

downtown, a love story

It's absolutely mutual between Ghislaine Viñas and the owners of this house in TriBeCa
text: *ingrid abramovitch* photography: *eric laignel*





Ghislaine Viñas and Paige West call themselves sisters. These two vivacious women share no DNA, but they connect on every conceivable level, from a madcap sense of humor to a shared passion for color. One recent afternoon, as Viñas dismounted from the orange bicycle that she rides around town and parked in front of the town house she'd designed for West, the pair were delighted to discover they were both sporting Opi's Shrek nail polish, Viñas in green and West in blue. "We're at the stage. . ." the designer begins—before her six-time client interjects ". . .where we finish each other's sentences!"

Since an introduction by a mutual friend several years ago, West, a contemporary-art expert who owns the Chelsea gallery Mixed Greens as well as curating a corporate collection in Pennsylvania, has commissioned Ghislaine Viñas Interior Design for everything from a beach house in Montauk to commercial spaces. But while those projects weren't exactly plain vanilla, the pair's latest endeavor—decorating a six-floor, 15,500-square-foot house for West and her husband, real-estate developer JC Keeler of DDG Partners, and their three young sons—is the most colorful and ambitious to date.

It was Keeler who discovered a 1915 warehouse on a busy street in TriBeCa, near City

Hall, and decided to turn the crumbling building into a home for his family. His partner at DDG, Peter Guthrie, who studied architecture at Yale University, handled the renovation. Rather than go the easier route of demolishing the warehouse entirely and replacing it with the ubiquitous glass box, Keeler and Guthrie made sure the new house would still blend into the cityscape. They retained the facade's profile and window placement while replacing original brick with bluestone quarried in upstate New York—a nod to Keeler's native turf in the Catskills. "We thought a lot about our footprint, too," Guthrie says. Nothing but the joists, however, remains inside. The family lives on the top four stories, with a green roof accessible via a ladder. On the lower levels, a separate guest duplex features a double-height climbing wall that Keeler scales when no one's around.

Where the architecture is restrained, the furnishings are no-holds-barred, an amusing mash-up, as Guthrie describes it, of "Bauhaus and *Gone With the Wind*." Partly clad in the same bluestone, the shared lobby sets the tone. Other walls and the ceiling are covered in orange

Previous spread: In the kitchen of a TriBeCa town house by Ghislaine Viñas Interior Design, Lisa Ruyter's oil on canvas inspired accents including the custom-colored solid-surfacing of the island's counter.

Top: The bluestone-tiled lobby serves both the main part of the house and the lower guest duplex. Vintage wooden chairs were re-upholstered in vinyl and dipped in paint, duct tape covers the side table, and textile designer Alice Lam knitted a "sweater" for the lamp.

Center: Photo-printed on the dining chairs' vinyl seat upholstery are the family's favorite foods. **Bottom:** In the playroom, vintage chairs by Gideon Kramer surround a restaurant-supply table in stainless steel.

Opposite: A custom chandelier by Suzan Etkin hangs over a pair of wool-covered sofas in the living area.



fleurs-de-lis on gray polka dots, a pattern by Viñas and her graphic-designer husband, Jaime.

Near armchairs dipped in orange paint and a table covered in silver duct tape stands a floor lamp with a spindle-like turned base sporting a fluffy white knitted "sweater." A self-portrait by Vik Muniz, known for his work in chocolate, stares out at a chandelier made from Ping-Pong balls.

The Muniz occupies a spot between the front door of the duplex and the elevator to the upper stories, where a hand-carved wooden staircase with white-painted plaster balustrades winds upward to a skylit top landing. West, who grew up in Philadelphia but has roots in the South, imagines her ancestors having

"a plantation house with a big swooping staircase like this one." Much less traditional is the inverted layout here: With bedrooms below, the common areas above can take advantage of city views. "The goal was to have a grand space in a relatively small building," she says.

