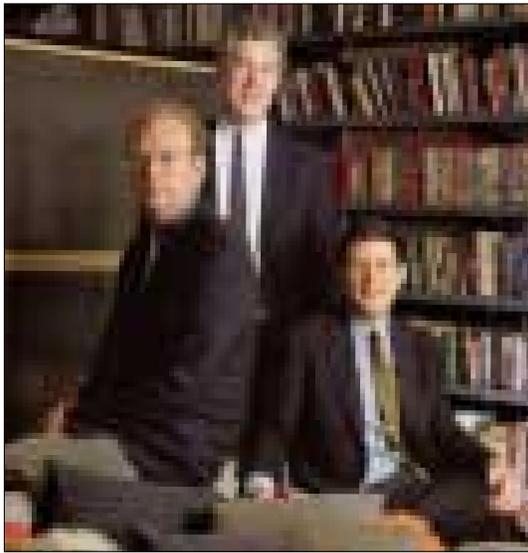


Interior Architecture and Design
by Ike Kligerman Barkley
Text by Philip Nobel
After Photography by Durston Saylor



Tribeca is one of those neighborhoods in New York City whose names indicate a history of change. Like SoHo, it takes its contrived, relatively new-found label from the geography of its borders—in this case, the loose “triangle below Canal” defined by that

street to the north and by Broadway and the Hudson River on the long sides. Like SoHo, too—or Noho, Nolita, Dumbo and all the rest—the name was devised to mark the shift of the neighborhood away from industry and toward finer pursuits—art, shopping, living.

In the case of Tribeca, the

Joel Barkley (above, right, with partners Thomas A. Kligerman, center, and John Ike), of New York’s Ike Kligerman Barkley Architects, turned a 3,600-square-foot former butter warehouse into a modern loft for a Tribeca family. The firm’s Mia Jung did the interior design.

BELOW: A 12-inch-thick concrete floor had to be removed with a jackhammer. “It looked like the world’s largest collection of moon rocks,” Kligerman says. **RIGHT:** The living area has a felt rug and vintage Thonet Industries armchairs. Wool felt sofa fabric from Decorators Walk.



