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# VERANDA

SPECIAL ISSUE

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# The Alchemist


GLOBE-TROTTING DESIGNER KATIE LEEDE MIXES CULTURES, CRAFTSMANSHIP, AND CREATIVE THINKING TO BRING THE BEAUTY OF THE WORLD HOME.




A silk-screen by Sam Francis presides over the living area of designer Katie Leede's former loft on New York's Crosby Street. OPPOSITE: Leede in the master bedroom, where she painted the walls in Farrow & Ball's Incarnadine and hung dramatic custom portieres pieced together from former window curtains and a vintage suzani.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY KATIE LEEDE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELANIE ACEVEDO  
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Leede's current loft is flooded with light. Because of height restrictions in the area, "there's more blue sky downtown," she says.



With clients from Santa Monica, California, to New York's Upper East Side, designer Katie Leede is used to working on strict deadlines and across time zones while balancing the rigors of her thriving interior design business.

But no deadline has tested her tenacity as much as the one she was given last year, when the building she called home along the cobblestone-lined streets of Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood was sold, and she and her boyfriend, Averill Powers, had to be packed up in three months. Luckily, a light-filled aerie around the corner—with enough room for their five grown children to visit—beckoned. The two spaces, both shown here, are linked in style and theme, with family heirlooms, contemporary art, and a mélange of exotic patterns embodying Leede's gutsy approach to putting her spaces *and* herself together.

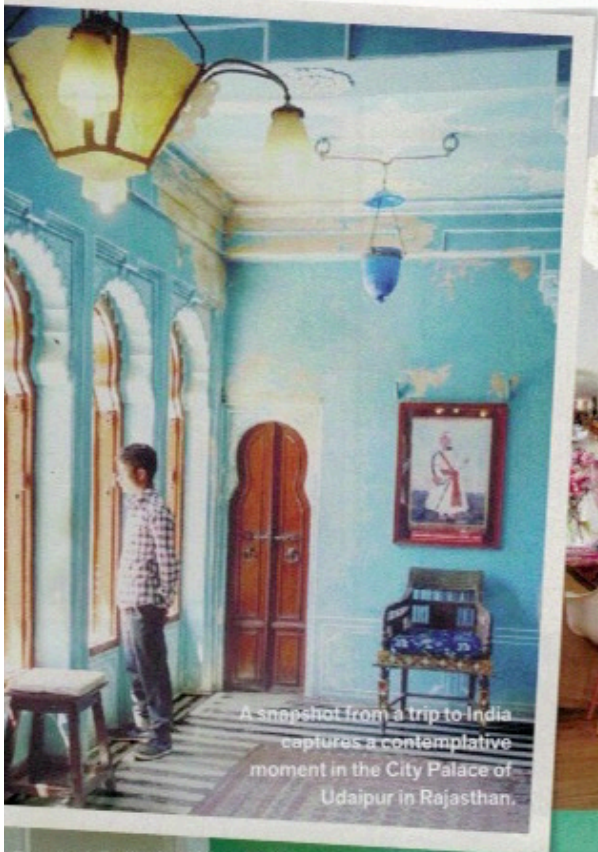
"A strong personal style doesn't necessarily require a big budget," says Leede, "but it does require a certain élan—zip, oomph, verve." Whether she's designing a new fabric, plotting out a client's living room, or getting dressed in the morning, Leede's M.O. is beauty and comfort that's deeply heartfelt. "I like rooms that are relaxed, collected, and not decorated per se," she says.

The same holds true for Leede's ensembles, which transcend the latest runway trends: boho prints accessorized with layers of stacked bracelets; chunky necklaces that have personal meaning. She's also pretty fearless. While Coco Chanel once said that elegance is refusal, Leede doesn't wholeheartedly concur, and her pals can back that up: "My friend Mariska says, 'Katie, you are the one person I know who, instead of taking one thing off when you leave the house, you put one thing on!'"

With her burgeoning line of wallpapers and fabrics, inspired by her world travels, and a keen eye that can pick up nuances in individual threads of a rare suzani or appreciate the talismanic qualities of New Mexican turquoise jewelry, her 360-degree approach to design is a truly movable feast. "Style isn't something you just hang things on," says Leede. "It's actually an emotional and vivacious living thing. I want people to love their homes, to experience practical comfort and joy where they live, whatever the style." □



Rings and necklaces on a vintage textile purchased in India.

