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MAGAZINE: PACIFIC NORTHWEST DESIGN

{ DESIGN WORTH }

flipping over

CELEBRATING CONTRASTS:

Pro skater • Fashion designer

NEW FAMILY • EMPTY NESTING

Furniture maker • Motorcycle builder

WEST COAST • EAST COAST

& so on ...

Nesting on top
OF THE WORLD



n a corner in a bustling Vancouver neighborhood—once a manufacturing district, now home to a thriving media industry—sits the office of **Lesia Kirk** and her six colleagues of the **Kirk Talent Agency**. A rough-edged, factory-style building, it was a munitions storage facility during World War II and later, a sewing factory. Arriving here didn't happen without a few bumps in the road; in July 2012, the agency suffered a devastating fire in their previous office and quickly needed to relocate.

Kirk Talent Agency expanded to Los Angeles in 2009, and Lesia Kirk spends much of her time there. Despite the distance, Kirk quickly dove into reconstruction, reaching out to her friend **Shannon Powell**, a Vancouver-based designer and actress, to collaborate on the new office. "After what they had been



renovate

THIS PAGE: Putty tones and textural details in an office warm up the industrial theme. **OPPOSITE:** A painstakingly restored fire door refers to the past.

DESIGN TEAM

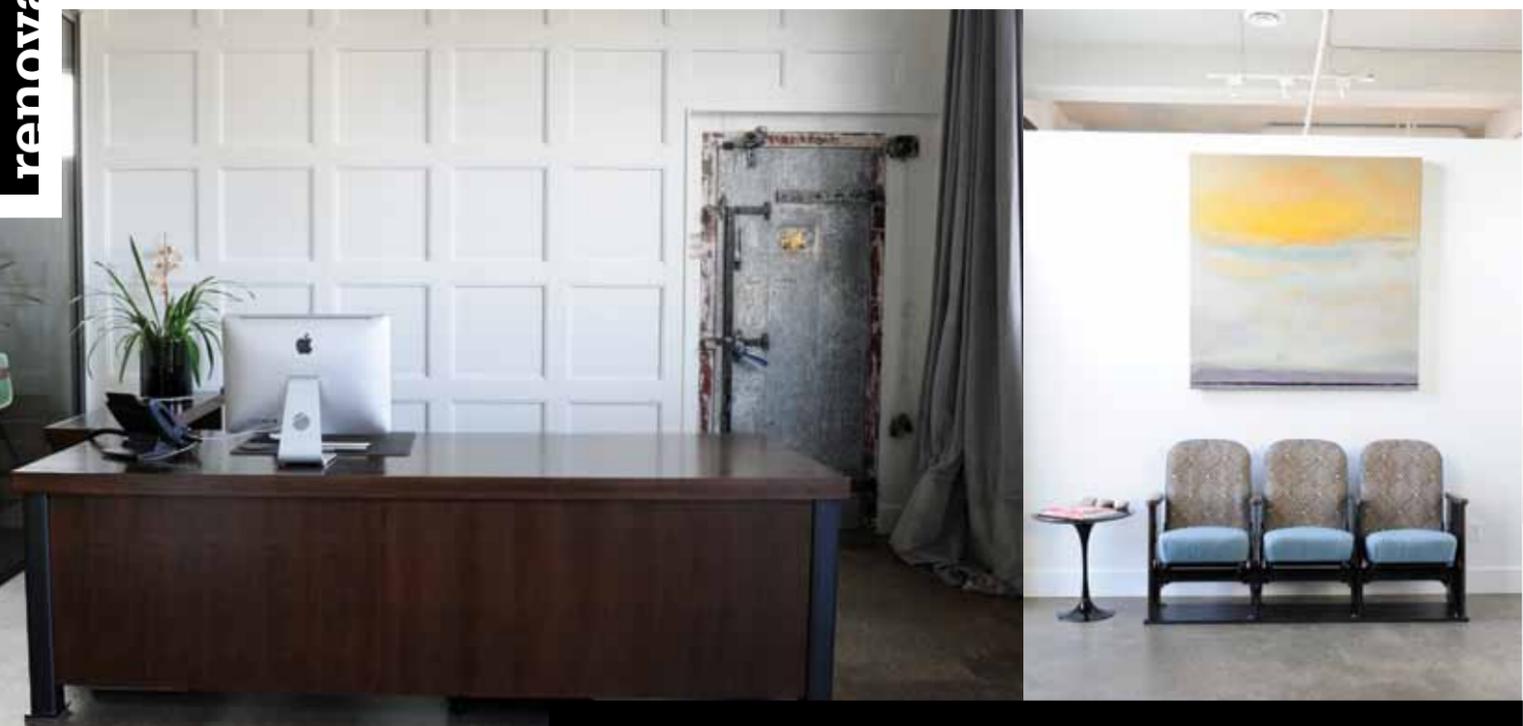
interiors: Powell Interiors

project management: Calvin Fox Project Management

cabinetry: Richardson Cabinetry

WWII Munitions Storage to Sewing Factory to Talent Agency

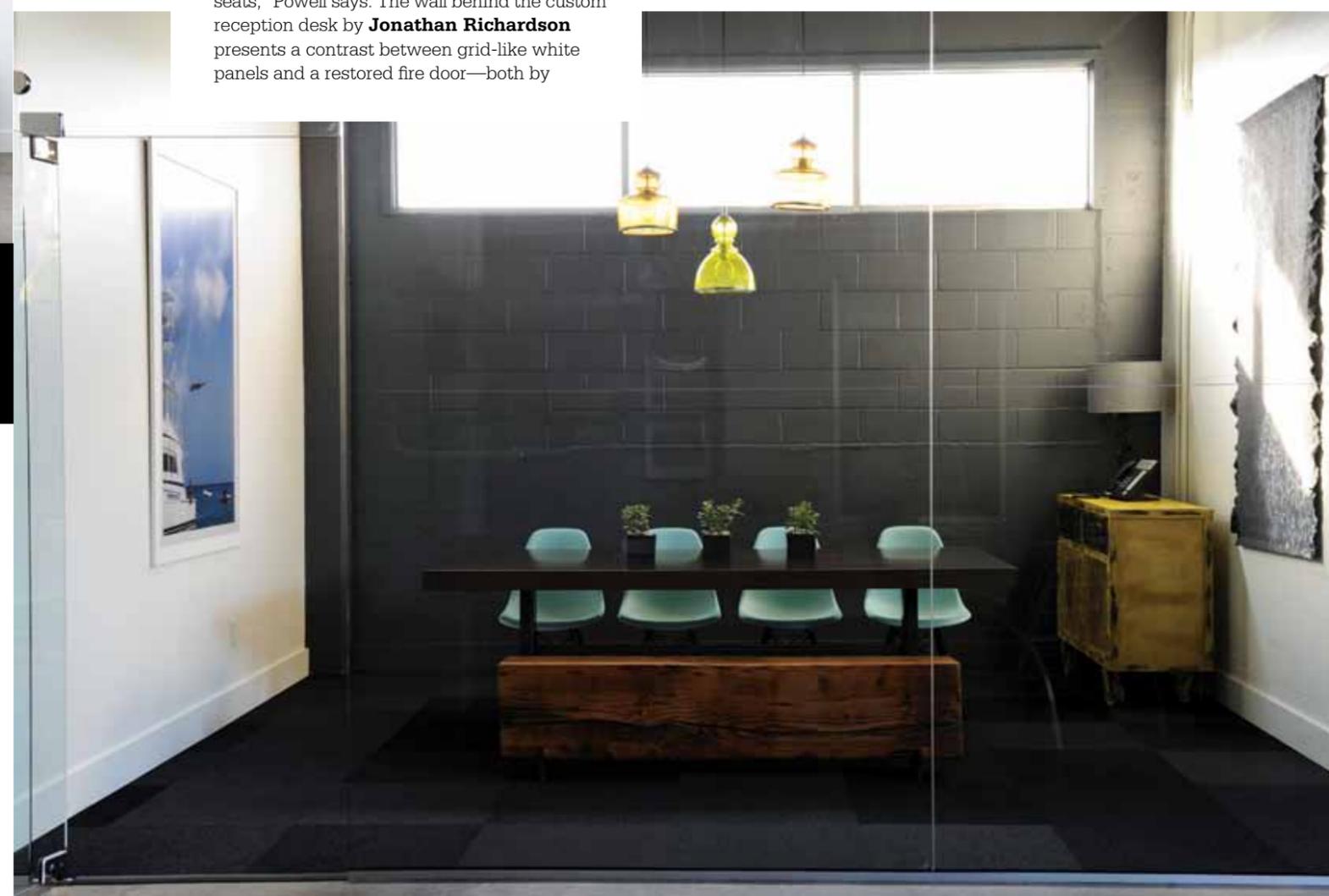
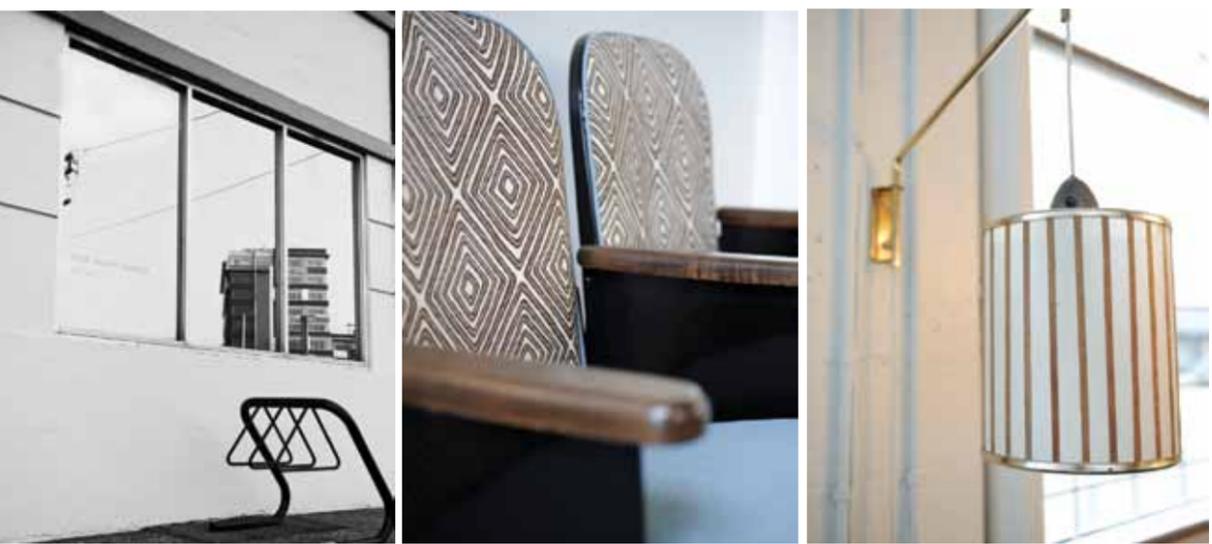
Written by RACHEL EGGERS
Photographed by TRACEY AYTON

