

Finding &
Understanding
the Grid
of a Magazine

(Harper's Bazarre Magazine)

Here is a double-page-spread from a feature article of a magazine.

Let's find the grid...

FIFTHS YOU ARE BLIND FOLDED...

Laurie Anderson embraces a composer's pioneering vision—without ever seeing a thing

Photograph by Victor Demarchelier

Dress, \$1,200, Marc Jacobs.  shopBAZAAR.com Mask, Philip Treacy London, philiptreacy.co.uk

 Available at ShopBAZAAR.com FASHION EDITOR: Joanna Hillman

LET THE MUSIC BEGIN

Ruins, symbolism, and Siberia—it's all fair game when **Laurie Anderson** meets *Lera Auerbach*

Lera Auerbach visits my studio on a sweltering summer afternoon. The composer and Renaissance woman is here to talk about *The Blind*, her pioneering a cappella opera, which made its world premiere during the Lincoln Center Festival in July—but the topic of conversation keeps shifting.

"Everywhere I go, I visit cemeteries or abandoned ruins—including one in a very small village in Brazil that you can only reach by boat. You walk in and there's this incredible cemetery, with all sorts of flowering trees and completely disintegrating graves," she says, gesturing like an orchestra conductor, dark curly hair flowing around her face, her eyes gleaming. "And there's a sign at the entrance: PLEASE DO NOT DUMP BODIES UNATTENDED. It was exceptionally beautiful, in a gruesome way."

Much about Auerbach's career, including *The Blind*, is just that: beautiful, gruesome, devastating, and daring. Now 39, Auerbach, born on the border of Siberia, composed her first opera at age 12, and defected from the Soviet Union in 1991, when she was 17, to study at Juilliard. She also writes poetry (in Russian and English), paints, and performs as a solo pianist. With all of her projects, Auerbach has distinguished herself by pushing the boundaries of her chosen medium. (Take her previous opera, *Gagel*: the most ambitious commission ever undertaken by Vienna's Theater an der Wien, it used pyrotechnics, actors in flight harnesses, and a tilting stage in a stadium-style spectacle.) In Auerbach's hands, anything can become a source of inspiration.

"I once did an experiment," she offers. "I was in a practice room, more like a storage space—extremely claustrophobic. I had to be there all day. I had my camera with me, and I thought, There must be something really inspiring here, if I can only find it. And suddenly something happened. It was the way the light reflected from the ceiling onto the piano; it fractured. It totally looked like notes. I took a photo, and it's on the cover of my most recent CD, *Cellarboy*. It's this idea of finding beauty in the most unexpected places."

For her latest work, Auerbach reinterpreted Nobel Prize winner Maurice Maeterlinck's 1890 one-act play, *The Blind*, as a 12-piece a cappella opera. Auerbach's take is an immersive soundscape, sweeping attendees up into the performance. "It's not like the opera, a concert, or a play," director John La Bouchardière warns me before the performance. "It's more like an installation. Everyone's on a very individual journey."

The experience begins in the line outside the theater, when every guest receives a blindfold. The only way to navigate into the performance space is to place my hands on the shoulders of

the woman in front of me, who leads me into a room suffused with electronic crackles and fizzes. The basis of Auerbach's opera is the same as Maeterlinck's story: An elderly priest leads 12 blind adults and one sighted child to an island. The priest then departs in search of a lighthouse, leaving his flock to wait for him.

There is no moment of lights slowly dimming—just sudden darkness. Chill breezes sweep through the performance space, accompanied by occasional whiffs of herbs. Singers move around, creating the disconcerting sense that nothing is solid. Prayers, calls, shouts, words whispered into ears, small skittering noises raveling along the ground—it's an overwhelming wave of sound. After a while I realize I'm huddling in a fetal position, something I would never, *could* never do, in a more traditional concert setting.

"The audience needs to be blind too. They become characters in the show itself," adds La Bouchardière. "Only in opera can you have each singer singing a completely different text, each singing in his own world simultaneously. In a play, it would be a disaster. But in opera it's possible."

By now I am freezing. The sounds disperse, flow around me. I imagine how the *barsa*, the Buddhist concept of the interval between death and rebirth, might sound, the way it's expressed in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. In the *barsa*, the senses dissolve, and, as some Buddhists believe, the self disintegrates as the energy prepares to enter another life form.

