in terms of aesthetic quality of light," says Sattie Clark, co-founder of Eleek, Inc., a Portland,

OR-based company that crafts environmentally responsible light fixtures by hand. "LED lamps today are closer to incandescents than they were a year ago even," says Clark. "It seems that the LED is leapfrogging over other lamping types."

An LED has a significant environmental edge over other lighting options because its cluster of tiny bulbs emits light through the movement of electrons. There are no filaments to burn out, so it can last 50 to 100 times longer than a standard bulb (or approximately 10 to 20 years). It also uses only a fifth of the energy and doesn't contain mercury, a continuing concern with CFLs.

Most people actually have some of the first generation of LEDs illuminating their digital

Clockwise: **GBL E26-F** up to 100,000 hrs. (lifespan); \$60; gbl-led.com **LR6** up to 50,000 hrs.; \$97-130; cree.com **MK1** up to 60,000 hrs.; \$140; ilumisys.com **MODA MB14** up to 39,000 hrs.; \$69; modalight.com

clocks and appliances. The breakthrough has come in the quality and brightness of its white light combined with its flexibility and its durability (there's no conventional bulb to break).

"LEDs have been taking over lighting applications, one at a time, for the last 36 months," says Jonathan Jordan with Cree, Inc., who, along with other manufacturers such as Halo and ilumisys, designed LEDs to be installed in existing fixtures. "First, it began with architectural and accent lighting, then it moved to



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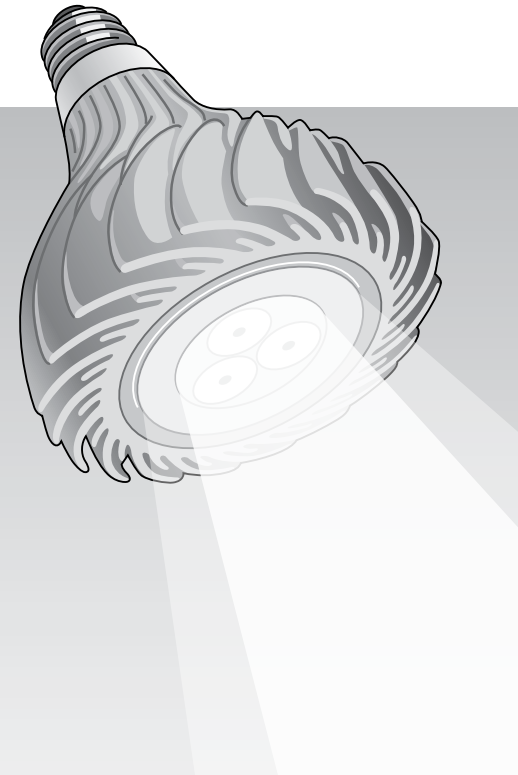


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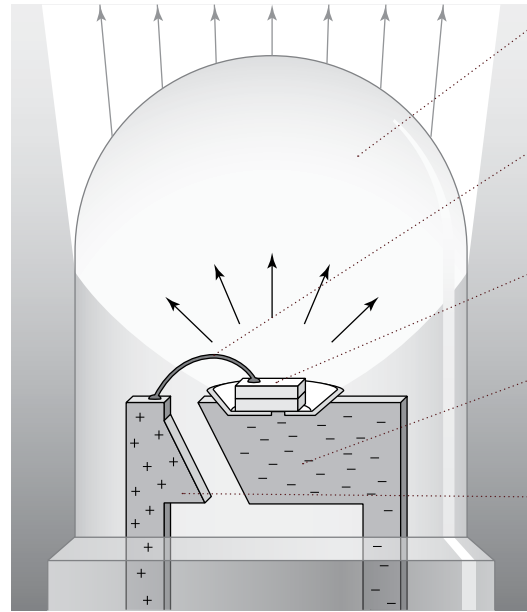


Dunford Jones

Illustrations by Phil Laughlin



LED Low Down



MOLDED EPOXY LENS

Made of silicon, the lens absorbs a portion of light to re-emit a second, longer wavelength.

ANODE WIRE

Transfers the positively charged particles so they can join forces with the cathodes.

LED CHIP

A diode that converts positive and negative energy into photon energy.

CATHODE LEAD

A semi-conductor of negative energy with extra holes so electrons can jump from hole to hole.

ANODE LEAD

Positively charged semi-conductor with extra particles that travel to the cathode lead.

SoL R38 up to 50,000 hrs.; \$145; lsgc.com

The standard light bulb converts only five percent of its electricity into light—the rest turns into heat (which makes your air-conditioner work that much harder).

DLEDA*

*Deciphering LED Acronyms: There's just too many these days to keep anything straight, and with the LED lingo, it's no different. Here's a guide, so you're not in the dark.

LED: Light-emitting diode. The new generation of lightbulbs.

CRI: Color Rendering Index. The measurement of a light's ability to make all colors.

UVA: Ultraviolet A. The longest light wave used in the popular party black lights.

RGB: Red, green, blue (light). Mix these and you'll make white.

ESD: Electrostatic discharge. A major cause for most device failure in semiconductors.

OLED: Organic light-emitting diode. A lighter LED (made of polymer) used for MP3 players and cell phones.

portable lighting, and finally to outdoor and now indoor applications," Jordan says.

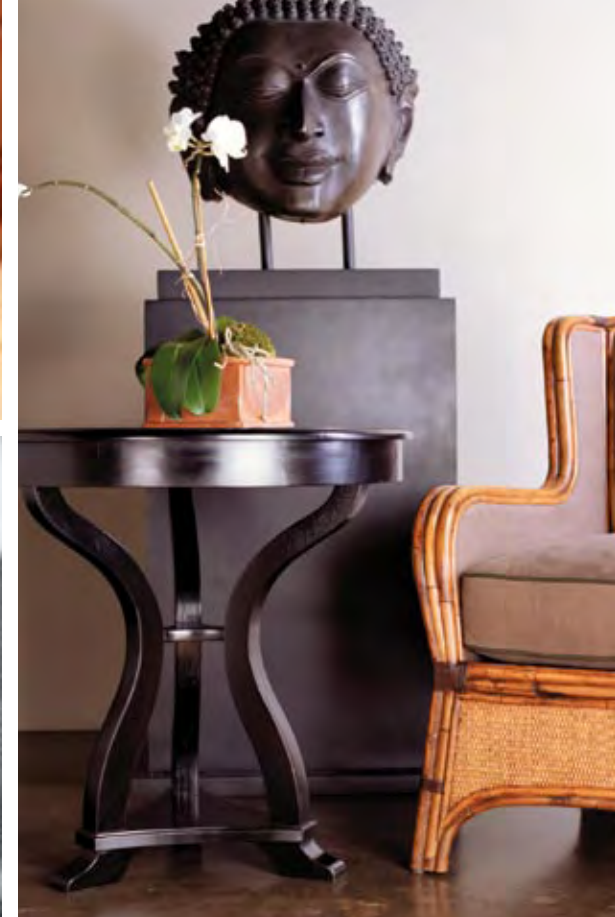
Cree's LR6 is one of the first on the market to reach a color rendering index (CRI) above 90 (which basically means the color of your orange will actually look orange).

"Unique to our LED products is their ability to act as direct drop-in replacements to current lamps, such as our MK1 product, a direct T-8 fluorescent lamp replacement product using LED technology," says Dave Simon, President of ilumisys, Inc.

Where LEDs fall short is the lack of standardized testing procedures and product specifications among manufacturers, something the US Department of Energy is looking to change, so the most reliable way to compare is to see for yourself. "Buyers should look for

good color rendering," says Jordan. "Plug it in. Does it look cool (bluish) or does it look nice and neutral, with a warm hint? You need to decide what works best for you." Steer clear of substandard, off-market LEDs that can quickly fail. Deal only with reputable companies that offer guarantees.

For most people, the biggest drawback is the upfront cost, but the costs will start to go down as the performance improves. "We will soon have products that are two to three times the efficiency of fluorescent at an easily justified three-year payback," says Simon. "At that point the move to solid-state lighting will have gained tremendous momentum, and the CFL era will be history." According to Simon, the tipping point should be reached within the next four to five years.



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Everybody is a Starr

Kyra Shapurji travels to Bushwick, Brooklyn to find people singing for their supper.

 Krenson's future-vision: Glass-walled atriums with towering 50-foot ceilings serve as entry points to housing, shopping, and sports. Many proposed lofts have views inside and outside the stadium

 Before you sit down in the Bushwick Starr's lofty black box for an evening of food and foolery, compliments of the performance troupe, Conni's Avant Garde Restaurant, you must first learn—through a group singalong—about the rules. Surprisingly, rule number seven is “This is *not* dinner theater.”

