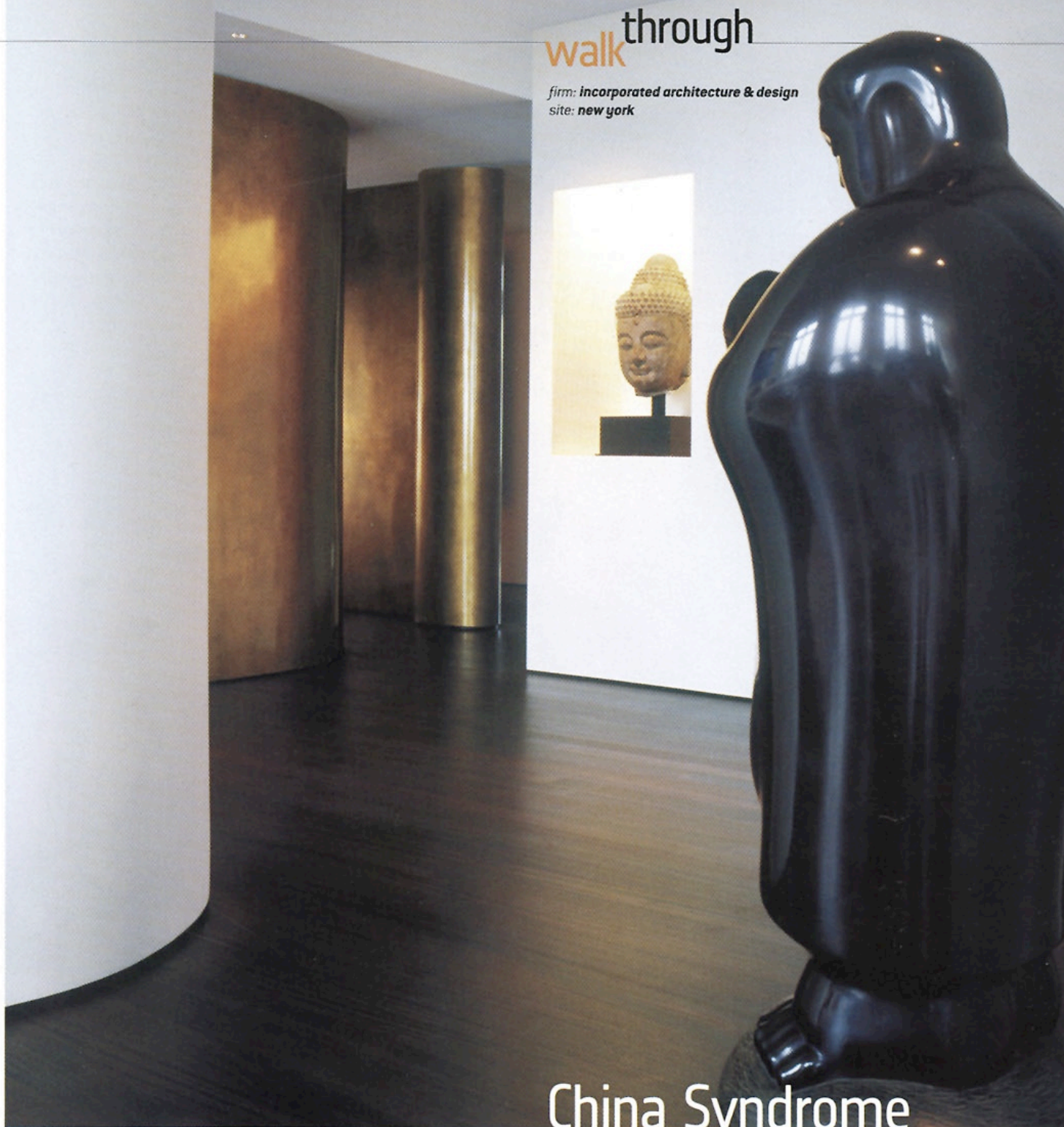


firm: **incorporated architecture & design**
site: **new york**



China Syndrome



The starting point was a pair of concrete boxes in the sky. "We were asked to combine two sub-penthouses," recalls Adam Rolston, a founding partner of 3-year-old Incorporated Architecture & Design, of his residential project inside a new loft condominium in New York. But it wasn't exactly a tabula rasa. "We began this project at Tsao & McKown, where I worked for

15 years," explains Rolston, who had been collaborating at the architecture firm with Drew Stuart and Gabriel Benroth when they decided to open their own studio. "Calvin Tsao was very generous and let us take the project with us, and he continued to advise us. It's a nice example of how emerging architects develop their practice."

It's also a nice example of how ➤

From top: A 5½-foot-tall, granite Buddha and a limestone Chinese head appoint the entry hall. A Borge Morgenson chair and a 1940's steel side table furnish a corner in the master bedroom.



