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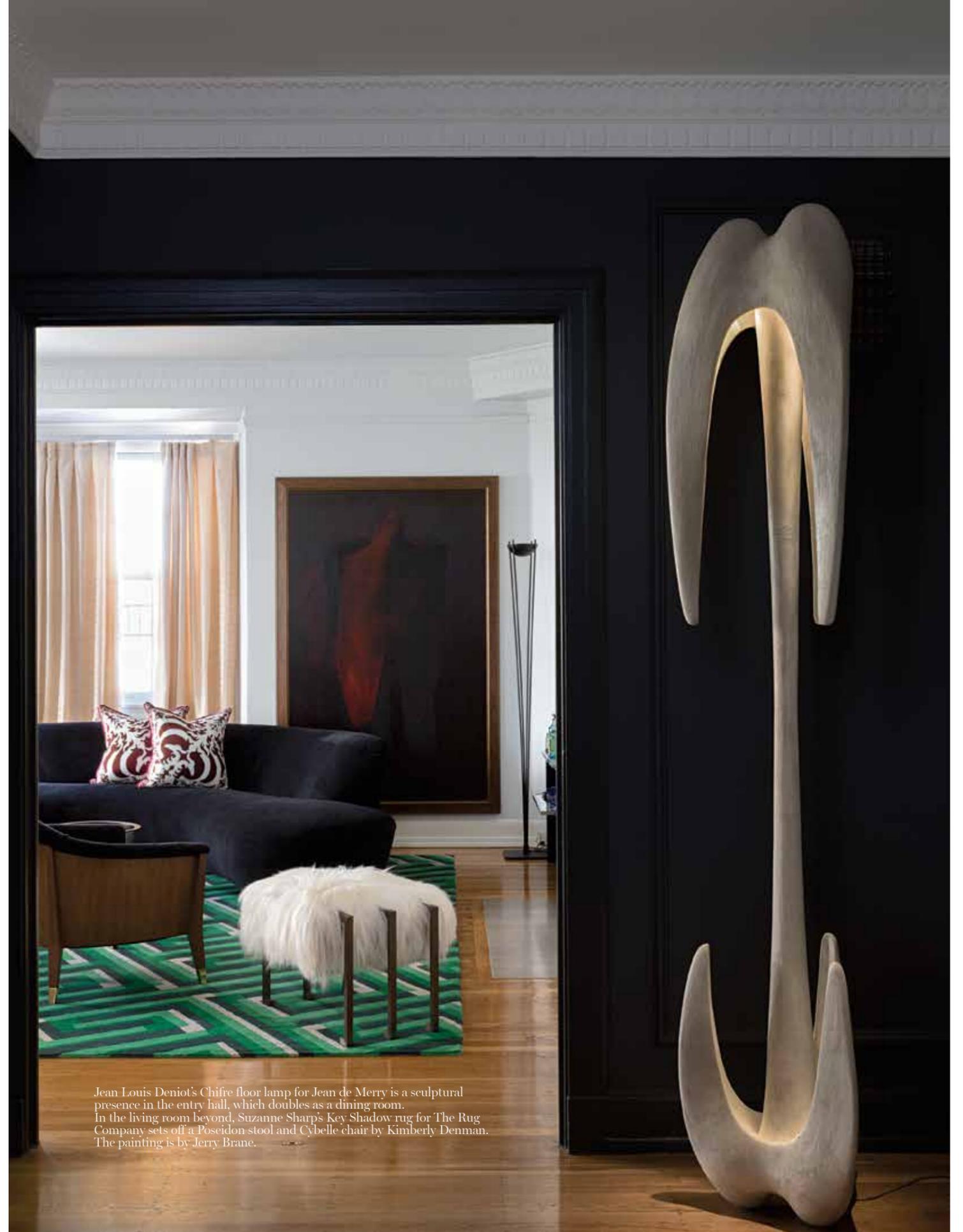
TALMADGE SALON

Kimberly Denman and Laurent Rebuffel Blend Vintage Finds with Contemporary Art and Design in a Classic Los Angeles Setting



The Talmadge apartment building was designed by Aleck Curlett and Claud Beelman in 1924; film producer Joseph Schenk commissioned it for his wife, silent-movie star Norma Talmadge.

