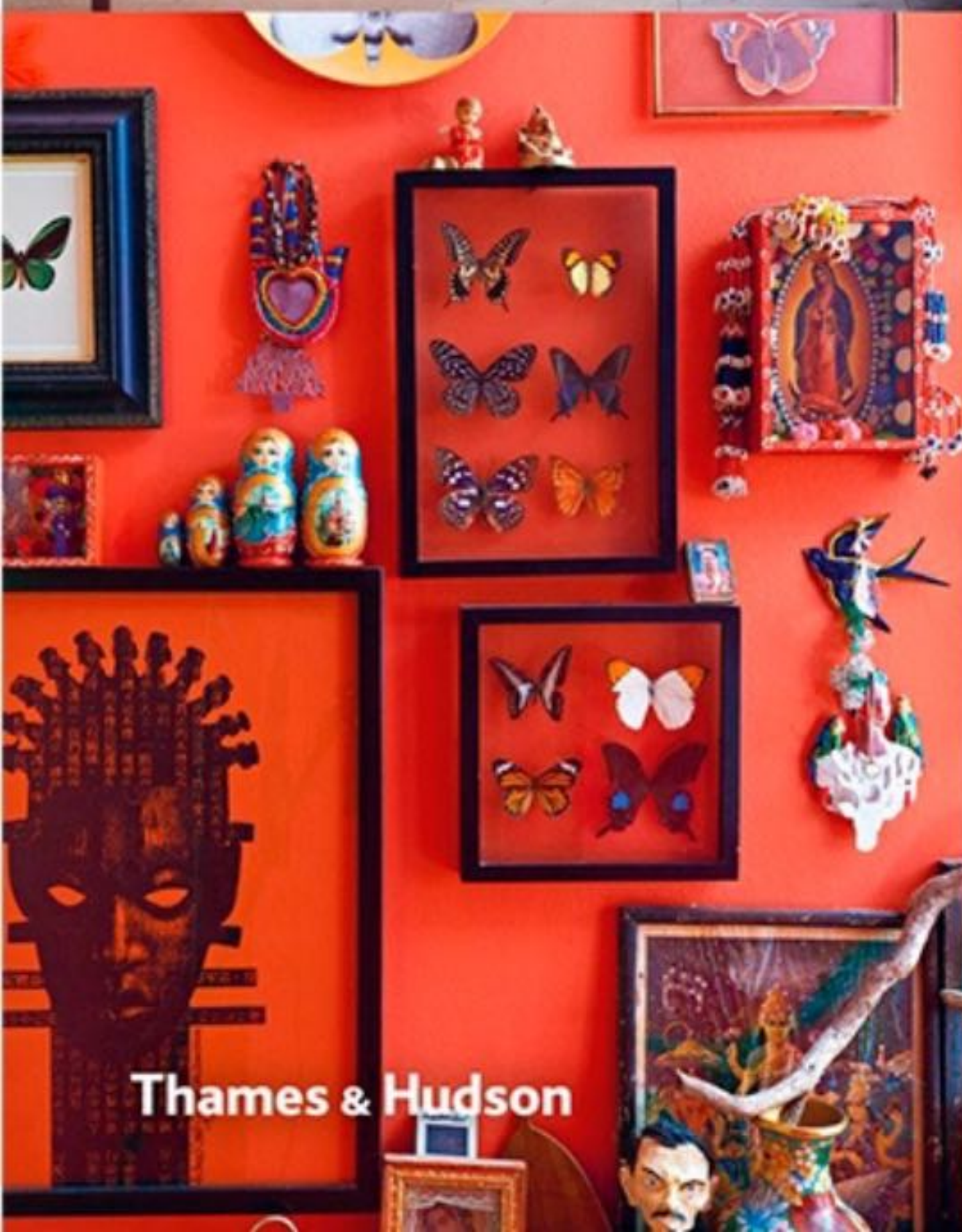




The New Creative Home

LONDON STYLE

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Photographs by Ingrid Rasmussen





HUBERT ZANDBERG

COLLECTOR AND INTERIOR DESIGNER

In an era when shedding possessions is fashionable and interior architecture is championed over decoration, designer Hubert Zandberg's intoxicatingly maximalist work has been known to convert even the staunchest minimalists to the power of beautiful objects.



