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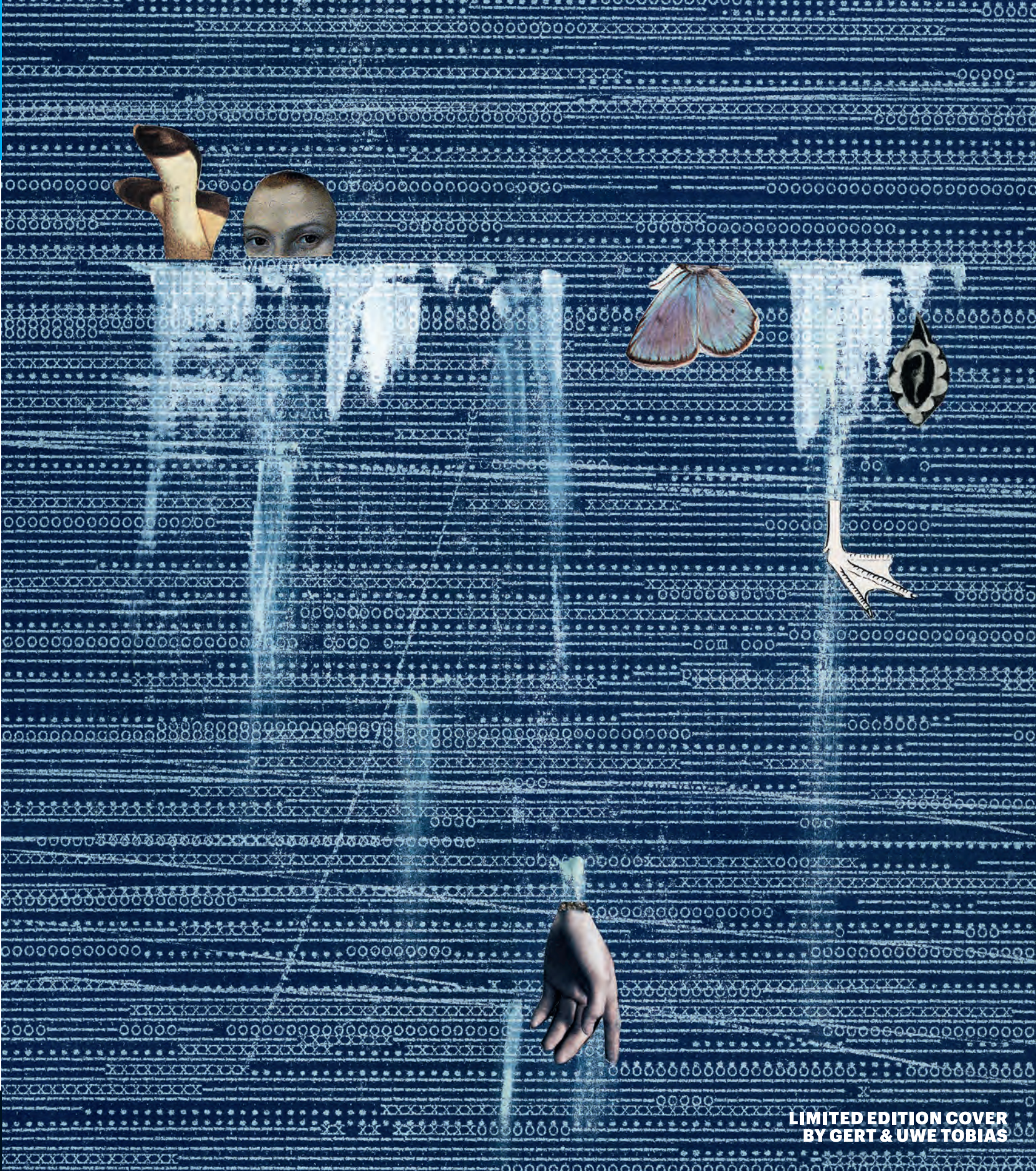
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LIMITED EDITION COVER
BY GERT & UWE TOBIAS

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LA storey

Built originally for movie star Gary Cooper and since owned by a string of actors, gallery owners and casino moguls, this 1955 modernist masterpiece in one of Los Angeles' most exclusive neighbourhoods is a Hollywood legend in its own right

PHOTOGRAPHY: LAURA WILSON WRITER: NATE BERG



STAR ATTRACTION
The entrance wall is made of native stone rocks chosen by the house's original owner, Gary Cooper. The house's terrazzo floor extends outside to meet the driveway, while Takashi Murakami's *Dream Lion* sculpture can be seen through the front door

094 | IN RESIDENCE

SITTING PRETTY

The house sits secluded among cacti, trees and native grass. A series of contemporary works, such as this Urs Fischer installation, *Bad Timing, Lamb Chop!* (2004–05) representing a giant chair embracing a packet of cigarettes, are on display in the garden.

The walls and windows don't seem to be there. From carpet to concrete to plants and trees, rooms are just part of the gradient. They don't as much end as fade away. Certainly, walls and windows do exist here in this 1955 home designed by architect Archibald Quincy Jones, but whether inside or outside, there's no connection lost to what's behind the glass.

This fluid interplay of in and out is partly enabled by its setting in the upscale Los Angeles neighbourhood of Holmby Hills. Hardly distinguishable from the neighbouring Beverly Hills in its opulence and exclusivity, Holmby is a landscape of large estates whose separation from one another creates discrete and discreet universes where what happens is rarely seen by or known to neighbours, even those right next door. But mostly, this connection between the in and the out is emblematic of the style of Jones who, with his partner Frederick Emmons, designed dozens of homes throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, helping define midcentury modernism on the West Coast. Homes like this one became poster children for the movement.

