

THE LIVING ROOM IS FURNISHED WITH A VINTAGE DE SEDE SOFA, 1972 PIERRE PAULIN CHAIRS, A CIRCA 1960 COCKTAIL TABLE BY JORGE ZALSZUPIN, AND SIDE TABLE BY HUBERT LE GALL. THE LARGE ARTWORK IS A WOLFGANG TILLMANS PHOTOGRAPH, AND THE CHANDELIER IS BY FORTUNY.

Blending their personal styles, Gabriel Chipperfield and Laura de Gunzburg transform a 19th-century London flat into a harmonious home

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# BALANCING ACT

ART: WOLFGANG TILLMANS/DAVID ZWIERNER, NEW YORK/HONG KONG, GALERIE BUCHHOLZ, BERLIN/COLOGNE, AND MAUREN PALEY, LONDON © CONRAD SHAWCROSS



GABRIEL CHIPPERFIELD, AND LAURA DE GUNZBURG ON THE VINTAGE DE SEDE SOFA. THE SCONCE ABOVE THE ANSELM KIEFER ARTWORK IS BY GINO SARFATTI.

like things to feel homey and comfortable,” says Laura de Gunzburg, an arts and cultural programs consultant, curled up on her vintage leather sofa, sipping tea. It’s a dreary day in early November, and the trees out the window in London’s Regent’s Park are turning yellow. “I like fabrics and textures, whereas Gabriel has a bit cleaner, more minimal aesthetic.” Gabriel—as in Gabriel Chipperfield, her developer husband, son of British architect and 2023 Pritzker Prize winner Sir David—is still getting used to the yards of luxe C&C Milano fabric that frame the windows of their flat in Central London. Growing up in nearby Marylebone, he recalls, his own father had little interest in window dressings, literal or figurative. “Someone once compared our home to an iPod,” he says, of the 1920s single-floor apartment, painted stark white and delineated by glass vitrines. Chipperfield the younger took a version of that pared-down approach into adulthood, but under de Gunzburg’s influence, he’s finding room for softness.

