

ROSE UNIACKE AT WORK

Foreword by Alice Rawsthorn  
Texts by Rose Uniacke

ROSE UNIACKE  
AT WORK

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# FOREWORD

## BY ALICE RAWSTHORN

“This lovely double-fronted house was in a sad state,” writes Rose Uniacke of a mid-nineteenth-century townhouse in Notting Hill that had been messed about by successive owners, designers, and builders, and stripped of its grandeur and original detailing. “I knew there was a wonderful, spirited house hidden in there somewhere. I just had to find it.”

In this book, Rose describes how she and her collaborators design and realize what she calls “sanctuaries” for their clients, “places that have atmosphere, in which they can think clearly.” Some buildings started out in good shape, such as a “beautifully balanced” late Georgian villa she worked on in Clapham. Others were wrecks, like the Notting Hill townhouse and her own home in Pimlico, which was built in the 1850s as the house and studio of a wealthy portrait painter but was neglected after being bombed during World War II. All these places have been transformed by Rose’s belief that interior design can be a nurturing and empowering force in our lives, and by her conviction that even the loveliest homes must also be comfortable, efficient, and practical for their occupants, and free from clutter, pretension, showiness, and bling.

The starting point of each project, historic or contemporary, private or commercial, is for Rose to visualize how it can fulfil the needs and wishes of its occupants, while remaining true to itself, just as she did by imagining the “wonderful, spirited house” lost in the Notting Hill ruin. She and her team decide which spatial and structural changes will be required for them to function freely and seemingly effortlessly, often by reintroducing original elements to historic buildings. They then choose the precise combinations of colours, textures, materials, light, and objects needed to articulate the character of each place. The notes Rose has written for the book tell us how she envisaged each completed project: “colours that soothe,” “Georgian beauty underdressed,” “generous wasted space,” “fresh clean energy,” “effortless, unadorned cosiness,” “lovely friendly mix,” and “nothing unnecessary, no clutter.”

Among Rose’s great strengths is her instinctive ability to gauge what she calls the “atmosphere” of each project. Another is her deep and eclectic knowledge of design, which is rooted in her passion for favourite makers and genres, such as the late nineteenth-century lighting designer W.A.S. Benson and French modernism, as well as in her practical experience of gilding and restoring antique furniture.

Perhaps her greatest strength is the joy she derives from her work. Rose relishes the challenge of designing spaces reflecting different periods for clients with different objectives. Whether she is describing the fun of choosing modernist furniture and contemporary art with clients who share her fascination with them for their early 1900s house in Dulwich, or of working in the Victoria & Albert Museum’s archives to develop a wallpaper from a sketch by the architect E.W. Godwin for an 1880 house he designed in nearby Chelsea, this book resounds with Rose’s love of her practice and the graceful, welcoming spaces she creates, so lightly and generously.



# INTRODUCTION

## BY ROSE UNIACKE

I believe that interiors matter. They can change the way we think and feel. In my design practice, I want to offer my clients a sanctuary: a place that has atmosphere, in which they can think clearly. Where their senses are aroused. I have always thought that the pervading tone of a room, the feeling, is important. This should be the combined effect of a number of equal factors — materials, fabrics, objects, furniture, use of space, how the light works, and where the shadows are. It's the perfect balance of these elements which will create the feeling I am trying to evoke. I think that I am most interested in how life is lived within a space: its energy and atmosphere. Can you do the things you want to do? This goes for commercial as well as residential work — if life is enhanced, or if the brand is elevated, then the designs have worked.

In everything I do I am interested in timeless, unobtrusive quality. I never sell anything that I couldn't live with myself. I started my career as a gilder and restorer of antique furniture. Furniture and objects are my abiding passion, a constant source of delight and inspiration, and the reason I opened my first shop.

My business grew organically. I had no plan to build it as it is now. I just followed what seemed logical and natural, step by step. I really love working in this way. In all areas of the business I like to keep an open mind. I find the freedom and the connections it leads to stimulating.

In this book I offer an overview of what we do at Rose Uniacke. The retail and the design arms are so closely bound that it is hard to discuss them separately. I have written short descriptions of the design projects, describing the particular journey of each one. I've also shown the two shops, with examples of their content, and taken a brief look at the "Editions" range.

I have a superb team of my own, across all the parts of the business. With the individual projects, although I typically lead the design, I do nothing alone. It's important for me to say that each project relies on many different people and their skills. In each case, we put together a team of people that suits the needs of the particular building: architects, builders, artisans, experts in heritage plaster work, upholsterers, and stone workers, to name but a few. I love the process of building the right team each time, with people whose work is thoughtful and inspiring, and who can understand and interpret ideas and help shape them. Collaboration is exciting and enhances our projects immeasurably.

Of course, nothing happens without those who place their trust in my work. I am immensely grateful to all my clients, and especially to those who have allowed their houses to be pictured in this book. Projects are long and, in every case, take us on an exciting journey that is also very personal. I am grateful for their faith in me, and also for the friendships that have flowered out of each commission. Most of all I am grateful to those who keep coming back, which is always both an honour and a great pleasure, including all those we regularly see in the shops. The conversations we have on a daily basis and the connections we have built here are a pleasure that animates the whole of my business, and enriches my life.

## MY HOME

Warwick Square is my home. I wrote about the house and the challenges of the renovation project at length in my first book *Rose Uniacke at Home*. I don't have the space to include all my thoughts here, so I will attempt a potted version.

I fell for this house several years before we bought it. It had an interesting artistic history. It had been the home and studio of James Rannie Swinton, a Scottish society portraitist, commissioned and built to a design by the architect George Morgan. Completed in 1860, the whole building was designed around the north-facing window in the octagonal painting studio.

After Swinton left, it became the home of another artist, Iain Macnab, a Scottish wood engraver, who in 1925 opened it as the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. With the help of Claude Flight, a pioneer of linocut printing, the school ran until 1940. Over the years the house changed considerably, and by the time we bought it, it had lost most of its charm and had the feeling of an institution. The basement had been carved up into flats. The floorboards and many of the original windows were gone. Some of the nineteenth-century fireplaces remained, along with window shutters, and much of the plasterwork in the big rooms, though this was hidden beneath layer upon layer of paint. The original stone stair had been removed and replaced.

There were many important structural decisions to be made. There was no flow between the rooms, doorways were blocked, and the gallery space that greets you as you arrive had lost its purpose, so we needed to redesign much of the house and rethink the way it functioned. There was a great deal to do.

Although I led the design, I involved Vincent Van Duysen on the architectural side, and Tom Stuart-Smith to work on the garden. They were great choices, and collaboration with both was fruitful and stimulating.

We started by stripping everything out, so we could see what was left of the original features and how the house felt when completely bare. I wanted to assess everything in its rawest form before deciding the concept and feel.

Once we'd stripped it, the house was sublime. It felt like an abandoned palazzo. I was determined to retain something of its emptiness, a sense of the space in its very simplest form. But it couldn't be cold or too grand, and it had to welcome. This, I think, is what makes the project work. By treating it lightly I found that I could let the spirit of the house speak, rather than its scale. This is something the house taught me, and it feels alive. One colour throughout each room allows a play of changing light and shadow, which is enough.

This house was built for art. It has been both made and shown here since the beginning. But as much as I wanted to highlight its architectural merits and its relationship with art, it was also important that the house was a home that could really be used. I wasn't interested in an art gallery or a museum of furniture that couldn't be touched and enjoyed. In terms of living — we use everything. Furniture is, after all, meant to be used. I started my career as a restorer. If something degrades, it can be lovingly restored. The patina of age has its own potent beauty.

I have always loved and collected furniture. There is tremendous freedom when buying for oneself and here I could follow where the furniture led me in the same way that I let the spirit of the house speak. To root the house in its period, I started with the nineteenth century, buying pieces of strong elegant form and simple design. The rest of the collection looks forwards and backwards, as you might do in life. The mix of periods feels spirited. Wood forms the heart of the furniture collection here. Its natural qualities, its softness, and its lines, feel alive, just like the house.

I move everything — furniture, objects, and art. I like how things change in different company. There are so many stories embedded in the bones of this building. I like to imagine them. I can pass a piece of art and imagine the artist at work, the love and the struggle, just as Swinton and the students of the Grosvenor School loved and struggled here in the house's beginning. With the delicate play of light and shadow, the house lives and changes, and all these stories, and ours, breathe life into the rooms.

**First hall, page 13:**

In the hall, a pair of oak benches by William Burn, made for Fonthill New Abbey in 1860, the year the house was completed. The first thing you see when you arrive reflects the period of the house and in some way its frivolity.

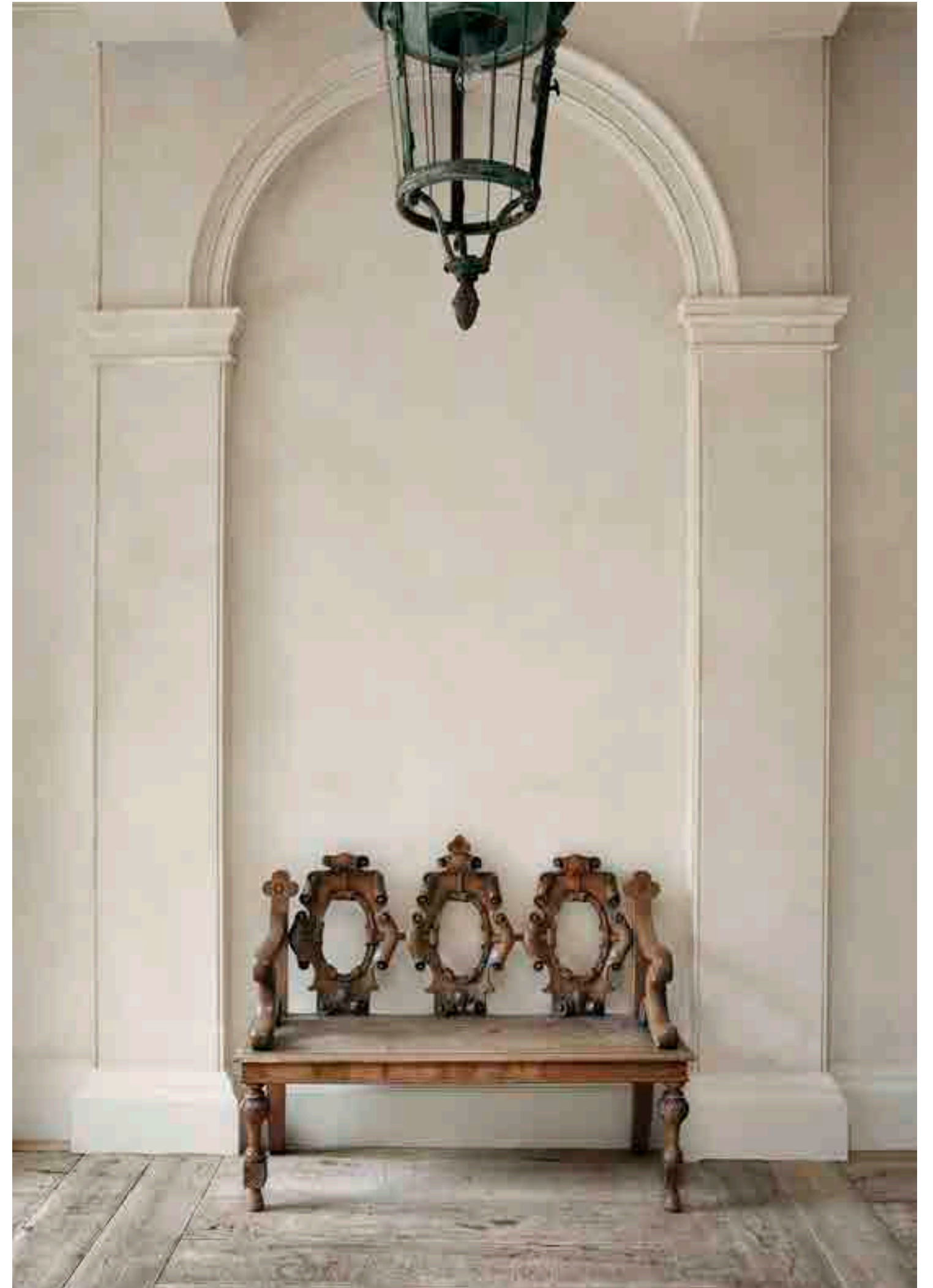
I like the feeling of their presence against the plain empty walls and unadorned arches.

Nothing unnecessary, no clutter.

The winter garden that greets you immediately is the surprise and the entertainment.

**Winter garden, pages 14 - 16:**

The original Victorian gallery reimagined — stripped bare and reclaimed by nature. The sound of water, candlelight, planting. Rough garden table surrounded by Diego Giacometti chairs.









**Drawing room, page 17:**

Painting by Gerhard Richter, 1965.  
Its beauty and strength allow it to be alone here.  
Fireside chair by Gerald Summers, 1933,  
sits as a sculpture underneath.

**Drawing room, pages 18–19:**

Colours reflecting the garden,  
drawing the garden in. Layers of colour wash  
over stripped walls, with the dry feeling of  
an old white. Intricate plaster work on cornice  
and ceiling, elegant and peaceful with  
no highlights. The light and shadow do it all.  
Wall colour and frieze reflected in  
the chandelier, whose form echoes the  
garden and the plaster work.

The drawing room started with my  
childhood piano, and the large black Glenn Ligon  
*Stranger* painting. Big fire. Intimacy  
and comfort. Very deep sofas invite informality.  
Broken rules here. Balance, no symmetry.  
The Tuscan refectory table, placed off-centre,  
works because of the piano next to it.

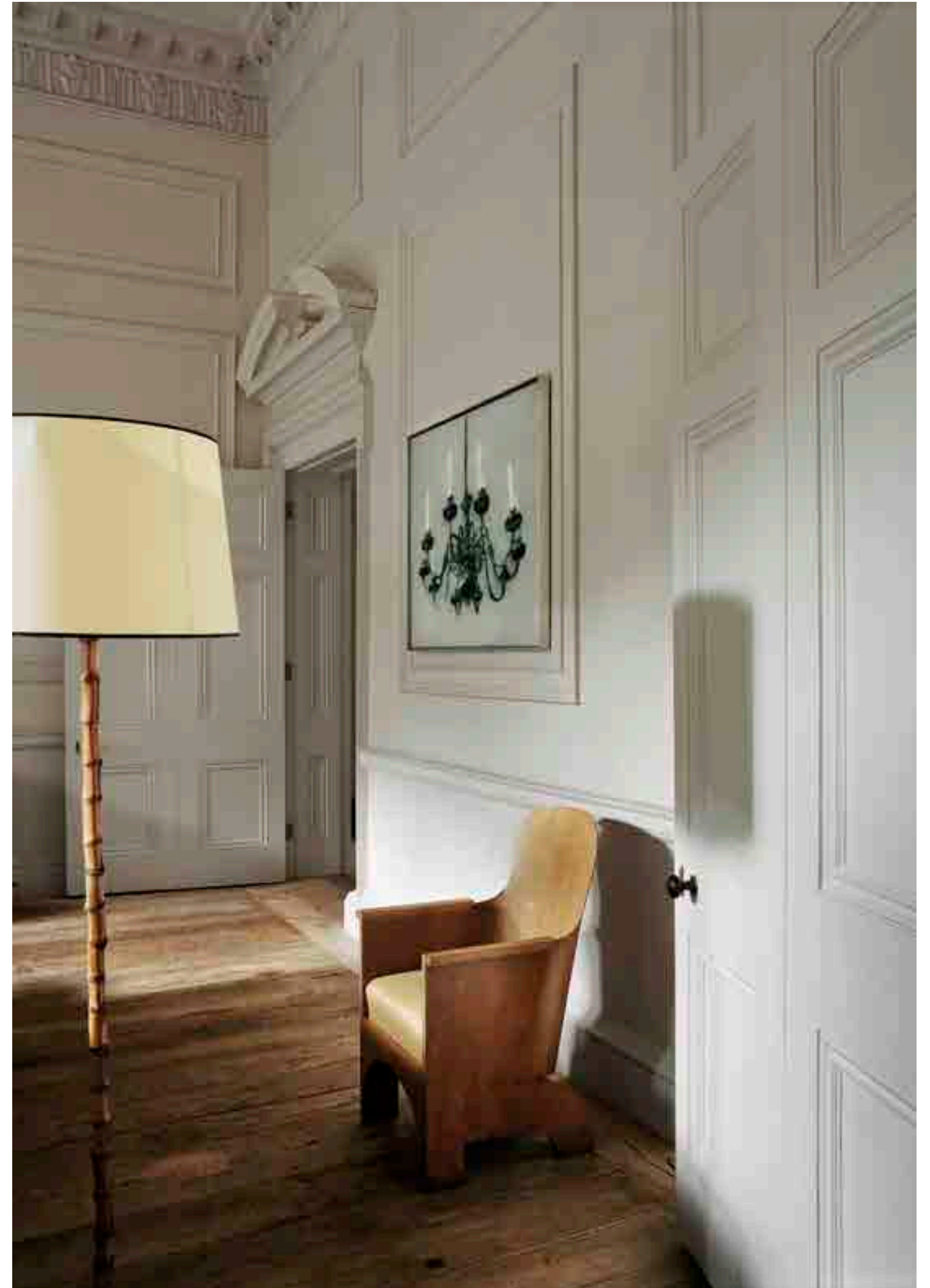
Lots of oddities. Two sculptural  
single armchairs of completely different form,  
sitting at either end. One a nineteenth-century  
chair by Thomas Hope, the other an early  
English modernist chair by Gerald Summers.

The void over the fireplace, empty space  
relaxing the rest. Log fire.

**Drawing room, pages 20–21:**

Mix of objects and drawings sitting on the  
table anchored by the Glenn Ligon painting above.  
It is a piece with such a strong material density  
that objects almost float around it.

Often this table is the first stop when  
we bring in something new, and things change  
here regularly. Here, a fifteenth-century  
marble tabernacle sits surrounded by various  
treasures: pre-dynastic vessels, a large  
Warring States Chinese urn, a piece of Lalique glass,  
and a group of Francis Alÿs drawings.  
Displayed carefully, so nothing assumes greater  
importance than anything else.

















**Studio, pages 22 – 23:**

Walls upholstered in rolls of painter's canvas nod to its origins as an artist's studio.

The creative heart of the original house.

This is a doing room, used as a cinema, with large table for projects and a card table for games.

The furniture moves depending on what's happening.

Sofa the colour of fire. Genoese chandeliers and vertical hang of Friedrich Kunath's series of black-and-white photographs suggest the height of the room. Everything else low-slung, comfortable and domestic.

**Hall, page 25:**

John Soanian views through arches to light. Circles and echoes. A flow around the table.

Here you can feel the scale and the clear intention of George Morgan. Very open so as to appreciate the architecture fully, with the Carl Andre copper floor piece leading to the circle, holding the hall with minimal gesture. A nineteenth-century lantern and mirror, against a twentieth-century work of art.

Reinstated fireplace here, its log fire regularly burning, warms the welcome.

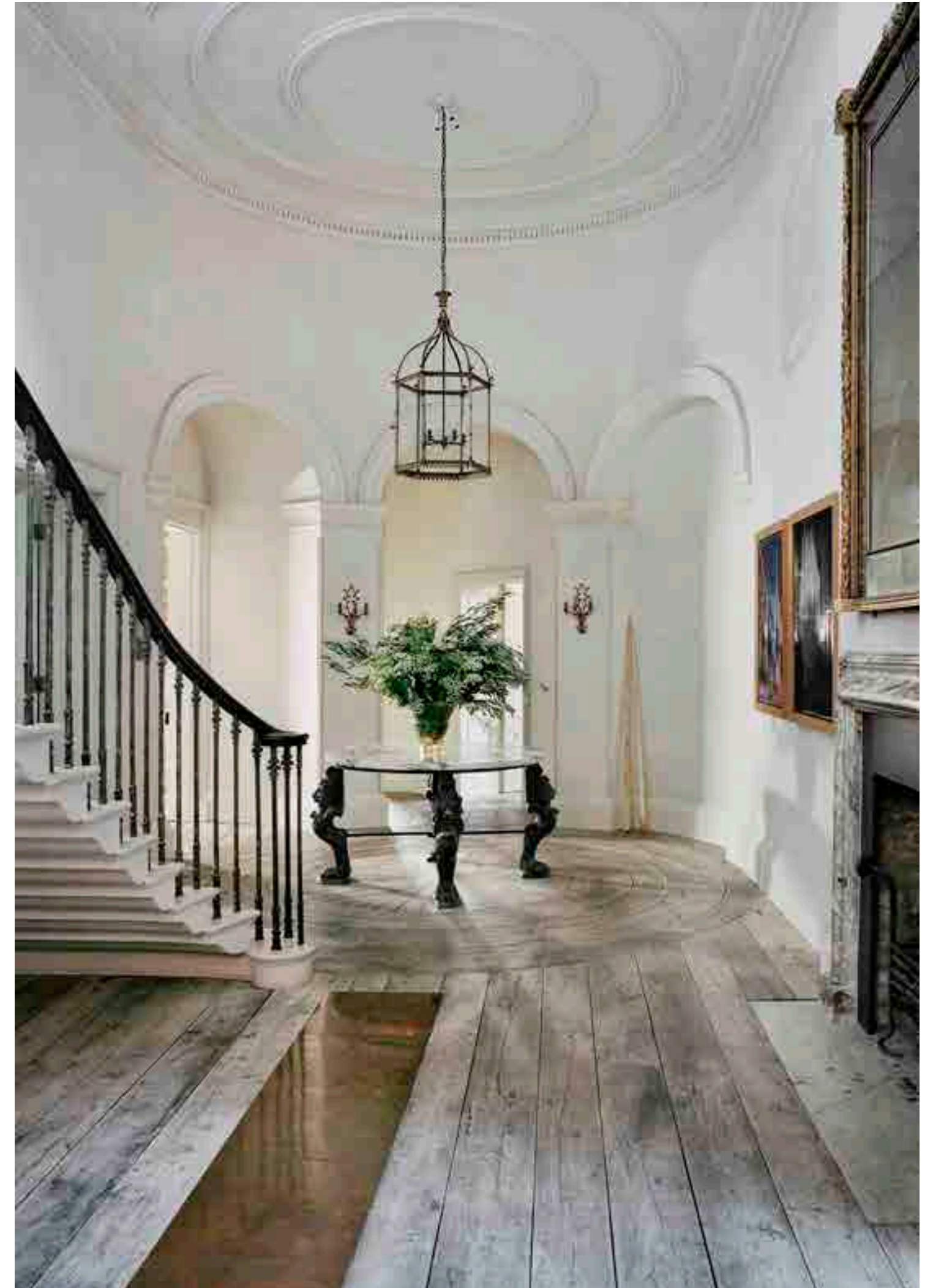
**Study, pages 26 – 27:**

The ballroom in Swinton's original house, more textured but still one colour, to relax. Immense volume absorbs colour, so sunshine yellow doesn't take over. High ceilings brought down by yellow silk. Yellow holding the sunlight and keeping it into evening. Drawing the colours out of the Mughal carpet. The art and furniture restrained with some gilt highlights. It's a private space.

Poul Henningsen copper-shaded lamp on the desk, flooding light downwards. Irreverent Sarah Lucas self-portrait balances the window. Light and shadow.

Two ebonised chairs on either side of the octagonal partner's desk, all three from the Regency period. The desk reflects the octagonal shape of the room.

Leaning pictures on the fireplace are easy to move around, and are regularly changed.









**Study, page 29:**

Folding Campaign table set up  
in the study for meetings, surrounded by  
Biedermeier chairs. I often work with my team here.

Last summer the carpet and curtains  
were removed for some necessary restorations  
and I loved the stripped-back feeling, with the views  
filled with summery green. Diego Giacometti  
floor lamp in the foreground.

**Bedroom, pages 30-31:**

Several rooms combined. I stood in  
this space one morning, filled with sunlight, and  
it was suddenly obvious where we should sleep.  
More symmetry here — pair of early cushion mirrors,  
pairs of tables — reflects the pair of us.  
A tranquil space to sleep. Monastic, no colour, but  
strong, not too polite. Plain raw plaster wall.

**Bathroom, pages 32-33:**

One of my favourite rooms, the anteroom to  
the original ballroom. This is designed as a sitting room  
with a bath, shower, and basin within it. It's a very pale  
pink all over. Argentinian masks, made by the Alamito tribe  
between 200 BC and AD 250, sit between the basins.

Richard Prince Joke Painting over the fireplace.  
RU Scallop shell uplighters on the wall. We sit here by  
the fire often, especially in the early morning.

**Spare bedroom, pages 34-35:**

Evening light in the spare bedroom. Garouste and  
Bonetti lamp by the bed. Soft yellow antique  
linen sheets as bedcover, and antique Fortuny fabric  
covering the bronze early twentieth-century  
bedhead — a pair of birds perched on top,  
as if flown in from outside. Olive trees and flowers  
fill the terrace — perfect for sunbathing. There is  
a rustic outdoor shower in a private spot.

**My home studio, pages 36-37:**

A standing table at one end, fabrics, samples,  
my books, and a desk at the other.

Drawings by my daughter framed on the standing table.  
Egg photograph by Rana Young in between.

Isamu Noguchi light on the RU Drapers table.  
Peter Collingwood Macrogauze hangs on the wall.  
The original pair of leaded lanterns that I found a few years  
ago hang above my desk — a version is now offered in  
RU editions. RU club armchair in the forefront.

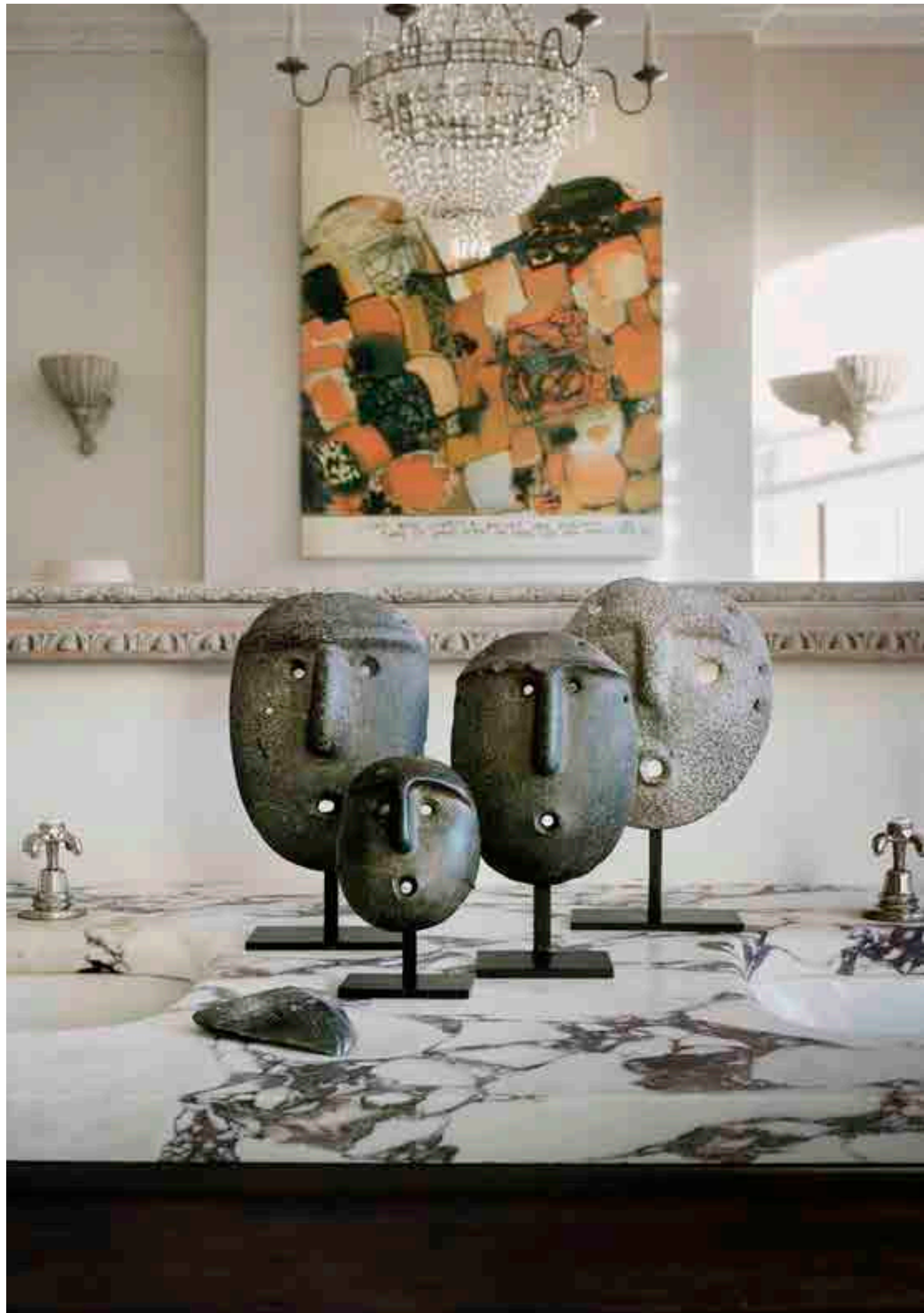
Lovely light-filled office, one that  
encourages concentration.



