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Art: Moshe Kupferman; Stefan Rinck/Nino Mier Gallery.

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# Campbell Brown's Soaring Manhattan Penthouse Is a Beautiful Interpretation of the Open Floor Plan

On the Upper West Side, AD100 designer Julie Hillman delivers a creative yet calming aerie for the esteemed broadcast journalist and her family

By Hannah Martin  
Photography by Manolo Yllera  
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When you enter a [Frank Lloyd Wright](#) home, there's often a major wow moment—when you step out of the close quarters of an entryway and into a vast space. It's a tried-and-true architectural technique that the great American architect called compression and release. When [AD100 interior designer Julie Hillman](#) was faced with the startlingly low entry ceilings in this Upper West Side aerie, she took a page from Wright's book. "I made it all black," she explains. "So you enter through this low steel frame, and then everything just opens up." Behold: a sun-bathed glass volume with soaring 14-foot ceilings overlooking the Hudson River, a bespoke Nacho Carbonell light sculpture hovering there like a cloud.

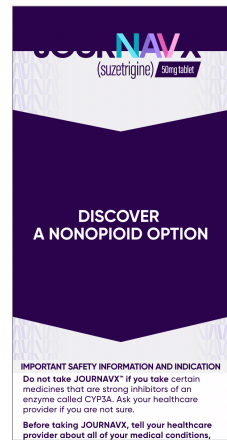
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This is the way Hillman works—she's not afraid to take a risk. And that's exactly why her clients brought her on to turn their pristine glass-and-steel penthouse into a home, infusing the contemporary architecture with soul and style while making it comfortable for the whole family, who moved here to be closer to the kids' school. "We wanted our place to be a hangout for their friends in the neighborhood," says client Campbell Brown, the Emmy-winning journalist and news anchor for CNN and NBC, who led media partnerships at Meta for many years.



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Once you're past the "release" stage of the journey, the first thing you see is a custom modular table—designed by Hillman with a base by Eric Schmitt—that can be broken up into three parts or strung together into one long arrangement (they're cleverly placed on invisible casters for easy reconfiguring). "The big question was where to put the dining room," Hillman explains. "And so we placed it in the center, right when you walk in." This

arrangement works for everyday or entertaining, as a place to do homework, serve drinks at a cocktail party, or host a big shabbat dinner.



In this Upper West Side Manhattan aerie crafted by AD100 designer [Julie Hillman](#), the [Buffi](#) kitchen featuring a [L'Atelier Paris Haute Design](#) range contains a custom resin breakfast table by [Studio Nucleo](#) surrounded by circa 1954 dining chairs by [Pierre Guariche](#), an [Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby](#) light fixture, and a head vase by [Christopher Marichino](#). Art: Nir Hod/GAVLAK



But how to create the sense of “rooms” within one large, irregularly shaped area? Hillman used bespoke Solstys floor coverings in round, almost biomorphic shapes to designate separate living spaces on either side of that central dining table. In the slightly more formal “living room,” a Rick Owens daybed and Pierre Paulin chairs mingle with a Raphael Navot sofa and a bronze Misha Kahn cocktail table. The slightly asymmetric shape of the custom bronze fireplace by [Officina Coppola](#) embraces the off-kilter lines of the space.

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Meanwhile in the more casual family room, a custom sectional wraps around a hulking tree-trunk table by [Hugo Franca](#), across from a [Harp](#) chair by [Jorgen Hovelskov](#). On each side, Hillman designed bespoke wall-mounted metal bookcases to house the clients' expansive collection. Sticking with a diaphanous, largely neutral palette—with pops of color coming from the family's trove of mostly contemporary art—allowed Hillman to create a sense of unity across the vast volume of open space.



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The kids' hang-out area is the most colorful zone in the house, featuring a [Pierre Charpin](#) elongated chair, an Isamu Noguchi floor lamp, and Gaetano Pesce vases on the Charlotte Perriand cocktail table. The rug is by [Soufiane Zarib](#).

In the kitchen—which is also visible from the main living area—Hillman installed a Boffi system with a slightly metallic finish that plays with the light. “It has a sexy feel to it,” she explains. While it didn’t originally contain an eat-in area, Hillman carved out a breakfast nook appointed with a custom resin Studio Nucleo table and Pierre Guariche chairs. The translucent quality of the material lends a luminescent quality to the room. “It’s almost as if you were to shine a light on a piece of alabaster,” she explains. “But since it’s a resin, the kids can do anything on it. You don’t need coasters and place mats and all of that.”