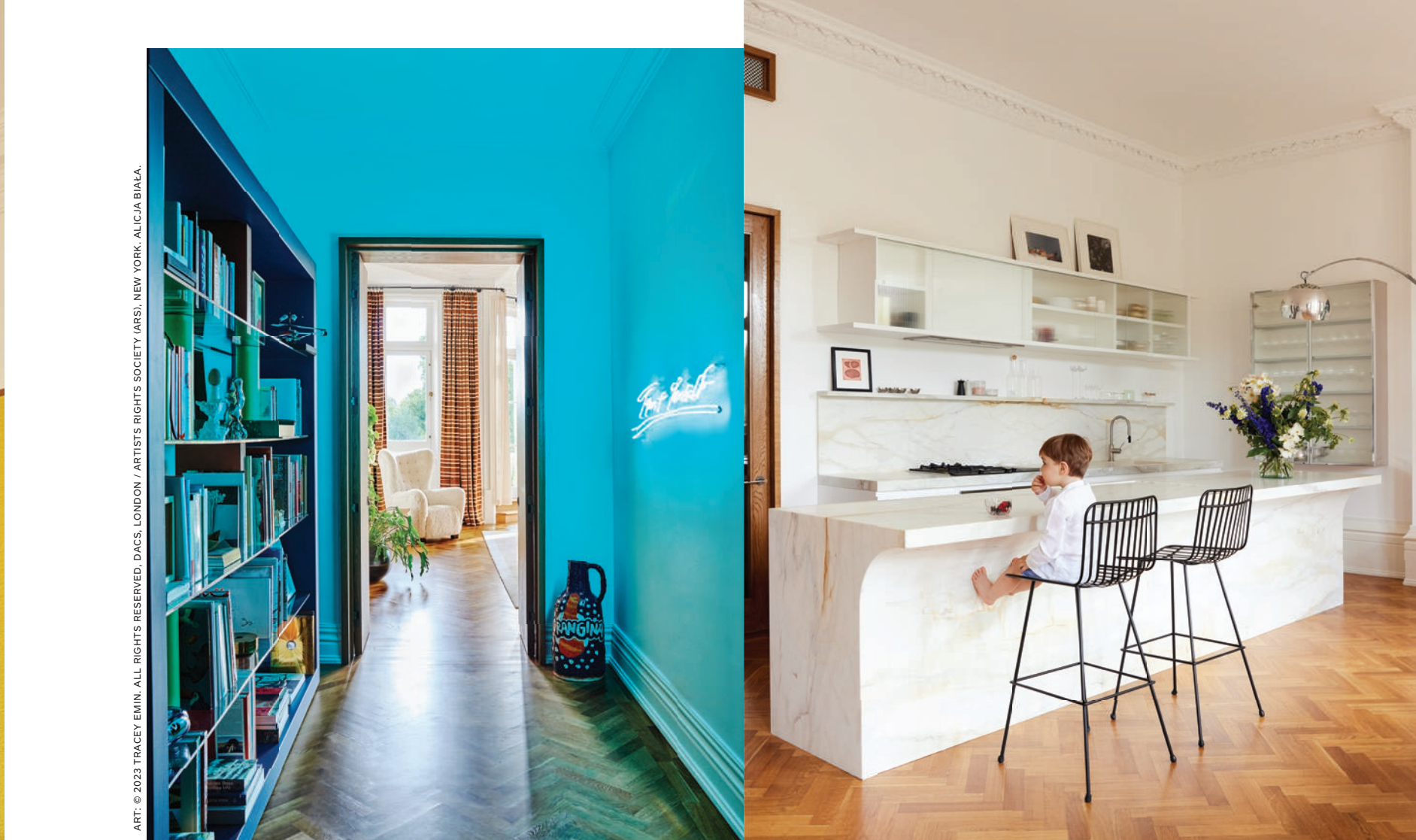
“I think if you get the hardware right, then it allows for any kind of software,” he reasons. “If you get the doorways right, the kitchen layouts right, then the curtains can survive.” When the couple first saw the place in 2021, in the throes of the pandemic, they liked the lateral floor plan—the apartment stretched the width of two and offered sweeping views of the park. The location was central, but because Regent’s Park is owned by the Crown Estate, the street in front of the building is closed to traffic from midnight to 7 a.m., resulting in total, almost-suburban, silence. “It just checked all these boxes,” recalls de Gunzburg. “It made sense.” De Gunzburg was pregnant with Cy, their first child, and they needed the home in working order in time for his arrival. They had a decision to make: “We can either IKEA this and it might stay like that for two years, or we can try and really do this,” Chipperfield recalls. They chose the latter, ripping the place to shreds the day they got the keys and moving in the weekend before Cy was born. Architecturally, Chipperfield calls the apartment “a little bit of a pastiche.” The late-19th-century building, constructed as private homes, converted into offices, and then back into



A LIGHT FIXTURE BY RONAN AND ERWAN BOUROULLEC FOR FLOS IS DRAPED OVER AN OAK DINING TABLE, DESIGNED BY CHIPPERFIELD AND PRODUCED BY E15, WHO ALSO MADE THE CHAIRS. THE CURTAINS ARE MADE OF C&C MILANO FABRIC.



THE BUILT-IN BESPOKE BED IN A CHILD'S ROOM, DESIGNED BY CHIPPERFIELD, IS UPHOLSTERED IN DEDAR FABRIC. THE LIGHT FIXTURE IS 1950s STILNOVO, AND THE CURTAINS ARE MADE FROM PIERRE FREY TEXTILES.



