A new sense of "house" awaited me down in Manhattan's financial district when I found my way to the 1909 office tower turned cooperative where one floor—all 3,000 square feet of it—had been bought by Francis R. Gillette as his new studio/home. Every bit as big as many big houses, with exposures on all four sides, Gillette's studio was transformed from a rabbit warren of tiny offices into what the owner has described as a "Barragán village." Los Angeles architect Franklin D. Israel not only helped Gillette realize some of his Barragán-influenced design conceits but also created a marvelously modern, original work of interior architecture. And to Israel's strong forms, the owner, a famed make-up artist, has applied his special talents, creating a series of magical moods in the "rooms" tucked in the gabled alcoves around the perimeter of the 31st floor of the building, page 80.

LANGDON CLAY

Entry to Francis R. Gillette's studio, designed by architect Franklin D. Israel.

Sometimes a House & Garden story is many years in the making. Editor Martin Filler became aware of the Jan Six collection in Amsterdam, one of the best-kept secrets in the world of art, when he was a Columbia graduate student taking a museum studies course in seventeenth-century Dutch art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art under Dr. John Walsh (who's since gone on to become director of The J. Paul Getty Museum). Martin visited the Six house for the first time in the spring of 1972 in connection with that course, and kept the memory of this extraordinary collection—considered by experts to be the finest of its kind in private hands—filed away in his mind until the Six family granted us permission to be the first to fully document their treasure-house, page 150.

All of us who are collectors at heart will appreciate Sir John Plumb's recognition of himself in the old peasant woman he saw circling a dealer whose pots she desired in a market in Yugoslavia. In the Collecting column this month, page 44, Sir John gives us a fascinating reminiscence of his love for objects and how it led him as a collector of Sèvres to Bond Street and beyond.

The Plumb text celebrates the explosion of scholarship in the study of early Vincennes and Sèvres that was possible because of the richness of the archives of these treasured objects. One such archive is the royal collection in England, and we show some examples from it to illustrate a text on Sèvres by Geoffrey de Bellaigue, Surveyor of The Queen's Works of Art, page 120.

As you have been able to tell from our most recent issues, we enjoy tracking the passionate interest today's fashion leaders take in their houses and apartments—Bill Blass in November, Oscar de la Renta in December. This month's example is a classic, the golden rooms of Coco Chanel, page 108, maintained as she left them above her salon on rue Cambon. Whereas the Blass and de la Renta tastes seemed to us quite consistent with their fashion offerings, Chanel biographer Edmonde Charles-Roux's text on the Chanel apartment points out some fascinating differences, even contradictions, between the modern revolution begun by Chanel in fashion and the traditional way she decorated her many apartments over the years in Paris. We particularly appreciate Chanel's declaration that, "An interior is the natural projection of the soul." Apparel, on the other hand, "provides a glimpse of the heart."

Some thoughts about home from a professor of classics continue this dialogue about old and new design, page 126. Ann Bergren moved to California to join the faculty at UCLA, and after seeing a house designed by Thom Mayne and Michael Rotondi she asked them to design an addition to her Venice, California, bungalow, giving them carte blanche. The owner feels that "just by effacing myself as a designer in the project, I have gotten the sort of 'classic' I would have designed." A classic, we feel, that also adds to the "new sense of house" I talked about in the opening lines of this page.

We'll leave it up to you, of course, to decide whether your predilection is for this "new sense of house" or the sense of house found in places as far-flung as the palace in Samode, page 142; the Estancia San Miguel in Argentina, page 70; or the flower-filled rooms of the Walter Matthaus in California, page 90.