After years of thriving in the world of traditional retail, Kimberly Denman and Laurent Rebuffel knew it was time for a different approach. “People stopped showing up,” Denman says about Habité, their erstwhile 7,000-square-foot antiques showroom on La Brea that Rebuffel originally founded in San Francisco. “Habité was a great place to showcase, slowly grow and really refine our process,” she adds. “But over time it became more about e-mailing pictures. Our love of having a store kind of went away.” And yet business hadn’t slowed per se. It had just shifted and evolved.



Jean Louis Deniot’s Chifre floor lamp for Jean de Merry is a sculptural presence in the entry hall, which doubles as a dining room. In the living room beyond, Suzanne Sharp’s Key Shadow rug for The Rug Company sets off a Poseidon stool and Cybelle chair by Kimberly Denman. The painting is by Jerry Brane.



Opposite: A 1960 Mazzega chandelier accents the morning room. Denman's Aleyone sofa and Ceto side table are grounded by Sam Turner's design for The Rug Company. Adam Hebb's Sub Humans coffee table supports bronze sculptures by Adam Gale. *Right:* Laurent Rebuffel and Kimberly Denman.

As Denman and Rebuffel were rethinking their entrepreneurial model, an opportunity came up that they couldn't refuse: A three-bedroom, two-bath apartment in the historic Talmadge building on Wilshire Boulevard near Vermont Avenue hit the market. The couple knew it wouldn't sit vacant long. With large rooms, high ceilings, good storage and 1920s architectural heft that conveys Old Hollywood glamour, the relatively formal unit would be a perfect match for their sensibility.

Denman was already familiar with the 1924 Beaux Arts landmark, which is an early example of influential Los Angeles architects Aleck Curlett and Claud Beelman's work. Film producer Joseph Schenck commissioned the residence as a gift to his wife, silent-film star Norma Talmadge, and it has remained a coveted Wilshire Boulevard address ever since. Denman had designed another unit in the Talmadge, and she and her husband knew some of the building's other creative residents. So they left what Denman describes as their "teeny tiny apartment" in Hancock Park and headed east to Koreatown in mid-2016, transforming the Talmadge spaces into a hybrid private showroom-gallery that also functions as Denman and Rebuffel's own residence and design lab.

Urbane multifamily living suits the couple, as well as Lulu and Romeo, their two rescue boxers. "I think that's my European upbringing," says Rebuffel, who grew up in Cannes, France, in a family of antiques dealers. Denman adds that even in her native Colorado, she opted out of the low-density lifestyle. Both had lived and worked in San Francisco for years before moving to L.A.

Denman began her own furniture collection in 2012, and her pieces are now available at Jean de Merry showrooms in L.A., New York, Dallas and Chicago, and at De Sousa Hughes in San Francisco. The new setup and context, however, are crucial to all steps of Denman and Rebuffel's process, from concept through manufacturing and beyond. They have adapted the apartment's layout to best showcase Denman's furniture and interior design vision, as well as works by the artists they represent in their composite roles as art and antiques dealers, designers and collectors. "I'm very eclectic," she says. "That's how I love to design, and I think it makes things much more interesting. When you look around these rooms, there's always something interesting to see."



The front door opens into a tight foyer where Denman placed a Hestia table lamp, one of her original designs. The contiguous larger foyer is spacious enough to function as a dining room, housing Denman's Danish-inspired Leto chairs and a stunning Jean-Louis Deniot for Jean de Merry floor lamp. They repurposed what was once the dining room into a secondary sitting room they dubbed the Morning Room, with Denman's Aleyone sofa covered in an earthy, textured Jean de Merry upholstery. An eclectic assortment of new and antique pieces is arranged beneath a cascading 1960s-era glass chandelier by Mazzega that the couple bought on a buying trip to Italy. "It gives a room so much more character and soul when you can use vintage pieces along with new designs," says Denman.

