

VOCAL LIVING

AUSTRALIA

WORLD VIEW
CREATIVE AUSTRALIANS
ABROAD – IN LONDON,
NEW YORK, PARIS, SICILY



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IN MARRAKECH *p132*

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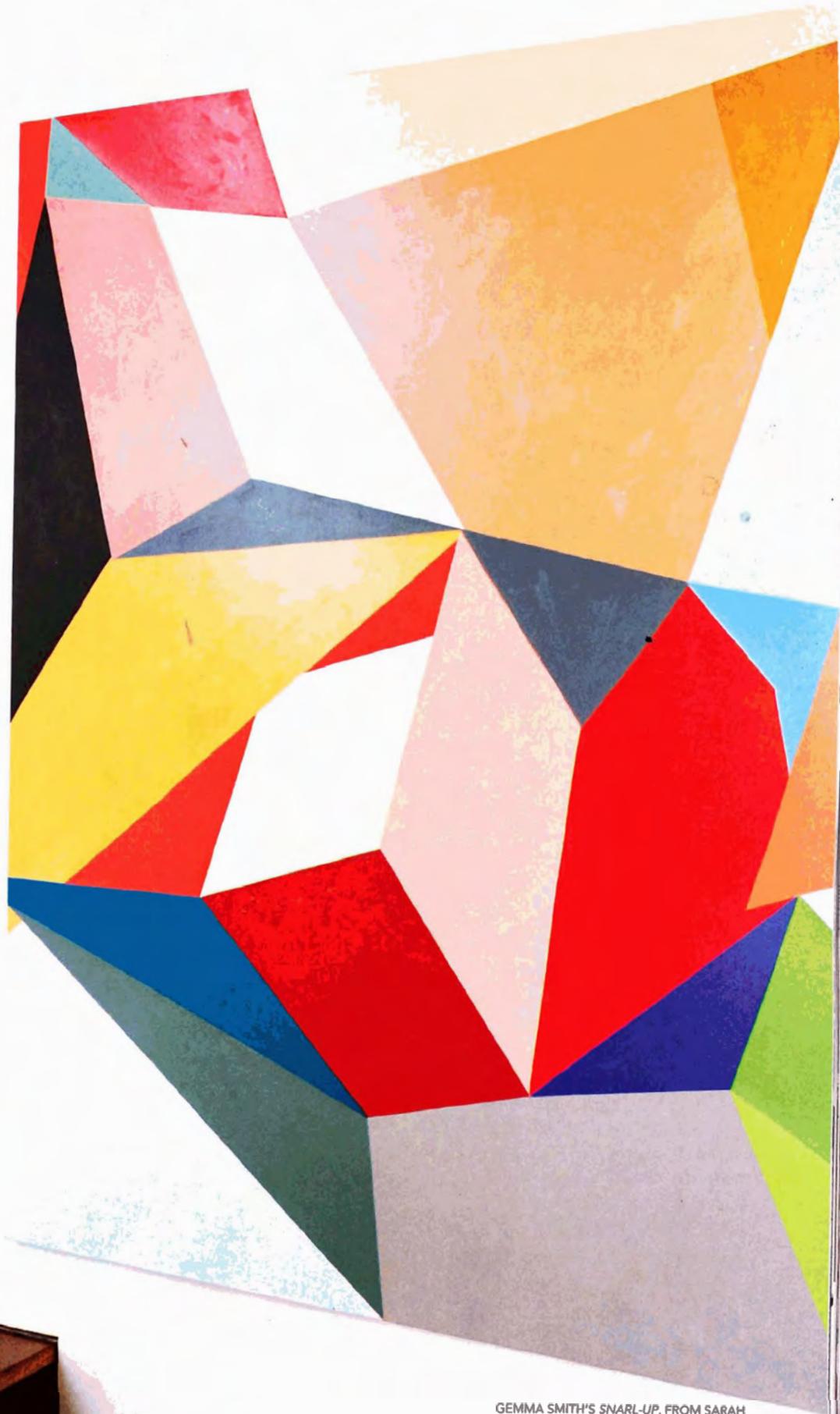
LIGHT MOOD

