

Celebrating the Great Gary Hutton

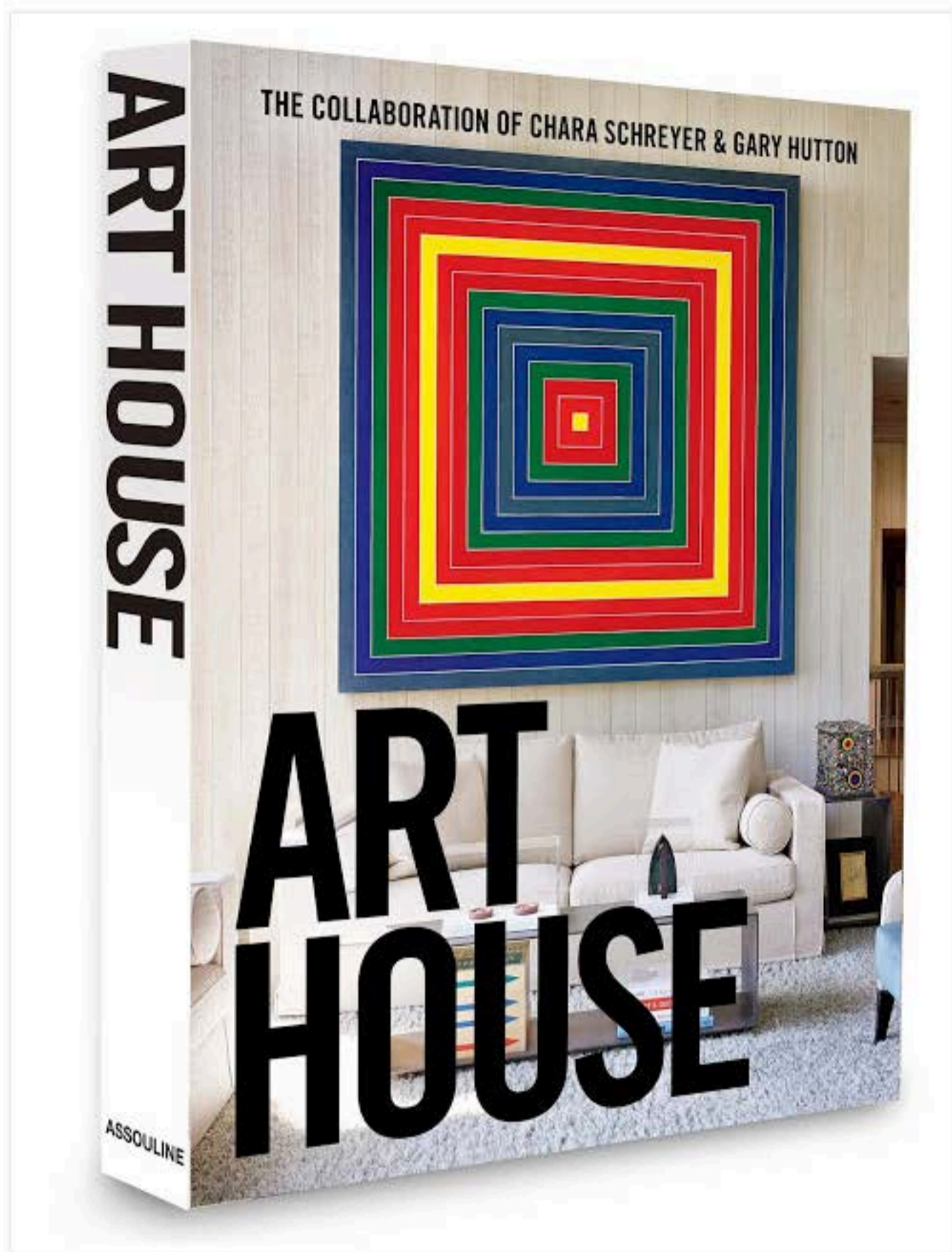
The multi-talented San Francisco interior designer and furniture designer seems in mid-career, after four decades in the hurly-burly of design, interiors, chairs, tables and a new book. He started in the late seventies.

Many studios and ateliers and clients and triumphs and challenges later, he is better than ever. Come with me for a very affectionate visit with Gary, to analyze his décor, his style, his insights, his furniture and longevity.



