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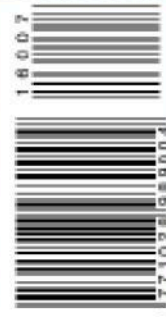
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ART BECOMES THE NARRATIVE OF A LIFE FULLY LIVED IN THE MONOCHROME APARTMENT OF DESIGNER HUBERT ZANDBERG

TEXT PIET SMEDY PHOTOGRAPHS MARK LUSCOMBE-WHYTE

In Hubert Zandberg's Paris apartment, an 18th-century daybed in J Robert Scott fabric is juxtaposed with modernist pieces, including a chair covered in black ponyskin by Jacques Adnet and a Gino Sarfatti ceiling light





'I don't spend all my time in the apartment, so when I arrive here it's like rediscovering old friends'
Hubert Zandberg



A good designer will facilitate what is true to you and will manifest it in a way that is rational and authentic,' says interior designer Hubert Zandberg of his approach to creating spaces with a sense of harmonious honesty.

Indeed this was his approach to the Parisian pied-à-terre belonging to a client he'd collaborated with before on a series of spaces in the city (one was featured in *Small Wonder H&G* June 2015).

This apartment, on the sixth floor of a former hotel building on a historic square in the 2nd arrondissement, was to be appointed as 'something like a New Yorker's take on 18th-century Paris'. Only it didn't take long for the South African-born designer to fall in love with the space for himself. 'I had to have it,' he laughs, and so heavy deals were made and the client eventually parted with it. 'When I took over I changed a few things, made it a little bit more "masculine", although it is by no means that,' he explains. 'A lot of black was introduced, but I kept the pink curtain as a kind of tongue-in-cheek dandyism.'

What followed was an entire overhaul of the apartment's 35-square-metre footprint, with most of the space being allocated to the bathroom, bedroom and living area, the latter two with sweeping views across the city. The kitchen, while still fully functional, was effectively placed in a cupboard that can be closed up with mirrored bi-fold doors and further hidden behind a grey velvet curtain.

The bookshelves are also kept behind the curtain because, as Hubert's mentor David Champion always said, 'books chatter'. Perhaps one of the most interesting features in the apartment is

the trompe l'oeil double French doors leading to the bathroom. 'I faked one of the doors to create the illusion of an enfilade, which really brings a sense of grandeur,' says Hubert. 'When all the doors are open, you look from the bedroom into the large bathroom mirror, which creates a vista and a feeling that there's plenty of space.' In the bathroom, a generous shower dominates and there are abundant storage areas. 'We went for monochromatic cement tiles in the shower and offset them with geometric patterns on the floor,' he says. 'That way we kept it interesting while still maintaining a hotel-apartment feel.' ▶

FROM ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT The console table shows off a Matégo magazine rack and a collection of 1960s ceramics that were sourced in Berlin. A Tobias Brothers artwork leans on the kitchen counter; the trompe l'oeil double French

doors lead to the bathroom; scatters in Kravet, Dedar and Bruno Triplet fabric on the daybed; artworks by Jake and Dinos Chapman, Polly Morgan and Dawn Mellor; a large black-and-white photograph was one of Hubert's earliest art purchases



Design Intel
Hubert Zandberg's top South African artists to start collecting
 ■ **David Goldblatt** is an absolute master of the iconic image.
 ■ The sculptural work of **Moffat Takadiwa**, who turns everyday objects into considered forms.
 ■ Robert Sherwood's very chic shop in Cape Town always has brilliant pieces on show.
 ■ The images created by **Lien Botha** represent every South African memory I cherish.
 ■ The great ceramicist **Nico Masemolo** elevated the art form.
 ■ I've recently started collecting the stunning and vibrant plates by **Ruan Hoffmann**.



Of the furniture, the only piece that Hubert kept was the 18th-century sofa, reupholstered in a J Robert Scott fabric, that he'd sourced at a flea market and then juxtaposed with modernist lighting, such as the radial brass ceiling light by Gino Sarfatti, and pieces including a Matégot tray and magazine rack that Hubert is fond of. 'I don't spend all my time in the apartment, so when I arrive here, it's like rediscovering old friends,' he says.

The most visually striking design direction in the apartment is the almost exclusive use of monochrome. This was the most obvious solution to a space that would essentially come to house

a part of Hubert's large art collection. 'My lifetime struggle is to find enough walls for my art,' he explains. 'I find the Zen of monochrome here. While someone else's idea of serenity is a Buddhist temple or a Japanese garden, my idea of serenity is to be surrounded by art that speaks to me. It doesn't shout at me; it reads a poem to me and I rather like the different poems I hear every time I'm in here.'

And although the groupings of art and ceramics might appear dense, it doesn't descend into clutter but rather gives the space a layered sense of harmony. There's an intertextuality between

the works themselves ('some of the artists know each other, two of them are actually partners, and elsewhere you'll find a younger artist commenting on an older one') and then, on a broader scale, between art and decor. 'Even if it's mad, it's honest,' says Hubert. For him, this apartment came to be about living with art and hanging the pieces in a way that allowed them to communicate and reference each other. 'There's more to the hanging than just a collection of black and white,' he says. Taking pride of place in the bedroom, however, is an early work by Nicholas Hlobo, one of Hubert's favourites, which he acquired from the Stevenson gallery

in Cape Town. 'The eye flows over this apartment like it would over a page with only typeface,' he explains of the arrangement of works. 'You read the space like poetry, in a sense, because you see it as something with a rhythm. There is a sense of structure, and then the madness happens.'

The result is then as true to Hubert, and his decorating philosophy, as could be: a space that is both practical and reflects the owner's life and tastes. 'From location to layout, this apartment fits me perfectly,' says Hubert. 'From the start it just had this spirit, as if I'd lived there in a previous life.' ■

FROM ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT A Nicholas Hlobo artwork dominates the bedroom alongside a Pierre Guariche wall light; an 18th-century zinc mirror from a Parisian flea market complements a black lacquer chair by Chiavari; a Matégot sidetable

with taxidermy bird from Deyrolle; a bronze vase by Rick Owens; in the bathroom, a custom-designed mirror by Hubert's studio, HZI, hangs above the basin and taps from Lefroy Brooks and a Matégot stand