



THE PICTURE OF TASTE

On New York's Upper East Side, Belgian architect and designer Nicolas Schuybroek breathes new life into a house with a storied past.

By FLAVIA GIROGI Photographs by ADRIAN GAUT Styled by COLIN KING



The living room of an Upper East Side townhouse designed by Nicolas Schuybroek with architect Matteo Fraticelli. Sofa and armchair by Jean Royère; rattan armchair by Franco Albini for Bonacina 1889; floor lamp by Ingrid Donat; end table by Diego Giacometti. On the pillar, paintings by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (left) and Tomma Abts (right).



The dining room table and chairs are by Jean Prouvé, and a bronze sculpture by Sherrie Levine hangs over a bookcase by Charlotte Perriand. Artworks by Wade Guyton; porcelain sculpture by Jeff Koons.



Another view of the dining room, with paintings by Rashid Johnson.

A former carriage house on the Upper East Side with an unmistakable red brick façade has a story to tell. Once renovated by the architect François de Menil, and inhabited by legendary art dealer Larry Gagosian, it then underwent yet another transformation at the hands of architect and designer Nicolas Schuybroek in collaboration with Matteo Fraticelli (of FROM Architects). From the moment he saw it, Schuybroek recognized the home's potential—or, rather, he intuited that the house had more to say.

"Architecturally, it had strong bones and a quiet confidence, but it was frozen in a very specific moment of 1990s

New York," he says. "There was glamour but also fatigue, as if it had lived intensely and then paused."

Schuybroek, who launched his Brussels- and Paris-based practice in 2011, is known for pairing crisp lines with sumptuous textures to create dynamic spaces, inside and out, that are at once sharp, warm, and inviting. His work includes projects in Europe, the U.S., the Middle East, and Southeast Asia and runs to hotels, retail spaces, residences, and even a line of objects. Transforming this house in New York presented a particular challenge, he says.

"From the outset the house asserted itself through proportion, light, and sequence. It was never meant to disappear behind art or furniture but to engage actively with them," he says. "I saw it as a musical score, because its structure already contained rhythm, pauses, and moments of intensity. Our task was not to overwrite it but to interpret it: adjusting tempo,

sharpening silences, and introducing new harmonies."

To accomplish this, Schuybroek brought in light and dark travertine marble, Douglas fir, and leather to create an atmosphere that was by turns calm and intense. "I'm less interested in comfort as a constant than in comfort that is discovered through progression," Schuybroek says. "The materials function as emotional registers within a clear spatial sequence, rather than as decorative elements."

The placement of each work of art came out of a dialogue between Schuybroek and the home's owner. "We spoke less about visibility and more about resonance—where a work could breathe, where it could hold tension, where it might quietly surprise," Schuybroek says. "Art was never treated as an endpoint; it actively shaped circulation, proportion, and moments of pause. The house became a shared composition between architecture, art, and lived experience."

Now light enters the living room through the home's original square windows—an echo of Pierre Chareau's famed glass block house in Paris, the *Maison de Verre* (built between 1928 and '32)—as well as via large skylights, "reworked as incisions... Their role goes beyond illumination. They are tools that modulate perception, breaking the severity of materials with ephemeral geometries." This task is shared by the rounded forms of the furnishings, which include pieces by the French greats: Pierre Paulin, Jean Royère, and Jean Prouvé.

"[This project] is exemplary in its refusal to be spectacular," Schuybroek insists. "It reflects my interest in restraint, emotional sequencing, and architecture as a psychological experience. It's about creating intensity without noise, richness without excess. If there is a signature here, it lies in the pursuit of quiet complexity." ■

Additional reporting by Genevieve Walker.

The downstairs living room features a sofa by Carlo Scarpa, a stool and chair by Charlotte Perriand, and a cocktail table by Ado Chale. Custom Venetian terrazzo flooring; artwork by Howardena Pindell (left) and Emmi Whitehorse (right).



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A set of white armchairs and sofa by Pierre Paulin and rattan armchairs by Janine Abraham and Dirk Jan Rol surround a cocktail table by Max Ingrand. Lamp by Pierre Guariche; artwork by Danh Vo.



Open to the terrace, the kitchen features a travertine floor, a Carrara marble island, and a steel cooking block by La Cornue.



The corridor from the dining room is characterized by wood flooring with glass and steel plates. Paintings by Rashid Johnson and metal sculpture by Mark Grotjahn.



The primary bedroom features a headboard and bench clad in a neutral suede. Table lamp by Christopher Baker; artwork by Emmi Whitehorse.



An artwork by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye hangs by the Travertino Romano stairs leading to the third floor; chair by Jean Prouvé.



The bathtub, vanity, and floor of the primary bathroom are in a sandblasted Carrara marble, with sink and tub fittings by Studio Ore. Stool by Pierre Chapo.



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