



WEB-EXCLUSIVE HOME TOUR

This Serene Chelsea Refuge Is a Creative Hideout

Argentinian-born designer and ceramist Carlos Otero crafted an NYC home where earthy hues mingle with interesting shapes and textures

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“My interiors are simple in terms of color, and my ceramics are completely monochromatic too,” explains Argentinian-born architect and interior designer turned ceramicist Carlos Otero. “Architecture taught me how to design, and I apply those principles to ceramics. I like to create graphic, simple shapes that have impact.”

The same could be said of the muted two-bedroom, one-and-a-half-story apartment he calls home in the heart of New York City's Chelsea neighborhood. Decorated almost exclusively in a warm, earthy shade of ecru, the space relies upon interesting shapes, textures and—of course—ceramics to add interest. Otero has lived in the property since the early 2000s.

HOSTLER BURROWS

It was during a sabbatical move to Hong Kong in 2010 that Otero began his shift into ceramics. He passed a small pottery studio on a six-floor walk-up in the city one day and thought it was time to try something new. “There was a little lady there who taught the classes, and I immediately loved it,” he recalls. “She was super strict and would yell at you if you got it wrong, but it was great training.”



This large space, painted in [Benjamin Moore Ashen Tan](#), was immediately transformed into Otero's home office for the interior design studio and is retained as a place to draw, sketch, and prepare his ceramic works. The pendant light is made up of dried poppy flowers and was purchased when he lived in Hong Kong. The 1950s rosewood chairs were reupholstered in red-orange linen from [Gastón y Daniela at Kravet](#).

When he moved back to New York, some colleagues began asking him to make things—the odd lamp, a mirror—and “then it all started,” as he says. Today, Otero, whose solo show at NYC's Hostler Burrows gallery is on view now through the month of November, works out of a studio in Long Island. What led him to make the switch? “I got burnt dealing with people, basically,” he says. “In interiors, you have to be on top of so many people all the time. After almost 15 years of being in my office until 11 p.m. every day, I just thought, I didn't want to do this anymore.”

Using an alternate part of his brain for this particular creative outlet was also a key factor in the switch. “I found ceramics was completely different to interior design; it was just me, some clay, and all my imagination. I could control everything—or so I thought until I started doing all the glazing and firing—and I loved going back to something very personal. Just me and the piece.”

While ceramics is the main focus today, creating beautiful 3D environments with craft at its core is still a joy of Otero's, to which his home attests. “I still have my interior design side of course,” he says. “So when I make a ceramic piece, I am always thinking where it could go, how the light will hit on it, and so on. It's a full circle.”



With his apartment's high ceilings and relatively large rooms in NYC's Chelsea neighborhood, Argentinian-born architect and interior designer turned ceramist Carlos Otero describes it as “perfect to entertain in.” The vintage Danish rosewood table is designed by Niels Moller, as are the teak dining chairs, which are covered in a blue velvet from [Schumacher](#). *When you buy something through a retail link on Architectural Digest, we may earn an affiliate commission.*