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Gary Hutton, based in California, has enjoyed a grand career. What's notable—other than his good humor, brilliant mind and superb designs—is the consistency of his work, his aesthetic.

Consistency is a wonderful thing in a designer. Gary, has been unwaveringly loyal to modernism. He's loyal to his friends. He has worked closely for many years with the great Tom Bonauro on graphics, and the great Scott Frankum for website concepts and design. He has allied himself closely with top upholsterers and craftsmen and teams of talent.

Modernism is Gary's lifelong focus, so his success is particularly sweet. As the great modernist, Orlando Diaz-Azcuy noted to me some years ago, "San Francisco does not like modernism or modern interiors, and prefers traditional", but both designers have had long and acclaimed careers, nonetheless. And San Francisco now embraces modern décor.

Come with me to take a closer look at Gary's best interiors—as well as his book, his ideas, and his furniture.

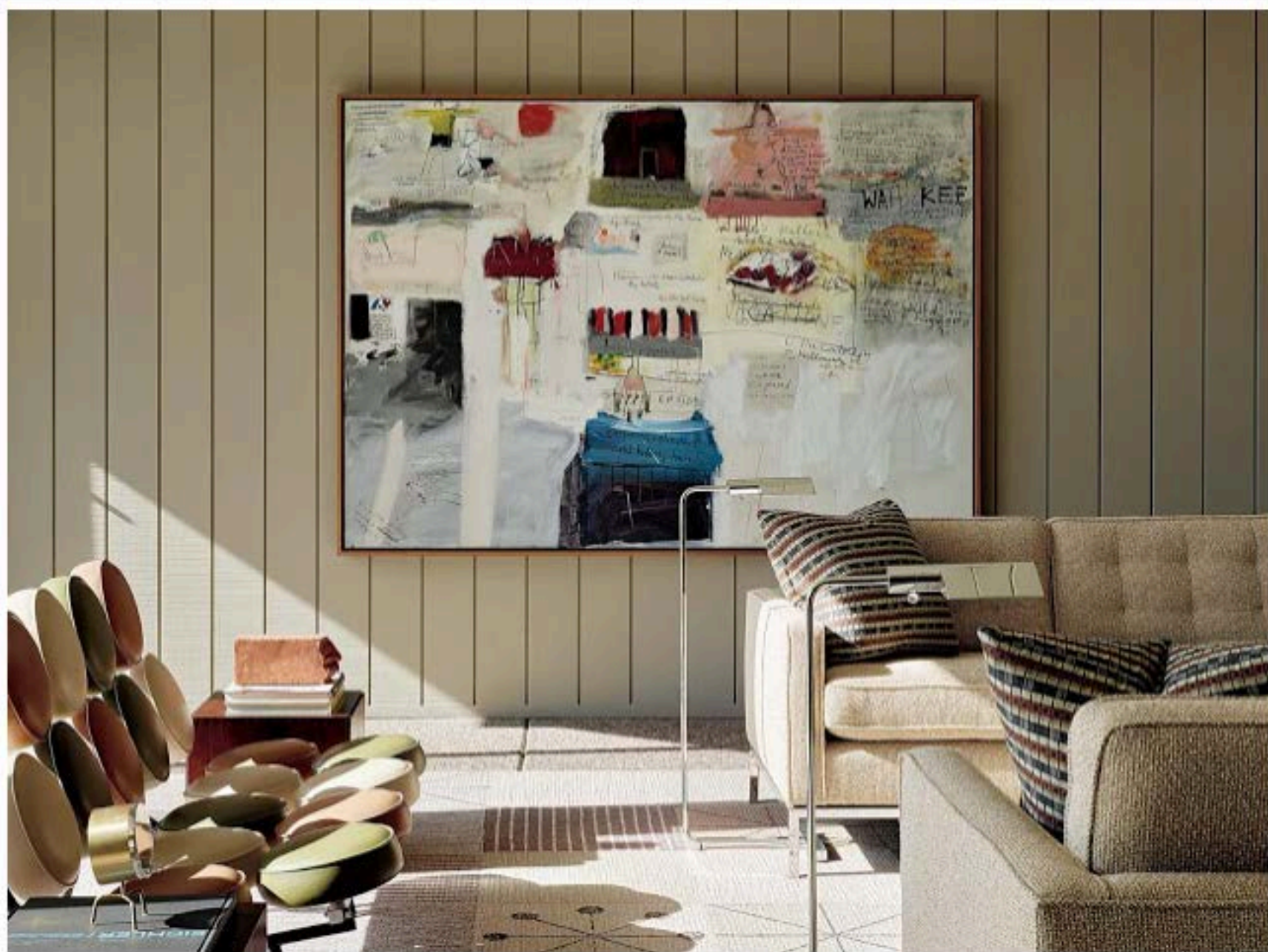


Devotion to Design

Gary Hutton's clients include some of the country's foremost art collectors, entrepreneurs, and executives.

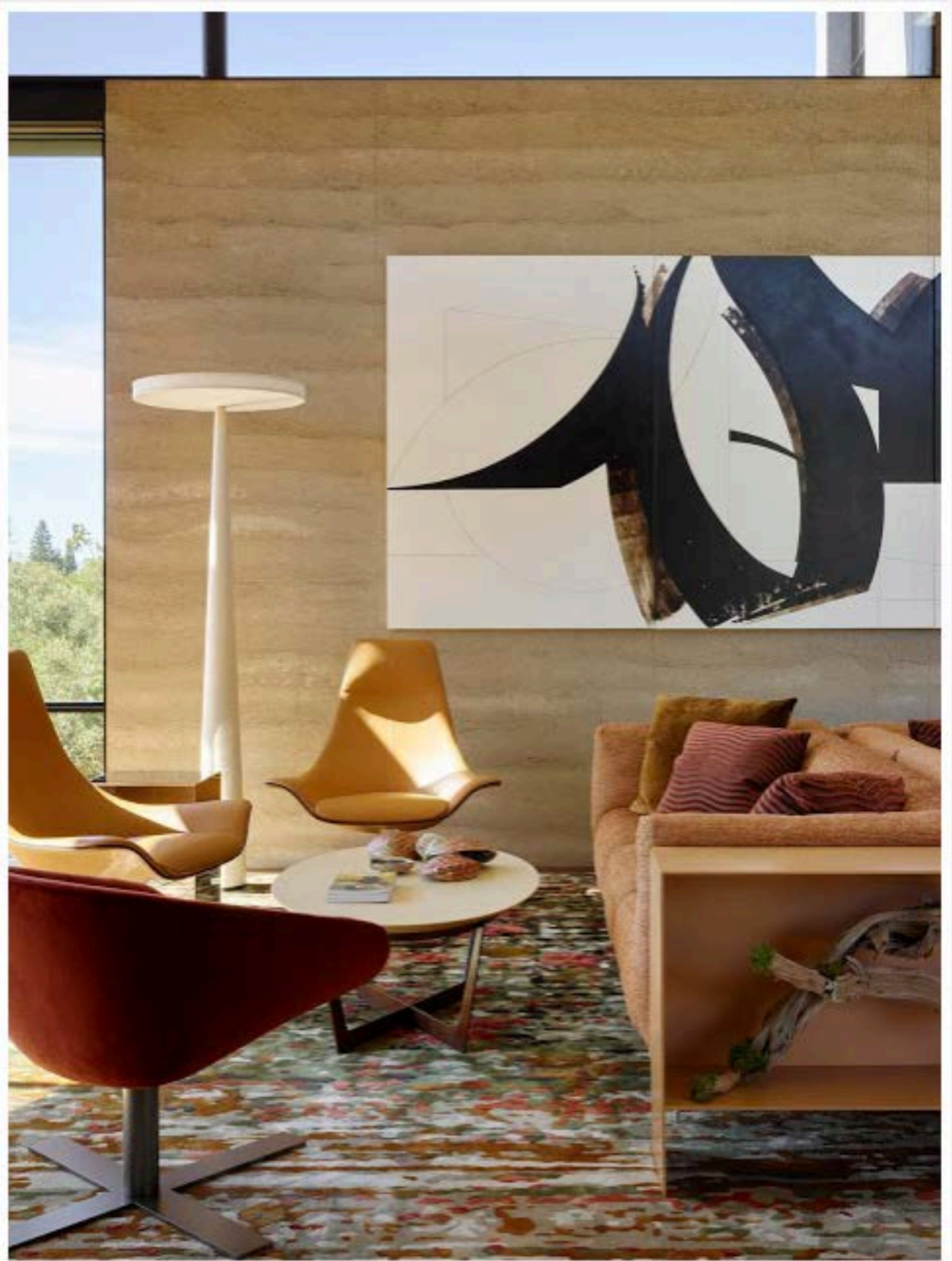
"I'm always interested in quiet luxury and the inventive use of materials," said Hutton. "Practicality is important and essential to all decor. It is not enough to create a space or design a table. They must be beautiful and functional. There must be an understanding of how a space or item will be used. Particular attention is focused on comfort."

