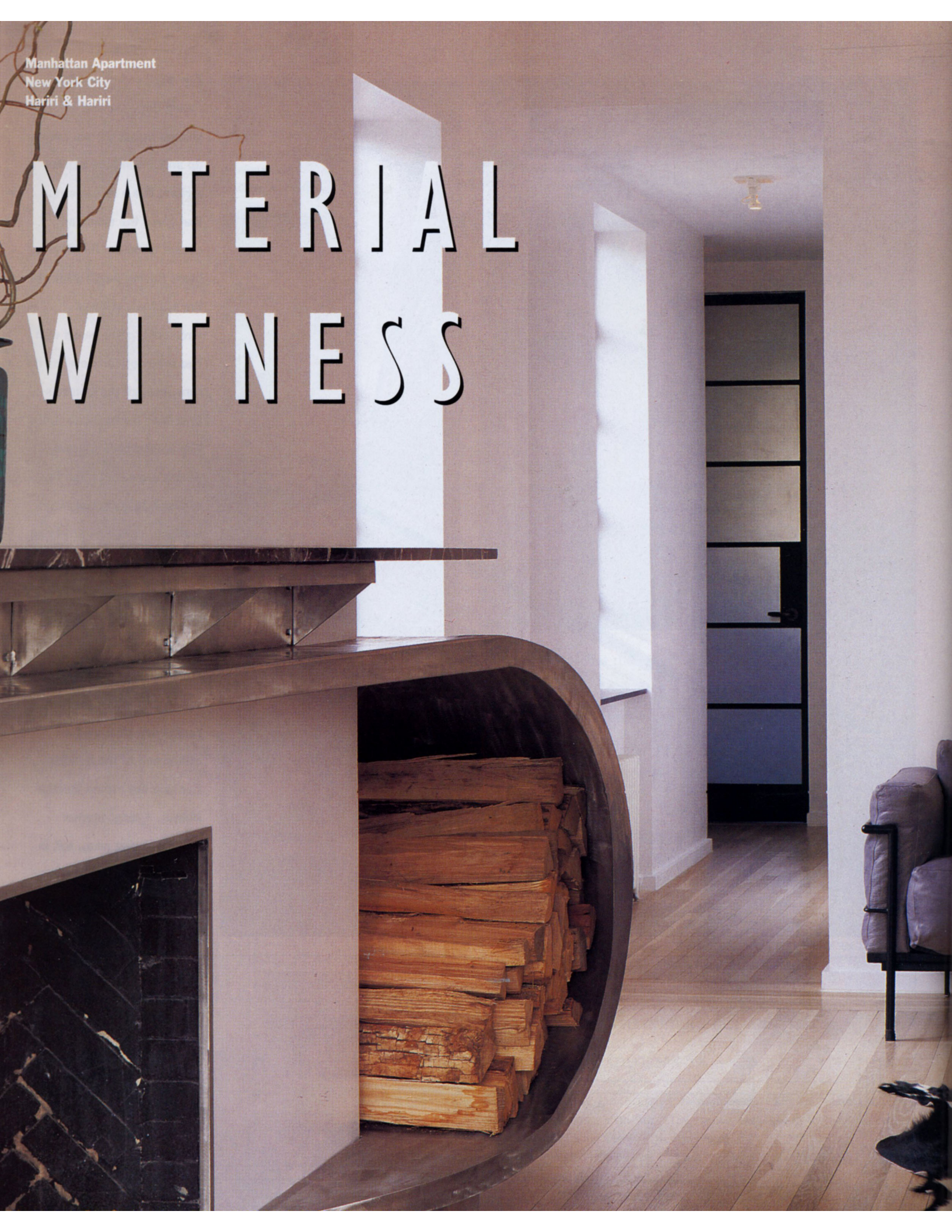
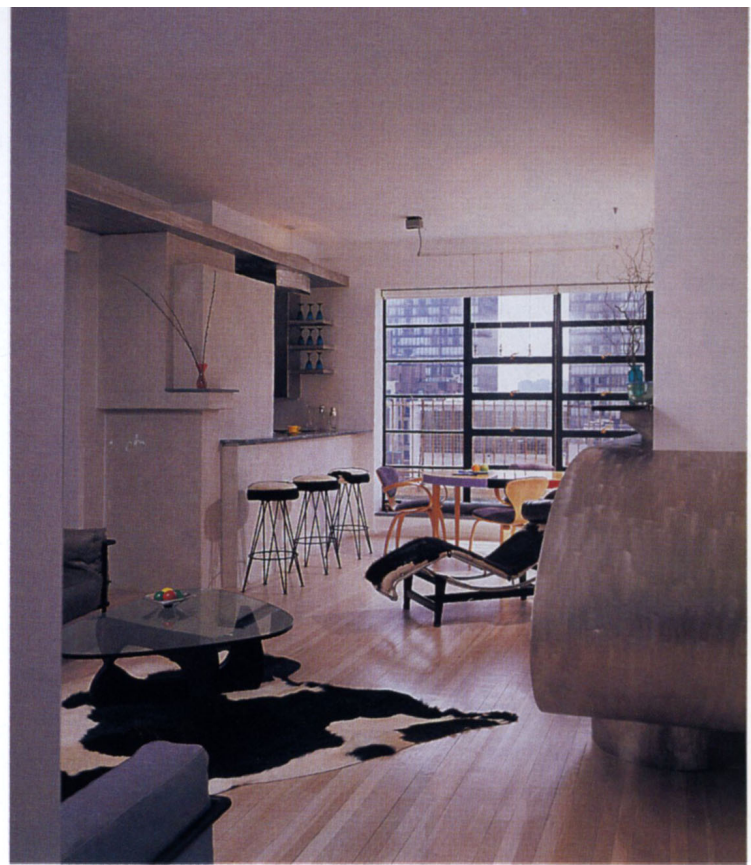