At the end of the performance, the audience files out, every member wearing a blindfold pushed up onto the forehead like a bandage. And it does feel like we've come through an ordeal together. "It was the silence at the end that I loved—it went on and on and on," Auerbach tells me the next day. "I was very happy about the end because of the silence. Because everyone became one."

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uerbach, meanwhile, has moved on to the next challenge: a new work that will premiere at California's Camerata Pacifica in spring 2014. Her enthusiasms are wide-ranging yet exacting. I share a Web site that shows sine waves being used to make water flow in zigzag patterns. "This is fantastic! Let's make a sound fountain," she says, seemingly on the brink of making a sketch. I tell her there are ruins you can visit on a bike path up the Hudson. "I already love it!" she says. I suggest a bike trip, and we agree to go. We discuss whether nostalgia is a disease and share our earliest memories. Talk moves to phosphores, the patterns you see when you close your eyes, and the differences between visual and mental images.

After experiencing *The Blind*, I felt that my ears had been directly connected to my mind and that I had somehow heard the desperate and impossibly beautiful music of the *barsa*. ■

Verticals and horizontals are drawn along the boundaries of every text block.

So now we can see the grid-structure this page was based on.

Every text block will always fit against one or more lines of the grid.

The grid if the facing page is always a mirror image.

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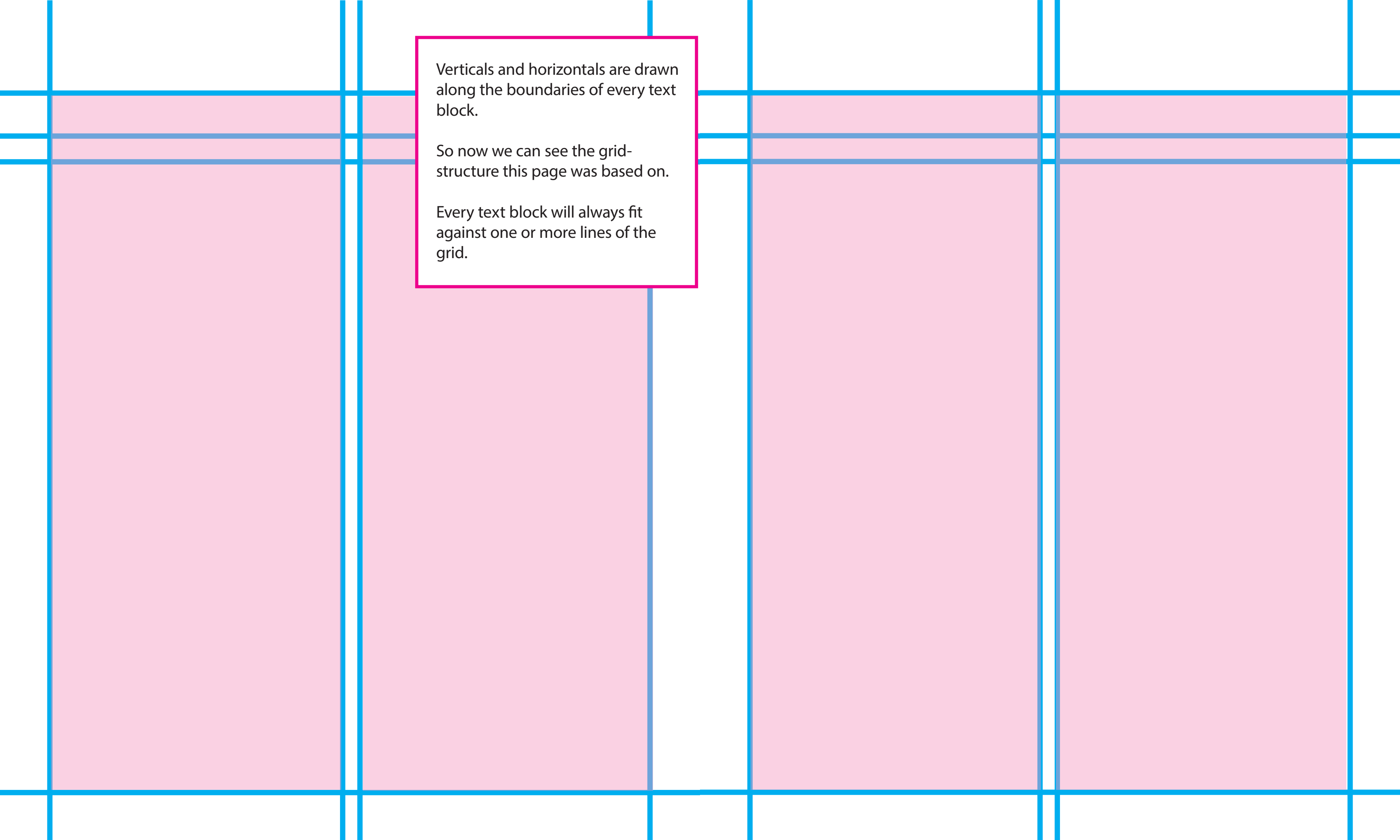
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After experiencing *The Blind*, I felt that my ears had been directly connected to my mind and that I had somehow heard the desperate and impossibly beautiful music of the *basu*. ■

