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RESIDENTIAL SURGERY 8 IN NEW YORK CITY

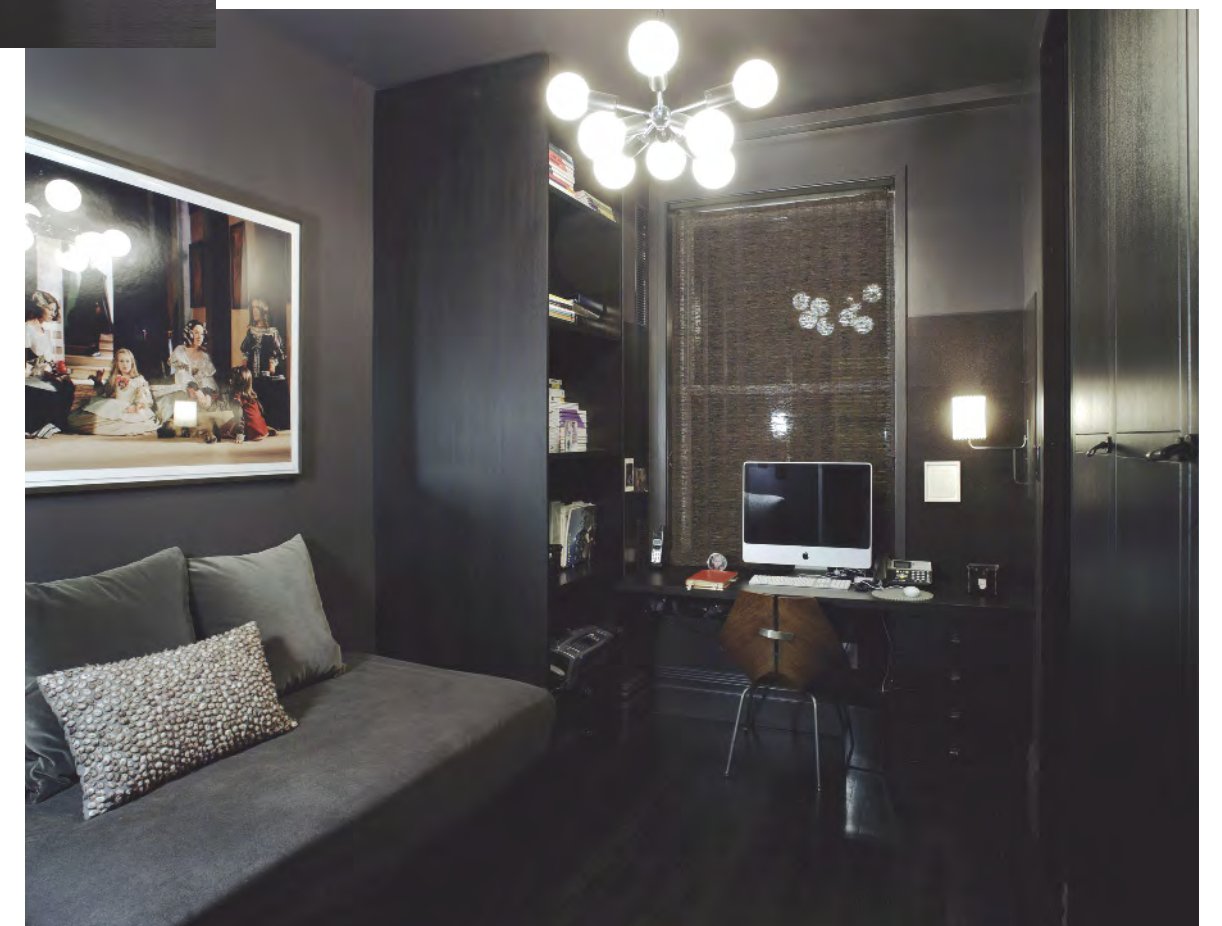
They call it the Residential Surgery: it entails the restructuring, renovation and furnishing of a series of apartments in and around New York City.

