



Clockwise from far left, the custom-made dining table is surrounded by Christian Liaigre chairs, behind which sits a sculpture by Donald Baechler; Rachel Hovnanian's new work *Trophy Case*, sculpted from Carrara marble; *Majestic Metropolitan Living's* author, Sue Hostetler; the book's cover; in one of the bedrooms, the floral Tord Boontje lamp hangs above a custom-designed headboard by Piet Boon.

## URBAN RENEWAL

*Design expert Sue Hostetler, has compiled a new book. Here, she discusses a singular home.*



**F**rom Miami to New York, Los Angeles to Chicago, there is an urban renaissance occurring and it's redefining modern city living. As depicted in *Majestic Metropolitan Living*, a new breed of revolutionary residents have come up with some innovative ways to carve out spectacular homes for themselves, right in the heart of the city.

Easily one of the most striking homes featured can be found right on the cover—that of New York couple Rachel and Ara Hovnanian. Contemporary artist Rachel and husband Ara, CEO of the Fortune 500 company K Hovnanian Homes, renovated a full-floor space in a magnificent Fifth Avenue co-op with their architect, Piet Boon. Originally designed in 1916 by prolific Jazz Age architects Starrett & Van Vleck, the apartment boasts unfettered views of Central Park.

The perfect oasis of tranquility and peacefulness, the light-filled apartment (from all four sides, all but unheard of in NYC) feels subtle and effortless even at a spectacular six bedrooms, eight bathrooms and six fireplaces.

The enormous amount of space, clean lines and subdued color scheme provide an ideal backdrop for the couple's world-class art collection, which includes works by Donald Baechler, Damien Hirst and of

course the artist-in-residence, Rachel. The most dramatic piece in the apartment is surely Rachel's starkly beautiful nine-foot photo on canvas of white narcissus flowers against a black setting. A show of her new work, "Power & Burden of Beauty," recently opened to critical acclaim at Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art in London and both the Meredith Long & Company gallery in Houston and Jason McCoy Inc. in New York. Her work, a mix of Carrara

marble sculptures, drawings, pieces cast in resin and photographs, examines our obsession with personal beauty, social prestige and power. Her visual symbols include pageant winners, trophies and tiaras; the theme of modern culture's view of narcissism, beauty and aging is pervasive throughout the exhibition. A documentary film loops in the background called *Who's to Judge?*

Will the Hovnanians display any of this new, more provocative work in their New York pad? "Of course!" says Rachel. "We love art. Our architect understood that we wanted to create a space where friends and family could experience serenity, surrounded by great art. Most importantly, I think that we succeeded in designing a home that allows everyone freedom to be themselves." *Majestic Metropolitan Living*, Clarkson Potter, \$65; randomhouse.com **OD**