Thanks to ample windows and a street-facing corner orientation, the apartment feels higher up than it actually is, particularly in the living room. An area rug by Suzanne Sharp for the Rug Company uses layered greens and bold geometry to set a dynamic foundation, while the Serpentine sofa by Vladimir Kagan for Weiman further anchors the room. One of Denman's Deco-inspired Cerus chairs, covered in shaggy black goat hair, and the Cybelle lounge chair stand opposite a midcentury table that swings open to contain a hidden bar within its round volumes (James Bond would approve). Cast pieces by Adam P. Gale, a San Francisco sculptor they represent, and tables with stone inlays by Adam Hebb add deeper dimensions of texture to the mix. Across the room, Denman's Vesper tufted sofa and Pierre Paulin ribbon chairs create another seating area; there, a fringed table lamp Gianfranco Frattini created for Arteluce in the early 1960s provides a wink of cheeky Italian Mod.

Below: A vintage sofa by Vladimir Kagan complements a round Willy Rizzo coffee table in the living room; Denman's Cerus armchair is covered in long-hair goat skin. The aluminum wall sculpture above the fireplace is by Rafe Affleck; 1950 French andirons are by Francois Monnet. Lauren Maciver's *Fire Escape* hangs over an 18th-century gilt console.



Top: Vintage Ribbon chairs by Pierre Paulin flank an Adam Hebb low table; the vintage table lamp is by Gio Ponti. Bergamo's Delphos drapery fabric provides a serene background. Above: Adam Gale's *Seahorse* sculpture stands by a doorway to the entry hall/dining room, where Denman's Leto chairs surround a 1970s Carlo Scarpa table. Denman designed the Hemera ceiling light.

Below: In the morning room, Denman's Cigar lounge chair is paired with an antique Baltic console. The rock lamps are by Andre Casanave, and the 1966 bronze bust of James Joyce is by Milton Herbold. Donghia curtain fabric adds a rich note.