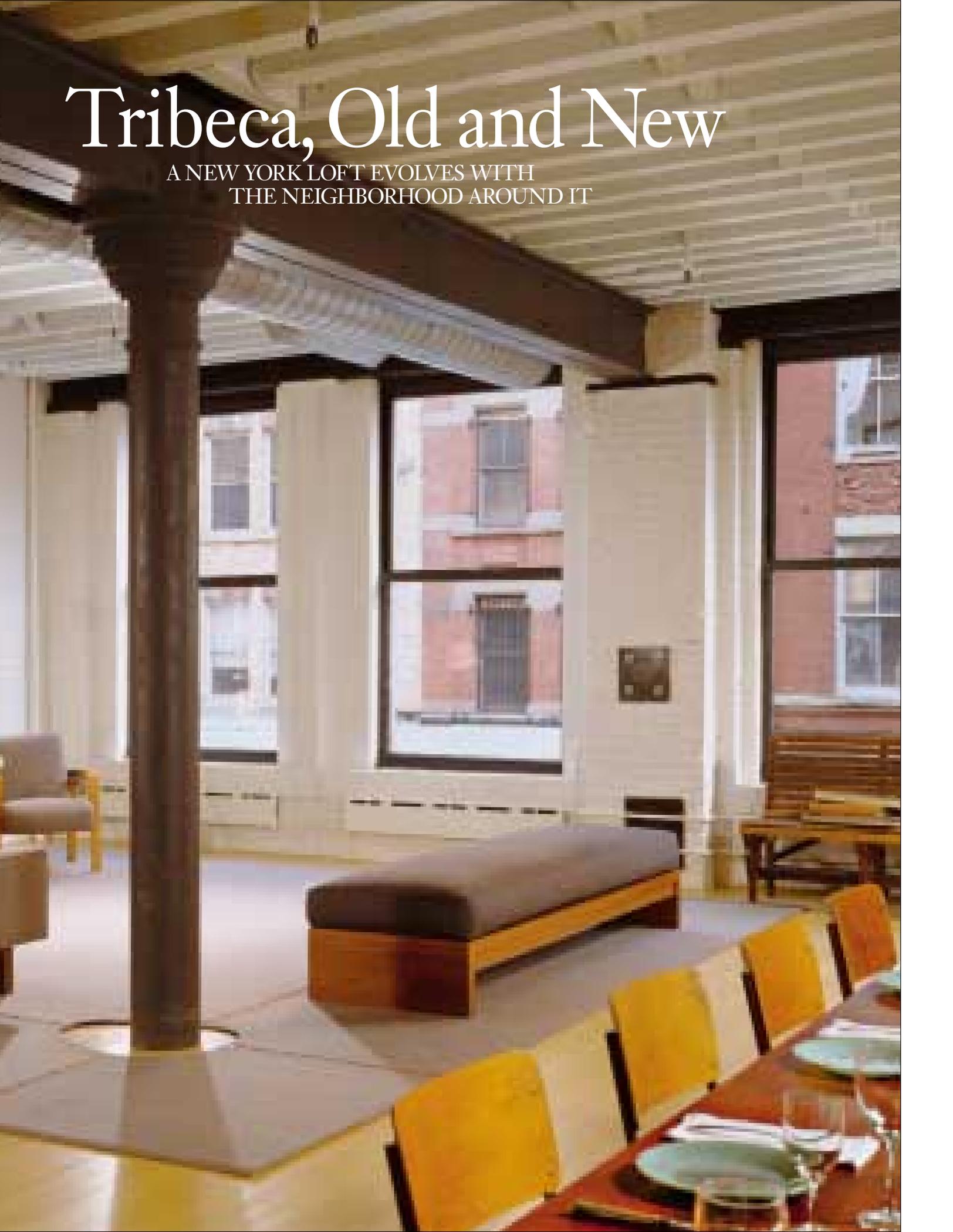
BEFORE



AFTER

Tribeca, Old and New

A NEW YORK LOFT EVOLVES WITH
THE NEIGHBORHOOD AROUND IT





BEFORE

Barkley's goal was to create "an open, dramatic, dynamic construction that also held room for the warm, soft, comfortable, cozy." **BELOW:** The kitchen has bamboo cabinets and stainless-steel counters, shelves and backsplashes. Screens, left, help divide the area. Viking range and hood.

RIGHT: A large raw space (above) was turned into a combined dining area, kitchen and living area. Beyond the 1955 Danish teak table hang plaster relief figures by Brenna Beirne. The flooring is "green" bamboo. "In 13 months you could grow what you'd need to replace it," Kligerman says.



posh area of lofts and lattes that has arisen there over the last 20 years first coexisted with and then replaced the Washington Market, the city's wholesale larder. When the last of the egg-and-cheese

dealers decamped from Duane Street a few years ago, that phase of the neighborhood's life was definitively put to rest. But the built residue it left—the loading docks that line the Belgian-block-paved



AFTER

streets, the arch-punctured fortress warehouses in brick and stone—are still calling all the designerly shots.

The new home of John Curran and Kristen Frederickson, longtime Tribecans

from a few blocks away, is a perfect statement about the area's palimpsest reinhabitation. Their 80-foot-deep three-bedroom loft apartment was designed by New York's Ike Kligerman Barkley

There is a kind of practical wit in evidence here that serves to synchronize the design with the ethic of the neighborhood.



Architects, with Joel Barkley taking the lead. It manages to celebrate the guts of the old neighborhood without any denial that there is much to enjoy about the new.

Before it was elevated to

its present state, the second floor of this brick-fronted, cast-iron-boned building on an overlooked side street was used for decades as a butter warehouse. Then, during a brief interregnum in which

the area was colonized as a down-market outpost of the nearby Wall Street business district, it served as an office for an insurance broker. It was at that time that the space suffered the indignity

that would be the renovation's principal challenge to correct: the pouring of a 12-inch-deep concrete floor on top of the original wood one. It was duly jackhammered out at the start of construc-



tion—“We called it Beirut on the Hudson,” Frederickson says—a move that won back the space’s original 11-foot ceilings but presented, as these things always do, a new cascade of problems. Chief

among these was the elevator, the primary entrance, which had been installed to meet the former height.

Barkley and his clients—for whom he had previously designed a summer house in

New Jersey, never built—arrived at a simple solution that recalls the evolution of the space. “It’s kind of a sitcom entry, like on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*,” the architect says. Stepping out of the elevator,

you find yourself on a mock-concrete platform from which you can survey the L-shaped loft space at the heart of the apartment.

