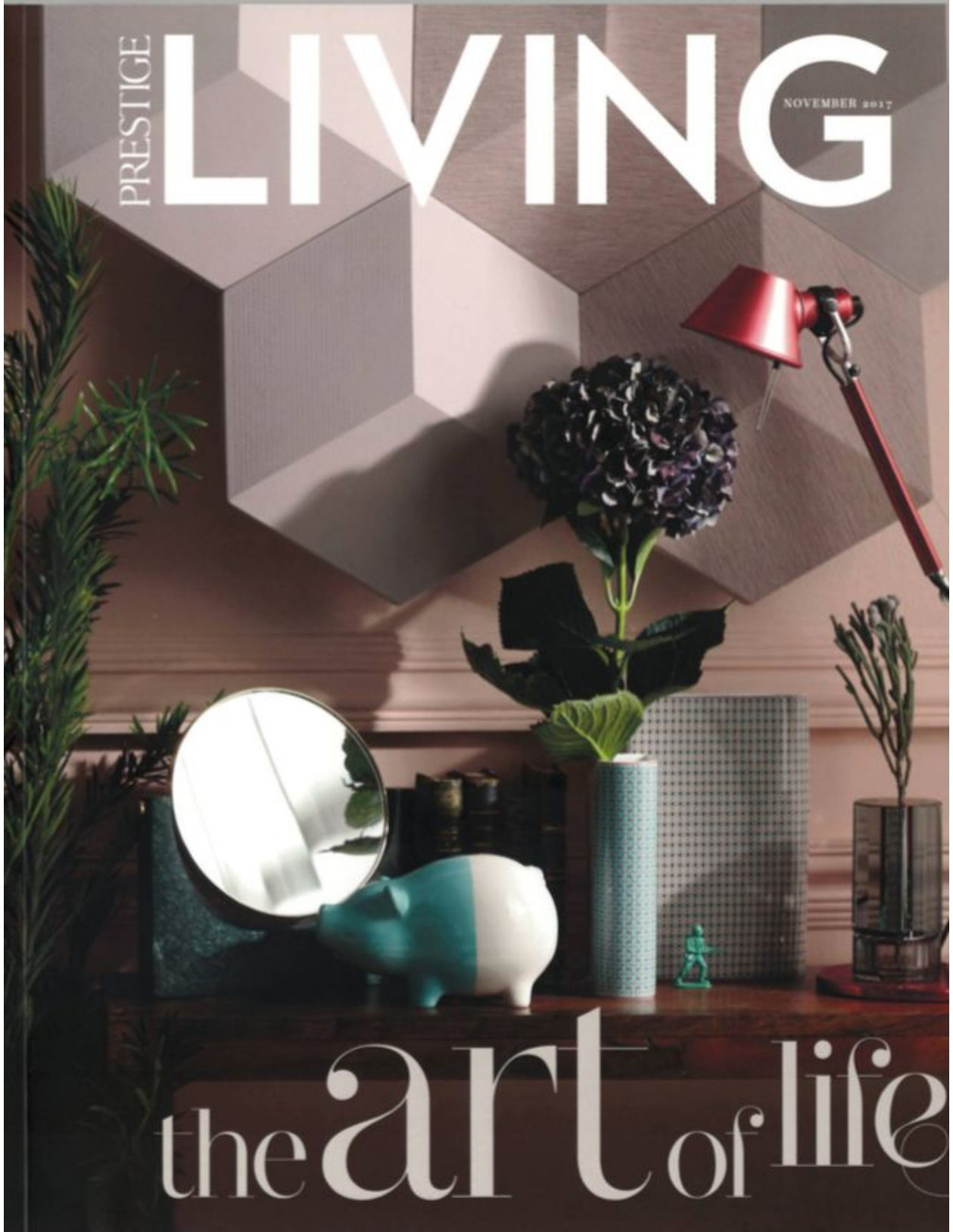


PRESTIGE

LIVING

NOVEMBER 2017



the art of life

california dreaming

California's rugged landscapes have always been a source of inspiration for creatives. GEMMA ZOE PRICE meets four artisans who have made the Sunshine State their home



Although of Polish-Irish descent, woodworker Aleksandra Zee has an affinity with the land and Native American aesthetic

INTO THE WOODS

Since leaving San Francisco's Mission District and making the move across the Bay seven years ago, woodworking maven and installation artist Aleksandra Zee has found her footing in Oakland's growing maker community.

At her cavernous, 1920s exposed brick workshop, Zee dons work boots and coveralls, working with hammers, nails and drills to craft pieces from reclaimed wood, citing her travels

and colours of the wilderness, mountains and ocean as inspiration for her craft.

"The colours and textiles of the desert truly inspire my soul. I find myself gravitating to natural hues and designs that I have brought back with me," she shares on her website.

Zee makes headboards and table tops, but is best known for her wooden wall hangings — you can see them at the Kimpton Buchanan Hotel in San Francisco's Japantown and the Joshua Tree House in the California desert town of the same name, where she had a residency last year.

She's also known for her chevron motifs, which evoke a Native American aesthetic. Although Zee is of Polish-Irish descent, she says she feels a connection to the land, its spirituality, and the history of Native American culture, and enjoys the feeling of recreating the patterns of indigenous textiles in a new medium.

In addition to making her own art pieces, Zee partners with other Oakland artisans such as Heather Day, who works with paint and other materials, and Searoon Succulents, known for dreamy plant installations. She also offers two one-on-one workshops every month, where apprentices get to make their own pieces, selecting the design and colours, and learning how to safely wield the power tools necessary for the job.

aleksandrazee.com



Inspired by California's natural beauty, Annie Morhauser interprets flora and fauna through her artisanal glassware.



IMITATING LIFE

Annie Morhauser fell in love with the beauty of glass when she first saw it being blown by an artisan at Waddell Creek Beach under a full moon over 30 years ago — during a small festival Morhauser cites as a precursor of the annual Burning Man arts festival. But it was developing her own version of the ancient glass forming process, known as slumping, in the 1990s that marked the beginning of her company *Annieglass*.

Morhauser took her first pieces of Roman Antique — a plate of thick glass with a wide rim painted in 24k gold — to a trade show in 1983. There have spawned copies although authentic pieces can be found at The Ritz Carlton and Waldorf Astoria, and even in the permanent collection at the Smithsonian.

Working from her Central Coast studio nestled between Monterey Bay, redwood forests and the Santa Cruz Mountains, Morhauser says she is inspired by the support for the artist community and by California's natural beauty.

"I have attempted to interpret the shapes of marine life, flora and fauna into my sculptural and functional forms," she says. "The patterns of bark, wind on the ocean, and sand dunes have found their way onto my surfaces."

Sometimes her rendering of nature is literal, such as in her droplet splash-like Water Sculpture Bowl and Ultramarine Clam pieces, but Morhauser seeks to immortalise and protect her environment in other ways. Since less than 10 percent of glass collected globally for recycling is actually repurposed, Morhauser is working on a patent and grant to further explore the process she uses to craft her Elements recycled glass collection on a larger scale. This year she's also excited about producing storybook bowls, where edges are cut in the silhouettes of a neighbourhood or garden.

"They are technically difficult and are a limited edition to honour our 35th year in business, blending ancient craft with modern technology," she explains.

annieglass.com





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