



INTROSPECTIVE

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In the foyer of a duplex in a storied Park Avenue building — Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's childhood home, built in 1939 by her grandfather — Nahem included two Jeff Koons works: A pair of the artist's iconic polychrome-wood *Yorkshire Terriers* (1991) are centered on an Italian table, and *New Hoover Deluxe Shampoo Polishers* (1980/86) sits in a nearby acrylic case.

Nahem often commissions pieces from artists and artisans. For a Neo-Grec townhouse on Manhattan's Upper East Side, he tapped ceramic artist Matthew Holomon, whose work he first saw at the New York gallery Maison Gerard, to create a porcelain tracery-inspired ornamental motif for the dining room ceiling. Nahem also worked with gallerist Cristina Grajales to have Jorge Lizarazo, of Hechizoo, weave a custom metallic rug for the hallway

and commissioned Los Angeles artist Jorge Pardo to craft an oval resin table for the breakfast room. In a West Village townhouse, Nahem paired Paul Evans chairs and a ring coffee table by Mattia Bonetti and Elizabeth Garouste with a custom sofa sporting a sheared-mink trim.

"We're very client-specific," says Nahem, explaining the firm's purposeful lack of a signature look. And despite collaborating with some of the most prominent architects of our time — including Charles Gwathmey, Annabelle Selldorf and Steven Harris — the designer is involved in every step of the process. He insists, as Downey's foreword in the monograph suggests, that talking yields the best results; developing a relationship with the project architect and the client is key.

"The first thing I say when sitting down face-to-face with an architect is, 'How

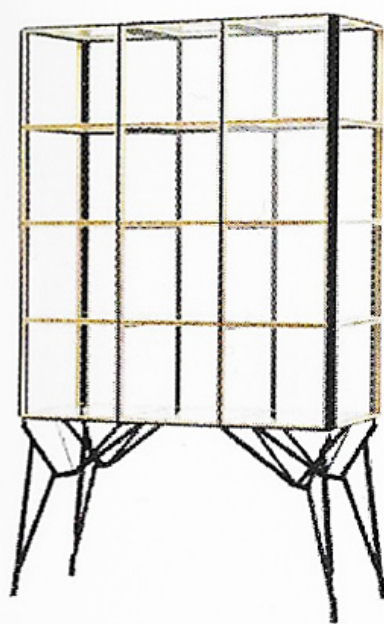
are we going to make this work?' " Nahem says. "The last thing you want to do is be a mediator between an egotistical architect, a client and a contractor."

Asked to describe how his business has changed over the years, he answers, "People used to come to us looking for specific things. Now our clients come with three thousand Pinterest images that need to be edited." Not that he's opposed to this new way of working. "I sometimes see things I didn't know about," he says. "Some of the best sources of ideas are our clients." They still look to him, however, for inspiration and for decor that is truly unique.

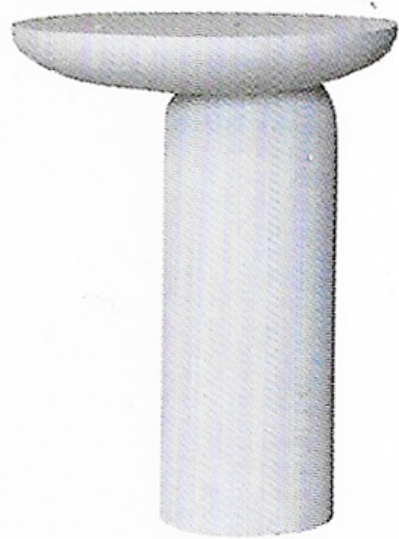
As Anthony Iannacci, the monograph's author, notes: "The type of clients Joe has don't want you to be able to find their dining room table by googling on the way home from a dinner party." ■

Joe Nahem's Quick Picks on 1stdibs

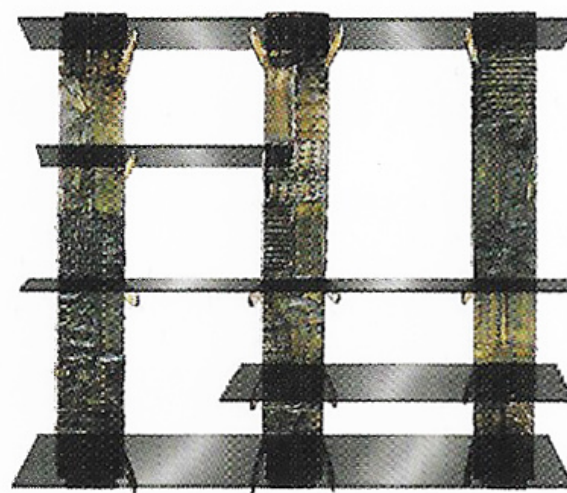
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Paul Heijnen cabinet, new, offered by Manfredi Style



Frédéric Saulou Décomplexé side table, 2010, offered by Galerie Philia Furniture



Paul Evans wall unit, 1972, offered by Lobel Modern



Amorph Inc. dining chair, 2017