

# aspire home

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# ARTISTRY AT HOME

## Art Appreciation



With ceilings so high, pendant fixtures are definitely part of the program; in the living room, a custom Garbo Chandelier by Fortuny. Opposite: An Oyster 75 Pendant Light in Custom Two-Tone Finish by Best and Lloyd graces the home's amply proportioned foyer.



Manhattan, NY

## Designer *Phillip Thomas* hits a high note reharmonizing a client's art collection

The eyes have it. Whether gouache or oil, three-dimensional or flat, art is as much a part of a room as furniture, drapes and rugs – and its placement demands as much, or more (much more) consideration than where to position the TV.

When New York designer Phillip Thomas took on the redo of a client's commodious Upper West Side one bedroom, he knew there was more to the job than giving the grandly proportioned space a fresh, contemporary twist. "The apartment was traditional, very colorful, with heavy textures," recalls Thomas. "With this iteration, the clients really wanted to honor the building's past and its wonderful details, but also make the space more up-to-date by using a lighter palette that also allows the art to be the focal point."

In re-imagining the residence, Thomas took several of the client's existing pieces and gave them a new place to live within the apartment. "I told my clients when we started, that while we were going to re-use quite a few pieces of furniture, I wanted them to think outside the box and push themselves to put things in places they have not been before. I think that is important because it brings new life and new meaning to each of the pieces. So often when people do a renovation where they reuse existing pieces of furniture, they put them right back in the same places they were before." Thomas took the same approach when it came to the couple's art collection, a strategy that proved spot on. With furniture and art re-situated, the homeowners are enjoying all kinds of new vistas.

That does not necessarily mean living with the outrageous or the avant-garde. But it does mean arranging art so that it can really be seen, so that it has an opportunity to hit the eye, and hopefully, the heart and mind, as well.

"Even if you don't have a large collection, you really should look beyond the obvious places to put your work and look for those spots where it can really capture attention," asserts Thomas.

While serious art-lovers blanch at the idea of using paintings and sculpture for decorative effect, the truth is, they have to play well with others. Thomas took a purple-hued canvas from the living room and hung it in the library, where it works well with the room's dark taupe color scheme. "It also creates the illusion of greater depth over the fireplace and injects an energy into an otherwise very tonal space," observes Thomas.

With almost more art than wall space, Thomas had to get creative, turning a hallway into a gallery. Hallways are not always the best place to hang pictures, especially if they are narrow. But Thomas punctuated the hallway with an arch to suggest greater width and positioned a painting directly across from a doorway leading off it. The picture not only benefits from the natural light streaming in, but it forms a focal point from within the adjacent room. In the full scheme of Thomas' project, it is a minor moment, but it speaks a thousand words.



The custom dining table from Keith Fritz is surrounded by Phillip Thomas Inc. chairs, upholstered with Greta in Neptune by Evitavonni Collections through Angela Brown Inc.

**Thomas believes that no matter one's taste, art is supposed to be provocative, and it should elicit a response from the viewer.**



In scale and hue, the canvas over the fireplace is the perfect companion to the towering bookcases in the library.