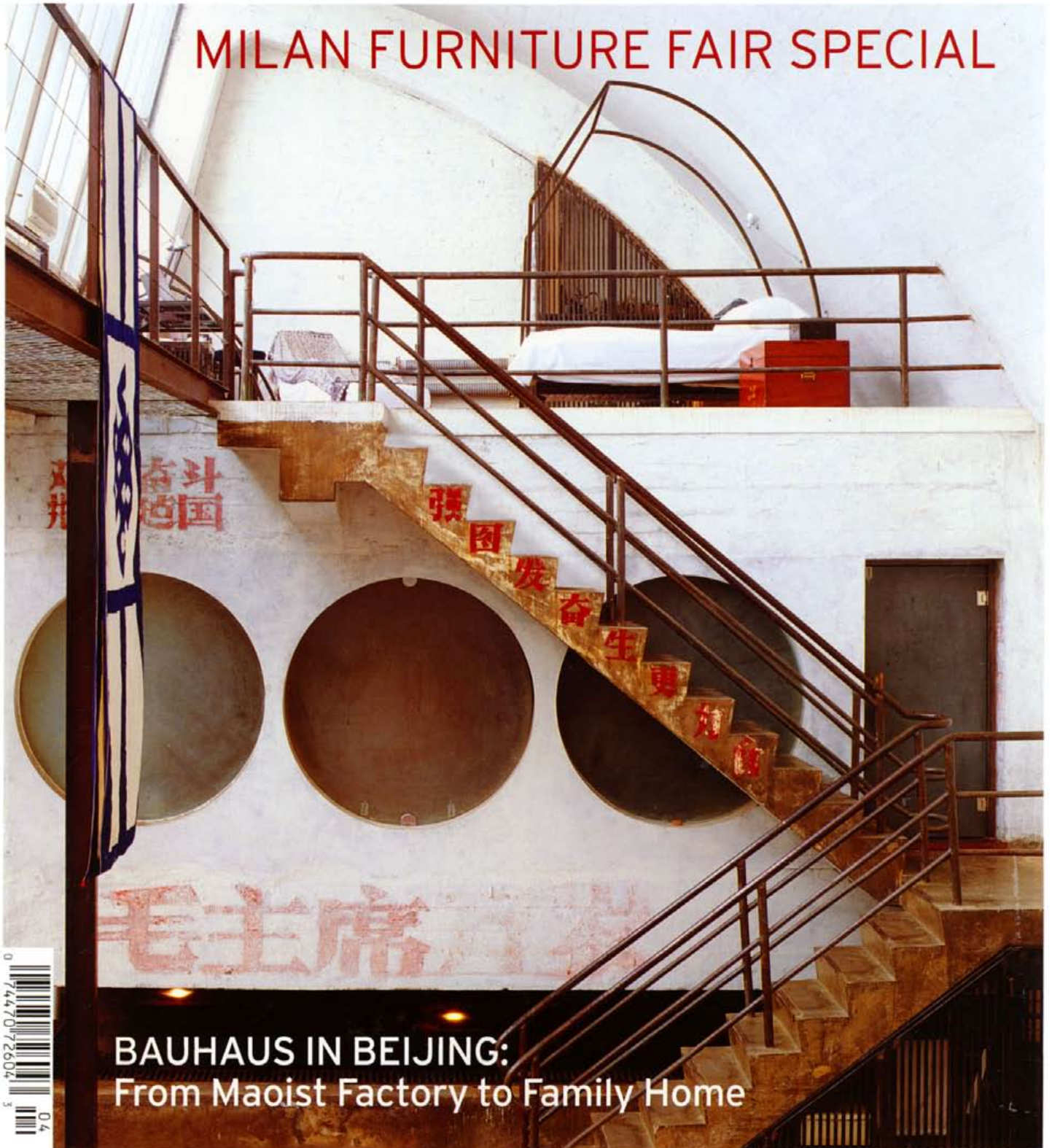


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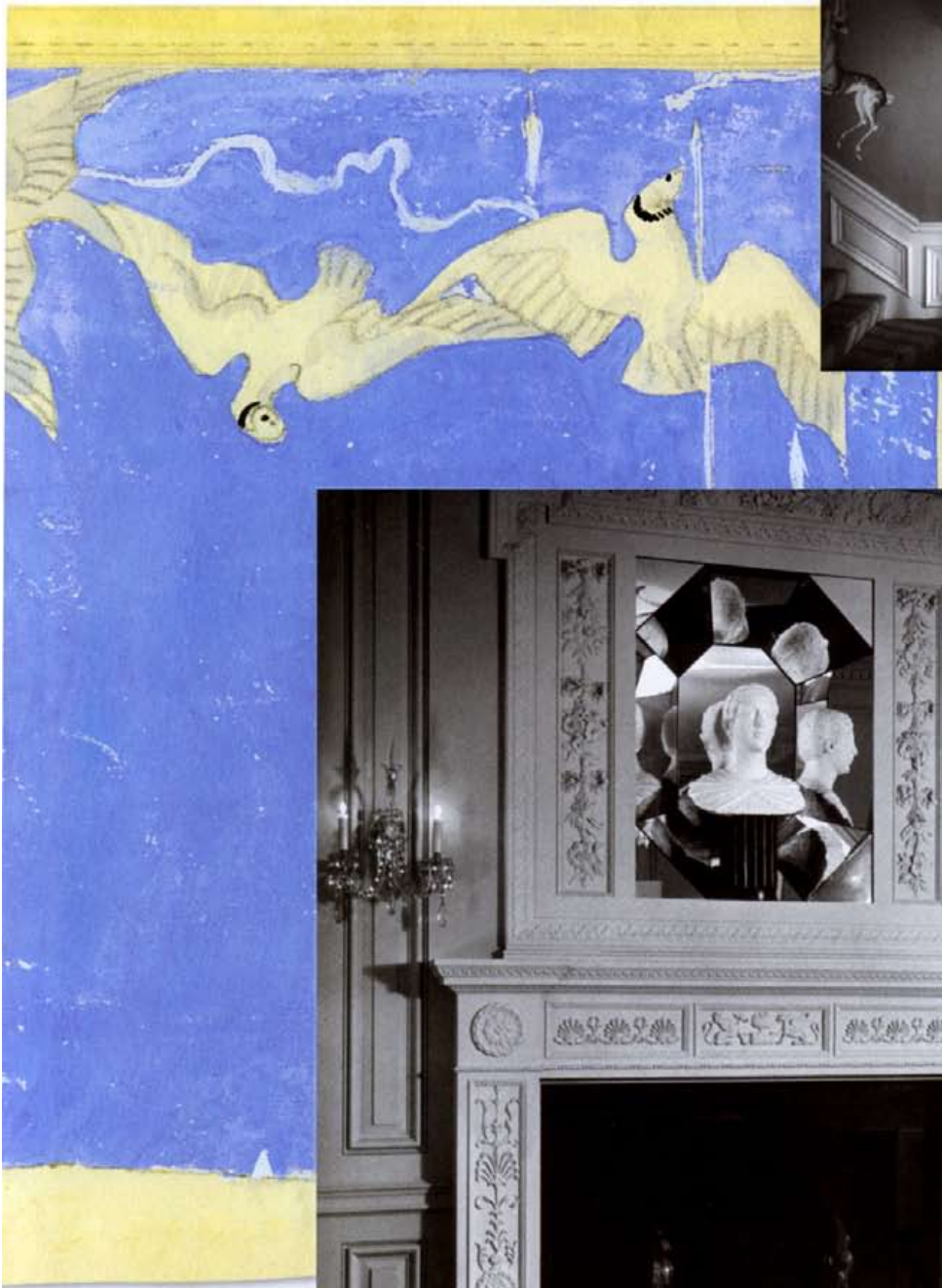
**BAUHAUS IN BEIJING:**  
From Maoist Factory to Family Home





Clockwise from main picture: European artist Paul Fèher worked as a freelance draughtsman for William Haines for over 40 years, and created gouaches that were later realised as Art Deco murals