Sure, a night spent at Conni's Avant Garde Restaurant provides staged entertainment and a delicious five-course meal, but that's where any similarity between dinner theater and what actually transpires at the Bushwick Starr ends. For instance, as an audience member, you become a full participant in what goes down on the space's dueling stages.

After arriving, you're encouraged to grab a name tag with monikers such as “Mama for Obama” or “Miss Underestimated.” After a meet and greet over hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, everyone is ushered into the main stage

and dining area, where a bar and six long communal tables await the breaking of the bread and opening of the vino.

Over the next two hours, food is served (accompanied by songs, of course): roasted pepper and leek soup, mixed greens with gorgonzola and walnuts, stuffed turkey breast and butternut squash risotto, a blueberry and white chocolate bread pudding with an Amaretto cream sauce.

According to the brains behind the operation, Connie Hall (aka Miss Conni Convergence), the idea originally emerged as a running joke during a summer-stock production of *As You Like It*. But after some great press and an upcoming season of 16 performances, it's clear the joke has paid dividends.

“When we first started out here, the pilot light went out in the kitchen,” Hall says. Now the challenges that many people face with old industrial buildings, like reliable garbage

removal and blown fuses, seem more than tolerable. Plus, as Hall says, “crises are looked upon as writing opportunities.” So she and the actors have more than come to terms with the space as she adamantly states, “The space strongly informs the show with the dueling stages, the kitchen, and the porch. And the architecture is vital to the storylines.”

To get to the Bushwick Starr from Manhattan, your best bet is to take the subway (it's cheaper and more convenient than a cab). To make sure you're included in this “private party,” you'll want to reserve a seat in advance (\$40 per person covers food, wine, and entertainment). And of course, it'd be smart to remember the first-come, first-named policy or else you may get stuck answering to “3 AM Booty-Call” all night.

For more information: avantgarderestaurant.com

Photography by Vincent Sacco



LIVING SOUND

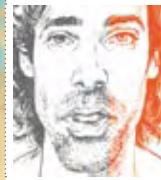


The Loudspeaker Technology Company
www.martinlogan.com

© 2008, MartinLogan Ltd. Lawrence, KS, USA 785.749.0133

Photo: Rachel Olsson

BIG BLANK WALL



EXPERT SAYS: "Gorgeous. I love anything with filigree or stencil. Great colors: sky blue and golden Punjab wheat field. I don't need a house, I'll just stare at this paper."

-Chris Moss

Cut and Paste

Wallpaper enjoys a renaissance as independent designers trade stuffy florals for bold statements.

1 MONACO "This design is hand printed. The ink color patterns are interchangeable and designs can be printed on any stock." Designed by Tibi's Amy Smilovic for Flavor Paper. flavorleague.com

2 GENUINE FAKE BOOKSHELF "Hand printed and painted with love for the 'utility line'. Can be tailored to meet the needs of your color scheme." Designed by Deborah Bowness. deborahbowness.com

3 ALLT SOM GLIMMAR "The name came from a Swedish story about magpies loving all shiny things people accidentally leave outside. The title means: 'Everything that shines.' I use design to tell a story." Designed by Hanna Nyman. hannanyman.se



EXPERT SAYS: "Looks like it would work in one of those bars with a secret address and private key on the Lower East Side (of Manhattan). Too gimmicky."

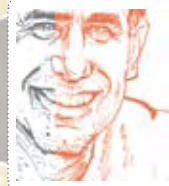
-Tim Ranney



EXPERT SAYS: "I like the simplicity and when I'm ready to add color, I'll invite my niece and nephews over to color it in."

-Jim Hackler





EXPERT SAYS: "Just like Christo's art, there's an elegant simplicity to this wallpaper, with a vivid touch of color."

- Jim Hackler



6



EXPERT SAYS: "Beautiful artwork. I could see a panel of this framed on its own."

-Tim Ranney

6 GOLDEN FAWN "This design was created for an art show called Radiant Dark, in Toronto, produced by Made Design." Designed by Anita Modha, Jonathan Nodrick, and David Hall. rollout.ca or bunnymaxwell.com

4 THE GATES "Christo's 'The Gates' of Central Park blanketed the surface of the earth with an undulating sweep of electric color, accentuating the land, much like wallpaper does for a plain wall." Kelly Huffstutler for SCAD. kellyhuffstutler.com

5 INDI "We set out to change the way people perceive wallpaper. It is traditionally perceived as a repetitive design based on one motif or theme. Our patterns are large-scale." Jee Levin and Randall Buck for Trove. trove.com



EXPERT SAYS: "This design is fantastically fulfilling on so many levels—quiet, but energetic, graphic, but elegant, and finally, lovely to look at. Peaceful, but not dull."

-Sherry Jo Williams



Creative freedom.

Photography

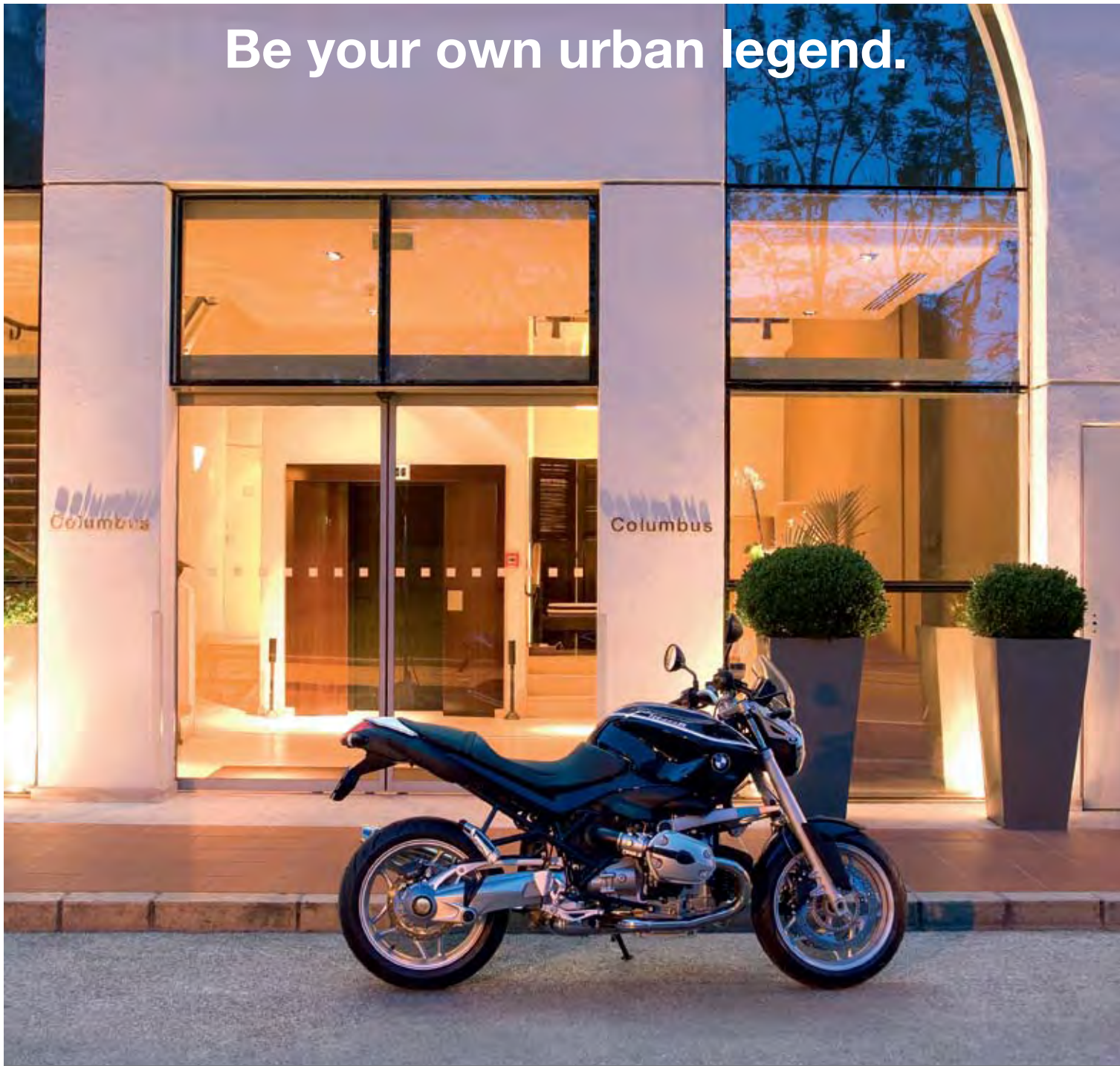
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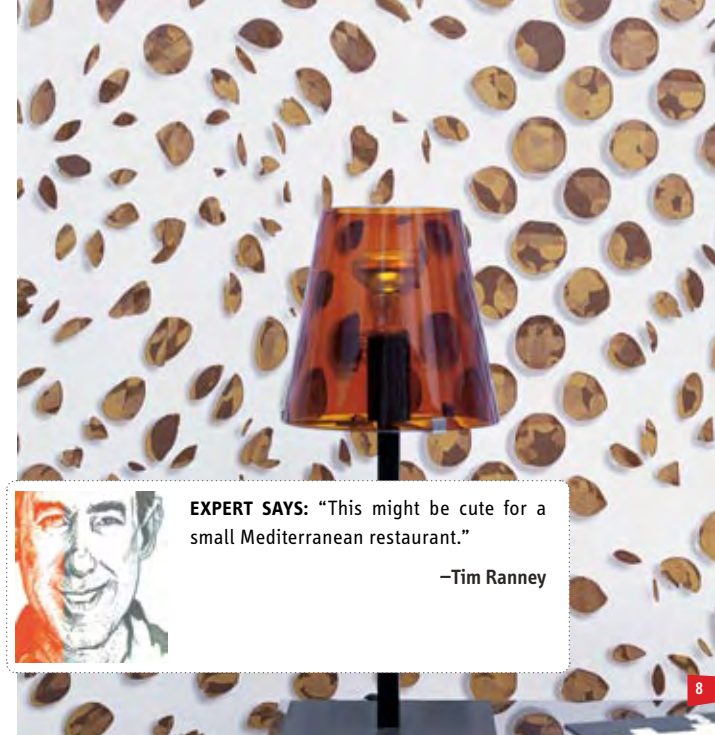
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EXPERT SAYS: "This might be cute for a small Mediterranean restaurant."
 —Tim Ranney