Some of the best panoramas are from the sixth-floor library. Its front wall is all glass, and a window cut out of the built-in bookshelves frames the side view. (Viñas organized the books by spine color.) A double chaise longue, big enough to hold the whole family, faces two armchairs upholstered in a floral linen that Viñas vinyl-ized. "They can easily be wiped off. We're always thinking about stress-free living with kids," she says. Alongside the chaise, strewn with woolly pillows, a couple of sheep sculptures graze on the green rug.

Throughout, she and West indulged their yen for bright colors. The kitchen island is painted yolk yellow, and the counter was custom-tinted to match. Two thick red stripes run, race-car style, around the playroom for the boys, a 5-year-old and 3-year-old twins. Meanwhile, West handed Viñas a photograph of a parakeet as color inspiration for the study. She obliged ▶

Opposite top: In the kitchen's lounge, an Antonio Citterio sofa and a custom table in painted wood gather near a photo triptych by Sarah Charlesworth. **Opposite bottom:** Steel pendant domes with silk threading illuminate the solid-surface top of the kitchen's custom table.

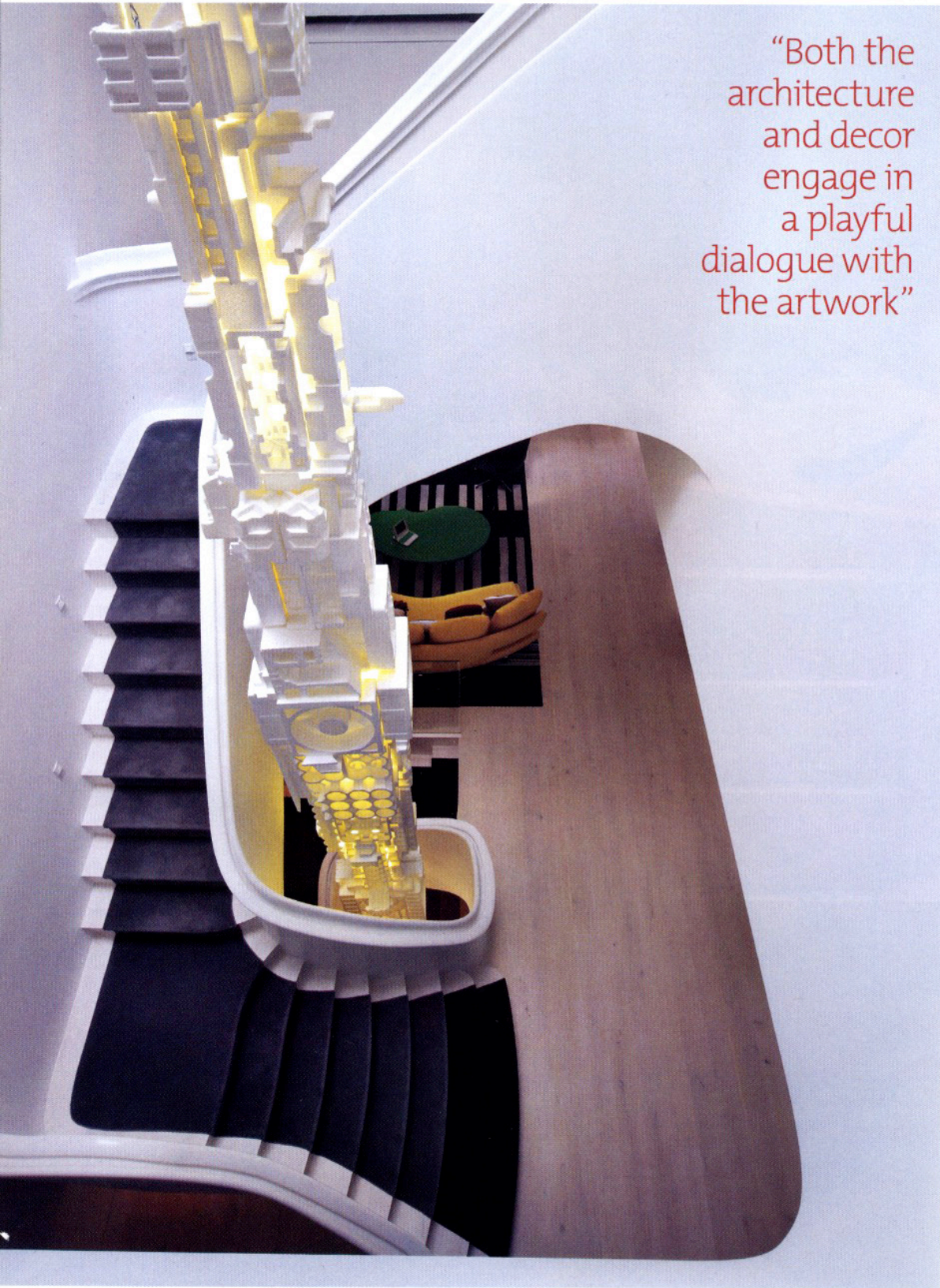


Top, from left: Murals in the boys' room are by Mark Mulrone, who's represented by their mother's gallery, Mixed Greens. The boys also have a library complete with a Vik Muniz photograph. **Bottom:** Seating options in a guest room are a chair by Hiromichi Kanno and vinyl-covered ottomans. An Andy Warhol image appears on the cotton window shades.





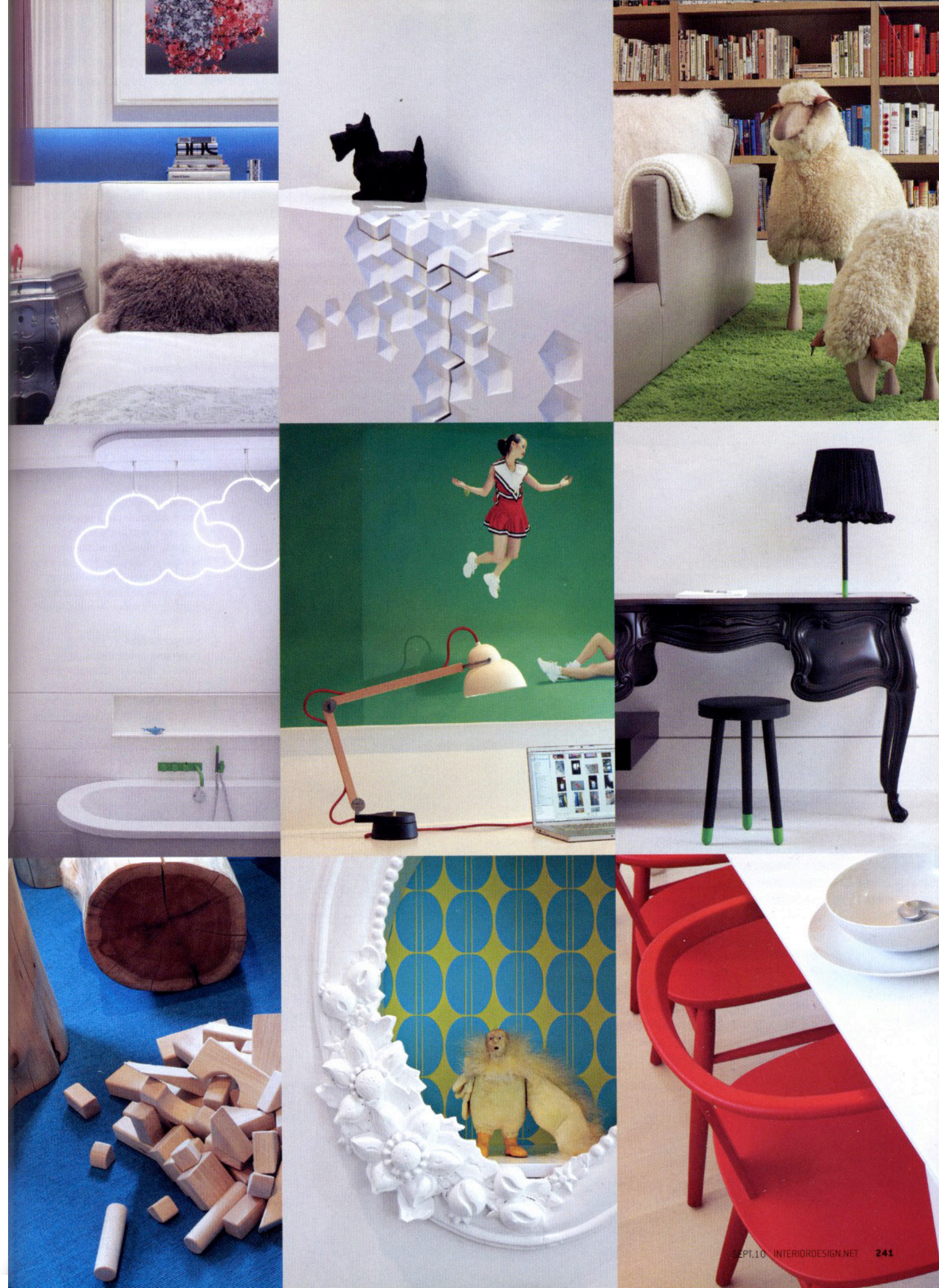
In the study, with its pendant dome by Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz and Steven Wine and cotton-covered armchairs, colors derive from a photograph of a parakeet's head.