The main intervention is aimed at creating logical circulation through the spaces based on the residents' lifestyle. Surgery 8 is a New York apartment for a family with three children recently overhauled in that vein by De-spec, headed by Farnaz Mansuri.



text: Robyn Prince
photos: Frank Oudeman

Top of page: the dining room which flows into the living area in De-spec's Surgery 8 project in New York. The designers' method centres on the creation of a new, unique experience. Above the sofa, a work by Eve Sussman. The artwork on the left is by Chris Gentile and, on the right, by Anne Collier. **Above:** left, Farnaz Mansuri, the founder and lead designer at De-spec. She is a member of the American Institute of Architects, as well as being on the board of the Children's Theatre Company and an active member of the Baha'i community. **Next:** lead designer Tom Shea. **Other members of the design team** are Alev Demerli for interior decoration, Michael Lau for the creation of rendering and web pages, Minako Kashiwabara, designer and construction detail consultant, Ghislaine Ng office manager, and Georgina Rossell for business development. **Top right:** the dining room and below that, the study with a photo by Eve Sussman.



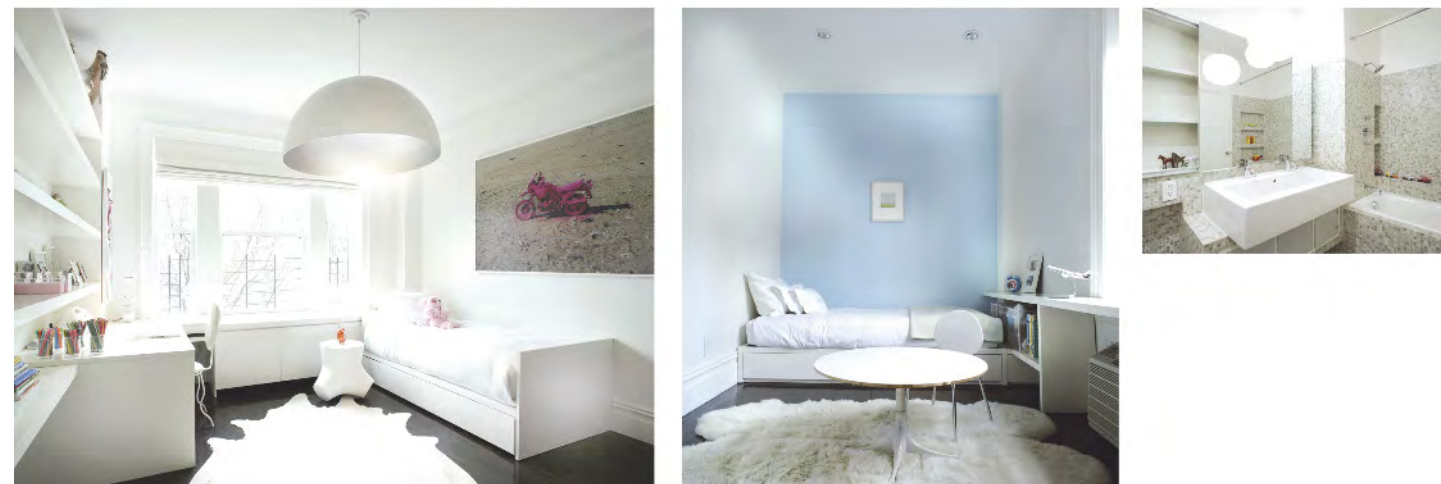
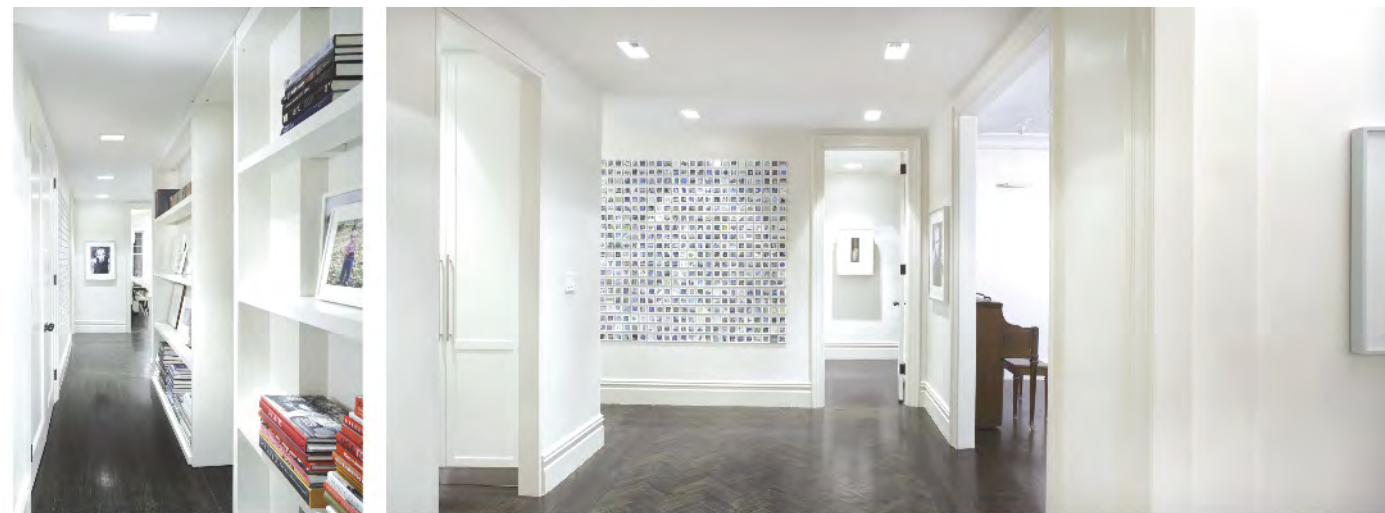
De-spec, with headquarters in the heart of New York's Chelsea Art District, was established by Farnaz Manuri in 2002. The studio comprises a relatively small team of experts who have gained experience in different parts of the world in the fields of architecture and interior design. Four architects and designers work there, as well as a design librarian and a graphic designer, addressing an entirely different approach to the design idea. Apart from residential undertakings, they specialise in retail, medi-spa and hospitality projects.