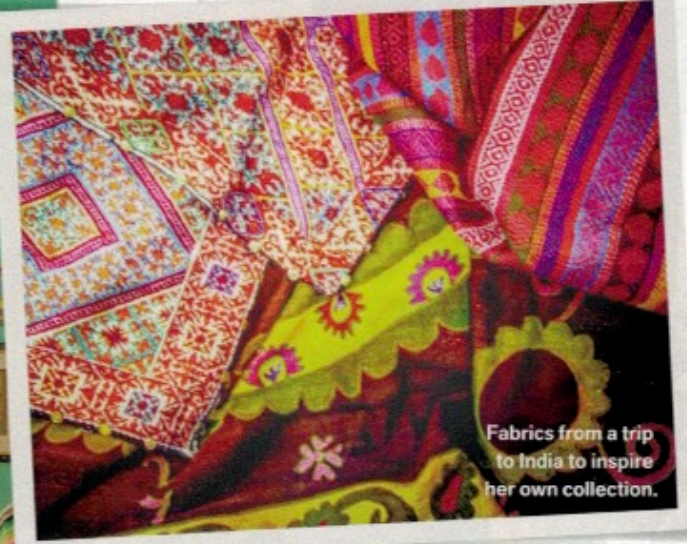


A snapshot from a trip to India captures a contemplative moment in the City Palace of Udaipur in Rajasthan.



In her former kitchen, functionality was key. Depending on the event, the island could be used for dining at night, working on presentations during the workday, or setting up as a bar for entertaining on weekends.

Farrow & Ball's Arsenic added a bold note to the previous residence's entry. Leede bought the rug at a souk in Marrakech; the custom mirror was made from an antique door lintel she found in Jodhpur and combined with a gold-leaf frame.

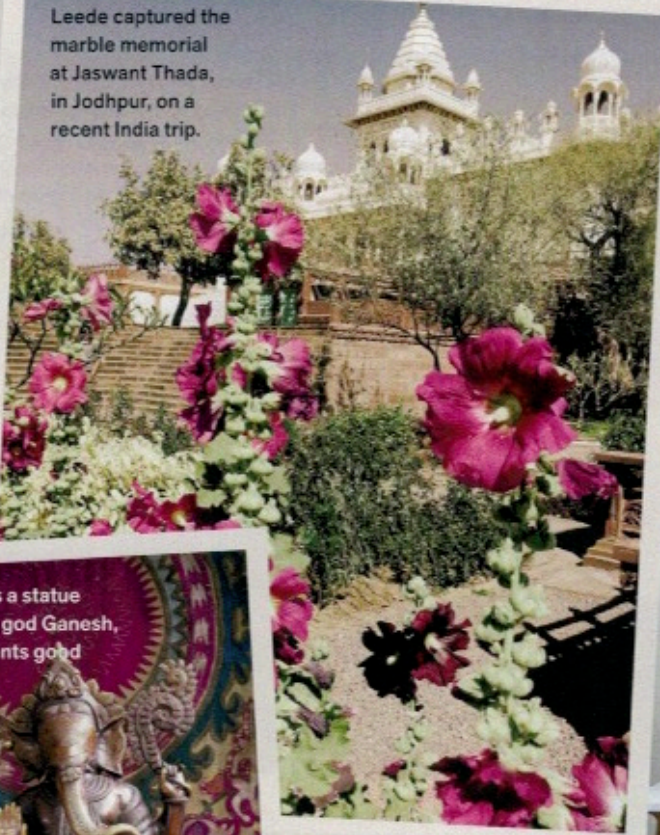


Fabrics from a trip to India to inspire her own collection.

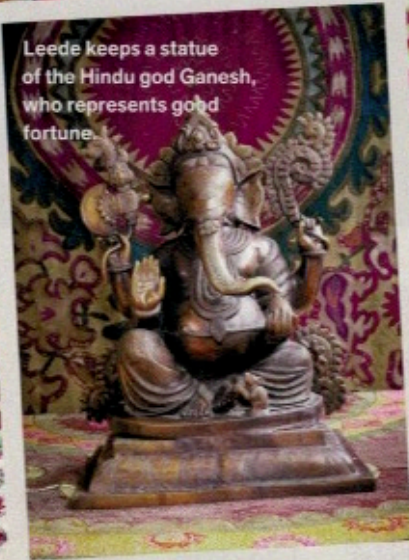


Royal Copenhagen china, a gift from Leede's mother.

Leede captured the marble memorial at Jaswant Thada, in Jodhpur, on a recent India trip.



Leede keeps a statue of the Hindu god Ganesh, who represents good fortune.



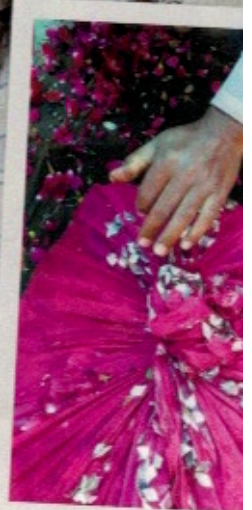
A bedroom offers privacy and showcases a world of influences.



Art is hung salon-style in a bedroom; leopard-print carpet grounds the space.



ABOVE: Fabrics from Katie Leede & Company's spring 2018 collection. RIGHT: Rose petals in India, where they are used as an offering of gratitude and worship to deities.



Leede wanted the Crosby Street master bedroom to be "cozy, sexy, relaxing, and easy to retreat to for reading and all the other stuff you might get up to in such a space." The headboard was made from a vintage suzani. For more details, see Sourcebook.

