

Decorator Show House

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“There is something in it for everyone”, says Diantha Nype, Director of Public Relations for the Kips Bay Boys’ Club. Indeed, her institution – a charity organization devoted to enhance the quality of life of deprived young people in Southeast Bronx – developed a formula which is both an original approach to charity fund-raising and an innovative concept in merchandising home furnishings.

DECORATOR SHOW HOUSE

Every year since 1973, the Club has been taking over one New York townhouse for four months, organizing its redecoration and opening it for public viewing. Except for the general public, who pays an admission fee, everything else works strictly on quid pro quo. For the disposal of the house, the owners get it renovated free of charge. For their gratuitous work, the interior designers get public exposure and a chance to deploy their talents unhampered by clients’ impositions. For the loan of home furnishings, the manufacturers get an opportunity to exhibit their products in magnificent surroundings, to participate in the preview auction attended by a thousand selected guests, and to sell off exhibits to visitors during the three months’ viewing period which usually draws in about 25,000 people. The public finally gets a visual lecture in top interior decorating and an inside view of significant private residences that are normally not accessible.

Text by Beatrice Feisst

- Deutsche Version siehe “Übersetzungen”
- Version française voir «Traductions»
- Versione italiana vedasi «Traduzioni»

A count's mansion

Located in the "Millionaire's Row" on Fifth Avenue overlooking Central Park, the 1983 Show House offers a glimpse of townhouse living at the turn of the century on one of New York's finest residential blocks. Built in 1903 as a wedding present from General McCook to his daughter, the Countess de Heredia of France, the house is fitted with Louis XVI boiseries, original Louis XV doors imported from France and 18th century mantelpieces. Together with a beamed hand-painted ceiling copied from an old English library and an Italian Renaissance marble fireplace, they provided an appropriate background for some of the scenes shot in the late 1930s for the film "Gone With The Wind". Stanford White, a famous turn-of-the-century New York architect who designed the building, was described as "as much an interpreter of an age as he was an originator". The house at 973 Fifth Avenue still reflects the eclectic taste for European artifacts, and fashions that prevailed among the late robber barons whose time he interpreted.

A designer's challenge

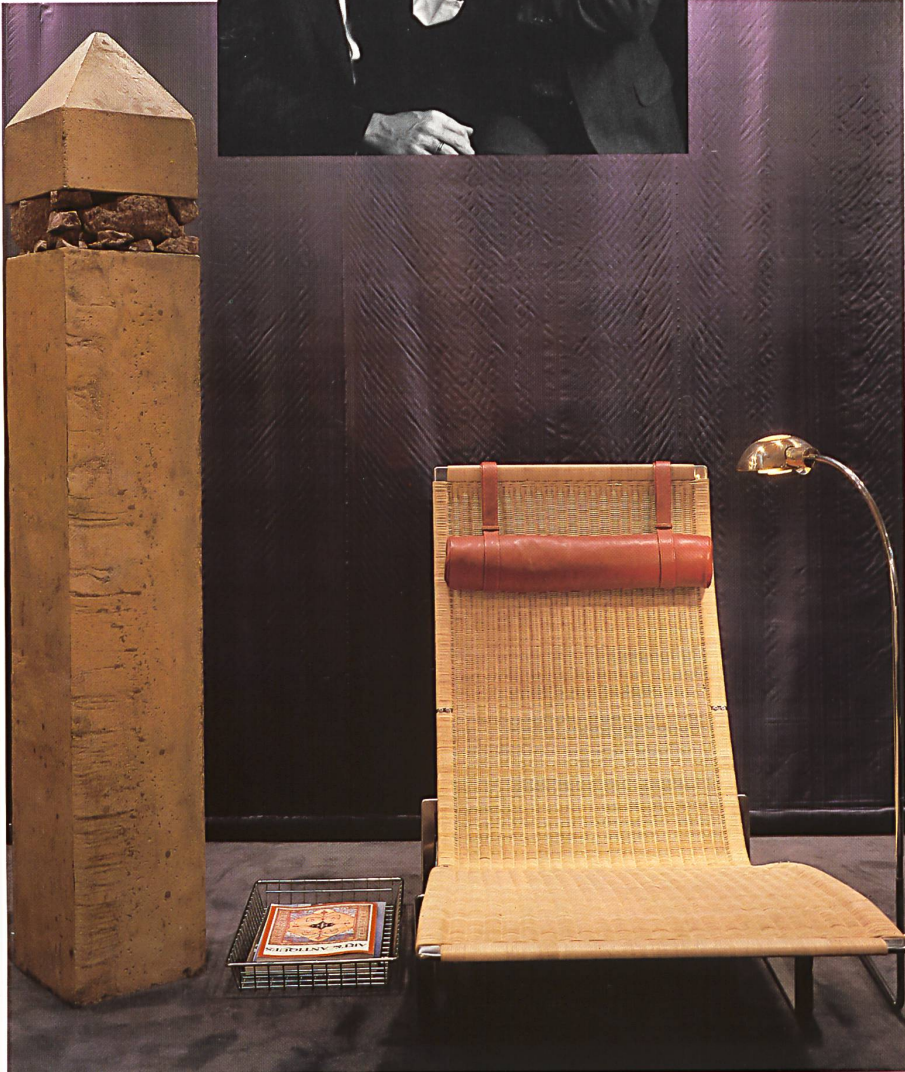
As part of the project, the Kips Bay Designers' Committee each year selects from among the many applicants 18 interior designers. Nominations always include some top names, some up and coming, and some young talents, offering the latter a unique chance at public recognition. A nominated designer assumes full responsibility for the room allocated to him. He designs the setting, organizes and supervises the work, buys or borrows from home furnishing suppliers rugs, curtains, upholstery fabrics, lamps and furniture. All past and present participants interviewed consider the show house concept a challenge to their creative talents, and a great opportunity to launch new products, to create looks and visualize trends in exclusive interior decoration.