In Hubert's five-storey Ladbrooke Grove home, every surface – even doors and ceilings – is decorated with art, artefacts and an extraordinary array of curios. His collection is carefully curated, so that the house becomes a living museum to be explored. Visitors enter the sitting room straight from the street, and are immediately enveloped by the 'more is more' decorating philosophy.

'I was looking for a space that could house the collection, and decorating this place gave me the perfect opportunity to experiment,' Hubert says. 'The layout is higgledy-piggledy and stylistically it's nothing special, but it became a laboratory of ideas. I thought I may as well have fun, and each room ultimately became a sort of cabinet of curiosities.'

The house was originally a canal-keeper's house on the Grand Union Canal, the basement storing hay, horses and coaches;



later it became a sweet shop and then a motorcycle repair shop. Some rooms have low ceilings, while others soar, and there are undulating curves, unexpected rooms and architectural oddities, including the old shop windows at street level.

To 'lose' the tricky architecture in the sitting room, Hubert painted the walls chocolate brown and the ceiling black before layering in his hugely varied collection.

ABOVE Seashells on top of one of Hubert's many carefully curated cabinets of curiosities.

OPPOSITE In the sitting room, chocolate-brown walls provide a rich backdrop against which all manner of curios – from prehistoric tusks to contemporary photography – are displayed.







THIS PAGE "People generally love it," Hubert says of the decoration. "It encourages exploration and conversation." But there is one pedestrian question that he abhors: "I hate it when people ask how I keep things clean." The answer? "I don't - I have a cleaner who enjoys dusting. I think it's easier to clean a house like this than one with five kids, endless dishes and a greasy oven."



THIS PAGE Hubert's fearless more-is-more approach to interior decoration is intoxicatingly seductive, and the very antithesis of the current fashion for clutter-free living and streamlined architecture.





'I wanted it to look like it was mounted on infinity, so that there was absolutely nothing to distract from the objects and the art,' Hubert explains. 'It became an exercise in combining pieces, and a bit of a challenge to see how many things I could put together without the balance being off.'

Hundreds, if not thousands, of objects fill every room of the house, even the bathroom and basement kitchen. There are prehistoric artefacts, including a mammoth tusk, wall-mounted tortoiseshells, contemporary photography, a Zulu skirt that is a nod to Hubert's childhood in South Africa, vintage Italian furniture ... the inventory could go on and on. A tonal colour palette and the fact that many of the items relate to nature helps to ensure the atmosphere is quiet, rather than chaotic, encouraging hushed admiration.

'For me, it's actually very calming, weirdly, because it's so deeply personal,' says Hubert. 'It's all about me and the pieces I decided to bring in. They're never really yours – you just take care of them for a time.'

ABOVE RIGHT Even the study has colourful art, statement lighting and a taxidermy flamingo for good measure. Patchworks of rugs in many of the rooms almost create the effect of wall-to-wall carpet.

OPPOSITE In the dressing room, old luggage racks from French trains serve as shelves and passmenterie from a very old Parisian shop is draped over the top of hangers to keep dust off coats and jackets. The walls are painted in 'Skylight' by Farrow & Ball.



THIS PAGE The black-and-white bathroom is crammed with monochrome collections, including a shelf of environmentally farmed coral. The framed photographs include male nudes by George Dureau (Robert Mapplethorpe's mentor), a gift from the artist. There are also prints of newspaper reportage from the 1930s and '40s. 'Framing black-and-white images is a cheap way to create impact - some of these are just Getty Images,' Hubert says.

