

cynthia byrnes
contemporary art

EXCESS
ALL
AREAS

Designed for
a Kuwaiti family,
this jewel box of
a residence shines
above Manhattan

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Styling: Frances Bailey



A view through to
the dining room,
where a painting by
American artist
Sergio Ballester
and a patterned
chair by Yusef
Khalil are by J.J.
Riviera Studios.
Lewis dining chairs
by Studio Van Den
Akker have been
covered in a Rubelli
boucé fabric.

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WE WANTED SOMETHING ECLECTIC AND PERSONAL – to go out of our comfort zone by not having a monotone, minimalist space,” say the owners of this luxurious four-bedroom apartment, at a sought-after address in New York City. Splitting their time between the United States and their residences abroad, the Kuwaiti family trusted interior designer Kevin Isbell to translate their vision into reality, capitalising on a knack for deftly combining bold colour, rich textures and vintage furnishings. In addition to creating something unique, the brief included reflecting an American perspective through the design. The result has clearly exceeded their expectations.

“My client’s only demands were that I push myself creatively to deliver something magical,” says Isbell. “I embellished every inch of the home with lacquer finishes, hand-painted papers and tufted silk carpets. This rough diamond was polished into a shimmering aerie overlooking Central Park.” The spectacular location played a major role in the selection of elevated furnishings and finishes. Adorning the walls in gold silk upholstery and light blue Venetian plaster, for example, was something that the owners discussed with Isbell from the beginning, emphasising out-of-the-box thinking.

The drama begins in the entry hall with pale lilac-lacquered walls, painstakingly applied by JJ Snyder Studio. A raw plaster lamp from Blackman Cruz, a Ghost table by Zhipeng Tan and the commissioned wall sculpture by the artist Carolina Sardi – which adds movement and shadows – complete the space. Isbell’s top pick, however, is the hanging mouth-blown Cloud light by Paris-based artist Jeremy Maxwell Wintrebert.

“Through the power of social media, we were able to follow along with every step of their productions from his glass blowing studio in France,” Isbell says. “When they finally arrived stateside, it was as if I was being reunited with an old friend.”

The living room is filled with plush textures. Walls upholstered in Rubelli bronze satin; custom silk carpets from Studio Four NYC; silk velvet fabrics from Loro Piana; and hand-woven mohair from Chapas Textiles. Among the homeowners’ favourite pieces are the crescent-shaped sofa, which offers a prime viewing spot, and a kaleidoscopic straw marquetry cabinet by Alexander Lamont. “This piece initially scared her the most but now, she loves it and understands how it sets the tone for the entire space,” adds Isbell.



ABOVE: A straw marquetry cabinet by Alexander Lamont provides a bold focal point in the living room.

OPPOSITE PAGE: A vintage brass-paneled ameer hassidim Rubelli fabric sits on a silk rug by Studio Four NYC. The painting by Paul Michael Graves is one of several pieces sourced by Cynthia Byrnes Contemporary Art.

The interior designer used art – much of it curated by Cynthia Byrnes Contemporary Art – to honor his clients’ origins. “The client was drawn to the Paul Michael Graves oil painting hanging over the sofa in the living room because it was reminiscent of Arabic lettering, whereas other pieces were sourced directly from galleries in the Middle East,” he says.

A Sarkis Hamalhashian canvas, for example, hangs in the dining room, which is furnished with a bespoke table from Hillman Chang and a striking Giopato & Coombes chandelier, fashioned from mouth-blown frosted glass orbs. “This home is a sophisticated, colourful jewel box for entertaining,” says Isbell. “Every surface and detail is special and was painstakingly crafted.”

The moody study highlights the gentleman of the house’s passion for falconry. “I filled it with vintage books on the sport, especially as it pertains to the Middle East,” Isbell explains. A golden striped wallpaper wraps the room in subtle sophistication, while a teal lacquered cocktail table adds a pop of vibrancy. It’s typical of the designer’s opulent visual signature.

“When we first walked in, it was as if we were living in the Museum of Modern Art,” the owners recall. “Every piece has a story to tell, that’s what we call a ‘happy journey.’ We are so thrilled with the result. It is far more than we ever dreamed.” kevinisbell.com



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“
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That’s what we call a happy journey
”

A Ghost table by
Zhipeng Tan and
Gemstone mirror by
Alexander Lamont
add sparkle to the
entry hall.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Ruby red Mays
Romanoff wallpaper
sets the tone in a
guest bedroom.