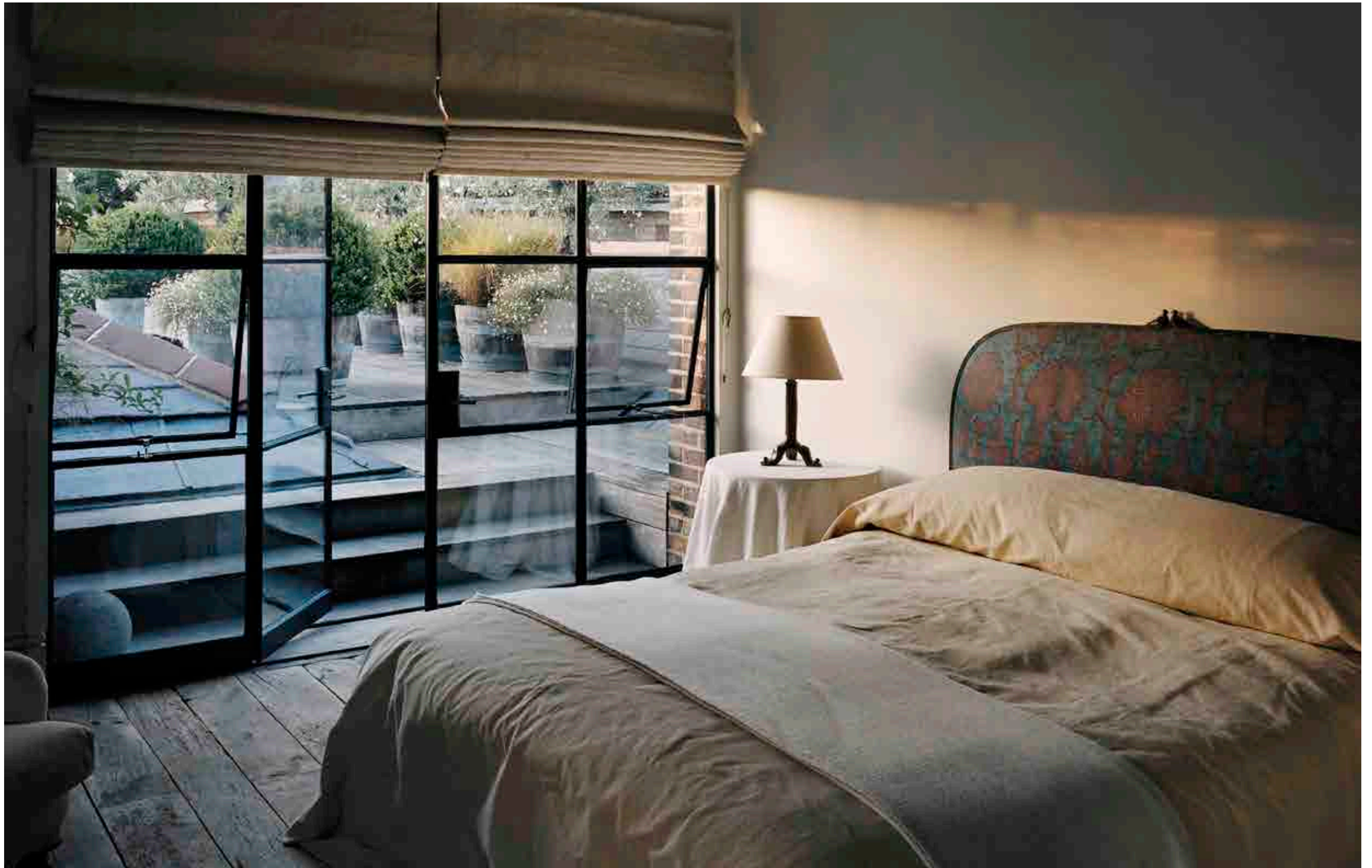


























**Kitchen, pages 38-39:**

Originally, I designed this room around an eighteenth-century painted breakfront cabinet that filled the wall. This kitchen came five years later, taking out a central island in favour of a small breakfast table. The original 1930s cone-lights by Syrie Maugham inspired the RU cone we make in the shop. Unbalanced, one slightly lower than the other. Ryan Sullivan painting takes centre stage, with a colourful energy, and allows the room to feel less like a kitchen. Open shelves. Hanging pans. A walk-in fridge is hidden behind the jib door in the corner.

**Dining room, pages 40-41:**

Relaxed dining, with RU Draper's table in untreated Oak. It gets better with age. Early period Kaare Klint chairs, made in 1930s when he was looking back at Georgian makers. Columns left raw — the original strip exposed.

Yayoi Kusama's *Infinity Nets* (2000) above the dining table is a strong force. Uplifting, calming, and unpretentious, it has a mesmerising quality.

**Garden, pages 43-45:**

Garden view into the dining room. Terracotta pots, and endless green. Walnut table by Peter Waals, c.1925, sitting in the window. Two bronze birds by Ugo Rondinone sit on the table in the sunlight.

**Garden, pages 46-47:**

Summer lunch table. Loetz vases, Georgian glass, contemporary ceramics with antique silver cutlery.

**Garden, pages 48-49:**

Sunshine on the garden table.

Soft, warm pink colours reflecting the pink of the coach house and the terracotta pots all around. Pink and green. Warm and natural.

















## COACH HOUSE

The coach house was part of the original footprint of our Warwick Square home when it was built in 1860. It was designed as stabling, when horses were the only means of transport, and as somewhere to keep the coaches out of the rain.

In the 1950s it had been split off from the main house and sold, along with the lion's share of the garden. Once we had bought it, we began the process of rethinking what it offered, re-attaching it, by way of the garden, to the main house, and returning the garden to its former glory. The first thing we did was to remove the fence that divided the two properties. When the fence came down, it could not have been more exciting. Suddenly the whole plot made sense, and one could enjoy the feeling of how the buildings would have been connected all those years ago. And the scale of the garden now worked more comfortably in relation to both buildings, and the light was so different. Tom Stuart-Smith, who had worked with me on our Warwick Square garden originally, came in to work on the new garden plan.

Meanwhile, as almost nothing was left of the original coach house, I started by gutting the building completely to feel the raw space. My plan was to turn it into a self-contained house that could work as an office, with bedroom, kitchen, generous access to the garden, and its own courtyard. It should be a little jewel — and offer a different, sweeter, softer energy...pretty and simple.

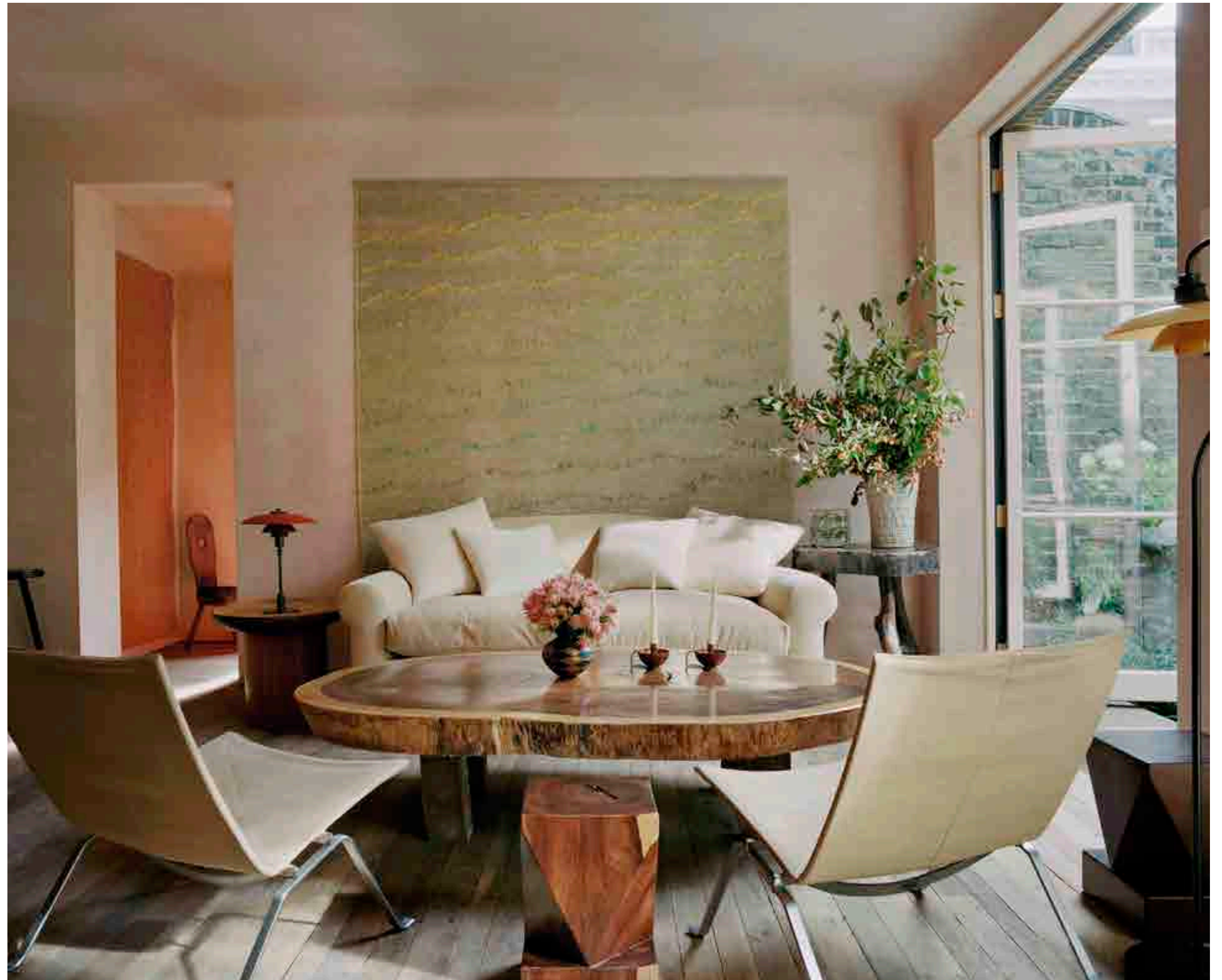
It should refer to its existence as a stable and coach house through its more functional spirit. Removing any wasted corridors and using every inch of the space as well as I could, I wanted to make downstairs a space for living and working, with sleeping space above. The log fire that had been removed long ago needed reinstating. Also, the house needed more light. There were two existing porthole windows, but they needed to make sense in terms of their positions. To increase the light, I filled the wall facing the garden and the church view with windows. I made them classic in design — as a link to the main house.

Next I moved the stair out from its original cramped spot in the corner and replaced it with a small kitchen, which could then be partially hidden if necessary, by a simple curtain. There was a sweet existing corner window, which could now light the kitchen. The new stair needed to be small, beautiful, and sculptural. It had to hold its own more centrally in the room, and be more than just a stair. I wanted a spiral, for spatial economy, and also for its charm. Its circular design echoes the portholes, and from here circles and curves became the theme that I threaded everywhere. From these important hooks, I could work out the logical shape for each floor. It was important to balance the softness of the curves with a stronger element, but I hope there's nothing hard about this little house.

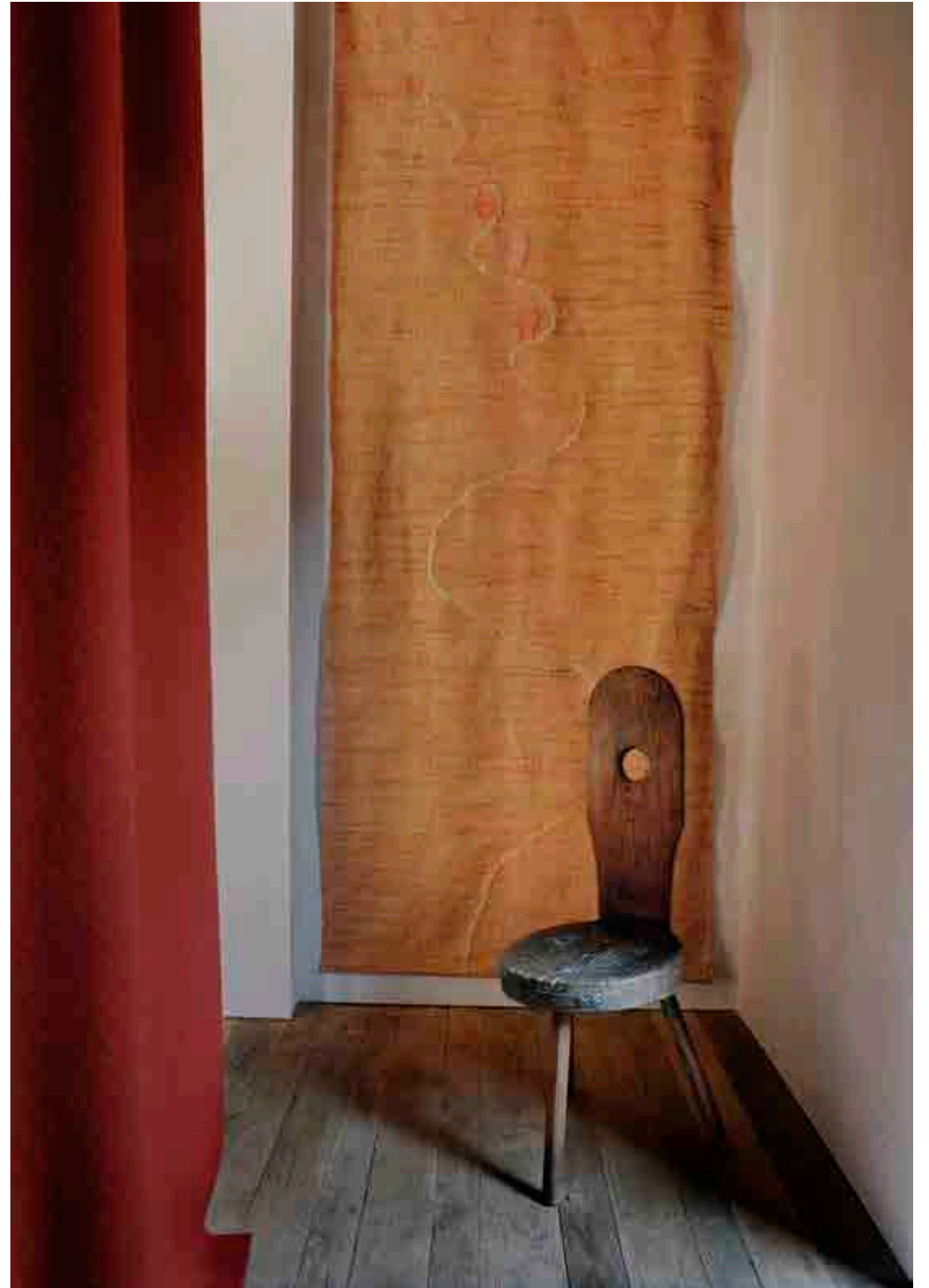
Downstairs, pages 51–53:  
The green of the garden is echoed in  
the hanging by Simone Prouvé.













**Hallway, pages 54-55:**

Warm colour in the little hallway. Circles and threads in the hanging. Next to this a flame red wool curtain concealing coats. The pink leads us through orange to fire. Natural colours, and natural materials. All to connect with the garden.

Low slung, casual. Strength and softness. Pink and warm. Primitive simple chair by the fiery hanging.

**Kitchen, pages 57-59:**

Simple lines, curves. Natural pink plaster, with as little detail as possible. Hemp curtains. Softening of edges. In the kitchen, an oak bullnose border framing the waterproof splash back with a curved corner.

Axel Einar Hjorth furniture, made for countryside houses in the 1930s, felt right here.

Simple, functional, and with a lovely patina of age. Above the cabinet a table lamp by Jos Devriendt sitting sweetly next to a black ceramic mirror by Georges Jouve, the black working nicely with Charlotte Perriand wall lights, fireplace and teapot. Strength. Open cane chair that doesn't block the view, and is comfortable for reading. Gerhard Richter print above the fireplace.

**Shelves, pages 60-61:**

I wanted the stairs to push into the bookshelves where they meet. It saves a little space, and I love the charm of it. The treads are carefully spaced so they flow naturally around and cut into the shelves at key points. It feels like the shelves run through the staircase.

Simple, free-flowing handrail, big enough for comfort, light enough for a floating energy.

Lights on the shelves bring warmth and interest at night.

Graciela Iturbide photograph of birds on the top shelf, as if they have flown in from outside. Rachel Whiteread drawings leaning.



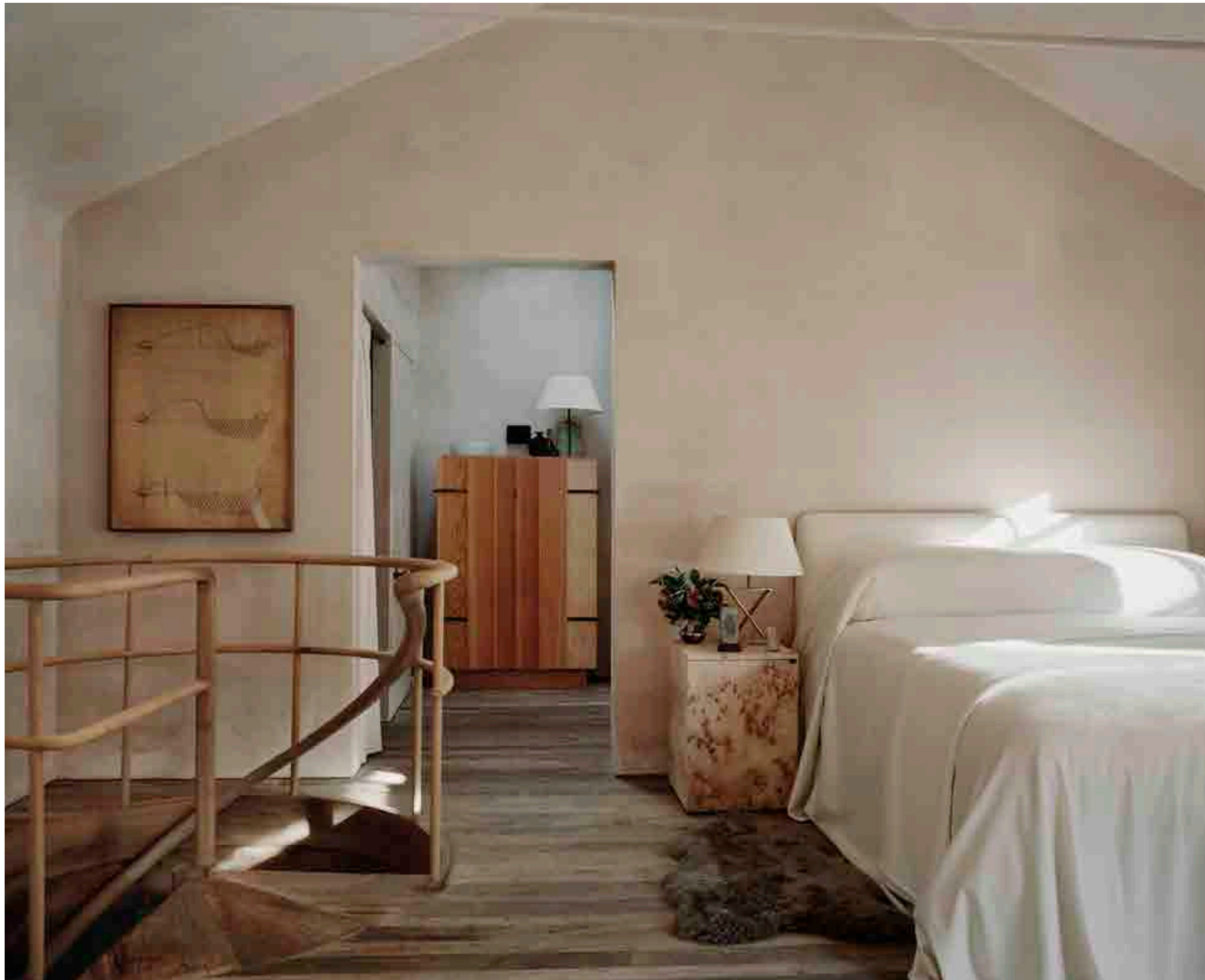














**Bedroom, pages 62–63:**

Curves and rounds everywhere.  
Soft pink chair in pink plaster room.  
Soft edges and circles.

Natural and cosy. Golden curtains.  
Warmth.

A Peter Collingwood macro-gauze  
hangs above the table by Axel Einar Hjorth,  
with a bobbin chair. Isamu Noguchi paper lantern  
filling the corner with golden light. Next to  
the porthole — reflecting its shape.

**Bedroom, pages 64–65:**

View through to the bathroom  
and the RU editions cabinet; my homage to  
Axel Einar Hjorth's brilliance.

On top, Edmund de Waal porcelain from 1990,  
and some French greats — Lalique,  
Jean-Michel Frank, and Charlotte Perriand.

Curves both in Le Corbusier drawing,  
and in the stairs.

A Loetz vase, an ancient Egyptian  
makeup palette, an X lamp by Jean-Michel Frank,  
and a Japanese glass sit by the bed.

**Bedroom, page 67:**

Hanging Akari lamp by Noguchi alongside  
a round cane table near the round porthole window.  
Circles and shadows. Reflecting shapes.

**Bathroom, pages 68–69:**

A Victorian table adapted with  
a marble top becomes a basin. RU curved  
wall lights either side of the basin.

Log fire for warmth.

Hanging by Simone Prouvé  
in the doorway. The curtain pole unlatches  
to open the door behind.

Circles and curves, warm pinks and gold.









## NOTTING HILL HOUSE

This imposing double-fronted house was in a sad state. Built in the mid-nineteenth century as a grand townhouse, it had been spoiled, with little period detail left. What had been put in its place was ugly, and without any flow: long narrow rooms, like train carriages, either side of a stair, offering no real heart.

I was appointed to lead the architectural and interior design on a complete rethink of the property. I knew there was a wonderful house hidden in there somewhere — I just had to find it. I wanted to restore some of the grandeur that this house would have enjoyed, keeping the design classic, replacing lost detail, adding a little frivolity to lift its spirits, while at the same time modernising.

As always, I started with a structural room scheme. What should go where? Why? Our plan was to gut the building and start afresh — so it was an opportunity to find a flow that really worked, and then to expand it graciously. It had to be cohesive and beautiful, suitable for family life, but also elegant, with two home offices included.

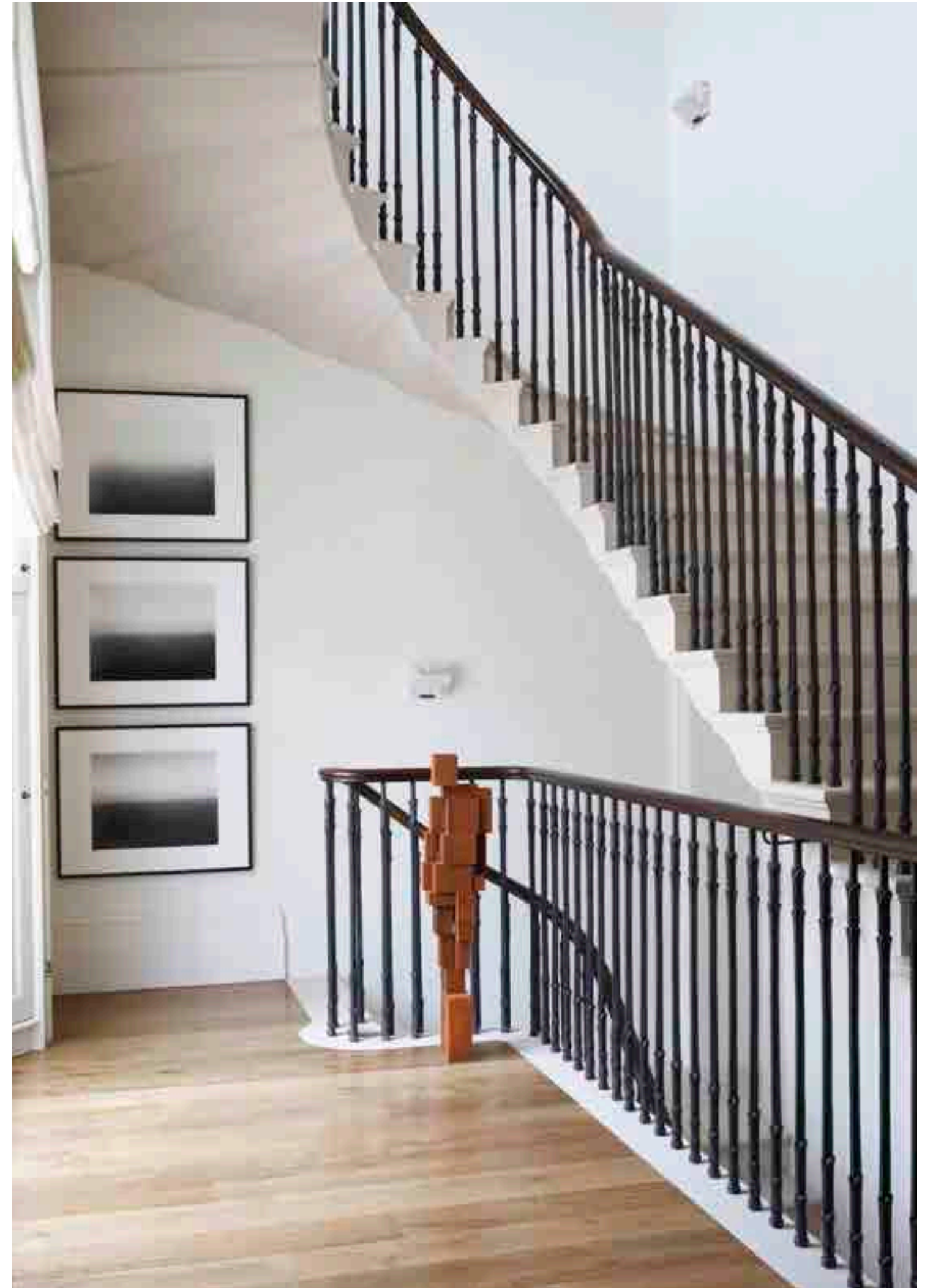
We also had permission to extend downwards. The challenge was to make the house feel strong enough to allow for the underground floors to work, without the building feeling bottom heavy. Although the house above the ground is large, it's important when adding underground space that everything feels logical. The upper house must be strong enough to hold its own. At the same time, I wanted to develop a wonderful underground world that would be a tremendous addition to the house.

It's always stimulating to work with clients who are in the process of building a distinguished art and furniture collection. What is the right atmosphere for good art? How do you elevate a house and yet keep it relaxed and welcoming? My job was to steer a path between the two.

This was a rewarding project, and I was really pleased with the balance we struck between the atmosphere of a gallery and that of a family home. I didn't want the art to be overwhelming or always centre stage. So, some rooms have a little bit of formality while others are more casual and even surprising — some full spaces and some very minimal. This happily reflected the slightly different design taste of each of the owners and created a house full of their own harmony.

### Staircase, page 71:

The staircase used to be centrally placed, breaking the house in two in an awkward way. Now it is repositioned at the front of the house, everything has opened, and the flow is improved. The stone cantilevered stair, strength, and pale elegance. Sash windows flooding the stair with light. Antony Gormley figure tucked into the turn. Hiroshi Sugimoto photographs repeating, like the repeating steps.

