



Inside Job

Hollywood director Adam Shankman and Industry designer Eric Hughes create a media-free retreat.

By Andrew Myers
Photography by Melissa Valladares

"I'm on six jobs actively, which I guess makes me an average American," says Adam Shankman, director of the forthcoming *Rock of Ages* and a judge on *So You Think You Can Dance*, as well as a choreographer, script doctor, Academy Awards producer and erstwhile professional dancer. At home in Los Feliz, however, the frenetic career grind is left at the door. "I need peace, to relax, to be calm. I don't even listen to music when I'm home," says the Juilliard-trained Brentwood native.

Cue designer Eric Hughes. Friends with Shankman for over three decades, the bicoastal Hughes was not only well acquainted with his friend's likes and lifestyle, he was also well versed with working with Hollywood creatives. "I really enjoy the dynamic with actors, directors and producers, because once you explain the vision and the plan they trust you to go off and just do it," says Hughes. Before switching to design a decade ago, Hughes worked as a studio executive at Universal, with clients including Sarah Jessica Parker, Kate Winslet, Katie Couric and *30 Rock* Executive Producer Marci Klein. "It's a leap of faith among creative people, and it's very much how they're used to working."

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AND SCENE! Adam Shankman lounges in the living room of his Los Feliz house. Pierre Marie Brisson's "Jardin Secret II" hangs above a Roche Bobois sectional.



...CONTINUED Enter Shankman's classic midcentury house nestled in the Hollywood Hills. Purchased seven or eight years ago and originally designed by Kimberly Biehl Schmidt, it was showing the wrinkles of time and sun alongside wreckage caused by Shankman's beloved white Labrador retriever and bull-boxer. Director to designer? "Please give my house a facelift!" says Shankman.

But facelifts are tricky business. What is not enough? What is too much? And what is too too much? Hughes' first job was to take the decorator's version of the Hippocratic oath: First do no harm. Both Hughes and Shankman agreed that the house's strengths were its site and siting (one wall of windows with spectacular views, and three sides cozy and cosseted in the landscape); its high ceilings and open floor plan; and the easy indoor-outdoor flow typical of midcentury architecture, which also affected the art. "All of the art reflects either a sense of humor or bringing the outdoors in," explains Shankman, who sought collecting advice from Steve Martin before he began purchasing photographs, paintings and multimedia works, and followed his instruction to "Buy what you love, be it \$10 or \$10,000, because you're going to have to live with it."

Architectural envelope and art inviolate, Hughes CONTINUED...



MIXED MEDIA Clockwise from upper left: The guest room with Room and Board's framed kuba cloth. The living area features fresh flowers, framed photos and a tiled fireplace. The dining room's painted steel table sits in front of Jean-Pierre Chardat's large-scale canvas panels. Madeline Weinrib rug



...CONTINUED turned his eye to interior decoration. “Basically what I did was to repaint, reupholster, reimagine some spaces, choose new rugs and consolidate,” he says, adding that he kept almost all the original pieces, augmenting them only with the occasional occasional table or natural wood-stump lamp.

It’s a modest, even humble description, but as with good plastic surgery, it belies the skill required to “refresh.” While “repaint” might have connoted simply slathering on a new coat of the same hue, here it meant new colors on all interior and exterior walls. “Reupholster” was not merely recovering furniture in similar fabrics, but the application of new materials (such as the hot orange patent leather on the living room’s ottoman) and, in coordination with the new rugs, the implementation of new concepts and color schemes. And although Hughes detests clutter, consolidation signified both throwing things out and gathering items together—particularly the innumerable photographs of friends, family and career spread throughout the house, which Hughes had reframed in simple black bamboo-like frames and hung studio-style on the house’s longest and most focal wall.

Editing finished inside, Hughes then tamed the jungle that had overgrown the backyard, deck and pool. The pool was painted “pond blue” and a putty-colored slate selected for the surround, complementing the house’s exterior. The deck and lanai also received fresh earth tones, and the cushions and pillows went green.

And the director’s last word? “This house has the happiest energy of any house I’ve been in. Ever.” ■

VIEW FINDER From top: Sunbrella fabrics and pots from Gainey Ceramics sit poolside. Between the Sheets bedding and a George Nelson lamp from Modernica in the master bedroom