A SYDNEY HOUSE CAPTURES THE BEST AUSTRALIAN STYLE



BRIGHT STARS

A CREATIVE COUPLE WITH AN EYE FOR DESIGN AND AN ARTISTIC HERITAGE
DISPLAY AN IMPRESSIVE COLLECTION IN A BREEZY BEACHSIDE SYDNEY HOME.
PHOTOGRAPHER: PRUE RUSCOE PRODUCER: ALEXANDRA GORDON WRITER: BETSY BRENNAN



GEMMA SMITH'S *SNARL-UP*, FROM SARAH COTTIER GALLERY, GREET'S VISITORS AT THE FRONT DOOR. OPPOSITE: BEHIND THE DINING TABLE IS *AFTERGLOW* BY ARTIST STEPHEN ORMANDY, WHO LIVES HERE WITH WIFE LOUISE OLSEN AND DAUGHTER CAMILLE. VASES, PLATES AND BOWLS ARE BY THE COUPLE'S COMPANY DINOSAUR DESIGNS. FLOWERS BY GRANDIFLORA. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.

"WE WANTED A PEACEFUL PLACE WHERE WE
COULD REFLECT AND WORK. TO BE A DESIGNER,
YOU HAVE TO FLOAT AND DREAM A BIT, BECAUSE
THAT'S WHEN IDEAS EVOLVE"



ARCHITECT SAM MARSHALL'S OPEN PLAN ALLOWS SPACE TO FLOW FREELY BETWEEN ROOMS. BEYOND THE DINING AREA IS THE LIBRARY ON THE LEFT AND KITCHEN ON THE RIGHT, BOTH OPEN TO THE BACK GARDEN. LONG CABINETS CREATE A STRONG LINE FROM THE LIVING SPACE TO THE KITCHEN. JASPER MORRISON 'HI-PAD' CHAIRS BY CAPPELLINI PULL UP TO AN OLD FAMILY TABLE MADE IN MELBOURNE IN THE 1970s. THE TIMBER FLOOR IS STEEL BOX AUSTRALIAN HARDWOOD. WALLS ARE PAINTED DULUX 'BRILLIANT WHITE'; THE PRINTS (TO THE LEFT) ARE BY VICTOR PASMORE.

YOU'VE CLIMBED THE umpteen steps to the front door, but you've come to the right house – a large, brilliant artwork by Gemma Smith leaves no doubt. "We love that painting here because it creates a wonderful energy when you walk in," says Louise Olsen – artist, designer, Dinosaur Designs creator and living image of her Archibald portrait by David Bromley (which hangs upstairs, a generous gift from Bromley). Daughter Camille is at school, but Skipper, the glossy dachshund, quietly greets you and Olsen's husband, Stephen Ormandy – painter, designer and Dinosaur Designs creator – pads in on bare feet.

Airy, informal, open to the air currents, the Sydney beach house is so filled with light and greenery it hardly seems to interrupt the natural flow of the hill. It feels uncluttered, yet everywhere you look there is something to engage: a tiny painting by Olsen's mother, Valerie, a transparent cube of curious white objects, a suite of resin plates, a wall punctuated with irregular rectangles of glass.

"It was an old Federation house that was altered in the late '70s," says Olsen, "but it was very enclosed, very dark, not open to the aspect. We lived here for about nine years before we renovated, which gave us a chance to think about how we would like it to transform."

The architect who worked the change was Sam Marshall. Married to Dinosaur Designs' third partner Liane Rossler (the three started the venture in the '80s when they were art students together), Marshall has worked on other projects for the company. "We pretty much built the house from scratch," says Ormandy. "We wanted space and light."

