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design

Robert Mapplethorpe, "Self Portrait" (1981), printed 1992. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: A Giotto Stoppino dining table and Thonet chairs; a George Mouhasseb bookshelf next to a Pablo Picasso drawing; from left, Maria Pergay sconces, a Georges Mathieu painting, Jose Zanine Caldas lounge chairs and an Ico Parisi couch.



LIVING LEGACY

Inside the Steinway Tower's Unit 17S lies a stunning shoppable and collectible model unit by esteemed branding and design agency frenchCALIFORNIA.

By Lauren Brocato





When JDS Development Group (jdsdevelopment.com) tapped frenchCALIFORNIA (frenchca.com), helmed by founder and Creative Director Guillaume Coutheillas, to design a model unit on the 17th floor of the Steinway Tower, the creative connoisseur assembled a team of equally keen and imaginative tastemakers for the job.

Enter Guillaume Excoffier and Nancy Gabriel of traveling design gallery Gabriel & Guillaume (gabrieletguillaume.com) to appoint the space with remarkable collectible furnishings, and Valerie Cueto of Cueto Art Advisory (cuetoartadvisory.com), who curated an eclectic collection of works from some of the greats: Think Picasso and



PHOTOS BY COLIN MILLER



Clockwise from top left: Guillaume Coutheillas; against the wall, a Carlo Hauner and Martin Eisler sideboard; artwork by George Condo and Jose Zanine Caldas chairs in front of a George Mohasseb console.



George Condo. Together, the team crafted a shoppable and collectable model unit inside the storied tower that acutely captures the essence of living in the building while offering an oh so-of-the-moment artistic spectacle only befitting of the iconic landmark building it resides in.

While staying true to the Steinway's storied legacy, Coutheillas imagined a space that incorporates both vintage and contemporary pieces that adequately complement the works curated by Cueto. "It's a really different experience than walking into a physical gallery," Coutheillas notes. "This is a residential space. So you're seeing a drawing by Picasso in context and not on a blank wall." Likewise, works by Louise Nevelson and Robert Mapplethorpe star in the sun-drenched space aside masterfully crafted furnishings and decor, like a sleek blue Martin Szekeley long chair. "We're imagining a collector that's traveled the world and lived in multiple cities and countries and has assembled a collection of art and furniture."

Gabriel & Guillaume called on their specialty in midcentury Brazilian furniture, apparent in the curation of pieces such as a 1950s sideboard by Hauner & Eisler and a chic pair of armchairs by Branco e Preto from the same decade, as well as their expertise in postmodern French furnishings, seen from selects like stunning J. Lang armchairs by Philippe Starck, which were initially designed for the famed 1980s Socialist French Minister of Culture Jack Lang, hence the name of the 1980s design.

“The goal when I work with these galleries to design spaces is to show museum-quality, collectible art,” Coutheillas adds. “But it doesn’t mean that it’s cold or intimidating. It’s a fine line between residence and exhibition. Our role at frenchCALIFORNIA is really, at the end of the day, to serve our client, who’s the developer, to make the space feel like an apartment.” And surely the space achieves just that thanks to the well-advised touches by Gabriel & Guillaume and Valerie Cueto. “It’s like these [gallery owners] are artists in their own way. They know everything about the craft... and that I think is my favorite part of the job.” ■

Philippe Starck's pair of J. Lang armchairs curated by Gabriel & Guillaume