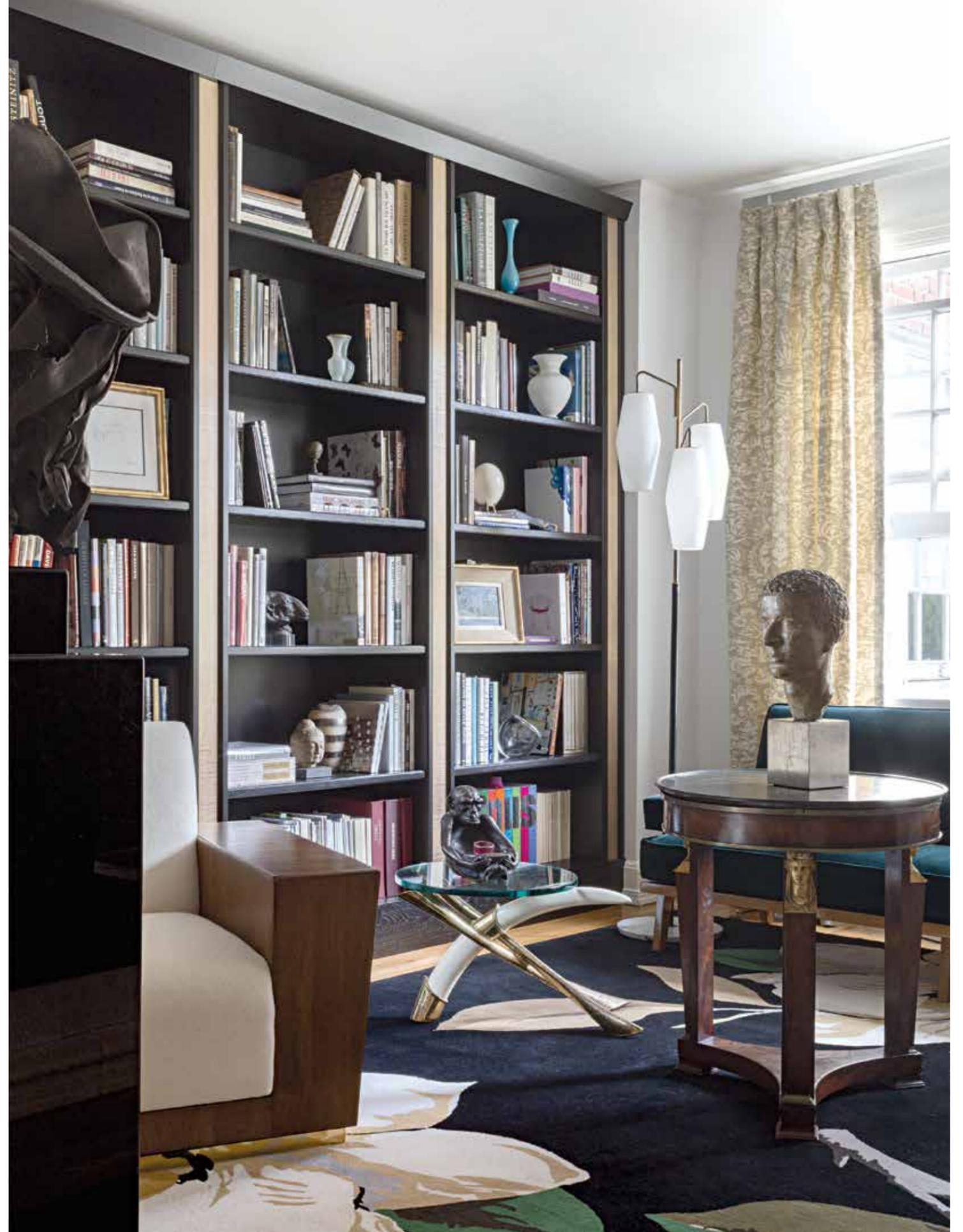
Opposite: Denman collaborated with Adam Hebb on the library's bookcase, which features etched-bronze inlay; her Speed lounge chair adds a strong profile. Fortuny curtain fabric and Vivienne Westwood's Black Magnolia rug for The Rug Company soften the space. The faux-tusk side table is from the 1970s. Arteluce floor lamp.

