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EDITOR'S NOTE

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MEGHA MCEWEN EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Change" may be one of the most bandied-about words these days, with politicians at all ends of the spectrum claiming it as their own to Chicago's very own neighborhoods, in a constant state of real estate and development flux. Maybe all this talk of change is more reality than rhetoric after all.

Take the neighborhood home of the *CS Interiors* office—River North—which just won't stop! Last issue, we did a price-tag tour through the high-end design shops of the district. And already, there are

two brand-new showrooms and a furniture-as-art studio to jump up and down about. We're talking major openings, like the first Maxalto to hit the United States—B&B Italia's Antonio Citterio's flawless collection. Florense, a 5,000-square-foot homage to South America's largest high-end furniture manufacturer, adds a stylish eco-component to the burgeoning scene. Then there's Kathy Taslitz's beautiful new space. One of our favorite interior designers, she recently switched gears in order to concentrate on her emotionally charged line of sculptural furniture. Her studio, which presents her entire collection, is an unintentional, humble ode to her growth and talent. Really, she's that good.

Unintentionally, we've honed in on designers who aren't just open to change in this issue: They embrace it, and then kick its butt. Lukas Machnik—a devout minimalist—takes on an historical Lincoln Park Victorian. He's a young, jet-setting party guy; it's a family home where two young children live and play. He favors stark white, monochromatic black and gray—sometimes a pop of bright orange—but this project is a soothing sea of pale blues and beiges. It's also one of the most beautiful family homes I've ever seen.

There's a brand-new crop of photographers pushing limits, and a batch of new creative collectives who are changing the way we think about design. Even Alessandra Branca, one of the most respected names in the industry, tickled an itch to do something new.

For a story about two of the latest new darlings of design, Lisa Cregan talks to Jordana Joseph and Anne Coyle. They both designed apartments on the smallish side but managed to make a huge impact with fiercely individual approaches to style. Killer wallpaper in a foyer. Knockout art in the powder room. And my favorite part of the story, Joseph ended up marrying the guy she designed the apartment for. So, yes, maybe anything is possible when you're open to change! MMCEWEN@MODERNLUXURY.COM





FAMILY STYLE

Minimalist designer Lukas Machnik moves outside his clean-lined comfort zone to create the ultimate family home

BY MEGHAN MCEWEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY SOLURI

The first thing you notice when walking through the entryway of the former sky-blue Swedish Consulate is *Crashing Cars*, a cerebral-looking abstract piece of minimal art—black paint on white canvas—hanging at the end of the open hallway. Painted (and cleverly named) by the homeowners' four-year-old son then displayed in an oversized gilt gold frame, it serves as the perfect analogy for the rest of the home: contemporary brushstrokes inside a more traditional framework, interwoven with details both surprising and deeply meaningful.

A family home—in a sky-blue corner Victorian in Lincoln Park, no less—is not the stuff of minimalist Lukas Machnik's regular workload. But what initially seems like a striking contradiction eventually settles into a symbiotic balance of give and take, old and new, subdued and simultaneously ballsy. After all, Machnik, a secret softie behind all that monochromatic black and steely gray, is a sucker for a good story.

And with two-plus years (and still counting) of working with the homeowners—an attorney husband and a former art dealer wife—there are plenty of stories to go around. After a near-gut job (which included ripping out "hideous" Spanish tile throughout), Machnik helped pick out every single piece of furniture in the house—from the sitting room showstopper, a luscious crème leather chaise, down to the Tord Boontje art book strategically placed on an antique drink cart with smoked glass. "It's more than just acquiring things," insists Machnik, who's constantly picking up trinkets and design accessories for the house during his travels. "They're not just empty objects in a house; everything has been carefully selected. It's all about the details." That they cycled through 10 different coffee tables for the sitting room is just one example of the painstaking care given to each decision. Finally, they settled on a custom

Often visited from exotic birds from the neighboring Lincoln Park Zoo, the sprawling outdoor space is as stylish as it is soothing. The Domino Table by Joan Casas i Ortinez is set with mismatched china Machnik bought from antique stores around the city.



coffee table with gold leaf finishing pulled from the gold in the Serge Mouille light fixture—a barely noticeable speck in the bend of the flying, off-kilter arms that angle above the room like a giant insect.

