

Shape

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Textured walls, veined marble, a sculptural staircase and organic forms give this central London townhouse decorated by Geraldine Dohogne the feel of a living piece of art

ATRIUM A Franco Ferri sofa in a Bruder fabric and a vintage wooden armchair are arranged around a custom poplar-wood coffee table on Portland stone flooring. Sissi Daniela Olivieri's bespoke ceramic sculpture *Bone Sprouts* ascends the wall by the stairs to the formal dining room on the mezzanine, at the other end of which is the playground

shifting

SISSI DANIELA OLIVIERI, BONE SPROUTS, GLAZED GRES, SITE SPECIFIC INSTALLATION



KITCHEN (above from left) Verdigris copper panels on **units** designed by the owner and realised by Ledbury Studio, and Craig Wylie's painting *L'Origine du Monde* (After Courbet) are complemented with the pale travertine worktops and Italian herringbone walnut flooring. Handcrafted Vincent Vincent '80/20' wooden **chairs** partner a small table for informal dining. **PLAYROOM** A vintage Aurelien Serre 'AS02' **armchair** and a Pierre Augustin Rose **sofa** in a Pierre Frey velvet are paired with Miniforms' 'Tototò' terracotta **side tables**. **DINING ROOM** (below and opposite) Walls in a custom terracotta colour set off an antique still life and Hans Op de Beeck's **wall sculpture** *Gesture* (dandelion clock), 2022. A bespoke red travertine table is teamed with a mixture of vintage wooden chairs



CRAIG WYLIE, L'ORIGINE DU MONDE (AFTER COURBET), OIL ON CANVAS © CRAIG WYLIE




FERNANDO BOTERO, MONA LISA, 1959, CHARCOAL AND PASTEL ON PAPER LAD DOWN ON PANEL

DRAWING ROOM Vintage sofas in a Pierre Frey velvet, Arthur Vallin's 'Ipséité' marble and brass coffee table and a bespoke marble bookstand are balanced by an antique chandelier. Fernando Botero's artwork *Mona Lisa*, 1959, hangs beside an original chimneypiece. **ENTRANCE HALL** Walls in a custom grey showcase a bespoke mirror, Fornasetti plates and a Danke Galerie modern plaster chandelier above Arda Yeniay's travertine 'Universe' round table for Studiotwentyseven. The custom-designed marble floor is by Oryx Stone



CRAFT ROOM (*above and below left*) On a raised platform, sofas and cushions in earthy Designs of the Time linens serve as extra beds for children's sleepovers. Blackened-wood chairs from a French antique market complement a Galvin Brothers "Titan" table in ebonised oak beside shelves displaying ceramics including Mughal-style red sandstone cooking vessels. **SPARE ROOM** (*above right*) Walls and shelving in custom colours tone with curtains in a Bruder fabric, bespoke seating and a glass coffee table. **BATHROOM** Blinds in a textured green Designs of the Time fabric pick up on the hand-painted design on a Drummonds bath. **LIBRARY** A bespoke burr walnut table, panelling and shelves are teamed with a custom silk carpet, and curtains and chairs in George Spencer Designs velvets





‘It’s a house built on family and craftsmanship – a piece of living art’

For years, I’ve walked past a row of grand Georgian townhouses in central London and assumed that what lies beyond their thresholds is polite and well appointed, if a little dull. Nothing prepared me for the scale, splendour and surprise that greeted me at this house, where a soaring double-height atrium dominates the rear half. Venture a little further and there is an exquisite burr-walnut-clad library, a hand-painted bathtub and even a bespoke craft room on the fourth floor. Dull it most certainly is not.

‘It has a strong viewpoint,’ explains Geraldine Dohogne, who tailored the space entirely to how the owners – a globetrotting Sikh couple and their two young children – live. The brief was to create an environment that was better than any hotel, superlatively comfortable, flexible to their needs and ‘alive’, she says.

The London- and Ghent-based interior designer earned her stripes working in hospitality design for over a decade before launching her own studio six years ago, so she wasn’t the least bit phased by what the owners sought. ‘It was about creating something that would have longevity, that would continue to evolve with them living in it,’ says Geraldine, a new addition to *House & Garden’s* Top 101 list this year, who started work on the project in 2022.