“Both the architecture and decor engage in a playful dialogue with the artwork”

Below: A sculpture by Jason Rogenes rises through the center of a staircase by Peter Guthrie, chief creative officer at DDG Partners, the husband's investment and real-estate company.

Opposite top, from left: The master bedroom's ribbon lamp shade and metallic-painted wooden table. An Aranda/Lasch credenza in the lobby. Hans-Peter Krafft's sheep on the library's custom wool rug. **Opposite center, from left:** Custom neon clouds in the boys' bathroom. Ilse Crawford's task lamp and Luis Gisbert's photograph in a guest room. The kitchen's custom desk in wood and steel. **Opposite bottom, from left:** Stump stools and blocks in the boys' room. The study's built-in bookcase. Painted wooden chairs in the kitchen.

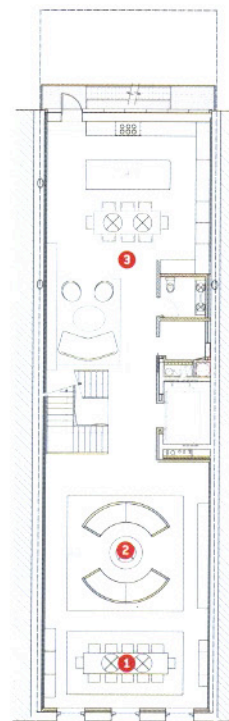




Top: Another Mulroney mural in the boys' room was influenced by *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. **Center:** The library occupies the front of the top story. **Bottom:** Piero Lissoni and Carlo Tamborini designed this guest room's chair.



Opposite: In the lobby, a photo self-portrait by Muniz faces a chandelier by Marcia Zia and Paul Priven and a vintage fiberglass table. The wall covering is a collaboration with the graphics firm Viñas Design.



0 5 10 20

- 1 DINING AREA
- 2 LIVING AREA
- 3 KITCHEN

with a massive pendant dome sprouting turquoise feathers, a bookcase backed in wallpaper in turquoise and sulfur yellow, and a desk lacquered turquoise and white.

