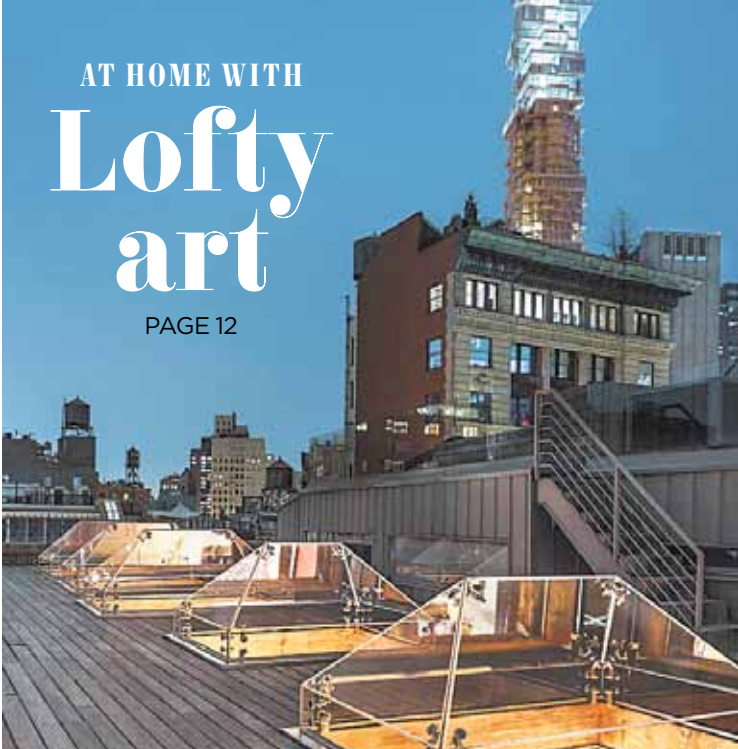




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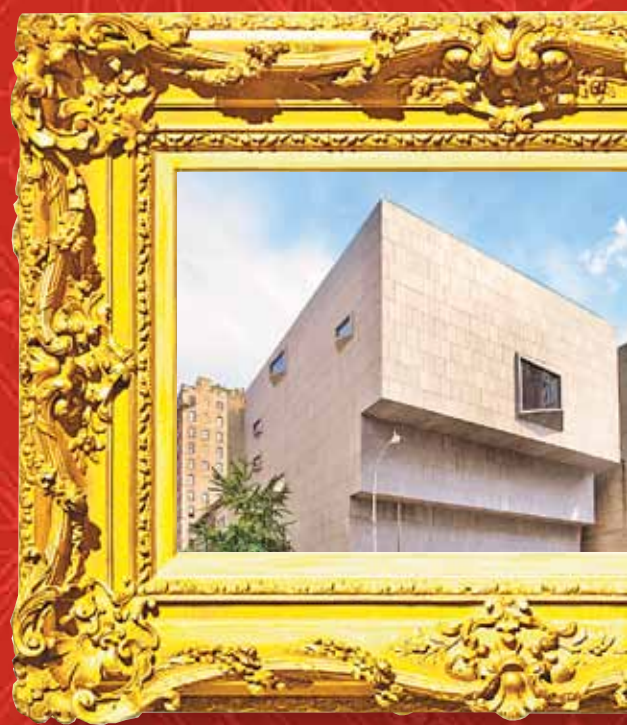
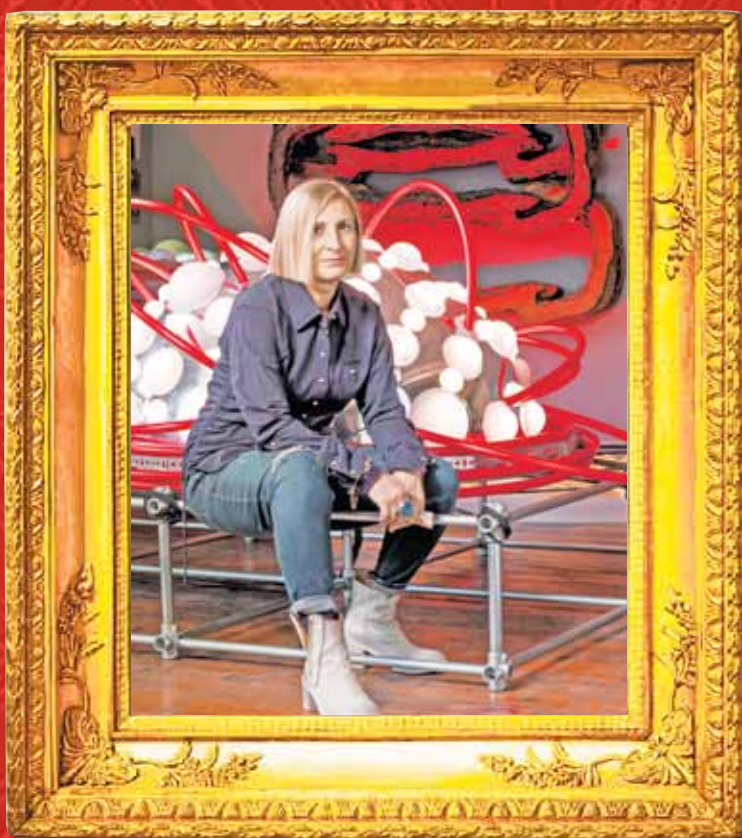


