

In the living area, an Angel Otero painting and Nick Cave soundsuit sculpture mingle with a Frigerio sectional from Haute Living and vintage Pierre Paulin lounge chairs. Apparatus pendants hang above the Imperfetto Lab dining table, which is surrounded by Knoll's Eero Saarinen executive chairs.

MAGAZINE

Step Inside This Art-Insider's Chicago Family Home

Art dealer Kavi Gupta transforms the loft above his gallery into a family haven that's ready for guests and ready for art

By Janelle Zara

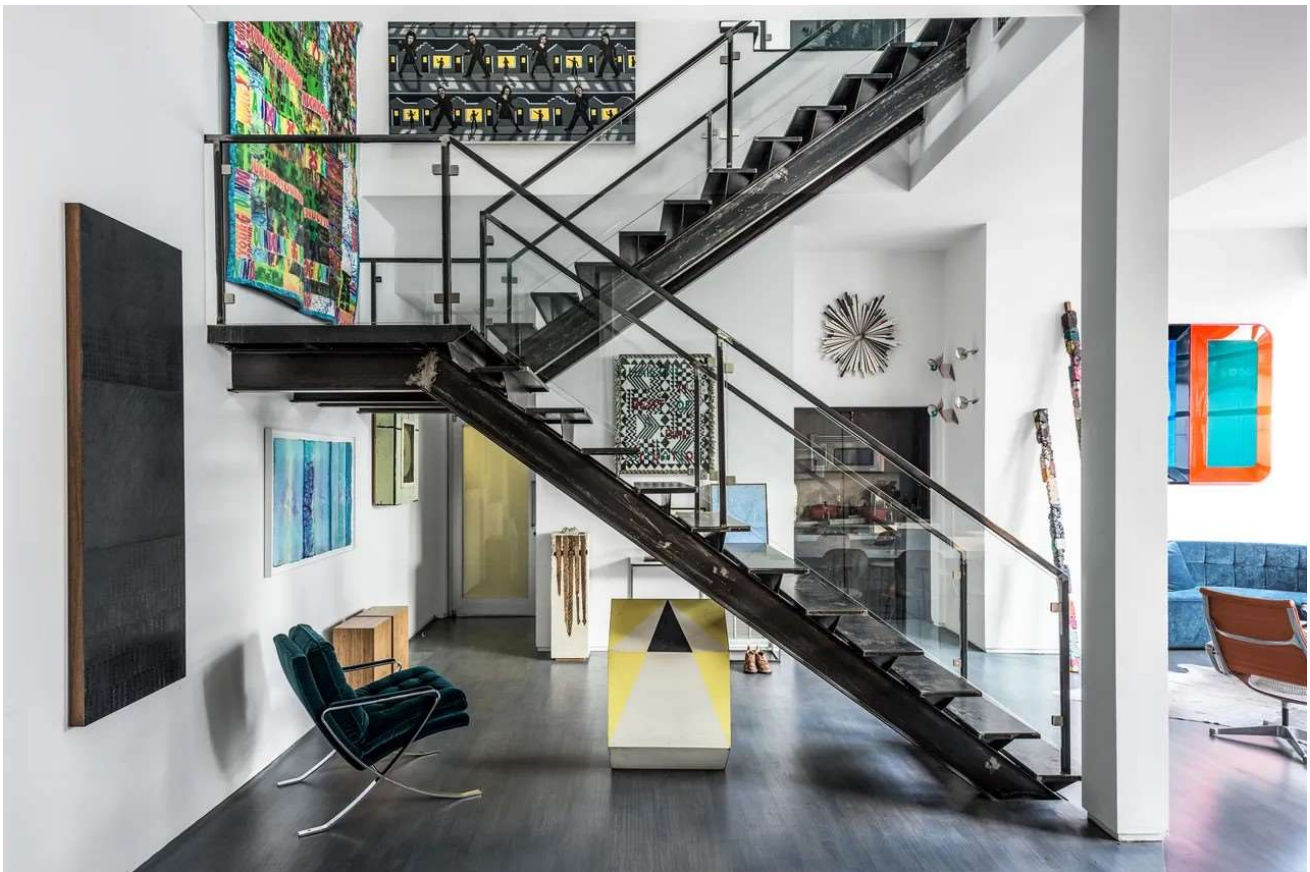
Photography by Gianni Franchellucci

Styled by Project Interiors

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There are no quick visits with Chicago couple Kavi Gupta and Jessica Moss. Anytime that curators, collectors, or artists drop by Gupta's namesake Washington Boulevard gallery—the first two floors of an industrial building in the West Loop—they inevitably make their way to the couple's home upstairs, where Moss will ask if anyone cares for a nosh, and Gupta will dive into his wine collection. On a recent visit, as talk strayed from interior design to the future of the art market, he uncorked a rosé, a Sancerre, and a Syrah. It was daylight as the tour began and nearly midnight as it ended.

