



HEAT INDEX:

# The Art of Living

As real estate experts, we regularly visit the beautiful homes of tastemakers and movers and shakers. We have learned that there is truly an “Art of Living” that should be explored, studied, and ultimately mastered. Recently, we spoke with Gagosian Gallery’s power gallerist, Kara Van Der Weg, and the executive director of The Drawing Center, Brett Littman, at the couple’s gorgeous NYC home to discuss how their lifestyle is a direct expression of who they are.

By Alexandra Fairweather & Lisa Graham  
Photographs by Carrie Buell



Top left: Kara and Brett in front of the leaded glass windows they love. Above: The couple's living room showcases their collection of art and pottery.

Left: Lisa Graham, a Manhattan real estate specialist with CORE, most recognizable from HGTV's Selling New York, and Alexandra Fairweather, an Upper East Side luxury real estate expert with CORE, are on the lookout for "The Art of Living."

LEFT: ROBERT WRIGHT



**How do you define “The Art of Living” and how have you expressed it in your home?**

We’ve tried to create a living space that reflects who we are—our tastes, our friendships, the fact that we are both creative people—and feels special, so that it is a pleasure for us to come home.

**Do you have a favorite feature of your apartment?**

The leaded glass windows really convinced both of us that it was the apartment for us.

**How would you define your style?**

Eclectic and concise—living in New York, we

don’t have lots of things because there is never enough space, so what we do have around us really matters.

**As leading figures in the art world, do your passion and expertise influence your design at home?**

Our friendships with artists really influence what we have in our apartment. That and our travels—we love a good souvenir.

**Do you have a favorite piece of art in your apartment?**

Everything has a meaningful story. But the pieces with some personal history are especially important to us. We have Turkish tables

and shelving from Brett’s grandmother, who sold antique replicas, and on the shelves are a few pieces of my father’s pottery.

**Do you have advice for people who are interested in building an art collection in their home?**

Always be on the lookout for pieces that you love. Also, you can build a great collection with a very modest budget. Some of the artworks we own have been acquired at charity auctions and from memberships where you pay a fee and get a new artwork once a year. Brett used to be the director of Dieu Donne, and they have a wonderful program that promotes emerging artists.



Above: Kara with the Jim Dine painting that the artist gave her when she worked at the Guggenheim.

Top: Brett enjoys showing visitors the couple's extensive pottery collection.

**Could you talk about your extensive pottery collection?**

That collection is always evolving, and growing. Building it is something that we really enjoy doing when we are traveling and at antique stores around the U.S., especially. It started with Brett's interest in mid-century design, and now we have plates to feed at least six dozen people. Russell Wright's American Modern series, Tamac, and Raymor are a few of our favorites. We both enjoy cooking, and when we have dinner parties we select the plates to suit the food.

**What year was your apartment built? How did the year it was built influence your design choices?**

1929 by Rosario Candela. Previously we lived in a factory building that had been converted to condos in the 1980s, and our style was much more modern. Here we felt that we had

to fit the era while not making it feel like we were living in a time warp.

**Do you have a favorite neighborhood in New York City?**

That is tough to answer! We are really enjoying getting to know our neighborhood, which is variously defined as Lincoln Square and Upper West Side. Downtown, in Soho, is where The Drawing Center is located, so Brett spends a lot of time there. And we lived in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn, for 10 years—that neighborhood evolved tremendously during the time we were there. There are so many small local restaurants and shops there that are fun to explore.

**Why did you decide to live on the Upper West Side?**

The Upper West Side found us. It just happened that this was where we found an apart-



**Kara and Brett's pottery finds a home in their classic Manhattan kitchen.**

ment that felt right, but it seems that it is, in fact, a perfect area for us. We are both within a short distance of our jobs—I walk across Central Park every morning to Gagosian Gallery on the Upper East Side. It's a pretty fabulous commute. And we love being within walking distance of half a dozen major museums.

**What are your favorite spots on the Upper West Side?**

The Leopard, which is across the street from us in the Hotel des Artistes, is a restaurant with really delicious Italian food in a beauti-

ful, atmospheric setting. They have the original Howard Chandler Christy murals that he began painting for the Cafe des Artistes in the 1930s—Marcel Duchamp and Isadora Duncan used to eat there! Epicerie Boulud is great for a quick coffee or a glass of wine, and the pastries are delicious. Having Lincoln Center in our backyard is a huge luxury—we can walk to world-class opera or symphony performances in a matter of minutes. And I could go on all day about all the things I love about living near Central Park. It is one of my favorite places in the city.