Assouline's recent publication of 'Art House The Collaboration of Chara Schreyer and Gary Hutton' written with Alisa Carroll, celebrates and distills his design philosophy of restraint.





“Looking back on my forty-year career, I am gratified and humbled by both my successes and failures. The audacity of my youth early on brought me much critical acclaim and to the attention of my client Chara Schreyer over three decades ago. We have created many wonderful things together, not the least of which is our new book ‘Art House’.” — Gary Hutton, recently, at his San Francisco studio





A Chat with Gary Hutton

Recently I had a lively interview with Gary, reviewing his career, his favorite paints, his inspirations, and his advice to young designers.



TSS: How did you get started as a designer? You are a third-generation Californian.

GH: I grew up near Watsonville, surrounded by my grandparents' fruit orchards. I moved to San Francisco and enrolled in the design program at California College of the Arts. As a student I undertook an apprenticeship at Gump's. I was put in charge of a restaurant project overlooking Union Square. The restaurant, Today's, was a hit, and it launched my design career

TSS: Throughout your career, with trends coming and disappearing, you have remained a modernist.

GH: It is important to live in the present and to take advantage of all of the benefits that our place in time allows us. We live in such an extraordinary era with technical knowledge expanding exponentially that we should strive to use that and move forward. I have a great respect for design history. Our modernist heritage is firmly rooted in the 18th century and the age of enlightenment. I look at antiques as markers on the path to the present, beautiful things that were the avant-garde of their time.





TSS: Which design movement inspired you most?

GH: I love all periods of design for very different reasons. French and Italian design of the thirties and forties is my current favorite. It was a time of modernist exploration. Serious designers were working hard to come up with something new that still paid tribute to the past in some way. Jean-Michel Frank is a standout but there are many others that are just now being rediscovered. Serge Roche has captured my interest lately. His work is quirky, highly individual, and totally unique.

TSS: Who is your favorite designer?

GH: Every designer brings something unique to the table, and maybe even designs the table! Styles really don't have much to do with the designers I admire. Vision and point of view are what turns me on and those could be as diverse as the elegance of the late French designer/antiquaire Henri Samuel, as well as John Dickinson, who worked in San Francisco in the seventies. His attention to detail was legendary. What matters is the quality of the work not the style of the work.





TSS: You are a connoisseur of the many shades of white. The most versatile paint colors?

GH: Benjamin Moore “Feather Down’ OC-6 is a favorite of mine. It is a really elegant off-white with a touch of taupe but still quite warm. It makes a great foil for other brighter colors in textiles, and created a warm and inviting envelope.

Fraze “Estate Grey” is another pick. It’s a beautiful warm grey that has a touch of brown and red in it so that at different times of the day it takes on very different characteristics.

I’m a big fan of neutrals. Bright colors are not my thing. I love the subtlety of them and Benjamin Moore “Nantucket Gray” HC-111 is a gorgeous grey/green that makes every skin tone look vibrant. People look wonderful in a room of that color. It’s rather moody and a bit dark.

Benjamin Moore “Kansas Grain” 2160-60 is a beautiful complex golden yellow. It makes a room sunny without it being relentlessly cheerful.



