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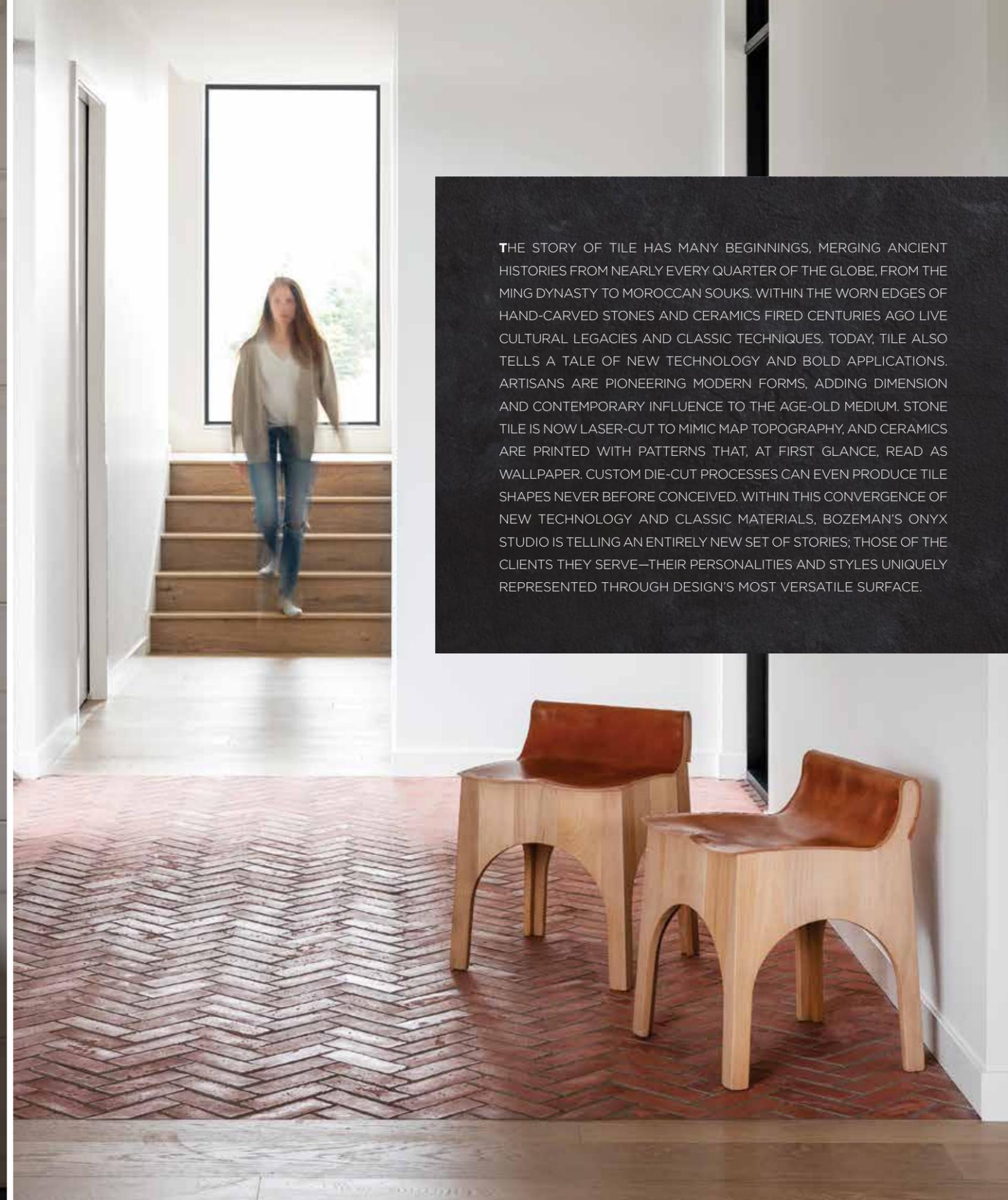
STYLE STORYTELLING