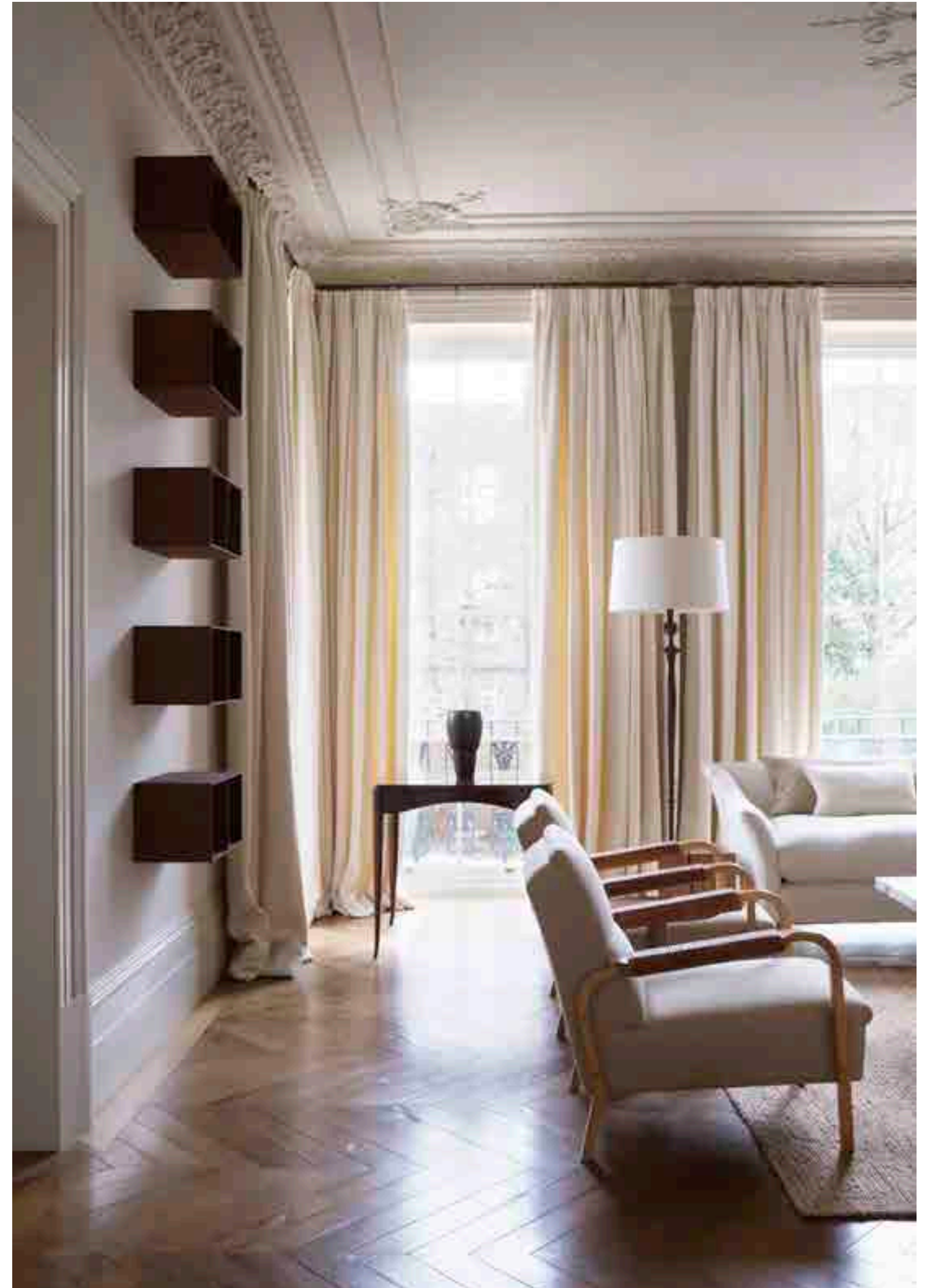


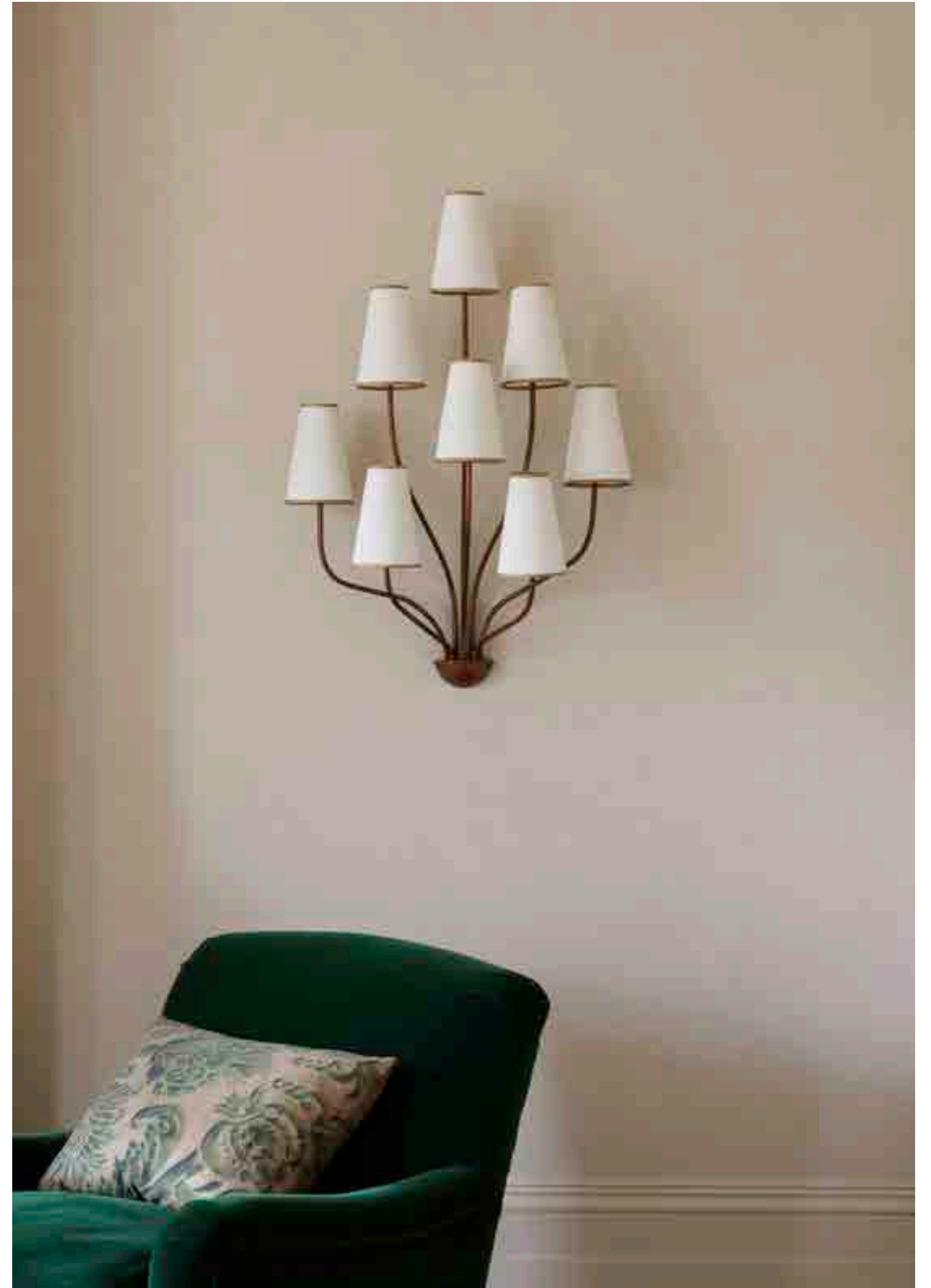


**Drawing room, page 73:**  
Donald Judd *Stack* wall piece and  
Alberto Giacometti *Tête de Femme* lamp holding  
the drawing room together. This is a  
lovely light drawing room, sitting between the  
two studies, with a full view of the garden.  
Huge floor-to-ceiling sash windows all along the  
back wall allow maximum light and elegance.  
Built in the traditional manner. Plaster work  
as it could have been.

**Drawing room, pages 74-75:**  
Fireside RU Rosewater armchair, and  
the Frank Auerbach portrait, 1969, both bringing  
garden colour into the room, and reflecting  
the dark green study on its other side.  
A French fire-surround for a bit of frivolity,  
with its roundels mimicking the shape of  
the ceiling plaster work. The Giacometti head  
sitting casually on the edge.

Alvar Aalto chairs from the 1950s  
opposite the fireplace. A pair of Persane  
wall sconces by Jean Royère from the 1950s  
flank the chimney breast.







**Study, pages 77-79:**  
Painted, traditionally panelled study.  
Enveloping, masculine, and functional.  
Deep green and black. The space  
through the open door houses  
an elegant bar and tea point on the right,  
and to the left an office cupboard  
for practical needs.  
Fire for atmosphere and warmth.  
Large desk. Floor-to-ceiling sash windows,  
as everywhere on this floor, flood  
the room with light.  
Ole Wanscher chairs sitting  
with a 1930s coffee table by Alvar Aalto  
by the fire, Serge Mouille ceiling  
light overseeing all.









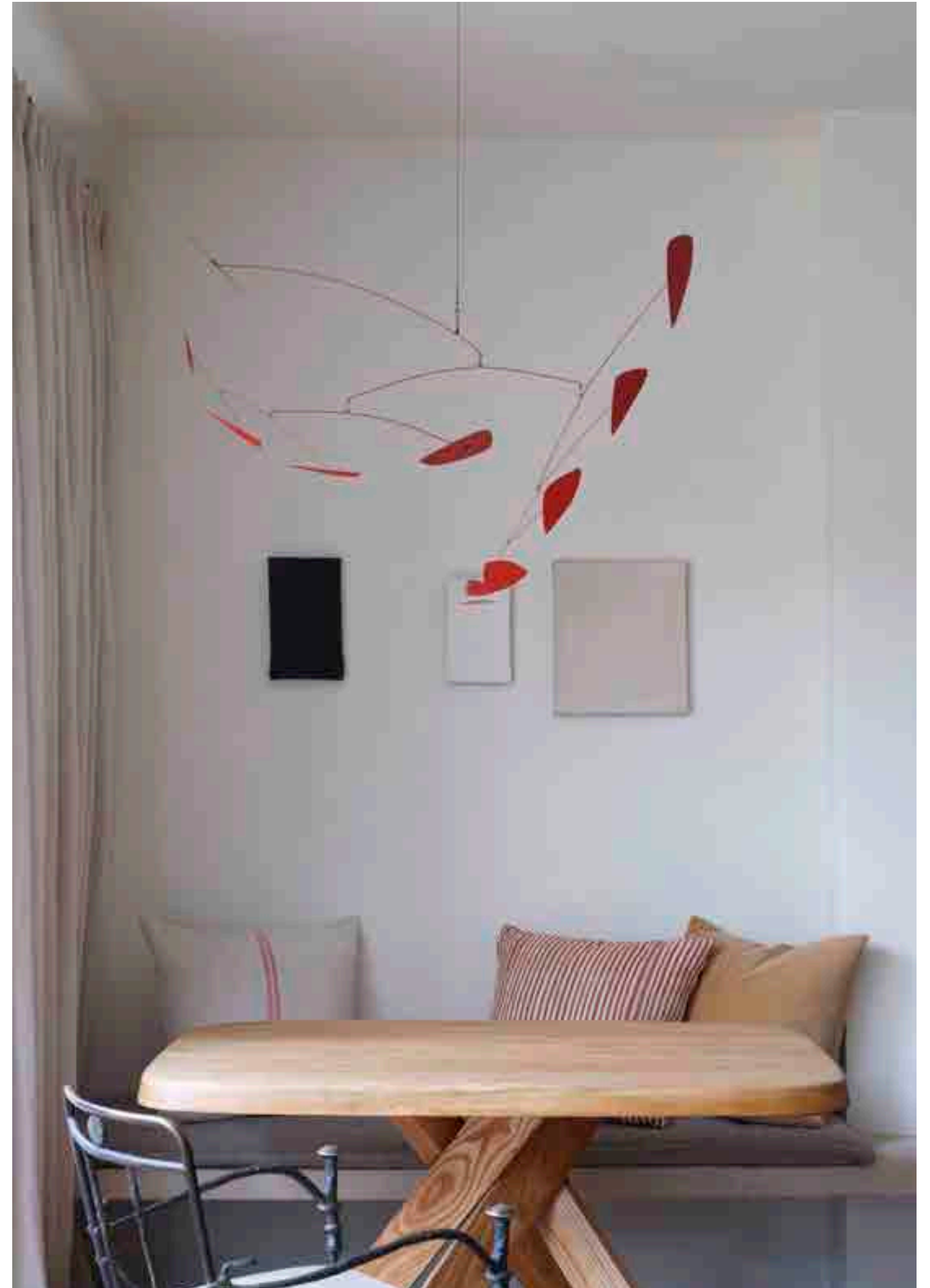
**Breakfast corner, page 81:**  
Intimate breakfast corner,  
floating Alexander Calder. Very light.  
Sarah Rapson piece hanging  
on the wall.

Casual and strong at the same time.  
Cushions just lightly addressing the  
Calder with their colour.

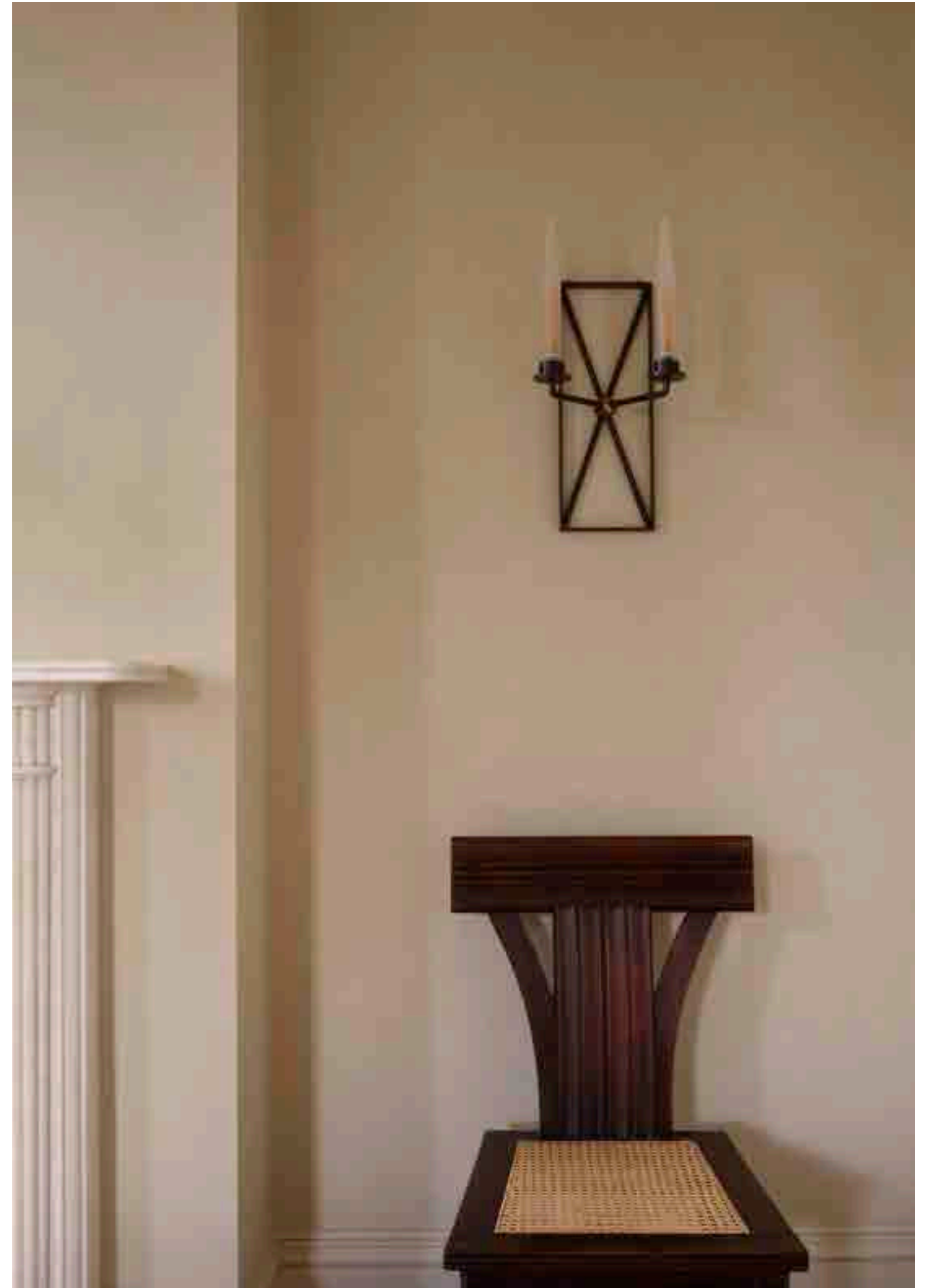
**Bedroom, pages 84-85:**  
Warm colour and firelight.  
Ornate plaster work contrasting  
simpler interior.

Shapes and repetitions. Japanese vases.

Jean Royère wall lights  
reflecting the shape of the wall  
behind them, singing  
yellow velvet Royère chair holding  
the corner.









**Attic staircase, page 85:**

Simple steps up to the attic.  
Internal window naturally lighting the way.  
Stone, walls, steps all the same tone.

**Swimming pool, pages 86-87:**

Minimal swimming pool — natural warmth  
from the wood, reflected in the daybeds.  
Dark, moody water. Lots of space, relaxing energy.  
Fresh feeling, clean and inviting at  
the same time. Serenity.

**Swimming pool, page 88:**

Roman stone fragments set into the wall — the  
only decoration. Ancient and new.

**Staircase, page 89:**

Stair to lower floors, wood taking over  
from stone — darkness leading down to floors,  
with no natural light.

Pink light spilling from the  
Anish Kapoor wall piece above, decorating  
the softly curved stair. Classic shapes.  
Simple planked doors below to contrast.  
Little adornment, so the staircase with classic  
spindle and tread feels alive in the space.

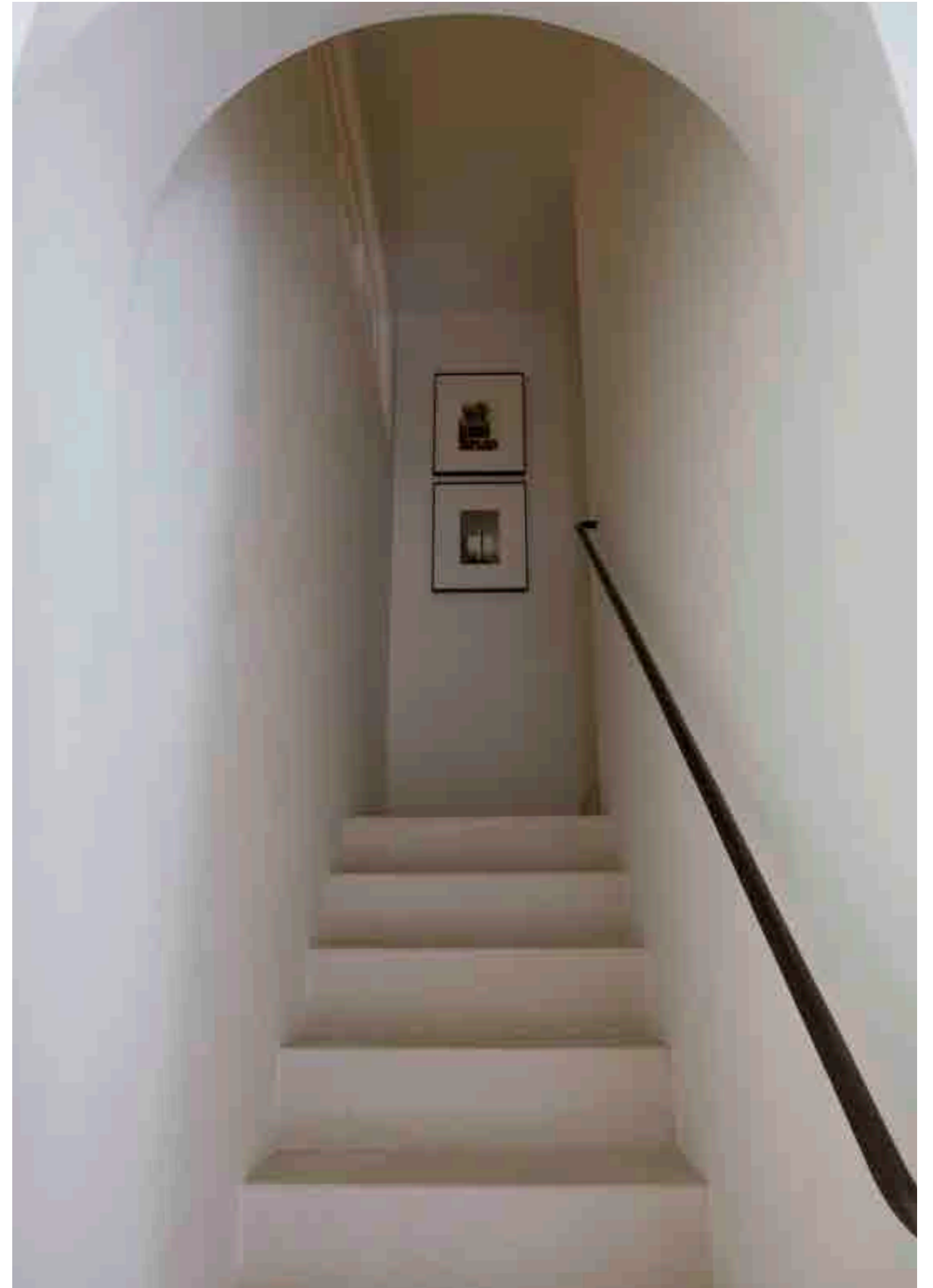
**Cinema, bar and poker room, pages 90-93:**

Dramatic change of pace in the  
cinema, bar, and poker room. Another world with  
a bit of magic, like a cabinet of curiosities.

Full, warm, deep colours. Bookcase  
hidden beyond the curtain runs smoothly into  
the wine cellar with a Dickensian glass wall.

Printed velvet walls, for glamour  
and to absorb sound. Rich, cosy. Lalanne lantern  
over the poker table. Deep, enveloping comfort.

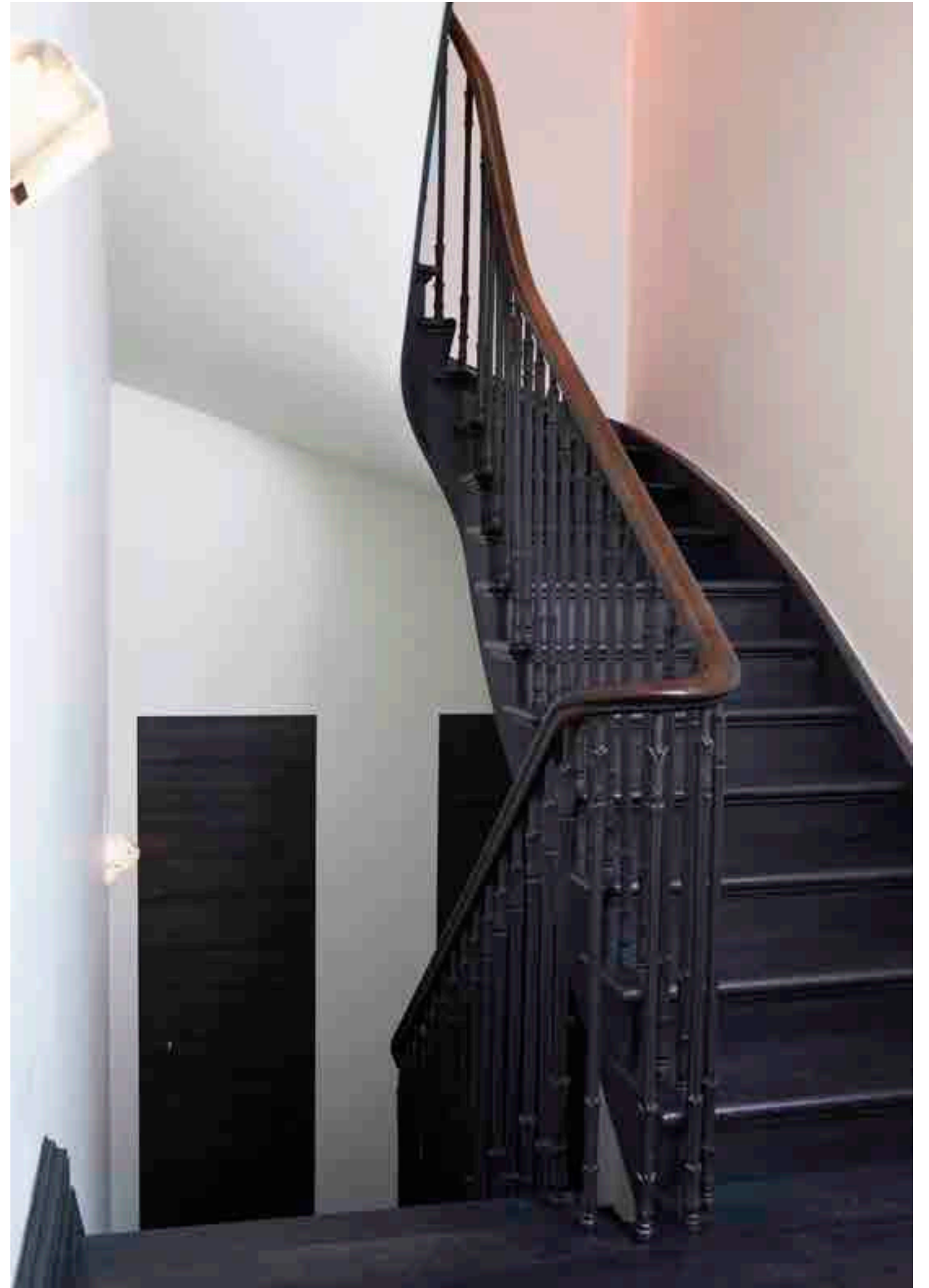
Galle lights hanging low over side table.  
Evening mood.





















## CHELSEA HOUSE

In 1880 this charming red brick house in Tite Street, was designed by E.W. Godwin for a painter named Frank Miles. Chelsea was a hub of creativity at the time: Whistler, Wilde, Singer Sargent all lived here. Godwin was a progressive architect and designer, highly influential in the Aesthetic Movement, which was then flourishing.

I was asked to restore and furnish the studio floor of this property, which had lost its way over the years. It was a wonderful space, still open to the eaves and full of precious northern light. I wanted to create an interior here that nodded to Godwin, without being a historical re-creation. The decorative style of the day was very full, layered and too heavy for now. I wanted to offer a new interpretation, something fresh with a surprising mix of colours and gestures, a playful modern take. It should reference the period authentically but creatively.

First the space had to be architecturally stripped back and restored — there was a great deal of poor detailing added that was hiding the prettier bones of the building, especially in the studio. The boldest element of the design here is the hand-printed wallpaper, contrasting with the pattern in the library. Working with a historic wallpaper specialist, we developed the paper from a Godwin sketch in the archives at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

To me, the result is so wonderfully alive it feels like a crisp green apple. Light and uplifting. Wanting to handle it in a more modern way, I covered the whole studio with the paper, running it up into the eaves and all over the ceiling. A frieze of Godwin irises runs above the original wainscot. This, combined with the overarching paper, gently grounds the room.

The adjoining library is in period pattern too, designed by Godwin's contemporary William Morris. His red Brer Rabbit fabric was an interesting contrast, and the mix of colours and patterns from two greats of that period felt delightful and right.

The furniture started with a number of classic pieces from the Aesthetic period, including chairs designed by Godwin himself. From here we branched out with an eclectic but harmonious mix designed to suggest a collection built over time.

Invited for dinner after everything was finished, we spent a very happy evening in the studio, with the fires lit and candles burning. The atmosphere felt just right, and I felt proud.

### Studio, page 95:

Wallpaper climbing up into the eaves.  
Purple irises above original wainscot.

### Studio, pages 96-97:

Godwin chairs, at home,  
either side of the table laid for lunch.  
Bust of Palladio looking down.



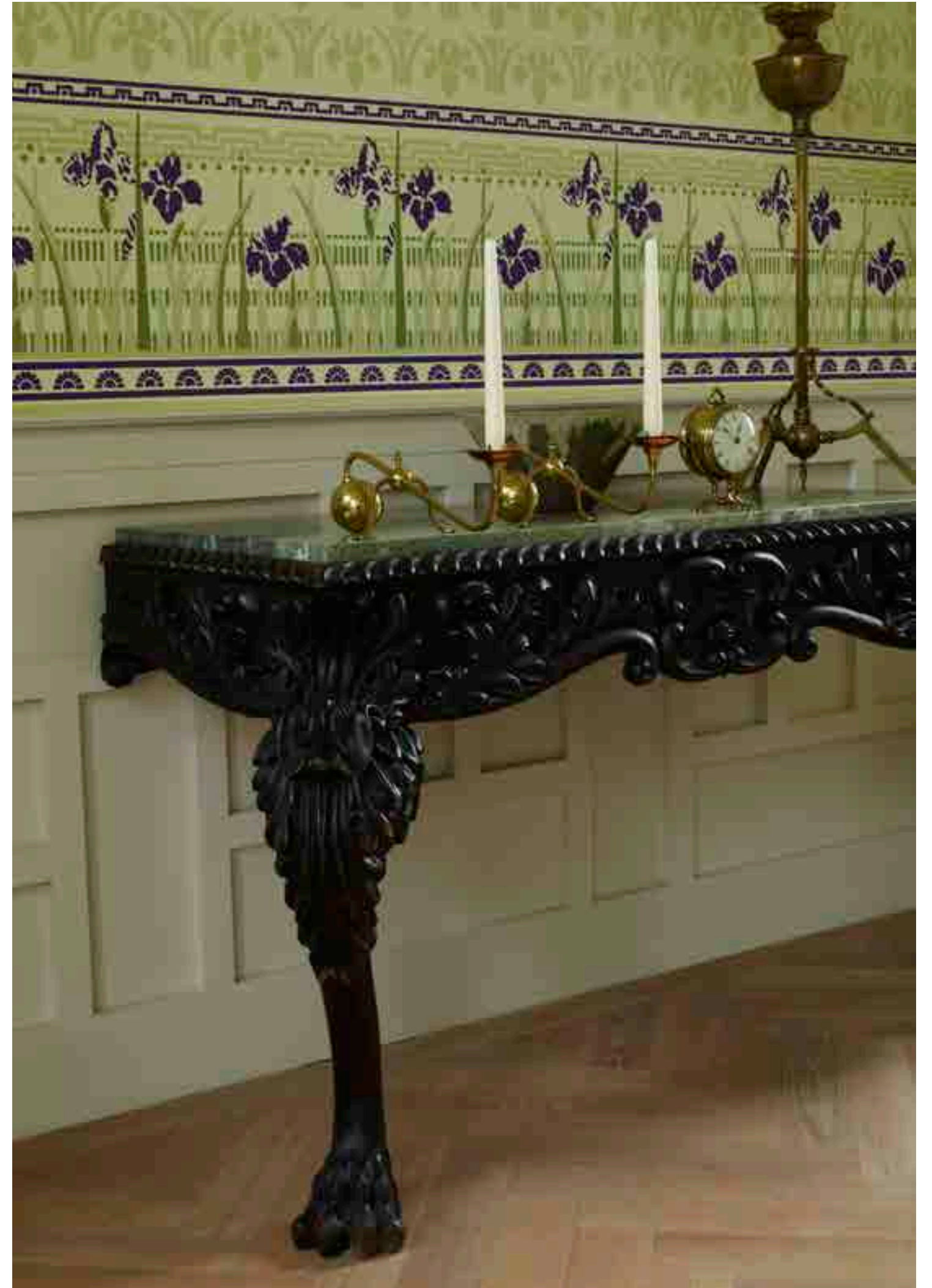


















**Studio, pages 98-99:**  
William Morris bunnies on the lovely original daybeds either side of the fireplace. Lucian Freud *Pluto* above. Period copper wall lights. Welcoming nook.

