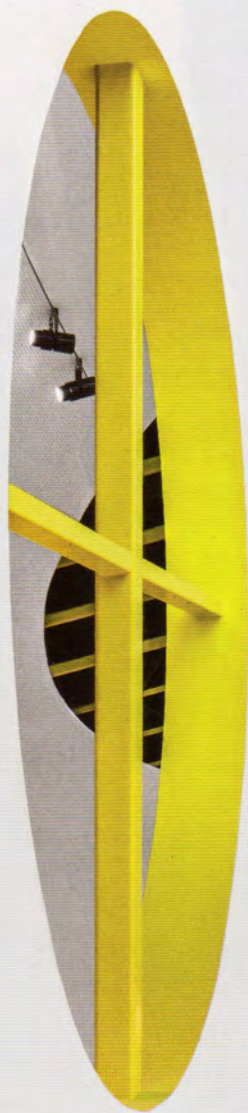
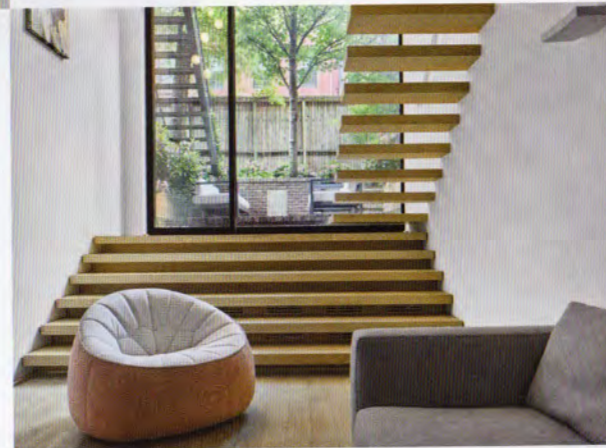
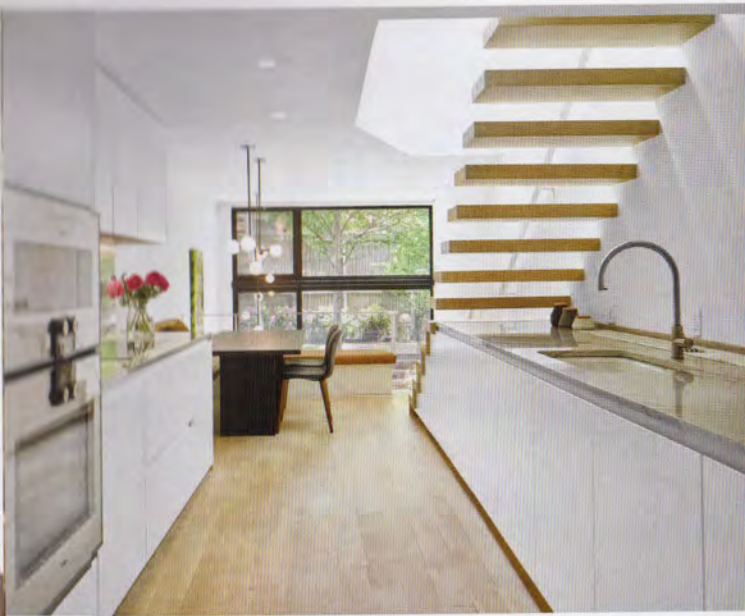


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De-spec

MEATPACKING TRIPLEX, NEW YORK

The name De-spec, an abbreviation of the term “de-speculative,” announces the New York multidisciplinary firm’s critique of speculative construction, particularly housing developments in which generic homes are built with custom-home pricing. Instead, founder Farnaz Mansuri favors an utterly bespoke approach that centers the client and site.

Mansuri had already updated political consultant Bernard Whitman and husband Constantin Mitides’s townhouse, set on the ground floor and basement level of a 1930 apartment building, when the flat upstairs became available, offering an opportunity to transform the spaces, each just 12 feet wide, into an airy triplex. The three floors shared a wall of glass opening to the building’s communal garden but the rest of the house was gloomy. By replacing the newly acquired apartment’s roof with an angular skylight, daylight could permeate throughout. Mansuri also cleverly opened things up another way, slicing nine feet off the garden-facing end of the street-level floor plate to allow light to suffuse the lower spaces and to create a connection between the three levels at the landing—proving that sacrificing a few feet can be the key to gaining something much grander. An open white-oak staircase links the formerly disjointed levels, rising from the now airy below-grade living room through the second-level kitchen and dining areas up to the master suite on top, creating an overlay of circulation and habitable spaces.

Completed 2017
1320 square feet

Clockwise from top left: Two dark apartments were united to form a skylit triplex with white-oak floors. The exterior staircase is painted steel. A floating walkway leads to the master bedroom door framed in oak. In the below-grade living room, a Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance chair sits in front of white-oak stairs that lead up to the communal garden.

PROJECT TEAM FARNAZ MANSURI; TOM SHEA; JONATHAN PAKAKI; AZHAR KOTADIA
KEY CONSULTANT CONNOLLY ENGINEERING
PHOTOGRAPHY FRANK OUDEMAN
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