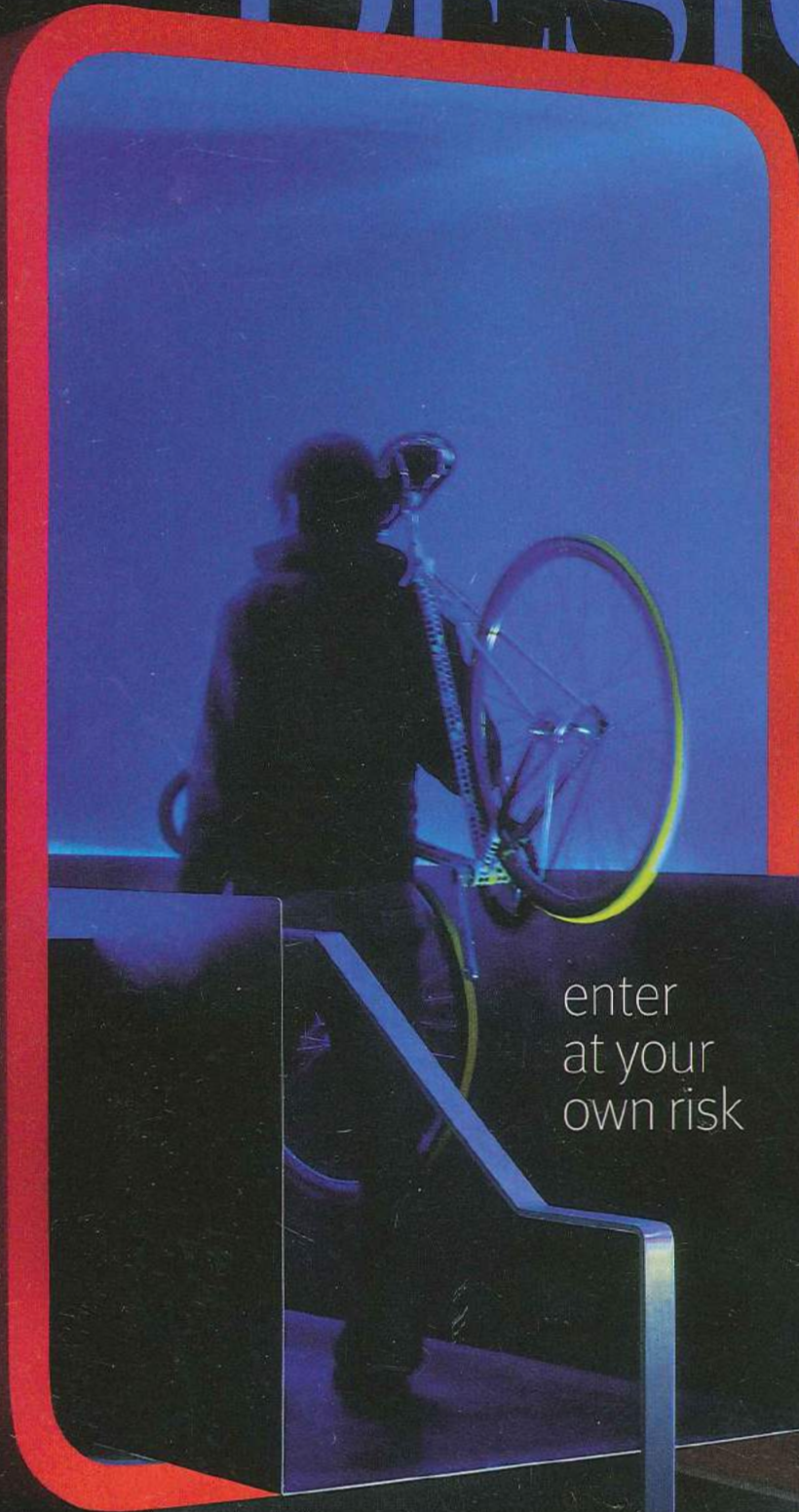
