

INTERIOR DESIGN

A modern interior design scene. In the foreground, a curved white table with a dark top holds a red tray with two pears. In the background, a red chair is positioned near a large window with a grid pattern. A yellow sunburst sculpture sits on a white pedestal. A tall, thin, wavy sculpture stands on a white base. The room has a concrete floor and a white wall.

Resolution: 4
ARCHITECTURE

Utility Box

Resolution: 4 Architecture builds a stunning volume as the planning keystone for a loft in Hell's Kitchen.

"IT'S A UTILITIES BOX," Joseph Tanney, founding partner of Resolution: 4 Architecture, remarks tersely of his defining gesture in the design of a 4,800-sq.-ft. Hell's Kitchen loft. The apparently simple solution, however, belies the complexity of both existing mechanical conditions and the specific needs of the clients. The married couple, long-time loft dwellers in the East Village and friends of the architect since college, intended to preserve the site's integrity while substantially upgrading its interiors. Creature comforts would supplant raw living and dorm-style décor, the architect explains. The husband, a film and video editor, had one stipulation: "a room to make things and make a mess," Tanney recalls. He also wanted to accommodate a beloved collection of quirky and modern furniture. The wife, a writer who recently published a novel, envisioned an unobstructed area. Both desired a plan that would balance openness with enclosure, and provide for ample storage.

The process began on strictly utilitarian terms. "Our first step was investigating existing mechanical, plumbing, and HVAC conditions," the architect continues. They discovered that the building's risers and plumbing were grouped in the center of the floorplan. The team conceived a "compressed box of utilities" that would contain the kitchen, baths, laundry, and storage areas as well as integrate two air-handling units (a clean alternative to exposed ducts). Location of the building's risers and plumbing lines enabled the architects to exploit the piece further as an articulating device. The volume divides the layout into distinct zones for living, sleeping, and cooking. "To access the baths, you have to navigate the volume, where the ceiling is dropped to seven ft. and the floor is one step up," Tanney explains. →

Cover: View of the interior showcasing selections from the clients' extensive collection of modern furnishings.

NAKASHIMA SOFA, LACQUERED CUBE FURNITURE, RUG: GARY DIAS. LIGHTING PENDANT: FRED SILVERMAN. BRANZI SCULPTURE: DESIGN GALLERY.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL WARCHOL

The architects also used the central block as a means to introduce materials and a spatial rhythm of solids and voids within an otherwise one-dimensional industrial envelope formed by concrete flooring and (refurbished) steel-framed windows. The concrete-paneled façade gives way to sections of maple cabinetry marking kitchen, closet, and bath zones.

The architects designed the dominant work island with lacquered base cabinets and teak counter; furnishings are otherwise flea-market finds and reflect the astute eye, perseverance, and element of luck needed to assemble such an ad-hoc collection. Passionate collectors of mid-century modern furnishings, the clients mixed classic Saarinen and Eames pieces with unexpected, under-the-radar items such as Droog Design's box construction, a Nakashima sofa in a brilliant red wool blend, Ettore Sottsass' pre-Memphis Wiggle table, Andrea Branzi's stacked disk sculpture, a 1960s lighting pendant, and other Italian classics by Kartell and Paolo Deganello in the bedroom. Most striking, however, is the quilt of sweaters; it demands a double, or even triple, take. Showing a streak of ingenuity and sense of humor, the husband took garments that had been folded and stacked in the former loft, stitched them together, and reinvented them as a coverlet.

Resolution: 4 Architecture's solution is neither gratuitous nor tricky. The sensitive creation of detailed volumes combines a well built environment with a gutsy raw shell to bring fresh life to the ubiquitous loft vernacular.

The project was completed in six months. Tanney shares credit with principal Robert Luntz, project architect Daniel Piselli, and team members Michael Anderson and Erin Vali.

—Edie Cohen



Opposite: A single volume articulates the space and anchors the materials palette with concrete panels, perforated metal, maple, slate, and glass. A wall sector clad with MDF panels incorporates a pocket door separating master bedroom from public space. Box construction is by Droog Design through Moss.

Above: The kitchen features maple cabinetry surrounding appliances, lacquered cabinets, and steel backsplash. At right are closets and a glass transom allowing light to infiltrate the bathroom.

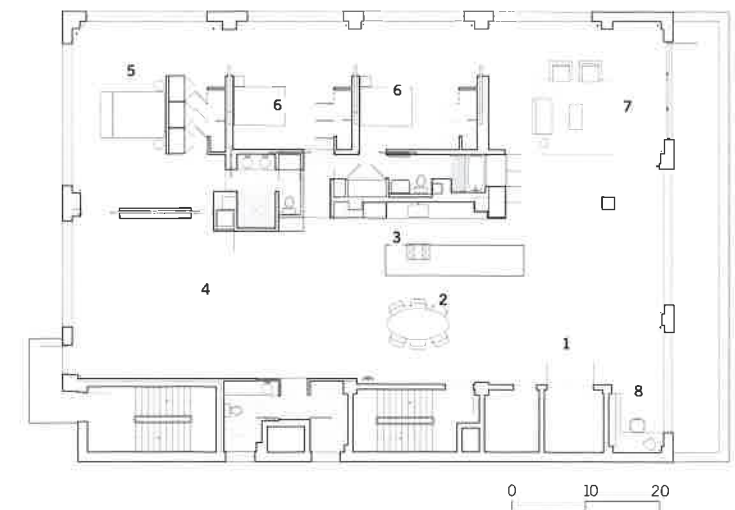
REFRIGERATOR: SUB-ZERO. RANGE: VIKING. DISHWASHER: ASKO. SINK: KINDRED. FAUCET: GROHE. LIGHTING: STONCO. HARDWARE: SIMMONS. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: CONTINENTAL CONSTRUCTION.





Above: A quilt of recycled sweaters shows the husband's handiwork. Lounge chair is by Paolo Deganello for Cassina; drum table is a Kartell classic; bedside table is an American piece, circa 1946.

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|-------------|------------------|
| 1 ENTRY | 5 MASTER BEDROOM |
| 2 DINING | 6 BEDROOM |
| 3 KITCHEN | 7 LIVING |
| 4 PLAY AREA | 8 WRITING AREA |



Right: A storage wall, with a facing wall of closets, backs the bed in the master bedroom. "We sanded the existing concrete floor until we achieved the desired effect," Tanney says of the plane's pattern.

