



SETS IN THE CITY

BEHIND THE INTERIORS OF *SEX AND THE CITY 2* ▶



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Carrie and company are back on the silver screen this Spring for more adventures in the highly awaited sequel *Sex and the City 2* (Warner Bros.). The film picks up two years later as fashionable femmes Carrie, Samantha, Miranda and Charlotte juggle marriage, family and career on the playgrounds of Manhattan and Abu Dhabi. Sharing the screen with the ladies are the cosmopolitan, cutting-edge sets. Here, design notes from the film's set decorator, Lydia Marks, who reprises her off-screen role from the first film.

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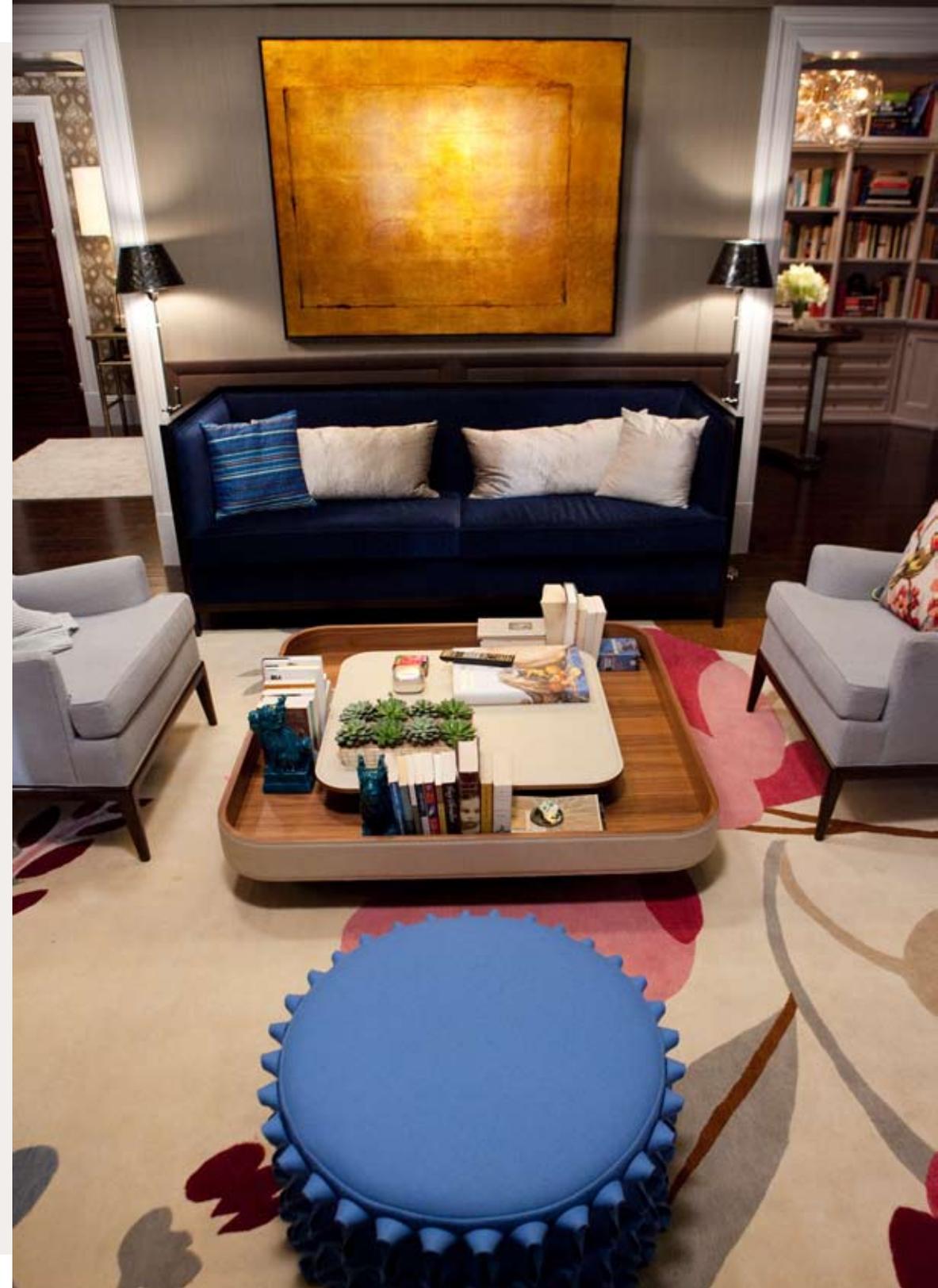
LYDIA MARKS studied fine art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and Tufts University in Boston. She majored in photography, later working at the Ansel Adams Center for Photography in San Francisco and the Museum of Modern Art in NYC. An interest in the details of the environments people live and work in, developed from documentary photography, led to her career in set decoration and interior design. Lydia's talent for creating distinctive personal and professional spaces is evident in such films as *Devil Wears Prada*, *Sex and the City 1* and *2*, and *Broken Flowers*; the roof bar at the Strand Hotel in Manhattan, and projects for clients such as Calvin Klein, Mercedes-Benz, L'Oreal and Maybelline.

This year, Lydia joined with fellow interior designer Lisa Frantz to form the design firm Marks & Frantz (marksandfrantz.com). Their background on-set informs their approach, as they incorporate their clients' personalities into interior spaces, using a mix of vintage and new furnishings, eclectic accessories and unexpected combinations.

The following set photos—some taken personally by Marks—lend insight into how interiors for film both reflect and fuel the characters...

In the spotlight in *Sex and the City 2* is the chic, comfortable apartment of Mr. & Mrs. Preston, a.k.a. Big and Carrie. The design direction for the apartment “was decorated as if Carrie (and her decorator) chose the pieces, but with Big very much in mind,” explains Marks. She adds, “In the living room and dining room, we made our own cashmere-covered wainscoting in a pinstriped deep shade of chocolate to create a rich, luxurious-feeling space.”

Carpets, color and pattern were chosen to reflect Carrie’s heightened sense of creativity, while furniture with strong lines and hard edges symbolized Big. Marks mixed the old and the new, seeking vintage pieces in place of trendy overscaled contemporary furniture. From a French Macassar ebony dining table and sixties Mastercraft steel and lacquer console to a collection of butterflies under a 19th-century glass dome in the dramatic foyer, antique treasures adorn the sets.





Details and personal objects are layered in the design scheme, and Carrie's profession as a writer required "a lot of books, all of which I selected specifically for her and Big," says Marks. Teak shelving and an elegant rosewood mid-century dining table and chairs were selected for the kitchen as it represents Big's favorite room and something no doubt he would have chosen.

Glamour and style

are the hallmark of the hit TV-series-turned-film, so it was crucial the interiors mirror this aesthetic and portray the persona of the couple as well. With Carrie's fabulous fashion sense, an equally fabulous closet was in order. Every piece of clothing in the closet was handpicked for Carrie, with a mixture of small designers and large fashion houses.





Carrie's redecorated apartment had a dynamic Marimekko fabric that was applied onto a soffit to delineate the area where her dining table was. The space was formerly a hallway where she had all her bookshelves. Explains Marks, “Her bedroom is pretty and glamorous... a mirrored vanity from the 1940’s, a Marni rug from The Rug Company. A carpet designed by a fashion designer—how Carrie!”

Sex and the City 2 opens May 27.

Interviews on these pages by Cathy Whitlock, whose book, *Designs on Film: A Century of Hollywood Art Direction* (Harper Collins), comes out this November and whose Cinema Style blog is www.cinemastyle.blogspot.com.