"And breezes," adds Olsen. "This whole house opens up with big doors everywhere. When we walked up here we thought it had a great aspect. We see whales and dolphins. Steve grew up in Mosman and I grew up in Watsons Bay, so we've always loved being by the sea."

The house is sited on a cross axis with the front facing north-east and the back facing south-west. The garden, laid out by Richard Unsworth of Garden Life, focuses on natives: coastal plants hardy enough to survive the sea breezes at the front and, at the back, a glorious mass of native frangipani, bottlebrush, tea trees and huge bird's nest ferns that creates a private, tropical rainforest which stays lush with no watering.

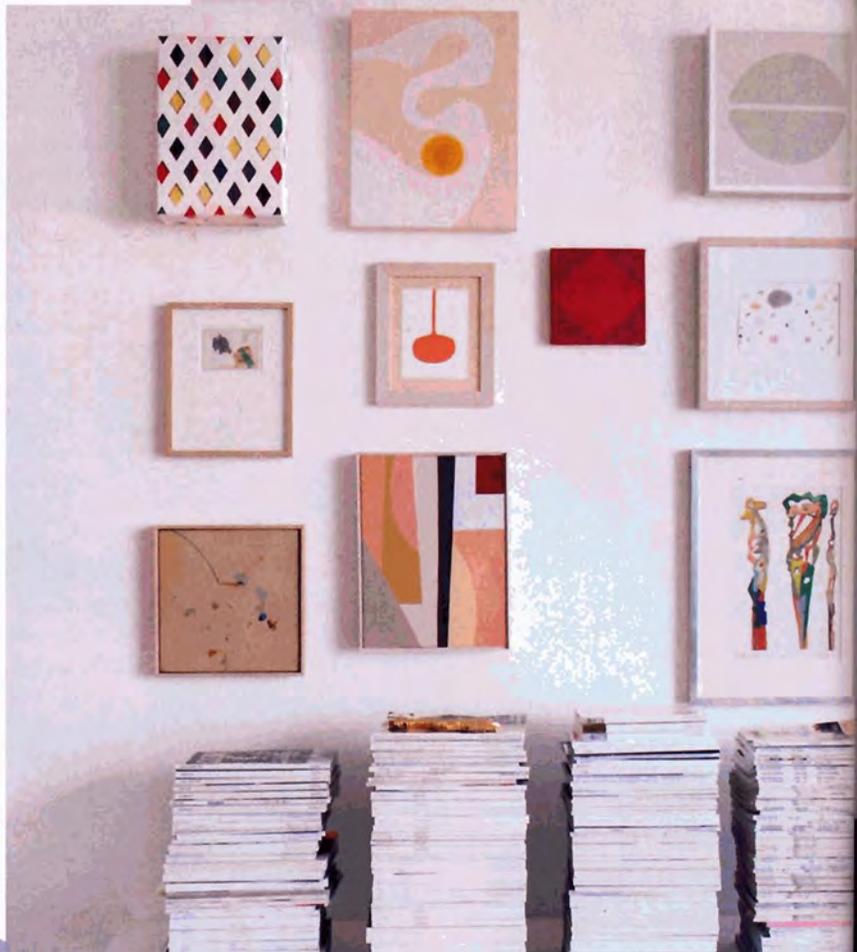
"For us this house is a studio as well," Olsen explains. Dinosaur's atelier in Redfern is always busy, "so we wanted a peaceful place where we could reflect and work. To be a designer, you have to float and dream a bit, because that's when ideas start to evolve." In this computer-driven age, the pair love working with their hands. "We just like making things," says Ormandy simply. Their resin works are first formed in Plasticine, which gives the modern material an organic look. "It looks as if it comes into existence through the hand," says Olsen. "I love the relationship of things being quite modern and quite earthy."

