

Tropical Retreats

Bali

Iker Zuniga

Lannoo



The soul of a collector

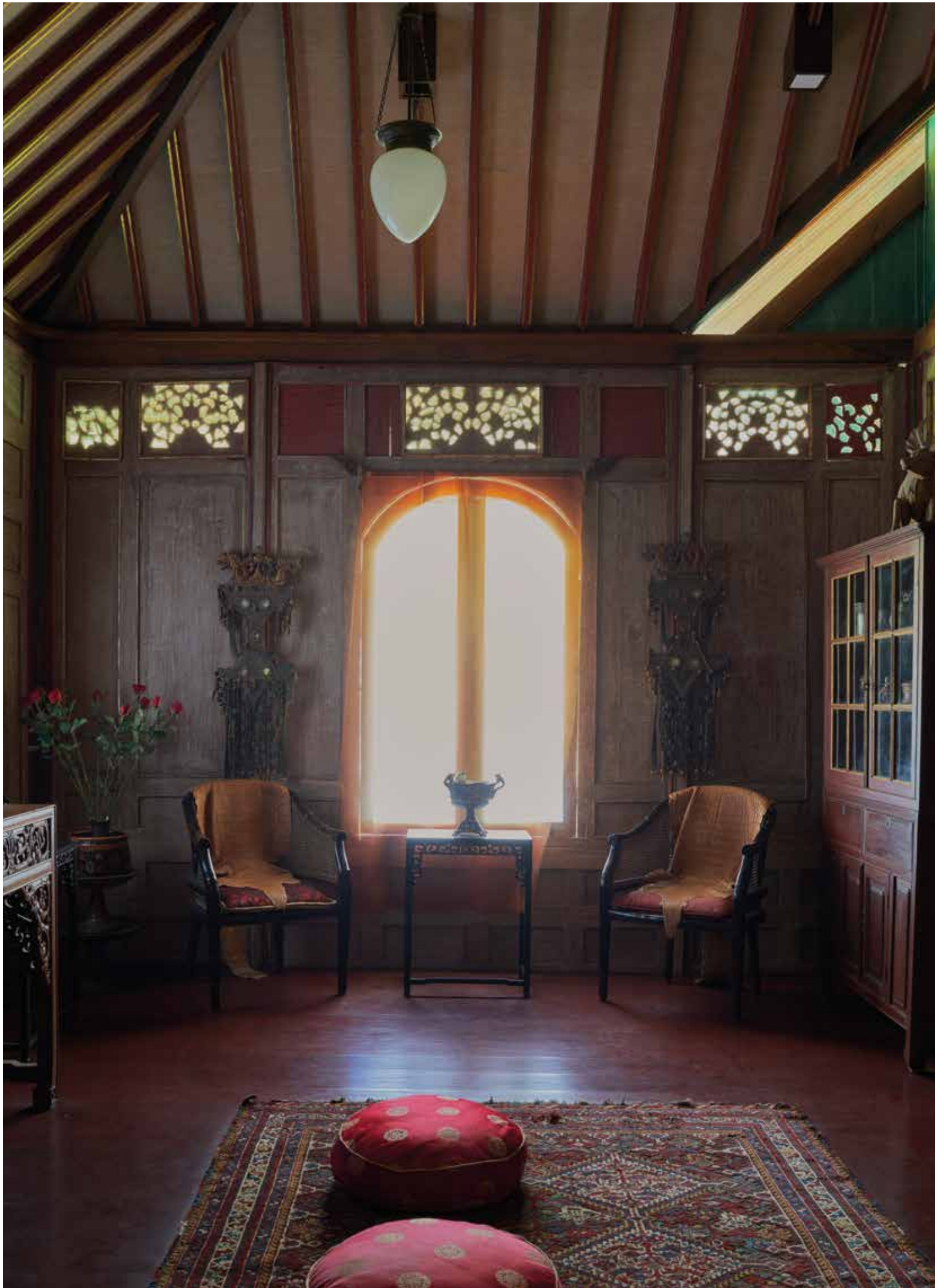
The home of an art historian

An art collection, often assembled over many years, is a mirror of the collector's soul. A larger narrative emerges from the meaningful stories connected to each object. This is especially true when a collector designs and builds a home for himself and his beloved collection. In such cases all things are interwoven; thus carved columns echo the reddish hues of a wooden deer statue from a Balinese temple as every answer leads to a question.