in Haines's house at 1712 North Stanley Avenue, Hollywood; the Classical figures – including gazelles and charioteers – made for lively and heroic conversation starters; a bust and segmented mirror added to the home's drama; Haines reclines on a daybed that survived his redecoration of the house in 1926-27

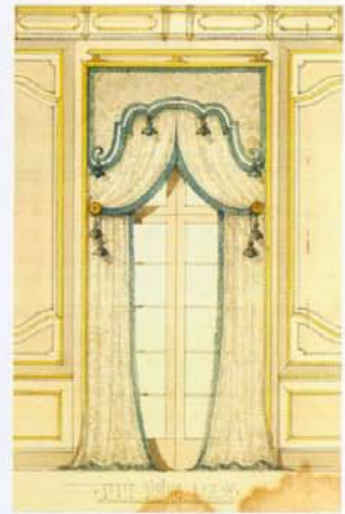
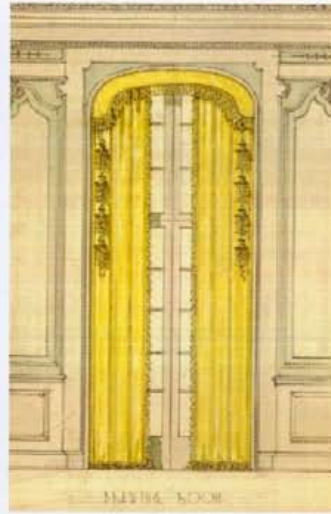