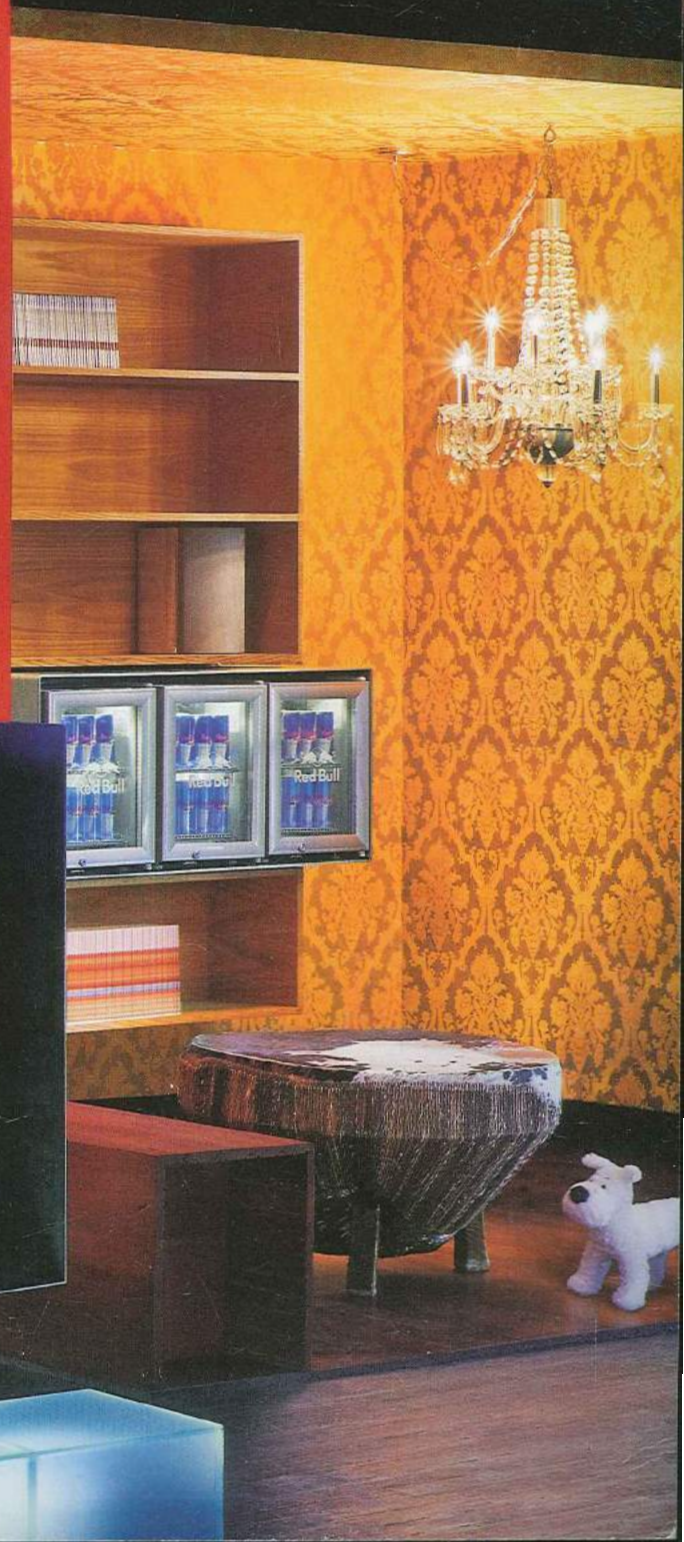


