

EYE

WANDERING

THROUGH DESIGN, TYPOGRAPHY AND PHOTOGRAPHY,
PEGGY WONG WEAVES A TAPESTRY OF A WELL TRAVELED LIFE ARTFULLY LIVED.

by Stephanie Boozer / photographs by Peggy Wong

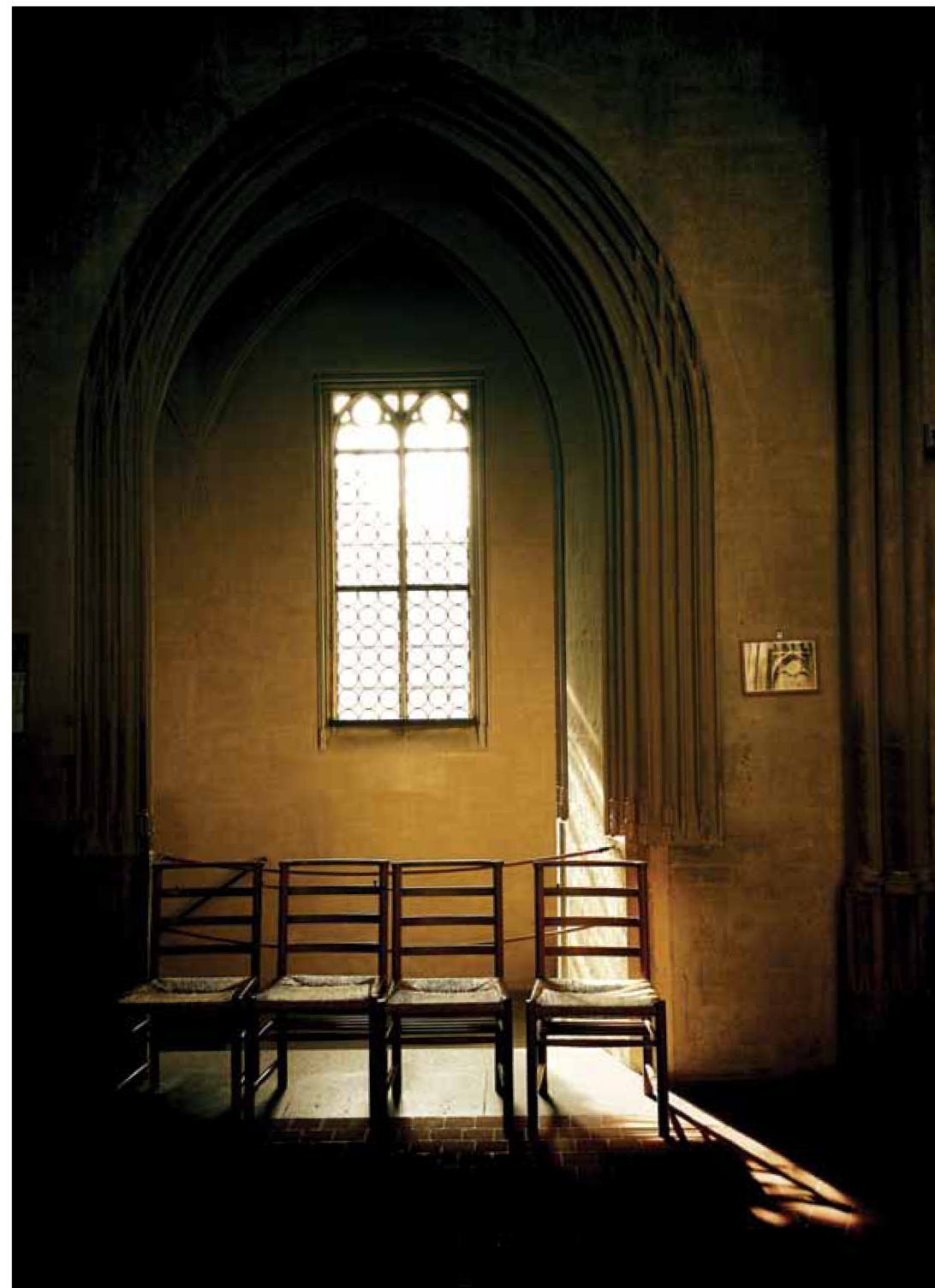
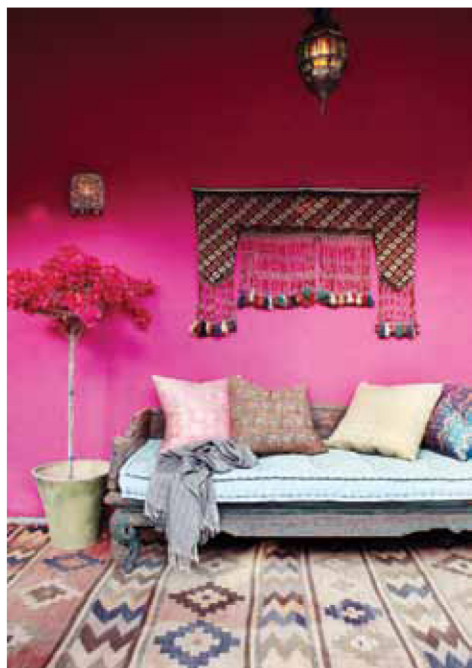




PINNING DOWN EXACTLY
EVERYTHING PEGGY WONG DOES IS
A BIT LIKE TRYING TO CATCH
A CLOUD, AS THE SONG GOES.

