



A quiet tactility infuses Garrett Carter's New York apartment, where hand-applied plaster walls and wall-to-wall wool carpeting from Vanden-Loom Carpet create a serene backdrop for the living room. The fireplace was painted brick before Carter refinished it in plaster of paris; above it hangs a photograph found at Michael Dawkins Home and artwork by Carter's aunt, Heather Becker. OPPOSITE: The curtain fabric, which Carter purchased at Mood in the Garment District, is actually leftover material from The Row.



AN EXPERT EYE FOR SUBTLY STATEMENT-MAKING FINISHES—AND A BIT OF LUCK ON NEW YORK CITY SIDEWALKS—HAS TRANSFORMED DESIGNER GARRETT CARTER'S 400-SQUARE-FOOT UPPER EAST SIDE APARTMENT INTO AN AIRY PERCH THAT FEELS WORLDS AWAY FROM THE CITY BELOW.

PRODUCED BY HUDSON MOORE. WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH KING. PHOTOGRAPHED BY WILLIAM WALDRON.



A three-year renovation of a New York apartment isn't out of the ordinary. But a three-year, purely cosmetic redo of a 400-square-foot one-bedroom? That's the sort of timeline that says a lot about the fastidiousness of the person responsible. "I didn't want to rush the process," explains Garrett Carter of the slow-and-steady approach he took to updating his home on Manhattan's Upper East Side, a one bedroom with tall ceilings and gracefully curved windows of the sort that enrapture prewar aficionados. "Because the apartment is so small and narrow, I had to be very thoughtful about the selections," says the Houston native, who moved to the city to attend the New York School of Interior Design and is now a designer at Stephen Sills Associates. "It took time to find the right pieces that were the appropriate size and that looked elegant in the space."

But first, Carter had to lay the right canvas. "I knew that the surfaces were going to play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of the apartment, so I started with the walls," he says. That part alone took a total of six months—again, a seemingly exorbitant amount of time, until you realize that every square inch was painstakingly finished by Carter himself. On the living room walls, he applied layers of biscuit-beige plaster; for the bedroom, he opted for a chalky limewash, thinned out and brushed vertically over mauve paint, which "gave the space so much more depth and interest."

LEFT: A small piece of abstract art, found at Aero, hangs in between the two enormous windows overlooking East 60th Street. "I love the contrast in scale. It helps the space feel even more grand," says Carter. The chair is part of a set that he found at the Paris flea market, repainted, and reupholstered in a silk-wool fabric. ABOVE: The designer sits beneath a canvas that he painted in shades of white and cream. The armless sofa is from Castlery.



The thin wood-plank floors, with their orangey hue, presented their own challenge. Carter's solution: Simply hide them under old-fashioned wall-to-wall carpet—solid cream-colored wool in the living room, off-white jute in the bedroom—which “instantly made the apartment look larger.” Even the painted-brick fireplace received its own surface makeover, transformed into a modernist, monolithic statement piece via several coats of plaster of paris that Carter sanded down to a clean, matte finish. Mirrored cladding in the firebox provides a sleek finishing touch.

Furnishings followed the same rule: keep it simple, subtle, and sophisticated. “Everything needed to be solid—no patterns—or else the space would immediately start looking too busy and sloppy,” notes

Carter. Slowly, he assembled a collection of just-right pieces, including an impressive number of fortuitous New York sidewalk finds, like the steel garden chair picked up from an Upper East Side curb and the petite drinks table spotted outside Bloomingdale's. A pair of Ultrasuede-covered pedestals, formerly part of a Bottega Veneta window display, were repurposed as coffee table bases; they're now topped with smoky glass panels that Carter found—naturally—on the sidewalk next to his own building.

“It was well worth the wait,” Carter says of the finished apartment. At least, it's as finished as it can be: “I'm still constantly moving things around and testing them out visually to see what works where and with what,” Carter admits. “I'm never really done with the space.” For him, the reward is in the process itself.



A custom Roman shade that spans the full width of the wall makes the petite bedroom feel wider, while the midcentury German glass pendant—converted from a flush-mount—highlights the tall ceiling. The Louis XVI settee, which Carter found at Drouot auction house in Paris, was painted and re-covered in a solid vinyl. “I love the modern textile on an older shaped piece like this,” he says. Jute rug, Beauvais. OPPOSITE: To create the textured wall finish, Carter brushed Sydney Harbour's Limewash Paint in Cashmere over a solid base coat of Porcelain by Benjamin Moore.