EXPERT SAYS: "I love this. Warm, inviting, fancy hotel room. I can make a mess here and not clean up after myself."
 —Chris Moss

9 CONCRETE "Reinforces the current trend for wallpaper as a practical and functional option for home decorating." Hemingway Design for Graham & Brown. grahambrown.com

10 MEDITERRANEA "Designed in the 1940s by Piero Fornasetti, this is a hypnotic cityscape of roofs, gilded domes, and gardens with a repeating pattern that stimulates the optical effect." The Fornasetti Collection by Cole & Son. cole-and-son.com



BIG BLANK WALL

EXPERT SAYS: "I absolutely love this! Perfect for a female's dressing room!"
 —Jan Halvarson

7 SULTRY HAIR "Created as part of a series of pattern designs for an exhibition about infinite flowing scenery and imagery of the Pacific Northwest and New York." Designed by Andrio Abero. rollout.ca or bunnymaxwell.com

8 SIXDESIGN "DIAMANTS" "Six designs, six stories, six inspirations, six discoveries, six dreams, six sensations. Hand designed and modeled using hi-tech techniques." Designed by Elitis. elitis.fr



EXPERT SAYS: "My all-time favorite, designed by the famous Fornasetti, is a timeless classic. Great in a powder room for instant drama."
 —Patricia Gray

10



EXPERT SAYS: "Anything iridescent is a great way to introduce texture and elegance without overwhelming an interior. Works in dark or well-lit spaces."

—Sherry Jo Williams



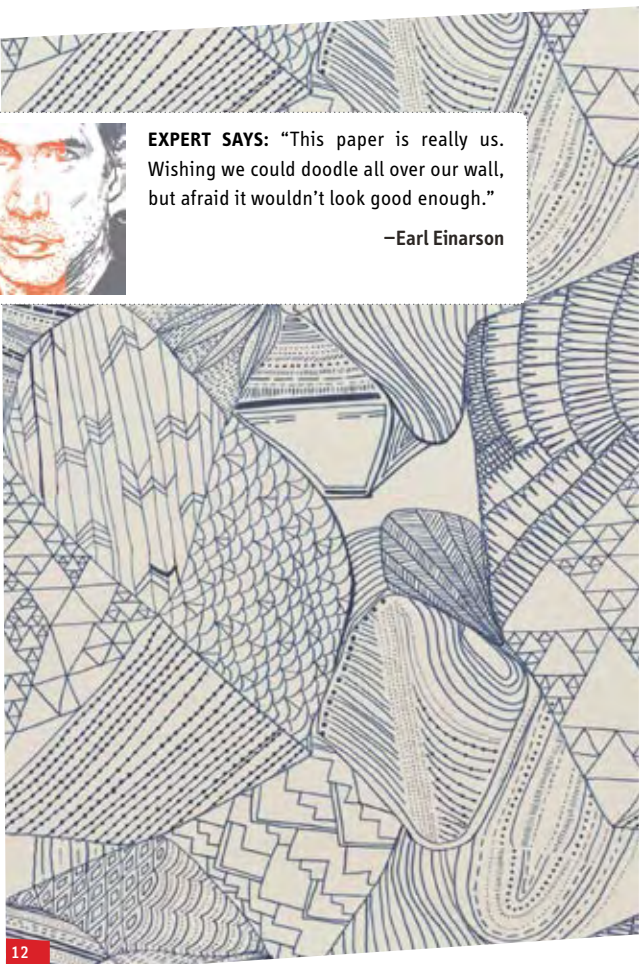
EXPERT SAYS: "A nice all-over pattern that would work well in a kitchen or laundry room."

—Patricia Gray

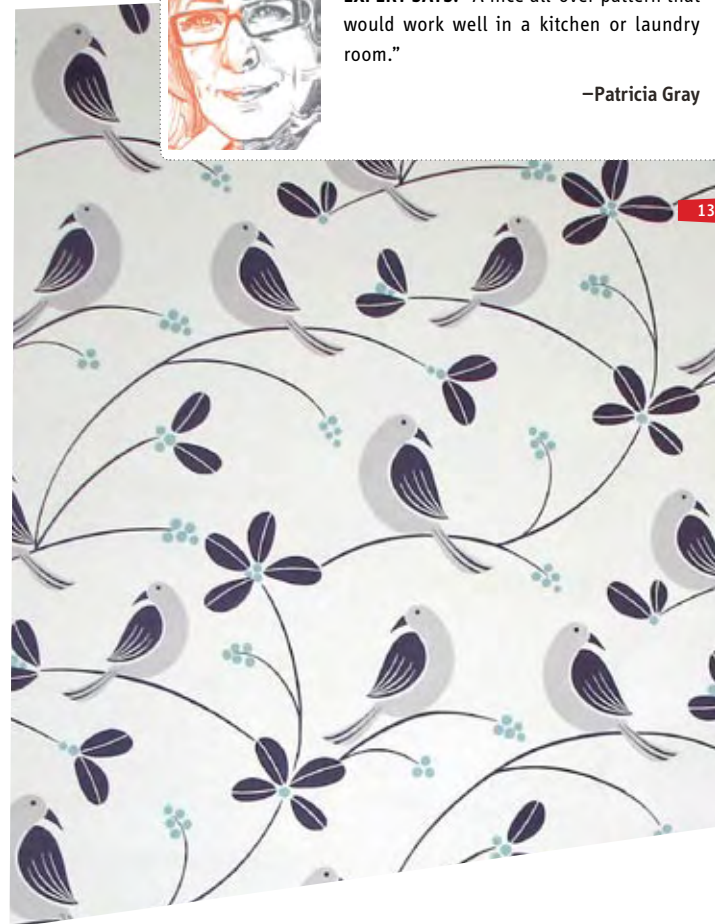


EXPERT SAYS: "This paper is really us. Wishing we could doodle all over our wall, but afraid it wouldn't look good enough."

—Earl Einarson



12



13

11 WHITE CIRCULAR IRIDESCENT SHELL "This tiled wall covering is shiny to the touch and comes in panels for easy installation." Julian Scott for Astek Wallcoverings. designyourwall.com

12 TOPO AZUL "This handmade pattern was created from the concept, 'freedom of lines'. It is reminiscent of the beauty that exists in chaos and randomness." Allan the Gallant Studio for Pattern Tales. shop.gallanttales.com

13 CLACKET LANE "'Clacket Lane' is an imaginary winding lane in the British countryside, dotted with portly doves and bright red berries. It brings a little bit of the outside right on inside." Madeleine Rogers for Mibo. 2jane.com

14 GLASS BEADED "Actual glass beads have been affixed to paper to create an iridescence. Available in two sizes and multiple colors (shown here in aqua)." Julian Scott for Astek Wallcoverings. designyourwall.com



EXPERT SAYS: "What a beautiful, rich color of wallpaper. Brings unique texture that's both cool and complex."

—Jim Hackler



14



A SECRET TOO GOOD TO KEEP.
ONE TASTE AND YOU'LL KNOW WHY.