Photography, art direction, creative direction, graphic design, textile design — the common thread is her keen sense of design, whether composing an image or helping a client with branding. Growing up on Blue Pool Road in Hong Kong, Peggy was surrounded by the influx of ever-changing art, architecture and design that converged in an area considered to be a design Mecca during the late 1970s to the early '80s. Her young mind found inspiration among the European furniture shops and contemporary decor boutiques clustered within walking distance of her home, where Peggy devoured the images in her interior design and travel

magazines featuring exotic locales and beautiful, spare interiors. She credits that early exposure for shaping her grown-up artistic sensibilities. “I would say I’m a minimalist at heart,” says Peggy from her home base in San Francisco. “Everything I do is very simple and streamlined.” Another major influence on Peggy has been travel, and from an early age. At 10, she visited Japan, Thailand and the United States, all in the space of one year. At 12, her father’s position as an executive with General Electric moved the family stateside, where they bounced from Virginia to Puerto Rico to Connecticut before finally settling in upstate New York. “I went to three different high schools; I was always the new kid,” says Peggy. “But obviously, looking back, it was the best thing ever. I got to live in all those places, meet different people, have those experiences. It really was amazing.” The family traveled extensively for pleasure as well, a habit that has since evolved into an annual month-long trip with her parents. “I have such great memories of traveling with my parents. We have a very close relationship, traveling together just brings us that much closer.” After high school, Peggy studied graphic design at the Rochester Institute of Technology, to follow her passion for typography. “It’s always been my first love,” she says, noting in particular Fabien Baron’s typography in Harper’s Bazaar in the '90s. At the time, of course, Rochester was a Kodak company town, and the institute’s main focus was photography. Peggy loaded up on electives in photography, finding that her design aesthetics translated well in her photographic compositions.



“Because of my graphic background, I shoot differently,” she says. “It’s almost as if I shoot with a layout in mind. I’m always thinking, *Oooh, I could put type right there*. That’s why a lot of my clients hire me to shoot, I’m a three-in-one — art director, designer and photographer.”

Right out of college, Peggy took a job with a large design firm in New York, working on branding, packaging and print collaterals for clients like Victoria’s Secret Beauty, Bath and Body Works, Halston, Reebok, Target, Dannon and Guess. After five years, she took a deputy art director position at Martha Stewart, which included catalog and packaging design for the Martha by Mail brand.

“That experience was incredibly rewarding,” she says. “I was involved in a lot of photo shoots and worked with some really great photographers and stylists, which is where I really honed my art direction.”

After three years, Peggy felt it was about time to be running her own show and moved to Los Angeles to begin freelancing. “I don’t know why, but in New York, I’d never thought I could freelance,” she says. “Once I got into the groove, I realized I could, and now 11 years later, I’m still doing this. I’ve stayed up many nights working crazy hours, but I balance all of that out with travel.”

Hired primarily for editorial shoots on travel, interiors and architectural lifestyle photography, Peggy continues to design branding and packaging for a range of clients. She also art directs for big brands, including Williams-Sonoma and Pottery Barn. In 2009, she launched bluepool-road, a multi-disciplinary design and product studio named for the street of her childhood home, and debuted rug and stationery collections of her own, and most recently added a series of lithographed marble tiles featuring travel images. That year she was one of three artists selected from a pool of hundreds to design stationery for Crane & Co.’s STUDIO collection, and she continues to collaborate with Paperless Post to design both online and print stationery.

Peggy sees herself as a traveler first, then photographer. “I try to capture the moments that not everybody sees; that’s my signature,” she says. “When I travel, I walk the city and find the quieter streets, the longer routes. I immerse myself and learn the language, talk to the locals and find out where they go. That’s when I find these moments.”



Through work and personal travel, Peggy has been to 21 countries. And while she's happily settled in San Francisco for now, she says having a European home address is definitely on her bucket list.

"I've often said that if the timing was right, I'd put everything into storage and move to Europe, even for a year," she says. "When I was traveling on an overnight train from Budapest to Venice, I looked out the window and there was the moonlight, casting its glow over miles of lush fields and countless castles. That image has stayed with me. It was magical."

Australia isn't out of the question either, after Peggy traveled there solo for an assignment (traveling far away and alone is something she feels everyone should do at least once) and she fell in love with the landscape. For now though, Peggy finds inspiration through long walks on the paths and trails of the Presidio, a part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. An avid hiker since childhood, Peggy finds clarity in the outdoors; the natural grandeur of Yosemite National Park makes it one of her favorite spots.

Someday, Peggy says, she'd love to design and shoot her own travel photography book. For now, she keeps up a travel blog and Instagram (@bluepoolroad, #pwtravelogue).

"Travel is my passion and I've made it work within my career," she says. "It's how I started shooting professionally and getting published. I work a lot, but, I love it and it's worth it." ●

Visit Peggy at bluepoolroad.com, peggywongphotography.com, onbluepoolroad.com.



PEGGY'S GEAR

Camera & Lenses: Canon EOS 5D Mark II;
Canon 28mm f/1.8mm USM EF and
50mm f/1.2L USM EF lenses

Peggy's portrait by Rafael Pulido

"I WOULD SAY I'M A *minimalist* AT HEART."

