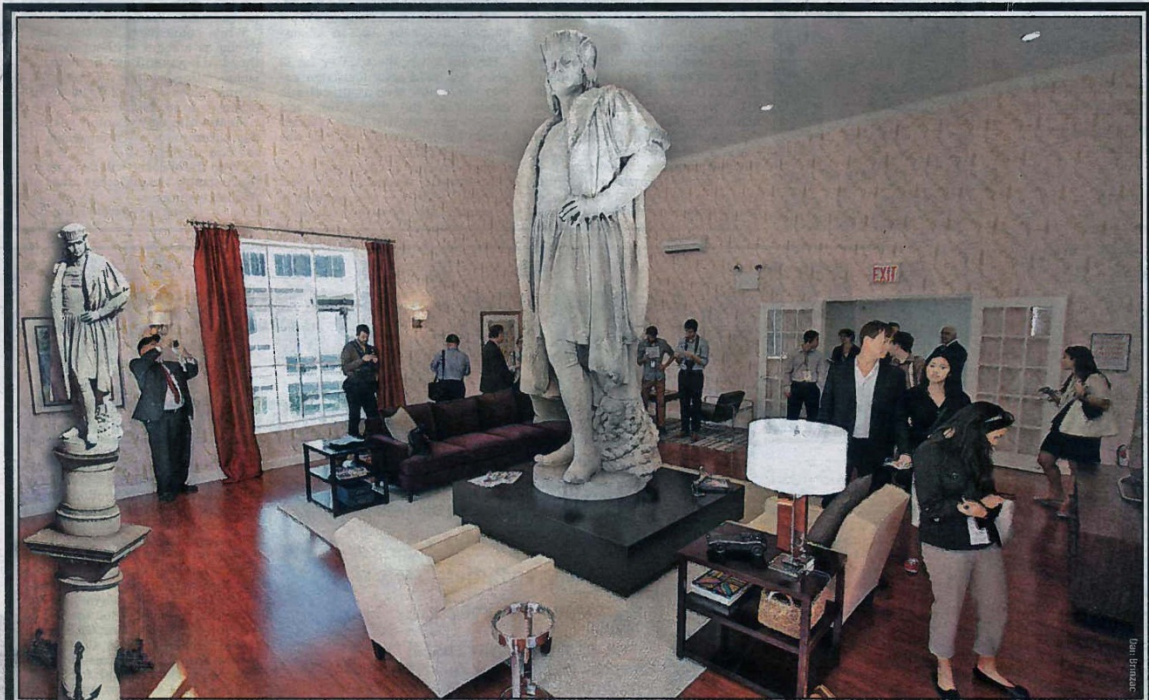


# NEW YORK POST

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2012 / Pleasant, 75 / Weather: P. 24 ★ ★ **LATE CITY FINAL** www.nypost.com • \$1.00



David S. Lee

## HELLO SAILOR

### Columbus gets a room at the top

New Yorkers will get to really discover Christopher Columbus starting today, thanks to this dazzling art installation, which puts the iconic statue (left) in a penthouse 70 feet above Columbus Circle (right).

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AP



NYPost, Jim Aborn

**SEE-WORTHY:** The Columbus monument, pre-penthouse.

# Columbus' high life in penthouse

By DAVID SEIFMAN  
City Hall Bureau Chief

In 1492, Columbus crossed the ocean blue — and 520 years later, wound up in a makeshift penthouse high above a corner of Central Park.

Starting today, New Yorkers and tourists can meet the statue of Columbus that towers over Columbus Circle in a new art installation that Mayor Bloomberg guaranteed “will knock your socks off.”

“None of us alive today have ever seen [the statue] face to face

— that is, until now,” the mayor said at the opening preview yesterday.

With \$1.5 million raised by the Public Art Fund, Japanese artist Tatzu Nishi placed the historic monument inside an 810-square-foot modern living room built on scaffolding more than 70 feet above the street.

Bloomingtondale’s handled the decorations, which include a sectional sofa, armchairs, lamps and wallpaper with likenesses of Michael Jackson, Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley.