When Gupta bought the building in the late '90s, he recalls, "my dream was to have a salon-style space." He refurbished the interiors and opened his gallery in 2000, settling into a bachelor pad on the second level to which he ultimately added another story, creating a kind of mega loft. "There were barely any doors, and they were to the bathrooms," recalls Moss, who moved in six years later. The pair married in 2008, and Moss, an art historian and curator, joined the gallery in 2017, where she is now principal and head of exhibitions. Representing contemporary artists who include Jessica Stockholder, Mickalene Thomas, and founding members of the AFRICOBRA group, such as Jae and Wadsworth Jarrell, Kavi Gupta|Chicago has expanded to a total of five exhibition spaces, with three buildings in Chicago and one in New Buffalo, Michigan. There is also a conservation and research archive and a publishing division.

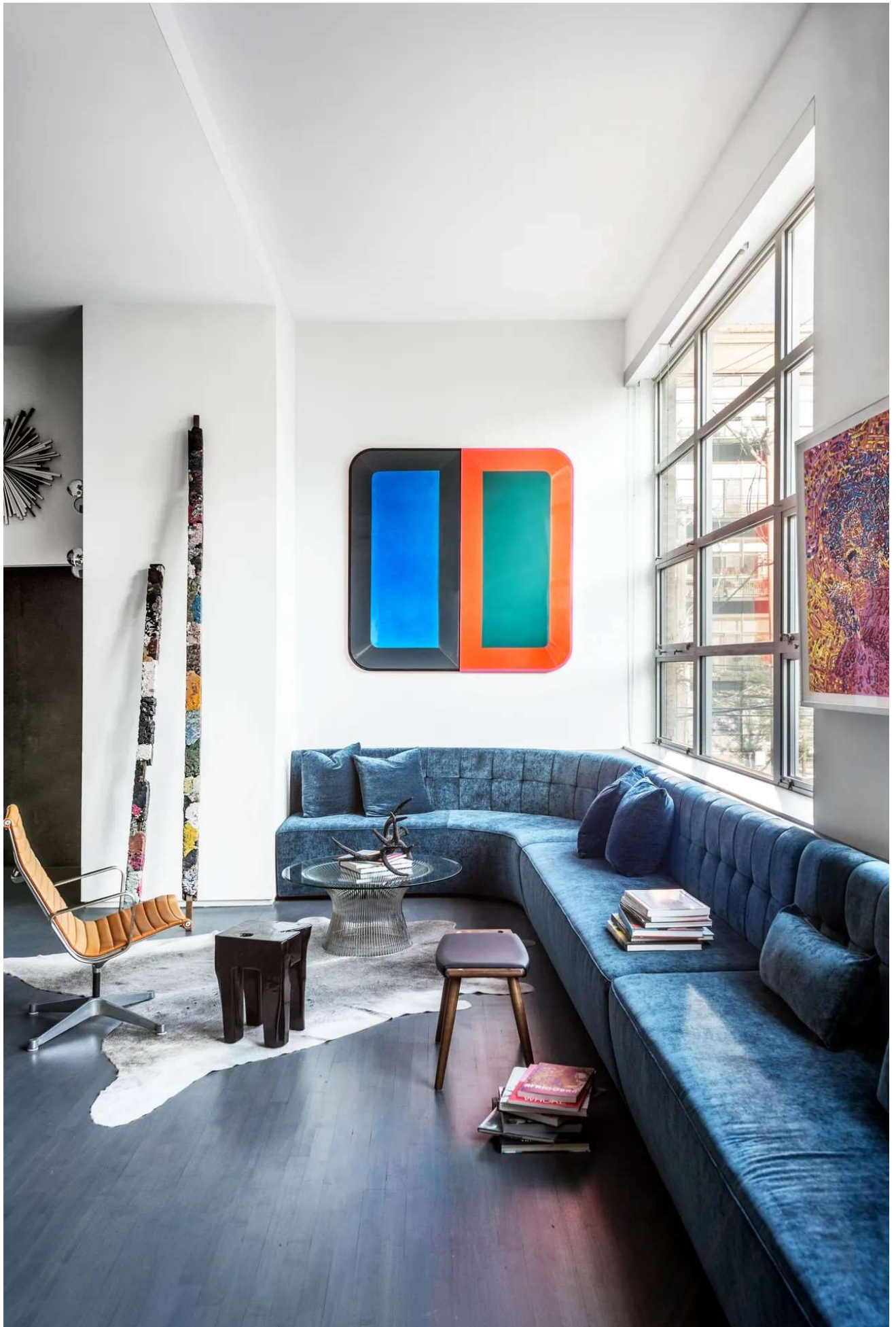


The home gallery also displays works by Theaster Gates, Sam Gilliam, and Jessica Stockholder, among others. © 2021 Sam Gilliam / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

At home, Gupta and Moss also made incremental changes, including the addition of bedrooms when their daughter, Lila, now an 11-year-old budding artist and critic, was born. This latest renovation was a full-scale demolition and reimagining of the third floor, overseen by the local firm Jonathan Splitt Architects. Steel beams now reinforce the floors, supporting a trove of artworks that range from a Deborah Kass piece on the new outdoor terrace (the beginning of a sculpture garden) to a Nick Cave Soundsuit made especially for the living room. Meanwhile, clerestory windows and automated skylights bounce sun off the 14-foot walls, which were painted a crisp museum white.