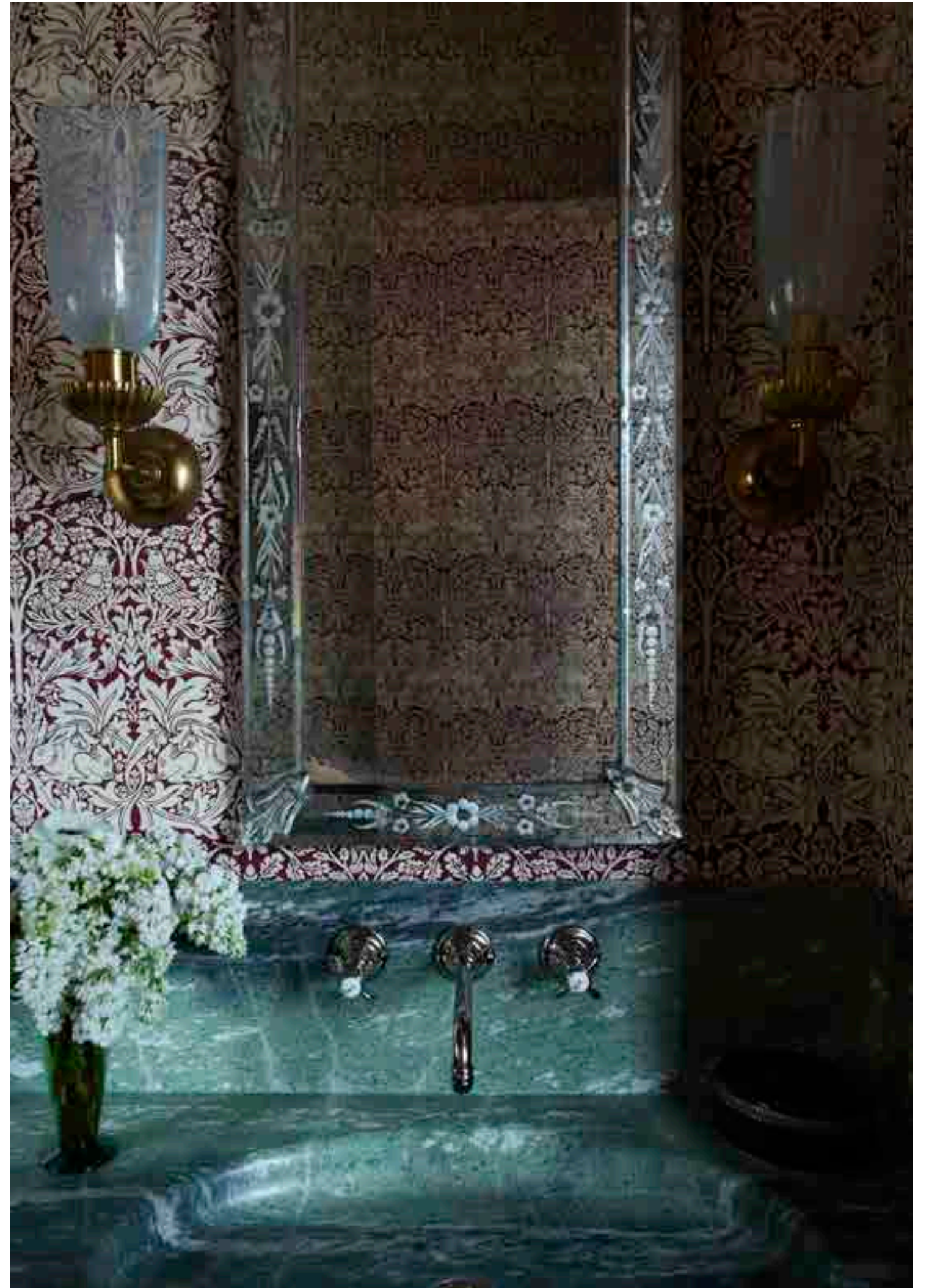
**Studio, pages 100-01:**  
W.A.S. Benson pendant lights with original cut-glass shades. Frivolity and superb craft.  
Early nineteenth-century Irish table with Swedish marble top counterbalances Benson brass candlesticks.  
A riot of materials, carved wood, brass, marble, painted irises, contemporary ceramic.

**Studio, pages 102-03:**  
Studio full of light. Carved Georgian mirror over the original fireplace. Happy contrasts. RU marble table in the corner — modern with Aestheticism.

**Library, pages 105-07:**  
Cosy and inviting. Red in different tones and shades. Green Swedish marble again, for continuity.









Library, page 109:  
French, simulated bamboo day  
bed by Jacques Adnet — TV hidden behind  
a fabric panel. Lovely, inviting mix.





## CLAPHAM HOUSE

This Grade II\* listed house sits in a plum position overlooking Clapham Common, one of the few surviving villas of this kind that had remained, with much of its period detail intact. The bones of this glorious late Georgian villa were exquisite and it was beautifully balanced. The scale and the proportions were so satisfying, I was excited as soon as I stepped inside.

I was engaged to create a family home, and at the same time to design a building in the garden on the footprint of a later, unlisted, pool house. It was to provide a garden room and a gym.

As always with heritage listed buildings, it was a challenge to honour the building and yet answer the numerous needs of modern-day life. Here, we were restricted both in what materials we could use and what changes we could make. For example, fireplaces had to be replaced with what was precisely correct for the period. Georgian pine floors that had degraded couldn't be changed, so hiding repairs and imperfections was a problem that needed solving. Challenges like these are stimulating; enhancing the lovely details were the key to holding on to the house's beauty.

I wanted this house to feel open and gracious, but also informal and soft. Elevated, but easy to live in. Warm antique furniture, with a sprinkling of pieces from the twentieth century, and the odd contemporary piece. Very little was new here. The owners' taste leaned more to the antique, and I wanted to keep the energy reflective of the past — but in a modern, minimal way.

The house is decorated with a light palette of softly textured paint, shades of white to yellow, earthy colours to a delicate duck egg blue.

The garden room was an exciting challenge. In the end, I designed a building that would sit very quietly, tucked away at the end of the garden. There are echoes of the house in the brick façade and in the arched French doors. The building is simple and low, with a skylight barely visible from the house or garden. In time, the wisteria planted by Tom Stuart-Smith, who designed the garden, will cover the orangery in a heavenly lilac coat, making the approach and discovery of this garden room a little more romantic.

It is a remarkable gem of a house, and it was such a pleasure to work on. I hope that now, it also feels like a welcoming home.

Exterior, page 111:  
The grand entrance with its stone portico.









**Drawing room, pages 112-13:**

The drawing room with its original cornice quietly ornamenting the room.

Glamorous sofas with carved and gilded feet dressed down in old linen. A Sheila Hicks tapestry over the fireplace, the first piece of art we bought for this house, in pride of place.

Earthy colours. Antique linen on the ottoman.

Candle sconces either side of the Hicks. Lovely light pours into this room. Colours that soothe, that candlelight would enhance.

**Drawing room, page 115:**

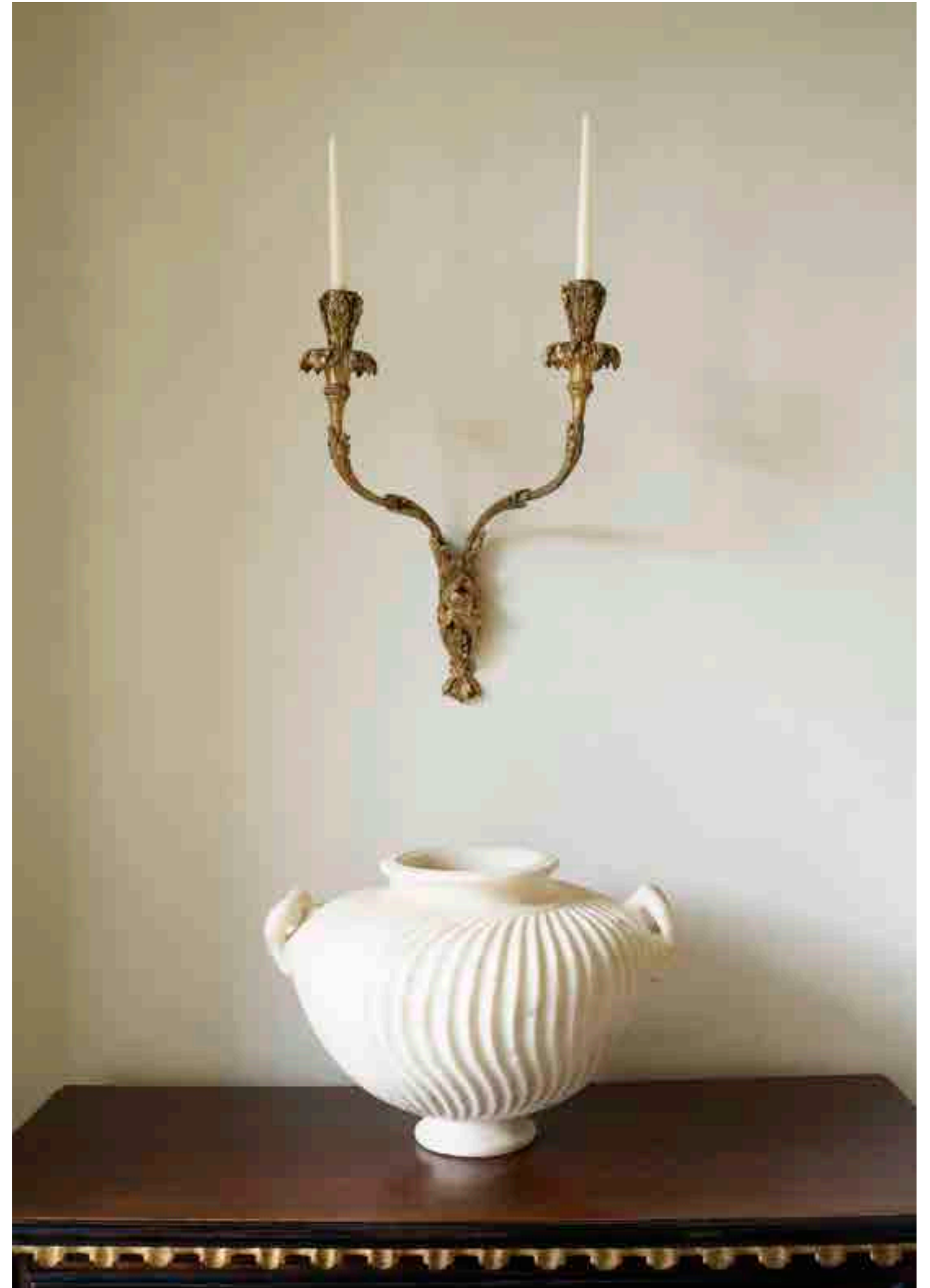
A glorious Roman strigulated vase sits majestic under the carved wall sconces. Candlelight. Gilded threads all through this room.

**Kitchen, pages 116-17:**

Panelled doors and a nineteenth-century cabinet. RU cone lamps with gilded interior over the island. Primitive nineteenth-century paintings leaning. Back kitchen beyond.

**Library, pages 118-19:**

Rich and full. Earthy colours, deep golden velvet on the Art Nouveau sofa by Léon Jallot. Korean patchwork wall hanging above the bar. Pendant by Ingo Maurer. Chess table with red leather, Kaare Klint chairs either side.













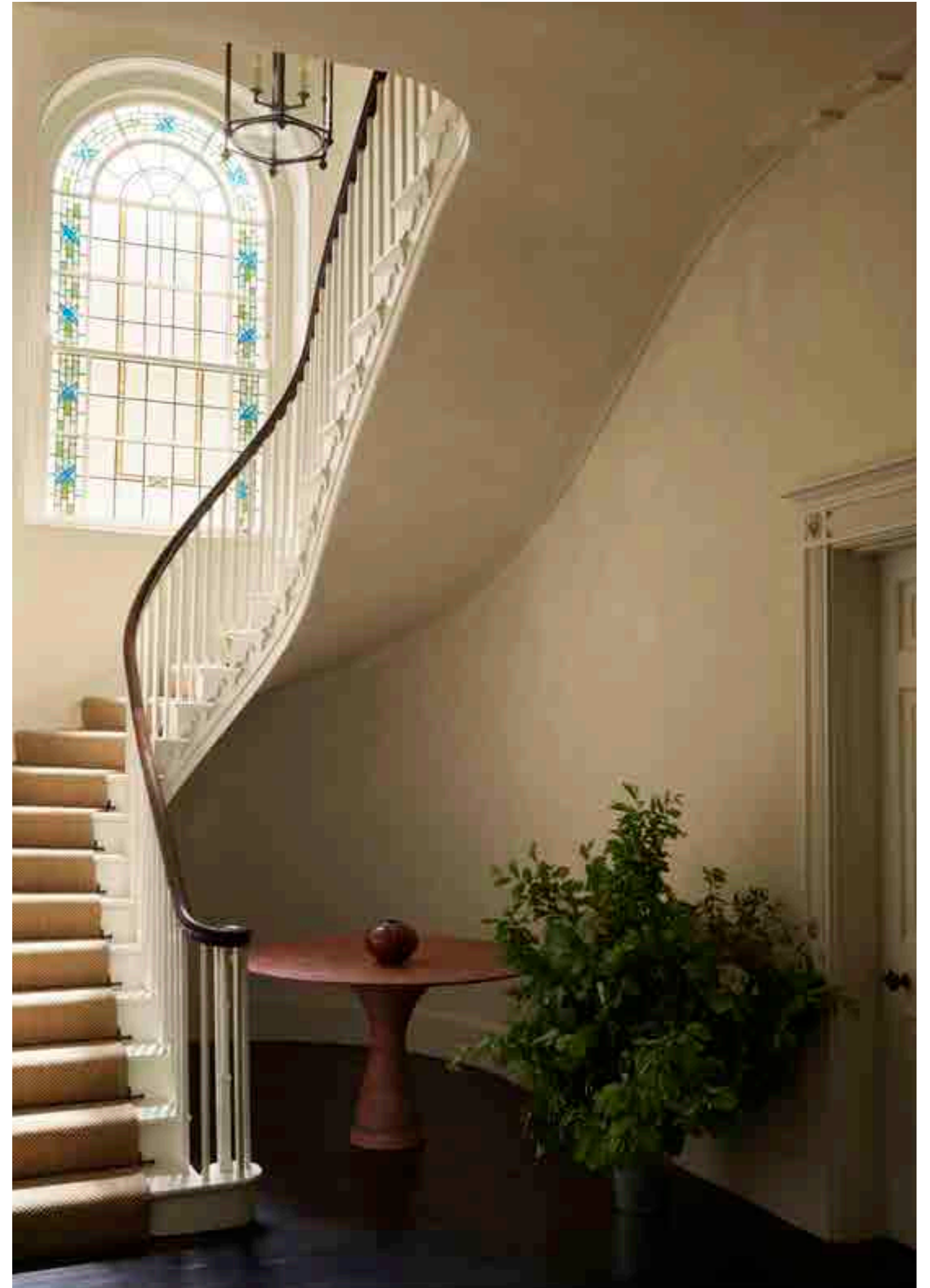
**Staircase, page 121:**

The flowing original staircase with a high arched window decorating the way.

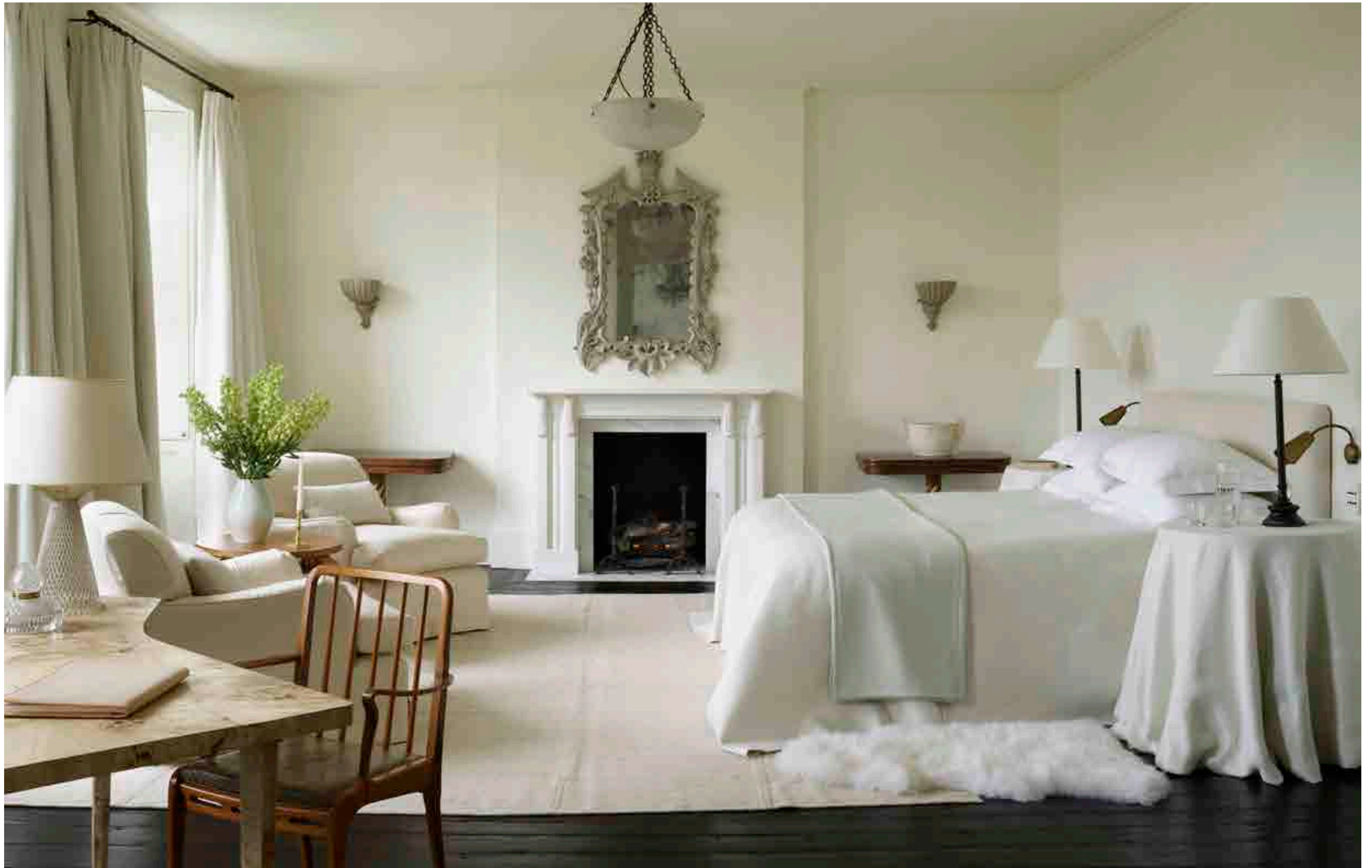
**Bedroom, pages 122-23:**

A bedroom in duck egg blue. Like a cloud, with an ethereal grace. A carved Georgian mirror with nineteenth-century card tables on gilded spirals. RU carved wall sconces complementing the mirror, RU bedside lights, and wool bedspread, with a baby blue blanket. With RU desk in Burr Poplar.

There is no highlight anywhere. The understated Georgian details can be seen and create their own drama with the play of light and shadow.









**Bathroom, page 125:**  
Light-filled bathroom with  
eighteenth-century chest of drawers.  
Japanese ceramic and Loetz.  
Original pine floors gently darkened.

**Spare bedroom, pages 126-27:**  
Warm tones. Robert Lorimer chest of drawers,  
exactly contemporary with the house,  
and with the same uncomplicated beauty.  
The original drawing for the inlaid hunting scene  
was found inside a drawer, and it can be  
seen in the reflection of the bathroom mirror.  
French mirror with amber glass.  
Hanging marble basin.

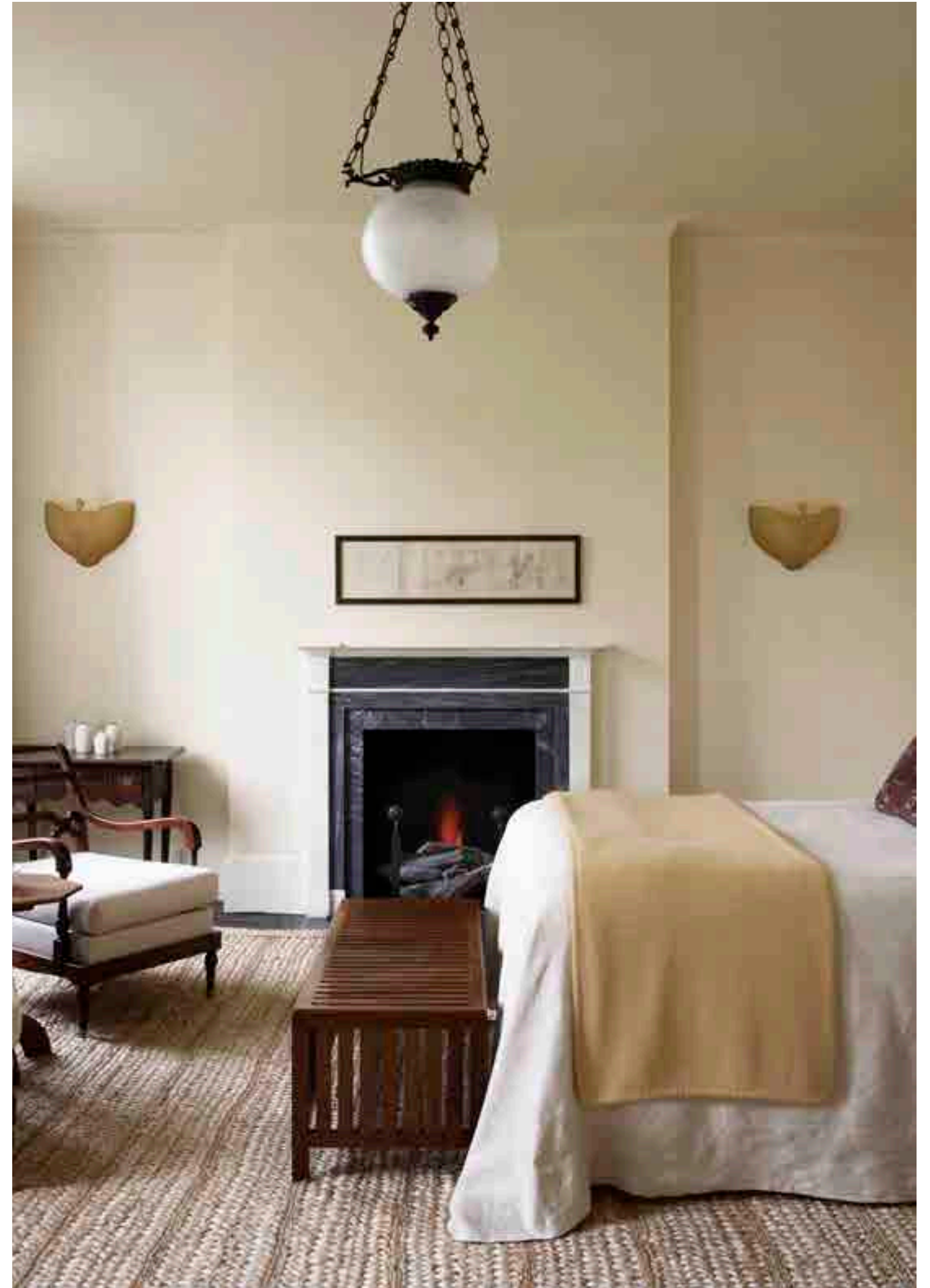








Spare bedroom, page 129:  
Carved resin wall sconces by  
Judy Kensley McKie either side of the fire.  
Regency lantern hanging. Golden colours.  
Generous space over the fireplace  
entirely given over to the small framed  
drawing. Exactly the balance of minimalism  
and period that I wanted throughout.  
Georgian beauty underdressed.





**Hallway, page 131:**  
The wonderful hallway, with view to the garden. Period details gently enhanced with only light and shadow. Columns. One colour throughout. Again, the original nailed pine floor, stained darker. Grounding everything. A fourteenth-century Solomonic column spiralling in the corner.

**Garden room, pages 132 - 33:**  
A modern orangery.  
Painted brick everywhere, old limestone tiles. Arches, full of planting and light.

**Gym, pages 134 - 35:**  
The hidden gym  
with natural light source above.  
Clean, black and white.

**Wine cellar, pages 136 - 37:**  
The wine cellar in the vault.  
Original floor. As little intervention as possible.

















## ST. JOHN'S WOOD HOUSE

Here my brief was to create a maximalist, full-colour, full-pattern interior for this charming nineteenth-century North London townhouse, as a home for a creative couple and their children. It was invigorating to be asked to do something that didn't exactly fit in with my previous work, and I was immediately excited. I would like to think that, in my projects, I bring a number of years of experience, and hopefully a bit of useful knowledge, but at the end of the day, letting go and working instinctively can often yield something exciting and different. Here I wanted to move my more restrained self out of the way and have some fun.

Mikhail Riches architects had already drawn up a design for the contemporary extension and below-ground scheme, so I first set about working on the development of these areas, while at the same time trying to find a way to blend this into the existing house. The house has its own lovely character, and I wanted to keep that in the architectural design, find it again where it was lost, and make it central overall.

If there was a picture in my mind, it would have been to create a warm, quirky, and inviting atmosphere for this characterful house. It was important not to deny the period in any way, but to find a language for the contemporary parts of the house that worked comfortably with the old. Maybe these different characters would be a little discordant, but I felt I could make these frictions work, not least because they would echo the way I wanted the vivid colours all over the house to work — as unlikely bedfellows but very satisfying. Rich colours, primary colours, patterns, these can all work well together. I tried to create some interesting juxtapositions where I could, between both patterns and colours. Moving from one colour to the next can make for a lovely unexpected explosion of energy. I'm always interested in the way one thing affects another — this goes for furniture as well as colour. I never want to be shocked, but I love a playful surprise.

I was given a great deal of freedom here — and it felt like a gift.

### TV room, pages 139–41:

Cosy TV room upholstered in green velvet, a sofa you can really sink into.  
Photographer Hendrik Kerstens' *Lampshade* (2008). Books, warmth.

Garden view, light flooded.  
Ceiling lamp by Seth Stein. Exquisite pressed silver panels, bought in the Chatsworth Sale, as pelmets. Red leather reading lamp by Jacques Adnet.