The image shows a grid of blue lines on a white background. There are four vertical lines and three horizontal lines. This grid creates several rectangular cells. Four of these cells are filled with a light pink color, representing text blocks. The pink blocks are located in the top-left, top-right, middle-left, and middle-right positions. A white rectangular box with a pink border is positioned in the upper-middle part of the grid, containing three lines of text.

Verticals and horizontals are drawn along the boundaries of every text block.

So now we can see the grid-structure this page was based on.

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The first time Eileen Guggenheim walked through the doors of the 12th-century Tuscan farmhouse that would become her dream home, the atmosphere can't exactly suggest a domestic idyll. "Animals used to live on the first floor," recalls Guggenheim, chairwoman of the New York Academy of Art's Board of Trustees. "It was all dirt, and there were troughs in the living room."

But the *paese* did have great bones, epic views of the surrounding countryside, and endless acres of unkempt gardens that were begging to be resuscitated. So Guggenheim and her husband, famed galleryist Russell Wilkinson—who first fell for the velvety green soils of Tuscany while visiting the nearby home of artist friends Shepard Fairey and Frances Loring—decided to snap it up. Together they spent three and a half years faithfully staring at the property, and now divide their time between the honking metropolis of New York City and this meditative paradise on the outskirts of an ancient hill town. "Russell always says that this is really his home," Guggenheim explains. "I feel the same way. You really appreciate the little things, knowing people. It's a sweet life."

Although the house was in clear need of an overhaul, its barnlike rigors gave it a sense of depth and rustic character. Guggenheim chose to keep the charming original open-lattice brickwork in the master bedroom—once a hayloft—but rebuild many of the stone walls and brick arches. Old wooden ceiling beams were sourced from neighboring farmhouses, slabs of marble were cut from local quarries, and quaint painted furniture was acquired in nearby towns—"the kind you would have found in a Tuscan house 100 years ago," she says. Terra-cotta-painted rooms now serve as backdrops for vibrant embroidered tapestries, rugs by Jules Leleu, and the couple's collection of Italian pottery, which includes everything from pieces that Marcello Fantoni created for Raynor in the 1960s to a gold-and-white luster vase by Ulisse Cantagalli, considered the Louis Comfort Tiffany of Italy. "I tried to respect the house," Guggenheim says. "Around here you don't really decorate."

Outside the jasmine-covered main house, an emerald swimming pool shimmers at the top of a silky lawn. Rosebushes border the edges of a formal garden, while manicured shrubbery mingles with century-old olive trees, giant clay vases, and stone *pizzo* wells. The lush surrounding landscape, which is dominated by wild tufts of rosemary and lavender that fall off into a field of orange

In this spread with the identical grid you can see how very versatile it is.