Initially, says Machnik, the owners wanted an elegant, very traditional home, but he credits their willingness and an adventurous spirit with the final, anything-but-typical results. The reigning aesthetic is part French antique, part mid-century and part flea-market find, like the old bell from a Chicago hotel or the stunning gilt double-door brass fireplace from a chateau in France. "Every designer I love is in this house," he adds, wistfully, dragging on a Parliament cigarette. Count them: Philippe Starck, Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, Verner Panton, Bertioia, Serge Mouille, Herman Miller, Mies van der Rohe.

Of course, anyone with money can buy pedigree. Rather, it's the way everything is put together—almost un-together—that makes the 5,000-square-foot home sing. A neutral palette of soft beiges and light blues—"earth and water"—wash over the home evenly, so everything is interchangeable, easily moved, mixed and matched to fit the homeowners' busy lifestyles—from entertaining friends to hosting raucous play groups. The flow and openness help, too. "You sit in one room and see the other rooms, always seeing something new. Your eye is always traveling, exploring new things in the home," says the designer. "It's very layered and textured. A traditional living room layout wasn't an option. It had to feel and read like an art installation."

Left: Three Venini crystal chandeliers hang over the kitchen island. The silhouettes are of the owner as a child and her father. **Below:** Machnik designed the cabana to serve as a private, glam outdoor living room, with polished-chrome and Lucite chandelier (Lightology). **Opposite page:** The texture of the Parisian console table, partly covered in exotic skin, and the "Destroy" Rosenthal vase pull out the pattern of the cracked earth in the self-portrait by Julia Christe.









That's the upside of a long project. "It gets more personal. They're not just clients," he says. Every piece of furniture has a story, a memory attached. There's the real farm table in the dining room—originally a fixture at Jayson Home & Garden that was covered with pottery. "We convinced them to let us buy it," Machnik recalls. "When we find something, we just look at each other, knowing it's coming home with us. We're on the same wavelength, finishing each other's sentences. It's almost scary."

And because of the close client-designer relationship, the highly curated space reveals itself with the knowing innuendo of good friends—a wink and nod here, a funny story there. The mirrored "Me" and "You" tables by Flos are an inside joke—albeit with a punch line that doesn't come at the expense of style. Even the kids are in on it. The masked jester lamp sets the tone of the room with a smirk. The kids call the lamp "Lukas with fabulous shoes." The Jeff Koons ceramic dog vase in the kitchen was dubbed "Miffy" the minute it was brought home, like a brand-new puppy. Machnik, who goes over to the house for some kid time when he's having a bad day, seems genuinely smitten with his clients-cum-adopted family. He's even throwing a big bash there this summer, capitalizing on the glam outdoor living space he decorated and landscaped: a little slice of the Hamptons in Chicago.

Perhaps most importantly, at least for the foursome that lives there, it's a family home with all the requisite creature comforts: a huge basement playroom with chalkboard walls, comfortable designer furniture that's not afraid of being used, and a kitchen that's as kid-friendly as it is luxe (to the tune of three crystal chandeliers hanging over the long center island). "I wanted it to be very stylish and very homey, without making it look shabby-chic," says Machnik. "The home doesn't have arrogance. It has a sense of humor." ■

"The home doesn't have arrogance. It has a sense of humor," says Machnik.

Opposite page: The scrumptious Barcelona day bed by Mies van der Rohe gives the front room a sexy parlor feel. Above left: Designer Lukas Machnik in white Dolce & Gabbana. Wallpaper by Cole & Sons, and Lorin chair by Douglas Levine for Bright. Above right: The oversized, leaning mirror from Luminaire makes the room appear bigger. Squat Thomas chairs from Flexform are the perfect contrast to the mirrored Flos tables and antique chair from the Paris flea market at Jayson Home & Garden.