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ABOVE, LEFT A NEON ARTWORK BY TRACEY EMIN CASTS A BLUE GLOW IN THE HALLWAY, OUTFITTED WITH AN ETTORE SOTTASS BOOKSHELF. ABOVE, RIGHT CY ON A STOOL IN THE CALACATTA CREMA MARBLE KITCHEN, WHERE THE SHELVING IS ACCENTED WITH ARTWORKS BY NICK KNIGHT (TOP TWO) AND ALICJA BIAŁA (BOTTOM LEFT). LEFT THE CIRCA 1880 EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING.



apartments, is protected as a historic structure. But due to bombing during WW II, much of it has been reconstructed, allowing a bit more flexibility when it comes to renovation. “We didn’t want to fight what it *should* be,” Chipperfield says. “We wanted to take this back to what it could have been when it was a house.” Original cornices were cast and replicated; moldings were installed; oak herringbone floors and fireplaces were restored. When reconsidering the layout, however, they added a modern touch. Ceilings were raised and the two street-facing rooms, which contain the living room, kitchen, and dining area, were opened up (though there is a small enclosed “working kitchen” for prep when entertaining, to keep the mess out of view), making the space more sprawling and airy.

“I wanted the whole place to feel like this,” says de Gunzburg from the eclectic living room, where ’70s Pierre Paulin chairs and a circa 1960 Jorge Zalszupin cocktail table gather around the snaking black leather de Sede sofa. A silk Fortuny light fixture, a gift from her mother, hangs overhead. De Gunzburg fought hard for the sofa, which she tracked down from a dealer in the Netherlands who sold it to her right from the floor of his own living room after much persuasion. “It was a week before I gave birth and I was like, I need the sofa,” she recalls.



A FLOOR LAMP BY TOMMASO BARBI AND PENDANT BY FRANK GEHRY ILLUMINATE THE PRIMARY BEDROOM. CHIPPERFIELD DESIGNED THE DRESSER IN THE CORNER, AND THE MURANO GLASS MIRROR IS FROM GALERIE GLUSTIN. BESPOKE RUG BY GOVINDIA HEMPHILL.



CHIPPERFIELD DESIGNED THE ALABASTER PRIMARY BATH, SPECIALLY OUTFITTED WITH AN OAK SOAKING TUB BY WILLIAM GARVEY.

**BECAUSE OF THAT TIME CRUNCH**, most of the couple's furnishings are vintage—a cuddly Fritz Hansen armchair from the 1950s; light fixtures by the Castiglioni brothers and Gino Sarfatti; a pair of Afra and Tobia Scarpa chairs. The rest were custom. "When we knew exactly what we wanted I just said, 'Gabriel, please design this and make it,'" says de Gunzburg. "I say it's easier to go to the Conran Shop," quips Chipperfield, ever the perfectionist, who, after much consideration, produced a handful of bespoke furnishings, including the fumed-oak dining table, some wall storage in the kitchen, and a cabinet that he now deems "basically wrong. Physically, it's okay, but the colors are wrong."

The couple's art collection, assembled over the years, is perhaps the most personal part of the home. Works by Tracey Emin, a longtime friend (Chipperfield helped with her Margate home and studio), are displayed around the apartment—several drawings and a neon text piece that casts a

blue glow over the hallway. Other standouts include a large paper drop photograph by Wolfgang Tillmans and a mixed media piece by Alvaro Barrington, both of which earned prominent placements in the living room. They've recently gotten into the work of Sheila Hicks—and now a subtle linen-and-wood piece hangs in the kitchen. "We've sort of run out of walls," admits de Gunzburg with a laugh.

After two years in the home, the couple is finding their groove. They welcomed their second child, Ivo, last year. They have perfected their entertaining game—just a few weeks before our interview they hosted 80 people for cocktails and dinner. The home itself continues to evolve. "Now, we're doing the first round of saying, 'You know what? This wasn't quite right,' or, 'We need to move this,'" says Chipperfield. That "wrong" cabinet is in line for a new coat of paint. The barstools are soon to be switched. As for the curtains? They might very well stick around. **▲**