

# Visual Thinker: Phillip Thomas

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Phillip Thomas '05 (BFA). Photo: Michelle Williams.

**Phillip Thomas '05 (BFA)** worked for [Ingrao Inc.](#) for six years after graduation. In 2011, he struck out on his own and founded [Phillip Thomas Inc.](#) This [Manhattan pied-à-terre](#) was one of the first projects he designed as the principal of his eponymous firm, and it's a triumph born of problem solving, curation, and a close, collaborative relationship with his clients.

## Nest Over the Hudson

In 2012, Thomas received a call from clients who were standing in a raw space in Manhattan that was perched high over the Hudson River. The clients told him, “If you love it, we’ll get it.” This couple lives abroad, and they were looking for a small apartment to transform into an escape where they could nest and be together, away from the pressures of their intense jobs. Thomas rushed to see the space and was overwhelmed by views all the way down the Westside Highway and out to the sparkling river. There was a huge structural column in the center of the room that could not be removed, and Thomas knew he could not hide it without obscuring the view and chopping up the space, so he decided to celebrate the column. He encouraged his clients to buy the apartment and worked closely with them to design a joyful, social, eclectic space lled with objects from di erent eras and nations. His clients loved the design so much they hired him for several more projects. Says Thomas, “If you want to make your clients happy, listen to them talk about how they want to live.”



1. These shelves, bespoke creations adapted from a line by the artist Gabriella Kiss and the furniture maker Chris Lehrecke, transform an unsightly column into a soaring, sculptural form that evokes a tree.
2. This painting is by the renowned Mexican Artist Rufino Tamayo. The son of a Chilean mother and American father, Thomas loves mixing cultural influences in his designs.
3. Thomas sourced this one-of-a-kind Maison Leleu desk (1940), with its rich, green lacquer, from Maison Gerard. The clients loved it so much that Thomas arranged the entire floor plan around it.

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4. These stools, created in the late 1940s by Edward Wormley for Dunbar and sourced from the New York Design Center, have undulating curves that complement the sight lines and sinuosity of the room. Their legs splay, “almost like tusks,” says Thomas. The stools make a circular seating area possible without obscuring the views.
5. The wavy, glistening form of the Hudson River inspired Thomas’ use of this multilevel carpet by Edward Fields.