The living area, in the short leg of the L, is straight



“It was a great way for Joel to explore that whole postindustrial vocabulary,” Ike says of the project. **LEFT:** In the master bedroom, an 18th-century English oak chest sits before the original brick-and-stone wall. Above the bed are black-and-white photos taken of the figures in the living area.

RIGHT: A ceramic-tile bench and a stainless-steel towel bar in the master bath are bisected by the frameless glass shower wall. Randomly placed downlights echo similar ones elsewhere in the loft. **BELOW RIGHT:** As the floor plan indicates, the rooms are grouped around a central space.

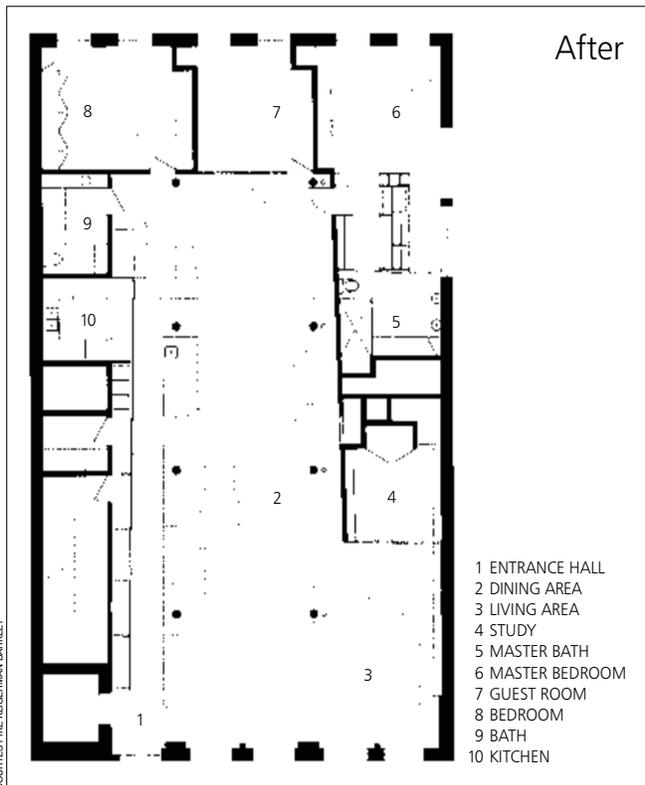


that continue into the study, which lies beyond. (The bookshelves have made such an impression on their daughter’s friends—her room, which is tucked into the opposite corner of the apartment, includes a wall-long stage complete with curtains—that they have gone home and reported to their parents that “Avery lives in a library.”) The living area is prevented from appearing to float too much in the space by its thick felt rug and by one of the loft’s handsome ornamented columns, which comes down to anchor one corner.

The intelligent play between old and new that defines the apartment is taken up in the materials used. The floors—replacing those misguided tons of choking concrete—are made of bamboo, that insurgent favorite of architects and interior designers, and the doors and cabinets throughout are veneered to match.

The effect of so much of this bright, fine-grained fiber is to divorce the new construction from the vestiges of the old—the columns, the deep beams that span the spaces, the exposed-brick walls (both painted and plain) and the braced joists that support the floor above.

There is also a kind of practical wit in evidence here that serves to synchronize the



COURTESY IKE KLIGERMAN BARKLEY

ahead, defined by a custom bench and sofa and a pair of vintage Thonet Industries armchairs (the firm’s Mia Jung collaborated on the interior design) and lined with floor-to-ceiling zinc shelves

design with the ethic of the neighborhood—and to deflate pretension. For instance, where that column in the living area comes to ground, an ellipse has been cut through the rug; zippers radiating from

it at the cardinal points provide a touch of ornamental detail, anchor the plain yet commodious furnishings and—not least—allowed the thing to lie around the column in

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ture” from his 2003 Paris show “celebrated the view” by creating a serene frame for its contemplation.

There is never a false or florid gesture to the work of Stephen Sills and James Huniford. Their wedge-shaped master bedroom has the charm of a princely bower as steeped in freshness as a citrus grove. A Flemish tapestry behind a camelback sofa upholstered in pale green satin mirrors the foliage of the park below. Fluted panels of silk punctuate the walls of glass like the columns of a classical loggia. A Louis XVI bed of limed wood, an abstract sculpture by Joel Shapiro and modernist-inspired chairs and lamps from the partners’ Dwellings collection all share the uncommon denominator of the firm’s grander commissions: mandarin restraint.

