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SPECIAL ISSUE:
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Who's Next!

"Who are the new designers?" It's a question we hear frequently. In fact, *Met Home* showcases the work of newcomers all the time, just not in a cohesive group. For this special issue, however, we searched the industry for the best of a new generation. Most of these interior and product designers and/or architects are in their thirties. Some have recently graduated from school or started their own firms after working for an established professional. Most have never been published and are making their print debut on the following pages, although one was the winner of a certain design-centered reality-TV competition. All have reached the moment of critical artistic mass when what they have to say comes together with the means of saying it in a fresh and stylish manner. Of course, the measure of inclusion here is not only youth or novelty but excellence. Looking deep into our Swarovski crystal ball, we predict that you will see their work and hear their names many times in the future. Enjoy getting acquainted and being among the first to know! —*The Editors*



Designer Amy Liu (opposite with Jean Pichon, Hatanaka) created a singular wall installation for the dining area by mounting interlocking cast glass tiles from a vintage room divider on custom brackets. More timid furniture might disappear in this room, but not BOCY's walnut side dining table, which has a cast-bronze "wishbone" base. The vintage mahogany-wineur dining chairs are by the Canadian designer Jacques Gullon; the chandelier is a commissioned reproduction.



when michael met amy

For this ascendant designer and a **Manhattan** client with high-rise Central Park views, it was midcentury-modern love at first sight.





Private investor and entrepreneur Michael Hirtenstein met New York interior designer Amy Lau through the Internet. Call it the beginning of his romance with 20th-century furniture. In fact, it was

Hirtenstein's assistant who played cupid, surfing to Lau's website and vetting her over the phone. When the designer and client were finally introduced, Hirtenstein says, he "liked her energy and her style." Then he hired her, adding that he wanted his newly rented 3,000-square-foot, three-bedroom apartment to be completed in two months flat, down to the barware and candles.

"Two months was unrealistic for that scale," notes Lau, who founded her firm, Amy Lau Design, in 2000. The personable designer, a graduate of Sotheby's prestigious masters program in fine and decorative arts, nevertheless delivered the total package in just three, having honed her curatorial skills as director of Aero under Thomas O'Brien and later as design director of the noted Lin/Weinberg Gallery, which specializes in midcentury pieces.

The open living/dining room presented one of several big challenges. Hirtenstein decreed that nothing should block the view, so

Lau chose a classically low Vladimir Kagan sofa and window-framing floor-to-ceiling drapes.

