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# FURNIT

A Manhattan apartment by Kelatan/MacDonald Studio sheds traditional boundaries of domestic space.



URE INTO FORM

By Sarah Amelar

"domestic spaces," as the architects dub them, are simultaneously fixed and flexible. Both are sited permanently in this interior landscape, yet their character and function change with the positions of their moving parts. In the guest bath, for example, a wavy hinged door encloses either the shower or the toilet and sink, or serves as a wall—depending on the level of privacy desired.

The cylindrical built elements—part wall, part furniture, part plumbing fixture—appear both dynamic and rooted in place. The frosted fiberglass, a modified acrylic resin, does not stop abruptly where each structure meets the ground, but extends along the floor, as if flowing around the base and affirming its position. Equally dynamic is the undulant quality of the molded surfaces, with the occasional use of their fronts, backs, tops, and bottoms.

Vibrant colors and muscular forms contribute to the fluid dynamism of the space. As a result, the setting is easier to envision as a corporate entertainment space

or showroom than as a dwelling. The design, however, departs purposefully from commonplace domesticity. With the conscious blending of forms and functions, the user has to "reinvert the program—it's no longer fixed and typical," explains MacDonald. Indeed, as you lie in bed with water sloshing near your head, these ambiguous conditions alter the spirit of everyday activity.

Steel-framed  
cylindrical guest room  
partly horizontally to  
become dining table.



Streamlined  
curves with  
Australian lacquer  
glue flows into  
bathroom vanity  
below translucent  
glass partition.  
A kitchen counter  
the left culminates  
in a long table  
on wheels.

The bathroom and bed in the Ost/Kuttner Apartments are melded into a single, curvaceous fiberglass form. Just beyond the pillows, a clear glass partition, like a dam, holds back the tub's flow of water. "We wanted to rethink the standard elements of everyday domesticity—the generic kitchen sink, bathtub, and bed," says Partner Susan Kolatan of Kolatan (MacDonald), the architect of this 1,600-square-foot loftlike residence, a winner of a 1997 Progressive Architecture Award (*Architecture*, January 1997, pages 100-103).

In combining two adjacent apartments on Manhattan's Upper West Side, Kolatan and Partner William MacDonald created a landscape of hybrid forms that replace

traditional room partitions and furnishings. Through computer modeling, the architects compiled a database of sectional profiles of fixtures and furniture, electronically mapped their similarities, and selectively merged them to create what Kolatan calls "entirely new animals." An aluminum-skinned armoire, for example, doubles as a bedroom wall that flows into the bathroom vanity.

The project's programmatic requirements were particularly well-suited to multifunctional components and fluid, noncellular space. The clients, German artist-filmmaker Biotrix Ost and businessman Ludwig Kuttner, needed a setting that could serve as a pied-à-terre, accommodate

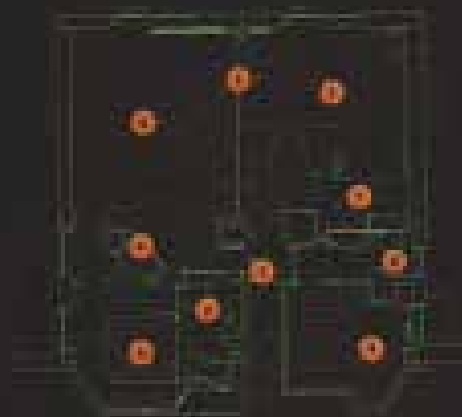




Reinforced fiberglass light fixtures (left) and shower (left to right) were fabricated to cut into small openings for the building's bright, visible. Fiberglass panels conceal service ducts for pipes and plumbing fixtures.



Low-voltage electrical system (left) and shower (center) are visible through the apartment's curved, metallic wall.



- entry area
- main bathroom
- main bedroom
- entrance/bedroom wall
- living area
- pivoting partition
- kitchen
- guest bathroom
- guest bedroom

#### 311, KUTNER APARTMENTS, NEW YORK CITY

**CLIENTS:** Queens, City and Ludwig Kutner **ARCHITECT:** Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, New York City—Susan Rotman, William MacDonald (principals-in-charge), Rich Schonberger (project architect); Rebecca Carpenter, Natasha Cunningham, Brown Deak, Mark Holts, Philip Polingre, Patricia Walsh (design team) **ENGINEER:** Dew Azzop & Partners (structural) **CONTRACTORS:** Alvin Cooke, Migrant Studio (metalwork); Seal Reinforced Fiberglass (fiberglass); ATL43 Industries (movable partitions and concrete); John Deegan (electrical and plumbing); Hoffman Floor Covering (paper wall and floor system) **INTERIORS CONTRACTOR:** Roundhouse Design International **2011 Architectural Record "Best of Year"** recipient **INTERIOR DESIGN:** Michael Moore



*Glass shelves in kitchen are flanked by curved backs of Rothman's fiberglass dinner chair and stool.*

a sit-down dinner for 14 or a corporate cocktail party, or function as independent units for separate groups of overnight guests. The original pair of apartments, which form a square with windows on three sides, needed to become, as the architect put it, "more than one, less than two."

Kolatan/MacDonald replaced the original party wall dividing the two apartments with movable, steel-framed cement-board panels. Staggered to either side of this center-line stand two prism-colored, rolled-flangeless structures: the sculptural core of the main bedroom/bathroom and of the kitchen/guest bath. These composite

*Glass partition separates bed from flow of hot water behind it. Cabinet bodies in brushed metal and brass doors to children's study and electronic work.*