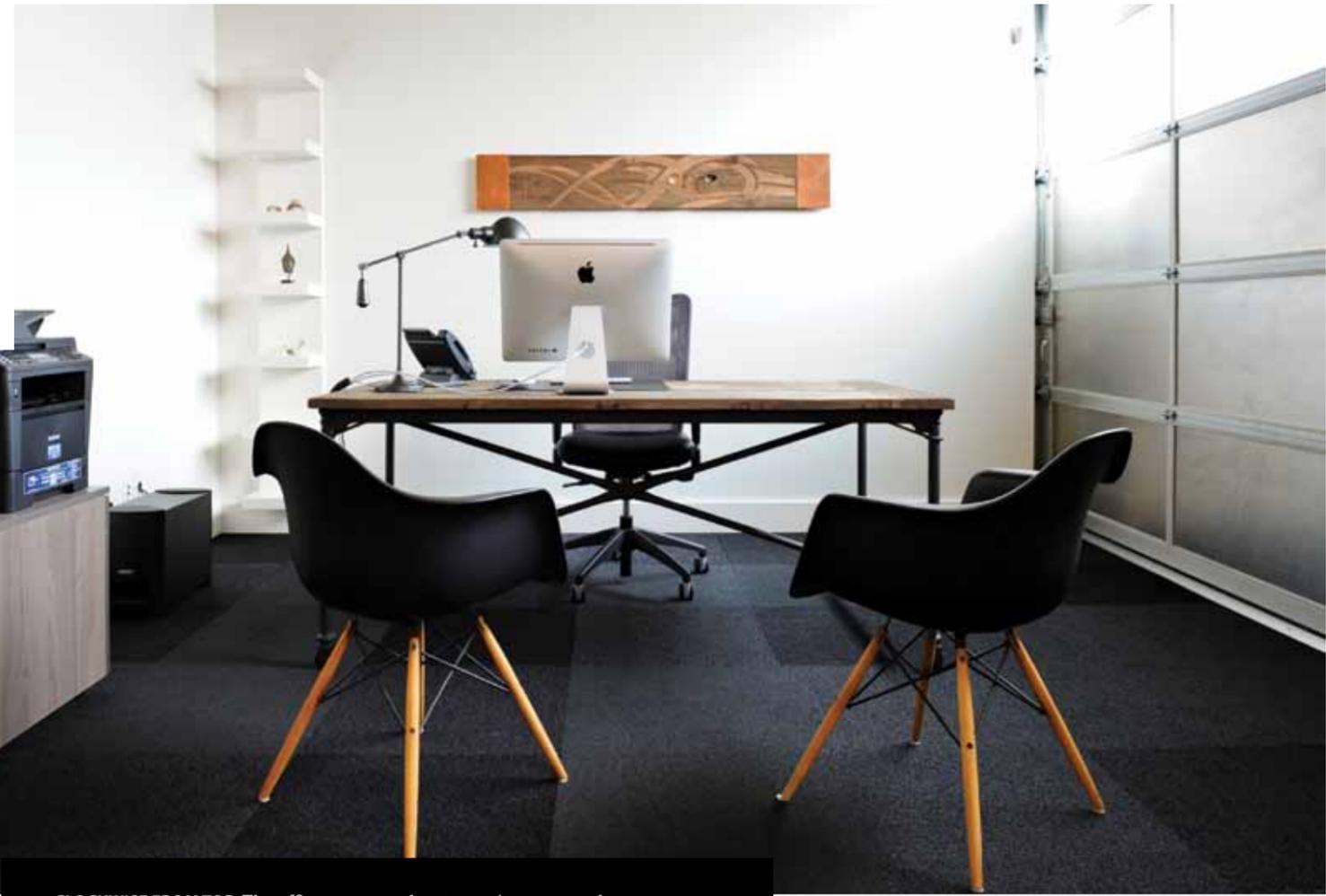


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Grid-like old wood panels contrast with the restored fire door in the reception area; Antique theater chairs in the waiting room nod to old Hollywood; A vintage pendant swing lamp completes the beachy, midcentury vibe; Antique theater seats get a makeover in graphic print backs and soothing periwinkle seats; The bike rack out front fills modern-day needs. **OPPOSITE:** Saturated hues and an immense reclaimed wood bench anchor the conference room.

