



## Tour Design Dealer Thomas Lavin's Gallery-Like Los Angeles Home

At his midcentury Hollywood Hills residence, Lavin, along with designer Gary Hutton, creates an understatedly dashing setting for his impressive collection of figurative art by emerging talents

BY MICHAEL SLENSKE (HTTPS://GALERIEMAGAZINE.COM/AUTHOR/SLENSKE/)

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Thomas Lavin stands in the living room next to his Steinway & Sons piano and a painting by Penda Diakité.  
PHOTO: SAM FROST. STYLED BY ALEXANDER IRVINE

**W**hen Los Angeles design dealer Thomas Lavin was growing up in the Pacific Palisades, there was a local antiques shop he began frequenting when he was just 13 years old. It was the place where his passion for collecting fine art and objects first took hold. “As a teenager I had a part-time job at a knitting shop and saved \$50 so I could buy one thing,” he recalls. “I was the perfect gay kid, torn between the black satin fan and the Chinese export box with fake jade on it. I ended up choosing the box.”

Lavin recounts this story in the living room of his art-packed 1958 Hollywood Hills home, seated—martini in hand—in a slipcovered armchair by Gary Hutton, one of the first designers he represented in the namesake showroom he founded 20 years ago. Today, [his business \(https://www.thomaslavin.com/\)](https://www.thomaslavin.com/) occupies 17,000 square feet in West Hollywood’s Pacific Design Center and has another 12,000 square feet at the Laguna Design Center in Orange County, catering to a devoted clientele of top decorators and collectors who admire Lavin’s eye for spotting emerging and underrecognized talent in art as well as design.





Overlooking a corner of the living room are works by Nate Lewis (left) and Tyler D. Ballon; the pendant is by Flos, the cocktail table is by Chista, and the armchairs, custom banquette, and small side table are by Gary Hutton.  
PHOTO: SAM FROST. STYLED BY ALEXANDER IRVINE

Before launching his business, Lavin was a self-described “stoned job-hopper” who worked in event planning and publicity and spent six years selling furniture at the L.A. showroom of Kneedler Fauchère. He opened his first space, on Beverly Boulevard, featuring furniture by Hutton and Jiun Ho—both of whom he still represents—alongside collections by Madeline Stuart, Rose Tarlow Melrose House, and Atelier Purcell.

At the outset, Lavin developed an art program with adviser Joanna Burke, offering consulting services as well as staging exhibitions and events, ranging from a show of photographs from L.A. dealer G. Ray Hawkins to artist Vahe Berberian’s painting performance with nude models as brushes. “I remember one time Holly Hunt was standing barefoot in the parking lot with shoes over her shoulders,” says Lavin, laughing. “The early days were insane. I didn’t make any money, but the parties were extraordinary.”



The salon-style display in the hallway outside the den includes works by Margot Bergman, Becky Kolsrud, Louis Fratino, Sam McKinniss, and Amoako Bofo.  
PHOTO: SAM FROST. STYLED BY ALEXANDER IRVINE



Beyond the all-black kitchen, which features Miele ovens, a Jiun Ho light fixture is installed above the dining area's Gulassa & Co. table and Madeline Stuart chairs; the artwork on the far wall is by Amoako Boafo.  
PHOTO: SAM FROST. STYLED BY ALEXANDER IRVINE

Lavin's own art collecting began in earnest a decade ago, around the time he bought his home in the Hollywood Hills. Inside the ranch structure, Lavin removed walls for a more open floor plan and introduced French doors to enhance flow to the outdoors. To give the interior a more contemporary vibe, he worked with interior designer Gary Hutton and added charcoal-gray concrete floors and whitewashed the walls.