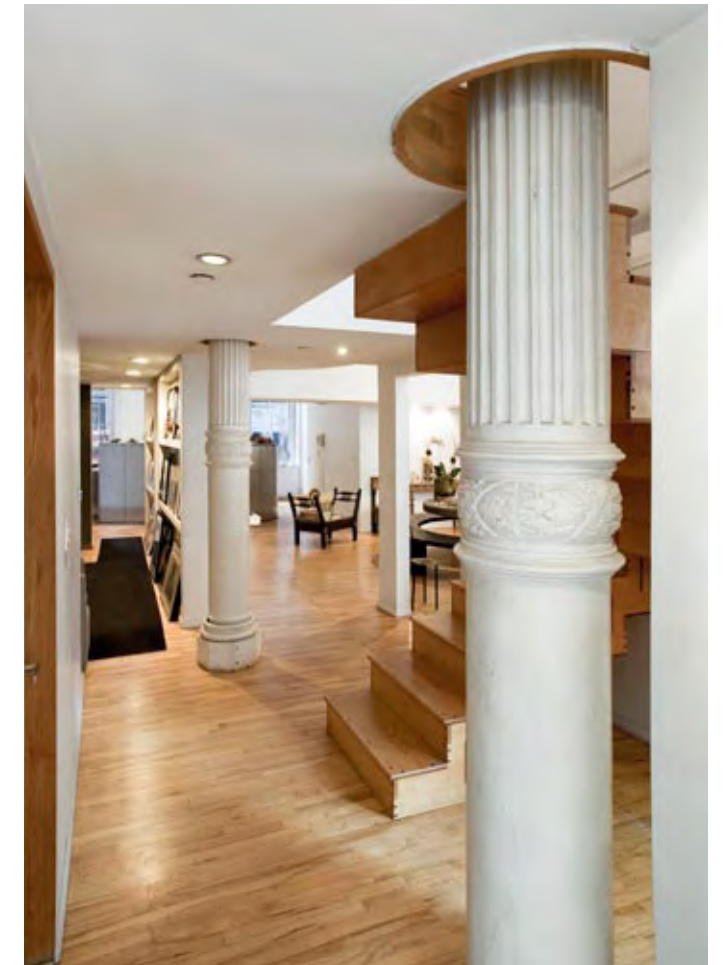
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The Pioneer

Twenty-eight years ago, a brave sculptor and her family broke new territory with the purchase of a choice SoHo loft. It remains their home today.





Story by Cate West Zahl
 Photography by John Neitzel

No matter what the market bears, we just can't seem to shake our desire for prime real estate. Long gone are the days when men on horseback galloped across the country looking for their piece of Manifest Destiny, yet the obsession with uncharted territory still lingers.

For city dwellers, the quest for land has turned into the quest for space. Especially for those who choose to live on the overcrowded island of Manhattan. It's hard to believe (and frustrating to no end) that just a few decades ago, shuttered-up factories sat empty in the one-time manufacturing district south of Houston Street, begging for discovery.

And sure enough, throngs of artists—our modern-day pioneers—bravely answered the call of SoHo's cast-iron canyons, staking their claims on massive industrial spaces that offered a new way of life. "The recipe of living in homes made up of little boxes had stuck for almost a century. Then, all of a sudden these large warehouses looked delicious," says one such pioneer, sculptor Michele Oka Doner.

Unlike the majority of early loft occupants, Oka Doner was married with two young sons when she moved to SoHo. But she and her husband thought: "What a moment, what a

lifestyle, what a way to live. It seemed so open, so free, much more unfettered. It called to us (like) a siren's song."

So in 1982, they left their suburban life in Michigan and moved to the second floor of a renovated button factory on Mercer Street. Suddenly, the cobblestoned streets south of Houston was their home. And years later, it still is. Oka Doner and her family are living witnesses to the complete transformation of their neighborhood, from abandoned to arty to its present incarnation as a tourist trap, littered with brand name luxury shops and five-star restaurants.

Today, Oka Doner's home feels epic. The all-white 5,000-square-foot loft features 16-foot ceilings, double-height windows, six neo-classical columns, and a freestanding zigzag staircase that leads to a second level mezzanine. The vast open living area functions as a 'multi-purpose zone.'

PREVIOUS PAGE: The main space features Oka Doner's favorite piece: a circular bronze table (10 feet in diameter) the artist made herself. THE LIBRARY: The library holds five generations of family books. CORINTHIAN CAST-IRON COLUMNS: Two ringed with original radiators, bisect the mezzanine. NEXT PAGE: Oka Doner's artwork surrounds her husband's grand piano.



“What a moment, what a lifestyle, what a way to live. It seemed so open, so free.”

**“The wonderful thing is the lack of definition.
It returns us to the simplicity of life in
the lived-in past, where shelter and space
was not differentiated by use.”**





“There is history, there are layers in a loft. We’ve kept enough of a connection to the moment of revival for this building.”

“The wonderful thing is the lack of definition,” she says. “It returns us to the simplicity of life in the lived-in past, where shelter and space were not differentiated by use.”

While there are no actual rooms in the space, areas are delineated smartly. For example, Oka Doner’s sculpture studio, or “laboratory,” as she calls it, makes up the back half of her loft. On the opposite side of the loft is a den of sorts, with a mini-gallery for Oka Doner’s habit of collecting: photographs of her family taken by Amy Arbus, portraits from various sculpture shows over the years, and quirky artifacts from past trips. There are also collections in the main space: small piles of artifacts (fossils, shells, pieces of coral) grouped together on tabletops and neatly arranged on canvas strips spread out on the floor.

The Doner family added two major elements to the loft since they originally moved in: the library (added in 1990) and the kitchen (completed more recently in 2004). Floor-to-ceiling, ebony-stained shelves, complete with a librarian’s ladder, hold an extensive collection of books. The state-of-the-art kitchen, designed by architect William Georgis, is a stainless steel island with a curvilinear shape that conceals the inner workings from the living space.

If anything, the dominant theme of Oka Doner’s décor is the history present throughout the loft. “Five generations of family books make up the library and five generations of family objects are stored throughout the kitchen area,” she says.

It’s this unobtrusive layering of the past and absence of trendy, contemporary furnishings that distinguish the space. In particular, the original Corinthian columns—with their unique wraparound radiators—exemplify the loft’s origins and these references to the past define the interior’s overall aesthetic.

“There is history, there are layers in a loft,” says Oka Doner. “It’s not new construction. The space itself speaks. We’ve kept enough of a connection to the moment of revival for this building.”

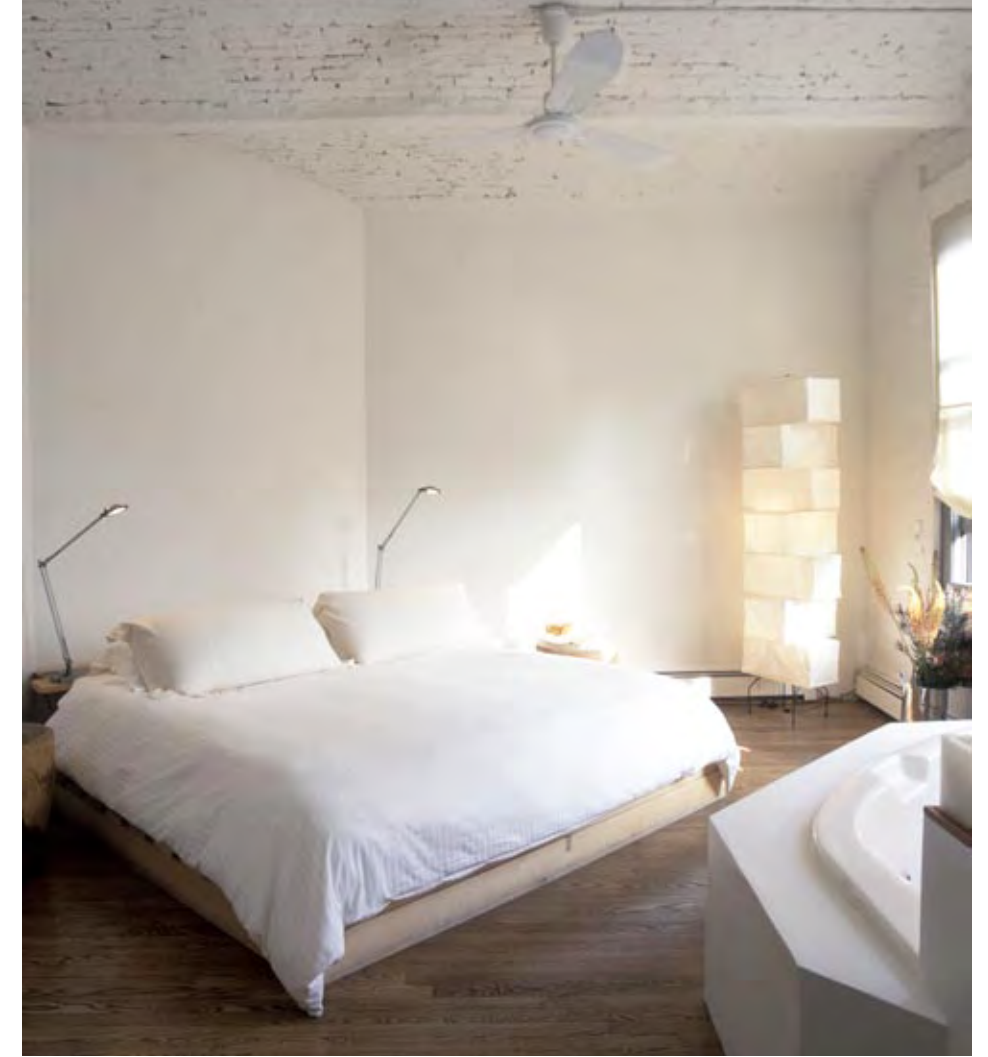
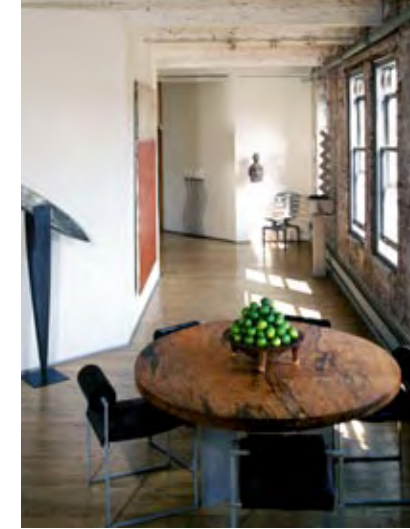
EXIT