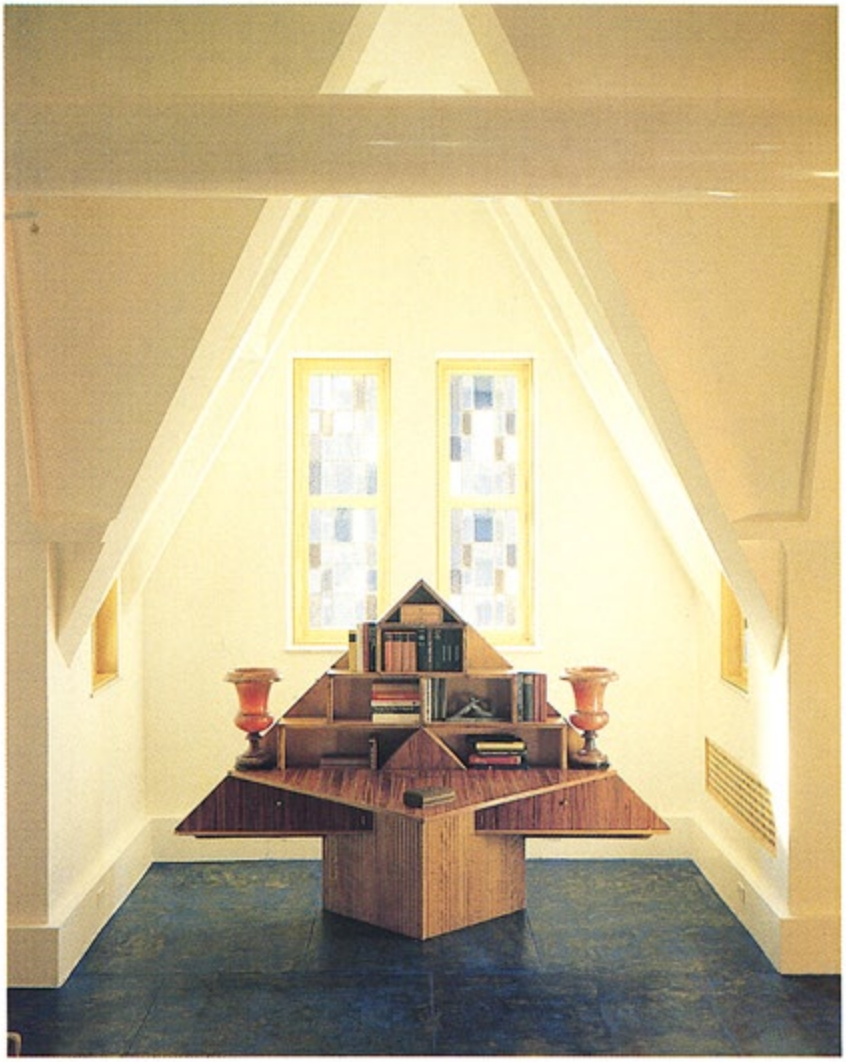
Lou Gropp

Editor-in-Chief

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Architect Franklin D. Israel boldly restructures the New York loft of make-up artist Francis R. Gillette

BY SUZANNE STEPHENS PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANGDON CLAY



Francis Gillette (often called Rick) is known for the supreme sense of perfection he brings to hair and make-up in beauty and fashion photography. Lithe and trim of build, he would resemble the young Franchot Tone except that his own facial features usually remain immobile, setting off the intensity of his gaze. Short pauses separate his carefully chosen words. Right away you know this is a person with deeply felt convictions. "Part of the reason I came down to the financial district was to have a studio where I could take photos [another of his preoccupations] and entertain my friends, many of whom are artists and designers. But it was also an opportunity to create an environment with a very good friend—Frank Israel—who happens to be a leading architect," Gillette says. "But," he adds, "the apartment had to represent my point of view—my way of seeing and treating things."

Mood, color, changes of light, texture, and the tactile feeling of space here were all affected by that point of view: Gillette was so concerned about getting the blue stain of the concrete floor the exact shade that he mixed it and applied it himself—adding boxes of blue iridescent eye shadow (which he would rather not see on eyelids) to a dry pigment and alcohol base.

Some architects would toss in the T-square before allowing a

The main rooms are nestled in gabled alcoves arrayed around the perimeter of the rooftop studio, *preceding pages.* A freestanding fireplace, a painting by Francis Gillette's brother, Richard, Ivory Coast fabrics, and a one-armed plywood chair from the 1950s highlight the living area. *Above:* An Art Deco desk of fruit and olive woods, which was designed for a yacht, is lit by converted alabaster urns. *Opposite:* Windows of stippled and tinted glass, designed by the client, afford glimpses of rooftop ornament and the Manhattan skyline, including the Woolworth Building.

