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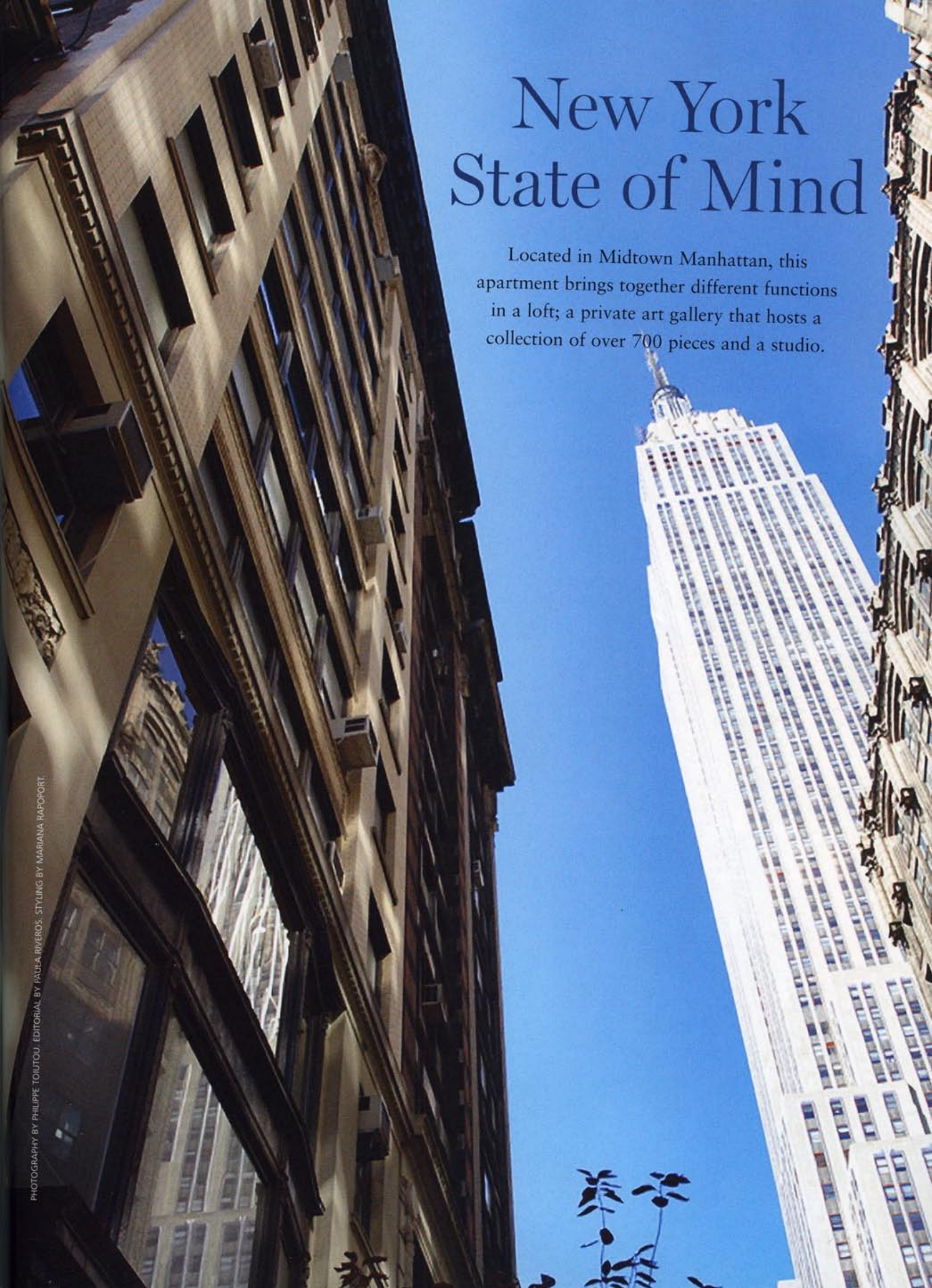
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# New York State of Mind

Located in Midtown Manhattan, this apartment brings together different functions in a loft; a private art gallery that hosts a collection of over 700 pieces and a studio.









Dinah gives yoga lessons and attends to reflexology patients here, but her apartment is also the setting for numerous social events. The question was how to attain these different functions, without losing its relaxed and open character — the typical characteristics of the New York lofts. American architect Steve Blatz is an expert in solving this kind of recycling work. The concept of continuity has been the architect's obsession, but he has successfully managed to grant Dinah's every wish in the 400 m<sup>2</sup> loft. On the one hand, an art gallery ought to be a neutral space where each work of art shines in its own light, so there's no interference with the meaning of each particular piece. On the other hand, yoga practice requires a room that promotes concentration and calmness. Finally, a home in the heart of a metropolis must be a shelter where the stress of life in the big city can be relaxed and a place to rest in a cosy corner, which is chic and stylish at the same time.

The answers to every one of these needs were provided by Blatz by joining the areas into permeable rooms, and creating physical and visual passages that connect and separate the different uses of the rooms. The result of his intervention is a beautiful organic design which is enjoyed in every section. 'I have known Steve Blatz for many years. Before even imagining I was going to embark upon a housing project, one day I was in his apartment and I thought, this place is magnificent... it must be 800m<sup>2</sup>. In fact it was half that size! Steve makes rooms look broader than they really are, interiors are fresh and open and his concept has gripped me.' This project was launched in 2001, which coincided with the real estate chaos and the scarcity of labour force, due to the tragic events that took place on September 11th.







