

# AD

## At This Historic Manhattan Townhouse, the Art Now Gets Room to Shine

Designer Andre Mellone and architect Jean-Gabriel Neukomm transformed the West Village residence into an airy home for two top collectors

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November 12, 2025



The living room of a Manhattan town house displays artworks by (from left) Suzanne Jackson, Robert Motherwell, and Thaddeus Mosley; stools by [Ilmari Tapiovaara](#). Art: Robert Motherwell - © 2025 Dedalus Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

Space changes everything. Depending on the context, a painting or sculpture can assume different personalities, its form redefining a room, its colors shifting in a given light. That process of rediscovery has been a source of joy for two art collectors who recently moved from their longtime apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side to a historic town house downtown. Living across multiple floors, in discrete yet airy rooms of varying scales, has allowed them to see treasured works with fresh eyes.



On Kawara canvases hang in the central staircase.  
Art: On Kawara / © One Million Years Foundation, Courtesy One Million Years Foundation and David Zwirner



A painting by Mary Heilmann anchors the double-height family area.  
Art: © Mary Heilmann. Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and 303 Gallery, New York

The couple didn't set out looking to buy a whole house. During the pandemic, eager for a change of scenery yet reluctant to travel, they opted for an extended staycation, renting a single-family property in the West Village and falling in love with the area, whose off-grid streets reminded them of Paris. "We weren't going to move to another city," says the wife, who recalls thinking, Why not change up our neighborhood? When their initial search for a prewar apartment proved fruitless, their real estate agent took them to a 19th-century town house just down the block from their rental. Opposite a park, sun streaming through the windows, the home dispelled any preconceptions of such buildings as dark and cloistered. Thus they officially became West Villagers.



In the couple's bath, a curved room divider sets off the water closet to the left and shower to the right.



[Mellone](#) designed a bespoke sofa, armchair, and coffee table for the husband's study; artworks by Günther Förg (left) and Norman Lewis (above fireplace).

Art: © Estate of Norman Lewis, Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY



In the kitchen dining area, [Paavo Tynell](#) pendants and a Stanley Whitney painting command attention.  
Art: © Stanley Whitney



Gae Aulenti seating in the garden.



Also in the couple's bedroom, a painting by Ed Clark and a vintage [Gianni Moscatelli](#) chair and ottoman.  
Art: © The Estate of Ed Clark / Hauser & Wirth, Lee Ufan - © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Updating the Italianate structure would require a gut renovation. To help, they enlisted architect Jean-Gabriel Neukomm (no stranger to such transformations) and AD100 designer Andre Mellone, for whom the job marked his first town house project. Any changes would be subject to particular scrutiny given the property's landmark status as part of a block-long sweep of historic homes. Innumerable filings later, Neukomm expanded down, digging into the ground to create a proper basement, and up, adding a penthouse office, set back from street view. Rooms are now arranged off a sinuous staircase, with plaster balustrades and an uninterrupted railing of hammered blackened steel that reveal a subtle ovoid profile—a little Giacometti, a little Scarpa.

“We balanced large-scale moves with a spirit of tactility,” reflects Neukomm. Terrazzo flooring likewise reveals a European influence, extending from the entry (framed by a screen of solid glass rods) through the dining and living rooms. Whereas they preserved the brick façade in front, they added soaring window walls to the rear, coaxing light into the double-height family room and adjoining kitchen, its island a marvel in stone.



The formal dining room features a Sam Gilliam painting, a vintage Carlo Scarpa light, and a custom table.  
Art: Sam Gilliam - © 2025 Estate of Sam Gilliam / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



A custom glass-and-steel room divider distinguishes the entry, which displays works by Lynda Benglis and Suzan Frecon.



A bespoke bed anchors the primary suite.

Art: Hélio Oiticica

Throughout the house, Mellone focused his discerning eye to layer new pieces with some of the couple's existing furnishings. "What I love about Andre is that you can't pin him down to a particular style," the wife notes of the warm and sophisticated mix. "You have to work that much harder to make it look easy." For Mellone, the array of rooms became an exercise in composition, scale, and proportions. "A town house, on top of all its romantic ideals, is a difficult design challenge," he reflects. "Real thinking goes into every piece."