☞ PREVIOUS PAGE: A collection of family photographs are displayed on built-in shelves in the den. ☞ The sculptor works on a piece inspired by nature in her personal “laboratory,” located in the back of the loft. ☞ The unusual catwalk on the second floor features only one railing. ☞ Collected pieces of coral are displayed on the stainless steel counter top in the state-of-the-art open kitchen.



Mother Nature Knows Best

Sustainability is more than just a buzzword for Clodagh. For 25 years, it's been a way of life.



Story by Tim Ranney

Photography by Daniel Aubry, Clodagh portrait by Tom Ackerman

It's probably no coincidence that the color most associated with Clodagh's birthplace, Ireland, would be a major influence on the interior designer's personal doctrine. Green is not just a convenient color or fashionable concept recently appropriated to profit from the sustainability movement, it's consistently played a dominant role in Clodagh's life, which in turn, has been instrumental to what has become a global movement. And it all began 25 years ago, when she and two partners, Sherry Jo Williams and Ivy Ross, opened a small design store on St. Marks Place in New York's East Village, aptly named Clodagh, Ross + Williams.

A launching pad for young designers whose work she meticulously curated and sold, the store also served as a laboratory for Clodagh's own creations, many of them conceived naturally and produced sustainably—a concept just then

sprouting in the collective consciousness.

Within the first few months, Clodagh, Ross + Williams drew accolades from the press and admiration from devotees of décor. The opening night receptions for the store's ever-revolving exhibitions became must-attend events, mobbed as any hip, downtown art gallery. Of course, the work on display was the big attraction, but the homemade fruit-infused vodka creations they served (later adopted with much success by the spirits industry) were another enticement. These slightly decadent parties also doubled as charity events for organizations such as DIFFA. (Even today Clodagh takes this extra step for charities dear to her heart. With a couple of friends, she started Clodagh Cares to raise money for a struggling tribe in Africa.)

Visitors to Clodagh, Ross + Williams would join an ongoing chorus of ooh's and ahh's, staring quizzically at things they'd

“A space cannot be truly beautiful unless it functions in harmony with who we are. It's about pleasure: discovering what pleases us, creating an environment that will celebrate those qualities and sustain us.”

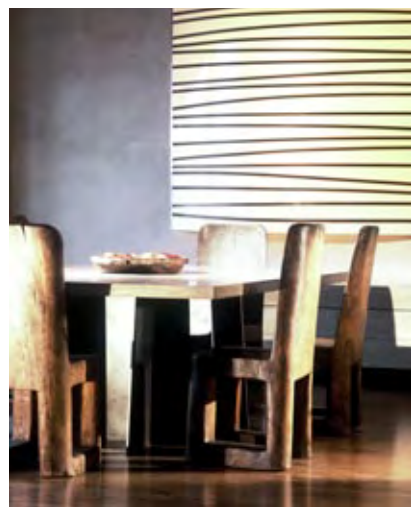
never seen before: eccentric gold sinks, stone tubs, iron chairs, free-standing water falls, and one of the most unforgettable objects, a concrete telephone. Yet, it wasn't clear if they were invited to touch these objects, or to simply admire them. That's where Clodagh's evolution is most evident. Is this a piece of furniture? Is it art? Can I actually have these things in my home? It took traditionalists longer to figure out what was what, but the Wall Street titans, mega-art-stars, and fashionistas of the go-go 80s knew the stuff was cool, so they hired Clodagh to outfit their moneyed pads with unusual pieces.

According to Sherry Jo Williams, Clodagh's former partner and *LoftLife* expert: “Clodagh is the epitome of green luxury—she took it from a curiosity and made it into a lifestyle through sheer determination. She knew the idea of sustainability was good for the world and for its inhabitants.”

Following the close of the shop on St. Marks Place, Clodagh's life reads like a dizzying portfolio of design projects, including commercial work, urban lofts, and a solid niche in the spa business that boomed in the 90s. Spa projects, in particular, helped Clodagh perfect and implement her philosophy of balancing ancient healing arts with natural elements and developing technologies.

As her reputation grew worldwide, and the concept of spa living morphed with residential life, Clodagh began to license

PREVIOUS PAGE: Clodagh smiles serenely in her Manhattan showroom. IN THE main living space of Clodagh's own loft, industrial furnishings, lush, leather upholstery, and her “Squish” sofa design combine to create an earthy aesthetic. CLODAGH'S round dining table, twin lounge chairs, and all-white bed bring a tranquil atmosphere into being.



her designs with manufacturers. Clodagh Signature is now sold throughout the world, alongside the Clodagh Collection series, a line of artisanal products that she curates with the same enthusiasm she had in the early days. Fittingly, many of the same artists and designers she worked with at Clodagh, Ross + Williams remain with her today.

Inspired by nature and created with Zen in mind, a world of luxury products and design services await all who visit her immense, light-filled studio, showroom, and gallery in Greenwich Village. Housed on an upper floor of the historic

Brooks Brothers building on lower Broadway, it's perfectly clear from the set-up that you're to experience everything *now*. As you sink into her custom "Squish" sofa, you understand that touching and feeling is exactly the point. Enveloped by the exposed brick, a visitor finds sanctuary for the senses: smelling, caressing, absorbing, and even tasting (through organic teas) Clodagh's world. The payoff is an enrichment of the "the sixth sense"—that is, the spirit, which readily succumbs to a bit of relief from the assault of urban life and uncertain times. From this welcoming public space and from the loft she and

her husband have lived in for more than 20 years, she experiments with who her clients are and what they need. Or as she is fond of saying: "A space cannot be truly beautiful unless it functions in harmony with who we are. It's about pleasure: discovering what pleases us, creating an environment that will celebrate those qualities and sustain us."

City dwellers need to pay special attention to keeping a balance of natural elements in their home, Clodagh explains in a soothing manner. "(They) need more light in their lives. The city needs to create more pocket parks and dog runs so that outdoor space is more accessible. Light is critical for healthy

growth." She further advises the incorporation of *feng shui* as paramount to achieving a calming environment—something she does for every client.

"The elements of earth, fire, water, wood, and metal should be represented according to your own unique chemistry," she

☑ A client's cement colored walls have been given a textured sandstone finish, creating a stucco look that lightens the space. Dark brown upholstery and a rustic driftwood dining set complement the wood floors. ☑ A reflective Robert Lee Morris sculpture rests on a 36-foot concrete ledge; the custom bronzed piano and burnt orange sofa warms the space.

25 Years of Sustainable Stuff



CHAKRA COLLECTION AREA RUG

Clodagh's earthy "Anahata" rug comes in four sizes to fit any area in your home: 3'x5'; 8'x10'; 8.9'x11.6'; and 10'x14'.



LOUNGE CHAIR

Simple seating from Clodagh Signature for Dennis Miller, natural fiber chairs come in three different colors: grey, chestnut, and honey. 26" high, 20" wide, 20" deep.



WATER LIGHT

Made from concrete and stainless steel, this self-contained "fountain" adds tranquility to any space. 8" high and 11.5" in diameter.



