



SMALL WONDER
Suchi Reddy's home is full of space-cheats like a dining table that retracts up to the ceiling. The cloud light above is crafted from packaging material

DOMESTIC LAB

SUCHI REDDY
45, NEW YORK

When New York-based designer Suchi Reddy embarked upon an apartment search three years ago, she didn't expect to fall for a former dentist's office. "The listing said, 'Needs a therapist,'" shares Reddy, recalling her very first encounter with the minuscule 375sqft studio, tucked in a pre-War building on the tony periphery of Manhattan's Greenwich Village.

Enticed by the 10ft ceilings, proxim-

ity to Union Square Greenmarket—"I love to cook, and wanted to get fresh ingredients," says the Chennai-born epicure—and a charming view of the neighbouring Gothic church, Reddy wasted no time in providing the "therapy", stripping the space of its walls and worn wooden floors. "I had a huge demolition party, where I invited everyone I knew and asked them to write on the walls," she adds. "So it's literally encased in love and enveloped by the good wishes of people." Eighteen months later, Reddy, whose profession-

al portfolio includes retail design for stores like Jimmy Choo and Henri Bendel, transformed the metropolitan matchbox into an urban marvel, now swathed in soothing creams and whites: walls were recessed to accommodate bookcases, shelves and 51 drawers; the newly-poured concrete floor was coated with fibreglass, scattering light across the entire apartment; Persian marble lined the bathroom, because she "wanted to feel like [she] was looking at the sky." Pointing to the gold-and-white linen curtain

PHOTO: RUTH SONVALO



CURTAIN CALL

From top: The 375sqft space was previously a dentist's office; the open plan of the apartment allows sunlight to stream in; Reddy in front of the gold-and-white linen curtain which drops down by her platform bed



various corners of the apartment, while stylish international objects, like a stack of red Japanese lacquer trays doubling as a miniature coffee table, stand in for mundane furnishings. “It’s almost like some of these pieces find me,” muses Reddy, walking over to one of her most beloved drawings, a pen-and-ink sketch of Nova Scotia by the renowned American architect Louis Kahn, perched above her quartzite kitchen counter. “Seven lines, and the man can tell you what he was looking at,” she says. Kahn’s ability to simultaneously capture artistic precision and minimalism strikes a chord with Reddy, who juggles the idea of maintaining a small carbon footprint with an unabashed passion for design. “The point of architecture is to make you live well, no matter where you live,” she says. “It turns what might be perceived as a problem into a thing of beauty.” —*Aarti Virani*

space-saving technique. “It’s a prototype... I’ve used my apartment as a sort of lab, trying out things on myself that I can’t always test on clients,” she says, and admits that she typically designs

Manhattan apartments that are almost 10 times in size. She gestures at the oversize cloud light (crafted entirely from packaging material) that floats above her dining table as another first. “I’m looking to turn everyday materials into something spectacular,” she adds, indicating her commitment to green design. Later this year, she’ll launch a line of high-end home products called Reddy 2 Give (R2G).

An eye-catching display of international art—contemporary American, Brazilian, Chinese and Indian—adorns

from Bengal that drops down beside her platform bed, Reddy says, “I really thought of this apartment as the house of seven veils. My sister gave this to me. You need to incorporate things that have emotional value; if you don’t, your space doesn’t have layers.”

Reddy often hosts sit-down dinners, serving a blend of traditional and contemporary South Indian fare on her customised Corian dining table. When the meal is done, a wireless switch pulls the table back up to the ceiling until it’s needed again, resulting in yet another

MY NOOK

“My tall-backed 1950s chair by the living-room window. Sitting here, I can see everything, from the lights in the church across the street to the flowers in my bathroom window.” ■