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LIVING IN STYLE

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sustainability and recycling
in **new york** loft

The assignment entailed the conversion of an existing loft in New York's Chelsea district into a roomy space where a family with three children could live comfortably. WXY Architecture and Urban Design had the job of creating space and light while adhering to eco-friendly requirements and a tight budget. It has resulted in an intelligent layout with recycled materials, and large windows giving a feeling of freedom.

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production:
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Above: the loft in Chelsea New York where the various rooms flow into one another logically, whereby the available space is put to optimum use. With the successful integration of the large window elements the designers have ensured that an abundance of light can flood into even the smallest rooms.
Below left: the partners of WXY Architecture and urban design of New York, from left to right: Mark Yocum, Claire Weisz and Layng Pew.





WXY architecture recently completed the renovation of this 4,000 square foot residential loft in the Flatiron District of Manhattan. The owner is of one of the largest recycling companies in the world. Sustainability and budget were a priority for the clients, who needed a space suited to the daily life of themselves and their three children that would also provide a dramatic place for entertaining, both professionally and socially. Wherever possible materials were to be reused or recycled.

"The goal of the design was to find within this wide and undifferentiated loft a sense of spatial definition and to find a way to make the most of the space. We strove to return the built-out loft to its original simple outlines, retrieving the desirable openness of the former industrial space and introducing sophisticated materials and details to create an engaging sequence", in the words of the architects.

To achieve this, the firm took down walls and exposed the central axis of riveted steel columns and remade the original plaster ceiling. A kitchen was designed with eco-friendly units made of glass, under a dropped ceiling panel that seems to float, to form the loft's new hub.

Material research resulted in the replacement of the ruined wood floor with one made from cement with mostly recycled content.





Above: looking from the television room to the kitchen, with the living room in the background.

Adjoining: a detail of the kitchen in which the reflecting stainless steel adds to the sense of space.



Ample lighting, illuminating the wall planes of the deep, north-facing loft was critical to its transformation. A control system provides preset lighting moods, which relate to different ways of inhabiting the space, helping reduce energy consumption. Prioritizing simple concepts like fans, wipe-off-mats, and sound absorption into the scheme supports the ongoing sustainable lifestyle of the clients.

Interacting subtly with the changing lighting, planes of varied translucency define functional areas. They enhance the volumetric impact of the space and give a sense of organization to the open plan. Some features, such as a stainless steel mesh screen and reused perforated-metal radiator covers, mediate the industrial aspects of the loft; others, especially fabric and acoustic panels, help lower noise levels, which are now a fraction of what they were before. The composition as a whole creates a series of dynamic visual relationships.

WXY architecture is noted for its focus on community and sustainable planning, incorporating new technologies and green design. Their studies of new materials and digitally driven production inform their search for unique structural and spatial resolutions to every aspect of design vocabulary.

WXY has just completed the new NYC & Co. Official New York City Information Center, a radical redesign that dramatically reshapes the way NYC visitors and residents navigate the five boroughs.