**The Home of Niv Fichman, Founder of Rhombus Media Inc**., **designed by Drew Sinclair, regionalArchitects**

Creating a home for Niv Fichman, founder of Rhombus Media was creating an expression of all that he values. Fichman is exuberant, discerning and a generous supporter of young Toronto film makers. His well-known film credits include *The Red Violin, the recent Denis Villeneuve film Enemy, and the film adaptation of* José Saramago’s novel Blindness. The design of his penthouse at 375 King Street West, reflects both his personal warmth and appreciation of art, as well as his desire to create uncompromising function out of every element within his space.

Niv Fichman chose Architect Drew Sinclair, Principal at regionalArchitects ([www.regionalarchiects.com](http://www.regionalarchiects.com)) in Toronto and a recent recipient of the 2008 Canada Council’s Prix de Rome, to lead the design. Drew reflects on the experience of Niv's design as *slow architecture,* requiring the careful, skillful crafting of contemporary architectural detail, set against the backdrop of a rapidly transforming city.

The design and construction of the penthouse emerged over five years, from 2009 to 2013. All the while, heated debates over the relative instability of Toronto’s downtown condo market dominated local newspaper headlines. Economists, urbanists and citizens speculated (and still speculate) on the economic risks of the city’s unparalleled condo explosion. Concerns were cited over the surplus of small, unsold units, the impermanence of investors and residents, and the construction quality of the new, glass skyscrapers popping up across Toronto’s skyline.

Fichman and Sinclair negotiated with the developer to retain the unit in its raw form: a 1200 sq.ft. concrete and glass box, 11’ ceilings and south-eastern views across to the lake. From there, the design came to fruition through an ongoing dialogue over the course of the tower’s construction. Niv’s needs, desires and aspirations were translated by Drew into drawings, and then piles of drawings, until sketches and concepts eventually materialized into flexible, flowing open spaces and intricately-detailed forms.

Every design element, from the custom tub to the telephone shelf, evolved through years of conversation and drawing. The plan sub-divides the space into zones: an angular corridor of rich wood, separating the primary living space from the study, wine cellar and workspace; a sunken bedroom court separating the tatami sleeping stage from the master bath; and a raised bath platform separated from the living area by a translucent screen.

Sliding panels conceal private spaces: a laundry, a second bedroom, a library, and a powder room. The circulation opens toward the living room and kitchen spaces, made enormous with sweeping, uninterrupted views across the city. To economize on space, individual elements take on multiple identities: a desk transforms into shelf to sort wine; a folding screen becomes a surface for folding laundry; and the wood paneling of the bathroom floor doubles as a drain. In Japanese tradition, the sleeping futons are tucked away each day, so that the recessed tatami mats can be used for work or entertaining.

Niv Fichman’s stunning art collection of sculpture, small paintings, and cultural relics required a a curators sensibility. A series of scaled display niches with integrated lighting beautifully displayed and illuminated each piece of art. The millwork plays multiple roles: housing the cabling, power, and a heating and ventilation system, concealing storage and providing ample workspace. The transformative nature of the architecture allows it be practical in application and luxurious in every sense. It is a testament to the power of the iterative design process: over time, it has evolved into a design that is both complex and refined.

Suppliers:

Architecture – regionalArchitects

Director, Drew Sinclair (dsinclair@regionalarchitects.com)

Team: Kelly Doran, Daniela Leon, Andrew Chau, Chris Mascarenhas

Construction Manager – TAS (Mazyar Mortazavi, Babak Mortazavi, Kamyar Mortazavi, Hosein Hassanpour)

Building Contractor – Tucker HiRise

Mechanical Engineer – MCW

Lighting – David Finn Design, Dark Tools, Ingo Maurer

Electrical Installation - Tron

Audio Visual Installation – Sound Designs

Solid Surface Fabrication – RJW Enterprises

Kitchen Supplier – Scavolini, Dekla

Millwork – Joe Macedo Carpentry

Stone – Crystal Tile

Fixtures – Vola, Gingers

Glass – Vast Interiors

TIMELINE:

Design – 2009-2012

Construction – 2011 – 2014

Budget – withheld

Client – Niv Fichman