INTERIOR DESIGN

NOVEMBER
2010



enter
at your
own risk



A 17th-century Paris mansion might just be the least-likely location for this apartment by D'Apostrophe

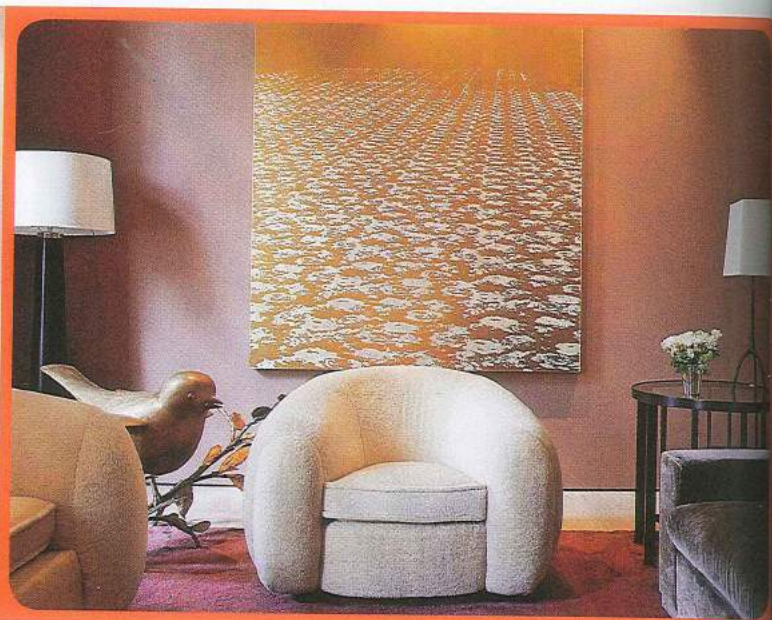
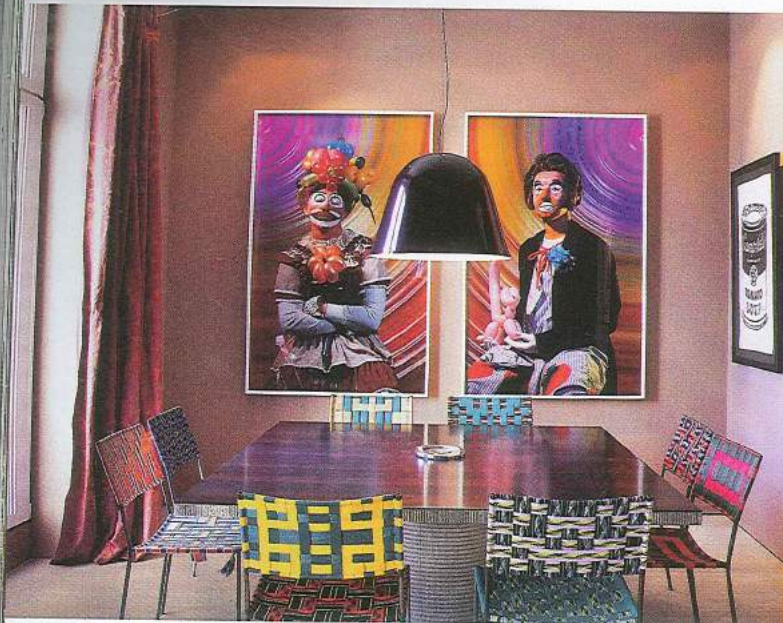
where the wild things are

text: *ian phillips* photography: *eric laignel*



Nadwozie typu coupé





Growing up in Belgium, and studying interior architecture at the Sint-Lucas School of Architecture in Brussels, Francis D'Haene was less interested in art than he was in squash and sailing. All that changed once he was living and working in New York. Among the first jobs he landed after leaving Zeff Design to go solo was an apartment renovation for a fellow Belgian, contemporary-art dealer Christophe Van de Weghe. Since then, D'Haene has made something of a specialty of art-related projects. In New York alone, he's designed the Calder Foundation office and eight commercial galleries. So he was on very familiar territory with a Paris collector couple. Both the husband and wife are keen on contemporary art from the 80's and '90's; the husband is also interested in the Russian and early Soviet suprematists and constructivists.

