

GREAT ROOM

Space Shifters

In a former cardboard factory, I-Beam Design created an ingenious multitasking apartment for a pair of art collectors.

By **Wendy Goodman** Published Oct 25, 2007

Photographs by Floto and Warner.



Husband-and-wife art collectors Jacob Ojito and Anne Milne wanted their 1,900-square-foot Soho loft, carved out of a former cardboard factory, to be minimalist yet spirited, with wide-open space but lots of walls to display their collection of South American Constructivist art. “The focus should be the art,” Ojito says. “The apartment and all our stuff should be in the background.”

I-Beam Design came onboard after an initial round with an architect who proposed “all Carrara marble and wenge wood, basically what every new

condo looks like in Manhattan,” Ojito says. “We are what you would call DINKS: double-income-no-kids. We wanted something more funky.”

Partners Azin Valy and Suzan Wines resolved all the issues with a fluid, morphing space based on interlocking grids. The main wall in the living room is a series of sliding panels, each hung with a different painting. One panel swings out to create a guest “bedroom” (and reveal more artwork). Even the pattern of the bleached wood floorboards has been designed in a detailed grid system that echoes the rest of the apartment.

The keystone of the room, though, is a massive art installation, “Cold Hearth.” Created by artist Joan Waltemath, lighting designer Linnaea Tillett, and software developer Andrew Tripp, it separates the main living space from the master bedroom (not shown). Embedded with a grid design based on a harmonic progression, it glows a deep cerulean blue at night. “It’s very hard to describe in a way that doesn’t get laborious,” Waltemath says. “But when you see it, you understand it intuitively, almost viscerally.”

Space Shifters

Design by I-Beam Design

The **white leather tufted couch** and **coffee table** are from Maurice Villency.

Photographs by Floto and Warner





One **wall panel** swings in to create a guest room, shown here with the owner's dog Massimo; it also swings out to reveal more artwork.

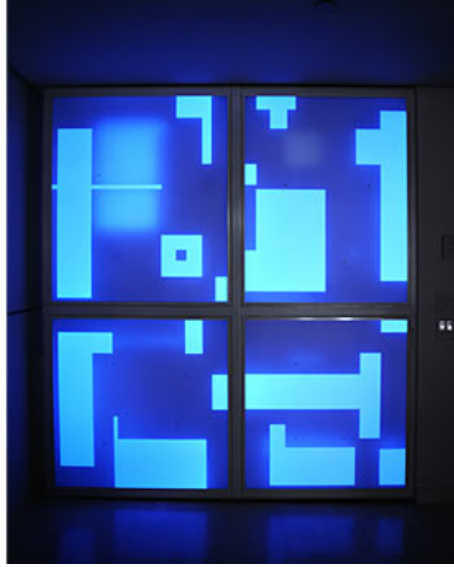
Photographs by Floto and Warner



Displaying artwork was the crux of the design process, since the owners are major collectors. The desk is an **Alejandro Corrujera**; above the table, an **Alberto Delmonte**. Artwork framed by Pamela Morgan Framing.

The **white lacquer box** near the banquette contains a flat-screen TV that pops up at the touch of a button.

Photographs by Floto and Warner



"Cold Hearth," seen in daytime, left, and at night, right, is an illuminated art installation, working light source, and door. It divides the living room from the bedroom. Manufactured by Steve Samuels at Work With Your Brain.

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