The studio is upstairs, with bedrooms and bathrooms. The downstairs living spaces include an all-important library, dark and intimate. Off the dining area is the galley kitchen, its work area hidden from the dining table. "We love cooking," says Ormandy, "but we wanted to avoid that feeling of guilt in the air when everyone's looking at the mess!"





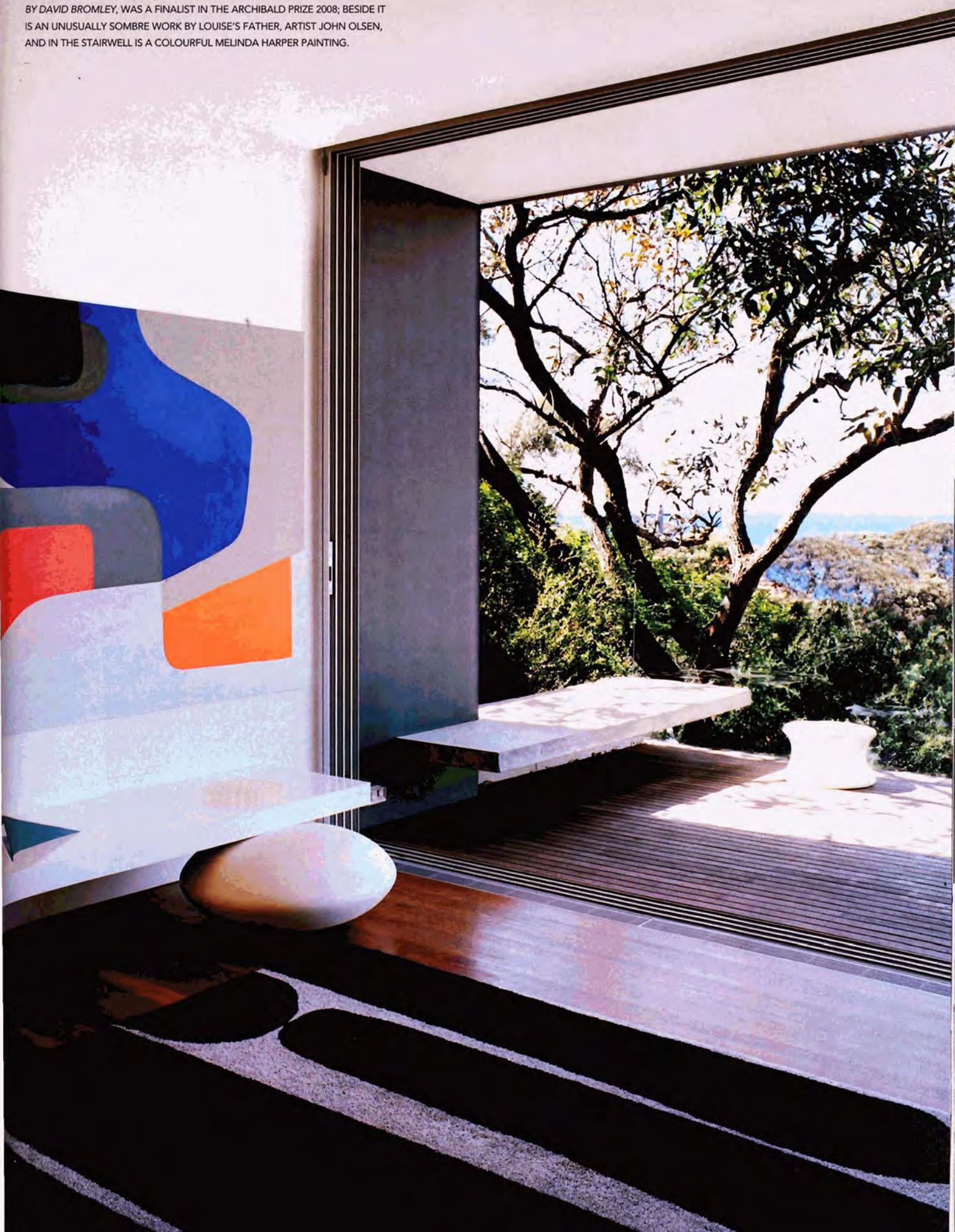
ABOVE: THE KITCHEN'S 'WET' AREA, TO THE RIGHT, IS NEATLY TUCKED AWAY. THE INTIMATE LIBRARY, ABOVE RIGHT, FEATURES VITSOE SHELVING AND CABINETS FROM MUD, AND PATRICIA URQUIOLA 'FJORD RELAX' CHAIR AND OTTOMAN. A WHITE NOGUCHI SIDE TABLE SITS BESIDE A FLEXFORM SOFA FROM POLIFORM. BELOW RIGHT: IN THE LIVING ROOM ARE PAINTINGS BY (LEFT COLUMN, FROM TOP): KERRIE POLINESS, MADONNA STAUNTON AND OLSEN'S MOTHER VALERIE STRONG; (MIDDLE) STEPHEN ORMANDY, PETER ATKINS, LOUISE TUCKWELL; A RED PAINTING BY KERRIE POLINESS; AND (RIGHT) JANE OLSEN, PATRICK HARTIGAN, ROBERT KLIPPEL. BELOW: ON THE LIVING ROOM CREDENZA ARE DINOSAUR DESIGNS PLATES AND A GLASS BOWL BY HOLMEGAARD FROM GREAT DANE. OPPOSITE: ON THE TABLE ARE DINOSAUR DESIGNS' 'CALDER' PLATTER, 'SEED' VASES AND GLASS VASES.







