

Living Color

SAN FRANCISCO INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM CHROMA, WHICH RECENTLY OPENED A STUDIO IN DOGPATCH, REPRESENTS A BRAVE NEW WAVE OF ART-INSPIRED CONTEMPORARY THINKING.

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY



Alexis Tompkins (left) and Leann Conquer in Chroma's new Dogpatch studio



Chroma's Dogpatch studio includes Edward Wormley Design Cubes.

reverberates throughout the space and truly makes the home both a haven and a destination.”

Take, for example, a recent Chroma project known as the Sundown Lounge, where Tompkins notes the artworks serve as poetic contours. Roger Herman’s (rogerherman.net) ceramic work “Untitled 44 (White, Green, Orange)” delineates one side of the room. “It’s a refined work, placed on a slick black custom Chroma *shou sugi ban* pedestal, but it has this unbridled rawness to it that speaks to the room’s sensate mystique,” she says. “A monochromatic Noam Rappaport (noamrappaport.com) acrylic work against the room’s moody teal walls gives very Josef Albers vibes, and a Phillip Low (philliplow.com) sculpture stirs attention to the details of the room and also serves as a kind of crowning jewel atop Vincenzo De Cotiis’ (decotiis.it) enigmatic DC1717.”

Working with clients effectively also is an art form. It’s something Tompkins and Conquer feel passionate about, and they begin the process by asking questions. What kinds of

films do the clients like? Where do they like to travel? What are their musical tastes? “Then we dig in a bit more psychologically,” says Tompkins. “What do they enjoy about the way they live their lives, and what are their greatest aspirations? Meanwhile, we’re behind the scenes researching—what era is the architecture from, what artistic movements occurred in this era, what was the fashion like, what was happening in the world of design at this time? We’re also simultaneously conducting programming studies and testing possible floor plans. With all this information, we create a conceptual primer for the home that includes mood boards, material and color palettes,



To inhabit a space designed by the minds behind Chroma (chromasf.com) is to feel ageless. That’s an aesthetic gift, of course, as the best interior designers merge touchstones of the past with a contemporary worldview flush with artistic and cultural references. Leann Conquer, Chroma’s managing partner, and Alexis Tompkins, the firm’s creative partner, curate rooms that are at once livable and dreamy. While they choose furniture, lighting, textiles and art to evoke moods of overarching serenity, make no mistake: These young design pros—whom *Architectural*

Digest recently recognized as New American Voices—allow sensuality and whimsy to play nicely in every room.

Art, as always with this firm, plays an integral role in the production. “For us, artwork isn’t just the flourish at the end—it’s essential to the composition,” says Conquer. “And while art is so delicately personal, it’s also made richer in community. We love introducing our clients to new artists and the depth of art history. We place a lot of pride in sourcing artworks that not only resonate emotionally or intellectually for our clients and lend their home a unique quality, but also draw out their own creative energy, which then



From top: Chroma’s studio art from Hugh Scott-Douglas hangs above an Edward Wormley bench; a pair of restored Gio Ponti armchairs covered in a curry-colored Sandra Prima Alpaca fabric, from Almond & Co.



technical floor plans and specific furnishings—and we continue to ideate with the client.”

Chroma’s new Dogpatch studio was launched to inspire clients and showcase work by local artisans, artists and musicians as part of the neighborhood’s emerging creative community. Tompkins and Conquer also plan to unveil Chroma collections (everything from small home goods to furniture), and they’re excited about their firm’s upcoming collaboration with renowned wallcovering designer de Gournay (degournay.com). These are incredibly busy women doing incredibly beautiful things. “We just really want to be a champion for all things art and design in San Francisco,” says Conquer. ■



From top: A bar vignette from a Chroma project known as Sundown Lounge; a game table from Sundown Lounge.

ART CRUSHES

The team at Chroma introduces clients to scores of Bay Area galleries and talented artists. Here are the local collaborators they adore right now.

GALLERIES

Jessica Silverman Gallery
jessicasilvermangallery.com

Almond + Co
almondandcompany.com

De Angelis
[@deangelisf](https://twitter.com/deangelisf)

Altman Siegel Gallery
altmansiegel.com

Ratio 3
ratio3.org

Fraenkel Gallery
fraenkelgallery.com

Et al.
etaletc.com

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts
wattis.org

Guerrero Gallery
guerrerogallery.com

ARTISTS

Davina Semo
davinasemo.com

Laeh Glenn
altmansiegel.com/artists/laeh-glenn

Aaron Silverstein
aasilverstein.com

Ben Peterson
ratio3.org/artists/ben-peterson/works

Koak
altmansiegel.com/artists/koak

Joe Cunningham
joecunninghamquilts.com

Laurie Reid
morganlehmgallery.com/artists/laurie-reid

Sandra Jordan (textile designer)
sandrajordan.com