

# HYLAND

NOHA HASSAN

*Photography by Mark Roskams*



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It takes an exceptional capacity for discernment to orchestrate a successful interior using, almost exclusively, furniture and art from the 1960s onward. Decoratively speaking, the inventions of our own age (I speak to readers over fifty) up to the present are difficult. Design with a capital “D,” often so streamlined they seem to have scant regard for comfort. Egyptian-born designer and collector Noha Hassan possesses just such a discriminating eye, distilling the best furniture and art of the last fifty years into interiors that sometimes appear paradoxically cozy. Perhaps an inspired outsider—both younger and foreign born—is better placed to interpret American and European design trends of this thorny time span.

*“It is sexy, yet it evokes home and hearth, a place communal rather than corporate.”*





Take, for example, the dining room of this Upper East Side post-war apartment decorated by Hassan. It is small, it is ever so cool, and yet it is warm. The walls are painted deepest charcoal gray, Benjamin Moore's 'Silhouette' tone, not a recipe for warmth, and yet it works because Hassan has planted there seminal furniture—a dining table by Matthew Hilton and chairs by Norman Cherner—possessing the glow of deep walnut wood. The Hilton Cross Extension table puts in mind of Carlo Mollino, as do the Cherner chairs. The ensemble is streamlined, it is sexy, yet it evokes home and hearth, a place communal rather than corporate. Hassan appears to have followed Billy Baldwin's precept of dark colors for small rooms and boldly filled the room with furniture—arguably some of the best the mid-



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and late 20th century produced—corner to corner. The dark gray is a Mollino quotation, as well as a Baldwin dictum. Another Baldwin bon mot was to warm a gray wall with gilded frames. Hassan has not had recourse to this anachronism, but instead has gilded the gray with the Saturn chandelier, by Simon, of small orange and amber suspended globes.

In the entry hall is another consummately cool tableau that is yet inviting, an almost rustic take on modernism. An entire wall is sheathed in horizontal, silvery slivers of slate, against which hangs an abstract painting, in blue, gray, white and black, *Retrospection*, 2013, by James Kennedy. The Siena 4 console, of wood on skinny steel legs, is from Organic Modernism; alongside it resides a marble Pouf by Cerruti Baleri. A capacious



cow hide rug, in black and white, completes the scenario.

In the living room sleek encases natural, with Frank Lefebvre's 'Bleu Nature' suite of acrylic glass cube tables cast around twisting, poetic driftwood, the branches called 'Kisimi', the trunk 'Nilleq'. The 'Hepburn Sectional' couch, upholstered in linen flax is by Matthew Hilton for Espada; the rug, 'Sellarsbrook Blue' is by Suzanne Sharp. Hassan has taken a modestly scaled apartment and devised a scheme at once rigorous and inviting, selecting furniture, art and accessories that bespeak the warm, organic face of contemporary design. **H**

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