While Bruce W. Carpenter's home appears to be a single traditional Javanese teak wood house (locally called Joglo), it is actually an eclectic reconstruction of an elusive ideal inspired by the Thai, Malay, and Javanese houses of Southeast Asia. Constructed of more than twelve gebyok – large carved teak facades that separate a long reception room from the inner sanctum – it seeks to recreate the form and atmosphere of the architecture he first saw while travelling in Asia in the early 1970s.

The house's interior is dark. Saturated cinnabar-hued wood, which reflects the sky's pale light, creaks beneath your feet. Once your eyes adjust, you find yourself in a wonderworld of unique and esoteric art pieces and furniture from ancient objects in burnished gold to tropical art deco chairs. Every space – the veranda, central living room, altar room, and bedroom – reveals new surprises. The walls protect different shapes and forms; each work of art or artefact hails from a bygone world few have experienced. Collections evolve and grow over time, eventually accumulating hundreds of unique objects. Each piece occupies a space in memory: reminders of distant people spread across thousands of islands, all living in one house.

The abode is an embodiment of Bruce W. Carpenter's life – a space where past and present blend, and where his legacy as a collector lives on in the wood, stories, and answers left behind.







A concrete sanctuary

The home of a fashion designer

At the edge of a forested hillside, a low-lying concrete structure appears almost embedded in the landscape. This house – a minimalist intervention designed by fashion veteran Bernard Teo – prioritises form, material, and solitude. The architecture is uncomplicated: two distinct blocks connected by a corridor that follows the natural slope of the land. The living, dining, and kitchen areas are situated in one block; the bedroom and bathroom in the other. Large floor-to-ceiling windows in the main rooms open the interior to the surrounding landscape while the concrete shell preserves a sense of separation.

Teo, formerly the head of CK Calvin Klein in Singapore, stepped away from his career to pursue a slower pace of life. This retreat reflects that shift: stripped-back, serene, and deeply personal. Inside, the home serves as a kind of informal archive. Ancient clay vessels, industrial objects from Parisian flea markets, and artefacts collected during his years in Hong Kong are presented with curatorial care. While each piece marks a place or moment, the overall atmosphere remains grounded rather than nostalgic.

The house is home to Teo and his animals, but also to the objects that have shaped his visual world. It's a space for living and reflecting, defined by restraint, clarity, and a sense of permanence.