## STAR-SPANGLED MANORS

Forced to choose between his love and his career, matinée idol William Haines said goodbye to the silver screen and hello to a new life decorating the palatial homes of Hollywood's famed and fabulous. His extravagant 'California Style' didn't come cheap, but then the likes of Joan Crawford, Jack Warner and the Bloomingdales were more than willing to pay over the odds for his unique services, reveals Ros Byam Shaw ▷

## STAR-SPANGLED MANORS



**HOLLYWOOD OF THE** 1920s and 1930s manufactured legends by the champagne-bucket-load in a movie-star world of exaggerated luxury and guilt-free spending. William Haines, one of five children from a middle-class family in Virginia, first stepped into this gilded circle when he won a 'New Faces' talent contest in 1922. He subsequently appeared in more than 20 films and by 1930 was a top box-office attraction. Four years later he made his last film. It was said that Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM, gave him an ultimatum: to give up his boyfriend or his contract. Haines, who had never hidden the fact that he was gay, chose Jimmie Shields over stardom, and their relationship lasted until Haines's death in 1973.

Had William Haines been disloyal to Jimmie, his own legendary status might have faded with his looks. Instead, he is remembered and talked about, copied and collected. Haines made a seamless transfer from actor

to decorator and so began a hugely successful career that lasted 40 years. Having entered that circle of glamour, he never left it. His first clients were friends and co-stars, actors and directors who had attended elegant parties at his impeccably furnished Los Angeles home, and who had been customers at the Hollywood antique shop he opened while still under contract to MGM.

Today Haines is credited with single-handedly inventing 'California Style', a sybaritic, sumptuous mix of pristine antiques, hand-painted wallpapers, extravagant materials, deep-pile carpeting and acres of plump upholstery. During the 1950s a single Haines room was reputed to cost at least \$50,000.

Haines's early style was new to Hollywood – a glossy faux Georgian, which came to be known as 'Hollywood Regency'. Unlike the more accessible European version, identified by Osbert Lancaster as 'Vogue Regency', >

Clockwise from top left: for his studio on Sunset Boulevard, Haines created extravagant window displays – such as this one featuring blackamoor statues and an antique spoon-back Regency chair – to draw in other decorators and collectors; the Haines studio drew up many plans for fancy drapery. The lemon-yellow scheme was realised at Winfield House, London; twin beds share a single grand bobble-trimmed canopy in a bedroom in Jack and Ann Warner's ten-acre Beverly Hills estate, which Haines began decorating in 1937; a detail from a chinoiserie wallpaper that Haines designed in the 1970s for the London home of insurance mogul Joe D. Bain

## STAR-SPANGLED MANORS



Haines's take on the 18th century was unashamedly grandiose. With the help of an architect, he transformed his unremarkable two-storey house into a small-scale English stately home, its interior panelled, pillared and pedimented, with Adam-style fireplaces, top-quality antiques, a flourish of chinoiserie and a dash of classical Art Deco. The prevailing fashion in 1920s movie-star mansions was a lugubrious, pseudo-Spanish Baroque; Haines's house was clean-lined, elegant and graceful, enlivened with a refreshing wit and lightness of touch.

Joan Crawford and Douglas Fairbanks Jr provided Haines with the first of many starry commissions. After persuading Crawford to give up her 2,000 dolls and her black-velvet portraits of dancing girls, Haines gave her home a glamour and celebrity splendour that she loved. Commissions from Carole Lombard and Constance Bennett followed, then the decoration of mansions for