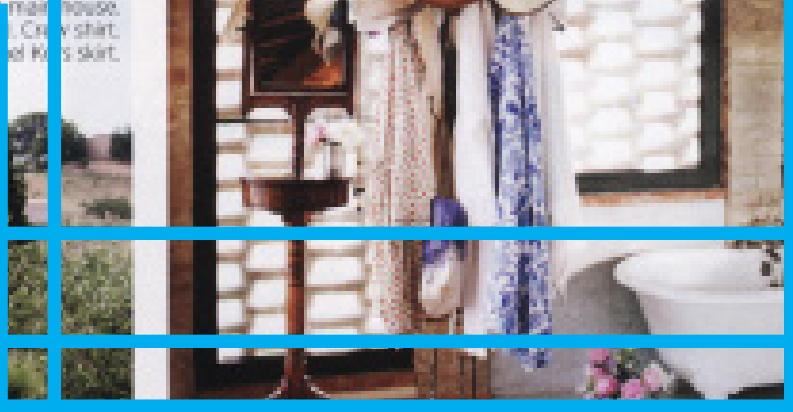
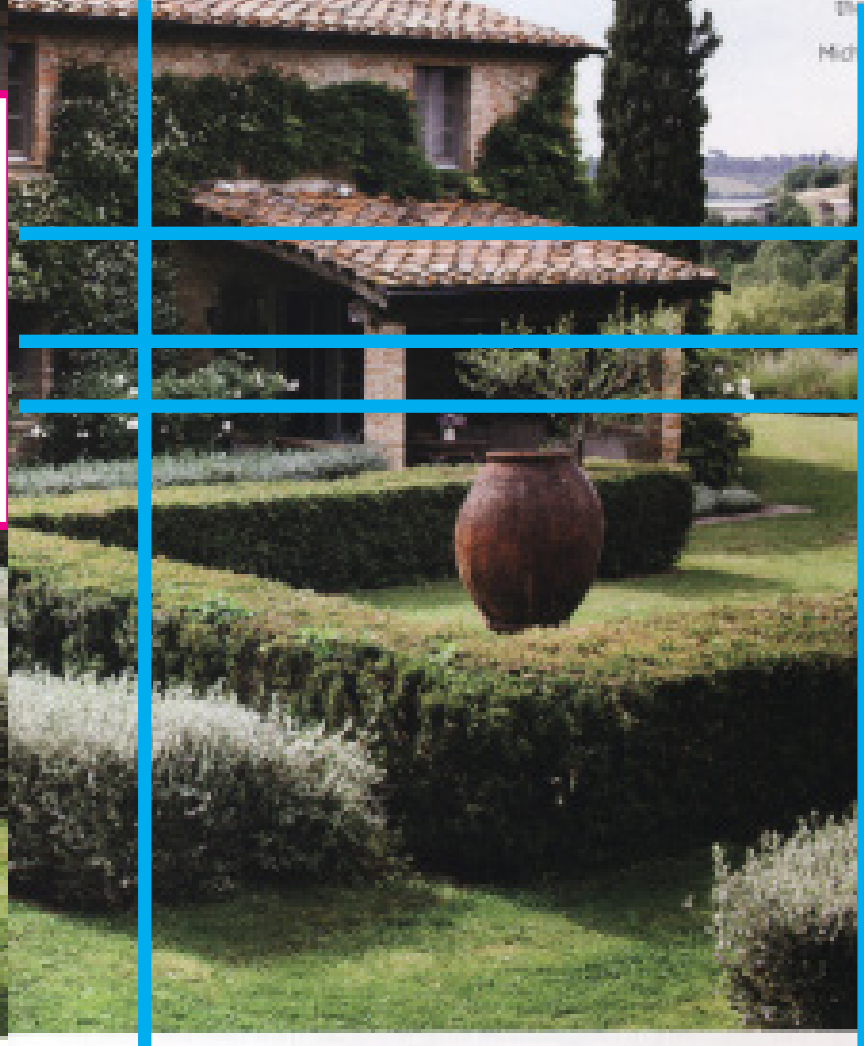
See the spread without the grid, following...



The 12th-century farmhouse, nestled in the hillsides



With her daughter, Isabel. On Guggenheim's deck: dress, on top; accessories, all new