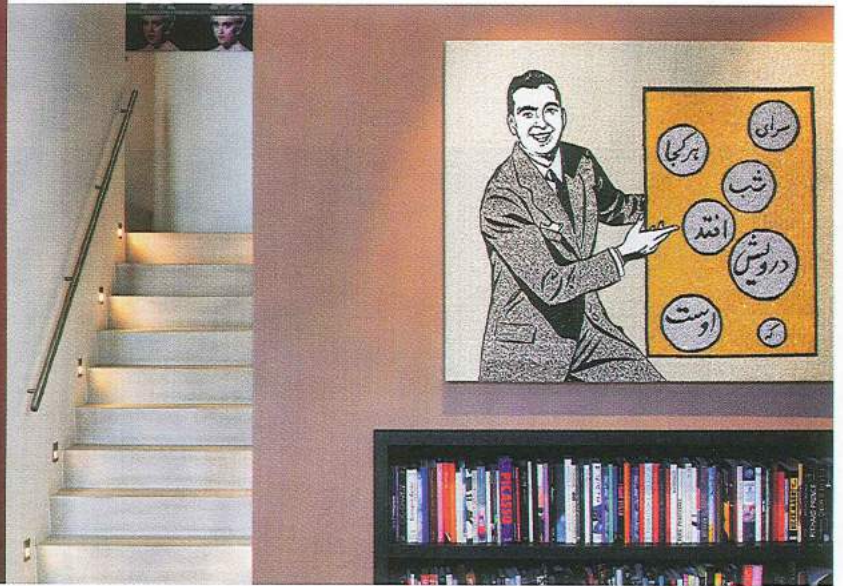
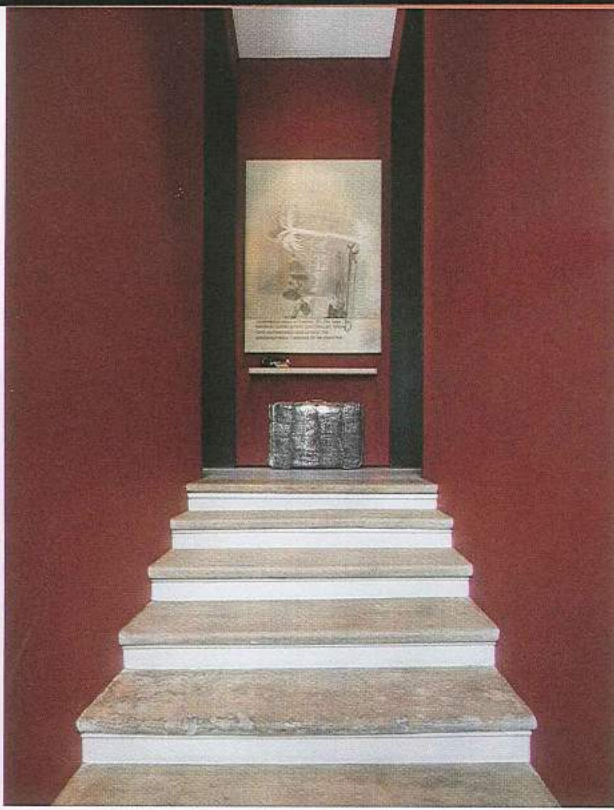
The couple hired D'Haene's firm, D'Apostrophe Design, to combine and restructure a pair of apartments on the top two floors of a Left Bank mansion. Though it dates to the 1600's, it was owned until recently by the French government and used to house civil servants. Nothing in these particular apartments had been touched for half a century. "It was really dreadful. There was a complete lack of taste," D'Haene says, recalling the mildew-laden bathrooms and caked-on layers of paint. The building itself was not in great shape either. For instance, the roof, in terrible disrepair, needed to be partly replaced.

Besides the roof, he avoided major structural work on one side of the 2,800-square-foot space, ➤

Previous spread: At a Paris apartment by D'Apostrophe Design, the stuffed-animal chair in the son's bedroom is by Fernando and Humberto Campana.

Left: In the dining room, a pendant fixture by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec hangs above a Martin Szekeley table and Franz West chairs. They're accompanied by a pair of Cindy Sherman photographs and an Andy Warhol silk screen. *Right:* The living room's vintage Jean Royère armchair sits near a polished-brass bird by François-Xavier Lalanne and an acrylic on canvas by Rudolf Stingel.

Opposite top, from left: The entry stairs lead up to an aluminum suitcase sculpture by Subodh Gupta and an acrylic on canvas by Richard Prince. Above a stained-oak built-in bookcase in the den is Farhad Moshiri's composition in crystals and faux pearls. *Opposite bottom:* In the living room, an oil on canvas by Wayne Gonzales dominates the wall behind a sofa by Agnès Comar. The acrylic on canvas is a Takashi Murakami.



realizing that the smaller of the two apartments, on the lower level, could simply become the master suite. It would connect to the rest of the duplex only across the landing of the building's main staircase, transformed into a private entry with a locked door at the bottom. On the opposite side of the landing, the downstairs could become the living room, den, office, dining room, and kitchen, the upstairs being devoted to a



bedroom for the couple's son, another for his nanny, and a guest room.

