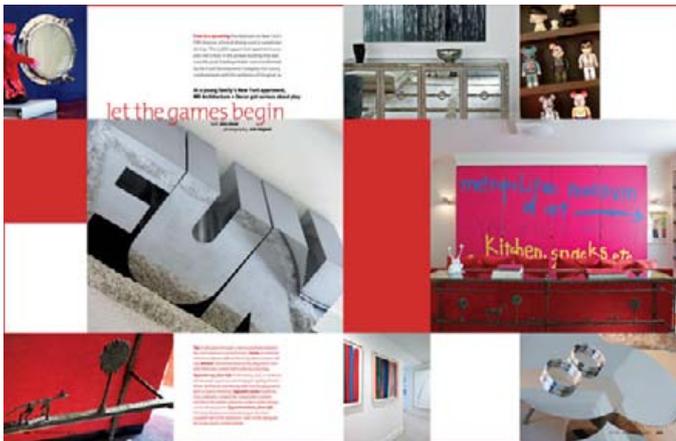


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At a young family's New York apartment, MR Architecture + Decor got serious about play

Dan Shaw -- Interior Design, 10/1/2009
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Even in a sprawling five-bedroom on New York's Fifth Avenue, a formal dining room is sometimes de trop. This 4,300-square-foot apartment occupies half a floor in the prewar building that was once the posh Stanhope hotel—now transformed by the Extell Development Company into luxury condominiums with the ambience of the great Manhattan residences of the 1920's. The traditional floor plan featured a dining room overlooking Central Park and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. However, the buyers have three school-age children, and what the family needed more than anything else was a place off the kitchen where the kids could hang out. There was only one solution, according to MR Architecture + Decor president David Mann: Place a

dining table in the living room, and turn the dining room into a playroom.

A «feeling of fun, nothing overly serious,» Mann adds, was another major requirement for the project. If the playroom became a sort of coda to the living-dining room, the pocket doors separating the two would not often need to be closed, disrupting the layout's flow. Taking a cue from the neighboring museum as well as the owners' contemporary-art collection—which includes lithographs by Ellsworth Kelly and Robert Rauschenberg—Mann and associate William Clukies made the playroom read like a work of art in its own right. The doorway, seen from the dining table or the sofa, frames what appears to be a magenta graffiti mural, actually printed on the plastic laminate cladding a storage wall. But no one in the living-dining room can see the children's artwork, displayed on an ingeniously placed pair of bulletin boards, or a collection of Be@rbrick dolls, lining built-in shelves.

Shiny surfaces add to the lighthearted spirit. The platinum-painted foyer's deconstructed mirror sets an avant-garde tone. In the living area, the stacked chrome slabs of a floor lamp by Curtis Jere contrast with the circular polished stainless-steel tops of the cocktail tables. A mirrored credenza in the dining area can be used as a buffet for parties. And the architects searched long and hard for the Sputnik-style silvered-glass chandelier over the dining table. «It looks vintage, but it's not,» Clukies says. «What we love is that the parts move, so you can direct light where you need it.»

«As we went shopping, the wife gravitated toward these shiny objects,» Mann continues, noting that the husband obliged as long as he was promised a

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study that was manly and cozy. «We built a coffered ceiling to mask the asymmetrical beams, and we upholstered the walls in brown cashmere.» A zebra rug keeps the study from feeling too staid.

Mann calls the wife's dressing room «the hall of mirrors»: Mirrored doors keep clothes and shoes out of sight. «With a makeup table and a phone, it could actually be an office, too,» he says—albeit one with a discotheque energy. The bedroom is serene by contrast, with an earthy palette unifying the velvet bedspread, the silk carpet, and the parchment-wrapped Jean-Michel Frank nightstands. The headboard was one of the only things the owners brought with them; Mann reupholstered it in a dynamic floral.

Children's bedrooms are color-coded. The boy's navy blue room features a nautical theme, complete with an internal porthole window from a marine-supply company. In one girl's room, pink patent leather covers the tufted headboard, and pink ribbon crisscrosses the ivory upholstered walls. The other girl's room has a water theme with aqua accents and carpet based on a photograph of a swimming pool. And each bathroom's ceiling and floor are tiled to coordinate with the corresponding bedroom.

Mann and Clukies had negotiated for custom bathrooms throughout the apartment. However, Mann says, «We worked with what the developers had done with the kitchen. The tulipwood cabinets were fine, but we extended the island and added the glass floor tile.» An Eero Saarinen table and Harry Bertoia chairs make the room feel like an airy café at the museum across the street, while the black-and-white scheme is as New York as a Woody Allen movie.