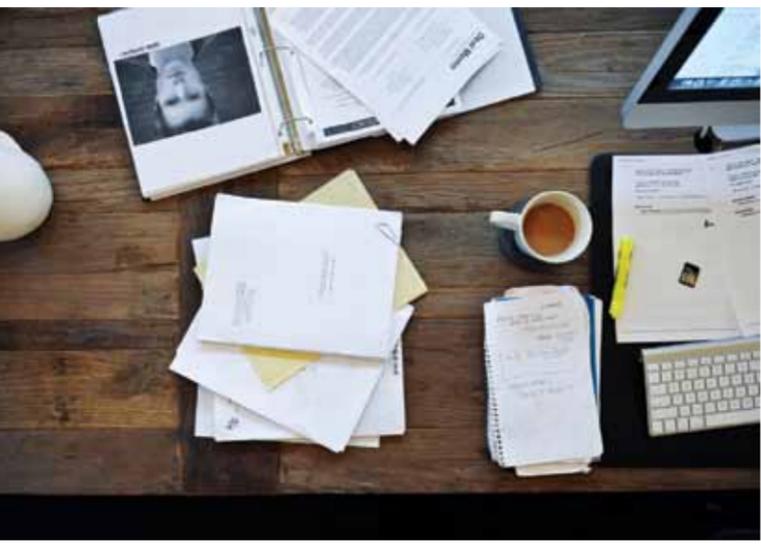
through, I wanted to surround them with a vibrant, inviting space that spoke to their personalities," Powell says. To achieve this, she created a clean, elegant mix of what they call "warm-industrial-meets-West-Coast-beach-meets-Hollywood-glamour." Powell adds: "It all started with the idea of a beach rock fireplace and it went from there."

The expansive entrance is a mix of cool yellow and blue tones. Vintage theatre seats, refinished in a mix of textures, were a flea market find. "They were in rough shape but it's fun to think about the actors waiting to see their agents in those authentic Hollywood seats," Powell says. The wall behind the custom reception desk by **Jonathan Richardson** presents a contrast between grid-like white panels and a restored fire door—both by





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The office opens to the street via a garage door; Inspiring quotes from beat poets adorn a customized chalkboard **IKEA** armoire; A communal dining table from **Restoration Hardware** serves as a desk.



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Calvin Fox Contracting—which serves as a symbolic acceptance of the past. “There were years of paint on the fire door,” Powell says, “but with some convincing, everyone started to believe that there was something great underneath.”

The conference room deepens the yellow and blue color scheme, with aqua Eames chairs, amber-yellow seeded glass pendants, and a distressed yellow antique console. In an impressive act of reclamation, an immense slab of raw wood over six feet long—recovered from the fire and refinished by furniture designer **Ward Kondas**—serves as a bench at the table. The tall, box-like shape of the



room and the gray floor and walls directs the energy inward, which helps the group focus during meetings.

Other rooms are distinct without straying from the overall concept. The media room goes for a modernized *Mad Men* style with a vintage chair recovered in a funky orange print and a vintage French movie poster of *Gilda*, the ultimate femme fatale. An office offers a feminine counterpoint to the industrial feel, with warm putty tones, gold-painted Anaglypta wallpaper, and a wooden chandelier.

While hunting treasures at a Los Angeles flea market one afternoon, Kirk and Powell came across a quote from writer Charles Bukowski that read, “What matters most is how well you walk through the fire.” Kirk Talent Agency has certainly come out better. ✱



The media room goes for laidback swank with a reupholstered mod chair and vintage *Gilda* movie poster.

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Written by STACY KENDALL
 Photographed by TRACEY AYTON

live/work/paint/show

One of Gastown's oldest buildings is also home to one of its coolest residences—a studio, art gallery, and living space all in one.

A workaholic in the art industry might joke that he or she lives at an art gallery, but few people can say that they actually do. For artist and design consultant **Noah Morse**, however, his gallery, **No Remorse Studio** in Vancouver, B.C.'s historic Gastown neighborhood is what he comes home to at the end of the day. At least his commute is short—Morse works at modern design mecca, **Inform Interiors** right across the street.