Manhattan Apartment
New York City
Hariri & Hariri

MATERIAL WITNESS





Exacting, kinetic details attest to the strong urban sensibility of two New York designers.

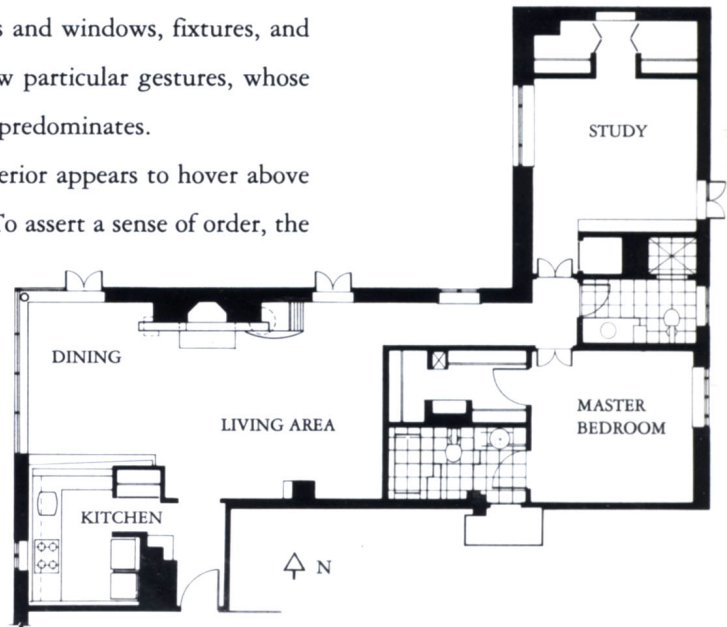
MANHATTAN'S CACOPHONOUS MEDLEY OF FORM AND MOTION FASCINATES GISUE AND Mojgan Hariri. Compelled by the city's abrupt visual disjunctions, unexpected variations in scale, disparate rhythms of mass and space, concrete canyons, and clustered towers, the Iranian-born sisters drew on such unpredictable urban factors in renovating an Upper East Side apartment. They then distilled that sensibility to create an environment saturated with purpose, and pulsing with restrained energy. "New York is filled with strange moments," Gisue Hariri explains. "We tried to abstract that sensation, pull it into the apartment."