CLODAGH TOUCH

Designed by Clodagh Signature for Watermark, the faucet of this deck-mounted Roman tub set stands 14.75" high.



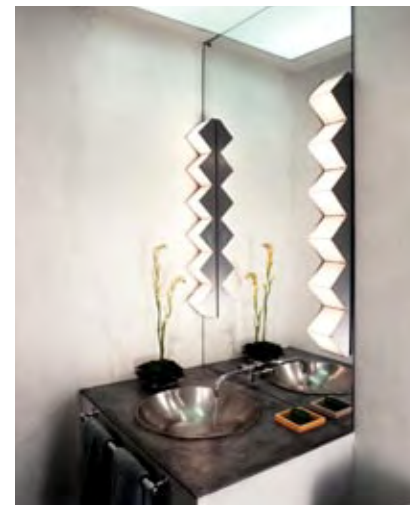
LITTLE SQUISH

One part sofa. One part daybed. Entirely comfortable. Also available in a "deeper squish." 32" high, 98.5" wide, and 33" deep.



PRIMITIVE SCENCE

Frosted glass wrapped in bronze (shown) or brushed steel. Just add a 60-watt bulb. 10.5" high, 5" wide.



suggests. “They can transform chaos into tranquility.” After spending a few moments with this design master, it’s evident that she lives the way she speaks. Her good humor, like so many of her designs, embodies her mission: a sense of fun with functionality and awareness. It’s in her eyes. It’s in the way she moves, lightly touching visitors and associates as she passes. Clodagh is more than a designer, she is a healer, a nurturing force, a maternal figure.

Those fortunate enough to find themselves spending time in the new W Ft. Lauderdale or the Caledonia in New York (or any of the many spas touched by Clodagh) already experience her

spiritual approach to living. Of course, total immersion may not be accessible to everyone, but Clodagh contends that anyone, anywhere, can make their domain a serene haven, resulting in a more peaceful life. Her showroom is filled with one-of-kind items you can carry out or custom order—and if you’d like a design consultant to come to your space for a makeover, the showroom has staff stylists who advise on everything from sinks to sheets.

Those looking to achieve a more balanced home need look no further than their local bookstore. With *Your Home, Your Sanctuary*, published by Rizzoli, Clodagh celebrates her silver

anniversary in the design world by sharing her philosophy through photographs and short essays. Disguised as a lush coffee table centerpiece, *Your Home, Your Sanctuary* also serves as a perfect tool kit and resource guide, with plenty of insights on how to bring serenity into your home. Did you ever stop to think, for instance, that the sound your lock makes when you open your front door sets the tone for how you experience your entire home? It’s nuggets like this that will make you take action. You may even find yourself referencing the pages on how to arrange your home, workspace, or outdoor area, according to Clodagh’s 4 Cs: Contemplate, Cleanse, Clarify, Create.

Perhaps her clients sum up Clodagh’s green mission best. When asked about living in a Clodagh-designed space, one lucky client says, “We are closer as a family and our lives are more peaceful.”

What more could a mother ask for?

EXIT

Devoted to promoting habitual wellness, Clodagh creates peaceful, spa-like bathrooms. Here she uses natural stone tiles and a waterfall that flows into the tub. A communal dining area is the epitome of Clodagh’s design: light, green, and organic (linen upholstered chairs).



CHELSEA RECTANGLE SCNCE

Barely a foot high, this bronze sconce with linen shades is the essence of clean design. 11.5” high, 5.125” wide.



SPA BED

Designed especially for Oakworks, Clodagh’s spa bed ranks as the best available on the market. Unlimited upholstery and veneer choices. 38” high, 72” wide.



MESA TABLE

One of the very first designs (going back to the 80s), the Mesa’s concrete and steel materials are quintessential Clodagh. 29” high, 84” wide, 60” deep.



NOHO TORCHIERE FLOOR LAMP

Either in brushed steel or bronze, these rolling floor lamps can be quickly added to any room in need of just a little more light. 75.5” high, 15” wide, 15” deep.



ZEN TUB

A tub worth sinking into, this Clodagh Signature design best exemplifies the designer’s interest in tranquility. 18” high, 66” wide, 40” deep.



YOUR HOME, YOUR SANCTUARY

(2008, Rizzoli) With photographs by her husband, Daniel Aubry, Clodagh’s newest offering is full of great ideas for a greener and more comfortable home.



STUDIOPLEX

Art Walk
This Wednesday, 6-8pm
with Artists in their Studios - Win
and Wednesdays at Studioplex

Jarke Studios

STUDIO

Where Creativity Lives

In Atlanta's revitalized Old Fourth Ward, a repurposed cotton warehouse harbors artists along with history.



Story by Katie Black
 Photography by Amy Herr

In Atlanta's Old Fourth Ward, just blocks from where Martin Luther King, Jr. first dreamed, a warehouse that once sorted and compressed cotton sat abandoned for nearly a century. Then, in 1995, the Historic District Development Corporation took a break from restoring Dr. King's equally neglected neighborhood and turned their sights to the cotton warehouse, envisioning a vibrant and creative live/work loft environment.

Today, their vision is a reality in Studioplex, an 11-acre development that's been ingeniously readapted, utilizing old brick walls and original hulking metal doors along with new sliding glass panels and open patio areas. Home to 130 lofts, which morphed in 2007 from rental units to resident-owned condominiums, the development is split approximately into thirds by residents, studios, and owners who both live and work in their spaces. Studioplex also contains Serpas True Food, an upscale restaurant, as well as a black-box theater, retail bays, and a site for future townhouses. Behind the complex is a large communal greenspace where residents can walk their dogs,



play Frisbee, or lounge in the sun.

According to Mary Hillman, recently retired property manager, Studioplex is a place where "creativity lives."

The Alchemist

Matt Janke and his wife, Kim, established their renowned glass-blowing studio in July 1996 in Marietta. After learning to appreciate the merits of Studioplex, Sweet Auburn, and the larger Old Fourth Ward district, Janke gladly moved his family and his livelihood into Studioplex about eight years ago. "There's no other part of Atlanta with this much character and diversity," he says with a smile.

Besides, adds Janke, their clientele was the intown crowd, and it made sense to move the business nearby.

 An open-air walkway at Studioplex evokes the history of the former cotton warehouse.
 The recently opened Serpas True Food: light-filled, airy, and appropriately lofty.



After learning to appreciate the merits of Studioplex, Janke gladly moved his family into the neighborhood. “There’s no other part of Atlanta with this much character and diversity,” he says with a smile.

“We started with a 10’x10’ space, then got another space, then two more, and then built out our ‘hot shop’ (where the glassblowing takes place). Our next step is a gallery expansion.”

Janke’s beautiful hand-blown works of sculptural glass are artistic and functional. One can buy a drinking tumbler for under \$20 or commission a unique piece of art for a few thousand. Janke also offers glassblowing classes and even rents out his ‘hot shop’ studio to independent glass blowers.

“We moved in only six or seven months after they finished up (the initial) construction,” says Janke. “There are only a few remaining original artists from move-in.”

The Trinity

Lisa and Phil Dale and their 11-year-old daughter, Angelique, are relative newcomers to the live/work community, having moved to Studioplex last year. Phil says they “had a dream, working and living in a loft space. I’d seen the building since 1974. I’d drive by, and when it was made live/work, it got my

attention.” He loves the “evolution of community—living and working out of history” provided by the old cotton warehouse. Lisa concurs, saying she adores the small community. Angelique also thrives here. “I trust everybody. I walk around and make friends.”

Phil and Lisa are both hairstylists, but Phil also paints. Angelique is a painter, too. She also makes jewelry. Within their unit’s approximately 850 square-feet of space the family has a hair salon with a separate hair-washing booth, an art gallery, Angelique’s jewelry studio, a living room, a kitchen, two beds, and a full bath. “Being in creative thought we feel so alive,” observes Phil. “It keeps us together as a family. We are together, encouraging each other. We are the trinity.”

↑ At Studioplex, Matt Janke stands outside his ‘hot shop,’ which he also rents out to other glass-blowers. → Janke uses his blowpipe after taking glass out of a furnace that can reach a temperature of around 2,000 degrees. Visitors can buy popular items such as the red floral chandelier and other vibrant sculptures, or they can commission an original piece of art.





**“Being in creative thought,
we feel so alive. It keeps us
together as a family. We are
together, encouraging each
other. We are the trinity.”**



Adams loves the light, “the industrial effect,” and the accessibility of his unit. “It’s a good working environment. People here will speak to you,” he says. “It was time to buy or fly. I wanted to buy.”

The Draftsman

Another longtime creative resident of Studioplex is accomplished draftsman and printmaker, Ron Adams, whose work can be found in the Smithsonian. Adams, born in Detroit, moved to Studioplex six years ago from Santa Fe, NM. “I liked the space, the open space,” he recalls, yet he built a dividing wall to make his home a bit more practical. “I can have the privacy of the bedroom, or if I’m utilizing toxic stuff, I can sleep in the other room.”

