

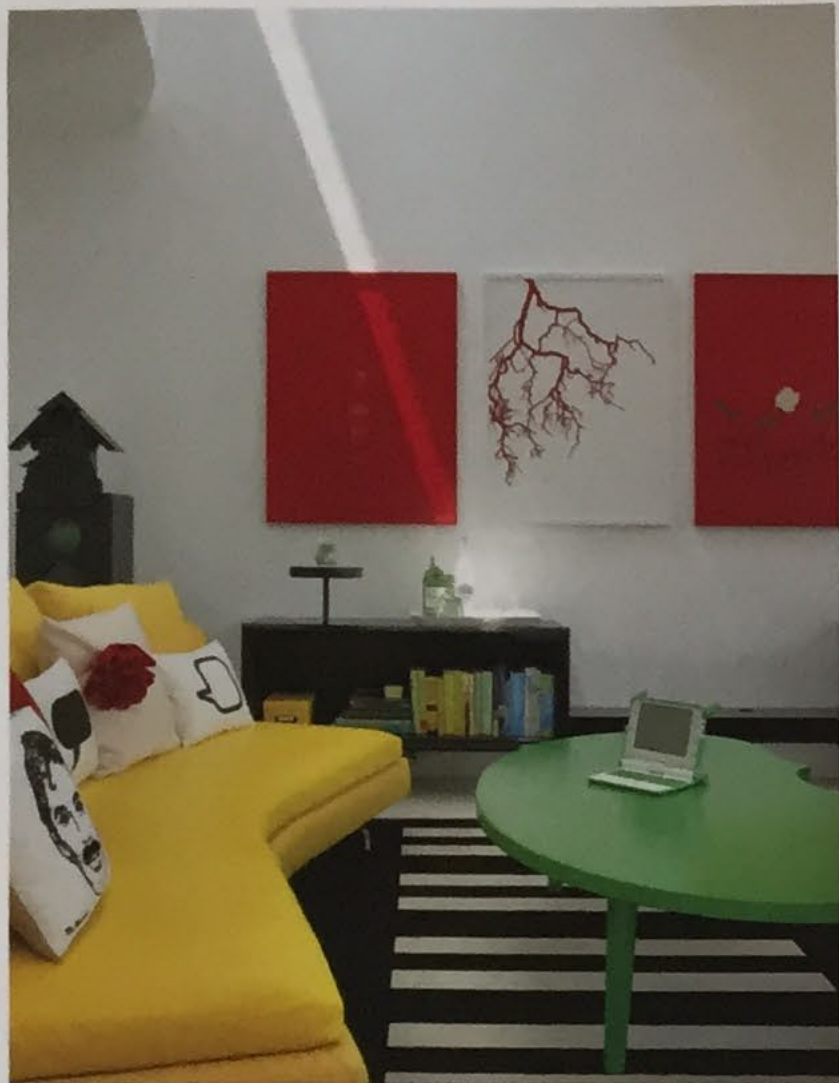
SHOW

TIME

New York designer Ghislaine Viñas uses colour, artwork and a fearless approach to interior decoration to produce a townhouse in TriBeCa that is equal parts quirky, crazy and irreverent.

design Ghislaine Viñas Interior Design
text Ian Phillips
photography Eric Laignel





01



02

OPENING PAGE
 The entrance hall features a vinyl wall covering custom-designed by Viñas and her graphic designer husband

01 The kitchen's living area features an Antonio Citterio-designed sofa and a custom-made coffee table. The triptych is by artist Sarah Charlesworth

02 A detail of the Lisa Ruyter painting that inspired the kitchen's colour scheme

03 The predominantly white kitchen is punctuated by furnishings and features in vivid colour



03



04

05



68

04 The home office features a custom
bookcase backed with coloured wallpaper
05 Green accents in a guest room complement
original artworks and the muted colours of the
soft furnishings and dark grey wall stripes
06 Another guest room in the townhouse
also features green accents, as well
as Ilse Crawford's Westberg task lamp
07 Whimsical touches are dotted throughout
the house: in the library, two sheep appear to be
grazing on a grass-green rug



As an interior designer, New York-based Ghislaine Viñas has never been interested in beiges and browns. She claims she inherited a sort of fearlessness from her mother and recalls being incredibly excited as a child every time she came across a bunch of crayons. "Colouring books were huge for me," she remembers. She also has trouble understanding why anyone would be scared of using bright hues. "I'm scared of walking in the woods and being attacked by a bear. But, colour? I don't get it. I think it makes you happy."

Vivid tones certainly play a large part in one of her most recent projects – a wonderfully wacky, 1440-square metre, six-storey townhouse in New York's TriBeCa. The entrance hall features an orange fleur-de-lys motif, two broad red horizontal bands wrap their way around the children's playroom, the island in the kitchen is egg-yolk yellow and the library features two sheep that look for all the world as if they're grazing on a grass-green rug.