Built in 1826, the seven-storey house had recently been sensitively remodelled by RV Architects, who respected the proportions of the interiors, while also adding the extraordinary atrium space that plays host to a kitchen, dining and sitting areas, a sculptural staircase and a roof terrace. ‘Though the main spaces were already planned, we reconsidered some smaller rooms and also created a playroom,’ says Geraldine, whose remit was to mastermind everything from finishes and furniture to bed linen and water glasses.

First, it was a case of thinking through how the areas would be used and, specifically, how the owners would want to feel in them. ‘We needed private spaces, but also entertaining spaces,’ notes Geraldine. ‘Rooms had to be flexible, as it is a large, tall house and we wanted to ensure that the owners would use every room every day.’ As such, the entrance hall – a spectacular affair defined by a herringbone marble floor that echoes original yellow marble discovered elsewhere in the house – is also a place for entertaining. Just beyond this, the rust-toned formal dining room, on a mezzanine in the atrium, is designed to be used for meals and special occasions. The fourth floor plays host to a spare room and also a craft room, which has a big screen for viewing films. ‘People can be making art, crafting, watching movies or even spending the night in here for the ultimate kids’ sleepover if extra space is needed,’ says Geraldine, referring to the raised platform bearing sofas with large fabric cushions that can easily be turned into beds.

Establishing a materials palette that would bring in comfort and warmth was the next piece in the puzzle. Geraldine used the owners’ three must-haves as a jumping-off point: a verdigris kitchen dreamt up by the owner (realised by Ledbury Studio and so sleek it could be mistaken for contemporary furniture); the exquisite library (achieved with burr walnut, paired with a silk carpet and velvet curtains, so that it now resembles a luxurious chocolate box); and a tone-on-tone atrium. For this voluminous space, she answered the brief with Portland stone flooring, a full-height plaster fireplace and textured paint on the walls, creating



a place that feels almost monastic, but has a playful energy thanks to the sculptural coffee table and sofa.

Marble became a thread throughout. Upstairs, the main bathroom is clad top-to-toe in this material, its striking veining creating something that resembles art. In the dining room, a piece of red marble – hand-picked by the owner for its exquisite details, as with all the stone selected for the house – was chosen for the table and provided inspiration for the terracotta walls. As in many of the rooms, Geraldine used textured paint mixed from pigments on site. ‘I like walls to look like you can dive into them,’ she says.

Even an adornment as fanciful as the hand-painted ceiling by Nancy Daniell in the main bedroom – conceived as a nod to the owners’ love of flowers – doesn’t feel over the top, thanks to the way Geraldine has paired it with caramel-hued textural walls, a bespoke mirror and an organically shaped fireplace: ‘I focus on getting the essentials right, rather than overdecorating for the sake of it.’

Much of the furniture was designed for the space, including a vast travertine headboard that dominates the main bedroom, and the burr-walnut desk in the library. ‘These pieces are what make the house magical,’ she says. So, too, do several exceptional vintage finds, including a pair of sculptural sofas in the drawing room that were sourced on a trip with her clients to a Belgian antique market.

The owners’ art collection came together as the house was being renovated. A wall in the drawing room is devoted to female artists, while a bespoke ceramic installation by Italian artist Sissi Daniela Olivieri, commissioned by the owners, trails across the rust walls of the dining room and into the atrium. ‘It’s a house built on family and craftsmanship,’ Geraldine says. ‘A piece of living art’ □

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MAIN BEDROOM The pale colouring of the dramatic, custom carved travertine headboard is echoed by curtains in a Designs of the Time fabric, the trailing botanical pattern of which is continued on the ceiling with a hand-painted floral work by Nancy Daniell. On the built-in bedside table is an Atlas table lamp in tobacco alabaster by Simone & Marcel. **BATHROOM** Iksel Decorative Arts’ ‘White Blossom’ wallpaper, with its chinoiserie design on a rich terracotta and gold ground, creates a luxurious enveloping feel