



**EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN: MANHATTAN**

# WORLDS ABOVE

**Design Determination** takes interiors to lofty new heights

**S**tepping out of the elevator into the foyer of architect and designer TC Chou's latest Manhattan masterpiece—a visual feast of color, light, art, and impeccable finishings—wraps visitors in the warm embrace of design at its height, figuratively and literally. A bird's-eye view of Central Park, rolled out below like a welcome mat and framed by wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling windows, first captures the eye in this Steinway Tower luxury perch. Chou, who served as a paratrooper during mandatory military service in his native Taiwan, revels in its distracting allure.

"It's reminiscent of peacefully floating above

the earth," he says. "That sense of serenity, color, and movement is something we've tried to capture throughout the space."

Just one entry in a global portfolio of luxury commercial and residential projects, the Steinway Tower residence is destined to be a standout. Founded a decade ago by Chou and his partner, Jerry Hsu (who helms the firm's Asia office while Chou manages their headquarters in New York), award-winning firm Design Determination has captured an international clientele seeking the firm's trademark marriage of culture and art.

"Creatively, we embrace a very forward-thinking and progressive aesthetic," says Chou, whose team

has garnered a reputation for exceeding even the most discerning expectations. "We love to explore color and texture in new ways, but the direction we take always starts with the client and what they envision for the space."

### Finding Balance

At Steinway Tower, creative direction was defined early on by both the clients' desire for a larger family pied-à-terre and Design Determination's careful curation of the clients' extensive art collection. The inspiration anchoring it all: a sofa.

An iconic cornerstone of the Roche Bobois brand for more than 50 years, the Mah Jong Sofa takes centerstage in the open-concept living and dining area. In an elegant union of Chou's classic-meets-contemporary and East-meets-West design sensibility, the sofa features a luxe tapestry of patterns in blues, grays, and greens from Kenzō Takada's signature fabric collection, which beautifully echoes monumental paintings by Eddie Martinez and Donna Huanca that adorn the east and west walls of the expansive space.

"It is just so perfectly suited to what we wanted to achieve, it was impossible not to be inspired by it," Chou laughs. "We truly curated the artwork and color palette around this incredible piece."

With a curatorial eye, Chou is a thoughtful steward of the precious personal objects and artworks his clients often bring to a design. The floor-through apartment's south-facing rooms, including the primary bedroom, study, and kitchen, feature jaw-dropping vistas of the New York skyline (the Empire State Building features prominently). An enviable tableau of custom fixtures and finishings, as well as Roche Bobois furniture chosen for the space, blend seamlessly with Chou's perfectly assembled mix of family pieces.

"Getting the balance right is about being in sync with the client," he says. "So much depends on knowing your client well and aligning with them aesthetically. We've achieved that here, and it's been a privilege to work in this incredible space floating above Manhattan."

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**1.** Brimming with the clients' extensive art collection, a vantage point from Steinway Tower provides a bird's-eye view of Central Park.

**2.** A tufted leather armchair sits between a sleek side table and vibrant modern artwork.

**3.** A cool blue, gray, and white color palette is artfully disrupted by key points of orange and red.

**4.** Abundant natural light warms this serene bedroom.

**5.** The color story of Roche Bobois' iconic Mah Jong Sofa ties into archetypal paintings by Eddie Martinez and Donna Huanca that can be found throughout the loft.

**6.** Cofounders TC Chou (right) and Jerry Hsu.