



ne could write a book about the meticulous four-year renovation and decoration of art collectors Clarissa and Edgar Bronfman Jr.'s triplex penthouse on Park Avenue. And, in fact, their interior designer, Amy Lau, produced a coffee-table tome as a gift for the couple, chronicling their collaboration with many of the artisans responsible for the apartment's custom-made rugs, lighting, and furniture.

Curled up barefoot on the 1960s Brazilian sofa in the leather-swathed library, Clarissa has a laid-back demeanor that belies her formidable role in New York cultural life as a vice-chairman of Carnegie Hall, a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art, and cochairman of the Guggenheim Museum's Latin American Committee. (She also practices photography and creates a sought-after line of jewelry.) The six-bedroom apartment, she explains, was conceived as an easygoing environment for raising four children (now ages 15 to 20) and as a flexible backdrop for the global art collection she's assembled with her husband, a scion of the family behind Seagram distillers and the former CEO and chairman of the Warner Music Group, who is now a venture capitalist with a special interest in profitably reducing carbon emissions.

The Bronfmans worked with two architects—Clarissa's brother Frank Alcock, who lives in Caracas, Venezuela, where the siblings were born, and New York-based Peter Guzy of Asfour Guzy—directing them to transform the traditional prewar layout of dignified but dark rooms into light, airy spaces that would allow furniture and art to be rearranged without disrupting the apartment's elegant flow. And the synergy between art and architecture is indeed visceral. In the spare entrance gallery, a dramatic sweeping white-painted steel staircase wraps around a suspended wire sculpture by the German-born Venezuelan artist Gego. From the foot of the stairs, there's a view into the double-height section of the living room—what Guzy describes as an “internal piazza that binds the apartment together.” “I wanted you to feel intuitively and immediately welcome,” says Clarissa, explaining why the



foyer also has direct views into the library, dining room, and her office, which all have pocket doors to allow flexible levels of openness and retreat.

After construction commenced, Lau joined the project. “The architecture has the right balance—it’s on par with and equal to the art but doesn’t overpower it,” she notes. It was Lau’s mission to help Clarissa sort through the art and furniture she had in storage, which included a pair of Jean-Michel Frank sofas now reupholstered in a handwoven cotton blend by Tara Chapas of Brooklyn. Lau commissioned furnishings (such as Californian Lauren Saunders’s embroidered throw pillows resembling abstract canvases) that would hold their own among the Bronfmans’ collection of pre-Columbian artifacts, kinetic sculpture, video art, drawings, and 20th-century paintings. A sprawling color-blocked rug by Jorge Lizarazo of Hechizoo in Bogotá, Colombia, is woven from natural and man-made fibers laced with metallic wires; its

Clarissa stands beside the living room’s custom-made Vladimir Kagan sofa. A pre-Columbian deity sculpture sits next to Diego Rivera’s *Dance in Tehuantepec*.

HAIR AND MAKEUP: MARY GUTHRIE FOR ARTISTS BY TIM





In the living room, Jean-Michel Frank sofas and a Paul Dupre-Lafon cocktail table are arranged on a Jorge Lizarazo rug crafted to complement the Roberto Matta painting. Cast-bronze side table by the Campana Brothers; 1950s Italian armchairs.