A show house morning room designed by Scruggs/Myers. Sheer voile and tiny basketweave from Zumsteg's cotton collection.





Allen Scruggs
and Douglas Myers



Scruggs/Myers and Associates: ...the best of all worlds

Designer Allen Scruggs says of one of his firm's rooms for a decorator show house: "The design is contemporary with classic overtones. Special attributes are master-crafted furnishings, choice materials, rare accessories, unmistakable luxury. In brief, the best of all worlds." Among these bests he introduced sheer voiles, geometric basketweaves and silk chintzes from Zumsteg of Switzerland. The one-time associate editor of *House & Garden* considers the quality of Zumsteg fabrics superb and the coloration absolutely genial. He has been using the firm's silks in a couture-like manner, as fashionable highlights of an interior.

Allen Scruggs and Douglas Myers set up shop in 1976 and recently moved from New Jersey to a loft in New York's Chelsea area. Their academic schooling focused on art and interior design. Past experiences include designing of theater sets, furniture and textiles as well as journalism and lecturing. Both did displays and model rooms for department stores. Scruggs and Myers have an affinity for luxurious interiors and very modern concepts. They are extremely versatile in their creative work for private residences and corporate settings. Their interior designs have been widely publicized by national magazines.



Oriental glazed silk chintzes and cotton matelassé from Zumsteg shown in settings designed by Scruggs/Myers.



Robert Metzger

Robert Metzger **Interiors:** **...a commitment to quality**

A native New Yorker who majored in business administration at New York University and later graduated from the New York School of Interior Design, Robert Metzger's ambition was to own an antique shop. However, blessed with an innate flair for colour and line, he almost inevitably ended up owning one of the City's top design studios. The former investment analyst and buyer of antiques, who likes things "to look rich and be rich", creates looks of great opulence that are neither flashy nor obvious. Planning a room, he always starts with the prints, adding textures, then solids and finally small geometrics. A witness to this successful formula is

the library of this year's show house, which he converted into a multifunction room, combining traditional values with modern needs.

