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statements

16 FAVE
DINING ROOM CHAIRS

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The early European Zig-Zag chair by Gerrit Rietveld makes a dynamic statement in the bedroom.



A 1950s Italian table, an 18th century linen Irish chair and an African mask easily mingle at the bedside.

GREENER PASTURES

Transforming a new residence into a true home is a challenge that goes beyond picture-perfect decor

On a somewhat short timeline, a two-bedroom, two-bath loft in Greenwich Village for a single father and his middle school-aged daughter was designated move-in ready, emerging as a livable, artistically striking space where no detail was compromised.

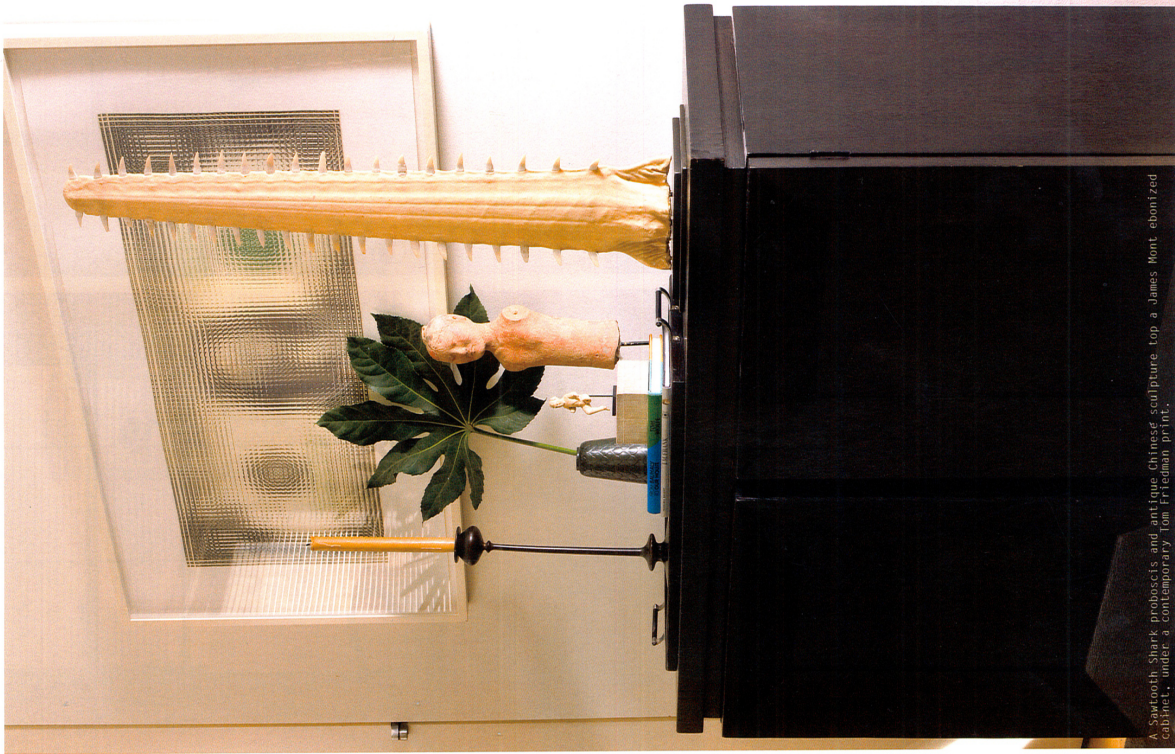
"There was some urgency to have it warm, comfortable and settled quickly," says Glenn Gissler, whose architectural training and wealth of knowledge in the decorative arts and turn-of-the-century style regularly land him among top designer lists and magazine pages. "There was a fair amount of books and a lot of art to be accommodated."

Opposite: A vintage Italian bookshelf from the 1950s displays a Frank Stella print.

The artwork – some from the client's personal collection and other pieces acquired for the space – takes the spotlight in the warm cocoa-hued living room. A diverse mix of historic and modern ("not contemporary but classic modern," Gissler notes) ranging from Donald Judd to Andy Warhol to Kiki Smith pops dramatically against the contrasting dark chocolate walls in Gissler's trademark play of color and chiaroscuro.

"If you put light-colored artwork on a light-colored wall, it becomes nearly invisible," shares Gissler. "A darker wall color recedes and becomes the frame, making the lighter elements come forward."

TEXT KATE MISSINE PHOTOGRAPHY GROSS & DALEY INTERIOR DESIGN GLENN GISSLER DESIGN



A Sauttooth Shark proboscis and antique Chinese sculpture top a James Mont ebonized cabinet, under a contemporary Tom Friedman print.



The frolic of light is one of the designer's specialties, and one that came in particularly handy in the loft, where natural lighting wasn't abundant. "Like many lofts, it didn't have a great amount of daylight, so lighting was a key element," explains Gissler. "We used lamps to create intimate spaces, directional lighting to illuminate artwork."

Light and dark, graphic prints pop against chocolate-hued walls in a study of color contrasts.



Modern meets retro in biomorphic American Modern dishes by Russel Wright. Contemporary blue kitchen cabinets lend vibrant color.



Artwork by Leon Golub adds personality to the soothing sleeping space.

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"We used lamps to create intimate spaces, directional lighting to illuminate artwork." Dimmers allow for atmospheric control, whether for entertaining, television watching or relaxing.

"One of the challenges of a loft is that you're always in the same place," Gissler comments. "If you haven't done your dishes or made your bed, you see it, always." To counteract the open plan, he worked to build "layers," which created separate spaces to be "revealed as you experienced the loft, not from the front door."

Gissler's favorite layer is the living room nook, a cocooned corner framed by velvet-tufted sofas and a pair of rope Klismos chairs by T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings. "It's a cozy space that's unique in scale," he points out, "especially the dark wall with the large-scale artwork." Further in, touchable textures, stacks of books and more art set a relaxed mood in the TV room. A vibrant kitchen punched up with lacquered blue cabinets gives modern definition to the white-washed brick walls, leading into the dining room's massive oak table paired with Anglo-Colonial style chairs.

"Some lofts can be cold because everything is so modern and the space is large," says Gissler. "We used different vintages and different scales to create a much more domesticated feel." Eclectic pieces span a range of styles and eras, and speak to a breadth of tastes and character. An antiquity circa 300 BC neighbors a Mexican ceramic vessel on a T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings coffee table, inspired by classical Greek proportions. "His pieces have classic sensibilities but are contemporary for the day," Gissler remarks. Furthermore, shelves from 1950s Denmark hold a vintage Italian bookstand displaying a Frank Stella print, and white Russel Wright American Modern dishes lend the kitchen a quirky retro vibe.

All part of an easy, natural interaction, zingy details carry on the mixed-era juxtaposition into the bedrooms – a funky, early European modern Zig-Zag chair from the 1920s; a 1950s Italian side table; and a 17th century linen Irish chair on cabriolet legs. In the daughter's cheery room, her own artwork brings personality to the print-covered walls, and bright, colorful accents create a fun, yet functional teen hideaway.

"We wanted to help the family make the transition and get settled into their new home," concludes Gissler. "It came together wonderfully; they love it." ■