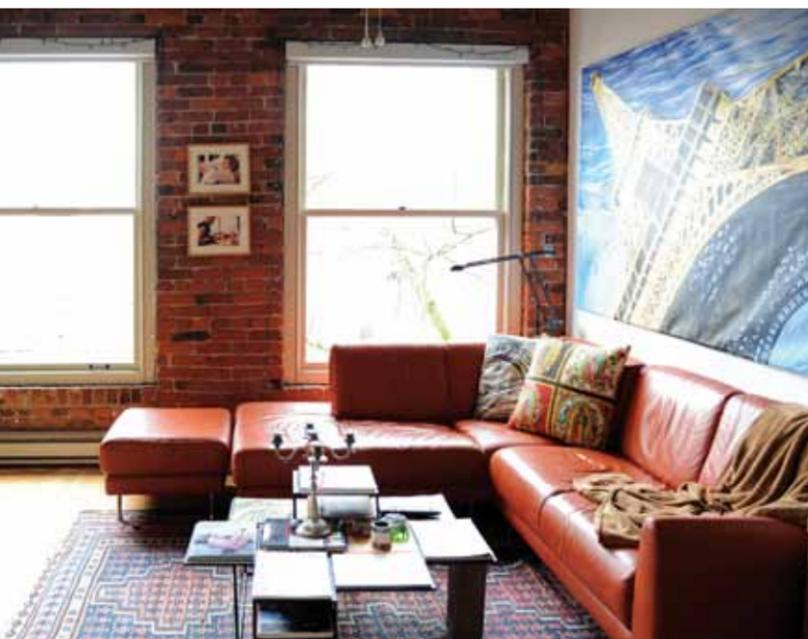
His triple-threat space—home, studio, and gallery—is

located in a heritage conversion building that dates to 1912, making it one of the oldest buildings in that area. "What I loved were the exposed ceilings and original beams," says Morse, who has lived in the building with his girlfriend for two and a half years.

Those exposed ceilings and original beams were the seeds of inspiration for Morse's transformation of the space into an attractively eclectic home, a useful and inspiring studio space, and a crisp, contemporary gallery.



THIS PAGE: Morse at his studio desk, surrounded by inspirations and supplies. He has painted for the last 10 years with acrylic on several different types of surfaces. **OPPOSITE: No Remorse Studios.** So far, nine artists from across Canada have shown in the space, which focuses on emerging talents.



Morse has a set of skills and interests that span a wide spectrum of art and design, not to mention he did most of the interior fixture work himself. A self-taught artist, he studied art history, architecture and furniture design at University of British Columbia. Both his parents were designers, and he credits his father's furniture designs in the '70s and '80s as a catalyst for his interest in all things interiors.

For Morse, opening a gallery was never a question—it was only a matter of how and when. After working at Inform Interiors for two years, he revisited the thought of opening a gallery—

an idea that he'd had since his university days. "I figured I could do both, if it was close to work," Morse says. Luckily for him, that space was right across the street from his day job. With such a short distance between all four spaces (live, work, paint, show), it was easy for Morse to get going on his dream and only a short time before he was having openings for other artists.

Morse walks through the gallery (located on the top floor of the building) to get to his home, which lies just beyond one wall. "It has a New York feel to it, where you have people that create gallery spaces out of nothing," he says. "Kind of like an underground scene, with pop-up shows. I think it's better that way."

No Remorse Studio was established for the advancement of emerging artists. After the openings, the pieces are on view for three weeks by appointment. Morse has imagined a gallery that doesn't rely on people just walking by. "It's based on a one-night-only opening, which has the feeling of if you want to see it and get it, you have to get there, and get there early," he says. That isn't just a sales pitch. Morse says that night, two-thirds of the paintings sold in the first half an hour. Not bad for a 350-square foot room, only social media marketing, and one night. If live-work spaces are the wave of the future for cities, perhaps Morse has hit on the future of galleries.

At press time, Morse plans to combine his family's design business and the gallery to become simply, **Morse Design Studio (MDS)**. He will continue to hold art shows on a regular basis, but the space will become an interdisciplinary design studio focusing on residential and industrial design projects. ✱

The studio workspace is separated from the living area. High ceilings, featuring original wooden beams, were the features that Morse was most excited about in the beginning. The Ingo Maurer Zettel'z 6 Chandelier over the dining room table is in constant flux; Morse and his friends add and subtract their own pages for the iconic fixture. He poetically describes the Zettel'z as a microcosm of the space itself—that it's always changing.