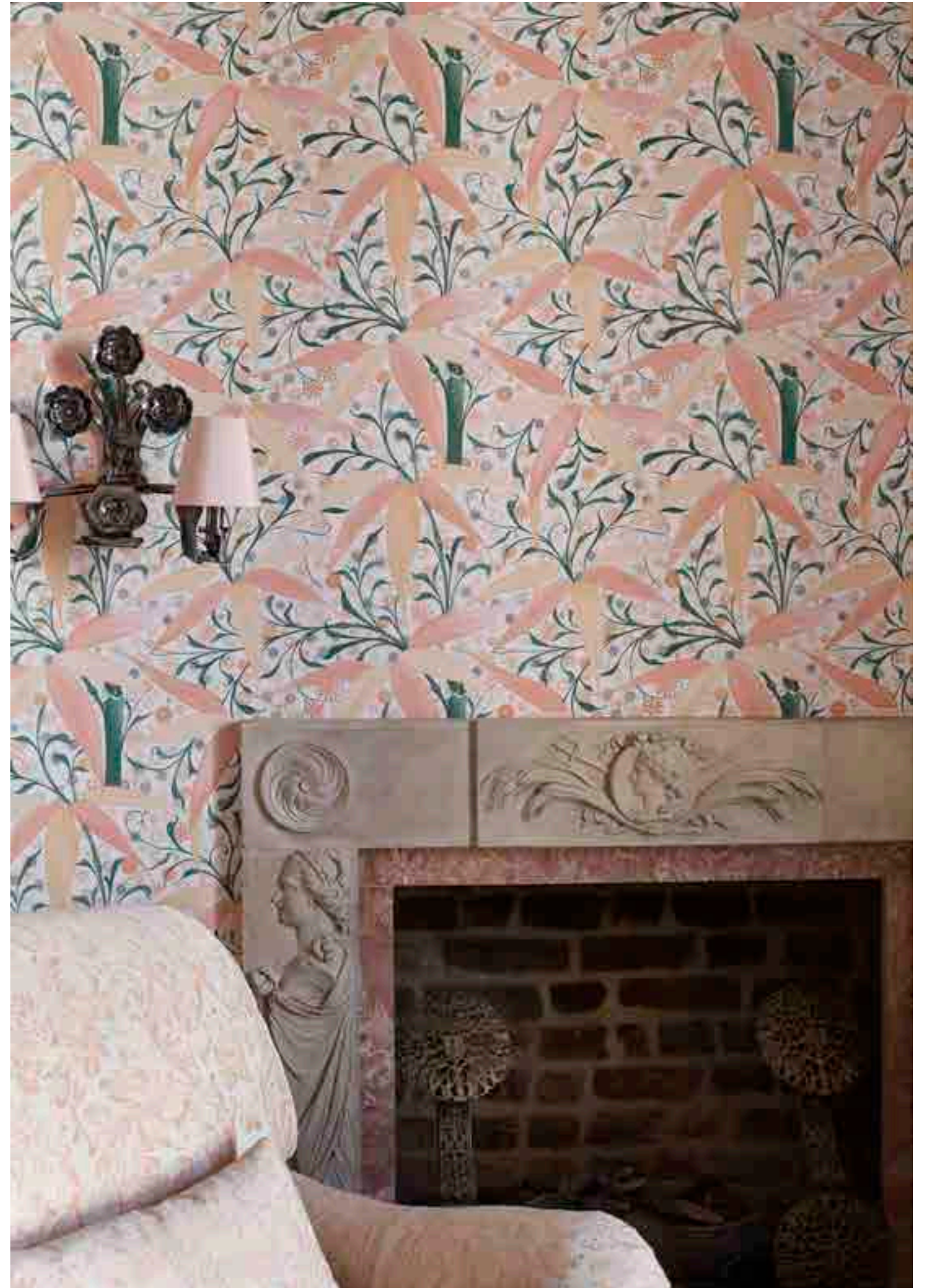














**Study, pages 142-45:**

Pink study adjoining the green room — a hint of green to settle this pattern into companionship with the green next door. Contrast, soft pink, harmony. This is a Godwin pattern — my love of Godwin developed whilst working on Tite Street, when we were tempted by so many lovely Godwin designs in the V&A. This is one of them — it was perfect here. A little bit frivolous, full of pattern and warmth, playful — a lovely challenge to the Chatsworth silver moulded pelmet, and also to the Fortuny covering the armchairs. The Beehive light by Alvar Aalto hangs in the middle — as in the green TV room, a very modern centre light to throw off the classic. In green to echo the velvet next door.

The wallpaper, reduced in scale on the ceiling. A rich mix with the vines on the cornice. The period fireplace a perfect fit, leafy and decorative.

Firedogs, wall sconces, circles and flowers everywhere.

**Red room, page 147:**

Deep rich red room, a wall-mounted cabinet by Christopher Dresser. Framed by W.A.S. Benson wall lights.

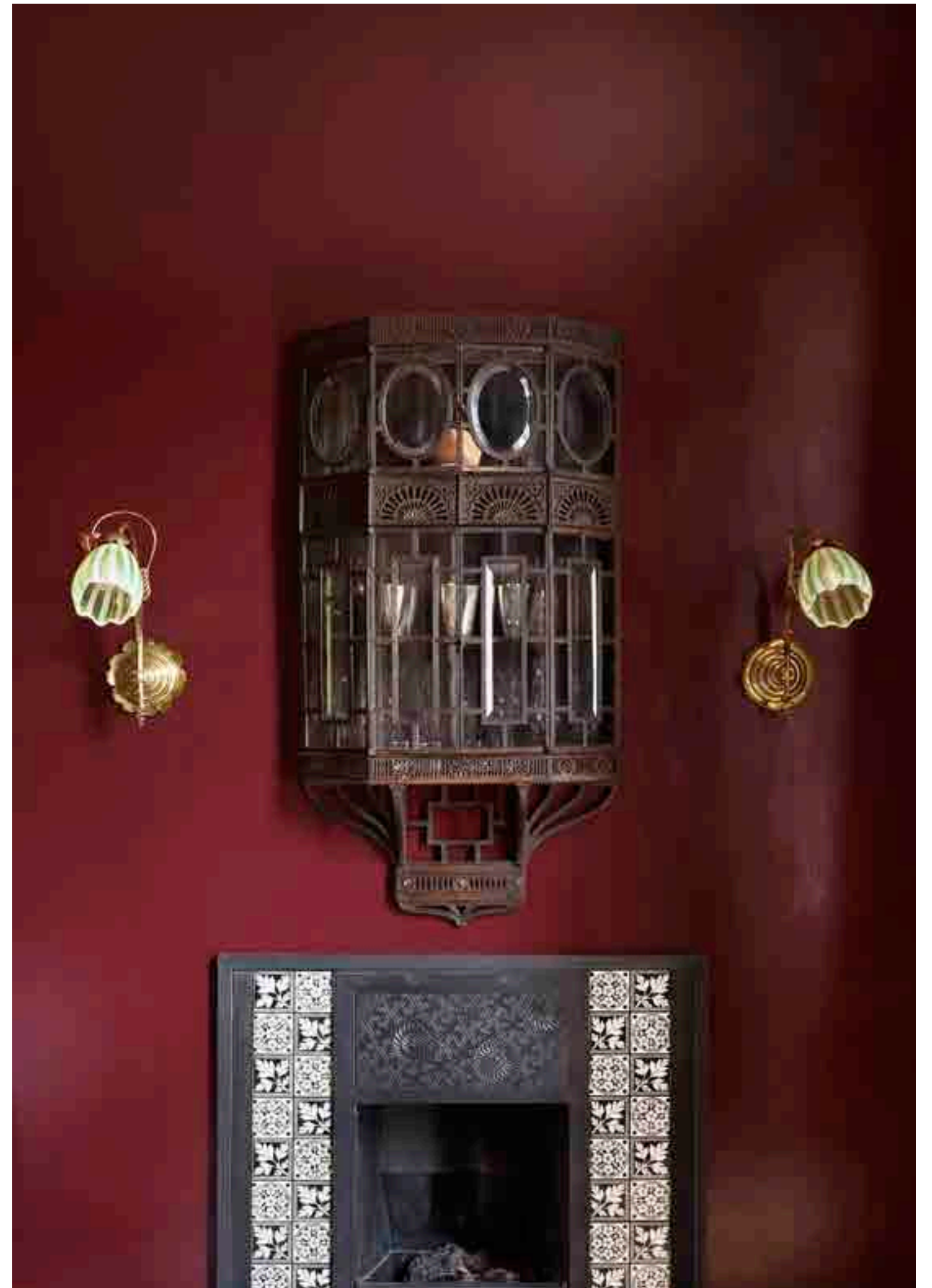
Wonderful surprise beyond the pink hallway — a comfortable shift but unexpected.

**Staircase, pages 148-49:**

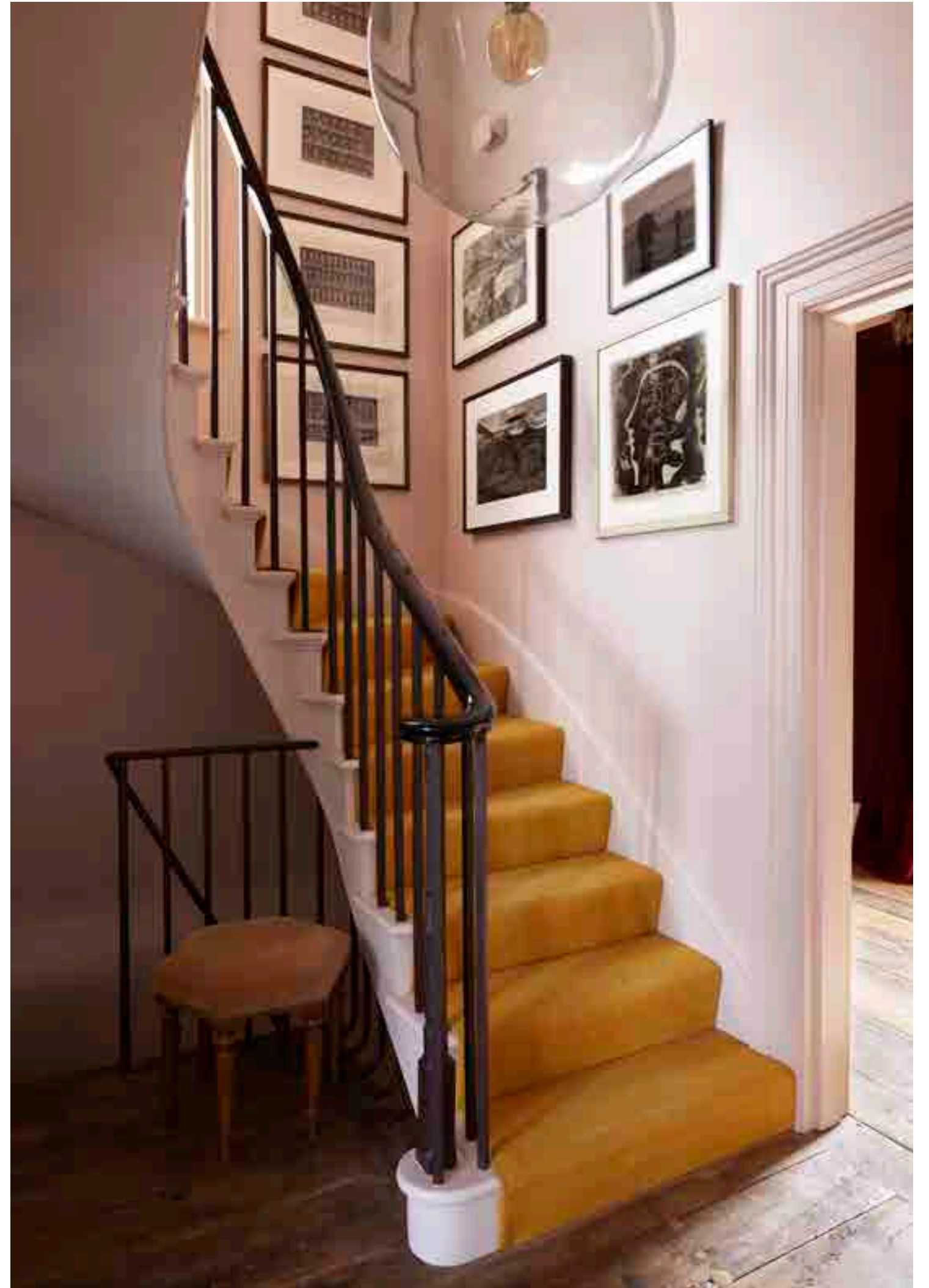
Previously boxed in, now softly rounded, all the hard edges and casing removed — just the movement of a curved stair showing in pink. Pink hallway, warm golden yellow stairs.

Lovely friendly mix.

Exciting with deep red velvet just visible beyond.









**Yellow bedroom, pages 151-53:**  
Another Godwin pattern.  
Uplifting, sunny, and happy. The small window by William Morris made in the 1870's tucked into the wall between the bedroom and the green shower room.  
Flowers blooming everywhere.  
A 1930's Josef Frank chest of drawers, and table lamp by W.A. S. Benson.

**Bathroom, pages 154-55:**  
Tiled bathroom, William Morris window.  
Reflections. Fresh, clean energy.

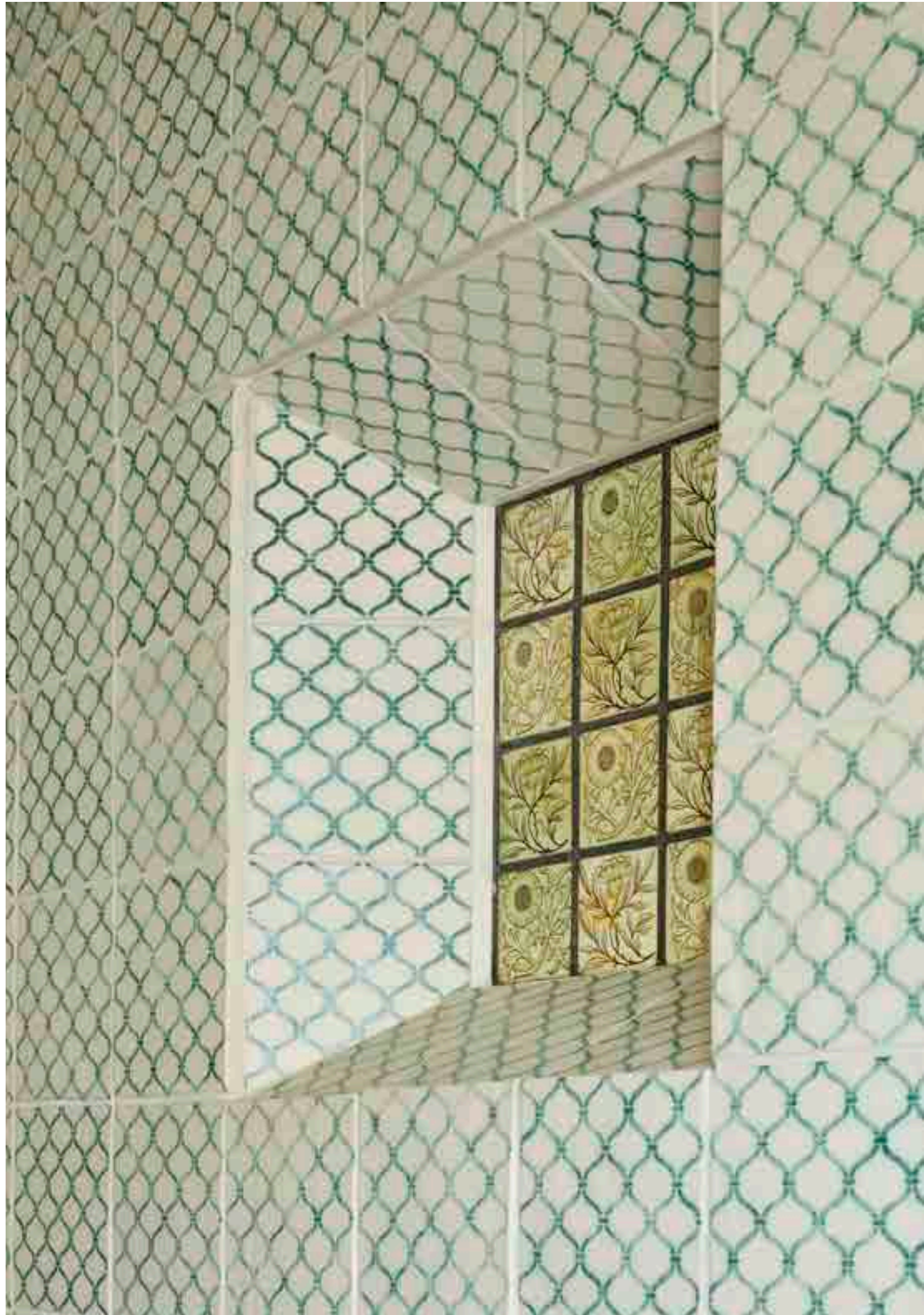
**Bedrooms, pages 156-59:**  
Seaside stripes in the bedrooms, one pink and one blue.  
Holiday feeling.



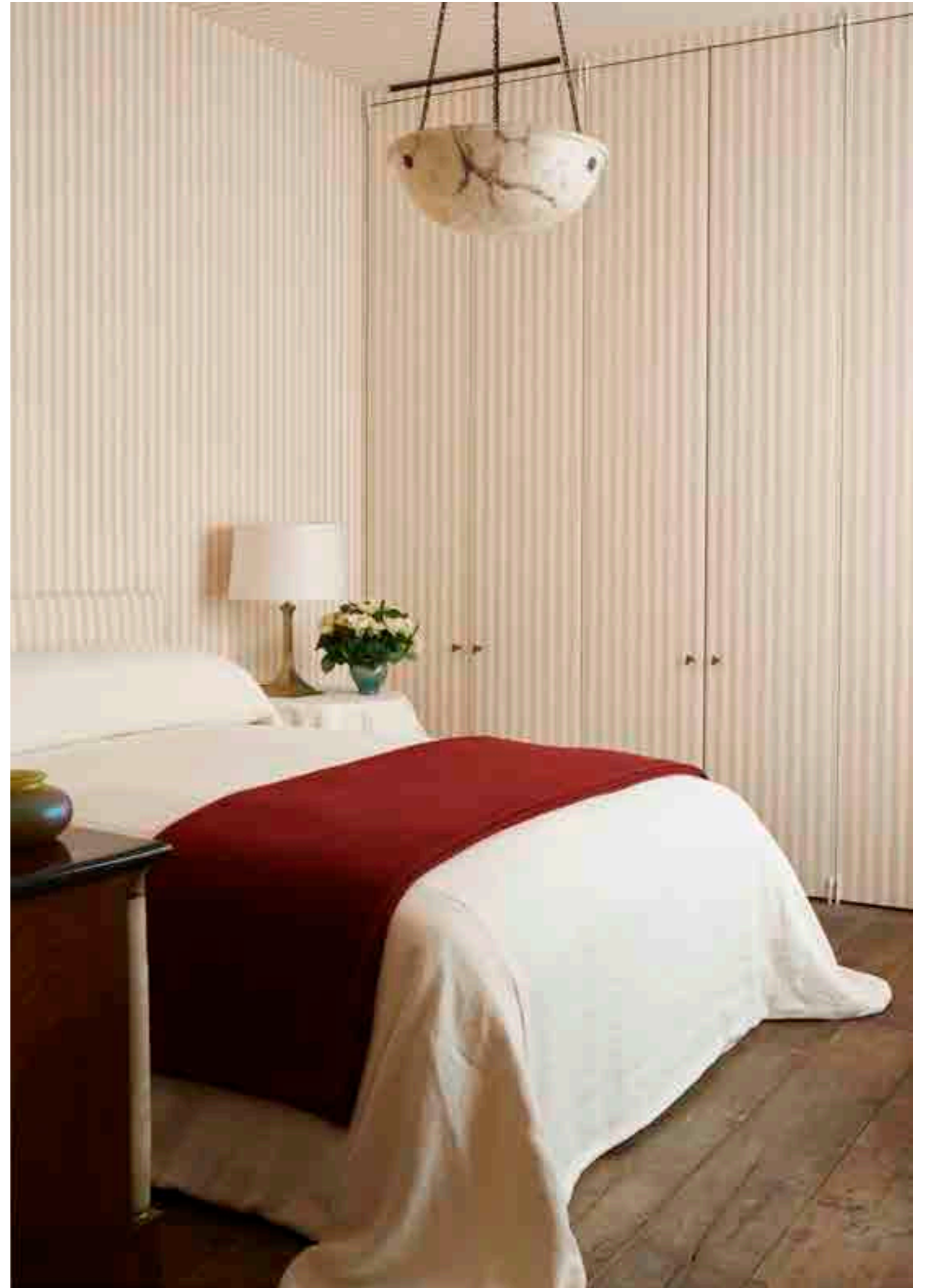
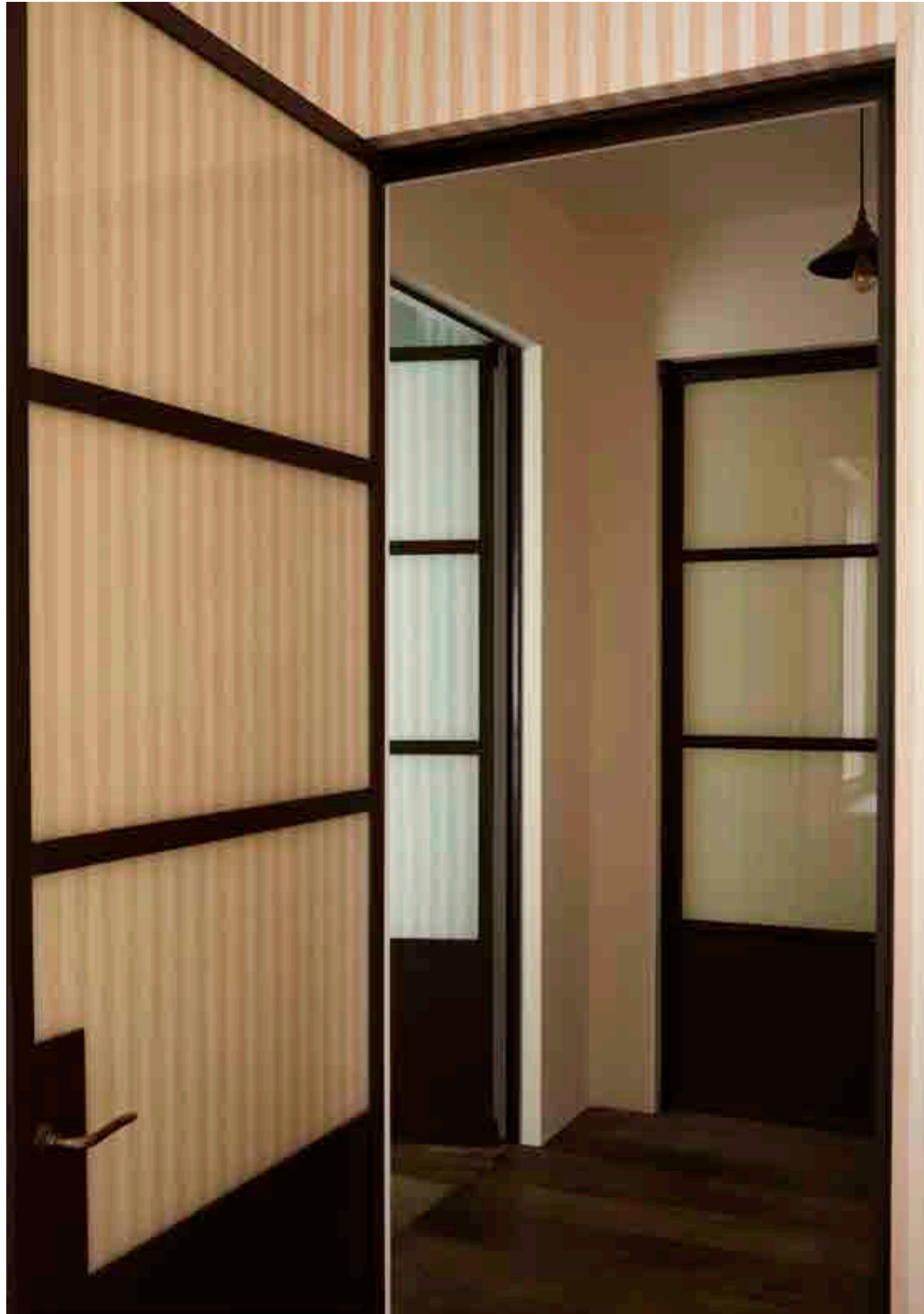


















## POOL HOUSE

This contemporary pool house was built to sit between the swimming pool and the tennis court, within the beautiful walled garden of a Grade I seventeenth-century manor house in the English countryside. This was a happy appointment for me.

The exterior architecture was developed by the firm Michaelis Boyd, and my task was to configure and design the whole of the interior space. It needed to offer somewhere to cook, dine, and relax. I wanted it to feel like the perfect summer room, welcoming you in when the sun was too hot, where a breeze would feel good. Although its main role was to provide for lazy summer days, I didn't want it to feel like a room that couldn't function during other seasons. It would be such a waste otherwise.

Everything had to be natural and practical with a warm contemporary energy, echoing its structure, but grounded by a sense of the old walls surrounding it, and a feeling of "garden."

It should be a room that offers nothing more than what is needed but in a very luxurious way. I pictured the interior often as if it had no roof — as if it were open to the elements, simply waiting to offer some food, a drink, a chair.

I wanted old beams in the ceiling structure, just as a nod to a period barn. Perhaps there was a barn with beams like these in the grounds here once upon a time. I wanted them to be the only decoration in the structure. The ceiling colour and texture matched the walls, and the finish was a little cloudy, like the sky. It was all very simple, and I used very few materials here — old oak, brick, plaster, and concrete.

I hope this pool house has something of a dreamy quality to its modernity, just like the beautiful walled garden it sits within. This was the first of several projects I have done with these owners in the years since and it is always an honour to be invited back.

### Sauna entrance, page 161:

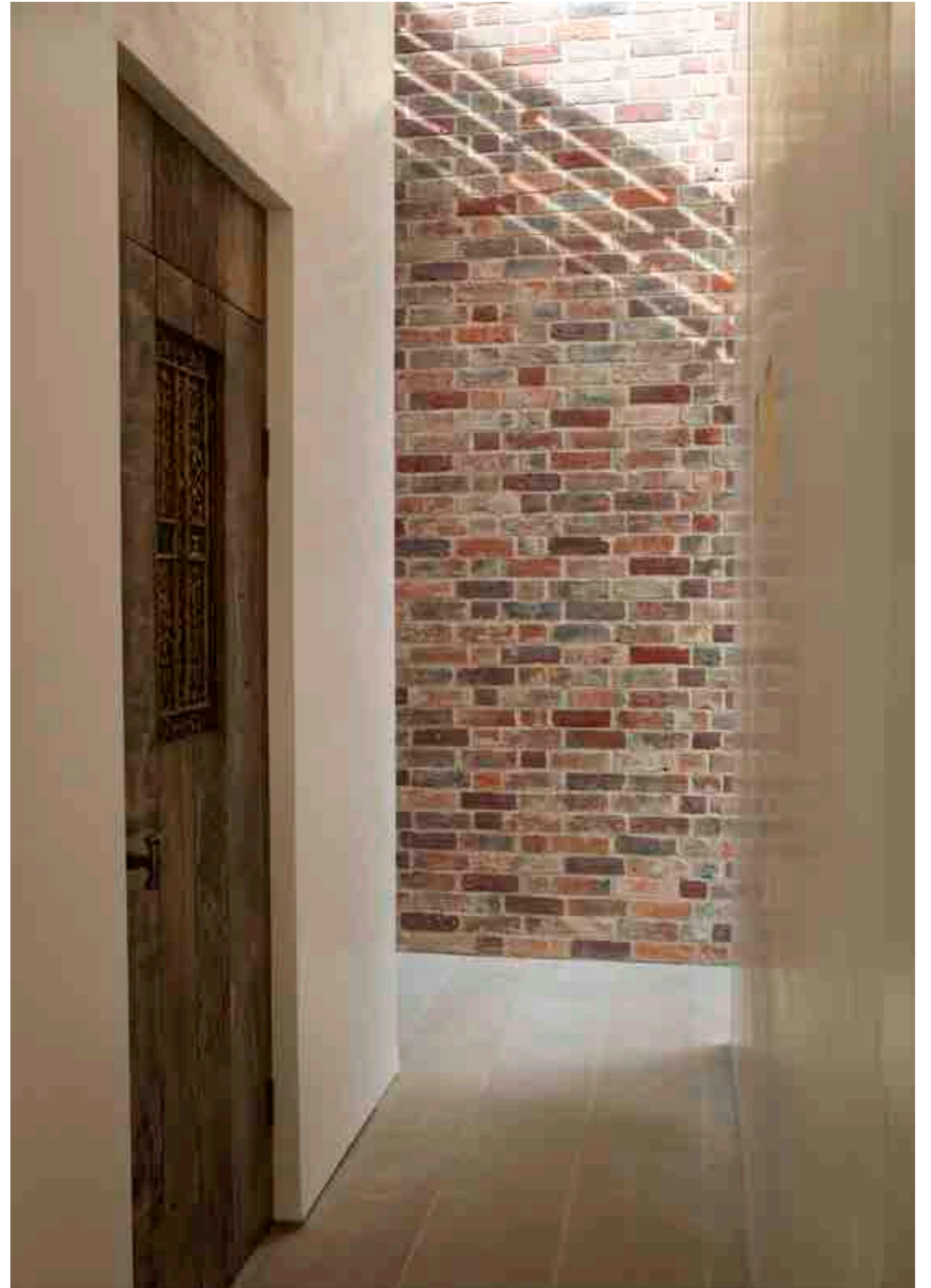
A seventeenth-century wrought iron panel is set into a door made of old wooden planks.

### Pages 162–63:

View through to the swimming pool.  
Easy summer living. We made a thick-topped table out of oak, robust enough to withstand use, and it will get better with age. Benches to squeeze in crowds. The kitchen is designed to fade into the background when not in use.  
RU bar stools, and hanging lights.