alexa

THE ART ISSUE

FROM THE NEW YORK POST
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The Best of Everything



FRIEZE FRAMES

As New York's biggest art fair raises its tents, we celebrate the city's coolest creatives — and their wildest works





Artist Grimanesa Amorós poses in her Tribeca studio with a model of her "PINK LOTUS" light sculpture, installed last year at the Peninsula New York hotel.

AT HOME WITH

GUIDING LIGHT

Grimanesa Amorós builds her fantastical illuminated sculptures in a soaring three-story Tribeca studio-cum-home



The artist snagged her 2,500-square-foot studio space (above) in 1993, before transforming the two floors above into her home.

STORY BY RAQUEL LANERI
PHOTOS BY BRAD STEIN

GRIMANESA Amorós has always dreamed big. As a child in Lima, Peru, she spent hours drawing maps of the world, building sea-foam sculptures, and painting giant landscapes of the mountains, deserts and jungles that blanket her native country. The earth was her canvas; the sky, her limit. But when Amorós moved to NYC in 1984, she initially had to scale down her artistic ambitions.

"As you know, real estate in New York City is quite high," the 53-year-old says wryly. "So I had to stick to painting."

Three decades later she has room to stretch — both in her work and at home. One of the most sought-after installation artists in the world, Amorós creates illuminated sculptures that have dazzled everywhere from Times Square to Tabacalera (Madrid's hip tobacco-factory-turned-art-space) to Art Basel Hong Kong, where she designed a spindly 100-foot chandelier that looks like a neon Jackson Pollock painting come to life. Those creations emerged largely thanks to her vast studio — a 2,500-square-foot loft that conveniently lies a floor below her sprawling, two-story Tribeca home.

"I tried sharing workspaces with other artists, I tried setting up a studio in my apartment, but I found that I would get distracted," Amorós — wearing a voluminous black Issey Miyake dress, her blond hair in a chic bob — tells Alexa. "I wanted a space that was totally separate, where I could create and still feel myself."

She found such a haven in 1993, creating a workshop that resembles a kind of laboratory — scattered with plastic tubes and LED lights, maps and diagrams. Her art has likewise expanded to include boldly colored paintings, paper sculptures and monumental light installations, frequently evocative of her homeland or inspired by nature. The studio offers her ample space to build ambitious 3-D objects: amorphous bulbous sculptures that mimic the ragged terrain of Peru's floating Uros Islands, and sci-fi-esque mock-ups for her large-scale public works.

A few years later, Amorós expanded further, moving into the two floors above her studio. She spent a year and a half gut-renovating that landmarked space into a homey loft, which she shares with her husband and their 19-year-old daughter, Shammiel. The artist ripped up the floors, broke through two ceilings, and added a multilevel terrace outside, working with city officials to make sure she wasn't violating landmark rules.