Both the architecture and decor engage in a playful dialogue with the artwork, from the Styrofoam tower rising through the center of the stairwell to the murals in the boys' room. Viñas and West were even inspired to contribute their

own installations, including the clusters of yellow or white flea-market plates on a wall in the kitchen. "It was like being a kid," West says. And finding a best friend to play with. ■

PROJECT TEAM

VANÉ BROUSSARD; GIOVANNA SGUERA; KARINA DHARMAZI; MANDI MARSH; ANDREA DOVALLE; STEPHANIE SHEPHERD; SOPHIE BERNHARDT; ABBY SAVAGE; GHISLAINE VIÑAS INTERIOR DESIGN. **KIT MIDDLETON ARCHITECT;** ARCHITECT OF RECORD. **RICHARD J. SHAYER ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING;** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **ROBERT SILMAN ASSOCIATES STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS;** STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. **PLUS GROUP;** MEP. **BJORK CARLE WOODWORKING;** WOODWORK. **FRITZMARTIN ELECTRIC;** ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR. **PALONE BROS.;** MECHANICAL CONTRACTOR. **HEIRLOOM WOOD FLOORING CORPORATION;** FLOORING CONTRACTOR. **B&G FULL CONSTRUCTION;** FINISH CONTRACTOR. **3 FINGERS PAINTING;** PAINTING CONTRACTOR.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT DUPONT; CUSTOM SOLID-SURFACING (KITCHEN). **EASTERN ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS;** TILE (LOBBY). **THROUGH AUCAPINA CABINET;** TABLE. **THROUGH SVENSKA MÖBLER;** CHAIRS. **ANZEA;** CHAIR UPHOLSTERY (LOBBY). **DAYBED UPHOLSTERY (STUDY).** **RACHEL O'NEILL;** PENDANT FIXTURES (DINING AREA). **FRANDSEN LIGHTING;** PENDANT FIXTURES (PLAYROOM). **THROUGH A PLUS RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT;** TABLE. **THROUGH EBAY;** CHAIRS. **NIEDERMAIER;** SOFAS (LIVING AREA). **DURALEE FABRICS;** SOFA FABRIC. **MARTIN PATRICK EVAN;** CUSTOM RUG. **MOOOI;** SIDE TABLES (LIVING AREA, BOYS' ROOM). **B&B ITALIA;** SOFA (KITCHEN). **MAHARAM;** SOFA FABRIC. **KNOLL;** SOFA UPHOLSTERY. **INTERFACEFLOR;** RUGS (KITCHEN, BOYS' LIBRARY, GUEST ROOM). **HIVEMINDESIGN;** PENDANT FIXTURES (KITCHEN). **ARONSON'S FLOOR COVERINGS;** RUGS (BOYS' ROOM, STUDY, LIBRARY, GUEST ROOM, LOBBY), RUNNER (STAIRWELL). **FATBOY;** BEANBAGS (BOYS' LIBRARY). **DESIGN WITHIN REACH;** DESK LAMP (GUEST ROOM). **FRITZ HANSEN;** DESK CHAIR. **DUNE;** OTTOMANS. **THROUGH CONRAN SHOP;** CLOCK. **ANDREW MARTIN INTERNATIONAL;** WINDOW SHADE FABRIC. **ABYU LIGHTING;** PENDANT FIXTURE (STUDY). **THROUGH URBAN ARCHITECTURE;** SCONCE. **STUDIO PRINTWORKS;** WALLPAPER. **DONGHIA;** CHAIR FABRIC. **DESIGNERS GUILD;** CURTAIN FABRIC. **PABLO;** PENDANT FIXTURE (MASTER BEDROOM). **THROUGH JOHNSON TRADING GALLERY;** CREDENZA (LOBBY). **HOESCH;** TUB (BATHROOM). **VOLA;** TUB FITTINGS. **NEMO TILE COMPANY;** TILE. **MABEO FURNITURE;** CHAIRS (KITCHEN). **ROMO;** CURTAIN FABRIC (BOYS' ROOM). **KARTELL;** LOUNGE CHAIR (GUEST ROOM). **THROUGH ABC CARPET & HOME;** BEDSIDE LAMP. **THROUGH CITÉ;** TASK LAMP. **ZIA PRIVEN;** CHANDELIER (LOBBY). **THROUGH RED MODERN FURNITURE;** TABLE. **WOLFGORDON;** CUSTOM WALL COVERING. **THROUGHOUT BENJAMIN MOORE & CO.;** PAINT.