Open brickwork in the master bathroom



Lady of the manor. Prada coat, J. Crew sweater, J. Brand jeans, Tod's shoes



Arches and exposed beams create rustic charm



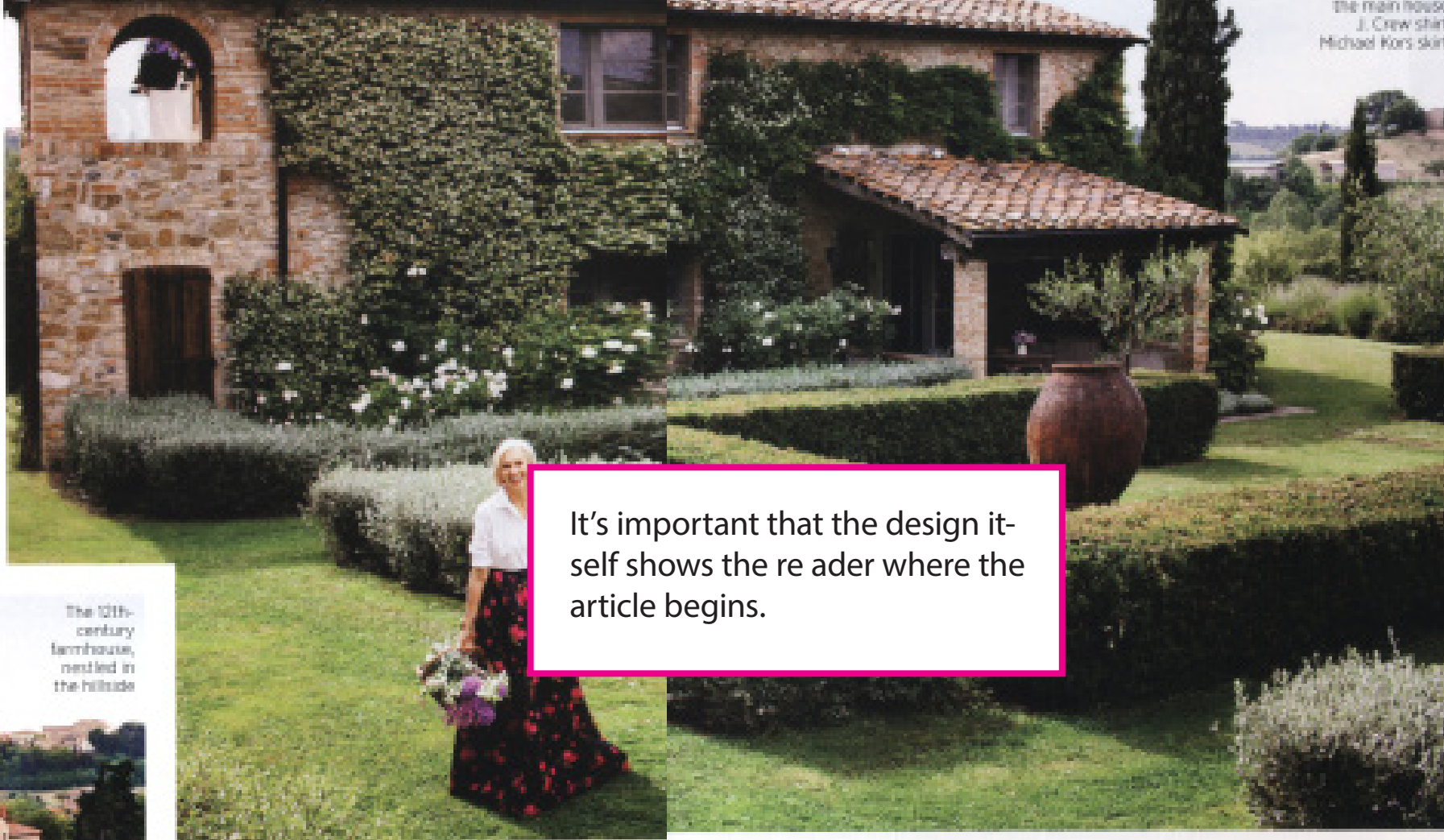
Terra-cotta pots fill a covered loggia

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It's important that the design itself shows the reader where the article begins.

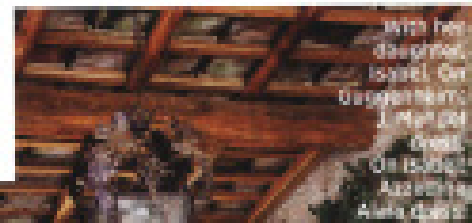
The main house. J. Crew shirt, Michael Kors skirt.



Open brickwork in the master bathroom



Lady of the manor. Prada coat, J. Crew turtleneck, J Brand jeans, Tod's shoes.



With her daughter, Isabel. On Guggenheim's left: red dress, on right: Assoluto, Alessi glass



Arches and exposed beams create rustic charm



Terra-cotta pots fill a covered loggia