

EYE ON Style

CHROMA mixes modern décor with a dash of glamour. With an in-depth background in fine art, designer Alexis Tompkins and her business partner, Leann Conquer, explore bespoke interiors with a daring edge.

Interior designers require bold vision, high-powered radar, and perhaps supersonic powers to keep track of fast-changing design directions and nonstop rollouts of exciting new fabrics, lighting, wall décor, furniture, and new décor. Designers must also have a dynamic list of craftspeople and talented decorative artists.

San Francisco designer Alexis Tompkins at CHROMA embraces the newest and best, and works closely with Northern California artists, artisans, metal fabricators, textile weavers, ceramicists, an historic lighting restoration workroom, and an array of super-talented specialists to give her clients highly personal rooms with bespoke style they love.

Relates Tompkins, “We work on significant projects with leading architects for clients who are interested in having our team develop design details in a highly considered and unique way. CHROMA’s work is often informed by art and fashion, in both an abstract sense including color and volume, and the more literal sense where we translate texture, materiality, stitching, and pleating details onto custom upholstery or pillows or curtains.”

CHROMA, founded in 2014, is working on a 1920’s Art Deco pied-a-terre in Nob Hill, where Tompkins is mixing inherited family heirlooms, including a collection of French provincial pieces, from the Louis XVI period, with contemporary traditional pieces including Rose Tarlow furnishings.

The firm is also restoring and translating a 1904 Edgar Matthews Pacific Heights home for contemporary family living. A modernised penthouse in Telegraph Hill is on the boards, as well as a historically protected Victorian in Dogpatch to blend the up-to-date and the historic, fashion, and art in a customized way.



Story by
Diane Dorrans Saeks

Photography by
Meghan Kay Sadler
and Shade Degges

CHROMA design firm partners,
operations director Leann
Conquer and creative director
Alexis Tompkins, at their
San Francisco studio.



On Telegraph Hill, CHROMA's complete renovation of a fifties residence resulted in a peaceful new sitting area for the master bedroom (left) with a new fire-place and cabinets. The beautifully composed living room includes a hair-on-hide fifties chair in juxtaposition with a vintage bronze table. The new kitchen includes a breakfast area (right) with a view.

"I'm continually delighted to find that our clients have incredibly original and brilliant ideas, and we are here to assist them in bringing these ideas to life," says Tompkins, who works closely with founding business partner, Leann Conquer, on all projects.

Tompkins also develops art and furniture collections that are highly individual and personal. "I pair the right artists, craftsmen, and specialists with clients to facilitate bespoke design and partnerships and patronage and creative relationships that may continue for many years," notes Tompkins.

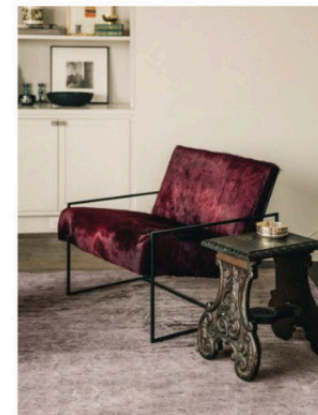
CHROMA recently completed a project in Marin County with Marmol Radziner Architects, noted Modernists with studios in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

"These clients have fearless and unusual taste," adds Tompkins. "They were drawn to the whimsy of 1970s-style furniture and interiors to balance Marmol Radziner's modern architecture. We studied '70s interiors and fashion and that heritage and mixed in contemporary elements to create something fresh. The material selections were contemporary, with a sophisticated stitching detail inspired by a coat from the Stockholm-based fashion house Acne Studios. We balanced the horizontal mass with vertical, horsehair pendants from Apparatus Studio."

As a creative director, Tompkins observes that the definition of luxury is changing and it's different for each client. "Clients are looking for the never-been-seen-before, and for a unique and timeless aesthetic as well as a very personal experience and process," she says. "The unique, the rare, and the handcrafted offer homeowners a sense of participating in design, and the end result is one-of-a-kind interiors. Even a somewhat traditional interior can be kicked up a notch with a dramatic handmade chandelier or a custom-crafted rug or tapestry."

The CHROMA team is currently working on a historic, 1914 Craftsman estate in Hillsborough formerly owned by the Lilienthal family of Levi-Strauss.

"Our collective goal is to preserve the historic details while simultaneously transitioning the spaces for contemporary family living," notes Conquer. Tompkins adds, "We have studied Craftsman architectural details and pulled them apart,





On Telegraph Hill (left) a pair of custom-crafted mirrors adds drama to the new bathroom. Cabinets are walnut. Below left and right, in a young girl's bedroom in Hillsborough a vivid headboard in Josef Frank fabric. Room & Board chairs were custom-upholstered. In a Hillsborough home (opposite), CHROMA composed a pair of Vladimir Kagan chairs with a Soude concrete table. Ottoman in Hodsolli McKenzie fabric from de Sousa Hughes.



streamlining them as we detail all the new millwork. As homage to Louis Comfort Tiffany, we incorporate iridescent glass. Rather than being literal here and selecting American-made Craftsman lighting, we looked to Italy and are sourcing rare, vintage fixtures by Mazzega and Venini."

To bring the striking classical landscape indoors, CHROMA has commissioned hand-painted custom wallpaper from London-based de Gournay to line the hallways of the house. Custom carpets are from Mark Nelson Designs in New York featuring custom color palettes inspired by the abstract, stained glass-style details in recent Dries Van Noten collections and patterns. "Many of our tech and design clients are successful in their own right because they have created something new, something bespoke in their business that no one has seen or experienced before," notes Tompkins. "They are open to experimenting with unusual mixtures of styles, which is so refreshing and rewarding for us as their creative partner."

The CHROMA team believes in the power of art. Notes Tompkins, "We educate our clients to invest in the artist, not just one art piece. That means we often support the artist and allow them to continue their creative exploration."

Tompkins believes that homeowners want to create residences that reflect what they care about—from their travel and passions to experiences. "Stylistically," she reflects, "our projects have great range and where we land is quite personal to each homeowner." ♦

