



# OCULUS

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Emerging  
Voices

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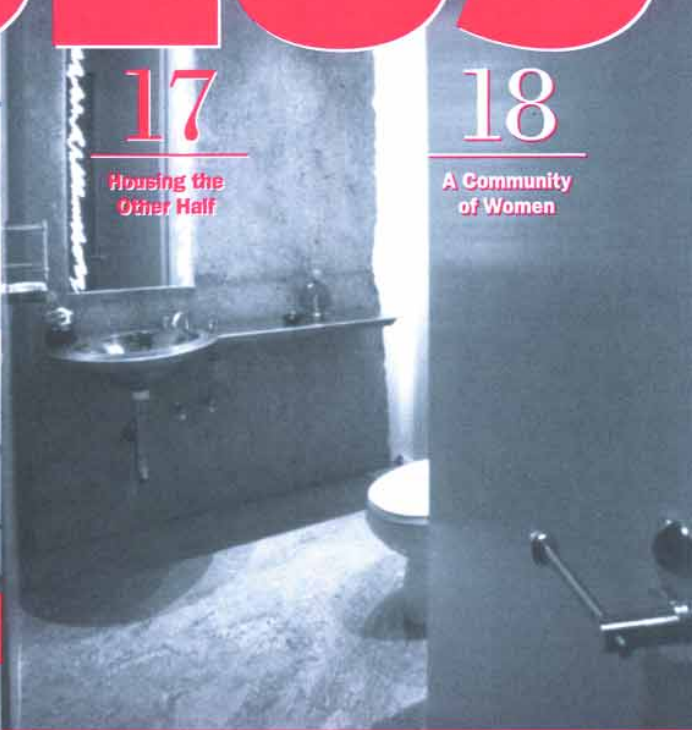
Holland  
in New York

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Housing the  
Other Half

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A Community  
of Women



## APARTMENTS AND LOFTS:



## THE NEW HUMILITY

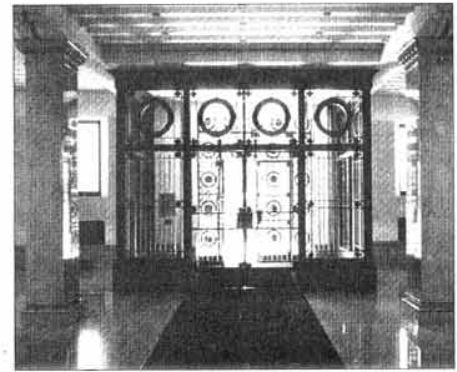




120 East End Avenue library,  
Ferguson Murray & Shamamian



Riverside Drive triplex,  
François Bollack Architects



258 Riverside Drive lobby renovation,  
Ethelind Coblun Architect

Christopher Shelby

2,700-square-foot loft for a couple with a young daughter on Laight Street. It has a home office and the biggest kitchen he has ever designed — 600 square feet. “Today everybody wants a large eat-in kitchen, a big master bedroom and bath, and a living room that you can actually live in. In New York, you make maximum use of the space you have. Even if you have a lot of it, you just can’t waste it,” he said.

“One reason doing people’s homes is difficult is that they realize this is their chance to do what they want in their life. Men, especially, don’t think about their physical environments so much, so when they start trying to figure out what they really want, they change. They’re not sure. Most people who come to us have only done this once before, if at all. They’re putting themselves on the line,” he said. That is why, “sometimes, listening is more important than anything else. In residential work, you have to listen and filter the clients’ ideas through your own work. That way you get several levels of meaning.”

Mills is doing an apartment in the oldest co-op in the city at 34 Gramercy Park, another on the southwest cor-

ner of the Majestic, which had twelve rooms before some walls were removed, and a penthouse in the West Village. That apartment for an art collector was technically the most difficult because it was made up of three small one-bedrooms on two different floors, and the top one was not directly above the other two. An extra space was built out onto the terrace over part of the living room below, but the connection was so minimal that it took Mills two months to figure out how to connect it with a dramatic, circular skylighted staircase that became the central element of the space on the lower floor. In all the apartments, rich textures and subtle colors join disconnected elements.

**Daniel Rowen** was luckier when he was asked by Nicole Miller to combine three one-bedroom lofts on Hudson Street, which were at least contiguous and on the same floor. Miller bought the first one many years ago when she was single, and later acquired the second and third. Now married with a child and a nanny, she and her husband, Kim Taipole, need to reconfigure the space, enlarge the kitchen, and add a child’s bedroom and bath, a family room, and a lot of storage —

“an enormous amount of plumbing relocation.” But they wanted to maintain the original feeling of what is now a “classic loft.” So Rowen sanded and refinished the existing oak floors, and had the radiators sanded and repainted, transforming them into decorative elements beside the large, arched windows along the perimeter. Everything is black-and-white with the golds and silvers of natural wood and metal. “The only special materials are in the new baths and the kitchen, which has a honed black-slate floor, honey maple surfaces, stainless-steel cabinets, and polished black granite countertops,” Rowen said. The family’s collection of French 1950s furniture — Jean Prouvé and Serge Monillé — is compatible with that palette and what he calls a “self-assured, mature loft; it’s quiet and traditional — for a loft.”