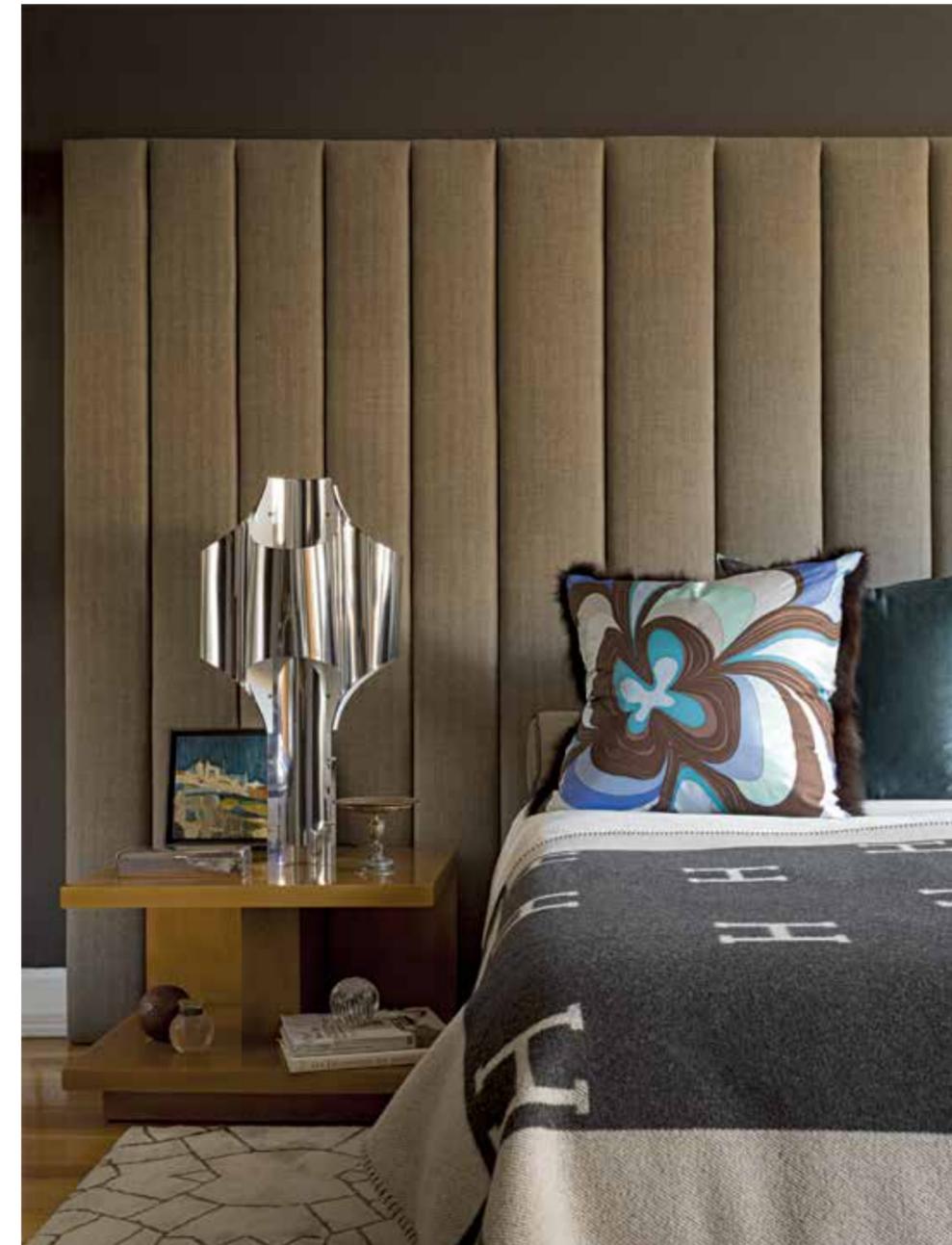
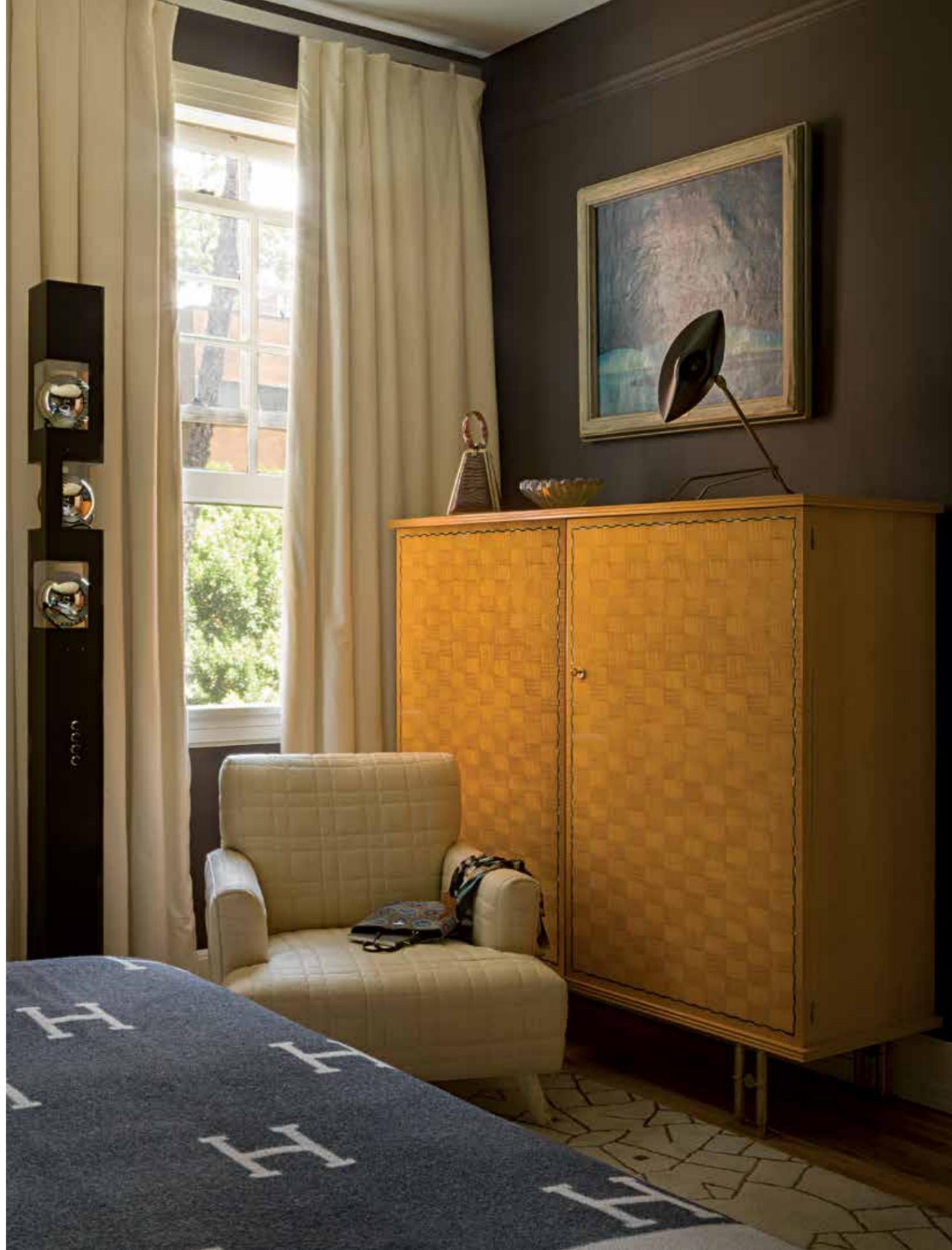