When the exhibit ends in two months, the city will spend another \$1 million to repair the aging statue, whose marble is so pockmarked, it looks like limestone.

“Do the pigeons get up that high?” Bloomberg quipped about a possible source of the damage.

And Hizzoner sounded as if he wished critics of the new installation had gotten lost at sea.

“People object to everything!” the mayor snapped after representatives of the Italic Institute of America — which calls itself the “guardian of the Italian heritage”

— protested the exhibit as “more carnival sideshow than art” and an insult to the explorer.

Bloomberg was also a big supporter of artist Christo’s “The Gates,” which graced Central Park with 7,503 vinyl “gates” along 23 miles of pathways in February 2005.

Reservations are required for the exhibit, which runs through Nov. 18 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Free tickets are available at the information desk at the Shops at Columbus Circle or at the Web site [www.publicartfund.org](http://www.publicartfund.org).  
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## Worth the climb of the ancient mariner

**BARBARA HOFFMAN**



IT LOOKS like any other penthouse above Central Park: same dazzling views, glossy floors, massive flat-screen TV.

Except there’s a 13-foot-tall sculpture of Christopher Columbus on the coffee table.

Welcome to the strange and wonderful world of “Discovering Columbus,” the temporary installation by Japan’s Tatzu Nishi. Unveiled yesterday, it does what good art should: It makes you look, and it might even make you think.

Sure, plenty of people are

thinking, why mess with Columbus? And isn’t there enough scaffolding in this city already? Well, yes. But this city is full of art you don’t see and, trust me, no one’s gotten a good look at this statue since Gaetano Russo finished chipping away at it in 1892. It’s fresh, it’s fun, the views are to die for — and it’s free. It even comes with its own aerobic workout, since you’ve got to schlep up six stories to see it. No wonder they make you sign a waiver first promising not to sue the city, the artist, the Public Art Fund and everyone else. Go ahead and sign it. You’ll never take Columbus for granted again.

Some artists wrap things — remember how Christo swaddled

parts of Central Park in The Gates? Well, if you loved The Gates, you’ll love this. (And if you hated it, well...)

Nishi, an exuberant, peroxidized 52-year-old, likes to surround sculptures and put them on eye level, or close to it, anyway. And he surrounds them with actual living space.

He did it in Liverpool, where he draped a functioning hotel around a statue of Queen Victoria. Now he’s done it here.

As the Public Art Fund’s Nicholas Baume put it grandly, “After 120 years, with only pigeons for company, Columbus is finally getting a taste of the American dream.”

Start climbing and you’ll see things you may never have no-

ticed before, like the bronze ships’ prows and anchors that jut out from the statue’s granite base. And then you’ll see the things you’ve seen before but didn’t really want to, like scaffolding, pigeons and traffic. Strangely, from up here, on a clear fall day, they look pretty good.

And then you’re there, at the top. You walk through a green door and into a narrow entranceway, which has a rug, big beveled mirror and some odd kind of new-car smell.

Enter the living room. It’s patterned with pale pink and gold wallpaper that looks very Louis Quatorze, but get up close and you’ll find images of hot dogs and Marilyn Monroe, the Empire State Building and Elvis. Yup,

