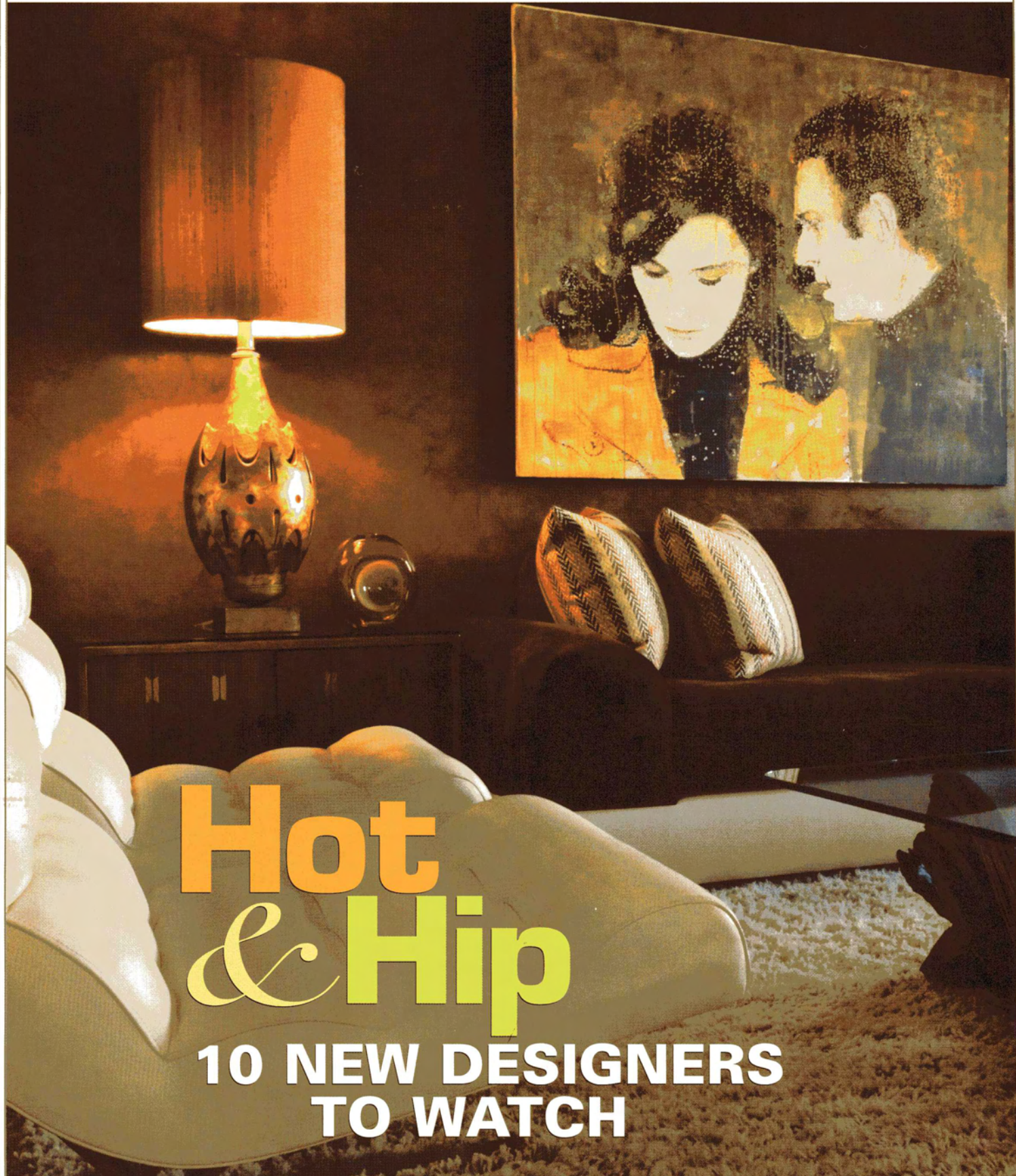


# NEW YORK SPACES

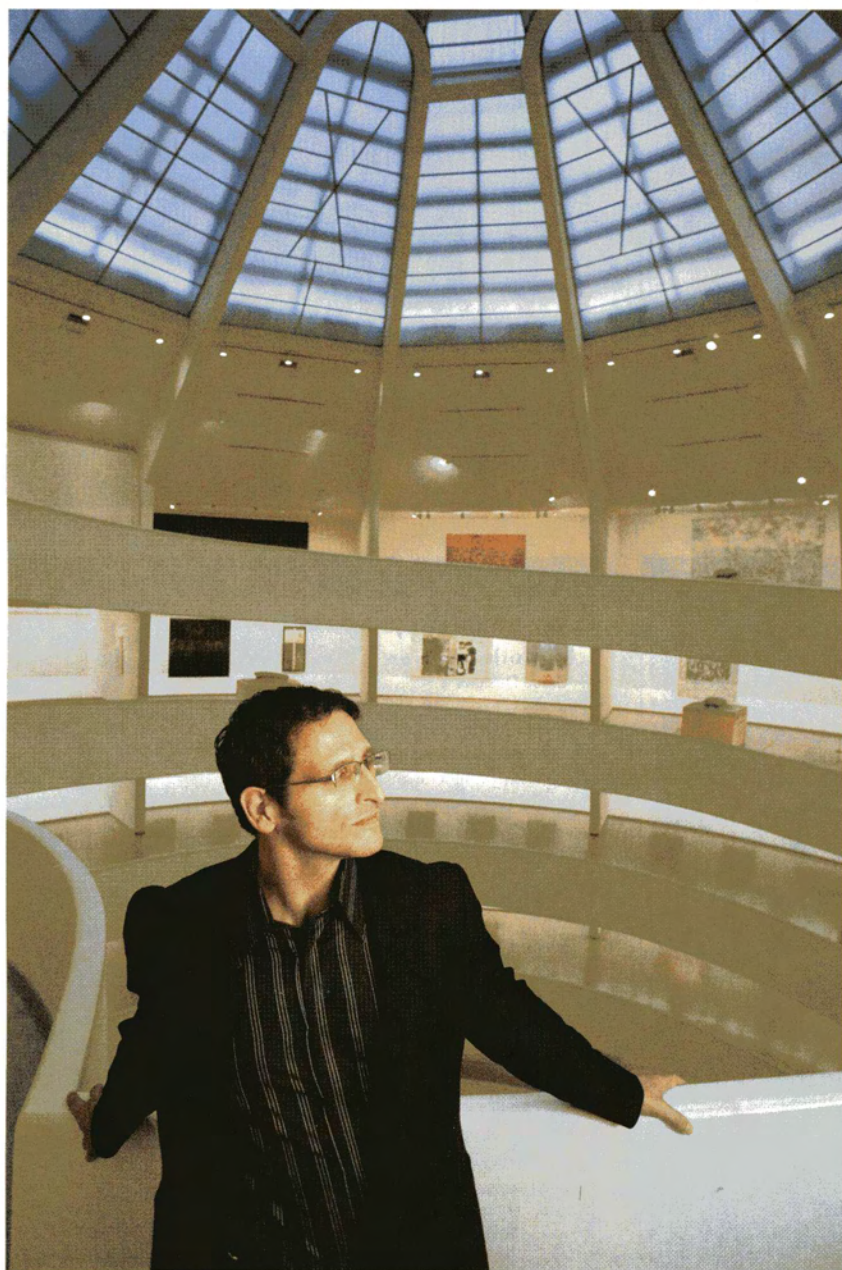
THE HOME DESIGN MAGAZINE OF METROPOLITAN NEW YORK



## Hot & Hip

10 NEW DESIGNERS  
TO WATCH

# The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



I WAS 14 YEARS OLD WHEN I came to New York in 1974, and I was very much involved with art and architecture in school. I'd seen images of the Guggenheim in books, but seeing the actual scale of the building, the way it hangs over the street and the

different views in person, I was blown away. It is an extraordinary piece of architecture, revolutionary for its time.

Guggenheim creator Frank Lloyd Wright, the genius of all geniuses, used it to explore architecture as sculpture. That was an experimental idea then

and still is today. The concept is being embraced by contemporary architects—people like Zaha Hadid and Frank Gehry. It was a far harder notion to sell back then. Wright was commissioned in 1943 and made more than 700 sketches and six working drawings over the next 15 years. The museum didn't open until 1959—six months after Wright died!

The interior is exquisite and functions beautifully. He broke the mold by keeping visitors constantly in motion. They don't just go from one hall to another; they walk round and round all the time. You get this incredible sense of moving inside a piece of sculpture. And the way natural light flows into the center of the space is just unbelievable.

Surprisingly, you rarely see lines for the museum. The art world today is so flamboyant, yet the people who go here don't seem to be after the latest blockbuster. I think Guggenheim-goers want mostly to experience the era during which Peggy Guggenheim amassed her incredible collection of art. I love what she said—that we can't get any better art than we have because we have exhausted the possibilities. Everyone thinks his or her time is the best, of course, and there is still great art being made. But the 20th century was such a turning point, with masters like Braque, Léger and Matisse.

These artists all pushed the envelope, and the movements they represent parallel the revolutionary nature of the Guggenheim. It has stood the test of time, and maybe that's why I still have that sense of excitement each time I pass it today. It still feels new. □

CHARLES ALLEM's Miami-based firm, CAD International, specializes in high-end residences and luxury hotels. He is known for employing unexpected scale and materials and for working in styles as diverse as Louis XIV, rococo, deco and contemporary.