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New York Cottages and Gardens

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**UPPER
EAST SIDE**



BOLD & BRIGHT



DESIGNING WOMEN

A mother-daughter decorating team injects pared-down elegance into an apartment on the Upper East Side

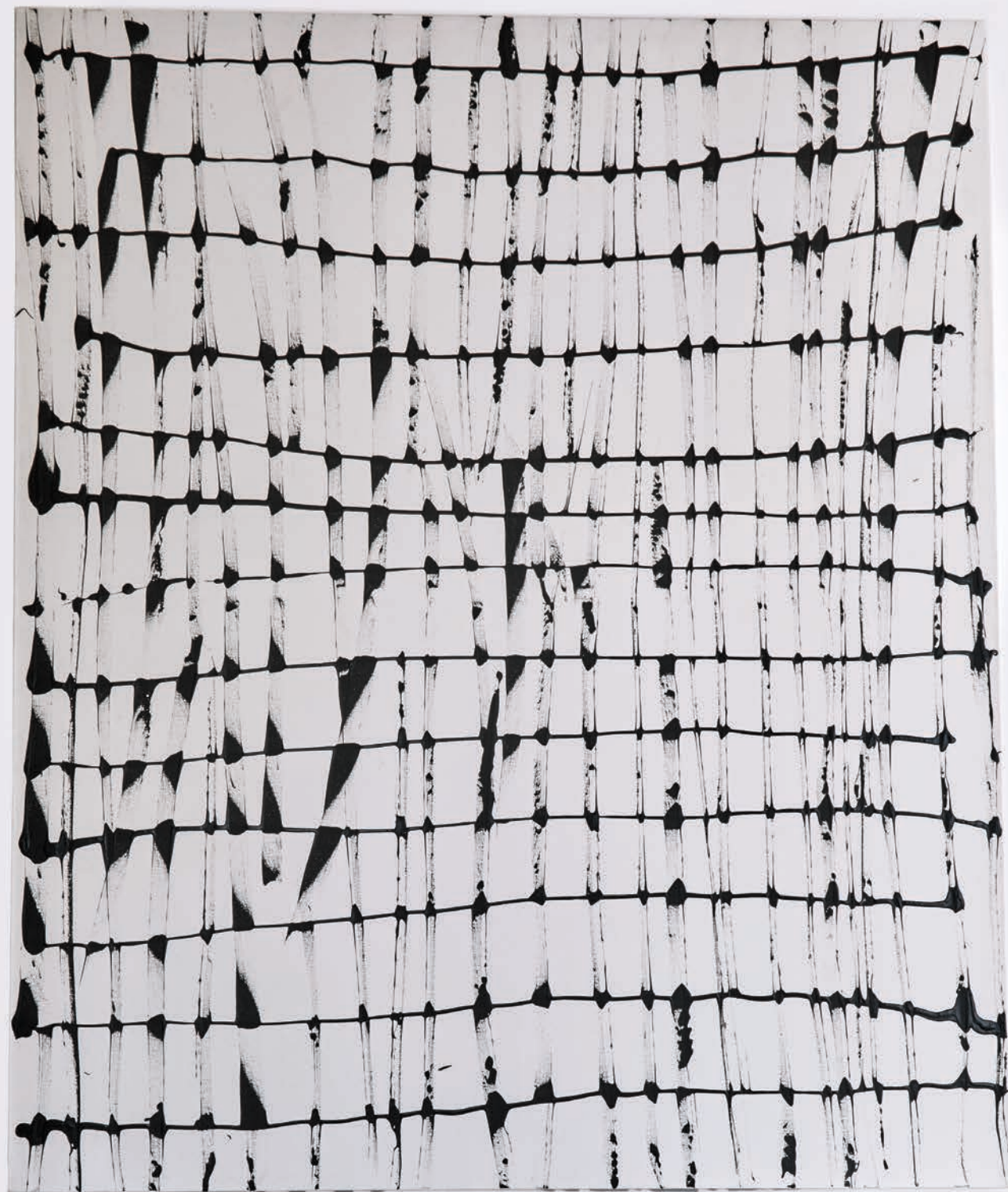
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PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MARCO RICCA**