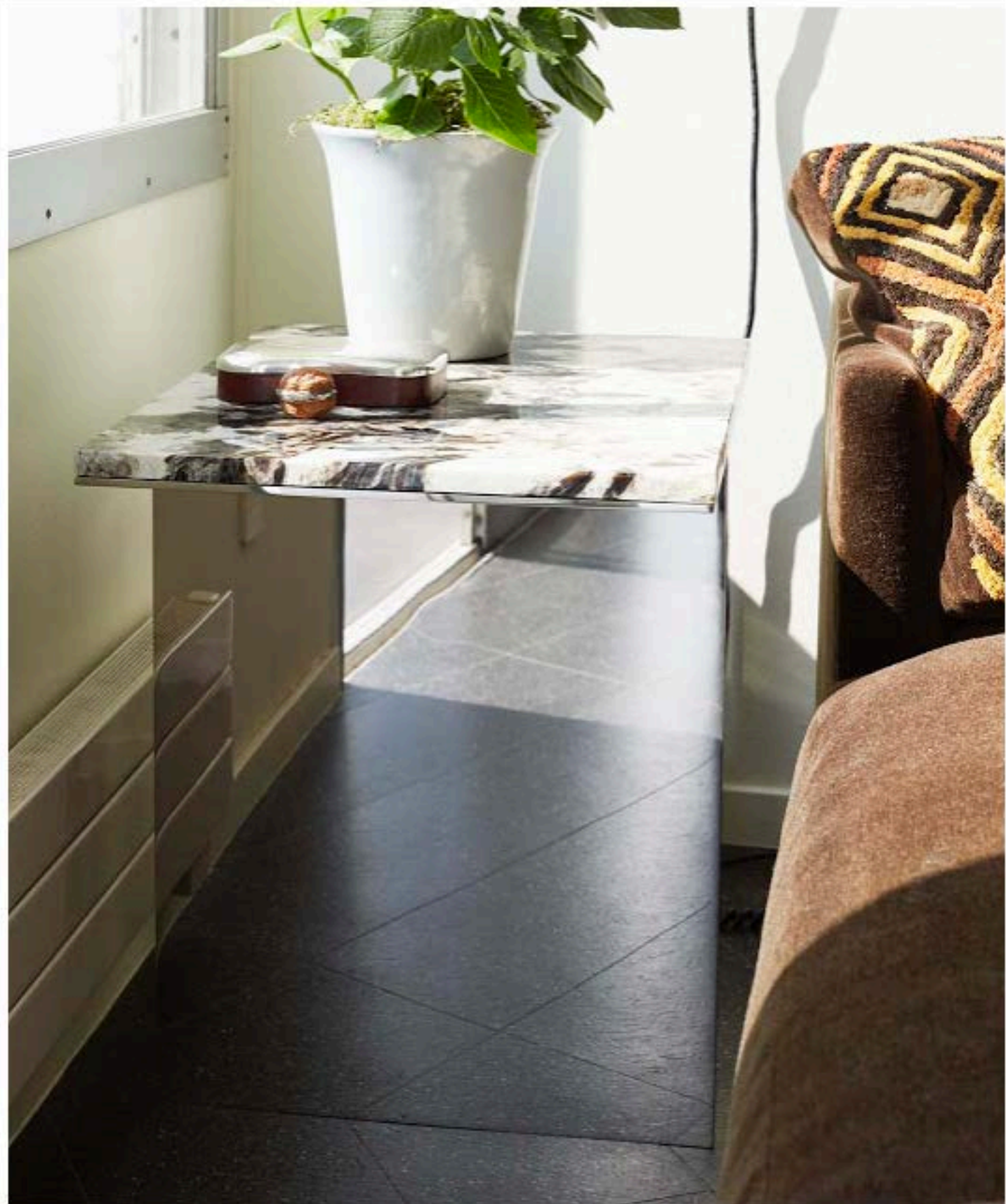
TSS: What do you love most about being a designer?