Clockwise from left: Under the den area's Andy Warhol silkscreen on canvas is an antique Chinese opium bed and a Ricardo Fasanella lounge chair; the plasma screen is surrounded by horsehair-covered panels, and a Milo Baughman armchair heads the dining table. Another Warhol canvas hangs above a Chinese rosewood console opposite the dining area. An opal glass lantern hangs over the bronze sink and vanity, all custom, in the powder room. Ebonized sapele flooring flows around the freestanding Richard Serra-like powder-room structure, which Incorporated Architecture & Design built out of lacquered gilded plaster.



three New York architects work with a globetrotting Italian client and his Miami-based interior designer, Sam Robin. "The loft is 'a portrait of the client,'" says Stuart. "He's a successful businessman who's spent 40 years traveling for work, a real citizen of the world," explaining his taste for Pop Art, Chinese antiques, and contemporary Italian design.

The architects were confident they could establish the appropriate aesthetic once they solved the problem

of combining the apartments. "Like most new condominiums, there's a central area that gets little light and has most of the bathrooms packed into it," says Benroth. "There were a bunch of building services that were tough to organize, so we carved out what we called the courtyard—what you'd find in a classic Chinese house, except this was inside."

The solution provided the set up for the central hall, which contains the 3,700-square-foot loft's most dazzling

element: a freestanding, gilded, curvaceous form. "It spirals like a Richard Serra sculpture," says Rolston. You can move around it or enter it to discover a gem of a powder room. The glazed, metallic interior and exterior surface is a nod to the gold-leafed Chinese screen that's mounted over the master bed.

This unabashedly contemporary environment owes a debt to 19th-century Chinese furniture arrangement. "The Chinese always estab-

lished symmetry with a central figure and flank elements," Rolston says. The rectangular living area follows this formula with seating areas at either end and a dining table as the midpoint. One end is conceived as the den, with a Chinese daybed, a TV, and a custom set of hexagonal stainless-steel tables that can be rearranged. The other end is more formal, with a sectional sofa wrapping a large, low cocktail table. Rugs of ecru silk anchor each area. ➤



walk through



The dining area is defined only by the table and chairs. "We had a big debate about whether to have a chandelier or not," Rolston continues. Ultimately, clarity of space won. Rather than hanging a fixture, the ceiling was dropped 3 inches and two pin spots installed to wash the table.

Every room has a crisp feel, accentuated by ebonized sapele flooring, austere white walls, and bare windows. A complete set of solar and blackout shades running down the window jambs disappear into the ceiling when not in use.

The over-counter frosted-glass cabinets in the kitchen are partially sunk into the wall to create more space, and a notch running the length of the back-splash houses concealed electrical sockets. "Hiding outlets is one of our obsessions," Rolston admits. In the limestone-clad master bathroom, symmetry reigns. Two sinks bookend

the tub; directly across stands the shower, which is flanked by a pair of toilet-and-bidet stalls hidden behind frosted glass.

"Much of what we've done is formal and ceremonial," says Rolston, "which is not what you would traditionally think of for a supermodern apartment." But it's a true reflection of the client's sophisticated sensibility. —*Dan Shaw*

From top: A Mark Tansey oil on canvas hangs above the linen-covered sectional in the living area. Anselm Reyle's mixed media on canvas backs a Chinese 19th-century lacquered-rosewood desk and a goatskin-covered chair in the office; the guest chair is Michael Thonet. Marble covers the wall and countertops in the kitchen, where cabinetry is glass and stainless steel, appliances stainless.



FROM FRONT THROUGH LAS VENUS: CHAIR (BEDROOM). STARK CARPET CORP.: RUGS (BEDROOM, LIVING AREA, OFFICE). GLORIA SACHS: PANEL UPHOLSTERY (DEN). FUJITSU: TV. THROUGH HISTORICAL MATERIALISM: FOLDING TABLE. THROUGH COSMO MODERN: LAMPS. HOLLY HUNT: SIDE TABLES, DAYBED, CUSHION, BOLSTER FABRIC. NICOLE MAYHORN NEW YORK: SMALL PILLOW. JIM THOMPSON: LARGE PILLOW FABRIC. ESPASSO: ROUND CHAIR. THROUGH HORSEMAN ANTIQUES: WOOD SIDE TABLE. THROUGH INTERIEURS: CHAIRS (DINING AREA). ABC CARPET & HOME: ARMCHAIR (DINING AREA), LOUNGE CHAIR (LIVING AREA). LACAVA: SINK FITTINGS (POWDER ROOM). WAINLANDS METAL: CUSTOM VANITY, CUSTOM SINK. FLEXFORM: SOFA (LIVING AREA). KNOLL: TASK CHAIR (OFFICE). PRESTIGE FURNITURE & DESIGN: CHAIR FABRIC. CORCORAN MARBLE & MONUMENT CO.: STONE (KITCHEN). SONY CORPORATION: TV. MIELE: COOKTOP. BLANCO PRECISION: SINK. DORNBRACHT: MIXER. POLIFORM: CABINETRY. THROUGHOUT NULUX: RECESSED CEILING FIXTURES. FINE PAINTS OF EUROPE: PIGMENTED PLASTER. ATLANTIC FIXTURES: WINDOW HARDWARE. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG LIGHTING DESIGN: LIGHTING CONSULTANT. TRI-POWER ENGINEERING: MEP. TACONIC BUILDERS: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.