Photography by Eric Laignel.

PROJECT TEAM

CATHERINE PRISANT: MR ARCHITECTURE + DECOR. **ROBERT STRAHAN WOODWORKS:** WOODWORK.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT THROUGH SAILORSAMS: PORTHOLE (BLUE BEDROOM). **THROUGH CAPITOL FURNISHINGS:** CREDENZA (DINING AREA). **WILSONART INTERNATIONAL:** STORAGE SURFACING (PLAYROOM). **PATTERSON, FLYNN & MARTIN:** CUSTOM CARPET (HALL). **MERITALIA:** COCKTAIL TABLES (LIVING AREA). **LUC GENSOLLEN LIGHTING THROUGH CHARLES PARIS:** CHANDELIER (DINING AREA). **WYETH:** TABLE. **JOHN BOYD TEXTILES:** CHAIR FRONT FABRIC. **SABINA FAY BRAXTON:** CHAIR BACK FABRIC (DINING AREA), PATTERNED PILLOW FABRIC (LIVING AREA). **HOLLY HUNT:** CHAIRS (DINING AREA, STUDY). **MINOTTI:** SOFA (LIVING AREA). **LARSEN:** SOFA FABRIC. **J. ROBERT SCOTT:** SOLID PILLOW FABRIC. **THROUGH FAT CHANCE:** FLOOR LAMP. **AM COLLECTIONS:** CUSTOM RUGS (LIVING, DINING AREAS, STUDY), CUSTOM CARPET (BLUE BEDROOM). **GALERIE VAN DER STRAETEN:** CONSOLE (FOYER). **HEMLOCK DESIGN:** MIRROR. **DANIEL SCUDERI:** DESK (STUDY). **HOLLAND & SHERRY:** WALL COVERING. **ROMO:** SHADE FABRIC (STUDY), SOFA FABRIC (PLAYROOM). **FORBO:** BULLETIN BOARD MATERIAL (PLAYROOM). **DESIGNERS GUILD:** PILLOW FABRIC. **AUGUST STUDIOS:** CUSTOM SOFA (PLAYROOM), CUSTOM OTTOMAN (AQUA BEDROOM). **KNOLL:** TABLE, CHAIRS (KITCHEN). **JEREMY COLE:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **DECORATORS WALK:** WINDOW SHADE FABRIC. **ARCHITECTURAL SYSTEMS:** FLOOR TILE. **METRO LEATHER:** HEADBOARD UPHOLSTERY (PINK BEDROOM). **DUC-DUC:** NIGHTSTAND. **HELENBILT:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **ELIZABETH DOW:** WALL COVERING. **RALPH PUCCI INTERNATIONAL:** SCONCES (PLAYROOM). **VITRA:** CHAIRS. **ARTIFORT:** CHAIR (AQUA BE-

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DROOM). **MDF ITALIA:** BED, DESK, FILE CABINET. **VERPAN:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **HABLE CONSTRUCTION:** WINDOW SHADE FABRIC. **LIORA MANNÉ:** CUSTOM CARPET. **BEAUVAIS CARPETS:** OTTOMAN UPHOLSTERY (AQUA BEDROOM), CUSTOM CARPET (DRESSING ROOM), CUSTOM RUG (BATHROOM). **CASSINA:** STOOL (DRESSING ROOM). **ER FUR TRADING CORP.:** STOOL UPHOLSTERY. **THROUGH JOHN SALIBELLO ANTIQUES:** CEILING FIXTURE. **THROUGH MODERNISTA:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY:** SCONCES (BLUE BEDROOM). **CALVIN FABRICS:** WALL COVERING. **RALPH LAUREN HOME:** DRESSER (BLUE BEDROOM), PAINT. **ODEGARD:** CABINET (BATHROOM). **THROUGH KERSON GALLERY:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **TOWN & COUNTRY FLOORING:** WALL TILE. **WATERWORKS:** FLOOR TILE. **THROUGH TOM THOMAS GALLERY:** NIGHTSTAND (MASTER BEDROOM). **THROUGH CARLOS DE LA PUENTE ANTIQUES:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **MODULIGHTOR:** CUSTOM PICTURE LIGHT. **YOMA TEXTILES:** HEADBOARD FABRIC. **DESIGNTEX:** WALL COVERING.

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