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Profile

THE OWNER Hubert Zandberg runs his own architectural and interior design practice, Hubert Zandberg Interiors (hziinteriors.com)

THE PROPERTY A five-storey Victorian terrace in west London. Spread over the ground floor and lower ground floor are a reception room, a kitchen-diner, a living room and a cabinet of curiosities area. Upstairs is the master bedroom with en suite, a dressing room, the guest bedroom, a study and a shower room. There is also a garden room.

A BEAUTIFUL

For Hubert Zandberg, collecting has become an all-consuming passion

OBSESSION

and provides the starting point for his imaginative journeys into interior design

FEATURE **JO LEEVERS** PHOTOGRAPHS **SIMON UPTON**



Interior designer Hubert Zandberg can tell whether visitors to his canal-side home are his kind of person the moment they walk through the door. 'If their first response is: "Wow, you must have a good cleaner – imagine all that dusting!" I know we're not on the same wavelength,' he laughs.

But for those who share Hubert's appetite for collecting, a visit to his west London address is a joy. Decorative and unusual pieces fill cabinets and adorn

walls; every surface is home to an eye-catching display.

It comes as no surprise to learn that the house has a compelling history: first it was a 19th-century canal keeper's home, then a sweet shop and, more recently, a motorbike workshop. 'A taxi driver once brought me home and said she used to buy sweets at my house. According to her mother, the shopkeeper had two wives – such scandal!' he says with a chuckle.

Hubert moved to London from South Africa several decades ago, and

ABOVE The Victorian display cabinets appear to float on their modernist-style bases, designed by Hubert. The sculptural 'urns' made from antlers are antique and probably hunting trophies. The mirrors are by 1950s designer Tommi Parzinger
PREVIOUS PAGE The dining room houses a fascinating mix of art, sculpture and furniture from the turn of the last century to the present day. The off-centre cornice is an uplighter designed by Hubert in collaboration with mouldings specialists Stevensons of Norwich

Previous spread: © Anne Reid, courtesy Maureen Piley, London; © Pascal Kirm, courtesy MACKIN-A gallery, Paris; © The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved. DACS 2017; Richard Woods

This spread: © Hannah Stanley, courtesy Maureen Piley, London; © Gonzalo Mabenda, courtesy MACKIN-A gallery, Paris; © The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved. DACS 2017; Richard Woods

was soon a regular at the antiques shops and markets of Portobello and Golborne Road. Before long he set up his own interior design company, Hubert Zandberg Interiors, with studios just a stone's throw from his house.

'I lived here pre *Notting Hill*, the movie, during the filming and then through the aftermath,' he says. 'When the brand names moved in, I knew it was never going to be quite the same again.' But despite the changes, the markets along Golborne and Portobello are still where

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT To overcome the difficult proportions of the main reception room, Hubert painted the walls matt black, which made the awkward space disappear and its contents take centre stage. The tortoise shells arranged on the wall are all Victorian and Hubert has enjoyed collecting them from various specialist dealers over the years

Hubert feels most at home. His house is very much an *hommage* to the old ways of the area: the contents of his cabinets as varied and surprising as a browse and rummage through traders' stalls.

For Hubert, the world is divided into collectors and non-collectors. 'It might sound glib, but being a collector does define us on some fundamental level,' he says. Surrounded by finds as diverse as an antique hippopotamus skull, Brazilian street art and a Memphis-style desk, Hubert is certainly well-placed to judge ➤



how collecting can influence your path in life. 'If you're a collector, it's in your blood. It will always inform what you do and your approach to life.' Far from being a distraction from seemingly more respectable pursuits, a desire to seek out and acquire is a trait to be celebrated, he says. 'Yes, it's a compulsion, but it brings so many positives.'

Hubert actually prefers the French term *ensemblier* to the more prosaic 'collector.' Creating an ensemble, he says, is more about judgement, taste and imagination than an orderly process of itemisation. And a look through Hubert's home proves his point.

As an interior designer, Hubert is obsessively conscientious about details: 'I go to extreme lengths to track down a particular door handle, or to ensure that

a room is perfectly composed,' he says. And the art of display, arranging pieces into balanced compositions that just 'click', is all about the interplay between the individual elements. Hubert believes that when an antique grabs our attention and we duly decide to buy it, it's the collector in us at work, interacting with that object and placing it alongside our existing pieces.