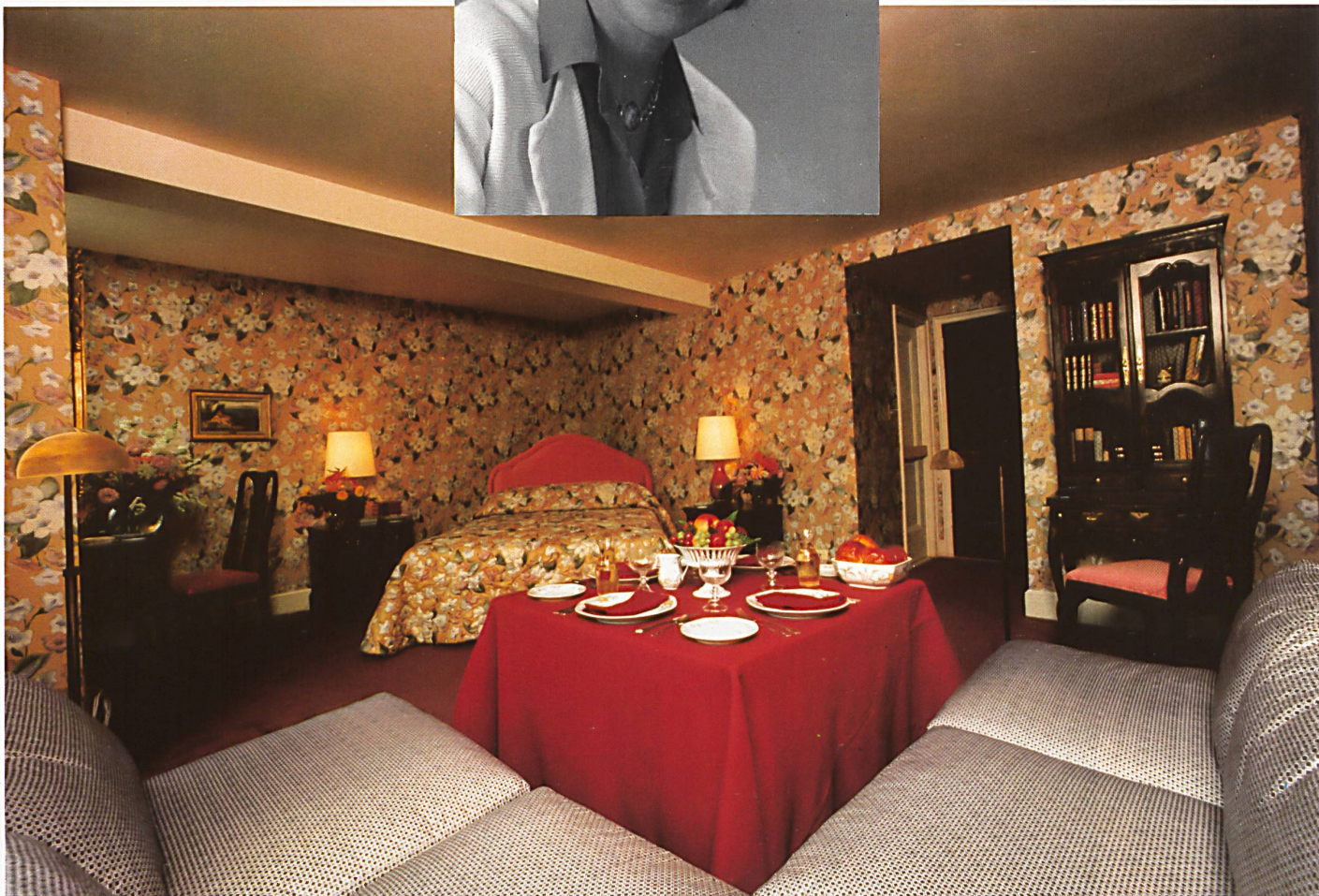
Robert Metzger's approach to interior design is a total commitment to quality. He has a special liking for heavy textures and rich finishes. When the Swiss fabric house Zumsteg opened their showroom in New York in 1976, he found his preferences reflected in their matelassés, their tone-on-tone raised geometrics and their glazed chintzes. He has been using them ever since. To Robert Metzger, who re-designs about ten major houses a year, Zumsteg fabrics have a wonderful feel of quality and understated richness, making them eminently suitable for the sophisticated taste that hires his services.

A pair of Directoire bergères covered in solid matelassé-textured cotton from Zumsteg. Room designed by Robert Metzger.





Moya Manassero



Zumsteg's "Capucines" design - a multihued flower print in delicate water colours on cotton chintz and matching wallpaper. Room designed by Moya Manassero for The Westbury Hotel, New York. Photos Jon Naar.

Corrigan Designs Inc.: ...an understanding of traditional

Another connoisseur of Swiss fabrics is Moya Manassero, the Irish designer who came to New York in 1974 and one year later started her own business. Corrigan Designs Inc. provide full service, from the design concept, to architectural detailing, construction and installation. 95% of their work are commercial interiors, among them resort hotels in the Bahamas and the Bermudas and such exclusive hostelleries as the Westbury, the Pierre and the new Plaza Athenée in New York.

A former student of art and textile design, Miss Manassero's signature articulates her special understanding of traditional design elements. In her opinion, the trend in interior decoration in America is shifting from the sleek lines and stark moods of contemporary design back to neo-classics and Pompeian colours. Literally she says: "The American market is going right back to traditional, updated of course and individually interpreted. I think that Zumsteg fabrics fit very well into this market because they have their own interpretation of elegant traditional design. They are not just reprints of 18th or 19th century English or French patterns. Zumsteg are



actually creating something new while keeping to the old strictures and the old values. Whereas I find that many of the cotton designs available on the market today are too casual for some of the work we do, I feel very comfortable using a Zumsteg cotton in sophisticated and even in traditional surroundings. They blend extremely well with all types of architecture, and the quality of the design and the quality of the colours are exceptional."

