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**THE
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FADE TO GRAY

Designer Paul Davis dreams up a soft, sumptuous palette for his Greenwich Village apartment

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Light My Fire
Furnishings in the living room (THIS SPREAD) include a vintage John Boone coffee table, a Holly Hunt sofa upholstered in a fabric from Rogers & Goffigon, and a pair of vintage Hans Wegner Papa Bear chairs covered in a DesignTex fabric. See Resources.



For people who love to look at real estate, entering a New York apartment for the first time is nothing if not an anticipatory event. Will it be cavernous? Intimate? Decorated to the hilt? When Paul Davis opens the door to the inviting abode he shares with his partner, Julio Hernandez, any trace of apartment envy quickly dissolves into utter admiration. Think cool, yet romantic; think collected, yet relaxed; think a soothing study in color and flow. It's a place you'd want to come home to every night, and also one you might not ever want to leave. With fine bones, exquisite proportions, a working fireplace, and large

casement windows, Davis and Hernandez's Greenwich Village pad could very well be *the* dream apartment. Davis, an interior designer, and Hernandez, a hair colorist for the Stephen Knoll salon, made every choice together when they decided to renovate the apartment a year and a half ago. "We were both the client," Davis says, "and extremely particular. But we have very similar visions, which made things easy for us." "I think we help each other see things we might not have seen otherwise," adds Hernandez, who initially bought the apartment many years ago and did it up in French '40s decor. But after growing tired of the look, he and Davis were ready for a change. "We wanted it to be simpler, and more contemporary. It was time." The pair gutted the apartment, creating an environ-

Inviting Arrangements
A John Dickinson African table stands sentry in the entryway (ABOVE), which features a bench and sconces designed by Davis and a wall upholstered in Rogers & Goffigon's Tuckernuck linen. The streamlined kitchen (OPPOSITE) includes white oak herringbone flooring from Siberian Floors and subway tile from Stone Source. The range is by Bertazzoni. See *Resources*.



**Benchmark
Of Good Design**

The dining area features a custom lacquered table and a pair of benches covered in Holly Hunt's Stingray leather in Dolphin. Davis designed the rectangular light fixture, as well as the library light illuminating the artwork. See *Resources*.



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ment where each room flows seamlessly into the next, and made the bold move to cast everything in shades of gray—from the lacquer dining table to the ripple-fold wool-crepe window treatments. Additionally, they decided to use just one paint color, Benjamin Moore’s Smoke Embers, throughout the entire space. “The color is so deceiving, you’d never know it,” says Davis. “Gray is probably the most difficult color to match.”

Illuminating the rooms correctly, Davis knew, would be the key to making all that gray coalesce. Davis turned to trans-Luxe, a company he uses frequently, to help him design the lighting. Each piece adds just the right variety: Spindly sconces, modeled on like designs by Serge Mouille, flank the fireplace, while in the foyer, two delicate mouth-blown glass sconces shine just the right amount of light onto a suite of graffiti-art prints. (Davis found similar works on the street one morning and tracked down the artist for months.) A recession in the foyer is neatly fitted with a reading bench covered in a soft Rogers & Goffigon fabric and lit by another set of sconces, these fashioned of black shades and arms with brass accents. The goal: kicking back with a book or chatting with people in the kitchen (the couple are both avid cooks). “I like to have meaning and purpose behind everything I design,” Davis says.



“We tend to look at where the art world is going for inspiration”

Davis credits his design ethos to supportive parents, who encouraged his creativity while he was growing up in Maine. “It helped me become an artist at a young age,” he recalls. “My parents let me design an addition to the house when I was 13. I drew up some basic plans and got to choose everything.”

Vivid artwork throughout the apartment is the couple’s only concession to color. “We tend to look at art, and where the art world is going, for inspiration,” Davis says. The pair snapped up the abstract works behind the living room sofa and dining table years ago at the 26th Street flea

market, after spotting them resting in the snow (they had just been taken off a truck). An early work by Marilyn Minter hangs in the bedroom, its raw rubies and pinks offering keen contrast to the otherwise calm and contemplative space. Aside from the art, though, for the most part the interiors hew closely to the prevailing palette of gray-on-gray, down to every last detail. (After all, Davis makes his living as a decorator.) Even when the couple head to the kitchen to prepare dinner each evening, the pots and pans they pull from the shelves are all Le Creuset, enameled in a soft dove gray. ✨

Fifty Shades
Statuary marble envelops the master bath (OPPOSITE), which includes shower fixtures from Dornbracht and a custom vanity with a Lucite base. In the master bedroom (THIS PAGE), an antique side chair covered in a Pollack plaid sits next to a Chista occasional table. Carlo Mari’s *Young Maasai* (2008) hangs above a British Khaki bed and night table. The bed covering is from ABC Carpet & Home and the rug is from Restoration Hardware. See Resources.