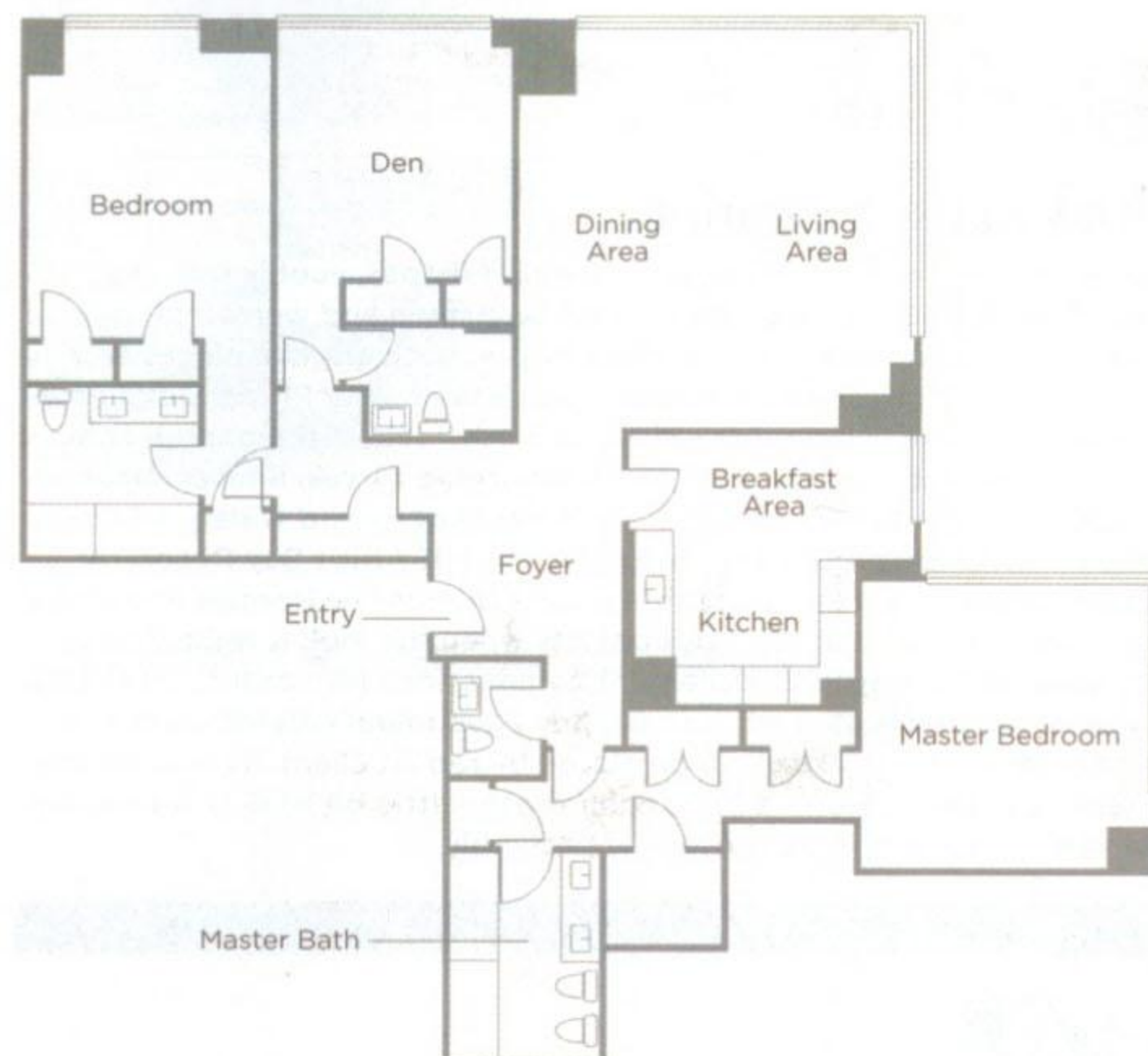
One of their biggest purchases was a monumental room divider consisting of 196 interlocking textured glass links. "We needed a big piece of art or something bold," Lau explains. It took three days to arrange the composition on the wall. Hirtenstein insisted upon 1950s Canadian chairs he first spotted while visiting the designer's studio. "He wouldn't leave until I sold them to him," she laughs.

Above: A vintage Vladimir Kagan sofa nearly upstages the view of the George Washington Bridge. The glass-topped coffee table is by Philip Lloyd Powell; seating includes a midcentury Italian leather-and-brass armchair and an Edward Wormley chair and ottoman for Dunbar. Right: Alongside Marco Zanuso's *Lady* armchair, Gio Ponti sconces flank Powell's circa-1955, hand-carved, black-walnut *Amoeba* cabinet.

PRODUCED BY SUSAN TYREE VICTORIA. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROGER DAVIES. WRITTEN BY CRAIG KELLOGG.







While Lau did not renovate the kitchen, she did create an appealing vignette for meals with a plywood table by Norman Cherner and recent walnut reeditions of his historic modernist chairs for the American manufacturer Plycraft. The apartment, with its ten-foot

ceilings and dark-stained herringbone floors, was laid out by New York architect Ismael Leyva and finished by the developer. Lau further personalized the breakfast nook with a current production version of Verner Panton's famed capiz-shell chandelier.

The entry hall got a more substantial pendant that's dripping with vivid glass medallions because "Michael kept asking for bold and colorful," Lau says. "I usually like warm tones," he explains—and Lau was happy to oblige.