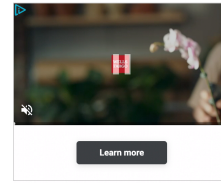
This was a general mandate throughout the house. “I love design and I wanted every piece to be special,” Brown explains. “But I also have teenage boys and dogs, so every room needed to feel welcoming and comfortable. The space couldn’t be too formal.” And while pieces may be highly collectible, this family is living with them every day. They do homework on that Studio Nucleo table, hang out with coffee on the Raphael Navot sofa, and the boys play video games from a colorful Pierre Charpin chair in their hang-out room—illuminated by an Isamu Noguchi floor lamp. Brown, who currently works as an advisor for the AI startup TollBit, reports blissful use of every room, saying simply: “What Julie pulled off is perfection for us as a family.”



Hillman designed two custom metal shelves for her clients' large collection of books—this one is visible in the family room, near a [Trish DeMassi](#) side table and [Jørgen Høvelskov](#) Harp chair. Art: [Nir Hod/GAVLAK](#)



A custom sectional wraps around a [Hugo Franca](#) burl-wood table topped with a ceramic totem by [Nanika Atelier](#). The side table is by [Trish DeMassi](#); the artwork is by [Nir Hod](#), and the floor lamp in the left corner is by [Andrea Branzi](#). Art: [Nir Hod/GAVLAK](#)



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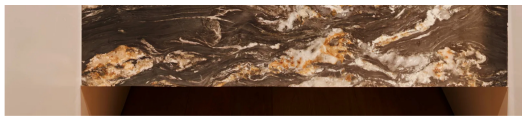
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In this jewel box of a powder room, clad in belvedere quartzite, the show-stopping mirror, by [Béatrice Serra](#), is made of titanium, crystal, opaline, onyx, marble, and brass.



In the dining room, a custom [Nacho Carbonell](#) light fixture crowns a dining table designed by Hillman with a and base and chairs by [Eric Schmidt](#). Its modular quality is perfect for entertaining. The tabletop objects are, from left to right, a stoneware vase by [Robin Welch](#), a Baga Kalum bird headress, and a [Françoise and Michel Delmotte](#) stoneware vessel from 1973.



In the living room, a seating area is arranged around the custom blackened-bronze fireplace by [Officina Coppola](#) and a painting by [Moshe Kupferman](#). On top of a custom [Solby](#) rug, a [Rajesh Nayak](#) sofa sits with Pierre Paulin chairs, a [Bliss Ozyurt](#) bench, and a [Kishu Kishi](#) bronze coffee table. The side table is by [Joyé Corzo](#), totem by [Stefan Rinck](#), and large stoneware vessel by [Martin Lewis](#). Art: Moshe Kupferman; Stefan Rinck/Nino Mier Gallery.



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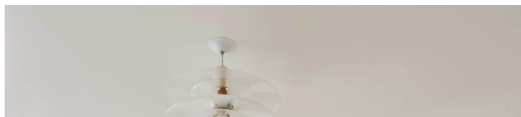
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The ethereal primary suite, with a custom bed, [Ico Darsi](#) sconces, and a [Gyala Serfaty](#) ceiling fixture, gets a jolt of color thanks to an artwork by [Eli Petri](#). Art: Elyahu Fatou/Ovir Gallery



A small sitting area in the primary bedroom includes a [Vladimir Kagan](#) sofa and ottoman, [Peter Lang](#) ceramic side table, and [Mark Brazier-Jones](#) shearing chair.



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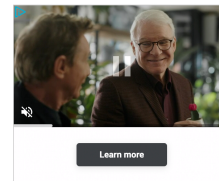


A [Louis Poulson](#) light fixture by Poul Henningsen crowns the primary bath, which also sports a [Trish DeMaiz](#) side table, Eileen Gray mirror, and a [Lisa Yossifor](#) artwork. Art: Lisa Yossifor/PATRICIA Gallery, Chicago

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A custom cowhide-covered bed in a kid's room is flanked by Jacques Biny light fixtures and [Eave Tanswood](#) side tables.



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**Hannah Martin** is the senior design editor at Architectural Digest, where she has worked since 2014. She contributes regular features on emerging talent and design history, often covering subjects that straddle the worlds of art and design. She writes two monthly print columns—"Object Lesson" and "One To Watch"—as well as ... [Read more](#)

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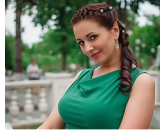


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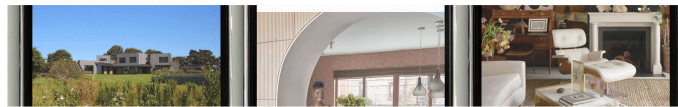


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