The owners of this particular house – who over the years have included a Hollywood grab bag of movie stars, art gallery owners, casino moguls and internet millionaires – add fitting cachet. Originally commissioned by >>

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LIGHT TOUCH

This picture, Murakami's *Dream Lion* and Jeff Koon's *Landscape (Waterfall)* in the main dining room
Opposite, top, the house at night, with Richard Prince's giant 'Tire' planter by the pool, and Damien Hirst's *Thirty-Four Pills* seen inside, next to the sofa. Bottom, 12 lamps by Jorge Pardo hang in the outdoor dining area



the Academy Award-winning actor Gary Cooper in the early 1950s, the house is built from wood, glass and stone – all intermixed throughout, appearing both inside and out.

The living area is spread across a single level, and the house's most striking feature is the angled roof, which rises gradually to jut dramatically above the rest of the flatness of the house. Clad with golden orange-stained wood planks, the roof contrasts with the white plaster and white-rock walls that dominate the front façade and the large windows that make up much of the rear. The wood of the roofline and the tall beams that support it straddle the interior and exterior spaces, as do the rocks. The strong straight lines formed by the post-and-beam structure are simple and elegant, features that are common to Jones' work.

Water splashing down a rock wall in the front creates a tranquil soundtrack as you enter along the terrazzo walkway, covered by a steel overhang, through the front door into the large, open-plan living room. Arranged over more than 5,700 sq ft, with four bedrooms, the house is now home to an extravagant collection of art and contemporary design, covering every available wall space. Tables and chairs by the designer Marc Newson are scattered throughout the house, sculptures by John Chamberlain and Takashi Murakami shine in the ample sunlight, while photos by Richard Avedon and Cindy Sherman are given entire walls to themselves.

Towards the tallest part of the room, a dining table is surrounded by a dozen



LINES OF BEAUTY
Top, the living room, with John Chamberlain's *Superjoke* sculpture, and Ed Ruscha's *Psycho Spaghetti Western 9* on the wall. The ceiling is sloped, as in many Jones houses
Above, the all-white master dressing room, with a Marc Newson chair in the centre

chairs and blocked slightly off from the rest of the space with a moveable wooden wall. It's just tall enough to feel separate, yet not isolated. The angled roof overhead slowly brings the ceiling down from 20ft to ten, while the large wooden vertical beams and the fireplace all subtly segment the floor-to-ceiling windows and the views of the lush backyard and the wooded canyon beyond it.

From the roof's peak, the walls drop straight down, creating a more restrained entrance to the kitchen and its eating area.

The kitchen has been modernised since Cooper's time, but much of the original aesthetic remains. New lighting recessed in long and narrow lines in the ceiling mimic Jones' original straight lines, running perpendicular to the room-wide band of skylights that lets even more light flood in. Newson provides a breakfast seating area that, again, fades away through the wall of windows and sliding glass doors leading out to the backyard.

An outdoor stone fireplace was added to the patio in a recent minor >>

**PICTURE PERFECT**

Above, the kitchen, with a Joan Mitchell painting being moved. Left, the master bedroom, with, from left, *Yellow Butterfly* by Mark Grotjahn on wall, a 'Random Pak' armchair and silver surfboard by Marc Newson; and *Two Kellogg's Cornflakes Boxes* (1964), by Andy Warhol. On the TV screen is the house's original owner, Gary Cooper, in *High Noon*

renovation — of which there have been several in the home's lifetime. The effect is an even more overt statement of inside-outness, adding another area where the lines between them are blurred. A few steps beyond is the swimming pool, flanked by a bar and barbecue for outdoor entertaining, in addition to a poolside pizza oven.

The pool and much of the house is surrounded by grass and ringed with a half dozen of what can only appropriately be called LA palm trees. A wooden deck hangs over the slope of a slight crevice, rising above the canopy of pines, redwoods and oaks that provide the house with a verdant privacy screen. The previous owner created a more dramatic, sweeping drive into the property by

buying and tearing down a couple of neighbouring houses — one of which was the former home of Barbra Streisand. From the street, all one can see is an array of dense hedges, eight feet tall. Beyond these green walls are all those tiny universes, spinning and twinkling on their own, only coming within each other's orbit through the tinted windows of cars that pass each other by.

This understated aura of seclusion creates the conditions for the house and garden to overlap so well. Long before the advent of drone-flying paparazzi and the 24-hour celebrity gossip news cycle, Jones' design demonstrated how to blend architecture with intimate spaces of outdoor respite. Each bedroom has its own secluded courtyard, shaded and

separated from each other and the rest of the grounds. The master bedroom comes with an outdoor Jacuzzi, shielded from the rest of the yard and the pool by a boxing ring of leafy tropical plants. Inside, there is a sizeable bathroom, with multiple marble showers and a bathtub sitting right next to expansive windows overlooking the garden. As in the other bathrooms, the exposure could seem vulnerable, but instead comes off as serene and protected thanks to the lush planting outside. A steam room and sauna area make up perhaps the darkest and most private space in a house that feels at times like a museum (albeit one on view only for the eucalyptus trees and century plants growing throughout the grounds).

Much of Jones' original design works as well now as it worked in the 1950s. The variety of owners over the years have brought their own sensibilities to the house. Some moved walls or expanded spaces. The original asphalt driveway directly in front of the house was replaced with a stone walkway. A poolside bathroom and outdoor shower are also recent additions. The current owner stripped and stained the wood beams and roof panelling, which were originally painted white. The contrast now against the white plaster and white rocks is far more striking than the earlier iterations of the home as seen in old photographs of it. And yet, for all the changes, the home largely remains the same in spirit. It's a prime example of elegant West Coast midcentury modernism that's undeniably of its time, but also relevant today. ★