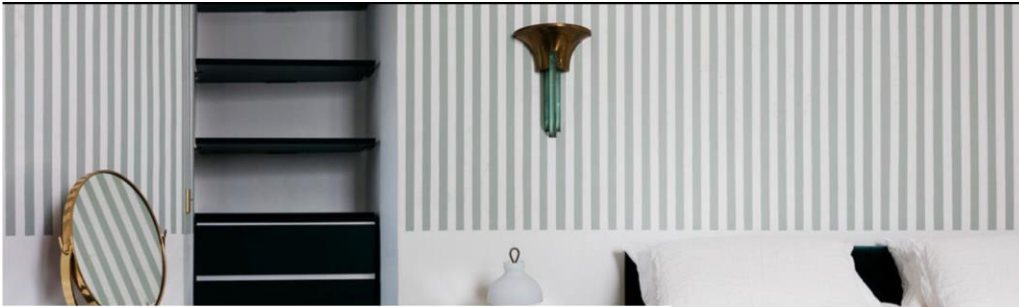


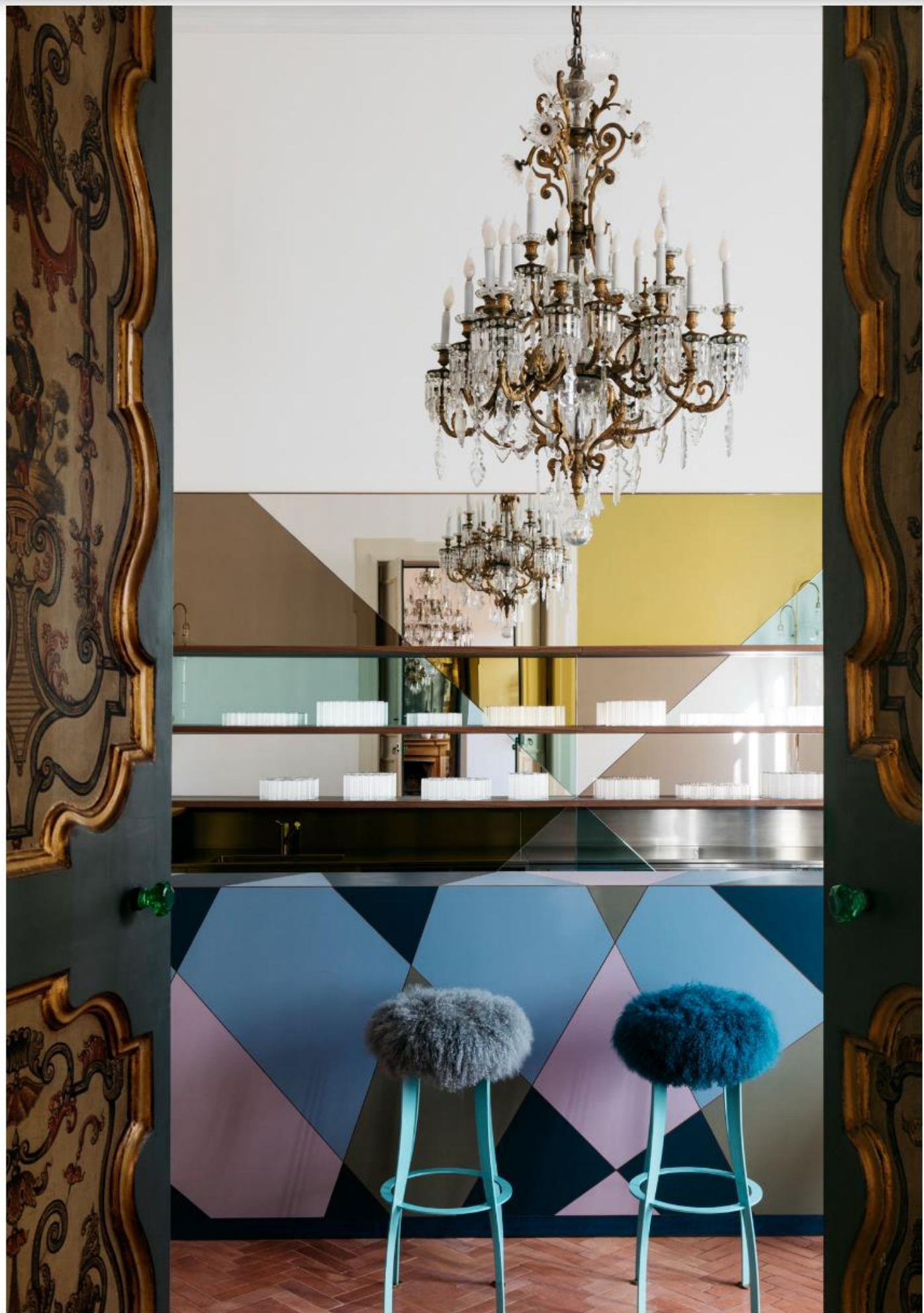
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PALAZZO LUCE: A DAZZLING HOTEL-CUM-GALLERY IN LECCE BY ANNA MARIA ENSEMI.

VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR · SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 · FEATURED, INTERIOR DESIGN, TRAVEL

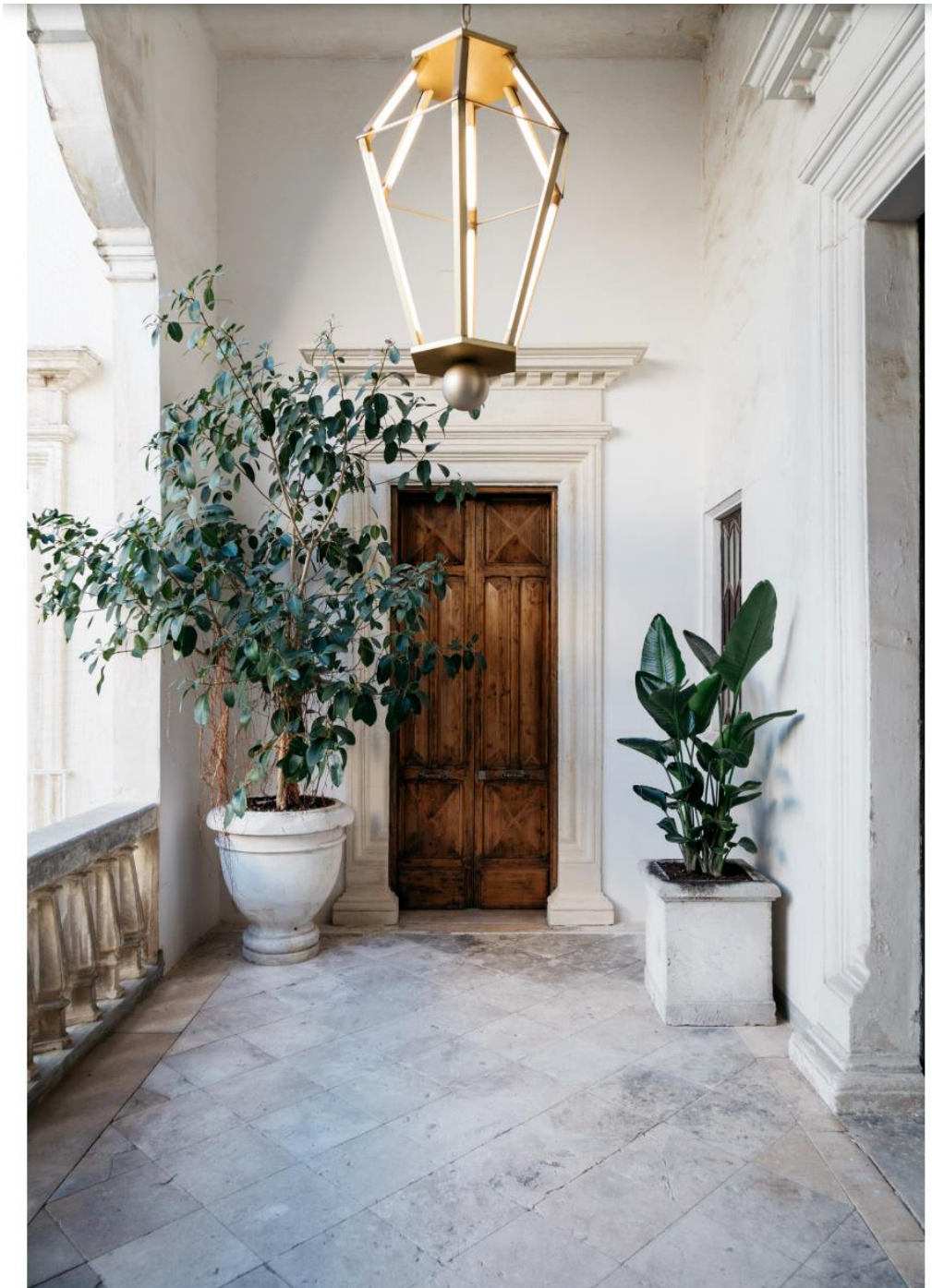


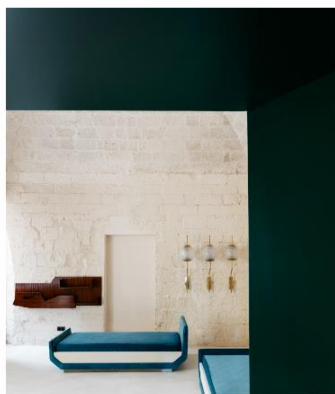




Two Renaissance-style portals, emblazoned with the numbers 2 and 4, are the first indications that **Palazzo Luce** isn't just another **hotel**. The internal courtyards confirm this suspicion, with excavated columns from a long-ago Roman theatre standing sentinel to the side, like stately guards awaiting their summons. The once-upon-a-time palace, situated in the Puglian town of Lecce, was constructed in the thirteenth century for the Counts of Lecce, but today it's a rather different kind of majestic.

The hotel-cum-gallery brims with art and design gems curated by Milan-based collector Anna Maria Enselmi. She used the backdrop of Palazzo Luce's ancient volumes as an opportunity to spotlight artists from a spectrum of eras, with a specific focus on the modernist works of the late Italian master **Gio Ponti**.







