Minimalist Penthouse

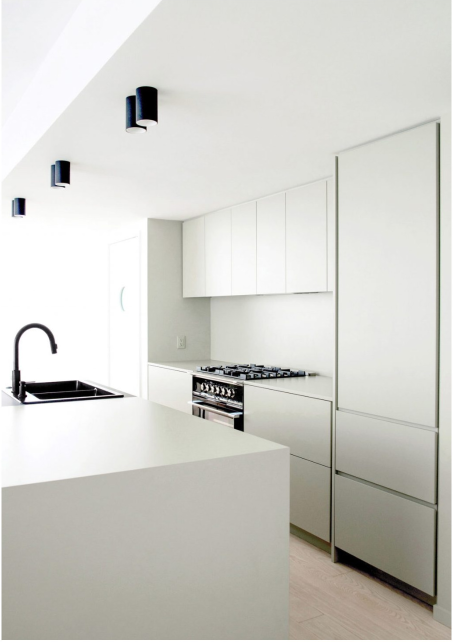
RENOVATION

1001ALBUMS

Project Description provided by &Daughters. Photos by Jennifer Latour and Sama Jim Canzian.

Design studio, &Daughters renovated this penthouse apartment in metro Vancouver with a youthful minimalism and playful injection of colour to the previously generic design. Originally built in the early 2000s, the space occupies the top two floors of a tower in the dense downtown core. The inspiration came from several sources: the natural surroundings and climate of Vancouver, the client's lifestyle and personality, the existing conditions of the space and, of course, we are always inspired by the work of other designers whose work we admire, both old and new.

A brief that included a demanding timeline, resulted in the decision to leave the larger architectural components in place. The project became an exercise in how to express the owners youth and character and reinforce the strong qualities of the space through materials. As an avid record collecto, the client wanted a dedicated space for his collection. We carved a set of shelves into the facing side of the kitchen island for this purpose and the collection creates a charming and idiosyncratic surge of colour.



As a contrast to the often grey and overcast sky that the apartment occupies, the designers chose to work with distinct colour to bring a sense of light and nature into the previously dark and dated space. A shade of pale green became the catalyst for drawing focus to the relationship between the two levels within the space. For the kitchen we introduced laminate. We used green laminate everywhere except for a section of the island where a strip of black laminate is applied.

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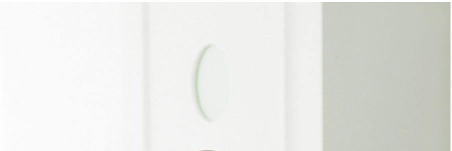
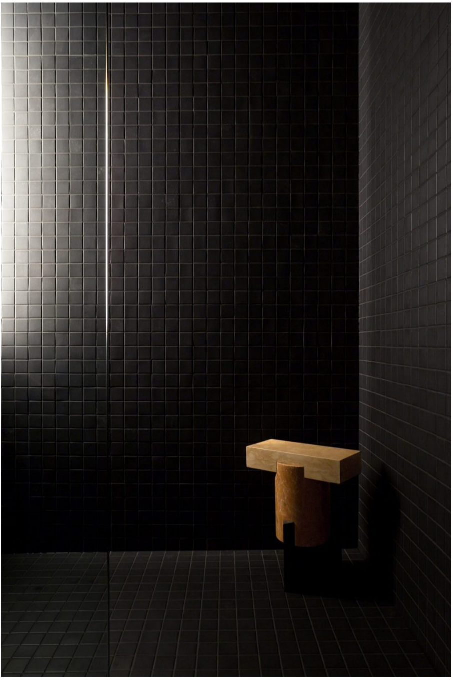
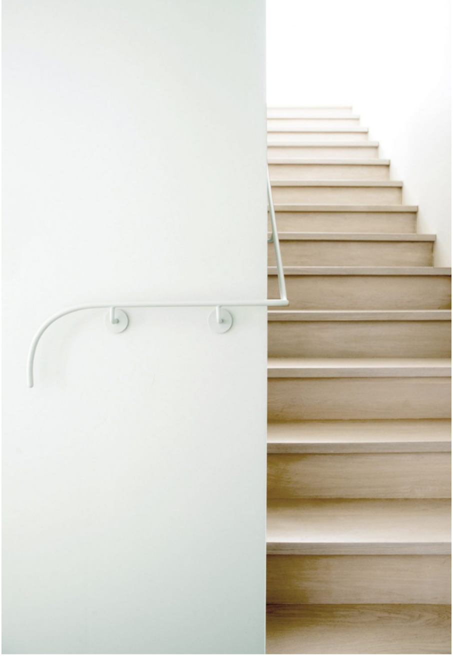


The green laminate of the kitchen perimeter and island millwork is interrupted by a band of black at the centre of the island. This detail introduces a break and a contrast to the otherwise mono colour kitchen. It also allowed us to better coordinate the finish of the kitchen sink and faucet. There is a large pantry space that is accessed just off of the kitchen which had previously had a sad, bi-fold door. This was replaced with a custom double swing door with a small, round, glass window. It is a playful nod to the traffic doors in restaurants.

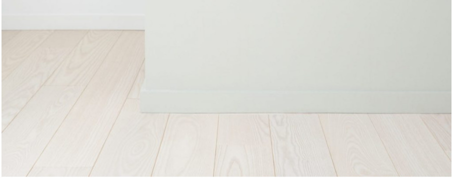
Using laminate, paint and wood stain, the design team brought definition to the apartment's primary structural core which houses the kitchen services and the vertical circulation.



The bathroom on the main level has no access to natural light. Rather than try to artificially reproduce a sense of daylight, the design team embraced this darkness and applied it relentlessly to the space. The walls and floor are covered in a matte black mosaic tile and the vanity is a blackened hot rolled steel. All hardware and plumbing fixtures are black and lighting is indirect and diffuse.



A delicate and whimsical custom steel handrail, further delineates this expression, as it wraps its way up the stairs. The wide plank ash flooring was also treated with a very subtle wash of green on its run up the stairs.



Since we were trying to keep the number of materials to a minimum, it was important that each material was refined and substantial but also very durable.

We had made the decision that we wanted to create a light bathroom space upstairs and a dark bathroom space downstairs and so we went through a process of research and elimination to find tile materials that we knew would capture those qualities and perform well. In the second level bathroom the material selected was a light grey marble and in the main level bathroom we used thick, matte black mosaic tile and blackened hot rolled steel.

The master ensuite is flooded with natural light as it is wrapped in floor to ceiling glazing. In this space both floor and walls are clad in light grey, almost cloud-like marble. Openness is reinforced in details such as the double under mount trough sink and the shower bench which is open to the adjacent tub, doubling as a table surface. The design of the apartment's two bathrooms was inspired by the existing conditions of natural light and the stark contrast that exists between these conditions in each space.

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