Tucked away from the urban soundtrack of Wilshire Boulevard, the master bedroom and library overlook the Talmadge's communal garden. As in the other intimately scaled rooms of the apartment, Denman incorporated a range of moody Farrow and Ball paint colors. The library is set up for quiet reading and research. And while many of her influences are from afar, Denman notes that the Talmadge itself inspired the built-in bookcase that spans an entire wall and features Adam Hebb's etched-bronze details. Paul László—the Hungarian-born designer who helped shape the nearby Art Deco Bullocks Wilshire building—inspired her Speed lounge chair, a recent addition to the collection. The dark palette in the master bedroom makes it a chic refuge, with an oversize custom headboard, Hermès throws and 1960s table lamps by Robert Sonneman among other compelling objects.

Regarding each new design, the home-cum-showroom "gives us the opportunity to live with it and tweak it, and it gives clients the opportunity to see it in a setting different from a big showroom," Rebuffel says. All of Denman's pieces are made in a factory near downtown L.A. "From a control standpoint, it's important to us that everything be made here, because everything is custom," he notes. "I'm at the workshop every day, and every day there's something to catch, something to change. It still takes us a long time to finish something, but we make up the time by not shipping things from China or Mexico."

No single era or design style dominates the couple's home, a fact that mirrors the Talmadge's physical and historical place within a rapidly changing neighborhood. "It's a mix along Wilshire Boulevard," says Rebuffel, marveling at the layers of visible history. "We still have MacArthur Park and that era of L.A., and then you see thirty years of office buildings. And now we're seeing the rebirth of the whole area. You see the recent past, the distant past, and now it's like we're seeing the future." •





Above: The custom headboard in the master bedroom is covered in a Jean de Merry linen; the pillow is covered in a vintage Emilio Pucci scarf fabric, and the throw is by Hermès. The metal table lamp is by Robert Sonneman.
Opposite: A 1950s Billy Haines armchair sits near a Jules Leleu armoire topped with a Serge Mouille lamp in the master bedroom. The floor lamp is by Angelo Lelli for Arteluce.