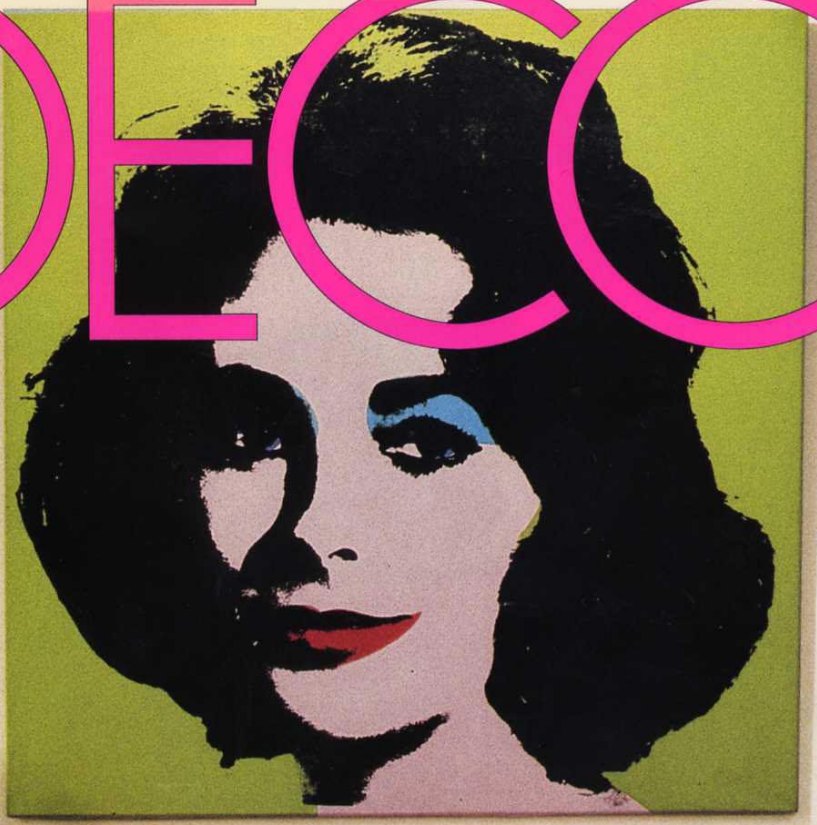


ELLE DECOR

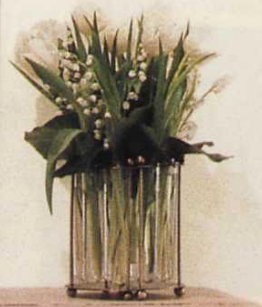
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When Robert Couturier began the renovation, with Lee Construction—providing, as he puts it, the canvas for Muriel to paint on—he found an architectural jungle that hadn't been touched since the '20s or refurbished since the '50s, judging from the shag carpeting. He balanced the spaces, opening a doorway from the living room to the dining room, making the entrance squarer by fitting an extra bedroom at one end of it. He restored the kitchen and bathroom to a laboratory crispness that suits the building's '20s character; the tall doors are solid teak and the kitchen cabinets maple. For a photograph to be tak-