

A CAUSE FOR APPLAUSE



hat runway shows are to fashion design and opening nights are to Broadway, so are designer show houses to the rarefied world of deluxe interior design. And no show house is as storied or revered as New York's Kips Bay Decorator Show House. For more than four decades, this convention of high society arrives each spring with much pomp and circumstance. Its alumni reads like a Who's Who of interior decor, from legendary names that have defined design for many years to newcomers waiting in the wings to make their mark.

The story of the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club is as powerful and cinematic as New York City itself. Beginning in 1915, the Kips Bay Neighborhood Association, representing the area from 34th Street to 39th Street on Manhattan's east side, called a meeting to address a problem with vandalism being committed by local kids -- specifically roving gangs of boys. The concept of an organized Boys Club was suggested, and in partnership with The Children's Aid Society, a former lodging house for the homeless and transient on East 44th Street was remodeled and expanded to serve approximately 900 boys by 1920, along with a summer camp at Valhalla, a hamlet in Westchester County. The Kips Bay Boys Club was incorporated in 1922, and by 1925 a branch clubhouse was opened on East 54th Street.

The resulting reduction in youth vagrancy was so dramatic that the Children's Aid Society agreed to support further expansion. Land was purchased on East 52nd Street and, with designs by the architectural firm of Delano and Aldrich (Charles Holmes Aldrich serves as president of the Club for 20 years) the most comprehensive, state-of-the-art clubhouse to date opened in 1931.

The most important development in the club's history was its official name change in 1988 to the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club, reflecting the reality of this extraordinary organization. Today, under the inspiring leadership of Executive Director Dan Quintero, The Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club proudly serves over 11,000 children - turning poverty into potential, developing minds and bodies and allowing dreams once unattainable to become spectacular realities.

THE PROVOCATEURS

Among highly creative types, there will always be the envelope pushers, those willing to take risks in the pursuit of getting people to look at things differently. The way we live today, in relatively flexible, undefined spaces, is a direct result of interior designers' and architects' willingness to take risks and cast off the hard-lined definitions of specific rooms in favor of far more multifunctional ones. These visionaries most certainly had their work cut out for them, as traditions in interior design die hard. Yet through experimentation in usage, scale, color, pattern and texture, some of the most memorable Kips Bay rooms made their debut, stimulating discussion and, in many cases, changing how we think.



Above and below: Citrine and teal battle against shades of orange and fuchsia in an entry and adjoining powder room by Andrew Suvalsky.