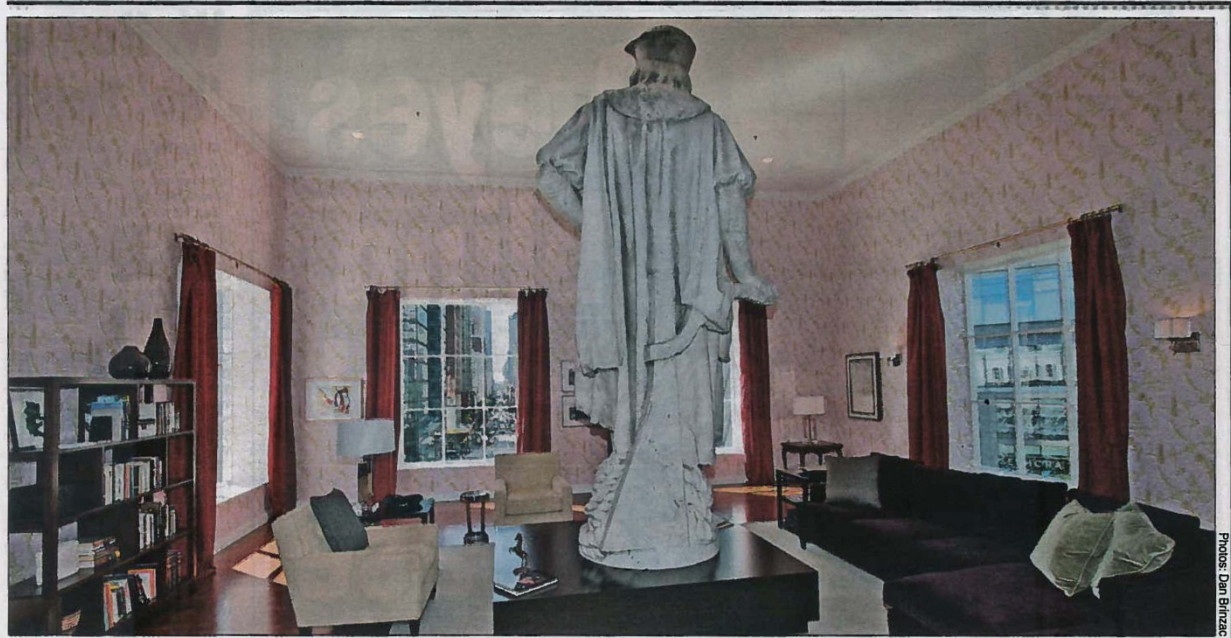
that’s America, all right, as gleaned from the movies.

The TV is tuned to CNN — someone’s idea of upscale viewing — and there are serious books like “The Power Broker” and “The Audacity of Hope” and... oh, my God, you stop looking because there’s Christopher Columbus on the coffee table, a few magazines and newspapers scattered around him.

He’s looking pretty good for 120 years, a real master of the universe carved out of marble. With one arm on his waist, head lifted, he looks ready to strut the catwalk.

Frankly, he looks smug as hell. Why shouldn’t he? He’s got all of Manhattan at his feet.

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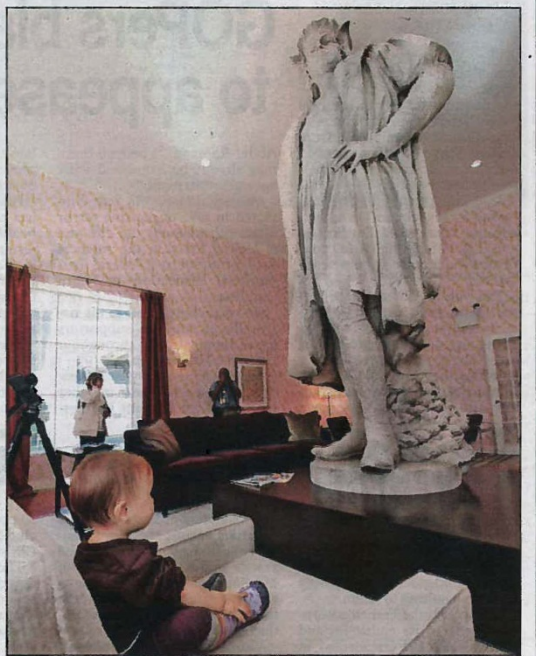


Photos: Dan Barbraze

**CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS:** The iconic statue of Christopher Columbus yesterday surveys the \$1.5 million penthouse that was designed by Japanese artist Tatzu Nishi.



**WALK THE PLANKS:** The Christopher Columbus "apartment" is covered in scaffolding yesterday. The city intends to spend \$1 million to restore the statue when the exhibit is over on Nov. 18.



**AYE, AYE, SIR!** At 11 months, Hanna Fujitaka might not appreciate she's in the presence of the great Columbus yesterday, but seems impressed anyway.