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PRIVATE VIEWING

AN ANTIQUE COLLECTOR'S LONDON HOME STRIKES THE PERFECT BALANCE BETWEEN GALLERY SPACE AND LAID-BACK LIVING

TEXT PIET SMEDY PRODUCTION HUBERT ZANDBERG PHOTOGRAPHS SIMON UPTON

A custom HZ1 sofa covered in Rubelli fabric and an Ernst Schwadron pouf add an eclectic touch to the otherwise neutral reception room in this London home. A Seb Patane painting hangs above the fireplace

No two spaces are the same; each has different needs that require clear and clever scrutiny by the designer, be it a pied-à-terre in Tokyo or a holiday home up the West Coast. Similarly, some projects come together with relative ease; perhaps the aesthetic is simple and unfussy. When the owners of this particular four-storey house in West London approached South African-born, London-based designer Hubert Zandberg, he knew at once that this was not going to be one of those projects.

'There were a fair bit of architectural changes to be tended to, although less than what we normally would undertake,' says Hubert, explaining that the entrance hall staircase was replaced and the basement ▶



A Brent Wadden painting hangs above a vintage Scandinavian sideboard in the reception room **OPPOSITE PAGE**. **FROM TOP** The dining room table by Established & Sons and chairs by Christian Liaigre are complemented by custom mirrors by HZI and a vintage Italian chandelier; a Celina Decorações chair in the reception room sits in front of a late-Art Deco cabinet displaying a few of the home owner's prized artefacts



'Sometimes all you need is a bit of colour or texture to lighten the picture' *Hubert Zandberg*

level was opened up and reconfigured for more casual living. The designation of certain rooms was also changed. However, when it came to appointing the interiors, Hubert and his team had their work cut out for them. 'The client is a serious collector of high-level archaeological and in particular pre-Islamic artefacts,' he says. 'So what we needed to do was incorporate these pieces into the spaces but in a way that made it feel livable and not like a museum.' This meant avoiding the 'super architectural, white-box approach' beloved by modern minimalists. The challenge was striking the right balance between paying respect to the artefacts without allowing them to completely take over. 'Hundreds of years ago, some of these

pieces were used in everyday living: ceramic pots and utility objects. Our job was to make them a part of the architecture again without over styling them.'

In the main reception room, Hubert decided against the traditional double sofa, opting instead for a more unconventional semi-L shape in classic fabric. This was then juxtaposed with 1940s Brazilian chairs, African stools and a modernist pouf – the result: a completely eclectic scheme and the ideal platform for showcasing the owner's collectables in two late-Art Deco cabinets that were found at a Paris flea market, no less. 'Containing many of the small objects in the cabinetry really helped calm it down,' says Hubert. ▶



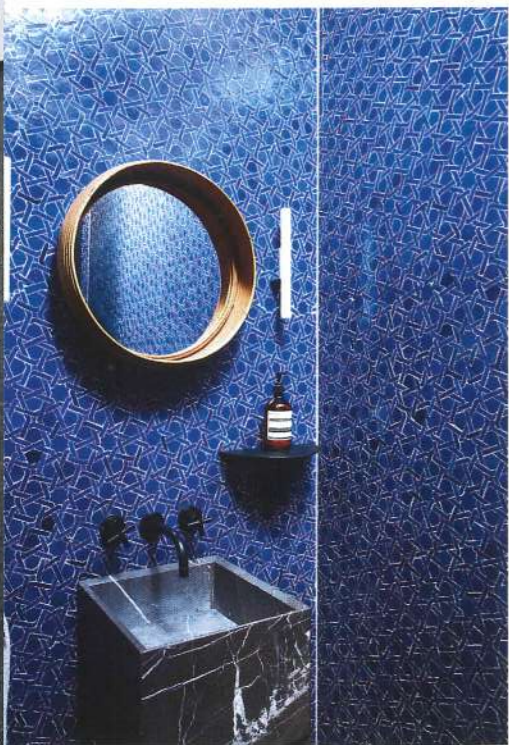


'Especially when you're surrounded by so many objects and so many visual dialogues.'

Yet no matter how esoteric Hubert's design plays, he still successfully keeps his eye on one of the key objectives: 'This is a house that's being used, it's not a stage set.' And it functions as just that, a comfortable home that regardless of the volume of decorating is still an environment that can easily adapt to family living. 'Objects in display cabinets aside, there isn't a sense of micro-styling but rather room for pieces to be moved around and lived with.'

A similarly disruptive approach was taken in the dining room, where a three-metre-long, carbon fibre table by Established & Sons and skeletal Christian Liaigre chairs share the room with custom antiqued Mondrian-style mirrors and a 1940s chandelier from Italy. The placement of the chandelier was, in ►

ABOVE In the living room, a Paul Frankl-style console from Talisman is paired with a vintage chair and table lamps **LEFT** A custom HZI sofa covered in Pierre Frey fabric along with African indigo cloth throws and print cushions bring the living room space together. The vintage school charts were a Berlin flea-market find



In the study, a pan-cultural discourse has been encouraged between pieces of varying provenance

fact, a happy fluke after a minimalist, contemporary fitting simply failed to work in the space. 'It was classic and subtle yet carried enough history to make it the perfect counterpoint to the other pieces in the room,' says Hubert, who described the whole experience as 'conducting an orchestra of soloists.'

In the study, which occupies the now expanded basement level, a pan-cultural discourse has been encouraged between pieces of varying provenance. 'We introduced retro pieces, African pieces, and some not as rare as others. It really adds a breath of fresh air,' he says. 'Sometimes all you need is a bit of colour or texture to lighten the picture.'

For Hubert, the repetition of colour, texture and shape act as subconscious markers in the home that help to structure the experience in a logical way, creating a subtle level of order. 'In the end, this became more of a psychological exercise than a design project,' he says of his rationale. 'It's about the psychology of the collector, what it means to collect in the modern age and what it means to live with artefacts.' It is within this almost pareidolian response to find pattern in everything that clear themes emerge in Hubert's appointments and that a rational, unified interior is achieved. ■ **Hubert Zandberg Interiors** hzinteriors.com



Antique needlepoint squares mounted on Dedar fabric and a ceiling light from CTO Lighting add a metallic touch to the master bedroom
OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP
Custom shelving by HZI in the study houses a Severin Hansen 'Rosewood' desk and Thonet desk chair; Zellige mosaic tiles in the bathroom are paired with a basin stand from Copa Living and a bamboo mirror from a Paris flea market