Instead of taking an objectified architectural approach to a specific problem, they prefer to 'choreograph' rooms and thus achieve the desired experience of the space.

Farnaz: "We do not design an object or 'container' from the bird's eye view, we explore the design from within. By applying that 'inside-out' approach, we reach the essence of the space and the atmosphere it emanates. It means that design is not an 'overlay', but an interactive totality between designers and clients."

The name 'De-spec' is derived from the word de-speculative – the complete opposite to speculative programming aimed at reaching for an ideal of universal space which Farnaz believes all too often results in generic solutions.

"We exercise 'de-speculating' to most of our projects, as a form of de-constructivism. We take ideas



The photos give an impression of how De-spec has transformed the rooms in an old apartment in New York's Chelsea into a series of multi-functional spaces which flow together in logical fashion. In order to create a sense of tranquillity, the designers opted for a colour palette of whites. The artworks, carefully chosen and with input from Farnaz Mansuri, are intended to accentuate the flow and interaction between the various spaces. Although the clients required quite a number of rooms, the logical transition from one space to another means that there is nowhere a cramped impression. The artwork in the corridor is by Guy Limone. In the photo top right, a work by Sam Samore.

of radical Functionalism to provide our clients with intelligent, innovative and exciting solutions." Surgery 8 is the renovation of an old apartment for a family with three children. The idea was to create four bedrooms, a living room, study plus library, kitchen and dining area within the original framework. In addition, sufficient wall space was required for the owners' artworks. The 'surgery' entailed the reconfiguration of the architectural plan to meet those requirements. Walls were repositioned ingeniously to avoid a feeling of cramped spaces and, accordingly, rooms have acquired a multi-functional character and now flow together: for example, the hallway also doubles as a library. For visual tranquillity, the colour scheme has been reduced to varying shades of white. The living and dining room have been designed with a minimum of furniture, while the artworks on the walls reflect the geometry of the spaces. The art was chosen by the clients with input from Farnaz, the idea being to rotate the artworks and objects at regular intervals.