

urban

In his Mill District condo, creative consultant Michael Rabatin weaves a bit of interior magic

life style

to create a stylish home

for his family of four.

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For anyone who thinks that kids, urban condos with cast concrete walls and great design don't go together, designer Michael Rabatin would like to show you otherwise.

Rabatin, formerly a VP at Polo Ralph Lauren in New York and the Design Studio director at Gabberts, and now on his own offering creative services on both the business and design side, walks the talk every day in the Mill District condo he shares with wife Lenore Moritz (founder of Mom Culture) and their two sons, Harper, 3, and Hudson, 1.

"We've learned that you can absolutely have beautiful things with kids and teach them not to destroy it," says Rabatin, settling onto a slipper chair covered in a Ralph Lauren silk shantung fabric, watching as Harper clammers up to sit on the acrylic side table.

Rabatin, who prefers to decorate with a tonal base and then let people and art add color and energy, designed this home on exactly those principles. In the living area of the open-plan first floor, furnishings are neutral, and the eye goes immediately to the art wall, which is filled with pieces that are personal: a thrift

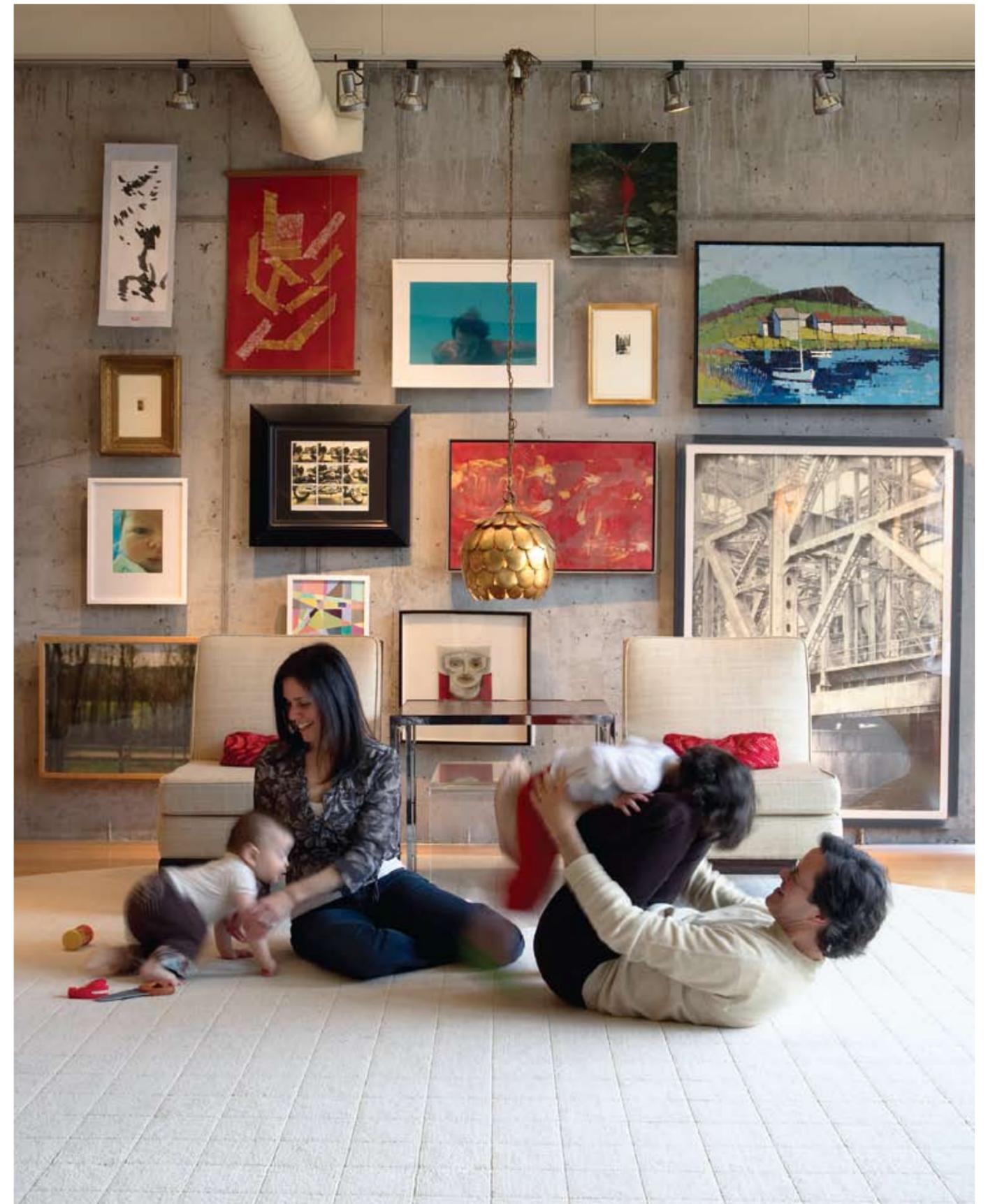
store painting he and Lenore found, batiks made by Lenore's grandmother in the '50s, a scroll made by Harper. The art hangs on an ingenious system, called the Arakawa Gripper, of wire cables that are attached at both floor and ceiling. You can add or subtract cables, and add as many hooks as you wish.

For the space under the stair, Rabatin designed a unit that doubles as office and storage, including a stroller garage. California Closets fabricated the unit, then installed it unfinished so Rabatin could paint the whole thing with chalkboard paint, which doesn't show fingerprints and cleans easily.

At the dining table, you need to take a second look to realize that the chairs are actually Smith & Hawken pieces designed for outdoor use. "We really liked the look of them," explains Rabatin, "and with the kids, we don't care how messy they get. I can take them outside and hose them off if I have to."

While their personal style allows them to embrace all things kids, Rabatin and Moritz also love living in the urban jungle, where the hallway of their condo building is their cul de sac, the nearby Guthrie escalators their playground and the recently discovered place under the Stone Arch bridge their sandbox.

"Most people assumed we couldn't live here with kids," says Rabatin, "but we have no plans to move to the suburbs. We convene in the hallways after 5 o'clock when people are coming home from work, and there's a lot of life exchanged there."





PAGE 37: Michael Rabatin, his wife Lenore Moritz and their two sons, Harper and Husdon, in the living area of their Mill City condo; the building was designed by noted local architect Julie Snow.

LEFT: Rabatin designed a custom desk/storage unit to fit beneath the stair, then finished it with chalkboard paint—a perfect spot for 3-year-old Harper to practice writing his H's.



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