### Pages 164–65:

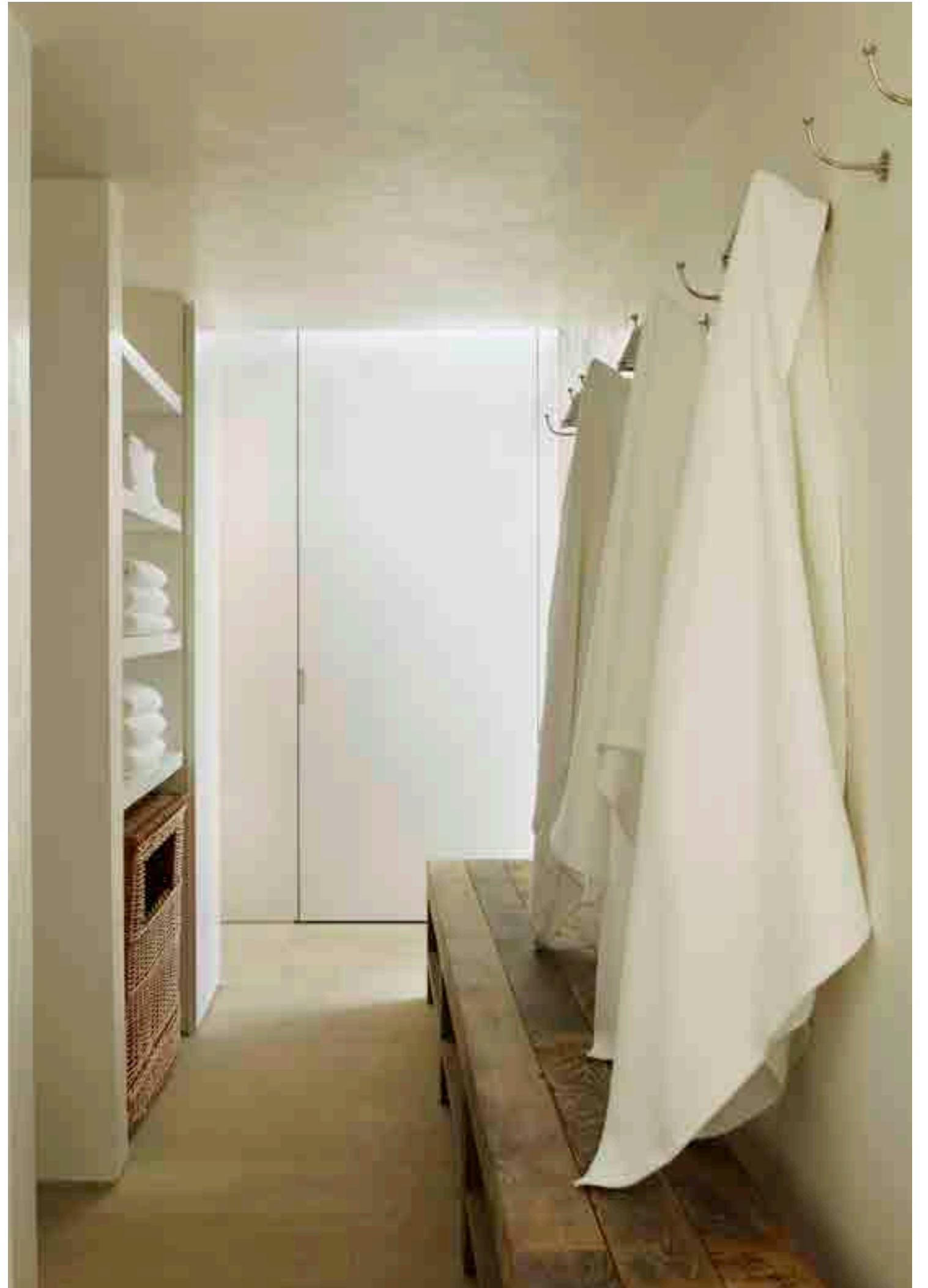
The basin, formed out of a slab of marble.  
Simple and clean. The changing area, with everything you need, but no more. The private changing room is tucked between the basin and the towels, with a curtain for privacy.













## WEST END APARTMENT

This charming apartment sits above a gallery, and is a London bolthole for the owners and their visiting artists. My task was to develop something that would be peaceful and cosy, with a couple of bedrooms, open-plan living and kitchen dining, with lots of space for books. I had to find a way to introduce some character to the plain plastered shell, and at the same time I wanted to keep it contemporary and very simple. So, in this project too, nothing more than the essential felt like a good place to start. The fire, with logs to burn. Books to read, and a place to sit and read them with enough light for reading by day or in the evening. A dining table and chairs. Furniture that could offer storage where necessary. A kitchen with everything hidden, as the room is open-plan.

In order to create a heart for the main room here, we introduced the chimney breast and a log fire, with a stack of shelves either side. Underneath all of this we secured a thick natural piece of stone, which formed a useful deep, raised platform but also created a space for logs beneath. The room started to take shape. The owners are avid readers, and so bookshelves were required, but more than that, a wall of books is such a lovely thing. I always think books breathe some sort of indefinable life into a room.

The huge, deep red curtain was both the strongest statement in the room and yet the thing that relaxed everything. I use fabric a lot. A piece of cloth can do so much. There is always a sense of movement and softness, and a clever, effortless quality that is almost temporary. I love that feeling. Unstructured structure or a femininity to counter the masculine. Each room here has one significant colour, always in a textile.

### Sitting room, pages 167-69:

The fire, books, and logs giving character and warmth. Luc Tuymans above the fire. Bent stem lighting casting a pretty downward glow. English button-back library chair, sheepskin carpet.

Natural colours, antique paisley cushions. Economy. Lots of wood, reducing the urban elements.

### Kitchen, pages 170-71:

Simple Shaker style, restrained. Nakashima dining table and chairs. Red linen curtain adding colour. Duck egg blue ceramics. Lovely relationship between the pale blue and the red.

RU lights hanging in the kitchen.

### Bedroom, Pages 172-73:

A simple bedroom. Basic, but luxurious.

The bed, with a cosy carpet to step onto.

The cupboard is prettily fitted into the eaves to gain some extra space.

A pretty cloth over the table.



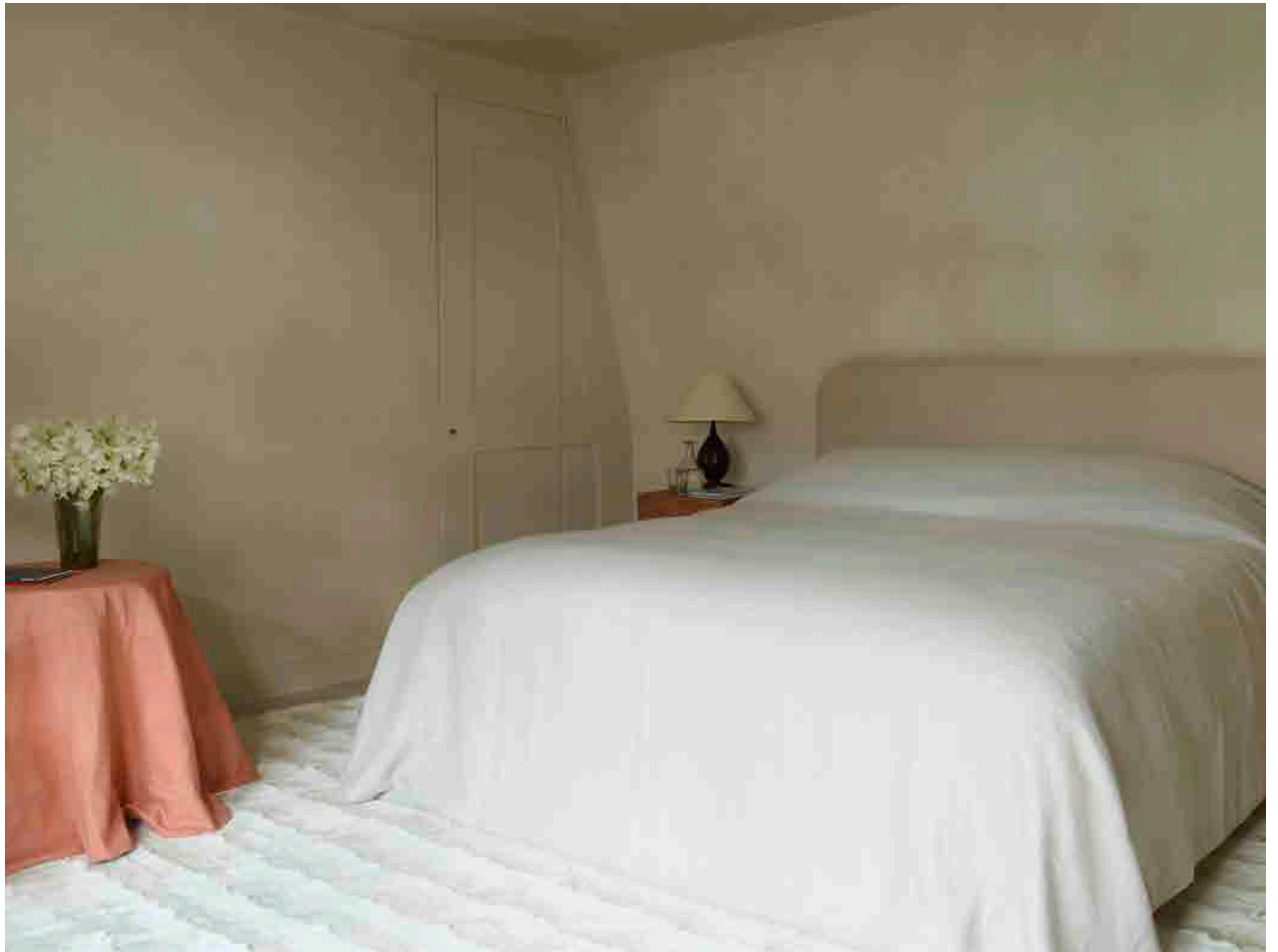














## JO MALONE, GLOUCESTER PLACE

When Estée Lauder bought Jo Malone, I was tasked with the design of their new flagship offices in Central London. The building was a Georgian terraced mansion house with a lovely staircase and many of the original features still intact. A headquarters office poses interesting challenges to the designer. The space here had to be an office, a corporate meeting and entertaining place, and a luxurious and comfortable headquarters for this well-known brand. So it had to be efficient and practical, and it had to feel full of energy and creativity. Then the building added its own nature to the design. With its natural grandeur, lightly emphasised in the design, it was a perfect fit for the brand in its new and exciting incarnation. The idea was for it to feel modern and minimal and very luxurious at the same time.

Jo Malone is about natural scent. The brand catchphrase is, “The natural world will forever be our muse,” so I have threaded this natural theme through all the design. Perfumes are made from plants, so all decoration is plant-themed. The chandeliers are leafy, the photographs by Jean-Luc Moulène are of plant life.

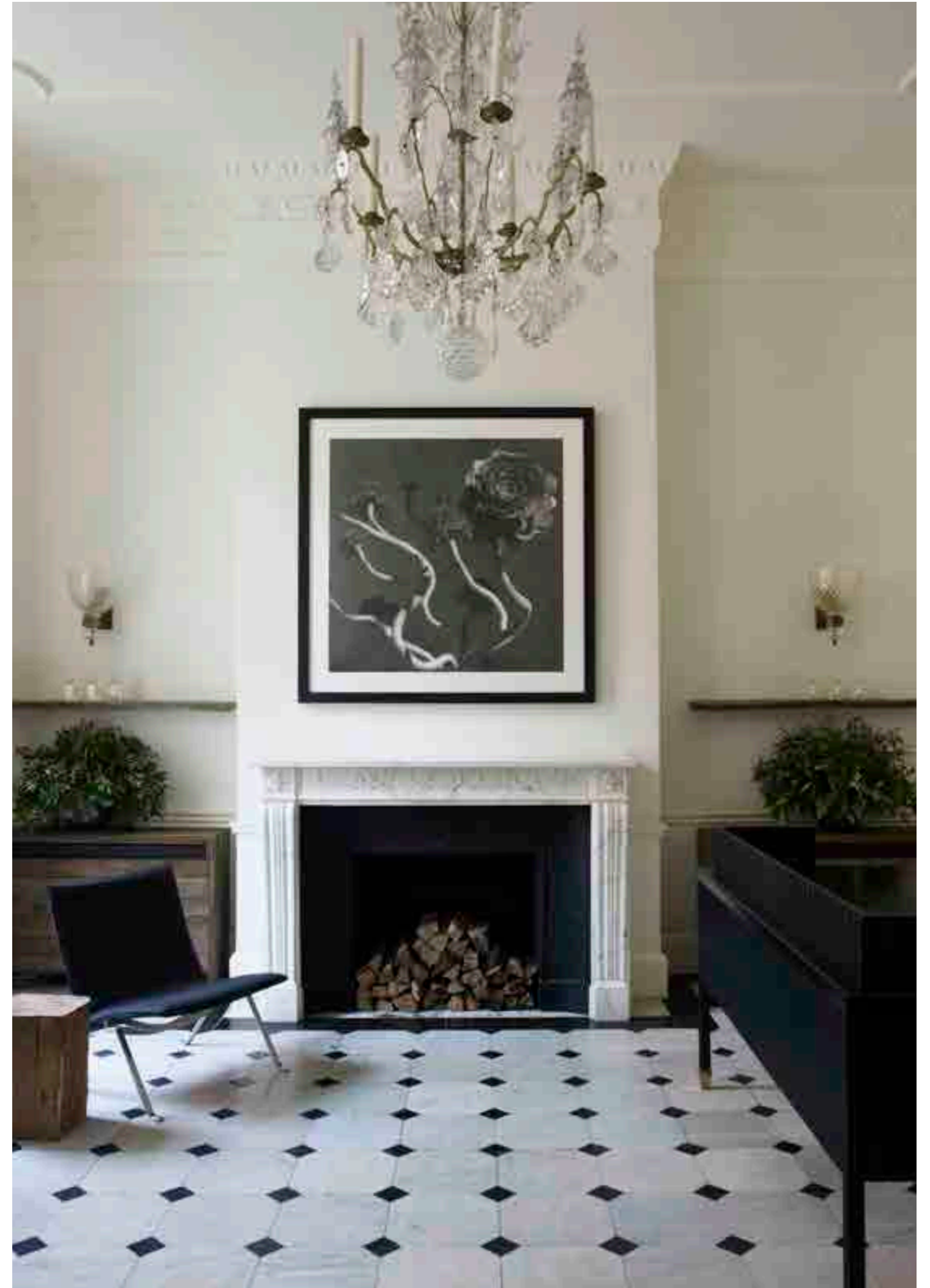
The budget was relatively tight so I had to be creative. I spent the majority on the important rooms and hallway, but the impressive staircase needed attention. It had ugly lights that I couldn’t move and a huge blank wall stretching up to the overhead skylight. I needed to spend a little money on good-quality stair runner and stair rods — they would make the staircase come alive a little more — and the lovely hanging globe. The rest needed to be very inexpensive.

For the vast wall, we bought a huge piece of canvas cloth, the colour of the Malone cream, and I drew a geometric pencil pattern on it. We asked the local dry cleaner to run some lines of thread over the pencil pattern, in black Malone accent colour. It was Velcroed to the wall, and the stairwell was decorated. It felt ideal. For the lights, we made little covers like bath hats, placed them over each tubular light, and tied them on with Malone black ribbons.

A colour scheme was a gesture to the cream and black of the Malone packaging, but I played with the tone of the cream colour. Then, as compensation, if you like, I added a strong and vibrant yellow in opposition. This was a wave to the sunshine needed for growth.

The black accents, which are a trademark of the brand, I gathered together into one strong statement. I wanted something not too broken in its impact but instead, dark and solid. So I threw a thick black velvet cloth over the ottoman and covered the Regency sofa with the same — and that felt like enough. Elsewhere I have continued the black in fine black threads and ribbons.

Welcoming hall, page 175:  
Black-and-white tiled floor. Décor  
to match; black is an important Malone thread.  
Photograph by Alberto García-Alix.  
Perfume bottles lit from beneath. Nature. Luxury.  
Grand stairwell with Jamb hanging light.





**Dining room, page 177:**  
Natural floor, natural theme throughout  
the decoration, from the floor to the chandeliers.  
A marble table designed by RU for Malone.  
This is now part of our editions range.  
Chairs covered loosely, practical. Not every area  
needs an obvious purpose.  
Generous wasted space, if treated properly,  
can be the thing that makes a house.

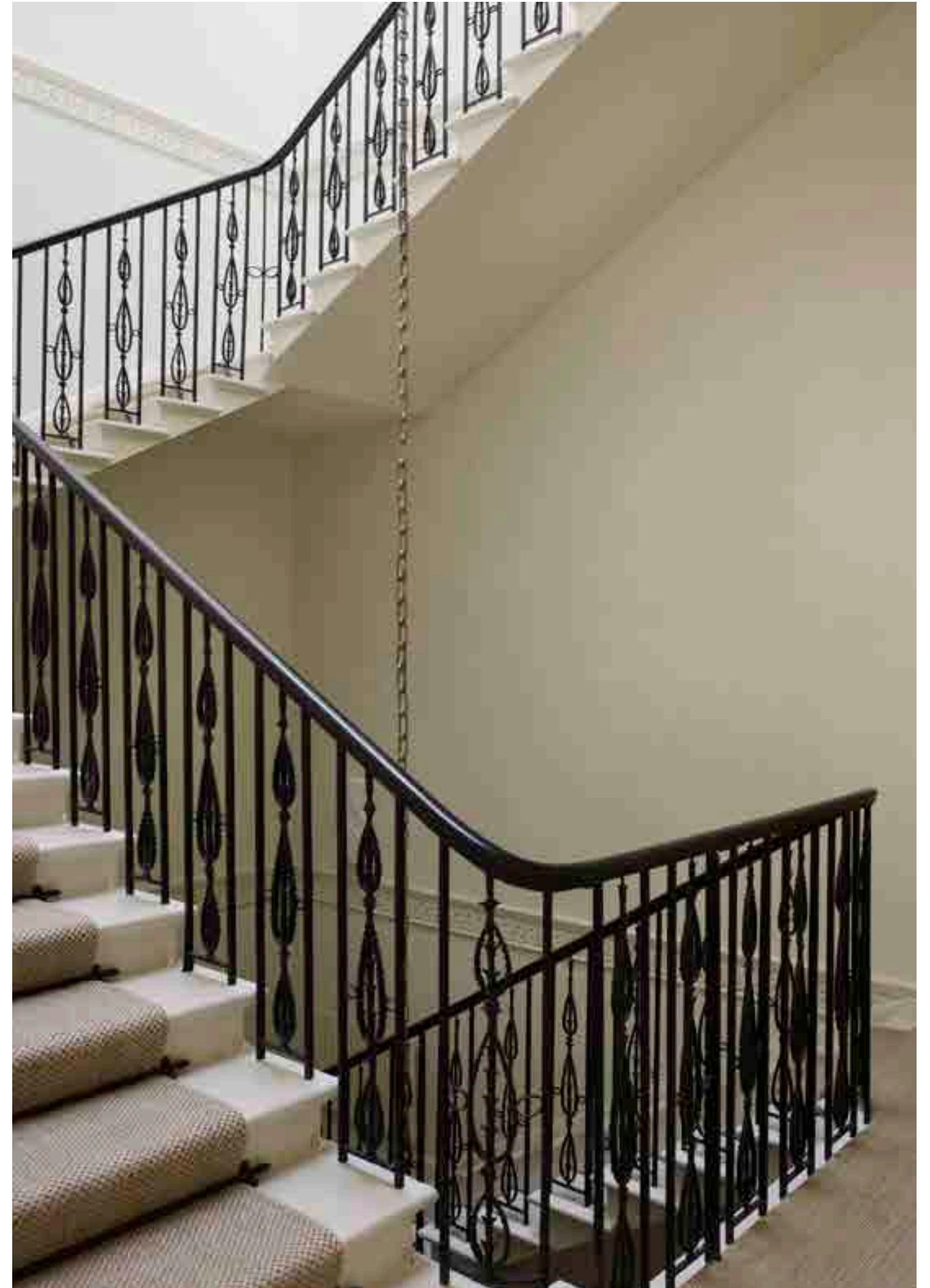




**Staircase, page 179:**  
Natural stair runner, black-and-white  
natural theme throughout.

**Meeting room, pages 180-81:**  
Sofas — comfort and luxury at once.  
The washed-out colour of the brand packaging  
here, and everywhere. Threads on the cushions.  
Bronze pieces echoing dark threads.

Natural formed stools, rustic pieces that  
would also nod to the nature.





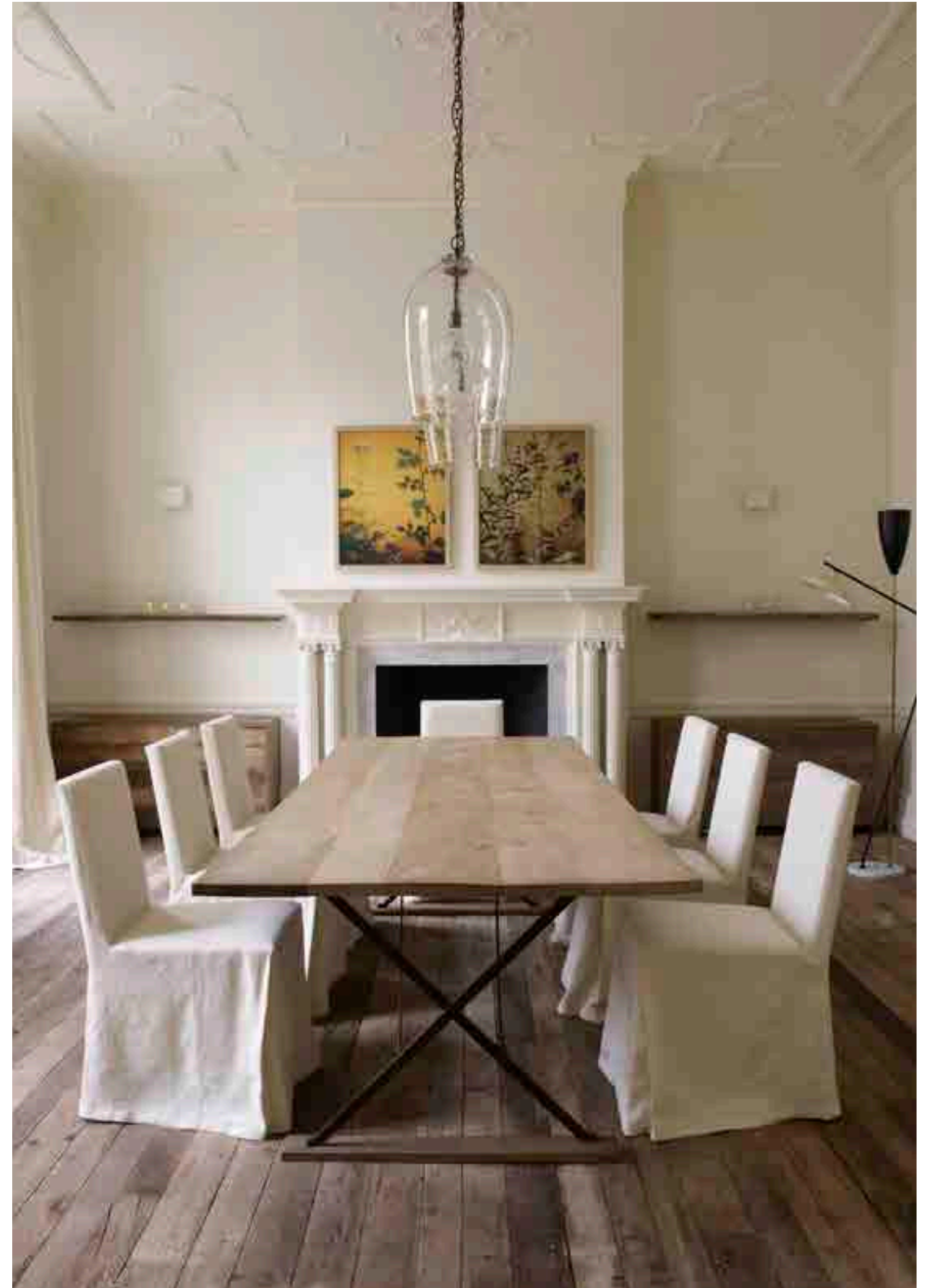




**Meeting room, page 183:**

A large RU drapers table — the chairs are covered with loose covers again, inexpensive cotton covers that can be easily washed. Two RU seminar cabinets for any storage needs.

The shelf has very simple removable strips, the width of each perfume bottle, cut into the centre of the shelf. Where a bottle is placed, a strip can be removed. The light shines up and through the bottle, beautifully highlighting the liquid, the glass, but nothing else.





## LONDON HOUSE

I was asked by the owners to redesign, extend, and decorate this detached Edwardian house. It needed a completely fresh start to make it work for a creative family. The building lacked a matching vitality. It had no significant rooms that felt suitable for generous, modern living, and no flow. To bring it to life again meant more than just a thorough rethink. It meant finding a new heart that would change the focus and reinvigorate the whole house.

We started with the floor plans. A large addition was necessary, and it was important that this not only blended seamlessly with the original footprint, but also gave a natural direction of flow when you stepped inside the front door.

After reconfiguring architecturally, a great deal of the house including the staircase, we added a significant brick extension, built across the entire width of the building, in a simple style that made the most of the light. The extra space completely transformed the house, drawing one directly into it and providing, happily, the new beating heart of the building in the form of a huge open-plan family room including a kitchen and dining area. Its scale, and its brick coat, fit naturally next to the original period house. On three sides, and as tall as they could possibly be, large, steel-framed French doors dominated the new building. These allowed in a stream of light, as well as wonderful views of the garden. I lined an adjacent smaller room with patchwork plywood, creating an inviting study. It draws you in.

I wanted to give the interior a restrained, modern, and informal feeling. The owner's natural interest in collectable twentieth-century furniture was an exact fit for the period of the house and we made some very exciting choices together.

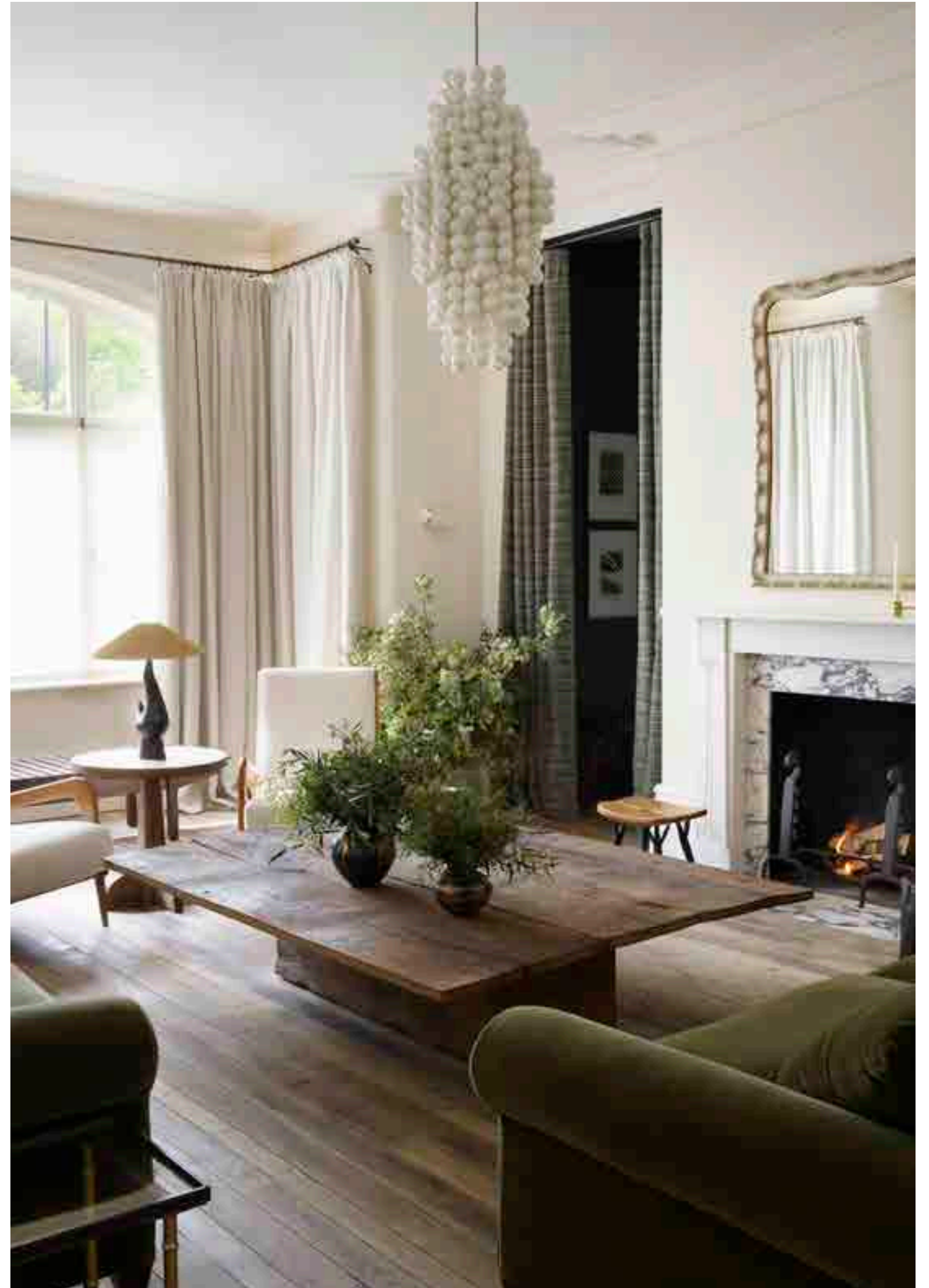
There are wonderful things in the house, mixed, I hope, in a comfortable way. RU editions, twentieth-century French, Scandinavian, Brazilian, and American furniture, with contemporary Japanese bronzes. The dining table, by Donald Judd, holds the new wing and sets a tone of excellence and clean design, using natural materials. It was the first piece we bought for the house, and it set a high bar. I let this table lead me throughout, and I think it worked.

