

The Sun



TODAY
Sunny to partly cloudy. High 62°

TONIGHT
Brisk and chilly. Low 36°

TOMORROW
Mainly sunny. High 55°

Couch Questing

Get One Old or New:

AUCTIONS, p. 19, and HOME, p. 23



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MID-CENTURY MASTER

Mark Naylor Offers Vintage Treasures at His Lower East Side Shop

By CHRIS SCHMIDT

Mark Naylor's sleek mid-century design showroom, Modern Living Supplies, is a novelty in its surroundings near the Manhattan Bridge, at the outer reaches of the Lower East Side and Chinatown. In the course of my interview with Mr. Naylor, several curious neighborhood residents wandered over to the store's windows and cupped their hands against the plate glass to gander at the 1950s-era high-end sofas, cabinets, and coffee tables on display.

"I wanted a space where the store's design would reflect what the furniture was trying to say," Mr. Naylor said, referring to the pristinely refurbished Garfield building he has just moved into, at the corner of Rutgers and Henry Streets. "And I'll make the location work for me. I'm near the subway and all the bridges. People have no excuse not to come."

The showroom's former location, in Williamsburg, got plenty of foot traffic, but the space was underwhelming. Shoppers would see "an \$8,000 sofa crammed into an ex-bodega," he said. Mr. Naylor first began Modern Living Supplies while a student at SUNY-Buffalo in 1998; he relocated to Brooklyn in 2000.

If the new location of Modern Living Supplies is unexpected, so is the selection of furniture. The usual mid-century suspects — Eames, Herman Miller — are not the focus of Mr. Naylor's collection, though a few of interior design's greatest hits populate the basement: an Arne Jacobsen swan chair (\$2,300), a George Nelson bench/table (\$1,800), and a gorgeous Nelson dresser (\$4,500), for example.

Instead, Mr. Naylor looks to showcase the work of lesser-known furniture makers from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. This is partly due to practical business considerations. "Nelson and Eames don't repre-



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sent a viable vintage market," Mr. Naylor explained. "People know what they've got, so you're not going to make any money on it." And companies like Knoll and Design Within Reach are increasingly producing new, lower-priced versions of those classic designs.

Paul McCobb and Harvey Propper are a few of the noted mid-century designers whose creations, refurbished in Mr. Naylor's Williamsburg workshop, fill the striking space. An entire lot of furniture designed by Edward Wormley for Dunbar arrived just last week, including a rare "magazine tree" that had Mr. Naylor, a 32-year-old Buffalo, N.Y., native, almost boastfully excited.

Mr. Naylor rounds out his showroom's vintage collection with a selection of his own designs, which have sharp, contemporary lines. Mr. Naylor studied furni-

ture design at SUNY-Buffalo; he began collecting mid-century pieces — and soon dealing them — while apprenticed to a master craftsman from whom he learned the finer points of design and restoration.

A floor-to-ceiling mirror by Mr. Naylor, framed with patinated metal, retails for \$1,650. But most popular are Mr. Naylor's media centers, which he customizes depending on his clients' needs (ranging from \$1,400-5,000). "Most people, when they realize their furniture can be completely custom-made, want to go that route. 'Oh, if we can just change a couple things...' they'll say. And I don't want to sound like the Soup Nazi, so I usually agree."

Modern Living Supplies, 20 Rutgers St., 646-373-1579. For more information visit www.modernlivingsupplies.com.

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Above, Mark Naylor in his Modern Living Supplies showroom.