WITH **ONYX STUDIO**

by **STEPHANIE DENNEE**



THE STORY OF TILE HAS MANY BEGINNINGS, MERGING ANCIENT HISTORIES FROM NEARLY EVERY QUARTER OF THE GLOBE, FROM THE MING DYNASTY TO MOROCCAN SOUKS. WITHIN THE WORN EDGES OF HAND-CARVED STONES AND CERAMICS FIRED CENTURIES AGO LIVE CULTURAL LEGACIES AND CLASSIC TECHNIQUES. TODAY, TILE ALSO TELLS A TALE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND BOLD APPLICATIONS. ARTISANS ARE PIONEERING MODERN FORMS, ADDING DIMENSION AND CONTEMPORARY INFLUENCE TO THE AGE-OLD MEDIUM. STONE TILE IS NOW LASER-CUT TO MIMIC MAP TOPOGRAPHY, AND CERAMICS ARE PRINTED WITH PATTERNS THAT, AT FIRST GLANCE, READ AS WALLPAPER. CUSTOM DIE-CUT PROCESSES CAN EVEN PRODUCE TILE SHAPES NEVER BEFORE CONCEIVED. WITHIN THIS CONVERGENCE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND CLASSIC MATERIALS, BOZEMAN'S ONYX STUDIO IS TELLING AN ENTIRELY NEW SET OF STORIES; THOSE OF THE CLIENTS THEY SERVE—THEIR PERSONALITIES AND STYLES UNIQUELY REPRESENTED THROUGH DESIGN'S MOST VERSATILE SURFACE.



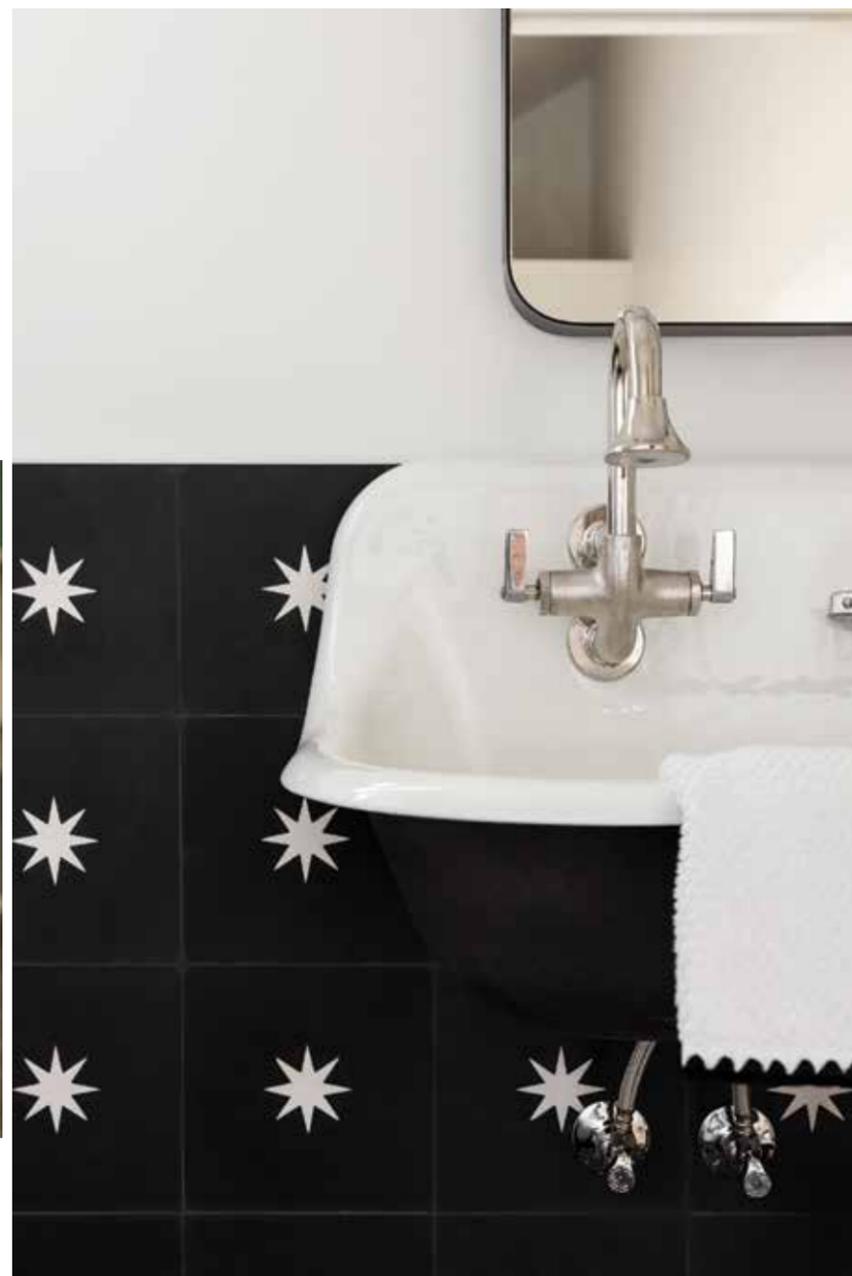
At the Onyx showroom in downtown Bozeman, walls are a kaleidoscope of color, texture, and scale—sample boards asking to be touched, pulled from their display space, played with, combined, and re-combined. Play is exactly how the Onyx team wants the experience to feel. “Regardless of the scope or budget of the project, shopping for tile shouldn’t feel like checking a to-do item off a list,” says Montana native and owner of Onyx, Ashley Hertz. “Instead, we aim to give our clients an elevated experience by creating functional art that reflects their personalities.”