Despite the general uncertainty, the householder, who was advised by Blatz and her lawyer, discovered that this floor in an old office building located a few blocks away from the Empire State Building was the ideal place to settle down. The old floor was in a discouraging state and it was divided into cubicles by several walls. It had to be refurbished from scratch. Blatz, who was already fully involved in the issue, took some yoga lessons to understand the mood and the energy level required by a room devoted to these practices. This is how he has managed to rightly guess how to insulate the yoga room from the living room, while at the same time connecting both rooms through sliding aluminium and fibreglass sheaths, which diffuse the sunlight from through the living-room windows. He has drawn his inspiration from eastern architectural elements.

Another strong point in the architect's work has been joining the rooms by means of the furniture, thus turning it into an architectural element. The floating wall made of ash wood that separates the social areas from the yoga room, the curving wall that leads to a small meditation platform in Dinah's bedroom or the stone footbridge used to display sculptures all along the corridor, illustrate Steve's ability to interweave the spaces in interior design and introduce functionalities in always present, but neutral, elements.

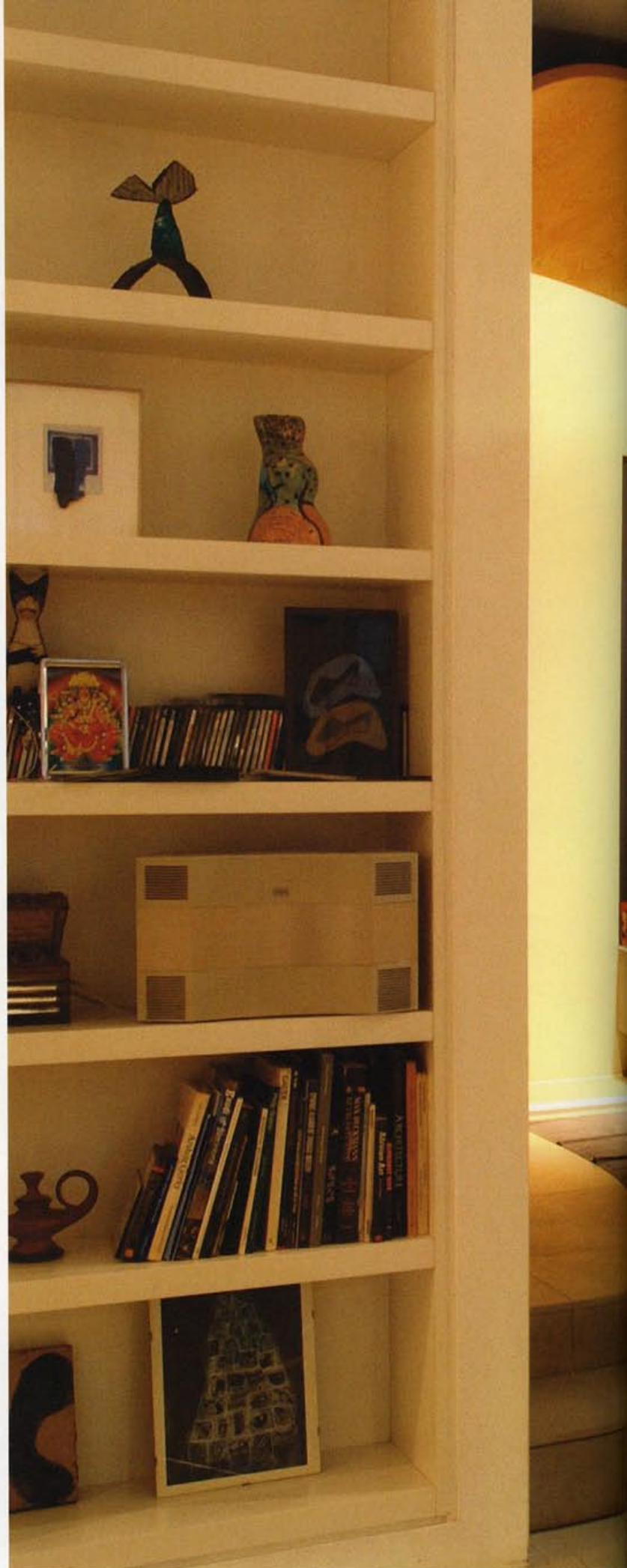








The materials used were noble ingredients, which is expressed in their calm textures. 'It was very important to me to use strictly cultivated wood to avoid an impact on the environment. I wanted yellow shades and other colours that reflect light. We have chosen sky blue and different white shades,' Dinah adds. The feeling of peace and austerity is present in this loft, although it must be highlighted that no minimalist coldness is perceived here. 'I see Steve as an artist rather than an architect. I wanted his part in the project to be like a work of art on which we would work together. He respects artistic work and has known how to give each piece its place. I've given him a great freedom of choice.' Blatz has gone into every detail, leaving some space for art in every room, though not on all surfaces and walls, thus providing visual breaks so that the view has not been saturated.















Regarding interior decoration, Dinah would rather have walls and corners filled by the energy provided by reflection and creativity. 'The work done with the objects I have placed in my flat is not decoration to me. Decoration is done through art. I also like observing and finding small things. I see possibilities in objects nobody else would see. I often visit flea markets, where I can always spot something that interests me. At home, I like breathing in each room and allowing the works of art and objects to speak for themselves. There are still quite a few things out there, waiting to be found, that I would like to have on these walls.' The rooms are separated, contained, defined and connected. This apartment has been defined within a relaxed balance that transcends architecture and design, awakening the senses in order to attain the mental and physical well-being necessary for life. 🏠