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Special Report
What's New
in Kitchens

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Lofty Ambition

Project

Michigan Loft

Location

Chicago, U.S.

Firm

Vladimir Radutny Architects,
Chicago, U.S.

Team

Vladimir Radutny with Ryan Sarros
and Fanny Hothan

Photos

Mike Schwartz

Sometimes, the luxury of space comes at the expense of warmth. Such was the case in this sprawling century-old loft, which boasted ceilings up to nine metres high but lacked intimacy. That chilliness evaporated entirely when architect Vladimir Radutny signed on to transform it. His intervention made the gritty, 209-square-metre unit feel homey while maximizing functionality – with astoundingly beautiful results.

Radutny's approach: divide and conquer. Following his redesign – which involved carving out individual spaces within the colossal volume and introducing common elements to form a cohesive living environment – the dwelling's entry point now consists of a low, white oak-clad foyer that leads into an open living and kitchen space. Here, that same wood distinguishes an elevated platform that encircles the living room and extends into the kitchen as raised flooring. Custom-built cabinetry and furniture further define – or, rather, redefine – the space.

Besides enhancing function, Radutny also contributed more than a touch of drama, such as the black steel-clad cube that punctures the living space. On one side, facing the living area, its panels open to reveal an entertainment centre. On the other side, lined in oak, it encompasses the main sleeping quarters.

More surprises abound as one moves through the upper levels. A nook for working, for instance, is tucked cozily between two concrete beams, while unexpected vantage points reveal impressive city views. And then there's the doorway that leads onto an outdoor garden – an area that, incredibly, yields yet more living space.

“This project has a rigour to it; it's compositional and tastefully done. It has a language that feels authentic.” — Johnson Chou