By understanding not only the specific tile project but also the context of the entire home and the client’s lifestyle, the Onyx team creates that elevated tile experience. Ashley says, “Some clients have a clear sense of what they want when



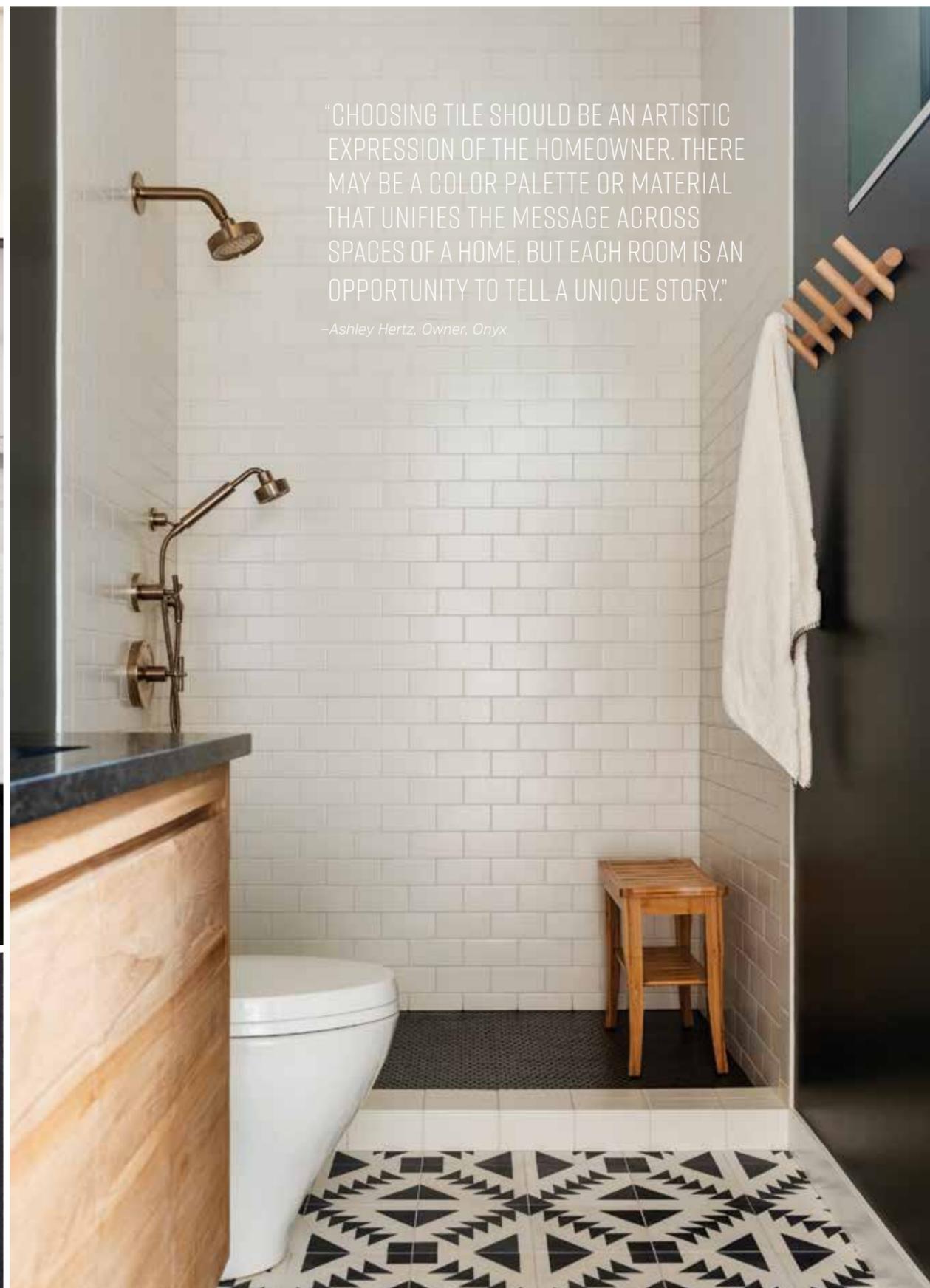
they come into the showroom. Other clients have less specific ideas, but a few initial questions from our team define intentions and prevent any decision fatigue.” Functionality and the space of the tile application may set some parameters of tile design. Still, beyond those initial guidelines, Ashley and the Onyx team, with a combined 40 years of design experience, feel that traditional rules can be broken in pursuit of personal style. “Choosing tile should be an artistic expression of the homeowner. There may be a color palette or material that unifies the message across spaces of a home, but each room is an opportunity to tell a unique story,” explains Ashley. With Onyx representing over 22 brands and endless design combinations, there is no limit to the direction the story can take.