#### Found Architecture

**I**n some apartments, the architectural interest comes from the building itself. It just needs to be teased out of the structure. An extreme case in point is a 2,800-square-foot triplex apartment at the top of a limestone town house on

Riverside Drive designed by Clarence True in 1896. **Françoise Bollack Architects** remodeled it after it was gutted in the 1970s and fitted out with smoke glass, gold-framed interior windows, and marbled mirrors. “We couldn’t bring back the classical detail it would have had, because it wouldn’t be in sync with the three-story volume,” Bollack explained, “so we did a very understated modern design with some richness in the materials, such as a library in bird’s-eye maple with ebony trim.” Stark surfaces in the slanted ceilings reflect the slopes of the roofs above them. Clear-glass operable interior windows create views from one space to another; exterior windows and terraces on the second and third stories provide views across and down the Hudson and to the residential neighborhood nearby. The counterpunch comes from theatrical lighting inspired by the owner’s collection of Art Nouveau theater posters. “We mounted them on actual theater trusses,” Bollack said, noting that the very stark, angular fixtures — “pure technological objects on various circuits controlled by a computer” — relate to the rooflines and contrast with the refined detail.



*Trump International Hotel and Tower Condominium, 52nd floor, Costas Kondylis & Associates*



*The Mayfair Hotel, Costas Kondylis & Associates*

Another case of found character is a 900-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment Lester Korzilius created in a structure on top of a building on East 68th Street under the water tower. It has a two-story living room with arched windows facing the street and terrace, a bedroom on the mezzanine, and a one-story kitchen and half-bath on the entry level. The architect left the interior brickwork exposed to preserve the feeling of a rooftop hideaway.

**Robert Kahn** used balconies in a similar way on the parlor floor of a Greenwich Village town house that had been treated to a “disco renovation” in the 1970s. Every piece of molding had been stripped away. He put it back, probably more “correctly” than the late-nineteenth-century builder had, then created a new nineteenth-century-style hanging balcony similar to the ones at the University Club and the old Scribner’s bookstore on Fifth Avenue. Classicists like **Donald M. Rattner** of Ferguson Murray & Shamamian see an exoneration of their position — long frowned on by the architectural establishment — as bold architectural gestures for gestures’ sake become passé, God returns to the details, and pre-

war buildings become increasingly popular. The training he and his colleagues at the Institute for the Study of Classical Architecture provide allowed him to update an apartment at 120 East End Avenue, designed by Charles Platt in 1931, not just seamlessly, but with “the grace and charm of a grand home but no pretense,” as the owners, a CEO and his wife, requested. A uplighted cove ceiling was built over the entrance gallery, with new overdoors, trim, and polished French mahogany doors. In the dining room, he said, “a new Federal Style cornice, punctuated with mutules and pearls...wainscot, overdoors, and china display cabinets are detailed to echo the delicate Adamesque ornament characteristic of the building....[The] library was fully paneled in a hand-finished Ponderosa Pine, which was also used for the denticulated cornice, custom mantelpiece, and television cabinet.” Other concessions to the end of the twentieth century were made with a new marble master bath, the elimination of the pantry for a new kitchen with cherry cabinetry, Juperance granite countertops and a 300-bottle wine closet, and hidden electrical work for lighting, audiovisual,

and mechanical systems.

Rattner’s clients have the apartment **Ethelind Cobelin**’s clients were looking for, but with a smaller budget. Cobelin’s clients ended up in a modern concrete building down the street at 180 East End Avenue with “virtually no detail.” It was her job to create a prewar ambiance in the 2,200-square-foot, three-bedroom apartment on a construction budget of little more than \$200,000. “We organized the spaces so that they open onto one another through pairs of beveled-glass doors with transoms...bringing in and reflecting more natural light,” she said, adding that she inserted a new chair rail, base panelization, and crown trim, installed marble flooring in the entrance, Italian tile in the kitchen, and granite kitchen and dining room countertops. She also “incorporated wall sconces into the lighting scheme to punctuate the walls and provide a glow at night.” Cobelin, who provides similar services to co-ops boards, restored the lobbies of One East End Avenue and a McKim, Mead & White building at 258 Riverside Drive.

### Apartment Houses

**A** few years ago, the only new apartments on the market were in buildings that were left over from the construction boom of the late 1980s — mostly postmodern buildings with vaguely modern interiors on the Upper East and West Sides and in Battery Park City. About the only offerings of the early 1990s were the modern, view-oriented, mixed-use Millennium projects in Lincoln Square (*Oculus*, October 1995, p. 4; May 1997, p. 8) by **Gary Edward Handel**, then at **KPF**, with **Schuman, Lichtenstein, Claman, Efron**. The Brodsky Organization also built the 1,000-unit, twin-towered, prewar-inspired West End Towers by **Buck/Cane Architects** and **SLCE** (*Oculus*, September 1995, p. 3).

But the wheels are grinding again. **Buck/Cane Architects** and **SLCE** just topped out another Brodsky project, the 49-story, 729-unit mixed-use rental complex at One Columbus Place, built around the surgical theater of the 1892 Syms Building (*Oculus*, September 1996, p. 4).

Another rental building, the Related Company’s \$150 million, 22-story Union Square South, designed by