In the living room, [Gio Ponti](#) sconces flank a sculpture by Lynda Benglis; the vintage bookcases are by [Jacques Dumond](#), the cocktail table is by [Joaquim Tenreiro](#), and the artwork (by window) is by Lee Bontecou.



In the garden, [Brown Jordan](#) dining chairs surround a custom teak table.



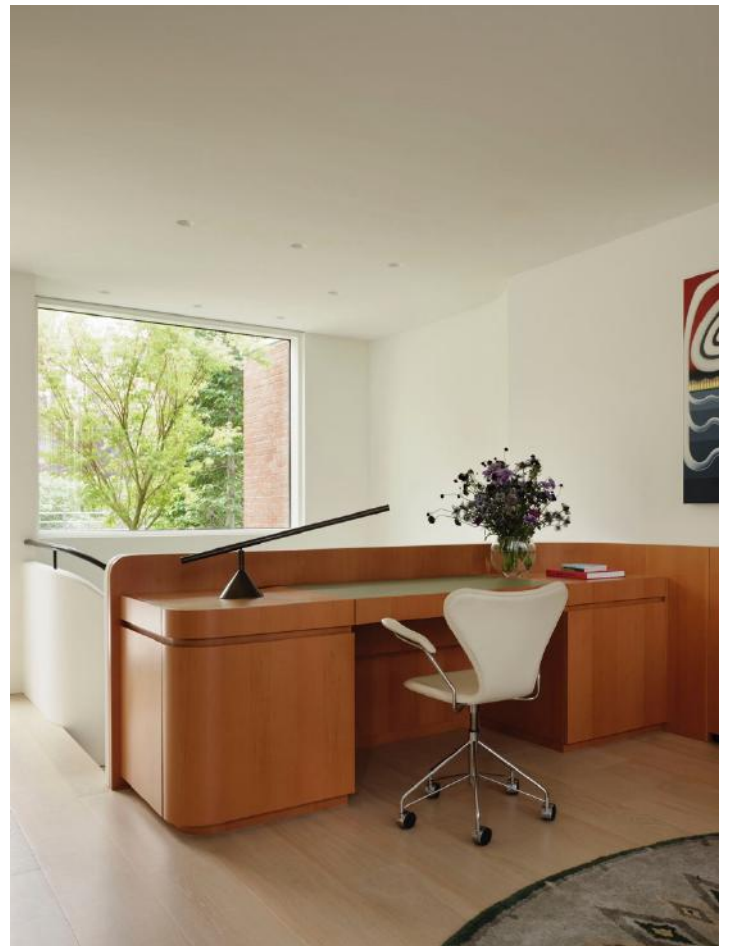
A vintage Swedish chair and settee face off in the penthouse office; painting by Takako Yamaguchi.

The driving force at each stage was the art: a sublime but deeply personal trove of contemporary and 20th-century works, with a focus on minimalism, the Arte Povera movement, and canonical female talents. “I needed to know there would be space for the [Robert] Motherwell, the [Stanley] Whitney, the [Lynda] Benglis,” explains the wife. Early design sessions included moving around cutouts of those and other works. The broad Motherwell canvas now surmounts the steel fireplace, opposite which hangs the contorted Benglis sculpture, flanked by Gio Ponti sconces and Jacques Dumond bookcases. All the while, a mix of seating (some new, some existing) mingles with works by Suzanne Jackson, Bridget Riley, and Lee Bontecou. Says Mellone of the collection: “You can see right away there’s an emotional and intellectual connection.”



A vintage Italian mirror and sconces complement the powder room's quartzite vanity.

A custom lamp by [Mellone](#) sits atop A bespoke Douglas fir desk by Neukomm.





A view of the central staircase from above.

At every turn, designers and clients took care to give works ample room to breathe. “It was a project where every inch made a difference,” Mellone explains of the less-is-more approach, the success of which has reenergized both the couple and the collection. Says the wife: “The art looks so much better than it’s ever looked before.”

**Link to article online:** <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/andre-mellone-and-jean-gabriel-neukomm-historic-new-york-town-house>