"I designed the whole place myself with engineers. It was a lot of work," she says. "I actually get people all the time asking me to do their places, but I would not do it [again] for a million dollars!"

And yet the result perfectly melds her preoccupation with both nature and technology. Haitian paintings, butterfly specimens and traditional sculptures from Indonesia mingle with Amorós' own works, including a gleaming white portal with vine-like tubes that float to the ceiling

— placed smack-dab in the living area. A spiral staircase (made from the building's original wood beams), exposed brick walls and wooden ceilings add a rustic feel to the home, which is decorated with a blend of antique colonial furniture from South America and modern pieces, like a red leather couch and an Alexander Calder-style mural. "It's a mixture of so many cultures: Africa, Bali, Indonesia, India, colonial times, modern times — but I think [the pieces] manage to communicate well," says the artist, who acquired many of her treasures during her global travels before moving into the space. "My friends are from all different parts of the world. It captures the essence of who I am as a person."

For Amorós, that also means being a devoted mother; she temporarily dropped out of the art world after giving birth in 1996.

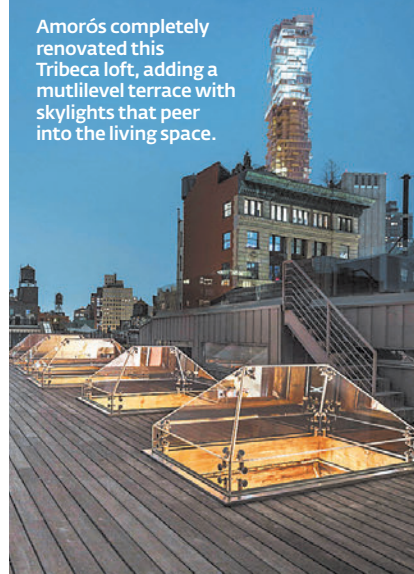
"When I do things I always give my 100 percent, and I think when I was with [Shammiel] she became my piece of artwork in a way, so I devoted all my energies and creativity to raising her," Amorós recalls. "I actually thought I was finished as an artist, because I had no creative juices at all: I could not even draw."

Instead, she turned her home into a kind of playground, hanging a pompom-embellished swing from the ceiling and encouraging Shammiel — who now studies textiles at the Rhode Island School of Design — to cover the inside of one of the loft's three elevators with crayon drawings (Amorós papered the outside with enlarged band promo posters she found in Peru).

"Being a mother has changed my art in a profound way," says Amorós, who discovered artistic ideas pouring out of her as soon as her daughter began school. "It's like I came back to the art world as a different person."

Amorós is now busier than ever, creating her monumental 2015 piece "Golden Waters" — a tangled strand of undulating fluorescent tubes stretching 164 feet across the Scottsdale, Ariz., waterfront — based on the irrigation systems used by the region's native Hohokam Indians. She's also building a large-scale installation for the Grand Palais in Paris and working on pieces for Qatar and, once again, Times Square.

"Every new project is like a romance with the unknown," she reflects. "We live in a time where we are so busy, there's so much technology. I want people to just stop and think about the space we're in, our place in the world, the beauty of engineering and nature. If I can capture someone's attention for three or four seconds, then I know the piece is working."



Amorós completely renovated this Tribeca loft, adding a multilevel terrace with skylights that peer into the living space.



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: 1. A spiral staircase (created from the building's original wood beams) and a vibrant elevator (decorated with Peruvian band posters) connect the home's floors. **2.** Amorós builds models of her light sculptures and larger public works in her studio. **3.** The sprawling living space is adorned with global art as well as her own work — including the tendrilled "ONKOCHISHIN," which she created in 2014 for a fashion show with Japanese designer Akiko Elizabeth Maie. **4.** Amorós says "Vine Creatures," from 1993, was her final painting before she permanently transitioned to other mediums. **PROP STYLIST: DAHLIA GALLER/JAMES REPS WORKS**