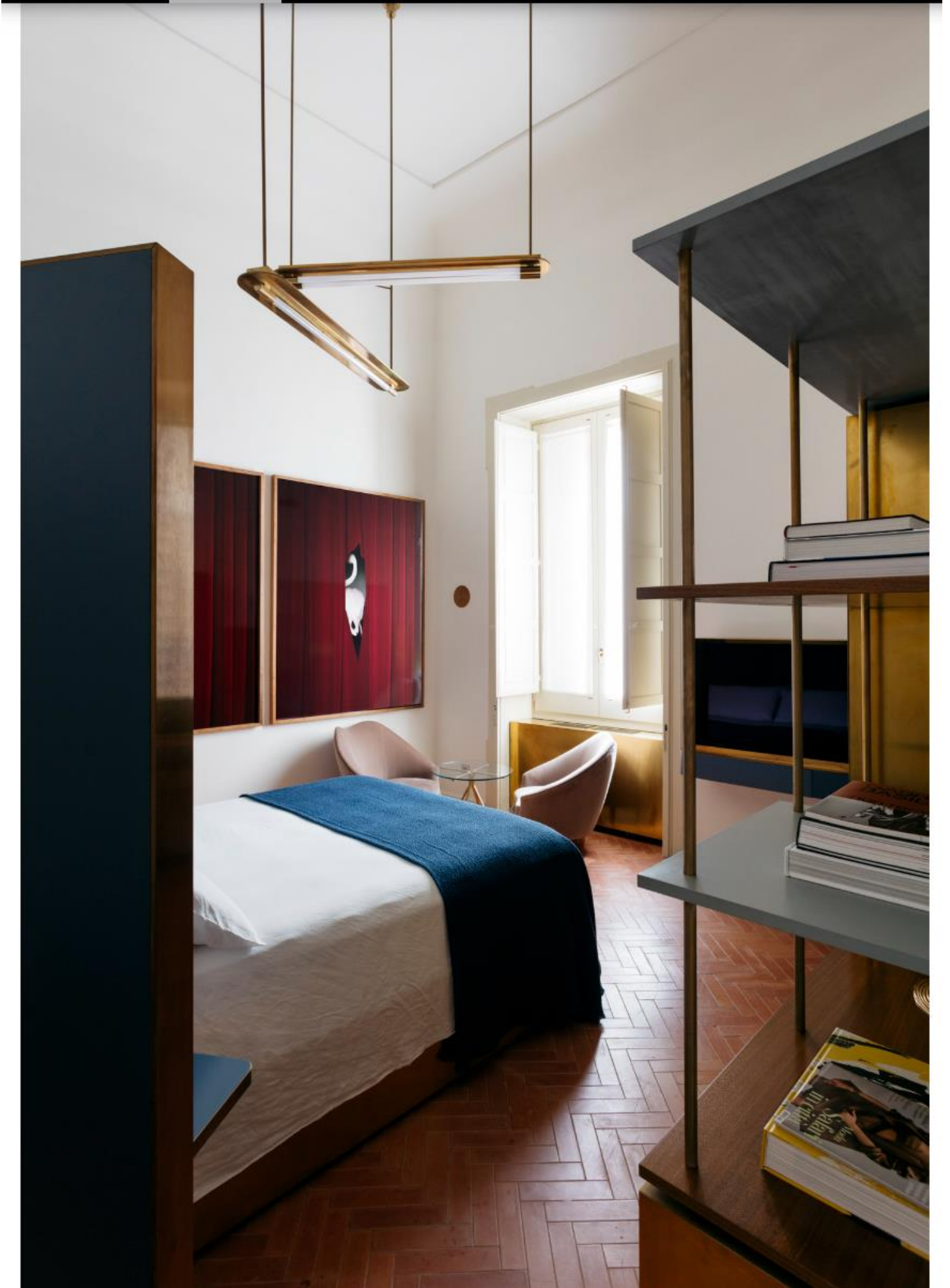




In doing so, she performed an exercise in tactful juxtaposition, pairing historic objects by Ponti, Ettore Sottsass, José Zanine Caldas, Hans-Agne Jakobson, Osvaldo Borsani, Carlo Mollino, Max Ingrand and Ignazio Gardella with more contemporary designs by Martino Gamper, Antonio Marras, Brigitte Niedermair, Konstantin Grcic, Nao Matsunaga, Bruno Gambone, Bethan Laura Wood and Audrey Large. She followed a similar approach with art, appointing mesmerising images by Marina Abramovic as counterpoints to silhouettes by William Kentridge, and photographs by Ugo Mulas, Thomas Ruff, Mimmo Jodice and Vanessa Beecroft as cures for neon opuses by Alfredo Jaar and Joseph Kosuth. Other artists of note included Pietro Consagra, Gilberto Zorio and Ettore Spalletti.

Most things at Palazzo Luce are one of a kind. Case in point: the Martino Gamper-designed bar, unique in its use of geometrical forms and colour-blocking techniques. Likewise, the large salon and two library spaces contain installations by Giuliano Dal Molin and Marzia Migliora, while the tour de force of the corridor is an Antonio Marras sculpture inspired by waves.









The piano nobile (noble floor), once inhabited by Maria d'Enghien, Countess of Lecce and later Queen of Naples, is a magical time capsule. Each room, restored by Giuliano Dell'Uva Architects, is different from the last, thanks to a glowing distinction in colour and material palette. The furniture harks equally to the past and present, with original beds, headboards and screens serving as historic preludes to the contemporary works on display. The floor's crown jewel is the erstwhile countess's private suite, where a haunting fresco by David Tremlett imagines the intersection between the past and future as a radiant light moving between the passages of time. The furnishings here are all Ponti originals, while the suspended ceiling lamp is a Hans-Agne Jakobsson design.

The garden spaces, curated by Michele Guido, evoke a Mediterranean postcard. With treasures on either side of the threshold, this design gallery-like hotel stays in your memory long after you've checked out.