Finally, I brought in Tom Stuart-Smith to redesign the garden, and he did a superb job. The magic of the garden gave the house a wonderful context and brought everything to life.

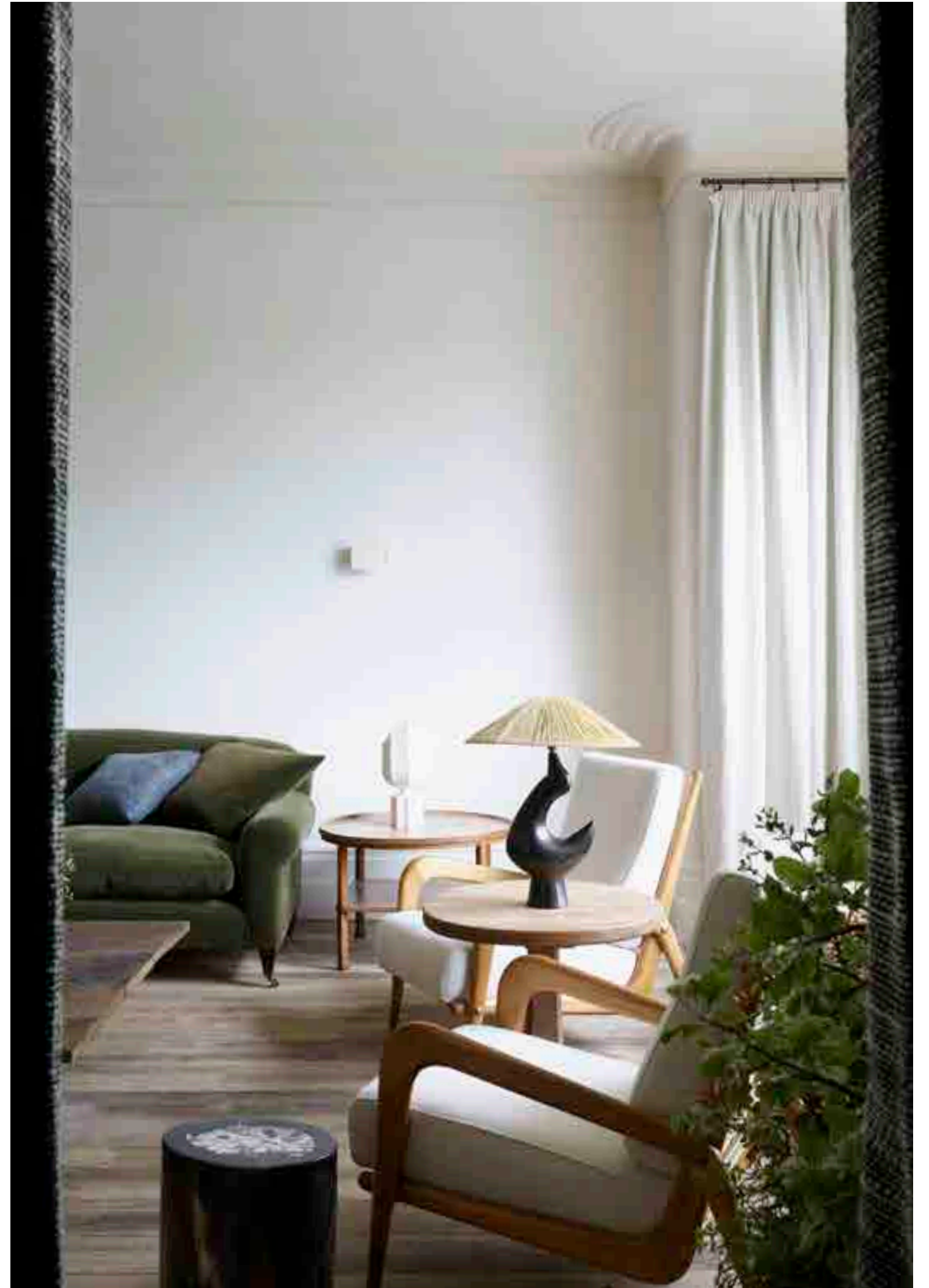
### Drawing room, page 185:

The drawing room with view into inviting dark of TV room. Curtain reflecting both colours.

Verner Panton hanging light. I brought garden colours to this side of the house, to balance things, and to remind and reflect the garden at the back.











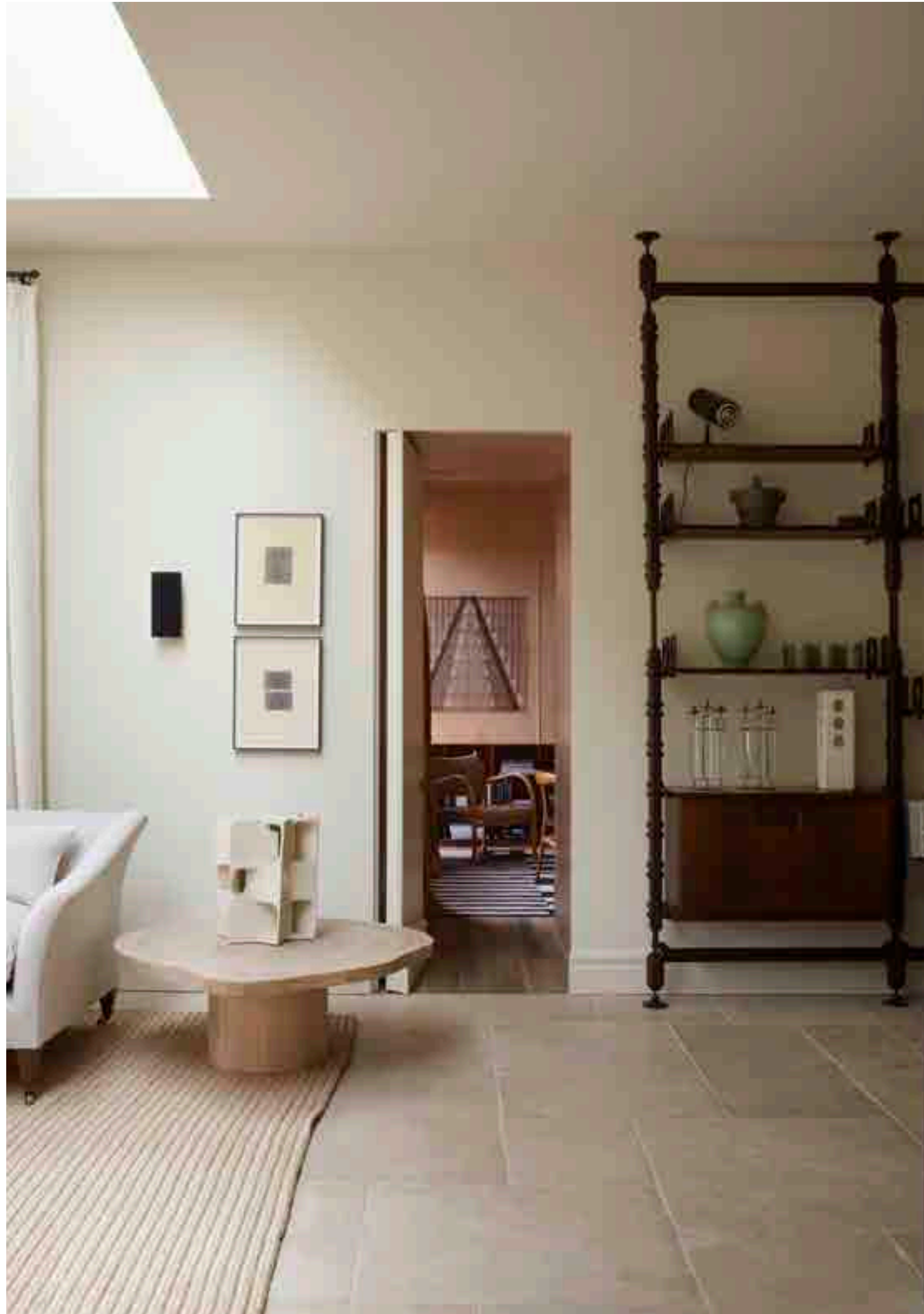














**TV room, page 186:**

Wall light in the deep green room for TV viewing, with simple white shade linking to the warm white room behind. Unstructured, understated feel. Colours echoing back and forth, rooms separated with woven curtains.

**Drawing room, page 187:**

Chairs by Gio Ponti, beautifully sinuous in design. Bronze bird lamp on the table by Axel Einar Hjorth. Isabelle Sicart uplighter, on table by Kaare Klint. The angled white plaster of the lamp working beautifully against the wall.

**TV room, pages 188-89:**

TV watching in dark green. Harold Ancart painting bringing in the sun.

**Dining table in the kitchen, pages 190-91:**

Lovely corner to dine — Dining table by Donald Judd, surrounded by Hans Wegner elbow chairs. Japanese bronze in the centre, and Axel Salto ceramic beyond, high on a plinth. Old English lime flagstones linking to the York stone in the garden.

**Sitting area in the kitchen, pages 192-93:**

The flag halyard chair, by Hans Wegner, relaxing with RU sofa and armchair. Petrified wood, natural colours and a natural feeling, right next to the garden.

**Study, pages 194-95:**

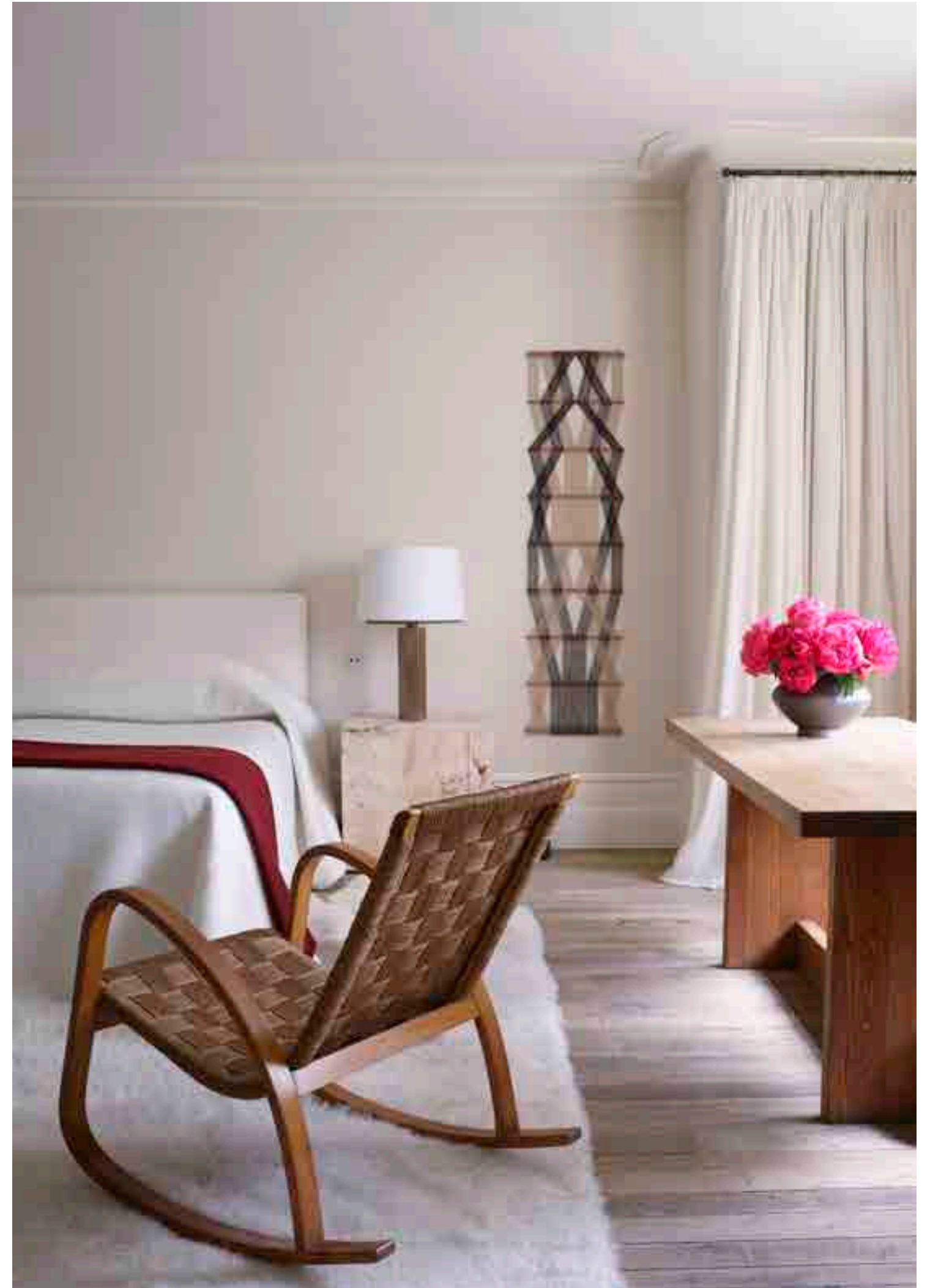
View from the kitchen to the plywood study, an enveloping and modern space to balance the modernity of the kitchen. Balance here, high shelves, left through to smaller photographs, leading to single Charlotte Perriand light. Shapes in the Peter Collingwood beyond in the study. Echoing the patchwork of the stone floor, each ply panel is lightly framed with thin plywood strips. Hans Wegner desk and chair, unstructured mood. Good design is so strong, these pieces of furniture need little around them. Function and ease.

**Bedroom, page 197:**

Light-filled and calm. Modern and restrained. Axel Einar Hjorth table in the window, Peter Collingwood macrogauze on the wall. RU floating cabinets by the bed. Peaceful mood with sharp red warmth.

**Dressing room, pages 200-01:**

Soothing colour, warm and inviting, and where clothing can take centre stage, nothing will clash.









## HAMPTONS HOUSE

This gem in East Hampton, coated in hand-split red cedar shingle, was built in 1929, in neo-Federal style. It sits, nobly, on the beach, looking out over the Atlantic.

Most of the house is one room deep and cross-lit, so that light and breeze flood in from both sides. This house is formal and balanced. Inside, it is decorated with panelling in the classical style. This might seem at odds with its casual, windswept, beachside location, but it works. The informality of the wild beach changes the house, unwinding it. The light inside shifts all through the day, in the most magical way, changing the mood almost hourly.

My brief looked simple, a full redecoration, but we began work in lockdown. Although I was able to visit several times towards the end, not being able to visit at all during the first year's work made it very hard. I had to get into the spirit of the house simply through image and video. I had to focus my mind in a different way, using my imagination. Perhaps it drew something unknown that I couldn't have offered on a more typical journey, I don't know, but I ended up feeling happy with the results without being quite sure how we got there.

The house was ornate, with its original plaster work still intact. I wanted to create something that was polished, but with a peaceful, seaside mood in which it would be easy to unwind. Natural colours would reflect sun and warmth, the beach, and blue sky.

To give the exquisite light centre stage, I painted each room in a single colour, with no expressed highlights. This allowed the space to shine. It felt like a necessary, quieter form of refinement. The carved mouldings were less on show and yet became more visible.

The owners are a scholar and curator of Asian art and a financier and photographer. So there was a collection of works to place: early Asian art, early calligraphy, and post-war Japanese abstraction, as well as lovely "homegrown" photographs. This was exciting — it's a joy to work with interesting collections and the stories of how they came about. Together we found links and threads to allow all the pieces to feel completely at home. We lined the breakfast room with the owner's own Fresson prints to great effect.

He gave me one of his own photographs as a gift at the end of the project. It's the view from the house out over the sea, and I have it hanging at home. When I stayed there as we were installing everything, I would wake up to this view, and it was breathtaking. I can recall it at home now, and it will always bring happy memories.

Drawing room, page 201:  
Painting, 1961, by Gutai artist  
Takesada Matsutani, a friend of the owner,  
casually standing on the table, next to  
RU hoof light. Light flooding in all around,  
changing hourly. Blue room, brings  
the sky and the sea in.









**Drawing room, pages 202 – 203:**

This house was designed by Penrose Stout.  
The picture windows were a masterstroke,  
framing the seascape beautifully. Very balanced,  
restful room, enjoying the light.

**Drawing room, page 205:**

RU Stupa table in plaster, echoes of the  
plaster work detail. Scandinavian vase.

**Drawing room, page 206:**

Painting by Saburo Murakami, 1963,  
next to a porcelain vase by Taizo Kuroda.  
Tucked into the niche. Both artists,  
friends, and academic subjects  
of the owner.

**Drawing room, page 207:**

Cizhou ware vase, twelfth century,  
next to a delightful Japanese summer-flower  
container, early twentieth century.  
Handles echoing each other.

**Dining room, pages 208 – 09:**

The dining room, pink all over  
the intricate panelling, with golden candles.  
Designed to feel magical in evening  
candlelight. The curtain folds echoing the  
reeded columns, single colour throughout.

Supper here is a joy. Calligraphy  
by early modern ink artist Qi Baishi,  
the characters reading happiness  
and prosperity — a wedding gift.  
Colour of the aged paper felt right against  
the warm pink wall. Flowers  
from the garden.

**Dining room, page 210:**

RU marble table in the window,  
working well with the pink. Ceramics,  
sunlight warming.

**Dining room, page 211:**

W.A.S. Benson candle sconces.

















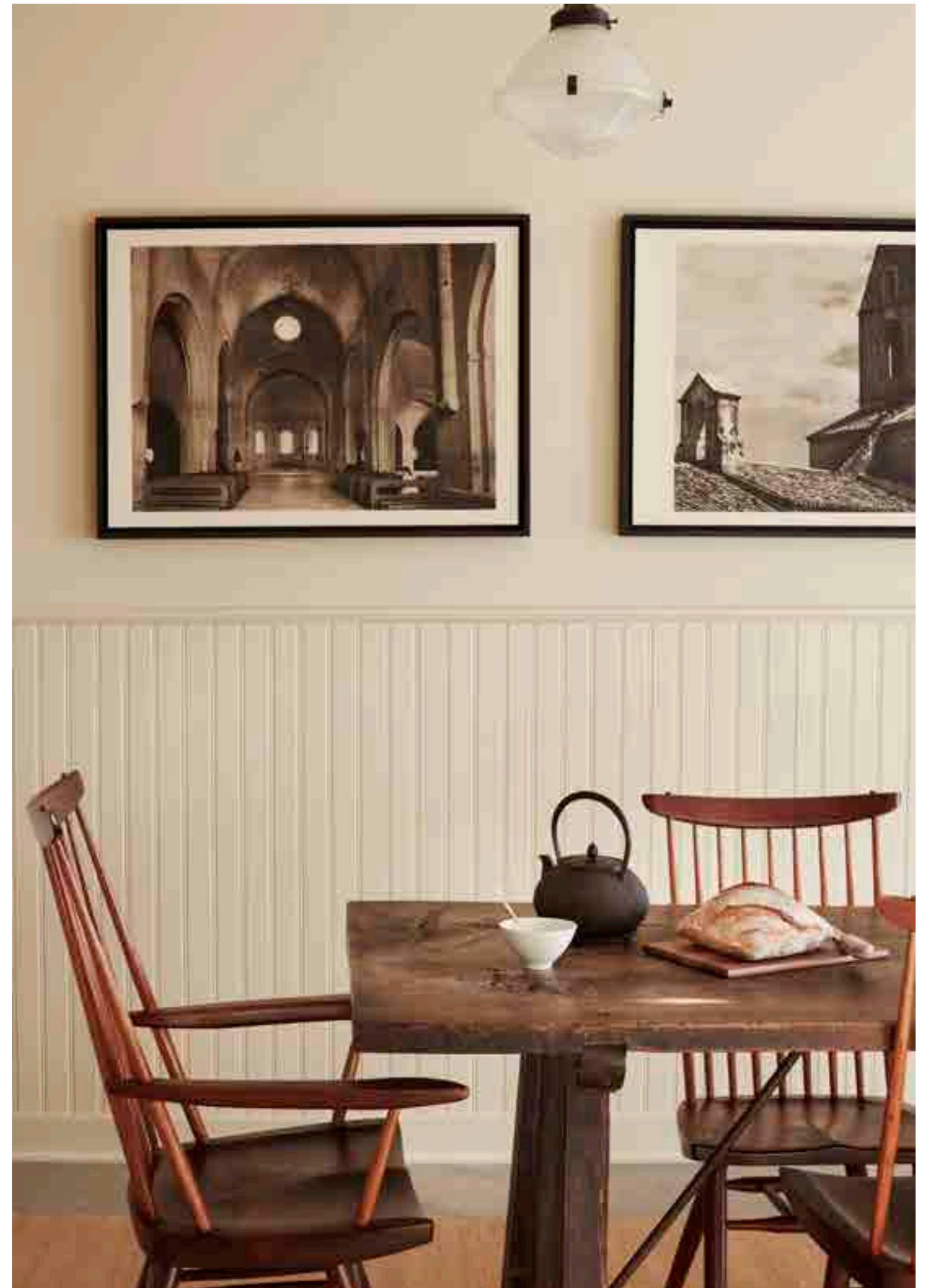




**Library, pages 212-13:**  
Library, billiard room, after-dinner sitting. Warm autumnal colours for cosy evening atmosphere. Mughal-period red sandstone vessel, echoing contemporary vase by a local potter.

**Breakfast room, page 215:**  
Breakfast room with photographs of twelfth-century Thoronet Abbey, taken by the owner and printed in the Fresson technique. Nakashima chairs, with rustic table. Ease, a gentle start to the day.

**Study room, pages 216-17:**  
Study with Frits Henningsen wingback chair, 1935. A Han dynasty ceramic pot, 200 BC, softly sitting in the corner. Relaxed, black-and-white room. Desk faces the view.









**Bedroom, page 219:**  
Bedroom, very simple.  
Jean-Michel Frank cross lightsits next  
to the bed. Creamy and restful.

**Terrace, pages 220-21:**  
Bedroom terrace for morning tea,  
enjoying the view.









## ANTIQUES, EDITIONS AND TEXTILES

I have always loved making things, so wherever I have lived, from my very first house, I always had a workshop of sorts. Even when I was young, I painted my rooms, decorated them with murals. I rearranged furniture and I made things all the time. I used to sew and would make my own curtains and cushions from glorious pieces of antique cloth. Once I made a carpet from different pieces that I sewed together. I love the craft of it all. I do much less of this now, and I miss it. In fact, I did everything then that I went on to do for a living much later on.

My first job was in the restoration workshop that happened to be at the end of my road. I had no idea that it was good when I joined them. I really loved working there, and the exposure to well-made, beautiful things further opened my eyes. Then, in 2009, I opened my first shop. I started dealing across the centuries, focusing on unique pieces from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, and in collectible twentieth-century furniture. We also started advising design clients who were interested in forming a collection from scratch, or developing one already in existence. The shop still feels personal, even though the business has grown so much.

The “making” side of our business followed next. It started because I wanted to provide a cashmere blanket for a project and I couldn’t find anything of the right quality or price. So I commissioned exactly the thing I wanted. The editions line was born that day. Through the antiques trade we were already working with so many different workshops, so that the expertise was all there for us to draw on. We use cabinetmakers and artisanal workshops, who are skilled in traditional methods. It’s so important that these age-old techniques are kept alive. Using them to develop new ideas was an entirely natural next step.

We aim to make things of quality. I am a believer in furniture being made to last, and being used. It should be beautiful too, using carefully chosen materials, with sustainable credentials. The drapers table, for example, gets so much better with use. I have one at home, and the more we use it, the more the patina develops, and the prettier it gets.

Pieces develop for different reasons. Some have developed because I have owned something that I particularly loved, and so we have made an adaptation. Some are contemporary ideas we have designed, and some are developed as an ode to a piece by a maker I particularly admire. The copper table, for example, is my homage to Eileen Gray. The Douglas fir cabinet, in homage to Axel Einar Hjorth.

On one occasion a cabinetmaker we work with a great deal had found a thick piece of wood. It was beautiful and deep enough to form a basin, and I had the idea to commission a tea-cupboard for my office. Together, holding the piece against the wall, we drew the precise shape of the rest of the cabinet. Into the wood slab I drew an oval, from which a gentle dish was fashioned. We marked out exactly where the small upper cupboards should be for comfortable access, and how the hinges should work — they were to be handmade. The finished tea-cupboard was plumbed with a boiling-tap.

The edition furniture is made in the same spirit, with the same love and care, and attention to the way in which a piece of furniture would be used.



**Tea cupboard, page 225:**

Made of ash, with copper boiling tap and everything I need for a cup of tea. The huge block of burr London Plane wood has a little scooped-out basin. The small cupboards above are made of oak.

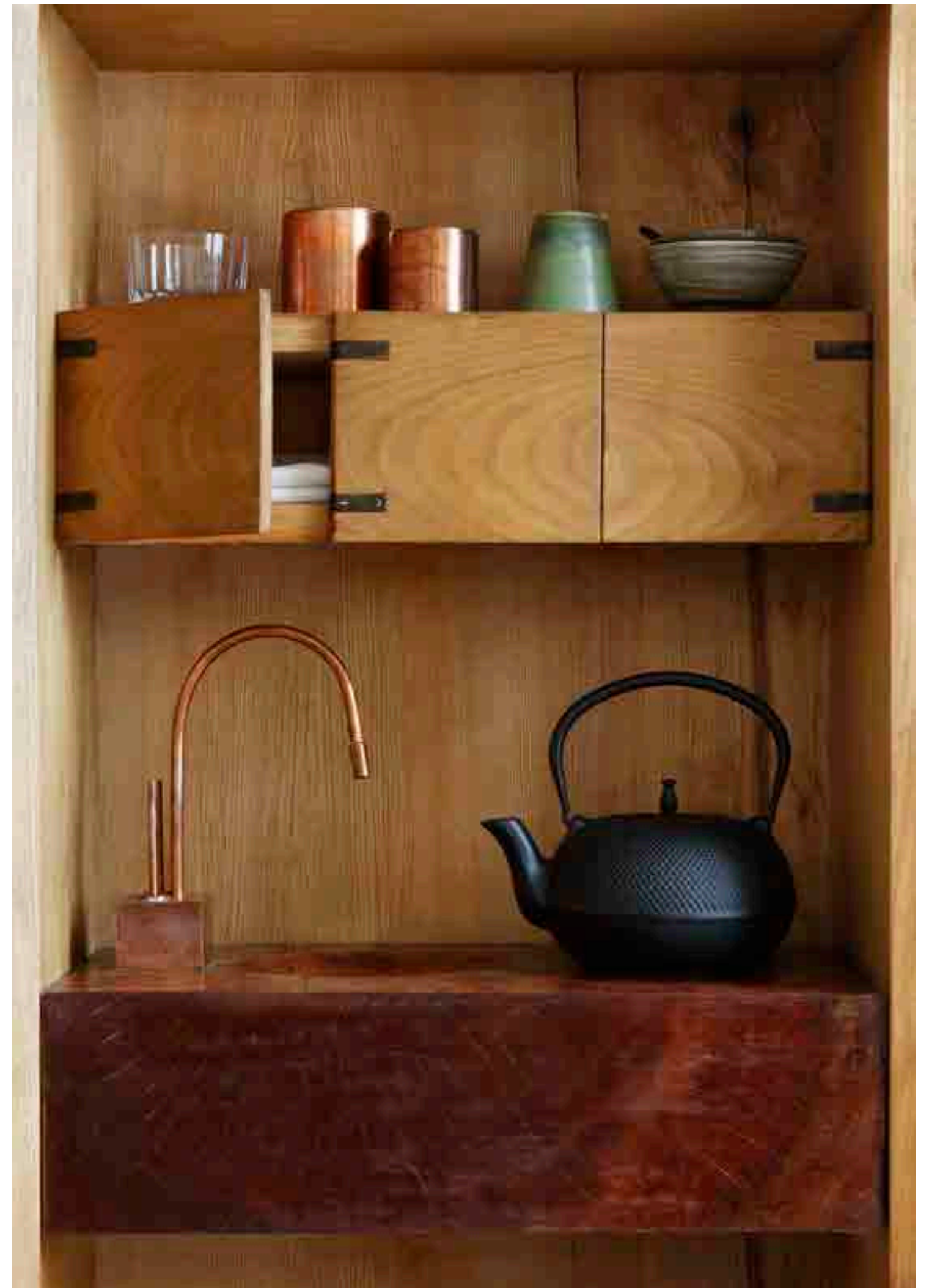
**Scallop shell uplighter, page 226:**

Designed after a George IV example that was originally a wall sconce. Cast in the form of a hollow scallop, supported by acanthus leaves. These are made using traditional plaster-casting methods, at a British workshop.