One of the owners' first requests was that he raise the doorways downstairs from 8 1/2 feet to more than 11 to make the most of the high ceiling. He also lined up the doorways to create an unbroken sight line from the master suite through the dining room, an incredible 72 feet from end to end. With that architectural framework established, no decorative details would be added, the better to keep the focus on the art collection. "I like structure and restraint," he offers.

That restrained aesthetic likewise dictated a certain economy in his

choice of materials, all resolutely natural. For flooring and built-ins in the public areas, he used oak, cerused or dark-stained, respectively. He also chose limestone slabs for the bathrooms and linen wall covering for the master bedroom and son's room. Though he initially painted the other walls white, the owners—who'd previously lived with color in Italy and Latin America—soon changed their minds about the necessity for such a

Opposite: The den features a leather-upholstered sectional and a Gupta wall sculpture composed of stainless-steel tongs.

Below: In the office, a Christian Liaigre desk sits beneath a large Prince acrylic on canvas.




purely gallerylike environment. So D'Haene gave his blessing to a palette based on taupe, rust, and dusty rose.

The owners chose most of the furnishings, including pieces by some of the biggest names in contemporary design: Christian Liaigre, Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, Fernando and Humberto Campana. A visit to an auction house yielded some mid-century icons for the living room: Jean Royère's cuddly white Polar Bear sofa and armchairs. Other selections were guided by practicality—the couple have not only a son but also a dog. Take the den's huge leather-upholstered sectional. "The main criterion ➤



was comfort," D'Haene notes. "Not everything had to be a work of art."

That said, he maximized uninterrupted surfaces for art display and gave the walls gallery-style baseboard reveals. A pair of Cindy Sherman photos, from her series of garishly colored clowns, were installed in the dining room. In the office, the owners hung a crayon figure drawing by Jean-Michel Basquiat near Jeff Koons's pink mirrored silhouette of a teddy-bear head, a Soviet suprematist composition in black and gray above an Andy Warhol portrait of Mao Tse-tung. Takashi Murakami's multicolored, round flower painting was assigned to the living room. The den got a dynamic wall sculpture made from pink stainless-steel tongs.

The piece, D'Haene's personal favorite, is by a New Delhi artist, Subodh Gupta, who once built a huge skull from pots and pans in the middle of a Paris church. At the top of the stairs up to the duplex, the owners placed another Gupta sculpture. It's an aluminum suitcase that looks rather like it's just been set down by an art-loving traveler ready to depart on his next global voyage. 

PROJECT TEAM

PATROCINIO BINUYA: D'APOSTROPHE DESIGN. **DESCAMPS:** WOODWORK. **SÈME BUREAU:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT ESTUDIO CAMPANA: CHAIR (BOY'S ROOM). **THROUGH GALERIE KREO:** TABLE, PENDANT FIXTURE (DINING ROOM), TABLE (DEN). **TAI PING CARPETS:** CUSTOM RUGS (LIVING ROOM, DEN, OFFICE, MASTER BEDROOM). **MAISON LIAIGRE:** LAMPS, ROUND TABLES, CONSOLES (LIVING ROOM), DESK (OFFICE), LAMPS (MASTER BEDROOM).

XAL: STEP LIGHTS (STAIRWELL), SCONCE (BOY'S ROOM), RECESSED CEILING FIXTURES. **AGNÈS COMAR:** GRAY SOFA (LIVING ROOM). **FLEXFORM:** SOFA (DEN), CHAIR (MASTER BEDROOM). **MODÈNATURE:** ARMCHAIR (OFFICE), CHAIR (DRESSING ROOM). **HÅSTENS:** BEDS (BEDROOMS). **BOFFI:** TUB, TUB FITTINGS (BATHROOM). **LOUIS POULSEN:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **CARAVANE:** TABLE (OFFICE). **THROUGHOUT ARGILE:** PAINT.

Left: The son's room has nylon carpet. Right: Henry Becq designed the chair in the master suite's dressing room.

Opposite top, from left: A 4-inch platform elevates the Marcel Wanders tub above the limestone floor of the master bathroom. In the office, a steel cocktail table stands between Liaigre chairs, on axis with a Jean-Michel Basquiat crayon drawing. Opposite bottom: The master bedroom's curtains, wall covering, and chair upholstery are all Belgian linen. Gupta painted both oils on canvas.