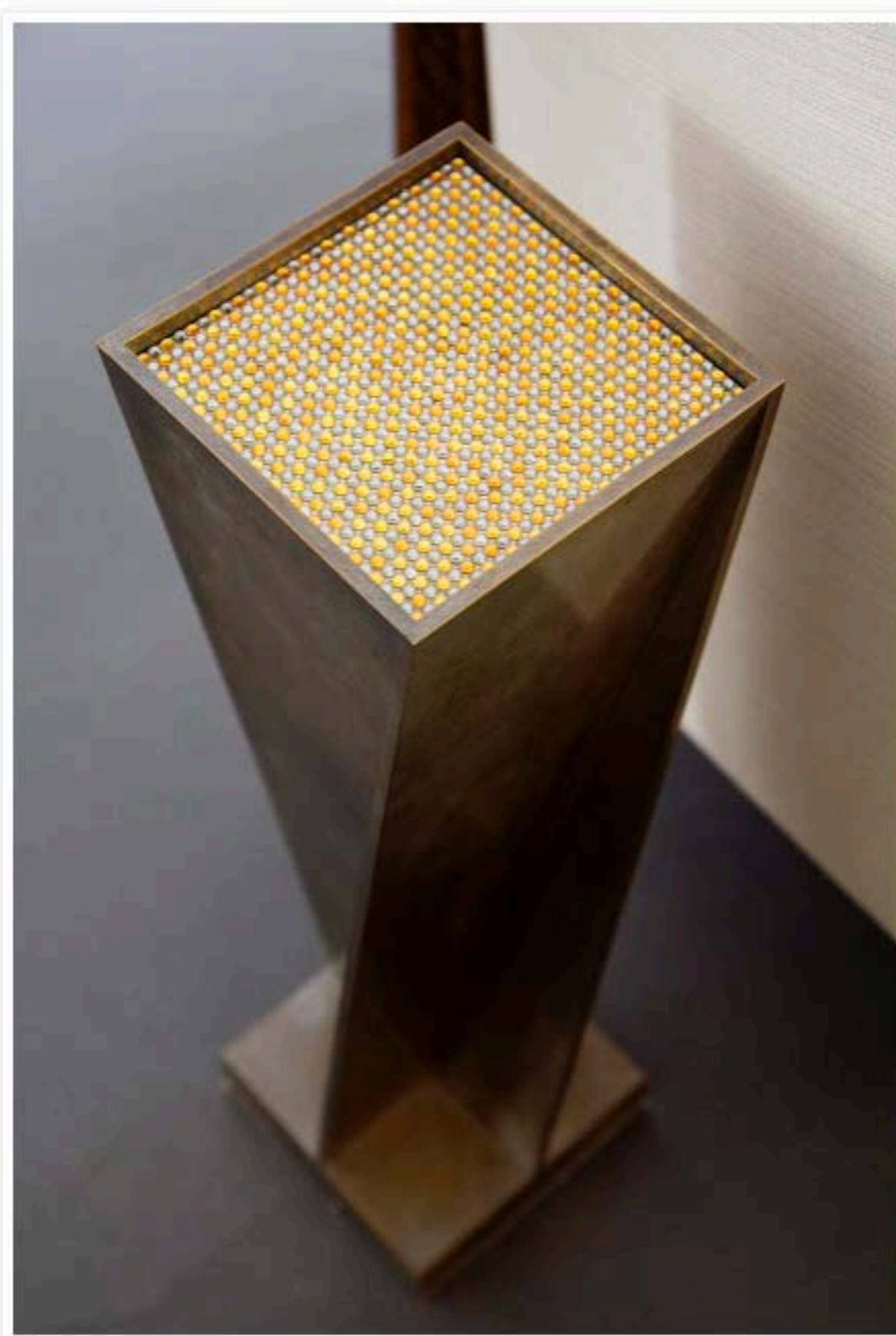
GH: There is nothing more exciting than seeing a project completed. Most of our projects and planning and designs take a year and a half or more, so there is a significant investment of time and emotion in each one. The exhilaration on that final day of installation is the most exciting.

TSS: What advice would you give to aspiring designers?

GH: Pay attention! Pay attention to everything. Learn as much as you can about design history and the architecture greats that went before us and why they were great. It will broaden your world and add depth to your interiors.







TSS: Where are you traveling for design inspiration next?

GH: Los Angeles. I love LA. The art and culture scenes are incredibly vibrant. There is more visual stimulation than any one person can handle. It is a great modern American city with all its chaos, new ideas, and beauty.

I am looking forward to traveling to promote my book. Currently we have book events scheduled in Basel, New York and Chicago. I love to meet art collectors and I love talking about design. Design is my obsession.

DDS: Thank you, Gary. I wish you many more years of happiness, success, and great clients and design.