

# INTERIOR DESIGN®

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ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PAST:  
3. RE-CREATION

# Museum Calibre

*Within New York's Metropolitan Museum, new galleries  
for the Linsky Collection*

PHOTOGRAPHY: STAN RIES

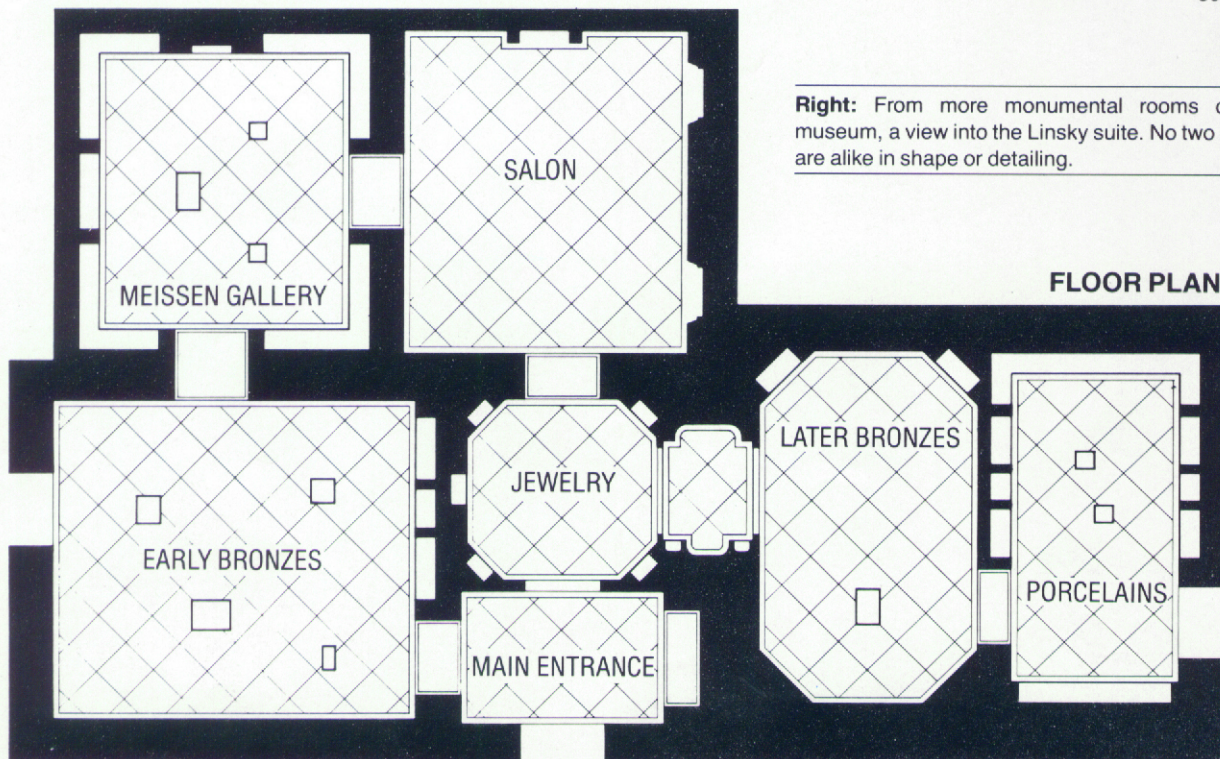
Restoring the old interior and carefully adapting it for new functions have become commonplace tasks for the designer. Creating a venerable-seeming environment from scratch is something else. At least, as in this case, when the new work is not the usual blend of old and new, not just a fashionable reference to the past, not a clever historic allusion, but as close as possible to the genuine article. This complex of seven galleries houses the Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, a recent gift to the Metropolitan Museum by Mrs. Linsky. It is the accomplishment of a collaborating trio of architects and designers: Arthur Rosenblatt, the museum's vice-president for architecture and planning, who supervised the entire project; Henri Samuel, the prominent Paris designer with an international clientele; and Robert Kupiec, consulting architect, whose firm produced the extraordinary construction documents, some of which we show here and some of which were based directly on sketches from M. Samuel. Harold Eberhard worked as Samuel's New York associate.

The special character of this suite of rooms was not a whim but a natural response to the special character of the collection it houses. It is a collection of particular interest to designers,

and it was assembled by serious and knowledgeable collectors. In his autobiography, *Self-Portrait with Donors*, John Walker, former director of The National Gallery, describes an auction room encounter when he attempted to buy a Flemish primitive panel, Juan de Flandes' *The Marriage Feast at Cana*: "I had a false sense of security, for I did not know that Mrs. Jack Linsky of New York, a most discerning collector, had decided that she wanted (the painting)...No one could have outbid Mrs. Linsky." No one did. The result of such avid collecting is an assembly of French furniture, Italian paintings, Renaissance jewelry, medieval bronzes, enamels, porcelains, and much more—an assembly unified only by a common level of quality.

The furniture in the collection, for example, includes a commode veneered with tortoise shell and brass by André-Charles Boulle, the most celebrated of Louis XIV furniture-makers. Also here is another commode from Versailles, this one marquetry with *Commedia dell'Arte* scenes by the famous German cabinetmaker David Roentgen. Also a bow-fronted chest of drawers with chased gilt-bronze mounts by the 18th-century sculptor and *ébéniste* Charles Cressent. Here, too, a mahogany and kingwood marquetry writing table made by

*Continued*



**Right:** From more monumental rooms of the museum, a view into the Linsky suite. No two rooms are alike in shape or detailing.