THE LIVING ROOM OPENS TO A NORTH-EAST FACING DECK. THE PILL-SHAPED SEAT, BY MICHAEL YOUNG FOR CAPPELLINI, SITS NEXT TO A RUG BY DINOSAUR DESIGNS FOR DESIGNER RUGS. STEPHEN ORMANDY'S *THE BLUEBIRD* HANGS ABOVE THE BENCH, WHICH HOLDS A GEMMA SMITH ADAPTABLE SCULPTURE. OPPOSITE: ORMANDY AND OLSEN, WITH SKIPPER AT THEIR FEET, AND DAUGHTER CAMILLE SEATED ON A PIERRE PAULIN CHAIR. THE PORTRAIT, *LOUISE OLSEN* BY DAVID BROMLEY, WAS A FINALIST IN THE ARCHIBALD PRIZE 2008; BESIDE IT IS AN UNUSUALLY SOMBRE WORK BY LOUISE'S FATHER, ARTIST JOHN OLSEN, AND IN THE STAIRWELL IS A COLOURFUL MELINDA HARPER PAINTING.



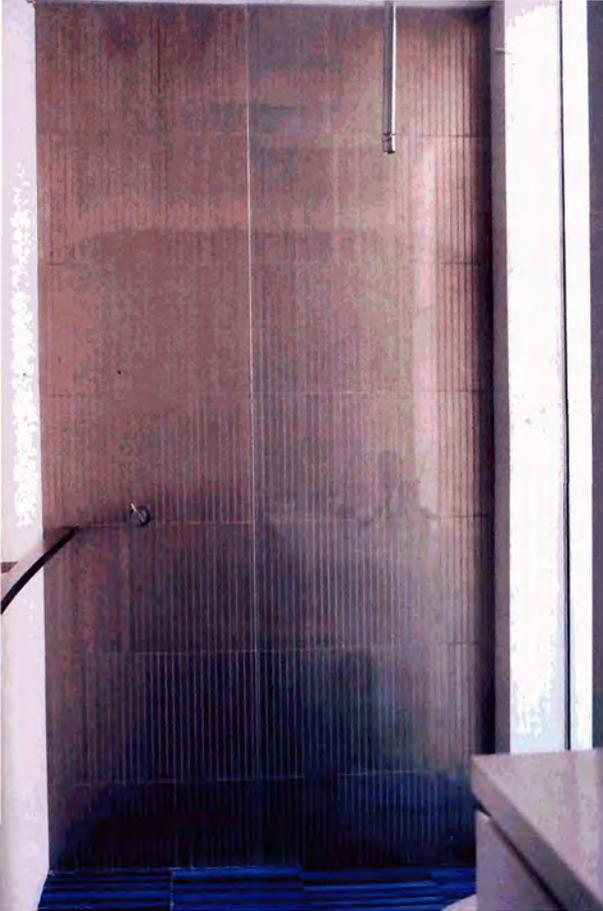
ABOVE A HARRY BERTOIA 'DIAMOND' CHAIR HANGS A WORK BY JOHN PASSMORE. IN THE ENTRANCE BEYOND IS A WALL SCULPTURE BY SIMEON NELSON, AND A CHANDELIER BY DINOSAUR DESIGNS HANGS OVER THE STAIRS. OPPOSITE: IN AN UPSTAIRS SITTING AREA HANGS A CROCODILE BARK PAINTING, A SMALL WORK BY FRED WILLIAMS, A 1958 JOHN OLSEN PAINTING AND A BARK PAINTING BY INDIGENOUS ARTIST BALIRBALIR. BESIDE A NOGUCHI TABLE AND DINOSAUR DESIGNS VASE IS AN INDIGENOUS SHIELD; THE VINTAGE ROGER MCLAY 'KONE' CHAIR WAS FOUND IN A SECONDHAND SHOP.





SWEET DREAMS BY STEPHEN ORMANDY BRINGS A SPLASH OF COLOUR TO THE MAIN BEDROOM. THE KNOLL 'SAARINEN' TABLE HOLDS AN ARNE JACOBSEN LAMP. OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT: STAINLESS STEEL TILES IN THE ENSUITE ARE BY DINOSAUR DESIGNS. TOP RIGHT: ABOVE A COLLECTION OF DINOSAUR DESIGN BANGLES AND VASES IS ZARA II BY PHOTOGRAPHER PETRINA HICKS. THE CHAIR IS TOM DIXON'S WOVEN CLEAR PLASTIC 'FRESH FAT'. BOTTOM RIGHT: AT THE ENTRY, A GLASS PANEL AND PIVOTING FRONT DOOR GIVE A CLEAR VIEW TO ARTWORKS INSIDE. BOTTOM LEFT: YELLOW RESIN TILES IN A SMALL BATHROOM WERE CREATED BY OLSEN AS A "DROP OF POLLEN". A HARRY ALLEN 'HAND' DISH HOLDS SOAP; VASES BY DINOSAUR DESIGNS. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.





A mirrored splashback in the kitchen echoes the long sliver of window opposite and reflects garden greenery. Above are banks of cupboards, with a walk-in pantry around the corner.

Furniture is new, vintage or classic pieces: a Roger McLay-designed 'Kone' chair, Noguchi tables, an Arne Jacobsen lamp. "We buy secondhand, new – wherever it's good, contemporary design," says Ormandy. "It's all about the piece." Walls are in Dulux 'Brilliant White', a great foil for artworks – their collection and their own works. Paintings in progress come down for evaluation, objects are rearranged, nothing stays static. "I grew up with the smell of turpentine and oil paint," says Olsen, daughter of celebrated painter John Olsen and sister of gallerist Tim Olsen. (Ormandy is exhibiting at Sydney's Tim Olsen Gallery 9–28 February.) "At one point the living room was Dad's studio, with his work from floor to ceiling, always changing. I wanted to carry that into my own home, where nothing is forever and you learn to enjoy things like a beautiful piece of music as they come and as they go."

Like Dinosaur Designs – virtually its own little art movement – the house celebrates the unexpected. "We love earthy tones but you need that dash of something to excite you," says Ormandy. "It's like putting chilli in a pasta." Says Olsen: "I guess this house is a lovely collage of our lives." VL

