

Interior design: Mead Quin embraces transitional traditional

By Paige Porter Fischer Updated 4:49 pm, Friday, October 10, 2014

[Email] [Facebook] [Twitter] [Pinterest] [Reddit] [Google+] [Print] [Comment]



Photo: Liz Hafalia / The Chronicle

IMAGE 1 OF 6
Mead Quin with her dog Abi at her home studio in Oakland.

There's an art to reinvention. Oakland-based designer **Mead Quin** studied fine art at **Vanderbilt University** and spent the first decade of her professional career painting exquisite portraits for clients across the country. While pursuing an MFA at the **Academy of Art**, Quin had an encounter with the world of interior design and, for the first time in her life, considered the possibility of making a career out of it. "The idea of creating beauty that would be *lived in* was intriguing to me," she says.

TRENDING NOW

- It's been legal to pick California golden poppies... (SF Gate)
- Conservative radio host Laura Ingraham loses it... (SF Gate)

coverage is **\$20** a month or less if you qualify

The Official Health Plan Marketplace

PROMOTED STORIES

- The 19 Rudest Celebrity Encounter Stories Ever (Suggest)
- She Is Easily The Hottest Female Golfer (FitStyleLife.com)
- Shocking Historical Photos That Will Leave You... (AmericanUpbeat.com)
- Driving Away in a Mercedes GLC You Built Yourself... (Mercedes-Benz)

La cobertura es de **\$20** al mes o es gratuita si usted califica

The Official Health Plan Marketplace

And so Quin started over — with a blank canvas. She landed a job as a design assistant with **Grant K. Gibson's** San Francisco design firm, which proved a catalytic experience for her. “Grant took me under his wing early on, and showed me that kindness, laughter, wicked natural talent and the ability to not take oneself too seriously are what you really need to make it in this industry,” she says. Next, she landed a plum job as a designer with **Martha Angus**, working on high-profile projects from Menlo Park to Nantucket. “Martha taught me that spunk, true artistic sensibilities and fearlessness will also get you there,” says Quin, who took her own fearless step in 2013 when she opened her eponymous design firm in Oakland (www.meadquindesign.com).

The Southern native has developed a passion for her new hometown of Oakland, where she lives and works in a sweet, sun-filled bungalow nestled between Rockridge and Temescal. “Oakland is urban living with a little more space and a lot more sunshine,” she says. “It’s diverse, a little gritty, full-on artistic and forward thinking, with lovely and lovable people.”

Quin’s roots give her an appreciation for traditional design. “I grew up around antiques and love using pieces that have stood the test of time,” she says. “But the Californian in me likes to mix it up a little and marry clean, contemporary pieces and accessories with the traditional ones. That’s one thing I love about design in the Bay Area right now — people are embracing transitional traditional design, which I think works better for our more casual, modern lifestyles.”

Quin believes the right design decisions up front are the most important ones.

“I work very hard to see that my clients purchase the best pieces they can afford the first time around,” says Quin. “We often fill our homes and lives with mediocre pieces just to have them feel ‘full.’ If you can wait and buy what you really wanted all along, not only is your home full of goods that are satisfying and pleasurable, but you are reducing waste by not filling spaces with things you’ll toss out a year later.”

Quin’s dream home would be a simple house on a bluff overlooking the Pacific, with the interiors reflecting everything going on outside — clean lines and calm colors. “Working as a portrait artist was a great foundation for interior design. A room is like a canvas — color, lines, shape, light, orientation — all of these things are important when working on a single canvas, a room or an entire residence.”

Paige Porter Fischer is a freelance writer in San Francisco. E-mail: home@sfchronicle.com

Mead Quin’s favorites

We asked designer Mead Quin for an insider’s “it list” for her adopted hometown of Oakland. Here are her sources of inspiration.



See The Movie The New Yorker Called 'The Best of...' (Screening Room by Amazon Video)

Recommended by Outbrain

LIVING VIDEOS

AdChoices



More videos:



MOST POPULAR

- 1 Thompson leads Curry-less Warriors past Rockets in Game 2
- 2 Local religious group suing city to remove outdoor urinals at...
- 3 More SF homes sit unsold as inventory grows
- 4 Cheer up! Rush Limbaugh is not long for this world
- 5 Book club members settle suit over ejection from Napa wine train
- 6 Rockets wary of what trip to Houston may bring
- 7 The worst seat on the plane is getting more difficult to avoid

If you had a design friend visit you from New York, where would you take them in the East Bay?

My designer friend from NYC would have to visit the first Sunday of the month to make the Alameda Flea Market. Know I'm partial to most things "Oakland," but I have to say, this is a magical experience. It's larger than life, refined and unrefined, treasures you dig for, others that jump out at you, kettle corn, bay views, sunshine and fog. It's a Bay Area experience you can only get on the east side. Worth the trip.

Where do you go to shop for your own home?

Maison d'Etire on College. "Celebrate Life at Home" is written above their front door, and I couldn't agree with anything more! Their space is chock-full of beautiful textiles, gifts, candles, flea market finds, cards, etc. If looking for accessories for an entire home or a special gift, this is a great stop. www.maisondetire.com

Where do you go for a client meeting or business lunch in Oakland?

Wood Tavern or Southie. Both owned by Rich and Rebekah Wood and next door to each other. Impeccable, flawless, tasteful beyond tasteful. www.woodtavern.net, www.southieoakland.com

What's your favorite building in Oakland?

Love the **Fox Theater**. If you haven't seen a show here, put it at the top of your list. Beautiful inside and out, awe-inspiring inside and out, a center point for the retail commercial development of nightlife in downtown Oakland. www.thefoxoakland.com

Favorite walk to take in Oakland?

Hands down, Joaquin Miller Park off of Skyline Boulevard. If you can pull yourself out of bed early enough for a sunrise, the east side of this park early in the morning is breathtaking and inspiring.

Haz click para aprender mas

nystateofhealth
The Official Health Plan Marketplace

Local date ideas for the young at heart

KAYAK

Search **Kansas City** rental cars

Kansas City

Thu 05/12 Sun 05/15

Search

PROMOTED STORIES



The Cameraman Just Kept Recording (OMGWhut)



8-Year-Old Skater Bella Kenworthy Is Hard to Ignore (Visit California)



Her Real Name Will Make Your Jaw Drop!!! (Your Daily Dish)



Jim Cramer is Alerting Investors of His Trades Before He Makes... (TheStreet on Topdust)