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AD

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

Stealing This Design Element From Meat Lockers

An effective partition that packs a punch

By Sydney Wasserman

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Apartments can be tricky. Unlike a home, which is dotted with windows facing every direction, a city apartment typically only has one exposure, with a few dinky windows to boot. So, when attempting to spatially define rooms in an apartment, you can't really put up a solid wall and door, lest you lose that precious light. The solution to this dilemma has traditionally been to A) leave the floor plan totally open, granting zero privacy between spaces or B) use a partial screen that still allows natural light to filter through. There are plenty of solid choices for option B, ranging from a wood-slatted partition, to a stand-alone screen, or even a frosted glass wall of sorts. But we recently discovered an even better solution that will kinda blow your mind. Think those curtains suspended on ball chains that hospitals use to divide beds, but in shower curtain liner material, and in the hue of a glo-stick. Sounds insane, but we promise it looks so, so cool.

We first saw this perfectly executed in the Brooklyn home of creative director and designer C.S. Valentin, where a pair of neon yellow vinyl curtains divides the living room from the rest of the apartment.



The living room of C.S. Valentin's Cobble Hill, Brooklyn home featured on Remodelista .

Photo by Jonathan Hokklo for Remodelista

“The apartment has a typical Brooklyn brownstone floor layout with a succession of rooms that don’t have a clear function,” C.S. explains. “In my case, the kitchen and bathroom are separated from the bedroom by a TV room, an office, and a living room.” When he first moved in, there was actually a track above one of the door frames

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leftover from when glass partitions had once hung there. Replacing the glass would have been a no-brainer here, but C.S. used the track as an opportunity to hang something more stimulating.

To create distinction between the spaces without being so literal with doors, he envisioned a curtain. But instead of making one with fabric, he chose bright yellow PVC strips that are typically used to keep insects out of restaurants and food manufacturing plants. (You've probably walked through a clear version of these curtains when entering the tropical rainforest section of a zoo, or the freezer section of an industrial kitchen or fish market.) Now, buyer be warned: These yellow strips in particular are made with a citronella-based formula to really, really deter insects, so C.S. was forced to leave the curtain strips underwater for ten days in order to wash out the chemical smell. However, we found these custom unscented ones in lots of different colors that would totally do the trick. Or you could go your own way and use a vinyl shower curtain for the same effect; we're all for these neon ones by Quiet Town .

The transformative design is completely DIY-able. Once you've settled on a curtain color and style (a.k.a. strips versus solid curtain), grab either a track for under \$100 that screws into the ceiling and the hospital drop chain that C.S. used , or a face-mount option that really leans into the industrial look of itall, as seen below at Fort Gansevoort's Sam Stewart exhibition.




A yellow PVC strip curtain in Fort Gansevoort's past exhibition "Crypid" , featuring work by designer Sam Stewart.

Photo courtesy of Fort Gansevoort

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Don't have a big space that needs dividing, but want to get in on the trend? Use vinyl strips in a smaller doorway, perhaps leading to a hallway or kitchen, like designer Sabine Marcelis did in her Rotterdam home, pictured above. In passageways big and small, the effect is like an electric jolt. The unexpected material gives your home that elusive cool factor—"What, this ol' thing? It's just plastic, NBD."



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