That transference, however, came with a twist or two. Unlike Manhattan, this apartment gains its force not by haphazard accretion, but by the exacting placement of walls and windows, fixtures, and materials. The Hariris created a space whose character derives from a few particular gestures, whose strength comes from calculated simplicity. It is a place in which precision predominates.

Located on an upper floor of an East Side apartment building, the interior appears to hover above street level, mingling with the spires and crests of Midtown skyscrapers. To assert a sense of order, the Hariris established a visual counterpoint of lines and volumes, reversing conventions, confounding expectations. The Manhattan grid, so stolid at street level, turns delicate when recalled in geometric patterning on the windows that wrap the southeastern corner of the apartment. This transparent corner not only links the apartment to the terrace beyond; it also provides a visual break from the surrounding stuccoed walls.

Fixtures and details, on the other hand, assume an almost sculptural sensibility, induced by the interaction of materials simultaneously spare

In the one-bedroom apartment (plan below), the Hariris' ability to mold materials to sinuous forms is seen in the swirling forms of an aluminum mantelpiece (above left and facing page), and planes of stucco that project from the kitchen wall (above right).



A hallmark of the Hariris' work is an inventive manipulation of materials, as evidenced by a steel-framed, oval cabinet (facing page, top right) and light-embedded counter top (facing page, top left) in the master bathroom (facing page, center). Suspended fixtures glow in the corners of the apartment (right) and a lozenge-shaped, steel projection (below), embedded in a steel-covered beam, illuminates the counter between kitchen and dining area.



MANHATTAN APARTMENT
NEW YORK CITY

DESIGNERS: Hariri & Hariri—Kazem Naderi,
Andre Bideau, Yves Habegger (design team)
ASSOCIATE ENGINEER: Lawrence P. Cesca, P.E.
METALWORK: Scott Madison, Mark Gibian,
Dan George, Long Island Metal Forms
STONEWORK: Manhattan Marble Company
TILEWORK: Amadeus Construction
CONTRACTOR: Scott Webb
PHOTOGRAPHER: Paul Warchol





and sinuous. “We tried to emphasize the corners, the meeting of materials,” says Gisue. Indeed, every juncture, every end or beginning of an element is meticulously considered. One stucco wall turns into a compelling geometric composition by the insertion of quartzite counters, streaked green, gray, and chalk blue. Above the fireplace, a stainless steel mantelpiece swoops to a giant swirling curve that appears to scoop up the firewood it embraces. In the kitchen, the prow-shaped sides of a stainless steel lighting fixture imbedded in a stainless steel beam (facing page) appear stretched and taut, as though eager to escape containment. In gestures such as these, the two designers endow their materials with a sense of movement, forever suspended in time.

However, the Hariris are reluctant to isolate the importance of materials, preferring to view them as partners in an overall process. “Our aim is not only to find new materials, but also to understand their nature.” Nowhere is this approach more apparent than in the master bathroom, where four stainless steel box-shaped units swing out from the wall to provide storage—discreet yet dramatic. Both



bath tub and toilet form part of a tableau, each arranged on a stepped slate platform (left). These varied textures establish a mix of hard and soft surfaces, contours, and curves—a visual rhythm whose effect is not lost on the apartment’s clients: a music company executive and his wife, who appreciate the urban pulse and respond to the forms. In fact, the couple made few special requests, except to ask for plenty of closets. “They felt our work was inventive, yet not intimidating,” Mojgan recalls. “She liked all the metal work and he liked the strength and elegance of stone.”

In this apartment, boldness of conception is matched by the restraint of execution. “In our work, the manipulation of form takes on a very particular and precise function. On the other hand, we feel intuition does have its place. We often feel our work is approaching a kind of quietness,” says Gisue, musing for a moment. “It may look a little empty, but it is full of purpose.” ■

—VICTORIA GEIBEL

Victoria Geibel is the former executive editor of Metropolis.