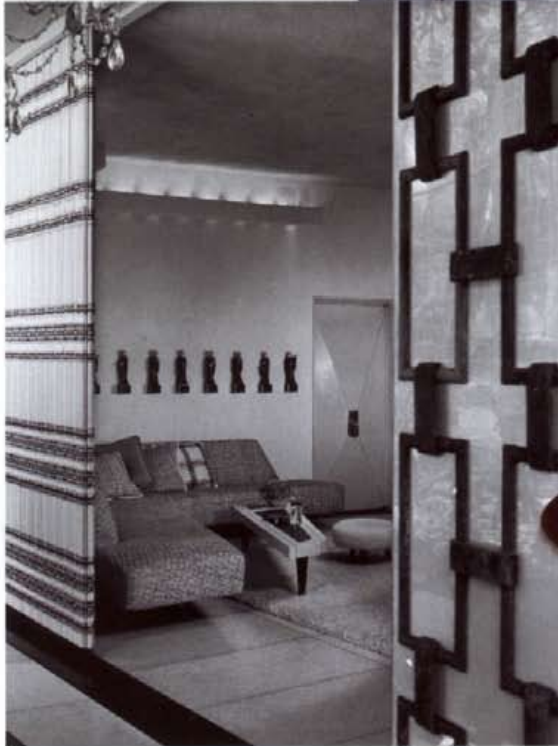
Jack and Ann Warner, and director George Cukor. Later, Haines designed fabulously lavish interiors for the Annenbergs and the Bloomingdales, and became the favourite decorator of the Los Angeles Republican elite.

The budgets for these projects were on a scale only dreamed of by most decorators. While the likes of John Fowler were washing down old paintwork and 'making do', Haines was hiding home projectors behind electrically operated screens adorned with Impressionist paintings, and lining rooms with suede. But, although money was no object, Haines was always fastidious about preparatory drawings and accurate estimates.

With virtually no financial constraints, Haines could indulge his taste and his imagination. In George Cukor's dressing room he installed an aquarium above a fireplace with an elaborate Rococo frame. For the Warners he built a scalloped and fringed bed canopy the size of a small >

Clockwise from top left: in the dining room of department-store millionaires Tom and Anita May, Haines hung abstract Lucite-crystal sconces; Haines designed most of the room's furnishings, including the 4m-long marble fireplace, and installed an antique English dining table that could seat 24 guests; these 'Hostess' chairs in walnut and yellow leather, also created by Haines, could be found round card tables in the Warners' bar-room; Haines's entry to the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco was his Desert Living Room, replete with leather-and-parchment floors, sheet mohair curtains and buckeye-burl-and-rawhide coffee table

## STAR-SPANGLED MANORS



marquee to link a pair of single beds. For the open atrium of a Modernist mansion he designed a complete outdoor room with waterproof upholstery, cushions, lamps and clocks, a fireplace and a waterfall. He covered ceilings and walls with velvet, floors with parchment, wrapped furniture legs and stair rails in polished leather, made cornices in copper and fitted shelving in coral stone.

Unusual upholstery and trimmings were a perennial fascination. He trimmed antique furniture with bobbles and for Joan Crawford he created the 'all-fringe' sofa, its back ribbed with thick bullion fringe from top to bottom. A penchant for buttoned upholstery was overtaken by a passion for quilted fabrics, which he used on chairs, sofas and bedheads. As time went on, the upholstery grew in scale. By the 1950s his long, straight sofas seemed to stretch into quilted infinity. A Haines living room also invariably incorporated his own-design 'Hostess' chairs

and low 'Elbow' chairs for ladylike lounging. Other Haines signatures were custom-made lamps, hand-painted Chinese wallpapers and the placing of first-class antiques in otherwise contemporary rooms.

Haines worked for an inner circle all his life, never achieving the international renown of American decorators such as Elsie de Wolfe or Billy Baldwin. His 'period' rooms lacked John Fowler's refinement, while his modern schemes bypassed the sophistication of David Hicks. Instead William Haines's legacy is one of thoroughly American panache. Whether working with Chippendale and Waterford crystal or picture windows and Lucite, his rooms always packed an unforgettable punch ■ *'Class Act: William Haines, Legendary Hollywood Decorator', by Peter Schifando and Jean H. Mathison, is published by Pointed Leaf, rrp £50. Readers can order it for £47.50 (plus £4.50 UK p&p) from the World of Interiors Bookshop on 0870 727 4147*

Clockwise from top left: Regency-style iron armchairs were designed by Haines for the veranda at the Bel Air home of Joe D. Bain; in 1950, Haines joined forces with A. Quincy Jones – later the dean of the University of South California's architecture school – to build this modern 'push-button paradise' in LA, which included an all-weather outdoor living room; ashtrays designed by Haines and his friend Michael Morrison became coffee-table staples in the 1950s; Haines moved his studio to Beverly Hills in 1949 and developed it as a showroom for his particular aesthetic, with low furniture, cove lighting and hand-woven screens