

MAY 2010

# Seoul Mate

A Korean gallery breathes new life into Pierre Koenig’s Case Study House No. 21 through a marriage of East and West

by JEN RENZI / photographs by JACK COBLE

For a glass-and-steel box, Pierre Koenig’s Case Study House No. 21 is surprisingly demure. Sure, anyone with a GPS can drive into the Hollywood Hills and enjoy voyeuristic views of its midcentury-mod interior through full-height walls of glass. But compared with Koenig’s iconic House No. 22—the veritable poster child of the Case Study House Program, which has been featured in more films, commercials and fashion spreads than a Hollywood starlet—the architect’s quieter masterpiece has been press shy.

Even its recent history is a touch mysterious. After the home’s previous owner hired Koenig himself to restore the 1958 landmark, the property was auctioned off to much fanfare four years ago for close to \$3.2 million—to a foreign art collector who prefers to remain anonymous.

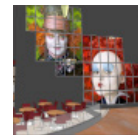
Respecting the property’s status as a modern architecture mecca, the new owner is making it slightly more accessible, inviting Seoul-based One and J. Gallery to spearhead a series of installations pairing art and design—open to the public by



REACTION: KOBE’S PHOTO SHOOT

## Lakers Speak Out

SEE MARK MEDINA’S VIDEO



PASADENA PREMIERE

## ArcLight Shines

READ STORY BY BRANDON PALAS

ADVERTISEMENT

GET STYLED  
FOR SPRING  
WITH SEBASTIAN!

THURSDAY, MAY 13  
6–8 p.m.

ULTA 7100 Santa Monica Blvd.  
RSVP to 888.367.3553

Enjoy sips and snacks while you receive a complimentary **Volupt** hair touch-up from a professional stylist.



appointment (info@oneandj.com). At the vernissage last month, VIPs rubbed elbows while admiring contemporary Korean artworks shown alongside vintage furnishings curated by New York's R 20th Century gallery.

Those lucky enough to visit the show during its four-day run had an opportunity to explore Koenig's visionary use of steel in a more leisurely fashion. Gallery partners Won Jae Park and Pat Lee expect to mount future exhibitions incorporating dinners, lectures and private events to foster spirited conversations about art and design. "Angelenos are very opinionated about art, which is invigorating," says Lee. "We want the house to become a forum for the exchange of ideas—and to trample visitors' preconceived notions of Asian art."

If the inaugural show is any indication, One and J. is on its way to accomplishing both goals. Launched in 2005, the gallery is devoted to nurturing young Korean artists. Many were featured in this show, co-curated by Asian-art specialist Gabriel Ritter.

Architectural abstractions by Kim Suyoung hung in the living room. Quirky riffs on traditional Asian landscape paintings by Yoo Seung-ho were mounted near the courtyard. Greeting visitors in the carport was Kim Jongku's installation made with video projections and powder made from ground steel—a material nodding explicitly to Koenig's construction.

The house's flat, open volumes and expansive vistas provided the perfect pedestal for furnishings from R 20th Century. Although partners Evan Snyderman and Zesty Meyers were early champions of SoCal modernism, here they arrayed a diverse—and global—mélange. In the gardens, granite and stone stools by Byung-Hoon Choi comingled with glazed ceramic seating by Hun-Chung Lee. A Greta Magnusson Grossman console was paired with an Architectural Pottery totem in the entrance hall. Wendell Castle's Molar dining table was placed in the kitchen, a Poul Kjærholm daybed in the bedroom. "We deliberately mixed cultures, styles and periods," says Snyderman. "So many modern houses owned by 20th-century-design collectors are furnished in a somewhat predictable, retro manner. We wanted something unexpected."

While the two galleries had discussed collaborating for years, this project came together quickly, brokered during downtime at the New York Armory Show in March. "We had two weeks to select the pieces and ship them to the West Coast," says Snyderman. (Luckily, the duo have a longer lead time for the next installation, which opens in the fall.) They laid out pieces in roomlike, residentially styled vignettes to underscore how the art and furnishings relate to one another—and to the architecture. "Koenig considered the furniture plan integral to the design and had final say as to what furniture was acceptable," notes Lee.

Indeed, Snyderman was in a fine position to channel Koenig's sensibility, having interviewed the architect in Case Study No. 21 a few years ago for a documentary about Southern California design. "I have hours and hours of footage of the house," he says.

His time spent there gave valuable insights about Koenig's poetic integration of indoors and out, the organic and the geometric. He marveled at how the walls slide fully open to brick terraces and a mosaic-tiled courtyard, framing intriguing views as one walks through the house; and how the shallow reflecting pools that thread through the structure transform it into a fountain, with a hydraulic pump pulling water up to the flat steel roof before cascading it back down. "The house," Snyderman marvels, "is just such a work of art."

Categories: [Architecture](#) / [Art](#) / [City Landmarks](#) / [Design](#) / [Feature Story](#) / [Photos](#) / [Pictorials](#)