

Glam Slam

Nicholas Obeid channels a chic 1970s vibe in his smartly outfitted Chelsea studio. His secret: glossy, space-stretching surfaces and fool-the-eye geometrics with panache to spare.



Nicholas Obeid did not hold back when decorating his compact studio apartment in New York City's Chelsea neighborhood. "In a small space, too little can be as dangerous as too much," he says. The vintage Milo Baughman chrome lounge chair is upholstered in an Alexander Girard checkerboard fabric by Maharam. Console and rug, Jonathan Adler. Sputnik sculpture, Edwin Vera.

500/SF



Stepping into this apartment is magical: You open a nondescript door in a nondescript hallway, and suddenly you're in a stylish pad. Was that hard to pull off? **NICHOLAS OBEID:** The apartment came together slowly over time, but I always knew I wanted it to have a strong voice. Too often people go minimal in a small space, with white walls and spare arrangements. I think that's a mistake. Here, there's always something to look at; your eye dances around the room. You're not thinking about square footage—you're noticing the design.

FRED NICOLAUS: Studios make for tough choices—you have only one room to play with. How did you decide what to give up?

I think it's better to start with what you want to keep! For a lot of people, the first thing to go in an apartment this size would be a dining room table, but my favorite part of my day is sitting down to a late dinner, so I knew I had to make a place for it. The tulip table was a perfect solution—it's a classic design, and it fits the space.

Clever! Still, you had to forgo something, no?

The bedroom area is definitely the "quietest" part of the apartment: The palette is mostly white, and it's tucked away in the back. But that was intentional—I love to cook and have friends over, so I made the choice to design my space more for entertaining than for sleeping. Sometimes I have

A set of 1970s mirrors Obeid bought in Palm Springs inspired the apartment's palette. The eyeglass sign was a flea-market find. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** Obeid customized a sofa by Jonathan Adler with cushions in three Kravet velvets and hung his own artwork above it. "The palette is a direct nod to '70s design, but the colors would have been much louder then," he says. "A more tonal look brings it up to date." **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM:** Obeid in his apartment.



Obeid loves to cook and entertain, so he made dining space a priority. The vintage spider chandelier is from a Buenos Aires flea market. Console, Jonathan Adler. The custom pillows are in a Lorenzo Castillo fabric for Gastón y Daniela. **OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT:** Obeid stores his sneaker collection and a makeshift bar in a vintage cabinet, quipping, “Who doesn’t want a cocktail while shoe shopping?” For *HB*’s photo shoot, he surprised the crew with pears poached in red wine, a delicious—and color-appropriate—dessert.



A vintage cabinet serves as both a bar and sneaker storage.



“**I have only four walls, so each one had better look amazing.**”

10 people in here, and everyone has a place to sit.

You’ve worked for Jonathan Adler for six years. What have you taken away from the experience?

I started right out of college and have learned so much, from styling photos to designing furniture to working on large projects, like the Parker in Palm Springs. One big thing I’ve learned from Jonathan is how to shake up a room with an element that doesn’t really “fit”—something that adds personality and shows you aren’t taking yourself too seriously. The eyes over my kitchen doorway are a great example of that.

While the apartment has distinct sections, the overall look is consistent. What was the key to that balancing act?

I tried to carve out three spaces with shifts in color and mood, almost the way you’d style three photos: The entry has burl wood and burnt orange accents, the center is more chocolate and gilded, then the bed area is in creams and whites. But those changes are subtle. Overall, the palette stays in a fairly neutral range. Also, having a recurring motif helps tie everything together. As you can probably see, I’m obsessed with squares—I love the perfect logic of the shape.

I noticed that, but it’s not overwhelming.

I was careful to vary the scale so the eye doesn’t get confused. For instance, the checkerboard fabric on the lounge chair is a different scale than the “cubes” pillow on top of it. And both of them have different proportions than the pattern on the rug. The variations create dynamism.

I count several reflective surfaces: the chrome table and chair, the mirrors, the base of the bed. Is that another small-space trick?

Having a mirror opposite the window helps, for sure. But the metallics come from my love of ’70s design. I adore the indulgence of that era—the chocolate lacquer, the squishy upholstery, the mix of brass and chrome. I took cues from vintage design books but avoided the bright colors. I wanted to nod to the glamour of the era, not create a period piece.

Do you ever dream of having more space?

I can’t lie, I’d love it! But for now, this feels right. I get to live in Chelsea and walk through the West Village on my way back from work. I open the door, drop my keys in a little Italian glass dish, and feel at home.

Obeid transformed a humdrum portrait by an unknown artist, dipping it in black paint up to the subject's eyes. The bed is by CB2. The square sham and curtains are in a Kelly Wearstler fabric. The white pillow is in a Maharam cream bouclé. The 1960s lamp is vintage. **OPPOSITE:** A printed-canvas photograph of the designer's father overlooks a collection of friendly faces. "I'm fascinated by figural art. I love the geometry of the human body," says Obeid, who painted the gold-on-black artwork. The console is vintage, and the Dora Maar vase (far right) is by Jonathan Adler. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



A black-and-white palette unites a quirky collection of faces.