

# KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

## ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

### Clarissa and Edgar Bronfman Reveal Their Park Avenue Triplex Penthouse After a Four-Year Renovation

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One could write a book about the meticulous four-year renovation and decoration of art collectors Clarissa and Edgar Bronfman Jr.'s triplex penthouse on Park Avenue. And, in fact, their interior designer, Amy Lau, produced a coffee-table tome as a gift for the couple, chronicling their collaboration with many of the artisans responsible for the apartment's custom-made rugs, lighting, and furniture.

Curled up barefoot on the 1960s Brazilian sofa in the leather-swathed library, Clarissa has a laid-back demeanor that belies her formidable role in New York cultural life as a vice-chairman of Carnegie Hall, a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art, and cochairman of the Guggenheim Museum's Latin American Committee. (She also practices photography and creates a sought-after line of jewelry.) The six-bedroom apartment, she explains, was conceived as an easygoing environment for raising four children (now ages 15 to 20) and as a flexible backdrop for the global art collection she's assembled with her husband, a scion of the family behind Seagram distillers and the former CEO and chairman of the Warner Music Group, who is now a venture capitalist with a special interest in profitably reducing carbon emissions.

The Bronfmans worked with two architects—Clarissa's brother Frank Alcock, who lives in Caracas, Venezuela, where the siblings were born, and New York-based Peter Guzy of Asfour Guzy—directing them to transform the traditional prewar layout of dignified but dark rooms into light, airy spaces that would allow furniture and art to be rearranged without disrupting the apartment's elegant flow. And the synergy between art and architecture is indeed visceral. In the spare entrance gallery, a dramatic sweeping white-painted steel staircase wraps around a suspended wire sculpture by the German-born Venezuelan artist Gego. From the foot of the stairs, there's a view into the double-height section of the living room—what Guzy describes as an “internal piazza that binds the apartment together.” “I wanted you to feel intuitively and immediately welcome,” says Clarissa, explaining why the foyer also has direct views into the library, dining room, and her office, which all have pocket doors to allow flexible levels of openness and retreat.



*A wire sculpture by Venezuelan artist Gego hangs in the foyer, joining a piece by León Ferrari (at left), a chair by Joseph Walsh Studio, and a Christopher Chiappa gold-leaf stool.*

After construction commenced, Lau joined the project. “The architecture has the right balance—it’s on par with and equal to the art but doesn’t overpower it,” she notes. It was Lau’s mission to help Clarissa sort through the art and furniture she had in storage, which included a pair of Jean-Michel Frank sofas now

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reupholstered in a handwoven cotton blend by Tara Chapas of Brooklyn. Lau commissioned furnishings (such as Californian Lauren Saunders's embroidered throw pillows resembling abstract canvases) that would hold their own among the Bronfmans' collection of pre-Columbian artifacts, kinetic sculpture, video art, drawings, and 20th-century paintings. A sprawling color-blocked rug by Jorge Lizarazo of Hechizoo in Bogotá, Colombia, is woven from natural and man-made fibers laced with metallic wires; its colors subtly complement Chilean artist Roberto Matta's 1944 Surrealist painting *Science, Conscience et Patience du Vitreur*, which occupies the entire wall above the living room's fireplace.

On the opposite end of the living room, Diego Rivera's 1928 *Dance in Tehuantepec* hangs on elm paneling above a seating group that includes a pair of two-tone leather chairs Gio Ponti designed in the 1950s for a house in Caracas and the floating curved Clarissa sofa commissioned in 2013 from Vladimir Kagan. (Lau devoted 16 pages in her book to the sofa's evolution.)

The Bronfmans' commitment to innovation and perfection is evident in the dining room. A model of Roman designer Achille Salvagni's massive Octopus chandelier, with eight patinated bronze arms and onyx-filtered lights, was brought in to make sure its proportions would dovetail with the amber resin tabletop on a free-form wood base by Irish designer Joseph Walsh. "It takes eight people to move the table, so we needed to get everything exactly right," Clarissa explains.



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Octopus chandelier by Achille Salvagni; \$110,000. [maisonjergard.com](http://maisonjergard.com)

Stool by Christopher Chiappa; price upon request. [katewerblegallery.com](http://katewerblegallery.com)

Foam-and-rubber Poly chair by Max Lamb; \$5,800. [johnsontrading-gallery.com](http://johnsontrading-gallery.com)

A son's room is painted Bull's Eye Red by Benjamin Moore. [benjaminmoore.com](http://benjaminmoore.com)

Ofidia side table by the Campana Brothers; \$15,000. [friedmanbenda.com](http://friedmanbenda.com)

Bloomin' acrylic vases by Alexandra von Furstenberg; \$220 and \$290. [avfhome.com](http://avfhome.com)

Marshmallow sofa by Irving Harper and George Nelson; \$5,579. [hermanmiller.com](http://hermanmiller.com)

“In decorating, I like a bit of irreverence,” says Clarissa. “I don’t believe in strict rules about what should go where.”