Adams selected Atlanta because of its temperate climate, and he chose Studioplex because a couple of his artist friends highly recommended it. He loves the light, “the industrial effect,” and the accessibility of his unit. He also finds his neighbors are creative and genuine. “People here will speak to you,” he says. “And it’s a good working environment.” Having

purchased his loft a little over a year ago, he comments: “It was time to buy or fly. I wanted to buy.”

Lofts at Studioplex are selling well, despite the economy’s downturn. Spaces range from \$169,900 to \$429,900. “We’ve got a phenomenal location and incredible energy,” states Brenda Lee Stepp, Studioplex’s on-site salesperson. “We are so unique. We’re a historic site and the mixed use zoning appeals to both the business user and the residential user.”

EXIT

PREVIOUS PAGE: The Dale’s live/work space merges from hair studio to jewelry shop to living room, all in true live/work fashion. **+** Ron Adams lounges at home, which retains a bit of Sante Fe flavor from his New Mexico days. **+** The tools of Adams’s trade sit alongside the tools of his playtime: fishing poles and cassette tapes.

Design for the Birds

The host of *Dress My Nest*, Thom Filicia, talks about his new book, his personal style, and his fine feathered friends.



**“I like raw with refined.
I like shiny with matte.
I like having that yin and yang,
if you will.”**

Story by Kyra Shapurji

Photography by Tom Ackerman

LOFLIFE: In your new book, *Thom Filicia Style*, you talk about your appreciation for natural and organic forms. How did this become part of your design style?

THOM FILICIA: I tend to like things that are very clean and simple, things that lean modern. Sometimes people think of modern as machine-made and very cold, and I think natural elements are a nice juxtaposition. I like raw with refined. I like shiny with matte. I like having that yin and yang, if you will. It's like wearing jeans with a really beautiful shirt, you know?

LL: On your Style Network show, *Dress My Nest*, you use the everyday fashion choices women make to help them discover their own interior design style.

THOM: Does someone wear a lot of patterns? Do they wear a lot of solids? Are they wearing bohemian things, or very sleek or tailored things? When you open up someone's wardrobe, it gives a great springboard. All of a sudden, people are confident and they start opening up about what they like.

LL: You've designed commercial and residential spaces, which can be very different experiences. What do you see as the similarities?

THOM: At the end of the day you're designing for people. Whether you're doing the interior of a car or a residence, it can be beautiful, but if it isn't comfortable, or inviting, or human on any level, then it really loses. If people aren't comfortable or they don't like it, that's not good design.

LL: You've said the living room is your favorite to decorate. Why?

PREVIOUS PAGE: A waterscape by artist/surfer Alex Winstein and a salvaged piece of wood from a Tibetan prayer house add to the organic tranquility of Filicia's living room. Disparate decorative elements mingle to create Filicia's favorite juxtapositions.



THOM: Because the living room sets the tone for the rest of the house. It's the room I like to be in the most. I like to entertain.

LL: Throughout your design career, the emphasis on 'sustainability' has evolved ten-fold.

THOM: Well, it didn't really exist when I first started. If it did it's because you wanted something to *look* natural and organic. It changed in the sense of how people approach design now—the way we think of materials. Natural is not a death sentence anymore, in terms of it being unattractive. Natural things are really beautiful; we appreciate them.

LL: Judging from your book, your show, and your website, it seems you have a thing for birds. How did your bird motif come about?

THOM: About five years ago, I bought two metal birds from this guy on the street for \$100. I also have a house in upstate New York, and there was this big, majestic eagle flying around one day. And I thought, "Those fabulous eagle consoles they have in

the White House could be a very fun thing to do, but in a modern way.' So, I started designing them for myself.

All of a sudden it was like, 'Thom has a bird thing.' Then, the bird thing became 'the thing' for our show, which had nothing to do with me at all. It was the network who came up with the bird idea. Maybe I was a bird in a previous life? I don't know what it is. I certainly don't have anything *against* birds, but I'm not actively part of the Audubon Society or anything. And I'm guessing I should be, because apparently I love the form of the bird and I'm drawn to the bird.

I got to go easy on the bird thing though, I don't want people saying, 'here comes the bird lady.'

EXIT

For the full interview, visit: loftlifemag.com/thomfilicia

Industrial pendant lighting mixed with sleek appliances and cabinetry capture Filicia's "raw with refined" aesthetic. Safety glass mirror creates a spaciousness while invoking the manufacturing past of Filicia's neighborhood. One of Filicia's "surprise effects" uses his Emmy from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* as a toilet paper holder.





Model Loft

Tribute Lofts, winner of the Atlanta Urban Design Commission's 2008 Award of Excellence for New Construction, is ready for its closeup.

Photography by Ashley Colhouer

Styling by KeKe Samberstein, Hair by Natasha Fett, Makeup by Jordan Eliza

Emanuel (Click Models) sports a **DIRTY ENGLISH** by **JUICY COUTURE** blazer, a **HUGO BOSS** shirt from Saks Fifth Avenue, **BILL BLASS** slacks, and **BALLY** dress shoes. Christina (Click Models) wears an ultra-marine **ZAC POSEN** dress from Saks Fifth Avenue, **TOM FORD** sunglasses from Drew Lewis in Atlanta, and **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN** heels. Audruis (Click Models) wears a leather jacket by **WILLIAM RAST** from Drew Lewis, an **ETRO** shirt, a **Z ZEGNA** tie, **HUGO BOSS** slacks, and **BALLY** boots.



Christina, in lingerie and silk shirt from **VICTORIA'S SECRET** and **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN** heels, reclines on an *Il Teatro* modular sectional by **PHILIPPE BOUIX**. Audrius wears a tie and shirt by **CALVIN KLEIN**, **Z ZEGNA** blazer from Saks Fifth Avenue, and **BARBARA BLACK** pocket square. Emanuel, between an iconic red **DOLCE VITA** chaise longue and a zebra wood chair designed by **POTOCO**, wears a **MODERN AMUSEMENT** vest, a vintage bow tie, **CALVIN KLEIN** slacks, and **ROBERT WAYNE** boots. Furniture provided by **ROCHE BOBOIS**. Also shown: **LES ARBRES** light sculptures; on the patio, twin chairs designed by **SACHA LAKIC** (*BEL AIR* collection).



Emanuel (CALVIN KLEIN ensemble, HUGO BOSS shoes) and Audrius (blue CLUB MONACO cardigan, WILLIAM RAST shirt from Drew Lewis, CALVIN KLEIN tie, HUGO BOSS slacks, and ROBERT WAYNE boots) take five in the lobby of Tribute Lofts.



In a ROBERT RODRIGUEZ jumpsuit, KENNETH JAY LANE bracelet, and CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN shoes, Christina sits on a SACHA LAKIC-designed zebrawood UBLO bar stool. Emanuel wears a VERSACE COLLECTION blazer HUGO BOSS shirt and slacks, and BALLY shoes. All clothing, Saks Fifth Avenue. VANESSA MITRANI-designed vases grace the kitchen counter. On the left: original acrylic by LYS SOUSA on a TSURU console table. Foreground: mirrored fume glass and wood CUBA LIBRE tables by DANIEL RODE rest on a TANI TAPIS rug. All furniture, ROCHE BOBOIS.



Audrius and Christina enjoy the sunset from the rooftop common area at Tribute Lofts.
On her: **JAMES PERSE** tank, royal blue **YIGAL AZROUËL** skirt, **FENDI** heels, and wooden bangle by **ALEXIS BITTAR** (all from Saks Fifth Avenue).
On him: **MODERN AMUSEMENT** blazer from Drew Lewis in Atlanta, t-shirt from **EMPORIO ARMANI UNDERWEAR**, **JOHN VARVATOS** pants, and **ROBERT WAYNE** shoes.



Golden Touch

Vancouver, Canada's design darling, finds itself front and center for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.



Story by Kyra Shapurji
Photography by Linden Hass

Vancouver, British Columbia, takes everything in stride. It's a temperate city—both in climate and in the attitude of its citizens. But just because it's a stark personality contrast to most major metropolitan areas, doesn't mean a savvy design scene is lacking.

If design encompasses the art of reinvention, then Vancouver knows all too well how to re-create. The city was completely rebuilt after a fire leveled most of the downtown area in the earlier part of the 20th Century. So the façade of this Canadian city, in most respects, seems quite young.

With vigor on its side, Vancouver kept its design industry contemporary and local, so visitors looking to feed their craving for design won't be left wanting. The city offers a broad mix of stores that run the gamut from antique to crafty to contemporary and chic, all set in newly gentrified neighborhoods.

