

## Interior Design: The Legends – with Clements Design

October 13, 2021



"Masterfully combining sophistication with simplicity, Kathe and Tommy Clements intuitively demonstrate that great projects depend on a symphonic cohesion between architecture and interiors. Their sense of style, leaning on textured, earthy materials and simple patinated forms, creates a casual elegance that feels at once humanistic and luxurious. They are simultaneously rigorous creative collaborators and divinely fun to have on the journey!"

Scott Mitchell

With these poetic words, renowned architect Scott Mitchell has captured the DNA of Clements Design, the interior design studio of mother-and-son team Kathleen and Tommy Clements—the inaugural guests of this season's Interior Design: The Legends program. Like the Clements duo, Scott insists that his work achieves honesty of expression and integrity of materials, and so the three have collaborated on numerous projects. One such example is a modernist residence in Holmby Hills, Los Angeles, for which Clements Design designed the remarkable interiors. It's featured in the new monograph published by **Rizzoli**.

Dedicated to eight of Clement Design's recent projects in Southern California, *Eight Homes: Clements Design* is an outstanding volume beautifully designed by Graphic Thought Facility in London. As an object, the book mirrors Clements Design's aesthetic ethos: The textural quality of the matte paper calls to mind the duo's signature plaster finishes; the minimalist, modernist graphic layout reflects the precision of their airy spaces; the quiet serenity one feels while leafing through the book simulates the atmosphere of their interiors.

Over the past decade, Clements Design has built a powerhouse interior design practice while remaining somewhat under the radar. The duo's sophisticated taste attracts high-profile clients passionate about living with exceptional art and design, such as Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi, Behati Prinsloo and Adam Levine, and Sheryl and Barry Schwartz. Transcending style, Clements Design creates livable, comfortable dream homes, filled with books and furniture masterpieces, complemented by inviting gardens.

Kathleen and Tommy, we learned in the interview, were not formally educated in interior design. Rather they were self-trained through their experiences in the world of antiques. Prior to launching her interiors career in New Orleans 30 years ago, Kathleen worked for the last privately held Ralph Lauren store as the primary buyer dedicated to antique and vintage furniture and accessories. Of Lauren, she says that he was brilliant, the first to develop a true lifestyle brand and contributed to the elevation of the distinctly American narrative.

Out of college, Tommy pursued a career at Architectural Digest, working on the advertising side as an assistant to the head of the art and antiques accounts, which put him in close contact with gallerists and furniture dealers. In 2007, he joined his mother's business. The two have collaborated ever since, specializing in interiors characterized by calm restraint, free of decoration and intense color palettes, and fully integrated within the architectural envelope and surrounding landscape. These signature Clement Design qualities are achieved in collaboration with master craftspeople who manipulate plaster, wood, stone, metal, and beyond to precise specifications.

One of the most substantial aspects of Clement Design's interiors—one which brings a sense of depth—is their selection of objects. Mixing old and new, vintage and contemporary, Nordic, French, Brazilian, and Italian, their curation is educated and chic. Whether a lounge chair by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer or a library table by French modernist Jean Prouvé, they harness the charisma of powerful pieces to transform spaces.

When it comes to contemporary pieces, they love Rick Owens—of whom they say he has succeeded in expressing a unified message across fashion and furniture. They also regularly draw on the bronze works of French designer Ingrid Donat and the functional sculptures of Australian-born, London-based designer Charles Trevelyan, both represented by Carpenters Workshop Gallery. Loïc Le Gaillard, the gallery's cofounder, calls Tommy a Renaissance man and an aesthete, adding: "He's one of the most sophisticated professionals with whom I have collaborated. His sharp intuition and understanding of spaces, light, color, and objects enhance his talent for brilliantly pairing exquisite and sometimes eclectic artworks."

A member of the audience asked the duo who their favorite interior designer is, and Kathleen and Tommy immediately agreed on Jacques Grange. Widely considered to be the godfather of today's world of interior design, the French decorator, the two explain, was the first to emphasize the primacy of object curation.

It's not unusual for Kathleen and Tommy's relationship with their clients to evolve from the professional to the personal, as they shop together in New York galleries and Parisian markets, envisioning the project together along the way. "We worked with Kathe and Tommy while our house was being built," Sheryl and Barry Schwartz told me about their Santa Barbara home (which was published in AD). "It's difficult to articulate how much they added to the project... They shared our passion for what we were trying to achieve. We started off as a design team and clients and ended up dear friends."

What did we learn from Kathleen and Tommy Clements? That a home can be breathtakingly beautiful yet livable; that great interiors can be completely devoid of decoration and trendy embellishments; and that if you invest emotionally in your home, you will enjoy it for many years. This article was published today in **Forum Magazine** by **Design Miami**.

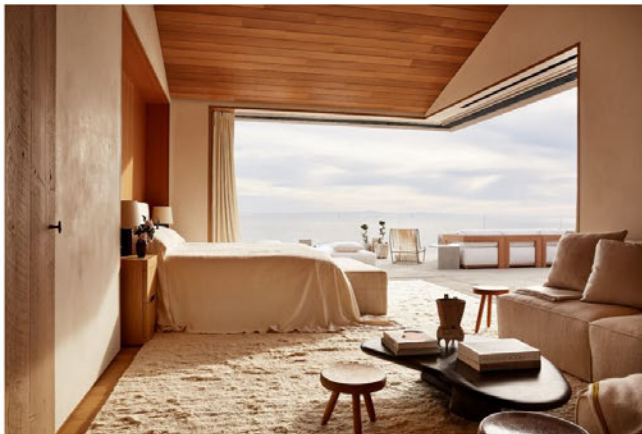




Alpine



Byers



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Pedaro



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Kuk'ŋo

## 2 thoughts on “Interior Design: The Legends – with Clements Design”



CHARLES BARBER  
OCTOBER 13, 2021 AT 4:18 PM

Excellent reading and excellent description... Clements Design, in my personal view, "have got it".



SUSAN SAWTISKY  
OCTOBER 13, 2021 AT 3:43 PM

This is amazing. I love their sensibility as designers, each individual piece and the whole gestalt. Thank you for sharing Kathleen and Tommy Clements creative design projects!

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