However, taste is ever fluid and can change over time and according to context, he points out. For example, there is good kitsch and bad kitsch. The pink flamingo standing guard by Hubert's desk? Most definitely good kitsch. But why? 'As an *ensemblier*, you are constantly questioning and asking yourself: "Why is this judged to be good taste or bad taste",' says Hubert. 'And ➤

ABOVE The house is built into a hill and the kitchen is in the basement area, which used to be a coach house. The glass shelves were made to Hubert's design and they have been used throughout the house. The antique taxidermy duck came from a dealer in Edinburgh and the large flick knife on the wall is by South African artist Mohau Modisakeng RIGHT The Memphis-style desk in the guest bedroom is gradually being colonised by Hubert's ever-expanding collection. The painting on the stand is by Maurizio Anzeri, while the light sculpture is by Andy Coolquitt and came from a design store in New York. Hubert has another of his sculptural light pieces hanging above the dining table (see page 70)

© Maurizio Anzeri



If you're a collector, it's in your blood. It will always inform what you do and your approach to life



The four-poster bed in the main bedroom was designed by Hubert for his company Hubert Zandberg Interiors. LEFT FROM TOP The large photographic work by Anne Hardy creates the illusion of a window beyond the Brasilia desk; the walls of the master bedroom are hung with an eclectic mix of contemporary art, photographs and antiques





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the answer often depends on the current trends – the zeitgeist.

This is why, he says, some antiques collectors make the transition into interior design. Judgements about whether an antique is desirable aren't just about market value, they are also influenced by interiors trends. Who knows? Next year, Hubert's flamingo may become 'bad kitsch'. But that unpredictability, says Hubert, is what makes collecting so interesting.

Whether he is adding 'just one more thing' to his treasures, or choosing antiques for a client, collecting sharpens his mind. 'It wakes up the brain,' he says. 'For me, thinking about what makes something collectable is the start of the design process; it's the catalyst that presses the 'On' button,' he reveals. 'And once that kicks in, I'm ready for anything – I can fill an entire chateau!' he declares with a smile. ■

ABOVE AND RIGHT Where others might have created a wine cellar, Hubert transformed two tricky alcoves in the basement into twin cabinets of curiosity. He painted the walls an intense navy blue, which provides a dramatic backdrop for the bleached bones and shells in one, and enhances the warm jewel tones of the tribal artefacts in the other. The alcoves were originally used for storing hay when the basement served as a coach house



Little black book

Paul Bert Serpette, 110 Rue des Rosiers, 93400 Saint-Ouen, Paris. paulbert-serpette.com
'I also have a home in Paris and this is my favourite spot among the city's markets for special or rare pieces. Its avant-garde reputation is well deserved.'

Original in Berlin, Karl-Marx-Allee 83, 10243 Berlin. +49 30 60 93 60 46; originalinberlin.com
'Parts of Berlin feel a little like Portobello used to. That sense of discovery, where shops are creative and surprising, still exists.'

Rua do Lavradio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
'This road is lined with wonderful antiques shops and Brazilians adore good design.'

Golborne and Portobello Road Markets, London, W10 and W11. portobelloroad.co.uk
'These markets will always be special to me.'

© Ruby Avenue, Wery Aggressive, 2007

Late 18th-century mahogany mirror, £6,800, Windsor House Antiques RIGHT Hubert favours moody colours on his walls. 'Mazarine' Absolute Matt Emulsion, £42 per 2.5l, Little Greene BELOW RIGHT Mid-century sunray sconce, £895, Tryst d'Amour BELOW LEFT Faux turtle, £24, Rockett St George

LEFT Silk ikat cushion, £125, Raj Tent Club BELOW Black lacquer chest of six drawers, £1,695, Orchard

Cabinet of curiosities

Style spy

Hubert's collections are a masterclass in the art of display

RIGHT Antique taxidermy greater flamingo, £3,360, A Modern Grand Tour FAR RIGHT Early 20th-century carved Maasai figure, £350, Xupes LEFT Red lacewing butterfly in a box frame, ethically sourced, £35, Mini Beast

A swing-arm lamp can be angled to highlight select pieces. Mid-century lamp, £1,850 Philip Thomas

ABOVE 'Margot' chaise, £449, Made.com RIGHT It is the sculptural forms of molecular models, like this one, that catch Hubert's eye, £204.21, Mighty Vintage at Etsy LEFT Replica bronze head of Aphrodite, £2,750, The British Museum Shop

For complete stockist information see page 161