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TABLE MANNERS A Tulip dining table and chairs in black by Eero Saarinen overlooks the bay while Cady Noland's "Cowboy With Holes, Eating," 1990, sits in the corner of the dining room.

► SAN FRANCISCO

Artful Living

A prominent interior designer turns one established art collector's high rise space into a modern, museumlike abode.

By Jennie Nunn
Photography by Eric Piasecki

For interior designer Michael Booth, co-founder of San Francisco-based firm BAMO, the backstory on working with real estate developer and art collector Byron Meyer to transform a vacant, two-bedroom, 3,300-square-foot penthouse in SoMa's Millennium Tower into a gallery-inspired space is based upon two things: a trip to Indiana and shared history.

After all, Booth (who has fashioned interiors of hotels from the Rosewood Sand Hill in Palo Alto and Four Seasons Hualalai, as well as private residences in Napa, Carmel and Pebble Beach) had already teamed up with Meyer to outfit his Stanley Saitowitz-designed weekend country home in Sonoma a few years earlier. "He's an incredibly savvy art collector and world traveler, and we just got along right off the bat, became close friends and have the same taste," says Booth, who also accompanied Meyer, a past member of the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, on several art trips, including a visit to the iconic J. Irwin Miller House in Columbus, Indiana,

INSIDE OUT
In the living room, a white Zaha Hadid Moraine sofa is coupled with an original Michael Taylor sofa reupholstered in Gretchen Bellinger blue silk velvet in the living room. Three Michael Taylor travertine block end tables round out the rest of the space.





THE SKY'S THE LIMIT
 Opposite page: A new 9-foot tabletop in light gunmetal-gray lacquered wood sits on an original Michael Taylor limestone base. It is surrounded by Flat Bar Brno dining chairs by Knoll. The painting is by Philip Guston. Right: The kitchen is outfitted in cerused walnut and features a stunning custom island of impeccably worked Calacatta Oro stone. Below: Interior designer Michael Booth.



“We always talked about [the J. Irwin Miller house] over the years and how Byron wished he had a house like it. The Millennium penthouse was his to design from scratch, so we sought to create a white, gallerylike space that felt like a museum.”

in 1999. “It’s such an unusual house with beautiful, custom-designed fabrics, and that really struck us and reinvigorated my passion for modernism. We always talked about [the J. Irwin Miller house] over the years and how Byron wished he had a house like it. The Millennium penthouse was his to design from scratch, so we sought to create a white, gallerylike space that felt like a museum.”

With Meyer’s large art, photography and sculpture collection, along with furnishings from his five-bedroom primary residence designed by Michael Taylor in Russian Hill, they had to think outside the box and edit. “Going from a five-bedroom house with a full-on living room to a two-bedroom apartment, he

needed help on what should stay and what had to go, so it forced us to be inventive with the furniture,” says Booth, who layered the space with nods to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Alexander Girard. “He also had a huge collection of catalogues from nearly every art show he’d ever been to and oversized art books, so we created built-ins throughout the space.”

Beginning with an empty canvas (Meyer was one of the tower’s early buyers), the duo, along with lead designer Billy Quimby, chose a bright white palette paired with a cerused oak floor to serve as a backdrop for artwork including pieces by Agnes Martin, Elizabeth Peyton, Stephen de Staebler and Jeff Koons, and delicately installed massive paintings and sculptures.



"We wanted to take the all-white to a certain point, but we wanted the art to drive it," adds Booth. To ensure lighting for each piece was just right, they enlisted the help of lighting consulting firm Fisher Marantz Stone (FMS), who work on lighting for museum exhibitions. BAMO designated a "core" gallery wall painted a shade of cobalt for more than 30 photographs, all framed with white matte, by artists such as Hiroshi Sugimoto and Henri Cartier-Bresson. "We painted it this deep, deep blue to contrast with the white palette and warm wood in the space. We wanted to give it a dark color so the art would pop," says Booth. In the living room, a Moraine sofa by architect Zaha Hadid is paired with a geometric-printed emerald green, white and black rug by The Rug Company; three massive travertine blocks that double as end tables; and a sofa by Michael Taylor reupholstered in Gretchen Bellinger blue silk velvet.

"The rug is a very bold gesture and we obsessed about whether to use it or not, but it gives it this big hint of sexy color in the room," says Booth. The dining room is another mix of old and new finds with a pedestal dining table by Michael Taylor topped with a new lacquer slab and flanked by a giant painting by Philip Guston, while the master bedroom boasts an oversized, sandblasted wooden sculptural tree trunk by Michael Taylor and a silk rug by Tai Ping.

Now, after the 15-month transformation, it's clear Meyer is right at home in his museumlike artist's retreat. "He hosted a reception and between the artwork and views, everyone had an 'ooh and aah' experience being there," says Booth of the serene space with views of the Golden Gate and Bay bridges. "It's exactly what he wanted it to be. I joke that I could live here, and if I say that, it means I really love it." ■

MAKE ROOM!

Above: Even the master bath is a showcase for Meyer's collection, and the view of the Bay Bridge is beautifully framed as well. Opposite page: Original Michael Taylor chairs reupholstered in a Rogers & Goffigon cream linen anchor one side of a John Boone custom-sized, glass-topped coffee table. A rug from The Rug Company brings a pop of color.