In a recent Bozeman-area Onyx project, the home’s Scandinavian architectural influence was a jumping-off point for the homeowner’s tile story. The clean lines of the light-filled home are reflected in a simple color palette of creamy whites and blacks, chosen as a cohesive element throughout. “Within that palette, each room takes on its own personality,” says Ashley. An encaustic tile star motif adds whimsy to the children’s bathroom within the black and white palette, while glazed basalt, carried from floor to wall and paired with honed marble in the master bath, lends sleek elegance. For the foyer, warmth is infused within the neutral palette through thin, brick-style concrete tiles in a rich umber.



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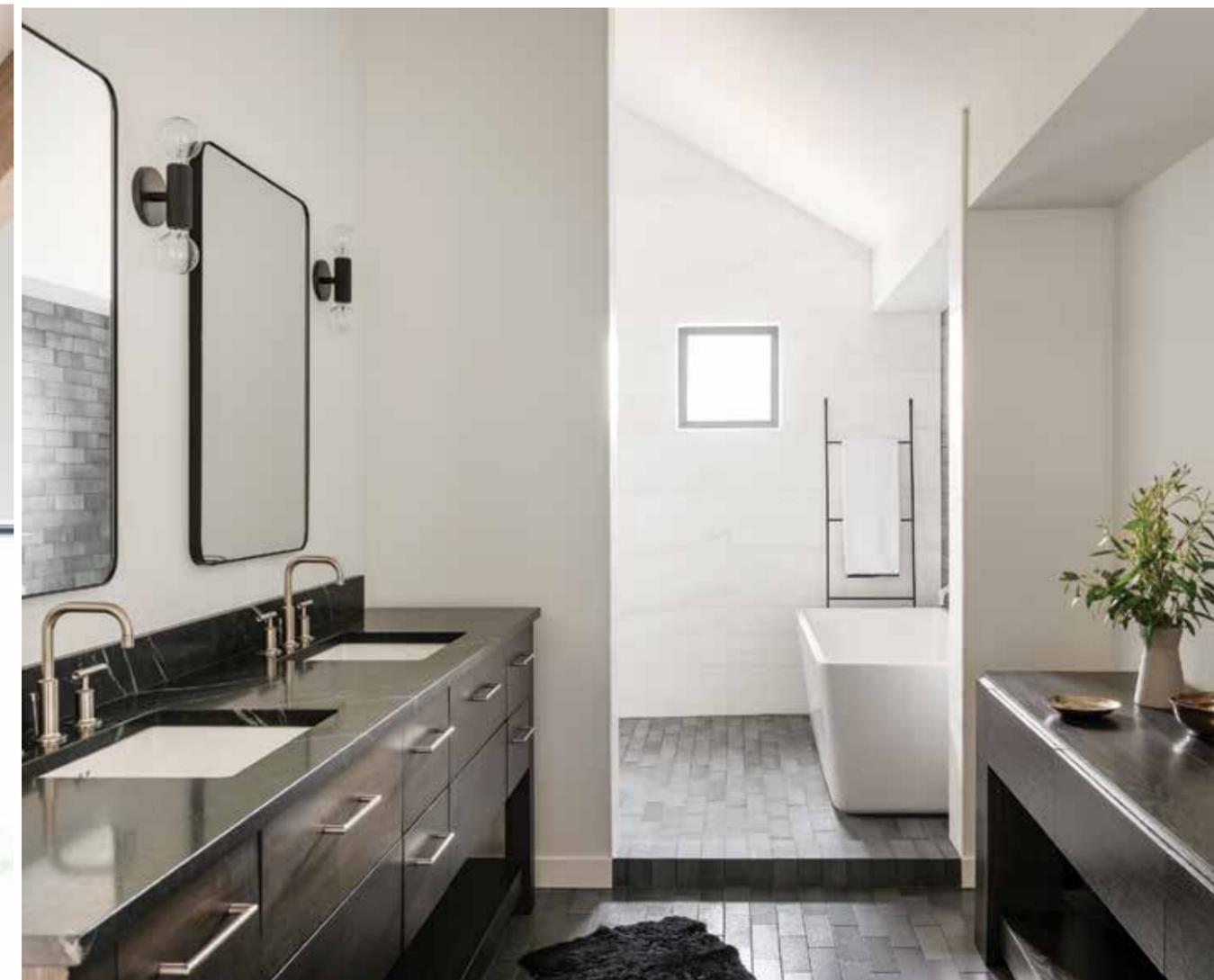


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In the kitchen, a hand-painted, hand-chiseled Moroccan Zellige tile backsplash thoughtfully blends styles. "Moroccan tile might not immediately come to mind when working in a home with Scandinavian styling, but when done in a clean, muted color that complements the minimalism of the home, the two styles merge to create a fresh aesthetic," shares Ashley. "It's all about finding a comfort level for the homeowner and seeing what speaks to them. It's their kitchen backsplash, their bathroom. Important spaces in their home that should reflect who they are."

When it comes to putting their beautiful products in place, Onyx is hands-on with the installation team, bringing them into the showroom to work through specifics of a tile package and visiting the site during installation. "The details—grout joints, mitered edges, trim and corner pieces—can make or break a tile project. We focus on clear communication with the most talented installation teams in the valley, so they know they can call with any install challenge, and we'll be ready to find the solution with them," says Ashley.

Ashley found her design passion in tile, a truly global material. Her love for travel means she visits tiled spaces worldwide, absorbing the craft through the lens of culture. To that global inspiration, she adds insight from her decades of work in tile and interior design for southwest Montana's luxury home market. With that combination of inspiration and insight, Ashley sees the next chapter for tile as a continuation of the artistic growth the material has seen in recent years. She adds, "Tile has taken a greater design presence in flooring and traditional applications. It's also being used in new ways to make statements. Manufacturers have upped their games, and with this fresh diversity in product, people are getting creative and bold in their use of tile. We're constantly looking forward to what we can help create next." ■