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Variety show

Hubert Zandberg's eclectic Notting Hill showroom is a place to present his creative ideas and pieces in a dramatic, accessible way



OPPOSITE Ruby Anemic's *Hang it all – hang it big* sculpture, 2007, provides a colourful foil to graphic artworks, including a Tanya Ling painting (bottom left), and *I want ornaments on everything* by Andrea Büttner, 2006. THIS PAGE Hubert with a Curtis Jeré tree sculpture, and his collection of African, Japanese and Tibetan headdresses





A shell can be as beautiful as a bronze if it means something special to you

LEFT The bright hue of a Wawa surfboard is echoed by a Vincent Szarek wall sculpture and vintage glassware on an Art Deco trolley. The 'Brigadier' sofa is by Cini Boeri for Knoll. BELOW LEFT A Sergio Bustamante ram wall sculpture presides over a 1960s Franz Xaver Sproll oak sideboard. The artworks are by Pascal Kern. BELOW RIGHT Anne Hardy's *Lumber* photograph complements pots of ceramic flowers by Le Cabinet de Porcelaine. OPPOSITE Vintage Berber rugs and a Zemmour kilim anchor the 'Il Ponte' desk by Hans von Klier for Skipper, chairs by Willy Rizzo for Cidue and a Florian Schulz pendant light



Visitors to interior designer Hubert Zandberg's new showroom in Notting Hill enter via a theatrical stone staircase, winding up through what was once the Second Church of Christ Scientist. The building's ecclesiastical grandeur is offset by a series of contemporary artworks lining the stairwell. A framed piece by the German artist Andrea Büttner proclaiming, 'I want ornaments on everything' boldly sets the tone for what is to come. It could be Hubert's personal motto – that, or 'more is more'.

Known for sensuous interiors that mix found and fine objects, both antique and modern, the London-based South African designer laughs at the suggestion. 'My approach isn't about maximalism or excess,' he insists. 'It's about layering pieces with energy, personality and a sense of narrative. That's what brings life to a space.'

The showroom, which adjoins Hubert's design studio, is not open to the public in the conventional sense. For now, access is by appointment or word of mouth. A mix of clients, collaborators and his circle of west London friends (including fashion editor Kim Hersov) drop in, often bringing others. 'It's very organic,' he says. 'People come to browse, to buy, or just to see what we're working on.'

That fluidity is central to the space's character. It is part gallery, part mood board, with layouts constantly shifting. 'We looked at what we had in storage, decided which sofas to bring in and built the atmosphere from there. I work fast. Once the energy is right, I stop. If you overthink, it flattens everything.' That is, until he decides to create a completely new vignette.

The showroom's warm, layered decoration is signature Hubert Zandberg, the space conceived in overlapping zones, each expressing a different sensibility. There is a Californian corner – anchored by a low vintage sofa and a South African surfboard – alongside a mid-century-inflected study area. One room channels earthy Moroccan-meets-Mediterranean, while another is pure Notting Hill bohemia, with an ornate bed and mossy wallhanging. The overall effect is dramatic but approachable. 'People often walk in and say, "I could live here" and, for me, that's the best compliment.'

He is also keen for it to act as an ideas incubator, with events, collaborations and pop-ups being planned. Hubert's retail background – he started out at a concept store in South Africa while studying business, and later worked at Heal's – has informed much of his approach. 'Retail is like farming,' he explains. 'You tend to it constantly. You refresh, you regroup. It can't stand still.'

Chiming with the designer's high-low style, the items range between '£35 and £35,000'. The idea is to offer pieces people can use every day – linens, ceramics, glassware, candles – alongside exceptional antiques and one-off finds. Hubert's intention is not to create an exclusive retail destination, but rather a welcoming and inspiring place. 'You don't need to come here to buy, and things don't need to be expensive to be valuable. A stone or a shell can be as beautiful as a bronze, if it means something special to you.'

This belief in the emotional resonance of objects is at the heart of Hubert's design philosophy. 'Everything here vibrates,' he asserts. 'The trick is to tune them to the same frequency, so they form a choir, not a cacophony. I don't buy pieces for spaces – I find spaces for pieces. The objects tell me what the room is going to be.'

For clients who struggle with layering, his advice is simple: don't be too literal. 'Take inspiration from memory, not replication. When you see a space you love, let it sit for a while, then respond to its atmosphere, not the exact details.' And for those building their own *wunderkammer* at home? 'Be curious and selective. It's like dressing – you already know what feels right. Trust that' □

Hubert Zandberg Interiors: hzinteriors.com



'Once the energy is right, I stop. If you overthink, it flattens everything'

BELOW Cotton sateen bed linen and a custom mohair throw, all by HZI, soften the 1930s hand-wrought iron bed. A vintage bamboo mirror hangs above the rattan side table, with its vine-root table lamp paired with a bright shade. OPPOSITE A bleached walnut 19th-century table displays woven trays by Madwa and The Columbia Collective. French 19th-century pharmacy jars line the top shelf

