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APRIL 2014

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SHOWROOMS

JIM THOMPSON

The Bangkok-based purveyor of fine silks opens an Atlanta flagship that combines Thai craftsmanship and Southern hospitality

Jim Thompson's new Atlanta showroom, the first dedicated North American outpost for the Thailand-based company, is a study in contrasts. Housed in a 7,000-square-foot industrial-looking space at ADAC (the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center), complete with honed-concrete floors and exposed ductwork, the trade-only venue offers arguably the most lavish and exuberant collection of Thai silks on earth, along with a wide range of other handsome fabrics and wall coverings. It's a bright, airy expanse that also contains cozy corners as sumptuous and enveloping as a well-appointed Park Avenue living room.

"This is the South, and there's a great tradition here of hospitality and welcoming people," says Chad Holman, managing director of Jim Thompson America. "I wanted this showroom to feel appropriately inviting, while also expressing a sense of freshness."

Designed by New York's Rockwell Group, the space was conceived as a one-stop-shopping destination for home decor—"a high-end department store," as Holman puts it—featuring boutique areas from select partners, among them Pierre Frey, Holly Hunt, Phillip Jeffries, Caperton Collection, and Remains Lighting.

Although the look is unmistakably contemporary, it also references Jim Thompson's rich history, which is the stuff of legend.

Clockwise from top left: The entrance gallery at Jim Thompson's first U.S. showroom, in the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center, is topped by a wood canopy laser cut with a bodhi-leaf pattern. A display of Jim Thompson fabrics. The salon area is sheathed in ikat-print wallpaper. The Holly Hunt section, one of several partner boutiques in the space.

The eponymous founder, a former American intelligence officer, established the enterprise in 1948 after falling in love with Thai silk during a trip to Bangkok. The company flourished—even after Thompson vanished while on vacation in Malaysia, never to be seen again—and became a top resource for decorators. Thompson's Bangkok home is now a museum, its intricate woodwork serving as a model for a series of dark-stained oak screens that grace the Atlanta showroom.

The screens are one of several elements the designers added to warm up the crisp architecture. The ceiling at the entrance, for example, is lined with wood panels laser cut with bodhi-leaf shapes, resulting in a soft, dappled light. "We wanted to layer a narrative and movement into the space," explains Rockwell Group principal David Rockwell. The overall effect, he says, is something "like a modern, Thai-inspired loft." At 351 Peachtree Hills Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA; jimthompson.com —TIM MCKEOUGH