Other ideas for the sunny palette came from the living room's Zoe Luyendijk Studio rug, which Lau likens to an abstract painting in autumnal shades. "There was no time to have her make one," Lau reports, "but happily Zoe had this one in stock."

Lau also encouraged Hirtenstein to invest in studio pieces by the Pennsylvania cabinetmaker Phillip Lloyd Powell. The wall-mounted, black-walnut, amoeboid cabinet (still lined in its original floral-print velvet) was found in good shape at Todd Merrill Antiques. When the glass top of a Powell table proved a bit wide for the living room, Lau sought out the artist himself for advice on how to trim it down. Powell grabbed a pen and proceeded to sign his name on the top with a flourish. "Then we all laughed because you'd eventually wipe it off," Lau says. "Michael entertains with a vengeance!"

Left: The pendant light in the foyer consists of five tiers of vibrant mouthblown glass medallions in citrus colors. Opposite (from top): Lau's eclectic foyer design incorporated a Swiss cabinet, Scandinavian rug, a French mirror from the 1930s with a gold-glass frame and German ceramics; the breakfast area boasts Norman Cherner's iconic dining set, a Verner Panton chandelier and David Roth silk screen.

Amy Lau's Inspirations

Amy Lau relishes the flamboyant sculptural shapes, nubby textures and earthy materials prized by furnishings craftsmen and women of the mid 20th century. Walnut pops up frequently, in both original pieces and the reproductions she commissions. Furniture maker Phillip Lloyd Powell designed the living room's curvy carved-wood wall-mounted cabinet and low table, both of which sport biomorphic curves. Similar shapes clearly emerged as a Lau signature in her groovy and widely admired Big Sur-inspired penthouse lounge for the 2007 Kips Bay Decorator Show House. Lau freely juxtaposes name brands like Hermès and superstar designers with anonymous objects when the look is right. So the original Swedish rugs complement commissions for couture knits and wovens from emerging artisans. Slightly aged metal accents add Lau's finishing touch—obviously appreciated by repeat client Michael Hirtenstein. "He loves Zanuso's *Lady* chair for the little bit of flicker from its tarnished brass legs," she notes approvingly.

for Hirtenstein's light-filled bedroom, Lau brought in vintage handcrafts like the Roger Capron tile tabletops, which she installed as art over the bed, and new hand-loomed pillows from the emerging California designer Lauren Saunders. There is also a lush

citron cashmere blanket that was commissioned from ABC Carpet & Home. It's almost a signature of Lau's approach to have artists and artisans create new pieces in the tradition of modernist craft. "Michael loves texture and woodworking," Lau says, "but this was the project where he really fell in love with design."

Lau is perhaps uniquely qualified for her role as tutor, having been a founder of Design Miami, the annual invitational decorative arts fair held during Art Basel Miami Beach. She remains involved as a member of the vetting committee. It was on eBay, however, that she found the brass candleholder for the living room coffee table (which Hirtenstein received as her housewarming gift to celebrate their first collaboration together).

Meanwhile, Hirtenstein has become one of Lau's most ardent supporters, having already commissioned her to tackle his Hamptons beach house. Now, since his days overlooking Central Park are numbered, she is already working on the new place, an imaginative TriBeCa penthouse designed by Mexican architect Enrique Norten that is currently under construction. Clearly, this meeting of the minds—between adventurous client and designer charting a new course in modern craft—was a match made in design heaven. ●

See *Resources*, last pages.

Right: A close-up on one of a pair of Roger Capron tile tabletops that Lau hung in the master bedroom. Opposite (from top): The upholstered headboard, oxidized-maple side table and leather-wrapped lamps form a suite from BDDW; in Hirtenstein's study, the oversize 2003 C-print "Terminal Mirage" by photographer David LaSelva hangs above an armless sofa from Wyeth and a pair of Hermès suede poufs.