AS SEEN IN
NYC&G
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Feel The Light
Living room furnishings include a SoHo cocktail table and Bedford chairs from Desiron, an RH sofa, and a chevron hide rug by Kyle Bunting. In the dining area beyond, Hans Wegner Wishbone chairs surround a white-ash table; the chandelier is from Apparatus. *See Resources.*

Laura Epstein first discovered the Brooklyn-based mother-daughter design team Sissy+Marley while perusing nursery designs on Pinterest when she was pregnant with her now three-year-old son, Oliver. At the time, the firm's principals—a.k.a. (mom) Diana Rice and (daughter) Chelsea Reale—specialized in children's decor, although they have since expanded their services to include large-scale projects. Epstein, a full-time stay-at-home parent, kept their work in mind, and when she and her husband upgraded to a 2,400-square-foot Upper East Side apartment, she knew exactly the best team to call to maximize the new pad's potential. "I was convinced that they would understand how to make the place look beautiful, while still keeping it kid-friendly," says Epstein, who had also been impressed by the pair's work on a Tribeca loft, a triumph of nuanced neutrals and textures that she had seen published in the April 2016 edition of *NYC&G*.

Stark Vision
 (THIS PAGE) A work by Robert V. Ryan and a Darin bench from Desiron amplify the entry.
 (OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) The den is furnished with a Septembre coffee table from Menu, a Thomas Müller and Jörg Wulff-designed sleeper sofa, and an Eames lounge chair. In the kitchen, Moooi's Heracleum II pendant hangs above a Saarinen dining table and Homenature chairs. The display unit on the playroom's wall is by Ferm Living; the desk is from Sissy+Marley's collection for Ducduc. See *Resources*.



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At their initial client-designer meeting, recalls Rice, “We instantly connected with Laura and knew we could bring her vision to life.” A good thing, since Epstein had kept only one piece of art from her previous residence, leaving Rice and Reale with the potentially daunting task of making every inch count. Given Epstein’s blessing and free reign, they incorporated their signature mix of neutral hues and warm, tactile fabrics to give the apartment a comfortable, yet refined air, subtly adding statement pieces such as a shagreen credenza with patinated brass legs. “There’s white, flax, and oatmeal, with hints of black throughout,” Reale says of the color

palette, “along with a lot of brass, leather, and linen to keep things warm.” Both mother and daughter follow the maxim that less is more, so they were careful to avoid too much clutter, and focused instead on a carefully edited selection of beautiful, handmade accessories. When they were finished, the Epsteins “just showed up with their clothes.”

But some things needed to be improved on before the apartment was toothbrush-ready. The original bamboo flooring, Reale reports, “was really yellow, so we convinced Laura to replace it with a beautiful white oak. The natural light bouncing off it completely trans-

Soft Landings

A ceramic work by MQuon Studio hangs in the master bedroom (ABOVE), which includes an ottoman from Barneys New York and a side table from ABC Carpet & Home. (RIGHT) Homenature’s Montauk chair sits below a Forchette Sconce II from Materia in the living room. See *Resources*.



Child's Play
Furnishings in Oliver's room (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE TOP) include a dresser from Ducduc, a mirror from Modloft, and artwork from This Modern Life and Design Life Kids. Love wallpaper by Marley + Malek Kids adds whimsy to Emma's nursery (OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT), which features a Rhea crib from Oeuf, a Maison Deux rocking horse, and Ducduc shelving. See *Resources*.



forms the apartment." Initially, Epstein says, "I was going to stain the floors, but I'm so glad that Chelsea and Diana convinced me to change them altogether. It made a huge difference, and ultimately was the best decision."

Fortuitously, the apartment's sharply delineated floor plan includes separate "wings"—a master suite on one side and three children's rooms on the other, plus a fourth that's used as a playroom—that are ideally suited to the needs of a growing family. The latter is

outfitted with custom kids' furniture from Sissy+Marley's line with Ducduc, while the bedrooms incorporate smart storage solutions, such as built-in floating shelves in baby Ella's room. And so as not to take things too seriously, Sissy+Marley's whimsical collaborations with wallpaper designer Jill Malek are in evidence on the walls. "These prints serve as art, transforming the spaces with pattern, texture, and color, while also keeping the mood playful," says Rice, deftly summing up the Sissy+Marley way. ✨



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