

# design anthology

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# All Things Bright & Beautiful

Text / Sophie Kalkreuth  
Images / Jonathan Leijonhufvud



‘We didn’t use a designer,’ Janis Provisor, co-founder of hand-knotted carpet producer Fort Street Studio, tells me when I arrive at the Tribeca loft she shares with her husband and business partner Brad Davis. This much seems clear — the space is too layered with whimsical ceramics, one-off art pieces, vintage furnishings and inventive reupholstery to be the work of a disinterested professional.

‘We wanted to create the feeling of a vestibule here at the entrance, even though it’s a big, open space,’ says Davis, gesturing to a sculptural glass and bronze wall light by Venetian designer Angelo Brotto hanging above a Carlo Hauner-designed sideboard from Brazil.

On the adjacent windowsill, a ceramic creature — half mermaid, half penguin — by Swedish artist Klara Kristalova presides over the loft, a cheerful Moroccan rag rug at her finned feet. ‘This type of rug is called a Boucherouite,’ Provisor explains. ‘The Berbers originally made them for dowries. Our dealer told us if you go into a Moroccan house and you see this rug on the floor, you know it’s a good marriage.’ If the rug, or indeed the couple’s luxury rug business, is any indication, their decades-long marriage is a great one.

‘We don’t always agree,’ Provisor admits. ‘If one of us really doesn’t like something we can veto it,’ Davis says, before Provisor adds, ‘Sometimes we’ll say “Well, if you really like it you can put it in your studio, but I don’t want that in the house”.’

When the couple met in the 80s, both were artists showing at New York’s Holly Solomon Gallery, and both were already avid flea-market hunters. But, according to Davis, when they got together ‘there was an explosion’. ‘It was a great collision,’ Provisor agrees. ‘We realised that collecting together was our form of play.’

The loft, which they have occupied since 2002, is the result of decades of play — at flea markets, auctions, galleries and art fairs. In addition to a keen eye for materials, a fondness for mid-century furniture and a love of warm olive tones, Davis and Provisor have a thoughtful approach to how space is utilised.

In the bedroom, an entire wall is dedicated to figurative paintings by Hong Kong artist Wilson Shieh, a favourite from the pair’s time in Asia, while bolder contemporary art is reserved for the main living space. ‘We call this wall our female gaze,’ says Provisor, pointing to large colour prints by American artists Catherine Opie and Mickalene Thomas. Opie’s stylised portrait shows a young woman in front of a green backdrop, her eyes locked on the lens. ‘It reminds me of a Hans Holbein,’ says Davis, referring to the Renaissance painter who also isolated his subjects against vibrantly coloured backgrounds.

Both Davis and Provisor can recall where every artwork, lamp or chair was discovered and why it first caught their eye. Thus the home is more than an accumulation of collectables; it’s a map of their life’s journey, with objects woven into their own histories. As Provisor puts it: ‘All of this stuff is a part of our big adventure.’

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The Hong Kong- and New York-based duo behind Fort Street Studio, Brad Davis and Janis Provisor, are both avid collectors — and it shows in their New York loft, where furniture and artefacts have been gathered from around the world. The hand-knotted Karl rug is by Fort Street Studio

Facing page  
An Eames lounge chair upholstered in fabric by Hella Jongerius sits beside a Karimoku table from the New Standard collection, on top of which are one of Fiona Waterstreet’s Gold Birds, German pottery from the 1960s and a Fazzoletto vase by Venini





Facing page  
The open-plan living space is also home to a classic standing lamp by Artemide and a mid-century American glass-topped coffee table from Lane Furniture. The green velvet chair by Sawaya & Moroni draws the eye, and is surrounded by more small objets

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The loft retains its industrial edge in places, softened here by artworks on the walls and the 1950s Paul Frankl bench. Ceramic sculptures by Anna Sew Hoy and Arlene Shechet sit next to a vintage German vase and Murano glass piece. The wall sculpture is by Evgeny Antufiev and the larger painting is by 19th-century Chinese artist Hu Gong Shou



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A Moroccan Boucherouite runner from the 1960s complements the Fort Street Studio floor coverings elsewhere. The chair is a 1960s German piece from Pagholtz, while the cabinet to the back is a vintage piece by Carlo Hauner. The striking light fixture above is a 1960s piece by Angelo Brotto

Facing page  
Provisor's preferred spot for answering emails and eating meals is a plush green Polder sofa designed by Hella Jongerius for Vitra that anchors one end of the living room. 'I don't eat a meal at a table unless I have to,' she says. Behind, sculptures by Klara Kristalova complement a bronze Singing Siren piece by Kiki Smith





Facing page

A sparkling 1960s Accolay coffee table made of resin and broken glass was picked up at a Paris flea market. In the foreground, early 20th-century Chinese cloisonné cups make an eye-catching complement to the couple's more modern pieces. The artworks on paper are by Thomas Nozkowski

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A Christian Liaigre sofa and Norbert Schwontkowski painting anchor one corner of the living space. On the table is one of Kiki Smith's Alice series and two ceramic sculptures by Heidi Lau



Facing page  
 In the kitchen, a 1960s Paul Evans dining table and Gio Ponti chairs provide a suitable setting. Beneath a Mickalene Thomas photograph, the sideboard by Florence Knoll holds a variety of sculptural pieces including a seated figure by Paloma Varga Weisz. One of the couple's favourite pieces in the entire home is the Italian standing lamp in the corner

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 An elephant sculpture by Klara Kristalova flanks the sideboard, resting on an 18th-century Chinese temple stand beneath a Catherine Opie photograph



At the other end of the kitchen, a reading nook is overlooked by a Patricia Blanchet photograph and David Weeks wall lamp. The sofa is by Patricia Urquiola for Moroso, and sits on a wild silk shag rug by Fort Street Studio



Vitsœ shelving and a 19th-century Chinese side chair mark the path to the master bedroom





The striking chair in the master bedroom is a Ragamuf piece designed by Tuula Pöyhönen and produced by female Syrian refugees. Hong Kong artist Wilson Shieh's works adorn the walls, while the 1950s bedroom set is by George Nelson for Herman Miller. A Fort Street Studio Grasscloth hand-knotted wild silk carpet provides comfort underfoot



Facing page  
 Silvertone pottery by Weller and a Flos  
 lamp bookend the dressing table below  
 a 19th-century Chinese painting

This page  
 The couple are also noted artists and  
 creators, exemplified here by pieces  
 from Janis Provisor Jewelry