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TOP NOTCH

Mastering the art of the well-curated coffee table

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“THE MOST INTIMATE story you can tell about yourself is on your coffee table,” says Alexander Poma, co-founder with Leslie Steven of New York architecture and interior design firm PomaSteven. To start, he suggests, pick a color scheme that complements your existing art, walls and carpeting. Then hunt for pieces of all shapes, sizes and materials—metal sculptures, ceramic vases, decorative details like wooden figurines—and don’t forget the books. “They say you can’t judge a book by its cover, but sometimes the cover is so seductive,” says Poma. A mix of flat and glossy jacket finishes, he says, is ideal. Then you’re ready to build. Flat is boring; stack books and incorporate elements of varying heights. But don’t go overboard. “It’s important to step back and think, What could I remove to make it look more powerful?” Steven says. Most of all, don’t forget to factor in function—a coffee table, after all, should still be able to hold some coffee. A functional tray beneath your items can sweep pieces out of the way when necessary. As a finishing touch, consider adding a bit of greenery. “It really transforms a table,” she says, “and makes it come alive.” ■



Above: “Blue Surround,” **RICHARD DIEBENKORN**, at **SUSAN SHEEHAN GALLERY**, 212-489-3331; Left, clockwise from top left: Beachwood stacking chair, **ROLAND RAINER** for E. & A. Pollack, **KIMCHEROVA**, 212-929-9720; Bronze and wood low table, **C.J. PETERS**, 212-752-1198; Cortina silk indigo rug, **FORT STREET STUDIO**, fortstreetstudio.com. On table above, from left: Nutcracker perfume bottle by **GIL NACHMANI**, Eggshell sculpture by **OREL ARBEL**, **MAISON GERARD**, 212-674-7611; Beacon walnut cutting boards (left and center), **CALVIN KLEIN HOME**, calvinklein.com; Modernist Wood Carving, **MANTIQUES MODERN**, 212-206-1494; Ceramic vase,

JACQUES LAROUSSINIE, **MAGEN H GALLERY**, 212-777-8670. Left, clockwise from top left: Wood box, **ALEXANDRE NOLL**, **MAGEN H GALLERY**; *James Welling: Monograph* by **JAMES CRUMP**, aperture.org; Welded copper vessel, **HARRY BERTOIA**, **LOST CITY ARTS**, 212-375-0500; Eggshell sculpture by **OREL ARBEL**, **MAISON GERARD**; *Cecily Brown* by Rudi Fuchs; *Maidenhair fern*; *Jean-Michel Basquiat* by Robert Farris Thompson and Rene Ricard, **GAGOSIAN GALLERY**, 212-796-1224; “Affinity” terra-cotta sculpture, **GINO COSENTINO**, **LOST CITY ARTS**.