

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2012

CHRISTIE'S

GAITONDE

— AN INDIAN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS
CARLO MOLLINO'S CHALET
BEATRIZ MILHAZES ON HANS MEMLING
A YALI ON THE BOSPHORUS
PARIS BIENNALE: WHAT TO SEE



Hubert Zandberg's reception room is filled with artworks by Bene Bergado, Peter Hugo, Francis Bacon and Rachel Whiteread. The shelf/sculpture is designed by Bruno Peinado while the cushions are made from vintage scarves by Paul Smith.



COLLECTION

COLLECTION OF A LIFE

By Edward Behrens

For Hubert Zandberg, collector and decorator, it started in the veldt. 'Those deserts can't leave you unaffected, those sunsets are too severe.' It was the drama of this South African landscape that started Zandberg picking things up; spurring him on to fulfil his imagination in his version of the hunter gatherer, collecting quills and rocks and bones, 'a natural thing to do for a curious kid.' This was the beginning of his collecting habit – or his 'illness' as he calls it.

Zandberg came to Europe about 16 years ago. He had trained as a lawyer and always planned he would become a cultural attaché in the South-African diplomatic corps. When this didn't happen, 'the first victim of affirmative action', he came to Europe. He had 'a portfolio to travel, to take a break and see where it goes.' He landed under the wing of David Champion, the prestigious interior designer and that's where Zandberg learned the craft. Except that, as he says, 'what I do is kind of inherent, you either get it from your mother or the landscape.' Here 'what I do' isn't just designing or decorating; it's collecting too. Some of these lessons he learned young: all those quills and natural

history 'teach you about texture and shape and this is why I value the object with no value that becomes the most valuable object in the collection by association, and the dialogue between pieces elevates.' Part of the value of the collection is the 'value of the eye'.

These dialogues are rife within his own house. The entire building is a conversation that seems to be saying how do I live in this space? When he took it over he 'wasn't ready to do it. I lived for a year and a half in the store room and I couldn't decorate it timewise. Of course that's an excuse; it took me that long to get my head round the space and then I was ready to curate it – that's what it was. I had very little say: the house and the collection decided.' Even now it's not entirely finished, 'the curatorial process is ongoing, things need to move.' It is hardly a surprise in such a vibrant and alive interior that things need to move. With such a distinct aesthetic it must be irresistible to discover new associations and conversations between the Zulu skirt and the Wolfgang Tillmans in the bedroom or the glass skulls and Walmar Corrêa's anatomy of Capelobo, a mythical Brazilian creature.



This view of the reception room reveals a Mammoth tusk and artwork by Richard Woods. The light which hangs in the corner is from the 1970s.



Mr Zandberg's striking bedroom contains an extraordinary Zulu skirt, a photograph by Wolfgang Tillmans, two monochromes by Mustafa Hulusi, a Skeleto sculpture by Wim Botha and a lamp by Pierre Cardin. The bed is his own design.

The study is dominated by Lumber by Anne Hardy. The Rope skull by Jim Faure and Die Zofen by Seb Patane also hang here.



