



Siblings **PAMELA SHAMSHIRI** and **RAMIN SHAMSHIRI** pictured in the outdoor living area at Pamela's restored **RUDOLPH SCHINDLER** residence in the Hollywood Hills. "Isn't it obvious?" inquires Ramin when asked who is older. "I'm three years older," adds Pamela. "But he acts older."



SAM FROST

Two of the masterminds behind California's modern-cool aesthetic, L.A.-based sibling DESIGNERS PAMELA and RAMIN SHAMSHIRI chart new territory

Written by MELISSA GOLDSTEIN

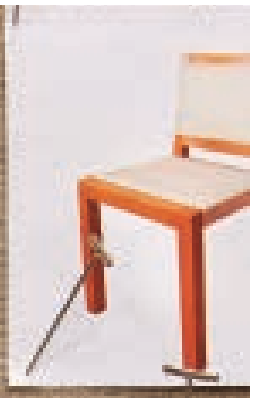
Kindred Spirit

> “Have you met my brother?” asks Pamela Shamschiri, sliding into a booth at the Chateau Marmont next to her sibling and business partner, Ramin. “He’s the fun one.”

To look at her—wild mop of curls, Sonia Boyajian talisman necklace, knee-length shearling Marni vest and all—Pamela reads as far from second fiddle as they come. But Ramin reluctantly backs up the claim, harking back to their college days, when he would visit her at Smith and entertain her friends late into the eve while she dozed upstairs.

Now pillars of the international design community, the two have spent their whole lives balancing each other out, not only in their close-knit family life, but also in professional realms: first in their business, Sham Interior Design & Events, then as two of the four founders of the design firm Commune, and now with the opening of their latest joint venture, Studio Shamschiri, last year.

STUDIO SHAMSHIRI's inspiration board for a playroom in the pool house of a midcentury restoration in San Diego features an **ISAMU NOGUCHI** light, a kilim by **TAHER ASAD-BAKHTIARI** and a ceramic tile wall by **ATHOS BULCÃO** c. 1968, Brazil.



The jewelry cases at the Commune-designed **IRENE NEUWIRTH** store are crowned by **CLAIRE OSWALT** paintings and lighting by **ATELIER DE TROUPE**. Below: The shop's kitchen is outfitted with an equestrian-themed painting purchased at an auction of the estate of **TONY DUQUETTE**, a capiz-shell lotus hanging lantern and a **COMMUNE FOR ENVIRONMENT** Split-Base Dining Table.



PORTRAITS, MOOD BOARDS AND BEDROOM INTERIOR (5): SAM FROST; IRENE NEUWIRTH STORE (2): SPENCER LOWELL; LAUREL CANYON INTERIOR: ART PARTNER LICENSING/ANTHONY COTSIFAS.

The reductive version of their dynamic is that Pamela is the creative one and Ramin handles the business. But, in fact, it's more nuanced. "Ramin's brain works both ways, and he has very strong opinions...which I love," says Pamela. "We've learned to compromise." Ramin adds, deadpan: "Yeah, now Pamela just gets what she wants."

When they came together with Steven Johanknecht and Roman Alonso to start Commune in 2004, they changed the game, bringing the worlds of interiors, graphic design and architecture together under one roof in Eamesian fashion. Commune authored a much-celebrated and subsequently imitated Californian aesthetic: a high-low take on late-20th-century design prizing natural woods, handcrafted objects and textiles of exotic provenance. The style manifested in the Palm Springs Ace Hotel & Swim Club, the Heath Ceramics space in West Hollywood and myriad private residences.

In 2014, Ramin left the group to pursue his own projects; a year later, Pamela followed, and Studio Shamshiri was born. "It's definitely still multidisciplinary and narrative and experience-driven, but

our aesthetic will be slightly different, because the combination of the two of us will be slightly different from the combination of the four of us," says Pamela.

The pair's family history is an influential variable in that equation: The children of an Italian mother and an Iranian father, Pamela and Ramin's early childhood was spent growing up in Tehran in the late '70s (before relocating to the U.S. during the revolution), and playing

house in their father's six-story furniture store. "We would go there every day after school—one floor was all kitchens, one was dining rooms, one was living rooms, and there was a suspended staircase in the middle," Pamela reminisces wistfully. "It was full of a lot of incredible imported Italian designers like [Achille] Castiglioni and [Gio] Ponti. We always had this Tehran/Rome connection—two really ancient places and cultures—and I



"The [restoration] was about respecting and honoring the history, but also making it my own and taking it over at a certain point," says Pamela of her Rudolph Schindler home. *Below (from left):* In the bedroom of client Sophia Amoruso, Pamela custom-designed the light-up bed. Pamela remade her built-in table and chairs according to Schindler's original specs.



feel really fortunate that we grew up with all of that influence."

Right now their attention is on the artisan work coming out of Milan—lighting, wallpaper and fabrics. "At the studio, we're also looking farther back into the 19th century at a lot of Mark Hampton and English Country, to try to tweak the very traditional and make it fresh," Pamela says.

Restoration is a major focus, with a full project load that includes houses by A. Quincy Jones, Stanford White, Nigel Coates, Richard Neutra and Myron Hunt—sensitive endeavors that hit close to home. (Pamela spent eight years restoring and updating her Rudolph Schindler abode in

the Hollywood Hills, featured on the cover of *T Magazine's* Design & Luxury issue in September; Ramin is currently doing a ground-up addition on his Myron Hunt residence in Ojai.) They're also working on their first resort, an experiential Caribbean retreat, and a boutique hotel in the South.

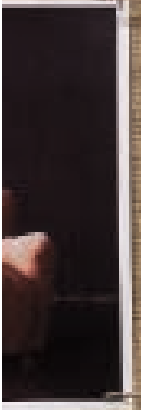
With a staff numbering 30, the studio currently operates out of an open-plan space in the West Hollywood private members' workspace NeueHouse. Pamela and Ramin have eliminated the words "interior," "graphic" and "architect" from all titles, opting instead to refer to everyone as designers. "There are people who that is tough for and people who love it," Pamela concedes. "But I think we

attract a lot of entrepreneurs and free spirits who think out of the box a bit, so for those people it works."

By the end of the year, Studio Shamshiri will move into its official office space, set in the landmark Hollywood building that used to house legendary watering hole and Morrissey hang-out The Cat & Fiddle. "It feels like a residence when you walk in; there's a fire-

place and a staircase, a balcony, and a lot of arches and coves and smaller spaces, which are good for the design process," she says, adding, "Our big argument right now is piano or bar." (She's Team Piano.) At this, Ramin shakes his head and smiles, shooting her a look but saying nothing—evidently a believer in the theory that the one who speaks first loses. It works, to an extent, and she reconsiders: "Maybe it's piano bar." studioshamshiri.com. •





A Studio Shamshiri inspiration board for the living room of a San Francisco residence features an **ILLUM WIKKELSØ** lounge chair, a **BDDW** desk, a vintage desk lamp, a **MAX LAMP** coffee table and a **RICHARD CLARKSON** light.

