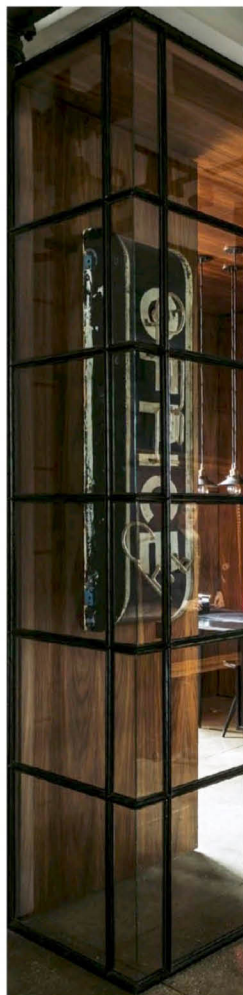


The living room The soft sculpture is by Anne-Valerie Dupond (annevaleriedupond.com). The sofa and armchairs are from BDDW (bddw.com). The antique stools are East German, and the vase on the table is a 1960s sculpture. Pol Thies restored the floor to its original polished concrete. **Below** The skulls' pieces on the window ledge are Thies's own creation. **The office** The Esqueleto telephone lamp is by London-based Alex Randall (alexrandall.co.uk)



Manhattan gothic

The floors are decked with big-cat pelts, the shelves are lined with animal skulls and dolls' heads, and the furniture's made of antlers. This Gotham apartment takes the macabre and makes it magnificent. Words and photography by Mark C O'Flaherty





We've all seen movies in which the lift doors open and the passenger steps straight out into their lavish New York loft apartment with no front door or hallway to pass through first. 'I always wanted that when I was growing up,' says Pal Theis, the Luxembourg-born designer who is now based in Manhattan. For the last couple of years, the man behind P&T Interiors has had it, in all its expansive, industrial glory.

'This was an old paper conservatory,' he explains. 'No one had ever lived in it before. It's a classic 1920s art-deco building and I have the whole 10th floor. I restored the polished concrete flooring and replaced the windows to the original industrial design.'

For an interior designer to find a blank canvas in midtown Manhattan, with views to iconic skyscrapers and out across the Hudson river, is miraculous.

The Theis aesthetic is a refined kind of gothic, right down to the all-black deconstructed wardrobe of clothing he's amassed from downtown fashion temple Hotoveli. The terrace of his Garment District loft is festooned with



The office The artier desk and chair originate from the Black Forest in Germany, c1850-90. **The dining room** The table and dining chairs are by Chris Lehrecke (chrislehrecke.com), and the chandelier is by Lindsey Adelman (lindseyadelman.com). The maître d's desk is a custom piece by P&T Interiors and the candelabra are antique brass. **The living room** The chairs are vintage American, reupholstered. 'I like a European grandmother style,' says Theis

gargoyles and the interior features a mix of macabre flea-market finds, industrial fixtures and self-consciously 'twee' touches – 'the European grandmother style', as he puts it – counterbalanced with a darker edge. There are skulls that have been turned into objets d'art, and the skeleton of a small goat stands in a glass case. 'I put a vice on it, so it's unique,' he says.

Much of the furniture has been made by his own company P&T, including a side table with an immense metal chain on top, as if to suggest a monstrous bird perch. There are also one-off objects such as the dolls' heads that have been turned into sculptures, and 19th-century chairs from the Black Forest in Germany, assembled from antlers. Pol Thies would top Bram Stoker's list of interior designers.

One gets the sense that Thies could easily move into fine art if he ever tired of creating lavish homes for clients in New York and Paris. 'What I'm looking for when I create these pieces is really just an installation and a unique piece for the space. If you want to call it art, be my guest.'

Before his New York City life, he was a corporate lawyer in Paris. 'I turned 33, and I was offered a partnership,' he recalls. 'I kind of loved it, but I didn't want to do that my whole life. I had always been interested in design, but in Paris, everything is much more categorised. You're not supposed to change jobs, careers. In the US, it's somehow expected of you.'

The thing that makes this loft so appealing is that it isn't relentlessly or simplistically gothic.

'My work is actually quite minimalist,' he says, 'but also eclectic. If you take all the furniture out of my apartment, what I've done is quite simple. I take most of my inspiration from Danish design of the 1950s. But I also like industrial pieces, and I like to mix styles. I think overall it's an international style, not fixed to one place.'

Thies enjoys this space on his own with his super-sized bulldog, Miss Lucy, but it's also a very social environment. The vast dining table is lit by a cluster of glass pendant lights arranged as if dredged up from a shipwreck. 'I like to have friends around for dinner,' he says. 'It's a mix of artists, painters and sculptors, as well as lawyers and investment bankers, because they still make up a lot of my social circle. I like to cook, or we will have a barbecue on the terrace.'

When he was designing his kitchen, with floor-to-ceiling black metro tiles, he reinterpreted the black doors with gold lettering inspired by the facade of his favourite restaurant in Paris, Chez l'Ami Louis.

'I never go to the city without having lunch there,' he says. 'It's so tiny, and only has about 10 tables, and it's been there for over 100 years. Everything is cooked from a fire oven, and it's very traditional.' When he thought about creating his homage to the restaurant, he called the owner, Louis, to ask permission. 'He said I should do it,' he recalls, 'but that he had to then come and cook for me here in New York. It was a win-win situation.'

pandinteriors.com

The kitchen door

was inspired by Thies's favourite restaurant in Paris, Chez l'Ami Louis, the owner of which flew over to New York to cook for him.



The bathroom

features black-and-white tiling, made in Fez, Morocco, and custom sinks, made of Corian (corian.uk). The kitchen was

custom-designed by P&T Interiors. The bull's head was originally a sign in an old French butcher's. The appliances are by Gaggenau

(gaggenau.com). The doors have been lacquered black, and the wood is claro walnut. The brass lunchbox and milk churn came from India

