

# Are You Being Served?

Inside Fanny's, the buzzy restaurant at the new Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. Plus: The season's design-world hot spots.

BY SEAN SANTIAGO

**F**OR THE DESIGNERS STEVEN Johanknecht and Roman Alonso of Commune, Fanny's, the all-day restaurant at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, is the kind of communal space we need now.

Within what was formerly the landmarked May Company department store, completed in 1939, the museum was respectfully renovated by architects Renzo Piano and the late Osvaldo Maiozzi into a raw, deconstructed campus. Yet the brief from Fanny's managing partners, Bill Chait and Carl Schuster, demanded comfort, luxury, and a throwback interior that also looks optimistically forward, marrying glamour and industry in a way that befits its clientele.

To achieve this in the restaurant, located as it is off the museum's main lobby, Commune hewed to a color palette dictated by Piano and Maiozzi's designs for the building's more industrial viewing and gallery spaces, creatively overcoming that limitation through their

material choices, studied references, and a sense of humor. "It was one of the more challenging things in this project," Johanknecht says. "But it was also what most excited us—how to hit this note that encompassed all of these different ideas."

Inspired by Old Hollywood haunts like the Brown Derby and Perino's, Commune developed a lighting scheme with the designer Sean O'Connor to visually lower the 30-foot ceilings, commissioning Atelier de Troupe to create curved, period-agnostic lamps for the booths. Sheer curtains by artist Adam Pogue reference the scrims used in set design, dividing the 10,000-square-foot space while allowing light to filter throughout.

The exuberant zinc-topped bar nods to Art Deco movie marquees, while the tabletops are clad in linoleum, which appears pleasingly anachronistic and feels like leather to the touch. It's a considered execution that stokes the appetite as much as the imagination, fittingly cinematic in scope yet human in scale. Just don't forget to make a reservation. ■



**ABOVE:** Commune's Roman Alonso and Steven Johanknecht. **TOP:** The wall mural in Fanny's is by Konstantin Kakanias. Wendy Stark, granddaughter of restaurant eponym Fanny Brice, lent the archival costume sketches on the wall of the mezzanine, as well as photos and memorabilia.