

# SCENE

WRITTEN BY KATE ABNEY | PRODUCED BY KRystal RACANIello



## FIRST LOOK

### THE FLOWER CANDLE

Recently released by Birmingham editor-turned-designer Zoë Gowen is a lavish candle collection stemming from visits to Mexico's Teotitlán del Valle. Each product from Gowen's El Shoppo, unveiled in spring 2023, conjures the color and festivity of this vibrant community—ranging from woven recycled-plastic totes to embroidered tunics and, soon, tabletop textiles. To fashion her Flower Candles, Gowen works directly with generational artisans to adapt a centuries-old indigenous handicraft. Made of sun-bleached beeswax frequently colored with natural dyes, her customized versions brandish showy dahlias, roses and bell flowers. Packing a punch at 36 inches tall, each pillar comes with an original piece of Oaxacan pottery: an artisan-made ceramic holder in traditional glazed or burnished black terra cotta. Sourcing through her ongoing pop-ups or website, Gowen's customers clamor for them as dining centerpieces, entryway tableaux and art accompaniments alike. [elshoppo.com](http://elshoppo.com)

## SHELF LIFE

DESIGN, STYLE & INFLUENCE

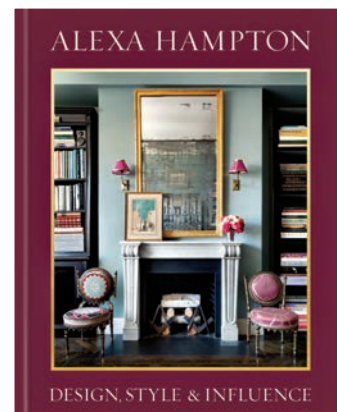
WRITTEN BY KHADEJAH KHAN

Alexa Hampton's latest book, the third in her oeuvre, explores the design evolution of her longtime New York City residences—in a building she's called home for 27 years—through vivid snapshots and heartfelt tributes. *Luxe* chatted with the prolific designer to learn more. [alexahampton.com](http://alexahampton.com); [penguinrandomhouse.com](http://penguinrandomhouse.com)

**What inspired this book?** I wanted to write about my lifelong influences. Some are seminal moments, like the Bill Blass and Givenchy sales. Others are museums or architects that have inspired me. That's the core of the book—"love letters" to various people, places and experiences that have shaped me.

**How do you balance grandeur with what you describe as "normalcy" in your home?** I've given myself permission to have things like crazy helmets and formal elements, but they aren't necessarily reflective of my personality—it's about what delights me.

**Any advice for the next generation of designers?** First, look at people you admire in other fields. What can you draw from their story? Second, take yourself seriously. Designing is a craft that requires intelligence, but it should not be divorced from our creative angels. Find the balance that suits you; authenticity is key to success.



SHELF LIFE PHOTOS: BOOK COVER, COURTESY CLARKSON POTTER; INTERIOR, STEVE FREIHON.  
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