client to have so much say, but the easygoing and philosophical Franklin Israel accepted with a grin the eclectic mix of African prints, 1840s Spanish bedroom suite, Art Deco chairs, raw silk curtains, and numerous other objects and furnishings Gillette had picked up on his travels. "When I see something that strikes me as being right, it doesn't matter if it goes with something else," Gillette maintains. "Eventually all will come together. But there were times when Frank thought I had gone too far—particularly with the windows." Though the scenic quotient of the views from the rooftop of the 77-year-old Gothic Revival–style building is very high, Gillette was not entranced by the looming presences of 1960s high-rise office buildings nearby. "Their lights are on twenty-four hours a day," he points out, "and make it hard to enjoy changes in the moonlight." So Gillette designed windows using an assortment of glass materials, including three with a mirrored finish, to vary in transparency and tint depending on the view.

The client and his architect had similar convictions about what to do with the 3,000-square-foot space with its 14½-foot-high ceilings. At first view, the architectural shell was buried behind hung ceilings, pipes, linoleum flooring, and a warren of offices, but Gillette was immediately "obsessed." He quickly figured out where he wanted each *(Text continued on page 177)*

A dark-lacquered Spanish Castilian bedstead and end tables, *above left,* dating to 1840, emphasize the Gothic-style character of the gabled niche. *Above:* Raw silk curtains separate bedroom sitting area from dining room beyond, where Duggie Fields's *Blind Swimmer Out of Degas* hangs. Gillette opted to leave some of the more muscular pipes exposed and encased in vinyl jackets. *Opposite:* Morning light brings a Vermeer-like quality to the bathing area, which receives water from the spout inspired by Luis Barragán.

(Continued from page 88) of his rooms. He and Israel worked out a scheme whereby many specific and private functions of the loftlike space (bathrooms, closets, darkroom, guest room) would be contained in two 13-foot-high lathe and plaster "houses." From the thirtieth-floor elevator, one ascends to the studio by stairs to come into the core of the largest "house." Proceeding through a vestibule/gallery past a narrow slot of open space, one walks through a smaller, freestanding "house" and by sliding open a wood gate arrives at the "courtyard," around which are arrayed the living room, music room, study, dining room, and bedroom areas at the perimeter of the apartment.

The alcoves and the little houses conjured up the apses and confessionals in the Catholic churches where Gillette had spent a fair amount of time as a boy. "I always dreamt of living in a church." Le Corbusier appealed just as strongly to Gillette, and he ferreted out photos of such work as Corbu's Sarabhai Villa in Ahmedabad, India, or his Maisons Jaoul outside Paris to show his architect. But *The Architecture of Luis Barragán,* by Emilio Ambasz, became "my bible," Gillette confesses. The famous aqueduct that the Mexican-based Barragán designed for a fountain for horses appears in a smaller version as the water spout for Gillette's pool-like bath. The massing of the houses, the configuration of the stair, the use of colored stucco walls (with shades chosen and mixed by Gillette) are also reminiscent of Barragán's serene distillation of textures, colors, and planar surfaces.

Frank Israel, who teaches at UCLA and maintains a practice in Los Angeles, has chosen not to bring a particular style of architecture to his projects. He expects to develop a scheme with input from the client—and from the nature of the given circumstances. Nevertheless, Israel's handling of architectural themes, such as the development of a procession of spaces within the houses, the use of long axes, and the play with symmetry, are important to the architectonic character of the whole. These and other moves, like designing the pavilions and the fireplace as if they were sculptural objects, seemingly cast from models based on the configuration of the ceiling, give the work his individual stamp. Francis Gillette analyzes the roles of client and architect this way: "I am an extremely cosmetically oriented person—basically a perfectionist. I knew what I wanted to achieve, but I needed a plastic surgeon."

In this case the architect had to understand the underlying "bones," knowing how he could restructure them so that the client could realize his vision for embellishing the structure. "There are areas where furnishings clash with the architecture, but they don't destroy the 'it.' Instead you look at the architecture in a different way," Israel observes. "You can do that with a woman's face: don't cover up the things that look awkward, celebrate them to create an unconventional sense of beauty." The result of this balance of different sensibilities is a space that doesn't ascribe to one sort of taste or style but allows visual things to happen. Sometimes the balance is almost thrown off, but even at its most precarious, the ensemble coheres as an arrestingly idiosyncratic statement. □

Editor: Heather Smith MacIsaac