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**PAINT TRENDS
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OF SILENCE
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top of the agenda*

Bring the OUTDOORS IN

FRESH IDEAS FOR STYLING WITH PLANTS
AND INNOVATIVE USES OF NATURAL MATERIALS



THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

*Hidden behind the historic
façade of the old King's
College, this London
apartment surprises and
delights at every turn*

Words CLARE SARTIN
Photography PAUL MASSEY

Living room Custom-made sofas by George Smith are grouped around a cluster of eucalyptus wood coffee tables, finished in-situ by Ben Whistler. Artworks include an Antony Gormley above the fireplace and the large mobile inspired by Alexander Calder. The rug is custom-made by Stepevi and the 'Link' floor lamp is by Tyson London ▶

WONDERLAND FANTASY

IT'S A KIND OF ALICE IN WONDERLAND

says Romanos Brihi, co-founder of interior design firm Studio Vero, of the black-and-white-patterned entrance lobby that he and fellow founder Venetia Rudebeck created for this west London apartment. 'As you walk through it, you see the raspberry-coloured hallway and staircase,' he adds. 'It's not for the faint-hearted.' But then, the design of this home was always about pushing boundaries.

The two-storey flat, which is hidden behind the traditional brickwork façade of the old King's College in London's well-heeled Chelsea, was once a practical family home, complete with a dedicated homework area and children's bedrooms that differed only by the colours of the headboards. When Romanos and Venetia's Dubai-based client approached them, however, the plan for a luxurious entertaining space began to take shape, with French interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot – known for his deft balancing act of minimalism and excess – named as an influence.

The new kitchen, crafted in collaboration with Lanserring, is now the ideal place for hosting dinner parties, with its Calacatta marble floor extending not only into the open-plan dining area, but also over the work surfaces and island. It's when you step into the living room, however, that this home's full potential to wow becomes apparent.

Here, a dreamy palette of pale blue, teal and pearly white emphasises the light that pours in through the windows. The sheer scale of the space is impressive: the walls, hand-carved by artisan Henry Van der Vijver to resemble detailed marquetry, took 16 weeks to complete, while the sofas, constructed on site by George Smith, each measure almost four metres long. 'The Antony Gormley above the fireplace looked much bigger hanging in the Royal Academy than it does here,' says Romanos.

That painting, spotted at the artist's recent retrospective, is just one of a collection of works that champions British artists. 'I think, in the end, we purchased pieces from 25 different galleries,' remembers Romanos. 'Sometimes art in interiors can be too curated, but I wanted this to be the start of an evolving collection.'

Upstairs, each of the six bedrooms is like a miniature art installation in its own right. There's the 'Kelly', with its striking wallpaper by American designer Kelly Wearstler, and the 'Palm Beach', which, with its bright pink walls, transports guests away from the capital. 'They are all so different they verge on being like Marmite,' says Venetia, 'but that's great!'

Despite the air of experimentation, there is also a knowing nod to this property's past. 'A lot of the textures and finishes are quite traditional, just in fun colours,' explains Romanos. 'There's a lot of velvet and artisan touches, but with some tweaks that speak to both the past and the future.' 'It's pure escapism,' adds Venetia. 'This may be a historic building, but its interior is a total surprise.' studio-vero.com



Entrance The lift lobby's black and white walls, painted by decorative artist Henry Van der Vijver, make a striking first impression. The console table is by Kelly Wearstler, while the artwork above is by British artist Peter Seal
Reception A custom-made central table, with its striking lacquer base and ebony circular top, is the ideal place for welcome drinks. The artwork hanging above the Nero Marquina marble fireplace is by Jeremy Annear ▶



Dining room A bronze and brass screen by Studio Vero separates this space from the entrance hall. The resin and bronze table is paired with dining chairs upholstered in 'Celestial Diamond' fabric by Soane and 'Hanover' velvet by Altfield. The Palissandro Bluette marble-topped sideboard is another bespoke Studio Vero design. Upon it sit lamps from Porta Romana and the painting above is by Manchester-based artist Peter Seal ▶



Kitchen Designed by Lanserring in collaboration with Studio Vero, this space mixes dark blue veneered cabinetry with antiqued brass details. The same creamy-toned Calacatta Oro marble has been used on the floor, worksurface and splashback – try Natural Stone Installers for similar. Two 'Arrow' lights by Apparatus hang above the central island. The bar stools (just seen) are custom-made and upholstered in a powder blue leather by Moore & Giles ▶

This is a space that's now PERFECTLY designed for entertaining, with LUXURIOUS touches of MARBLE and brass





‘There’s a lot of VELVET and artisan TOUCHES, but with some tweaks that speak to both the PAST and the FUTURE’

Smoking room (left and top left) The desk is a black stitched leather Jacques Adnet piece from the 1940s. A Gio Ponti wall cabinet is used as a bar, and the floor lamp is an antique. Beside it, the 1950s armchair is by François Letourneur from Portuondo and the rug is by Paul Smith for The Rug Company
Stairway ‘Focus Symbol’ wallpaper by Arte in an eye-catching raspberry hue makes a striking backdrop to artworks by Gary Hume, Ethan Cook and Jeremy Annear
Bedroom ‘Graffito’ wallpaper by Kelly Wearstler makes a bold statement, complemented by the bespoke bedside table. The headboard is covered in ‘Cambon Damier’ fabric by Abbott & Boyd, the table lamp is the ‘Linden’ by Kelly Wearstler and the bedspread was created using ‘Caton’ fabric from Zimmer & Rohde ▶





Bathroom The vanity unit is a bespoke design by Collett Zarzycki, while the 'Utopia' wall lights are by Kelly Wearstler. **Main bedroom** This space features a bed upholstered in 'White Party' fabric by Elizabeth Dow. Beside it is a 'Utopia' table lamp by Kelly Wearstler, the sofa is upholstered in 'Lama' fabric by Lelièvre and the chaise longue is custom made. 'Helidor' wallpaper by Arte provides a neutral background to the Michael Kidner artwork hanging above the dressing table. See Stockists page for details [ID](#)

Each of the six bedrooms is like a MINIATURE ART INSTALLATION in its own right