Despite the title of the exhibition—“Rooms with a View of Central Park”—one of the most glamorous spaces in Apartment 73C didn’t have a window and wasn’t a room. It was a narrow corridor of closets that zigzagged past Charles Allen’s sybaritic bath on its way to the master bedroom. Samuel Botero must have been channeling our imaginary bachelor as he recast this unpromising sartorial inglenook as “his dressing room”: a sensuous lair with suede walls and a leather ceiling, a leather-bound runner secured with bronze-toned studs, an ingeniously fitted bureau/grooming station of steel and wood with a valet mount, and a wall of closets concealed behind sliding panels of witty trompe l’oeil murals that depict the interiors of a dandy’s fastidiously organized armoire. “I wanted to anticipate ‘the owner’s’ daily needs,” Botero says, “but I also wanted him—and me—to have fun. That, in part, is the purpose of a designer showcase. You have the opportunity to solve a spatial puzzle, play with textures, revel in experiments, splurge on materials and merge fantasy with function.”

A dazzled visitor to the show plummeting nearly 1,000 feet back to earth in the high-speed elevator had just enough time for a final reflection on the spectacle of so much virtuosity: An endless vista is a desirable luxury, but greatness in design begins and ends with an inspired point of view. □

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for dressing on the dressing room,” he says. “I like dressing rooms that are separate from bedrooms.”

At one end of the apartment is a guest/sitting room, opulently upholstered in deep brown cashmere. “It’s a bit extravagant, but the nap is just so luxurious that it won out over merino,” Jordan says. In every room he tore out the old radiator covers and replaced them with front panels of vertical wood slats.

Jordan and McCarthy have been collecting art for 25 years. More wall space for their art was close to the top of their wish list for the new apartment. The walls of every room are covered with oils, gouaches, drawings and lithographs, and sculptures are to be found on most tables, cabinets and travertine radiator tops. The entrance hall is a stunning art gallery. “In order to provide an axis from the green of the living room to the blue and the brown of the bedrooms, I decided the hall would best be clad in aluminum leaf,” Jordan says. “It’s applied in four-inch squares, just as gold leaf is, then it’s burnished, and finally it’s glazed to tone it down.”

The couple prefer to spend weekends in Chicago. Their previous apartment was on the first floor and was dark. “We felt light-deprived and really didn’t want to stay at home during

“When you’re the client, you can indulge all of your own prejudices,” says Jordan.

the day,” says the designer. “Here we’re happy to be home because of the light and the vistas.”

When Jordan moved to his new residence, his office was two blocks away. The building in which the firm was located was sold, and in 2003 Gregga Jordan Smieszny leased space on the first floor of the building to which he had relocated. “My office is right under the northwest corner of the living room,” Jordan says. “I walk down the back stairs, and I’m at work. I got almost everything I wanted when I moved in, and now I also have the ideal commute.” □

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the first place. Downlights in the one dropped ceiling—necessary to hide the ventilation ducts and pipes of the apartment above—are scattered without pattern in what Barkley calls a “constellation.” From the master bedroom, a window at pillow level gives a view out onto the living area. (In one wall there is a low portal that lets the cats, one friendly, three retiring, get to their hidden backstage loo.)

In the kitchen, there is a glass-front refrigerator—Frederickson, an art historian who owns a gallery nearby, says

The bright, fine-grained bamboo divorces the new construction from the vestiges of the old.

that “curating” the exposed comestibles is her secret obsession—and a large porcelain sink that strikes one of the few off notes in this carefully conceived home.

“All I wanted was a white farmhouse sink and a place for my books,” Frederickson explains. Her husband also got his own design hiccup approved: The door to the master bedroom, which continues up a few feet past the rest, breaks a datum that is established by the honeycomb-filled plastic panel walls and reinforced in the hanging of two series art pieces. That this request was granted to Curran, a financier on the tallish side, speaks volumes about the useful lack of ideology that drove Barkley’s design process and that gives the apartment such an unpretentious feel. “It was my birthday present,” Curran says, smiling.

The smile is well deserved. When he first saw the derelict floor of the aging building that would become the family’s home, he says he thought to himself, “Let’s just leave now. This is never going to happen.” Barkley counters with a more positive spin: “It was just a blank canvas.” But Frederickson, who knows a thing or two about that particular metaphor, gets the last word. “No,” she says. “It was a horrible, dirty, disgusting canvas.” □