Throughout the transformation, the couple's love of frequent, impromptu visitors was a major consideration. "This is a very public-facing space," says Jennifer Kranitz, who took on the job while she was design director for the Chicago firm Project Interiors. (She later founded her own practice, Set Setting Studio, but collaborated closely with her former colleagues, as well as Karin Wowk of KWOWK, on the project.) Moss's best friend since high school, Kranitz came into the project with an intimate knowledge of the family's collection—the colors, the scale, the materiality—

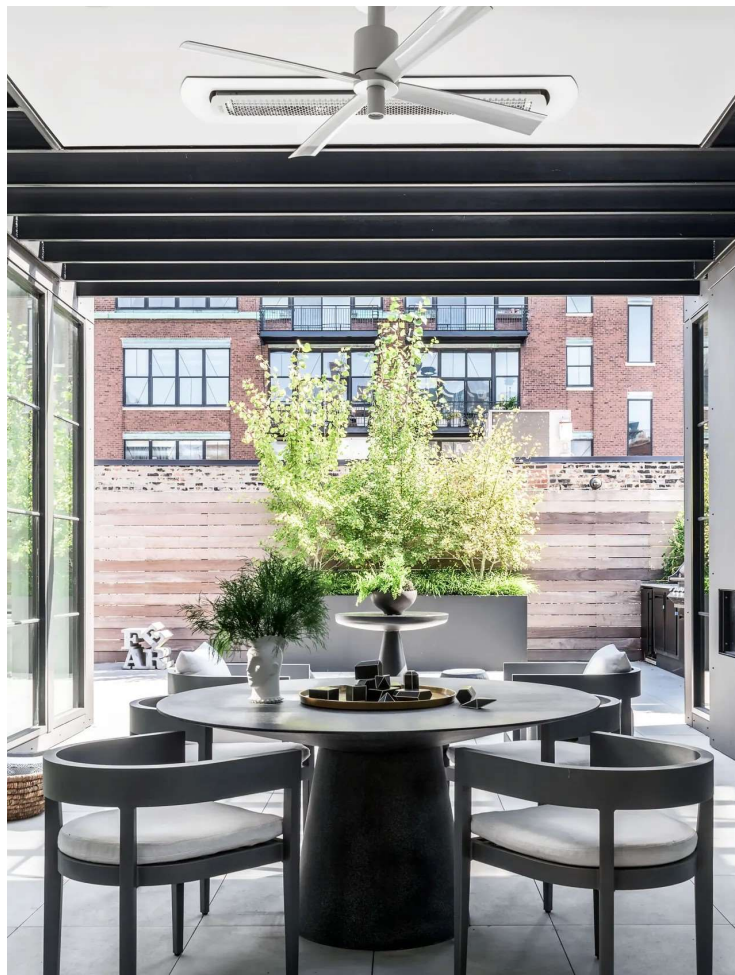
and furnished the rooms accordingly. “The design is very much in service to the art,” says Moss, noting a general minimalism and restraint. Low-slung furniture in shades of black, white, and gray allows more colorful works to take center stage, including the Angel Otero collage of oil-paint skins above the living room sofa.





Rather than expect the family to maintain a visitor-ready home at all times, Kranitz devised what she calls a “fade-to-black” strategy for keeping their personal effects out of sight. Ebony-stained millwork along a living-area wall, for example, hides space in which to stow clutter in the event of an unexpected guest. In the kitchen, dark wooden panels conceal the appliances and dinnerware. And in the bathroom off the dining room, the shower sits behind dark reflective glass, disguising the space as a more formal powder room.

Gupta got an entire room for his wines, while Moss got a double-height library to display her treasured art books, many of which she inherited from her grandmother Norma Lifton, a celebrated philanthropist in Chicago’s art scene. Lila also got her own cozy book nook, which features custom shelving by woodworker Zak Rose that stretches to the ceiling, with the requisite rolling library ladder.



Teak warehouse table and RH chairs in the courtyard sunroom.

Everywhere, flexible amenities serve the dual functions of entertainment and relaxation. On the roof deck, heat lamps, a fireplace, and a fan accommodate outdoor dining for three seasons out of the year. The kitchen's window wall accordion-folds to open the room entirely to the courtyard, where a projector screens both video art for adults and movies for Lila and her friends. Inside, every surface and material was selected in anticipation of heavy foot traffic and potential spills. "This rug has been very forgiving," Moss says of the Tai Ping carpet, which was custom-cut to make floor space for Cave's Soundsuit.

While it's not always clear whether Moss and Gupta's home is an extension of the gallery or the gallery is an extension of their home, what is clear is that they rarely want to leave. They sometimes hold staff meetings in the courtyard, and on most days, Gupta forgoes his downstairs desk for the dining room table, where, Moss notes, "he's close to his coffee station and his wine." Blurring the traditional boundaries between the professional and personal, this is the ideal home for a family who've made art their life's work.