

INTERIOR DESIGN



BELMONT FREEMAN ARCHITECTS
ATKINSON KOVEN FEINBERG ENGINEERS
ANN KALE ASSOCIATES

Architect Belmont Freeman combines and subtly divides two floors for a work/live arrangement in lower Manhattan.



Doubled Up

SPACES FOR WORKING and living are often glommed together without adequate differentiation. In the course of renovating a pair of 1,500-sq.-ft. floors in a lower Manhattan building, Belmont Freeman emphasized the vertical separation of

the two spaces and developed a material palette to distinguish but also join them. The client is an artist as well as founder and director of a not-for-profit organization that pro-

vides arts education for homeless children and "at risk" high school students.

Working with associates Alane Truitt and Sangho Park, Freeman developed an elegant yet straightforward environment. "Our client wanted a space that was simple and serene," Freeman says. "We became fascinated with how much we could do with a few architectural gestures." Surfaces were made of white plaster, concrete, stainless steel, or maple; this austere setting was then populated with the client's impressive collection of vintage mid-century furnishings. Floors on the studio level are concrete; on the living level, concrete was reserved for kitchen and bath areas while the rest of the floor is a more cozy maple. Despite the obviously minimal approach, there was not a lot of effort to rarefy the setting by, for →



Top: The residence and studio occupy two levels of a renovated commercial building on lower Broadway. The ledge between floors guided the client's decision to use the upper level as a living space; it conceals the street to emphasize the distant, "ethereal" views of treetops, City Hall Park, and the Brooklyn Bridge. The lower level is more visually connected to the busy streetscape below.

LIGHTING DESIGNER: **ANN KALE**. TRACK LIGHTS: **LIGHTOLIER**. MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL ENGINEER: **ATKINSON KOVEN FEINBERG**. STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: **ROSS DALLAND**. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: **BRYAN DEUITCH**.

Left: A steep ship's ladder connects the two levels while sustaining a significant transition between them. Cold rolled steel doors have been finished with automotive wax.

Opposite: Sliding partitions of gypsum board and translucent glass allow for spatial rearrangement. The hanging lamps, designed by William Lescaze, were salvaged from a 1940s public school in Brooklyn. Radiators were removed, sandblasted, and sprayed with mollen zinc. The credenza was designed by Paul McCobb; tables and desk chair are by Charles and Ray Eames; chairs are from Pascoe.

WINDOWS: **TISCHLER UND SOHN**.

PHOTOGRAPHY: **CHRISTOPHER WESNOFSKE**





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example, concealing light switches and electrical outlets.

In order to take advantage of abundant daylight and impressive views to City Hall Park and the Brooklyn Bridge, Freeman held interior partitions away from perimeter walls. On the living level, partitions and passages were kept to a height of seven feet, providing an intimacy of scale close to the height of the standing body. On the lower level, partitions of gypsum board and translucent glass roll to create various spatial arrangements, from a completely open space to a set of more private, enclosed rooms.

Lighting further emphasizes the distinction between the levels. The studio has what Freeman calls "business-like" illumination: track lighting and a group of pendant lamps designed by William Lescaze. On the upper floor, lighting is more indirect. Halogen lamps bathe the long white wall, fluorescent kitchen lighting was tucked into a recessed slot, and there is a mix of standing and table-top lamps.

Although there was plenty of room to introduce a more conventional staircase, Freeman opted to attenuate the connection between floors with a ship's ladder. Pitched at 75 degrees, the ladder detaches the two →

Left: The upper level consists of a living area, kitchen, and two bedrooms. The owner's collection of mid-century furniture includes a George Nelson daybed, table, and cabinet; a Harry Bertoia child's chair; Eames shell chairs and table; and a Gio Ponti lamp. The Werner Panton chairs are made of nickel rod frame with white poplin sling.







levels it joins and makes passage between them into a somewhat challenging climb. This suited the client's wishes perfectly; in his words: "I didn't want to carve a path of desire between my studio and home. I wanted going from one space to the other to be a deliberate and transitional act."

—Henry Urbach

Opposite: The kitchen countertop is a long maple box with drawers. Pantry, coat closet, and a small bathroom are behind the wood doors. The upper portion of the backsplash is a velvety stainless steel.

REFRIGERATOR: **TRAUlsen**. CABINETRY: **TATCO MILLWORK**. STAINLESS STEEL COUNTERTOPS: **NORRIS METALS**. STAINLESS STEEL APPLIANCES: **MIELE**.

*Above: Beyond the wash area is a shower/wet room and stainless steel toilet (from a prison fixture supplier); this room has a 2-in.-thick cedar ceiling. The sink is cantilevered on steel braces. In the distance, next to the Nelson daybed, is a tubular steel lamp with spun aluminum shade by *Greta Magnusson Grossman*.*



UPPER LEVEL



LOWER LEVEL

- 1 ENTRY
- 2 SHIP'S LADDER
- 3 OFFICE
- 4 STUDIO
- 5 MECHANICAL
- 6 STORAGE
- 7 PANTRY
- 8 MASTER BEDROOM
- 9 LIVING
- 10 BEDROOM
- 11 KITCHEN