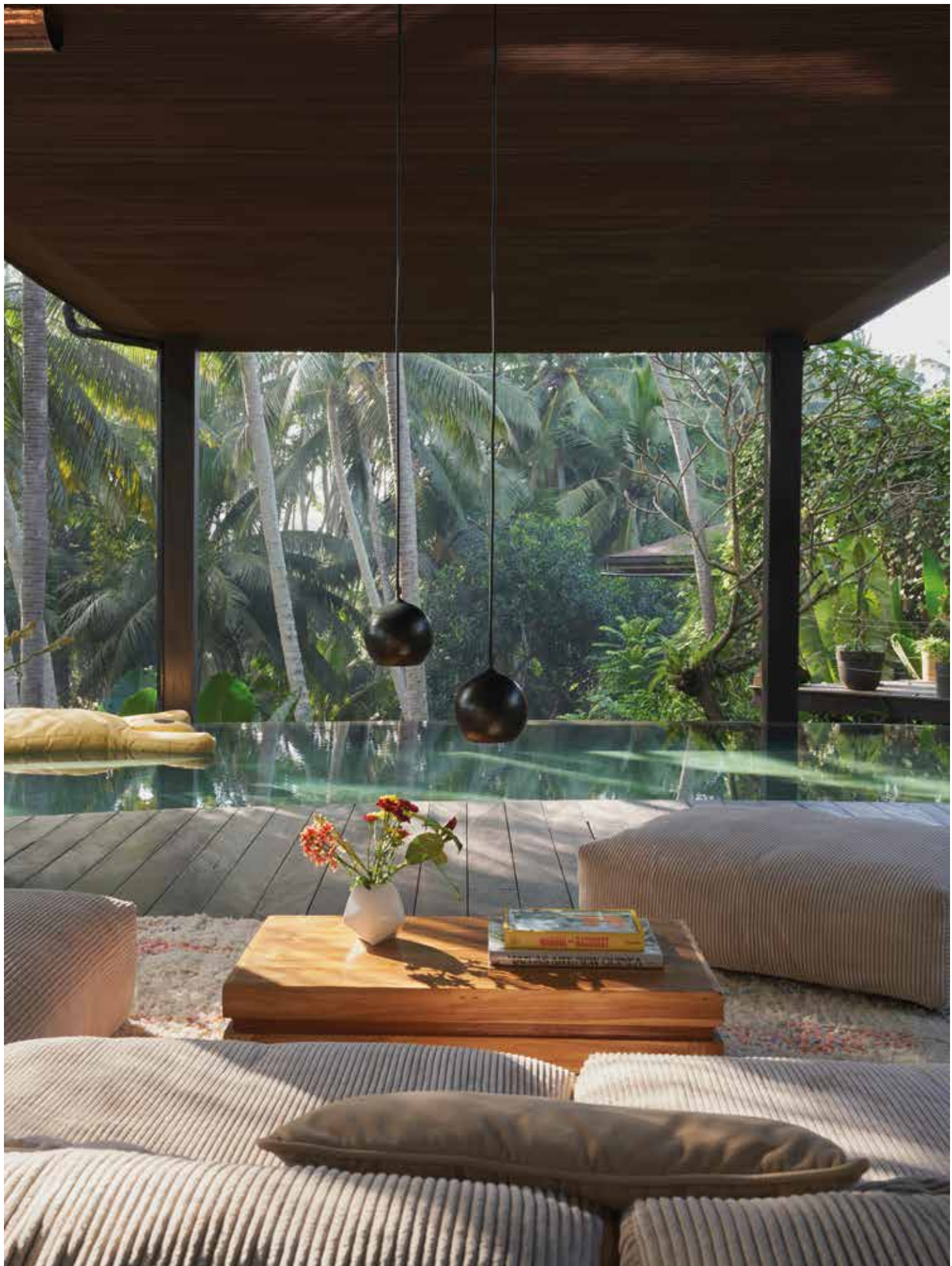
A challenge to the conventional

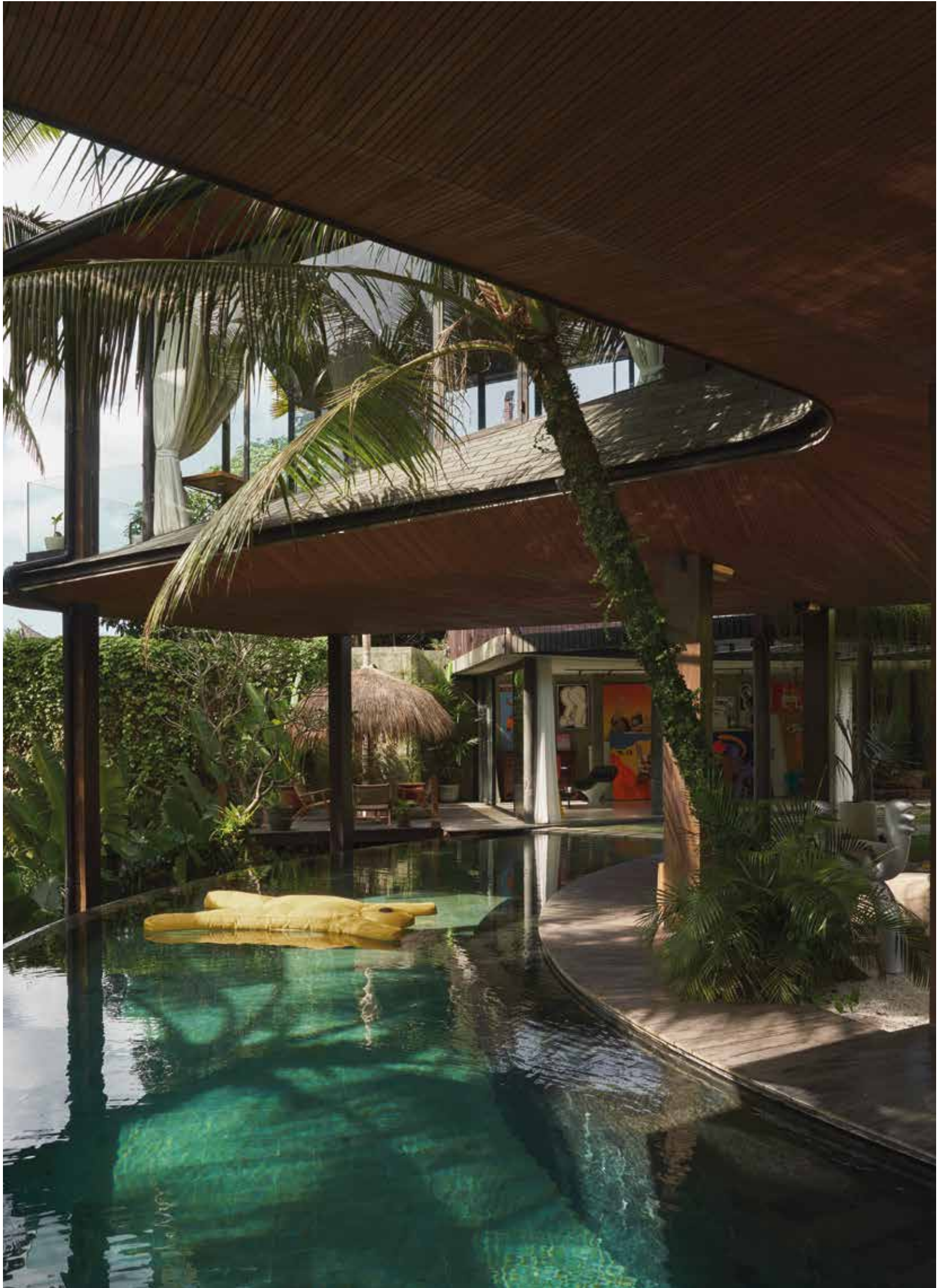
The home of a musician

Alexis Dornier's architecture explores the intersection of expressive form and contextual sensitivity. His work often challenges typologies through bold gestures, producing sculptural buildings that both respond to nature and assert a distinct visual identity. X Mansion is a clear example of this philosophy, with its dramatic rooflines and deep integration into the tropical landscape.

X Mansion, designed for German musician and rapper CRO, continues Dornier's exploration of spatial experimentation. The home is defined by its striking X-shaped roof, which carves out voids that frame the jungle and create immersive, open-air living spaces. Beneath this bold canopy, accompanied by his sister's works of art, the architecture becomes a vessel for creative life – part residence, part gallery, part studio. Inside, the interiors reflect the personality of its occupant: futuristic minimalism meets raw, textural materiality. The house becomes an extension of CRO's creative identity, offering a physical space where music, art, and architecture intermingle.

At the core of the design is a visual dialogue between geometric opposites: the sharp angularity of the “X” roof and the soft circular form of the “O”-shaped pool flowing beneath it – a nod to the artist's name and duality. The result is a confluence of architecture, music, and art, distilled into a singular spatial experience.











The timeless shape of a traditional home

