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ELECTRONICALLY REPRINTED FROM SPRING 2016



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Right of Passage

Daring color and vintage finds create a capsule of intrigue in a tiny Harlem apartment



"Instead of looking at the small footprint as a negative, we decided to use it to our advantage and create a perfect jewel box."

With the goal to create "a playfully glamorous space," designer Courtney McLeod of [Right Meets Left Design](#), transformed a 550-square-foot, junior one-bedroom apartment in Harlem into a showplace that balances bold and soft, natural and sophisticated, peaceful and wild. In doing so, she created something completely unique for her toughest client yet – herself.

"So often, clients are afraid to incorporate bold color into their spaces," McLeod says. "This space is proof positive bold colors used in the right places and right doses can be invigorating and joyful, even in the smallest of spaces."

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PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN DOLAN PHOTOGRAPHY
INTERIOR DESIGN RIGHT MEETS LEFT DESIGN





COLOR CONSCIOUS

After 15 years in real estate investment management, McLeod downsized to a smaller space as part of a plan to move her career in a new direction, one in which she would fulfill her passion for home design and renovation. The designer recalls that the apartment was a plain, white box when first she entered and that it felt incredibly cramped when empty.

“Instead of looking at the small footprint as a negative, we decided to use it to our advantage and create a perfect jewel box,” she tells of the project, adding that the furniture plan carves out a small entry, entertaining area, and reading corner for one. “I think this tiny space is a successful example of playing with scale and thoughtful layering.”

At every turn, be it through art, accessories or wall color, the home is an exercise in the magic of a thoughtful palette. The designer points to the blue/green and hot pink, for example, that were utilized as the standout color statements for the apartment.

“With that wonderful blue/green as a departure, we decided to use many tones – from the bright and cheerful turquoise of the lamps to the palest blush of color on the living room walls,” she explains. “Keeping the walls of the main living area light ensures an airy feel, and the intense color of the bedroom, viewable from the living room, becomes a powerful accent for the main space.”

The black, white and metallic accents injected throughout the space were used to ground it and lend a dose of sophisticated glamour. They also allow the bright colors to dance playfully throughout the space “without becoming juvenile,” McLeod notes. “The right balance of each of these elements is what gives the space such unique energy.”

BOLD BOUDOIR

The bedroom, quite small and with limited light, came with its own interesting challenges. “We decided to embrace the bedroom for what it was and play up the dark, intimate feeling,” she



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describes, noting the color choice a very easy one for her: “Hague Blue by Farrow & Ball, my all-time favorite paint color, was used on the walls and ceiling.”

The designer explains how using a strong color in this way “eliminated the line between the ceiling and walls, making the room feel more expansive than it really is. If the bedroom had been a larger space, the wash of a strong color would have been too much, but here, it’s an elegant surprise and feels just right.”

VINTAGE SOUL

Throughout the apartment, vintage pieces, many of which came from McLeod’s previous home, lend visual depth, history and a sense of individuality to the space.

“Bringing in the vintage pieces adds soul, personality and wit,” the designer states, pointing to the oversized ‘80s artwork, vintage Danish tea set, ‘70s glam Italian coffee table, and classic cream leather Eames lounge and ottoman. Of course, one couldn’t fail to notice the pair of sparkling, blue heels and vibrant, pink dress that “bring both elegance and levity to the space. It shows right away that this is a glamorous space, but with a wink and a smile.”

McLeod says that while filling such a small space with so much furniture may seem counterintuitive to some, it actually made the apartment feel substantially larger. Using the pieces to designate individual spaces allows for the illusion of more space with which to play.

“The result is a reflection of my unique interests and personality,” the designer shares. “It demonstrates a successful use of color, scale and balance to achieve a clearly defined design goal and a willingness to take a few well-considered risks.” ■