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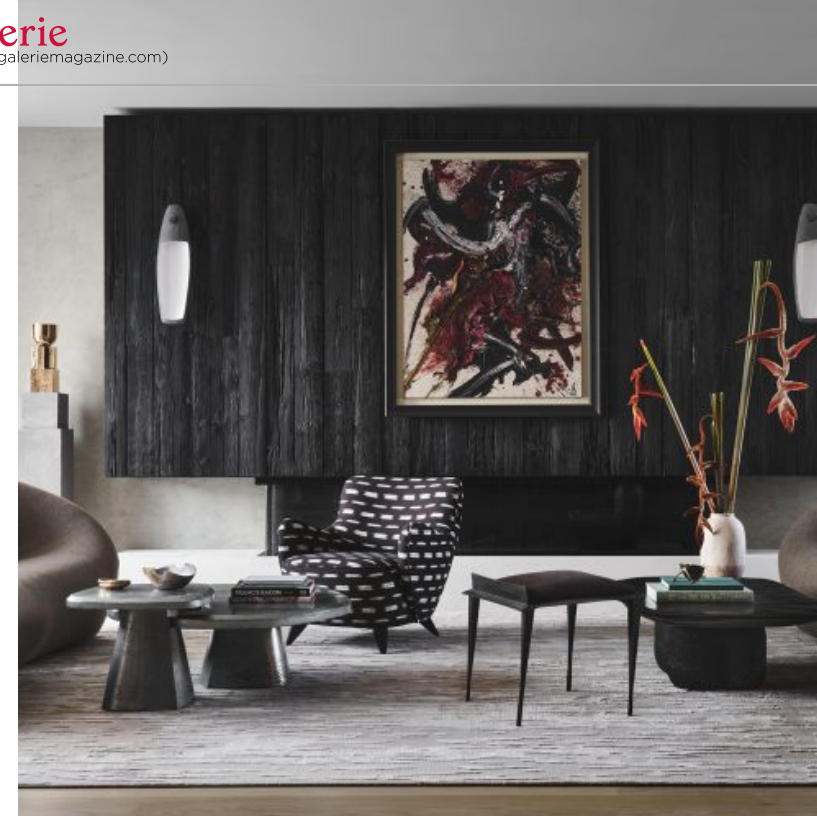




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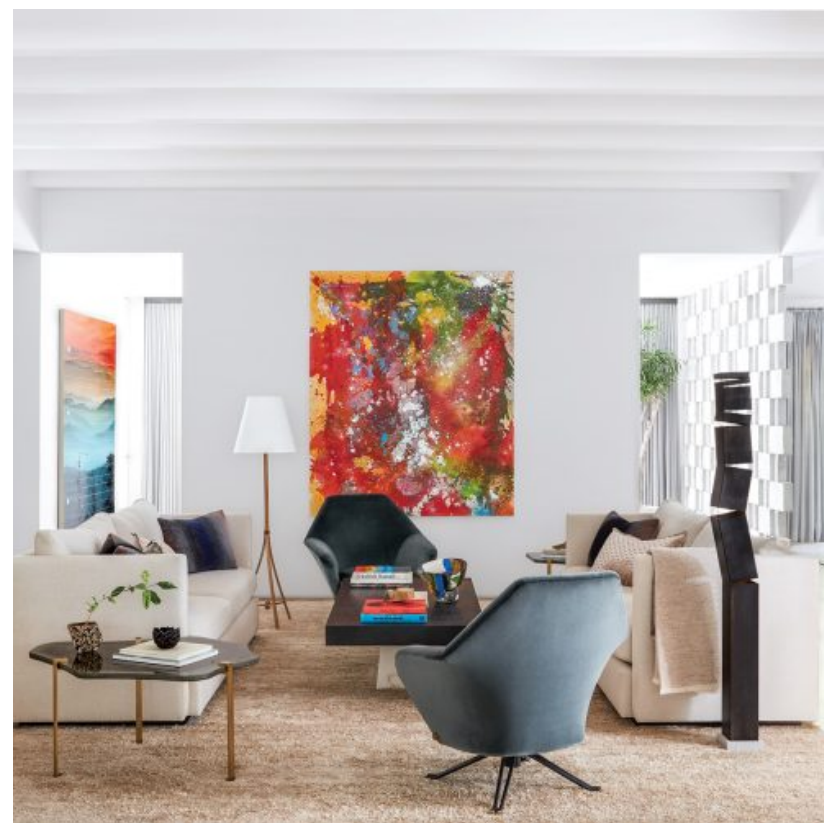
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