A couple's tropical home

Rumah Haruku, a residence nestled in the tropical forest of Pejeng, is a modern adaptation of the traditional Rumah Panjang, or long-house, where the abode is considered “the centre of life”.

At Rumah Haruku, this culture of living is embodied in the design, where private and shared spaces remain in constant dialogue. The long terrace serves as a transition between the secluded interiors and the open spaces facing the jungle. The railing was conceived as an elongated seat, creating a space for outdoor relaxation. Traditional textures are also celebrated in the design, with woven Balinese karpas lontar leaf mats adorning the ceilings. The triangular shape, combined with varying floor heights, enriches the spatial experience. Stepping down into the living room and kitchen, one senses the shift in volume and its effect of compression and release.

Designed for Dutch-Indonesian couple Tijn and Raisa, the architecture of Rumah Haruku celebrates the region's history through the use of natural materials such as wood, stone, and textiles. Paying tribute to the core philosophy, the design preserves every tree on the property, shaping the house to fit seamlessly between them. This harmony between architecture and landscape – tall ancient trees, rice terraces, and a flowing river – enhances the sense of serenity and connection with nature.

The fusion of cultural tradition with modern elements speaks to the closeness between humans and nature – a belief deeply ingrained in Indonesian culture and encapsulated in the design of Rumah Haruku.