The home in question belongs to developer, JC Keeler, and his wife, Paige West, who founded the gallery Mixed Greens in Chelsea, and also curates a family art collection that runs to over 3500 works. The couple previously lived in a townhouse in the West Village, but as their family grew they discovered the inconvenience of constantly having to go up and down stairs. They still have their own building, but this time with large floor plates and an elevator. According to Keeler, their new abode offers "the best of loft living with the best of townhouse living".

The site had previously been a crumbling 1915 warehouse, which Keeler transformed with the help of his business partner, architect Pete Guthrie. Of the original structure, they kept 70 percent of the existing floor joists and three of the exterior brick walls. They then added a penthouse and a roof garden above that, creating two distinct units within the building. The lower two storeys are home to independent guest quarters, the upper four is the family home. Although the old facade was replaced with bluestone from Keeler's native Catskill Mountains, the original fenestration was maintained. "It was important that the building not make too splashy a statement from the street," declares Guthrie. "The whole point of the project is for the architecture to be restrained so that Paige and Ghislaine could bounce around their colours within the space, making them pop." |...

(inside)

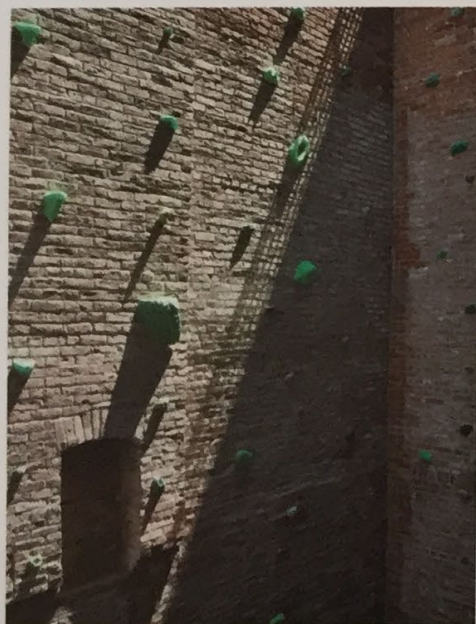


69



08

09



08 The children's bathroom features a custom-made lighting design by Viñas and Arne Jacobsen-designed tap and showerhead
09 Installed on the lower two levels of the building, the climbing wall features hand and foot holds in neon green

...| The townhouse is the seventh project on which the two women have collaborated and West asserts she would never work with anyone else. "We think alike," she explains. "We've got so close that we now finish each other's sentences." As for the Dutch-born, South African-raised Viñas, she insists that the design process is effortless. "It's very spontaneous," she says. "It's not brain surgery. It's just instinctual kind of fun." West continues, "Ghislaine understands my high-brow, low-brow approach. I like nice things and yet at the same time, I have three boys under the age of six and don't like fussy things. Ghislaine understands that and has a wonderful way of making things look spectacular and over-the-top and yet extremely liveable and very difficult to destroy."

Inspiration for the interior's design and decoration came from numerous sources. The top-floor library, for instance, features natural wood to reflect West's Scandinavian roots. For the home office, West presented Viñas with a photo of a parakeet she'd ripped out of a magazine. "It was bright blue and yellow, and fluffy and gorgeous," she explains. "And I said to Ghislaine, 'This is exactly how I want the room to feel.'" Viñas' response? She came up with a large ceiling light sprouting turquoise feathers (page 12). In the living room, meanwhile, the yellow snowflake motif carpet is a nod to the ski resort of Aspen, where Keeler and West were married.

There are many other quirky and amusing design features throughout the rest of the house. A wall near the library features an installation of evergreen trees made from train sets. Another wall, in the kitchen, has hundreds of plates sourced from flea markets and garage sales arranged in circular groupings. "There are some hideous ones in there," laughs Viñas. "I get so much fun out of finding disgusting things." As for the formal dining room chairs, they bear images of the family's favourite dishes: among them, sushi, spaghetti meatballs, and ice cream with sprinkles.

Given West's profession, it's not surprising that art plays a starring role in the home. The only piece that was already given a location – in the kitchen – before renovation began was the vivid red and yellow Lisa Ruyter painting, Hoodlum. "It's bright and fun and just kind of represents what I wanted the house to be," comments West. In the boys' bedroom, she commissioned one of Mixed Greens' artists, Mark Mulrone, to paint a mural, and in the middle of the stairwell a Styrofoam sculpture by Brooklyn artist Jason Rogenes was placed. On one of the living room walls is a round paper cut out by Simon Perriton, which she jokingly refers to as "our large doily".

As for Keeler, his presence is felt on the exterior, where he insisted on the installation of a 12-metre-high climbing wall (Viñas chose neon green for the hand and foot holds). He started climbing in Colorado some 20 years ago and, according to West, "looks at most walls and tries to figure out how to scale them". Inside, however, he more or less let West and Viñas have free rein. "They get to collaborate and do the fun stuff they want to do," he comments. "If there's something they have a question about, I will often get the last vote. But they have a very strong sense of their own aesthetic, which I fully embrace. They pretty much command the show." And what a show it is. *(inside)*

gvinteriors.com