To get an insider's perspective of Vancouver's design scene, we handpicked local experts to tell us what 'design hits' are a

must when visiting "Van": Patricia Gray, acclaimed interior designer (Patricia Gray, Inc.); Omer Arbel, creative director of Canadian firm, Bocci; and Jan Halvarson and Earl Einarson of the popular design blog, Poppytalk. Their suggestions will have you traversing most of Vancouver's individual neighborhoods—the best way to soak up every corner of the city's culture.

All three of our experts recommend making the trip to the **2 MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY**, one of architect Arthur Erickson's masterpieces, at the University of British Columbia. From the museum's Great Hall, you can take in a floor-to-ceiling view of the Point Grey cliffs. Arbel calls the museum "a real contribution to international modernist discourse."

When you're ready to make your way downtown, stop by the **15 VANCOUVER LIBRARY SQUARE**, designed by Moshe Safdie. This seven-story structure, surrounded by a free-standing elliptical wall, features reading areas accessible by bridges and a roof-

With vigor on its side, Vancouver kept its design industry contemporary and local, so visitors looking to feed their craving for design won't be left wanting.

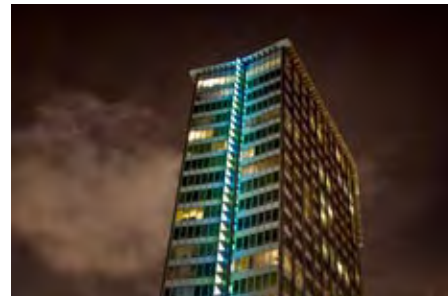
turned-public-garden. And since you're already in the tiny neighborhood of Crosstown, you should take the opportunity to visit **11 PROVIDE**. Recommended by Poppytalk for its selection of organic interior accessories, Provide's clean space is filled with abstract art, fashionable clothing, and even kimonos by Human Nature that add to the store's tranquil atmosphere.

From Crosstown you can easily walk to Yaletown, where you'll find two of Gray's favorites—**9 LIGHT FORM** and **7 THE CROSS DÉCOR AND DESIGN**. Gray shops at Light Form for the "latest and greatest in 'designer' lighting fixtures because their products are international cutting-edge." She calls The Cross Décor and Design, "the hip place to shop" and says "their packing rivals Tiffany's." The beautifully expansive store has a 1914 heritage mark and features exposed beams in the ceiling and 5,000 square feet of luxury bedding, lighting, bath products, and vintage furniture.

While you're still in the relative downtown area, you might

head up to Gastown, named after infamous local, "Gassy Jack," a late 1800s saloon owner. Stop in at **8 INFORM INTERIORS** and be carried away by its four-floor showroom with "the usual suspect brands," according to Arbel, including Philippe Starck, Isamu Noguchi, and Eero Saarinen. But they carry other pieces that are more "magical and special" as Arbel notes, such as the the "Sponge" chair, designed by Peter Traag for Edra. Another wonderful perk is the architecture library filled with every book or magazine you could want on the subject.

Granville Island is always a definite destination in any guidebook on Vancouver. It's not an island *per se*, but rather a peninsula that juts out into False Creek, filled with markets for artisans, food, and flower merchants. Within the Net Loft Building on "the island" lies a store called **5 PAPER-YA!** that Poppytalk says is "the place to go if you're looking to find anything paper related." Here, you're certain to find ornate and decorative supplies for your office: pens, seals, stamps,



Vancouver may be considered a quiet, placid city with a “take it as it comes” attitude, but its design industry holds its own next to the larger ones across the border.

and origami materials. Once you’ve made your way into the Granville area, you can stop at **12 18 KARAT** for “contemporary products inspired by nature.” The store originally designed and imported floral containers for large volume users, but has since grown into the place for tabletop, textiles, and lifestyle products. Gray says the store’s accessories are “simple and totally unique” and adds she recently purchased a Selenite crystal log set for a client.

On the other end of the scale, the Vancouver antique stores don’t disappoint. **10 PANACHE ANTIQUES** by Granville Island is a good one to hit up if you’re looking for pieces from the 17th through the 20th Century, such as an exquisite shrine cabinet from the Meiji period. Gray has an understandable soft spot for this store—the owner gave her her first job back in the 80s—yet Gray wistfully mentions a “Lalique chandelier circa 1920 that I am coveting.” You’ll also want to visit **4 ARCHITECTURAL ANTIQUES**, recommends Arbel. This glimmering maze into the

past boasts the largest lighting collection in North America, and they perform restorations on the premises. Beautiful gramophones are scattered throughout the store, among unusual pieces like an 1860 four-arm gas fixture and a 17th Century Celtic castle sculpture.

The next store suggested by both Arbel and Poppytalk is **13 VANCOUVER SPECIAL**, a relatively new store named after the infamous house design from 1965-85 in Vancouver, Arbel says, adding: “Finally a young *and* intelligently curated design shop in Vancouver!” If you continue on the same street for another few blocks, you’ll reach **5 THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TEXT** that Poppytalk recommends for original papergoods designed by the owners. The tiny shop has an “old office” look with wooden and metal file cabinets, and a collection of vintage typewriters—perfect for their monthly letter writing nights. If you’re nostalgic for the days when typewriter font was the standard, then you’ll find yourself a couple hours later having forgotten

what’s next on your schedule. It’s a paper junkie’s dream come true. Last but not least is **6 LIBERTY**, a design store cultivated with strict taste by its managers, so when you step inside, it immediately feels like an Alice in Wonderland-world infused with shades of black, white, and purple that make stuffed crows, modern gothic chairs, and table linens shine.

A must-see when the sun goes down is the **14 BC ELECTRIC BUILDING**, renamed “The Electra” when its lights are turned on. Originally built for BC Hydro, one of Canada’s largest electric utilities, the building was a collaboration between the modernist architect Ron(al) James Thom and the painter B.C. (Bertram Charles) Binning, who designed the blue and green porcelain mosaic tiling on the lower floors.

Closely situated near the airport, check out the recently completed **1 RICHMOND OLYMPIC OVAL**. The city took sustainability to a new level when it decided to use local, resourced pine trees to create a “wave roof” for the structure. The links

of wood panels create an undulating, rippling effect, a unique touch for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. But that’s just another example of Vancouver’s willingness to think innovatively and in the present.

Vancouver may be considered a quiet, placid city with a “take it as it comes” attitude, but its design industry holds its own next to the larger ones south of the border. And yes, it may be architecturally young, but Vancouver definitely doesn’t feel naïve. Globally aware and culturally receptive, you realize why Vancouver makes perfect sense to hold the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympic Games, a melting pot of cultures, athletes, and *some* design. Vancouver is ready to show the world that creativity flourishes best in a city where ingenuity is proudly upheld.

EXIT

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For lucky North Beach residents—and visitors, Caffe Trieste was the first place to offer espresso on the West Coast.

Double Shot of Nostalgia

Lisa Webster recalls the day BART accidentally introduced her to one of the great loves of her life.

➔ BART, the Bay Area's subway system, had only been around a few years before kids from the East Bay realized it was an ideal means of escape. We used to take the train from downtown Berkeley, under the bay, and into the heart of San Francisco's downtown. Emerging on Market Street, we'd jump on a cable car and ride up Powell, hanging from the sides of the car all the way to North Beach.

We all had our own San Francisco projects.

A friend of mine was obsessed with City Lights bookstore and would stake out the place for hours, notebook in hand, hoping to run into Allen Ginsberg. Which she did, much later—but in Tokyo. Others of us roamed Columbus Street, looking for trouble. (It may be a cliché, but when it comes to teenagers and red-light districts, there's no other way to put it).

As for me, it was all about Caffe Trieste, where I had my first cup of espresso, by

accident. My brother used to meet his girlfriend there, sort of a Romeo-and-Juliet-without-the-tragedy situation (the parents didn't approve, but it wasn't the end of the world), and sometimes I would tag along with my notebook to listen to the old Italian men grumble about politics.

One day I made the pilgrimage on my own and trekked up to Caffe Trieste. It was still early and foggy, and I put my stuff down at a table near the window facing Vallejo Street. Opera played on the jukebox. It felt like instant adulthood. The black and white photos that covered the walls were of people I didn't know, or know anything about, but everyone seemed exuberant—the way people look when they're winning a prize.

I don't know what I must have said at the counter, but this time my hot chocolate came in the form of a double-espresso. I was baffled, but game, and took a hearty sip...

Awful. At first. But with a tablespoon of sugar? Not bad.

I looked up at the glamorous black and white people on the wall. I suddenly got it. The afternoon wore on in a delicious haze.

San Francisco. Fog, the clang of the cable cars, strong coffee, steam on the windows. It's all still there.



Photograph courtesy of Caffe Trieste Archives

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