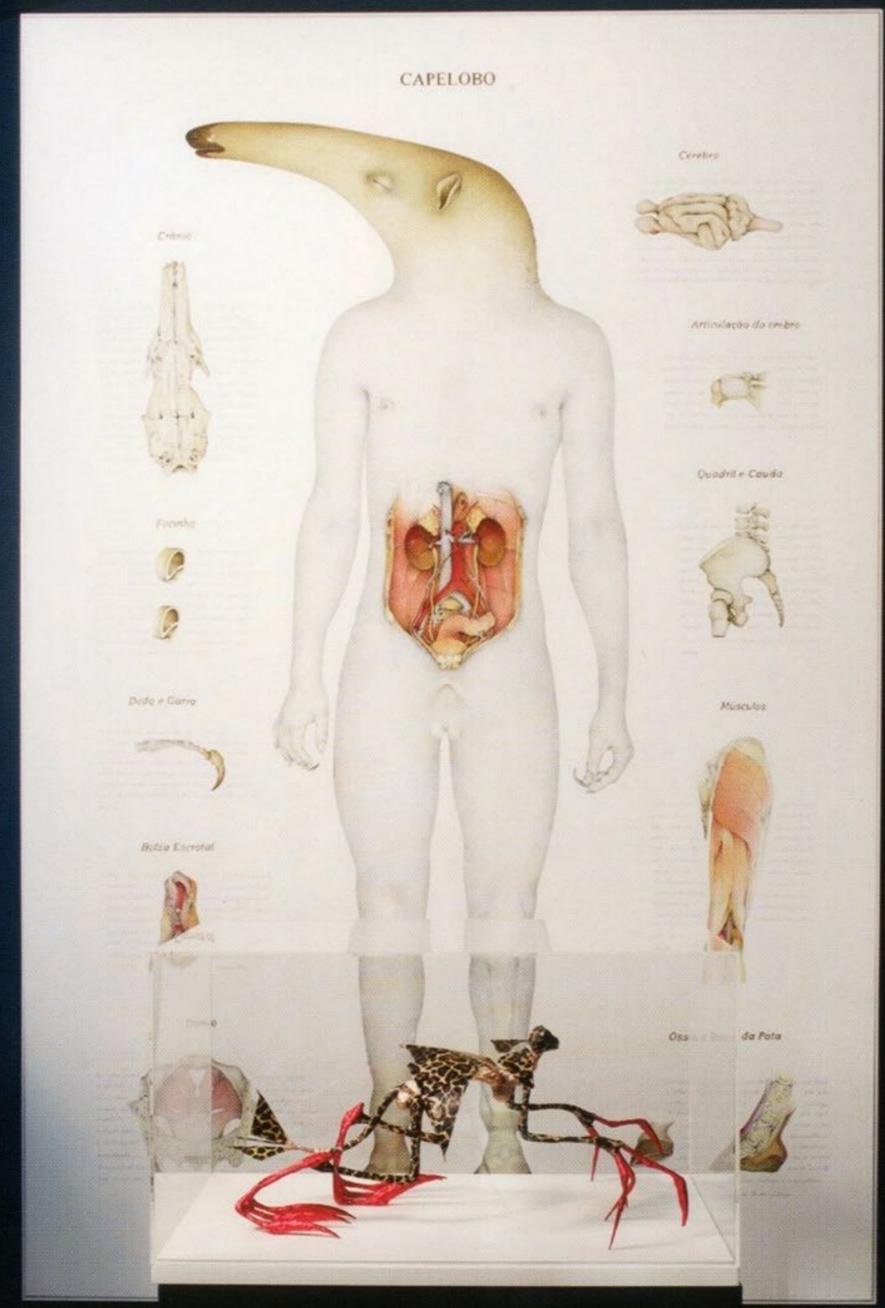
Yet this space asks another question which is harder to answer. It is a question Zandberg asks himself: 'How can you make contemporary art work in this sort of a decorated space?' Zandberg started collecting contemporary work with photography, 'it was an easy medium that became important as I was starting to collect. It was acknowledged as fine art right about that time.' The very first thing he bought was David Gamble's *Andy Warhol's Entrance Hall* – the colours and textures, that it spoke of decoration, of art and the personality of the artist, its plenitude of psychology, it was his entry to art. 'I'd settled into Europe. I felt ready to embrace Europe. It was the time of the first Frieze and I felt the confidence to buy contemporary art, it was a mind-shift. Of course, as with all collectors, there are the ones that got away. For Zandberg it was a Wim Wenders photograph of Alexanderplatz. It was priced reasonably, Zandberg went away to think about. He waited a couple of months weighing it up. It was too late. His conclusion to this missing out is the reassuring advice, 'You always have to buy what you can't afford or you'll never have a good collection.'

When he was decorating this house he called the gallerist who had sold him a very well known photograph by Hannah Starkey and asked, 'Do you

think they'll mind if I hang it on a black wall. She said to me, "Just do it. They'd mind about grey." So he did and in so doing it becomes something else, his creation. 'It's a reality and ultimately I still have the veto.' And besides, 'people don't sit on the floor and we do like flowers.' There is a brave personality to these decorated spaces. Each room revolves around different dialogues, comes with the ghosts of different thoughts – is distinct in its expression. So much so that Zandberg sees it as a distillation of himself, 'I don't have any pictures of myself, no holiday snaps; my collection is the story of my life.' Looking at these rooms that seems about right.

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Photography:
Simon Upton/The Interior Archive



These cabinets of curiosities contain many wonderful artefacts including whale vertebra, coral pipes, a hippopotamus skull, artwork by Ruby Anemic, sculpture by Franklin Cassaro and Capelobo by Walmer Correa.