## NEW YORK SPACES

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Local homes go Hollywood

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RENOVATION BY ANDRE JOYAU TEXT BY LISA KAHN RELIC reclaimed A furniture maker gives new life to old thingsincluding the onetime fur-coat factory he calls home



An L-shaped space connects furniture designer André Joyau's living room, left, to the dining area. A steel and walnut table, designed by Joyau, does double duty for meetings and meals.

## WHEN YOU OPEN THE DOOR, THERE'S ANOTHER DOOR-

an old, steel fire door displayed as a work of art. Stripped of its layers of peeling paint, each dent and ding displayed like a badge of courage, it hangs at the entrance to the combination gallery, workshop and home of French furniture designer André Joyau in Brooklyn's once-industrial Greenpoint section. It's a portent of the spare and unlikely beauty that lies within, coaxed by this artist out of other people's discards.

Joyau, 50, learned to be handy growing up on a farm two hours west of Paris. "When we needed something, we didn't buy it; we made it," he says. Fascinated with what he calls the "character" of old wood and metal that most people would consider junk, he now creates tables, screens and chairs from lumberyard rejects and the remnants of demolished buildings. An array of these pieces adorns the living and showroom areas in his 18,000-square-foot space. But the space itself is his biggest reclamation project.

A onetime fur-coat factory, the building was an abandoned pile when a realtor first showed it to Joyau. But he needed space, and it was enormous compared with what he was renting on Mott Street in lower Manhattan. So he took a leap of faith. "I wasn't afraid," he recalls. "I had done a lot of work on my first apartment in Paris when I was 21."

Alas, the dilapidated brick structure proved to be far more of a challenge than imagined. A pipe had exploded one winter, neighbors explained, and one side of the building had been "completely frozen over." For two years he camped out in a small corner of the building as he did many renovations.





Aged black steel was selected for the backsplash and faces of the kitchen cabinets, opposite, while white oak was used for the table and benches the designer made himself. Multi-hued neutral tiles recovered from local stone shops give the bathroom, above, a facelift.

He added a new roof, constructed interior walls, repaired metal staircases and replaced all 90 of the 12-foot by 7-foot windows. In all, it took three years to get the place "totally functioning."

Today, the top floor houses his office, showroom and one-bedroom living quarters, while the main level serves as a huge woodworking shop. Below, in what Joyau calls the English basement, a kiln and assorted metalworking equipment share space with "my reclaimed old things," he says.

In the third-floor entry area, a stately screen stands guard, created from small squares of old wood, wire-brushed and sliced into 1/2-inch squares. Nearby, three of Joyau's 11-inch-high Nara chairs—"perfect for a semi-Japanese lifestyle," he quips—surround his popular Raft table, composed of old logs fitted together "like a puzzle."

In the space beyond, a rectangular steel table top that rests on solid walnut legs does double duty for meetings and occasional meals. Nearby, a walnut room divider features clever square cutouts with lighting. Seats made from a round slab of walnut hide casters so that they can be moved.

As this artist's ingenuity and craftsmanship draw recognition, living in his workshop is no longer a financial necessity. But it's Joyau's choice.

"I don't like conventional living," he explains, "My inspiration comes at odd hours, and this way I can work when I feel like it." :