**Drapers table, page 227:**

This is my dining table at home, and in daily use. Only lightly oiled, this table improves greatly with age, and a lovely patina develops over the years. It has an oak top and stands on patinated steel X-frame trestle supports, each with a wooden plinth.

The high-back "Lovö" chairs by Axel Einar Hjorth are from the 1930s. In solid Swedish pine, they have blackened iron rivets. This series, named after one of the islands of the Stockholm archipelago, unified ideas of leisure with the aesthetics of traditional provincial life. Hjorth combined a farmhouse simplicity with a functional, modernist idiom, a style that became known as primitive modernism.









**Louis xv “Os de Mouton” sofa, page 229:**

Circa 1730–50. High upholstered back and seat covered in a fine green velvet, supported on a figured walnut frame, the carved sheep’s horn-shaped stretchers giving the style its evocative name. A rare survival of French provincial upholstery, as the piece retained the original filling of straw, wool, flock, and horsehair, which we have reused.

**Clear lantern, pages 230–31:**

From traditional mouth-blown, clear soda-lime-silica glass. I once bought a decorative light in Paris, and when it arrived it had been broken. From the remains we pieced together the shape of a light, and this became the mould for the clear, and bubble, lanterns. Each one is unique, as there are always minor variations in the glass. The one shown here is the largest size possible to blow by hand.

**Straw table, page 232:**

Inspired by Eileen Gray. Hand-beaten “phosphor” bronze, mirror-finished top, with a smooth curve on the underside. Again, with an unsealed surface, which allows it to patinate over time.

Chunky square section, patinated steel base.

Y chair in black leather, behind.

**Right-angle wall light, page 233:**

With mouth-blown glass storm shade.

I designed quite a few pieces for my own home, and this was the first. One tiny detail from a traditional Indian lacquered light that we have at home is married to the slimmest possible stem.

The light emerges from the wall with contemporary simplicity. Made from components of sand-cast and machined brass, this example is patinated dark bronze.













**Theatre chair, page 235:**

Handmade in oak. The comfortable barrel-formed back creates an elegant silhouette when the chair is drawn up to a table.

The seat cushion is traditionally upholstered. This slim, refined chair was inspired by an early twentieth-century model designed for a theatre, with the “spoonback” of the mid-nineteenth century in mind.

Veneered writing desk in burr poplar with brass sabots and single sliding drawer.

Glass “Nemours” bowl by René Lalique. Designed in 1929, in acknowledgement of the poppy liqueur that the town of Nemours has made its speciality, the bowl is highlighted with 240 hand-applied black enamel dots to create the deeply moulded flowers.

**Plaster cone hanging light, page 236:**

Entirely handmade in a British workshop. Inspired by a wonderful pair of 1930s cone lights by Syrie Maugham that hang in my kitchen at home.

Made from a mixture of fibreglass powder and plaster, laminated into a mould, left to dry, and trimmed. Lastly, wet plaster is applied by hand, creating the outer texture, which is then finished in a snow-white water-based paint. Sometimes the interior is gilded to create a golden glow.

**Panneau, page 237:**

By Simone Prouvé in Clevyl, a fabric made entirely out of recycled synthetic materials.

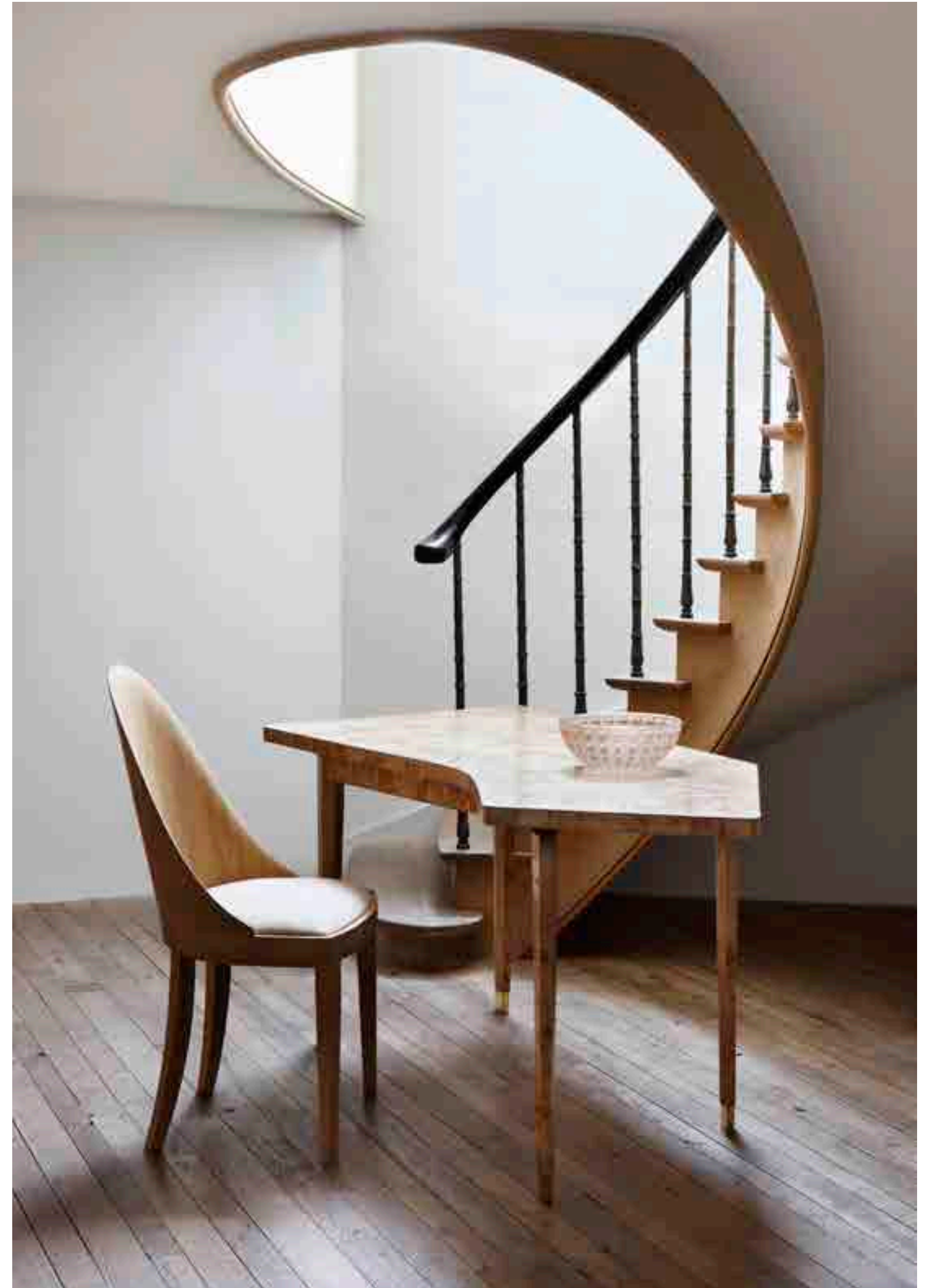
The panel’s intricate yet minimal appearance speaks of Simone Prouvé’s engagement with modernism, and its favouring of a new economy of line.

From an early age, she worked closely with key modernists such as Alexander Calder, Charlotte Perriand, and Pierre Jeanneret.

Hand-worked, turned, marble occasional table in Swedish green.

“Daddy” armchair covered in RU Bay wool. I have the original Victorian chair at home, which was its inspiration. Fully upholstered frame with loose cover, standing on four square, tapering, stained beech legs. Single down and feather cushion.

Large Art Nouveau iridescent glass bowl by Loetz with gadrooned body. Austria, c. 1900.









**Uchiwa pendant chandelier, page 239:**

By Ingo Maurer, in collaboration with Tatsuo Shigeki. Bamboo and rice paper, Kagawa Prefecture, Japan, c.1970s

Above the fireplace, a pier mirror, c.1890, stained and carved satinwood “faux bamboo” frame with oxidised mercury mirror plate.

Ernest Gimson Arts and Crafts firedogs, c.1900, in front of the fire. Brass and hand-wrought steel.

Art Deco peach glass vase, c.1930, with geometric textured decoration (etched signature: “Daum Nancy, France”) and “Shōwa period” patinated bronze vase by Arisu Bizan (Japan, 1926–1989).

Both pieces sitting on table made from a highly figured slab of rare, old-growth Sapele mahogany, a slow-growing tree, native to West and Central Africa.

**Day bed designed by Owen Jones, pages 240–41:**

Made for Eynsham Hall, c.1873. Veneered with sycamore, rosewood, and walnut, and covered in RU Argent velvet.

An impressive Daum Nancy acid-etched, table lamp with mushroom-shaped amber glass shade (French, c.1930), sitting on a solid oak table, raw and untreated. The cube is hewn from hundred-year-old kiln-dried oak.

A Peter Collingwood woven Macro-gauze hanging with signed stamp, “Peter Collingwood M191 No.1,” on lower rod (England, 1980s)

**Y chair, page 242:**

In black leather. A hand-welded steel chair with hand-stitched Italian saddle leather in front of another ethereal woven Macro-gauze, M225, by Peter Collingwood.













**Flute pendants, page 243:**

Inspired by the decorative style of the Viennese Secession, made from hand-folded sheet and cast brass. The highly polished surface is unlacquered, so it will develop a natural patina over time.

**Swedish pier mirror, page 245:**

Exceptional early eighteenth-century, c. 1720, by Gustav Precht (1698–1763). The crimson glass frame with gilt-lead and gilt wood mounts retaining the original rectangular plate.

Pair of oak breakfront cabinets. English, early twentieth century. Bleached oak with applied architectural mouldings and a single drawer to the frieze, above cupboard doors.

Signature chair by Frits Henningsen. The sinuously shaped, ebonised mahogany frame, seat, and back tightly reupholstered with black leather and stuffed with horsehair and Algerian grass. Designed in 1952; fewer than twenty examples were made.

**Walnut-veneered cushion frame mirror, page 246:**

With gilt repoussé mounts and original plate.  
Dutch, c. 1700.

Plaster cone wall light in dark bronze.  
Minimalist, hand-finished, and mounted upon a dark bronze arm.

**Marine-grade steel armchair, page 247:**

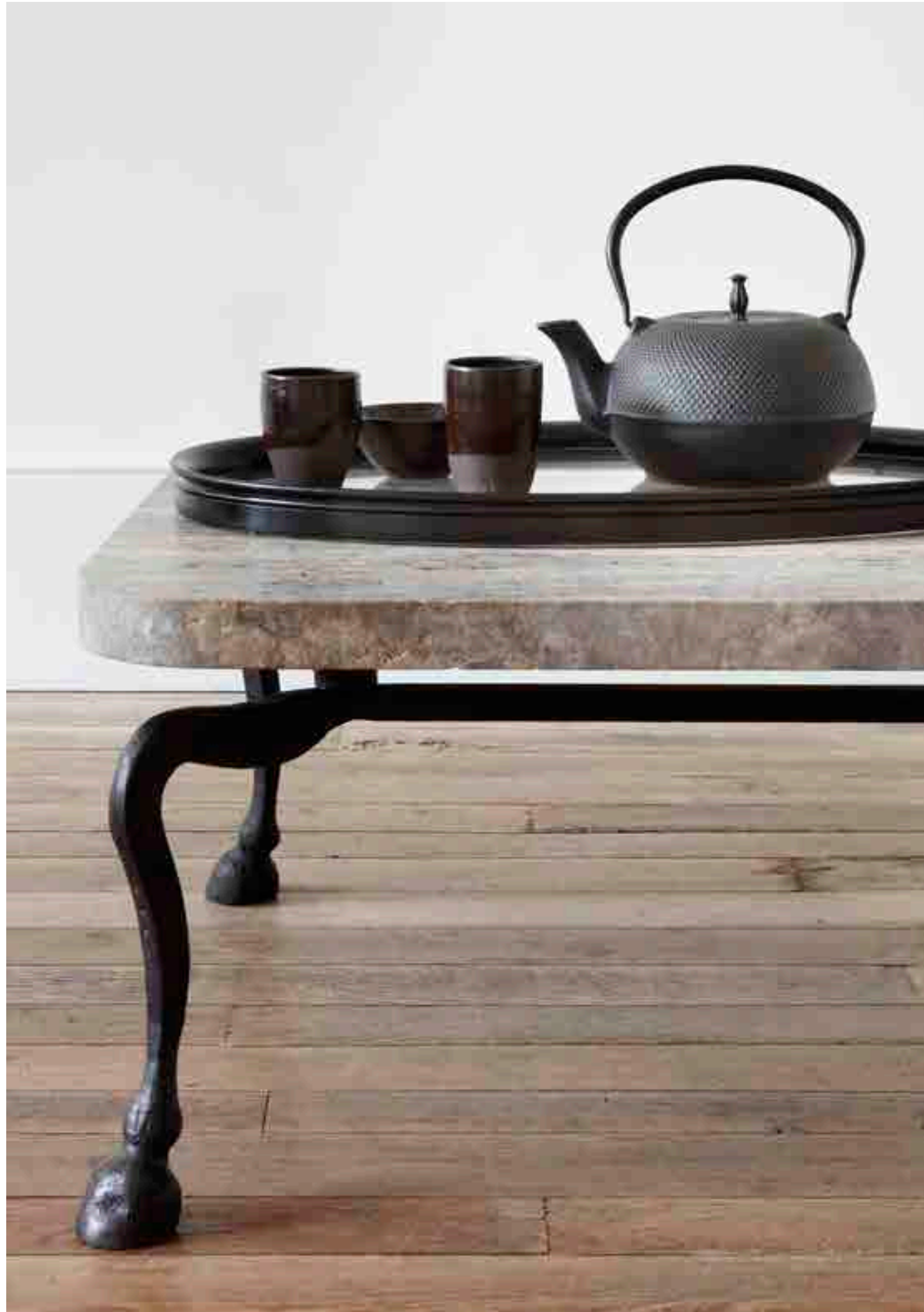
Wrapped in green soft leather stitched at the seams.  
The seats are in raw oak and caned.  
These chairs are our interpretation of Jacques Adnet's card table chairs of the early 1950s.



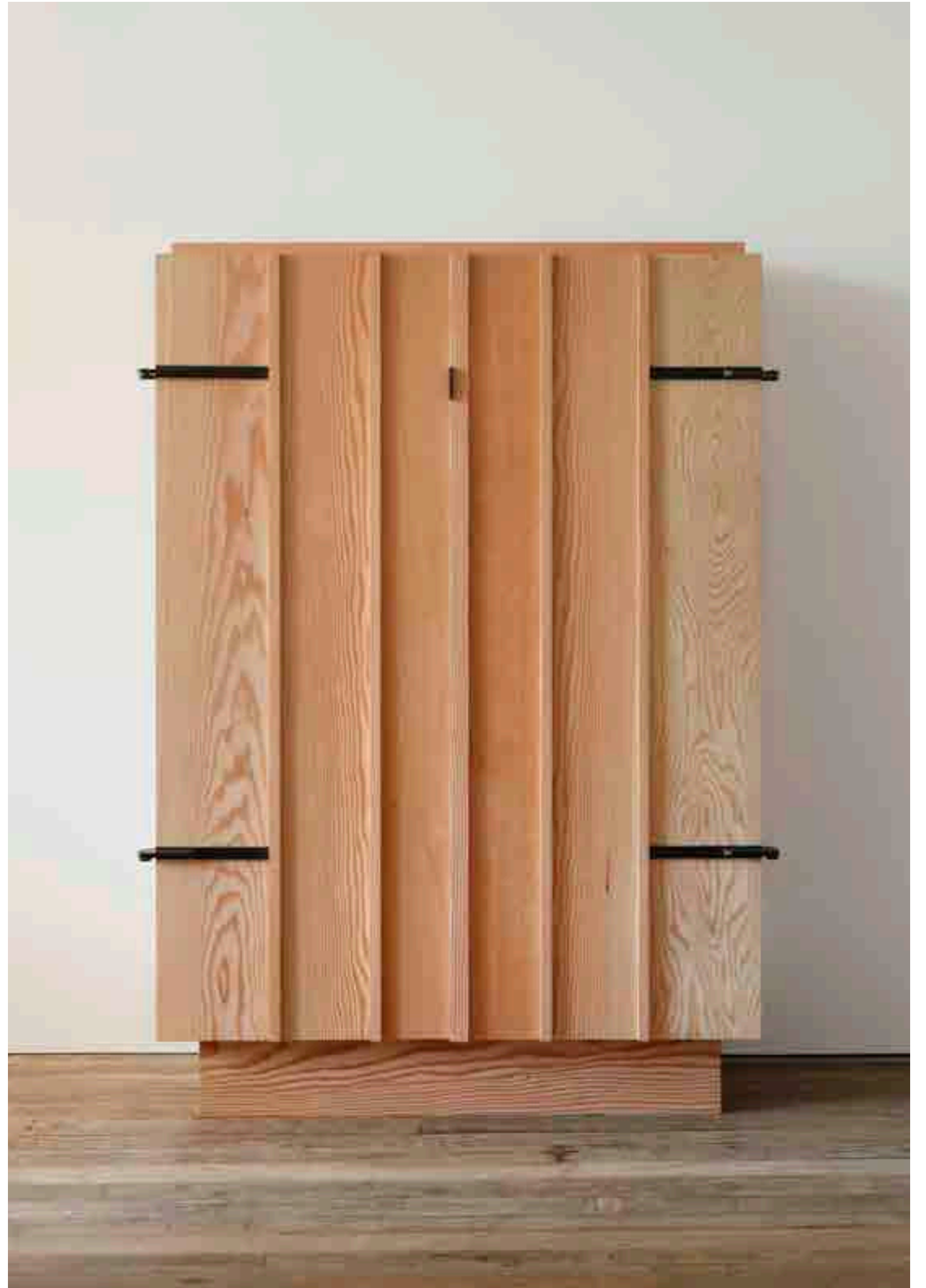














**Coffee table, page 248:**

Handmade with cast-iron hoof legs and a travertine top, inspired by 1920s French iron work, with added hoof detail. A glass tray with ebonised Brazilian mahogany frame, hand-finished in the UK, with steam-bent wooden moulding with handle lip.

A hand-thrown collection of beakers and bowls. Made from a variety of smooth and coarse volcanic clays married with complementary ash, Tenmoku, and clear glazes. Each piece is one of a kind and comes in a range of serene earth tones.

Contemporary Japanese ironware teapot by Oigen.

Oigen's craft of ironware dates back to 1852, at their foundry in Mizusawa, Iwate Prefecture, in northern Honshu.

**Circular hoof table, page 249:**

Cast-iron with travertine top.

**Plaster shell wall sconce, page 250:**

Based on a clam shell, with scalloped top.

**Douglas fir cabinet, page 251:**

Inspired by an Art Deco model of the 1930s combining form and functionality. Hand-crafted in England from sustainable Douglas fir, the cabinet sits on a simple inset plinth with three adjustable and two fixed internal shelves with a concealed keepsake compartment. Pivot hinges and latches are handmade and finished in blackened solid brass. The cabinet is lightly oiled to enhance the natural figuring in the wood grain.

**Four-legged stool, page 253:**

A cast of a favourite wooden original, captured in bronze with all its character and patina of age preserved.

**Pair of Waney edge oak benches, pages 254 - 55:**

In pippy oak. Each is one of a kind with unique knots and dovetail joints, constructed to create the illusion of a floating bench.









## FABRIC SHOP 103 PIMLICO ROAD

My love of fabric goes way back. I have collected antique textiles for as long as I can remember. The very first thing I ever sold was a collection of beautiful antique curtains that I had gathered together — there were printed velvets, glorious silk damasks and tapestry curtains. I took a stall at a Sunday antique fair at the Kensington Town Hall, and to my surprise sold them all within half an hour of the fair opening, to a reputable London decorator. It took me aback. It was the first time I realised that people might want to buy the things I liked.

I can't define why I love fabrics so much. There is almost nothing fabric can't do, and it adds atmosphere. Softness, protection, colour, tactility.

I was using fabric all the time, so it made sense to develop my own line. We launched in 2017. We worked with artisanal mills in the UK and continental Europe, which had the right principles behind them and were interested in collaborative development. They all have sustainability at the forefront of their practice.

We use almost entirely natural fibres. Some we leave in their natural state. The jewel-like colours are mostly custom-dyed. The fabrics are often developed from remnant pieces that I might have in my collection, and in colours that I love.

We sell linen, organic cotton, hemp, wool, velvet, and abaca. Materials woven from recycled plastic bottles form the majority of the outdoor collection.

As demand grew, the collection grew in response, so I opened a new shop opposite to house the fabrics. Now, alongside these we sell our paint collection, and fledgling home line.

Architecturally, I gave the new shop a complete overhaul. I wanted it to have a different identity from the furniture shop but be recognisable as RU. It was designed to feel fresh and with clean lines. I moved the staircase to the front, to create the feeling of openness as you enter the shop. I never think it's necessary to make use of every inch if you can get away with it — open space that has little purpose can be powerful. The shape of the stair was worked out on the ground. There is nothing like standing in a space and feeling it all out with some string, a tape measure, and an expert craftsman. The floors are dark and robust, and with the floating, curving staircase, visible from the outside, they give strength and bring the space alive. I am often trying to balance masculine and feminine, darkness and light, space that is open and that which is more closed.

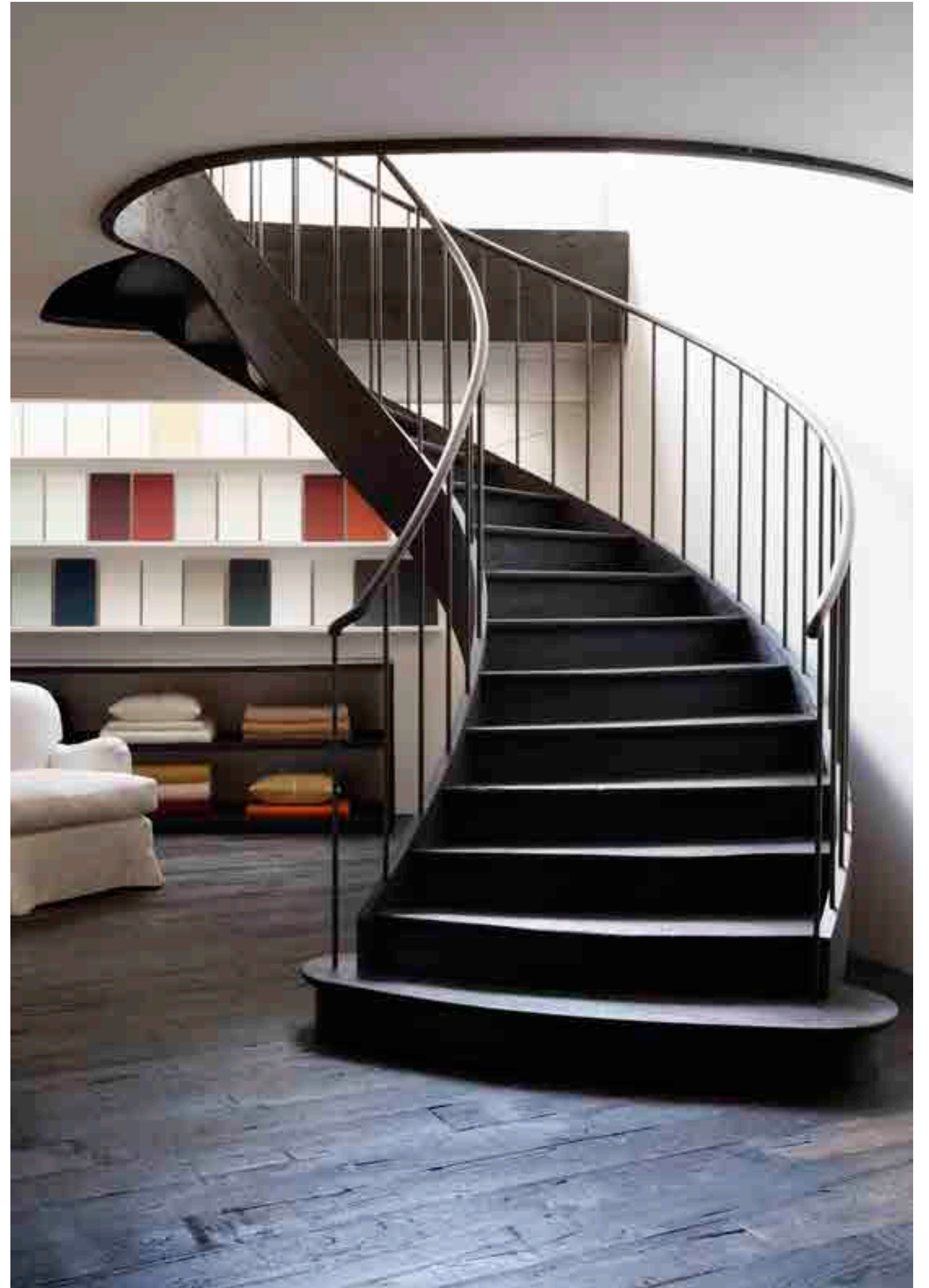
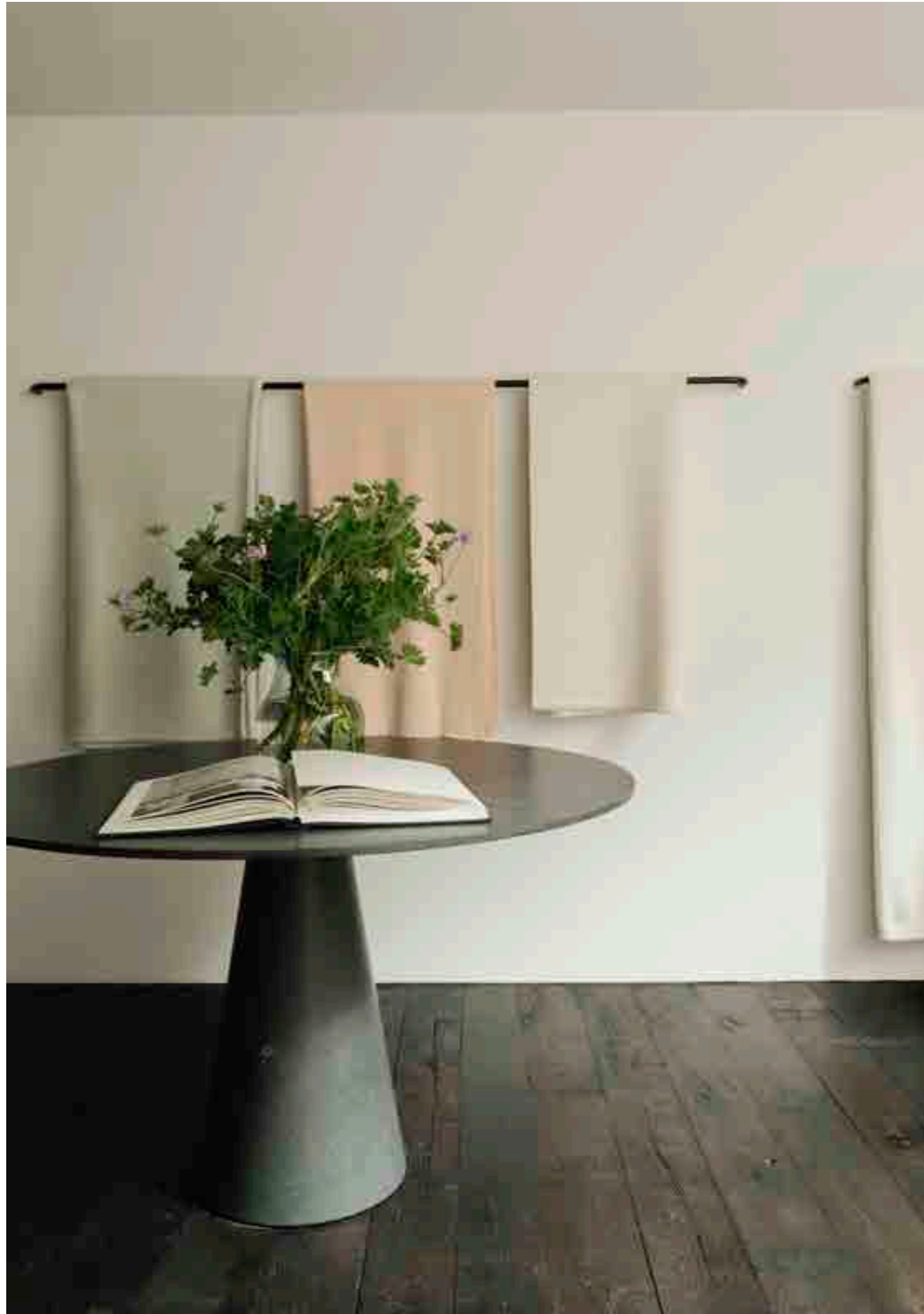
The design of this shop is purposefully strong, with a clean black-and-white theme, but my intention was that the things we sell should stand out. There are drapers tables throughout, giving us space to lay things out. Downstairs the shop is divided with sliding fabric panels. A way to show our wares and create useful "rooms."



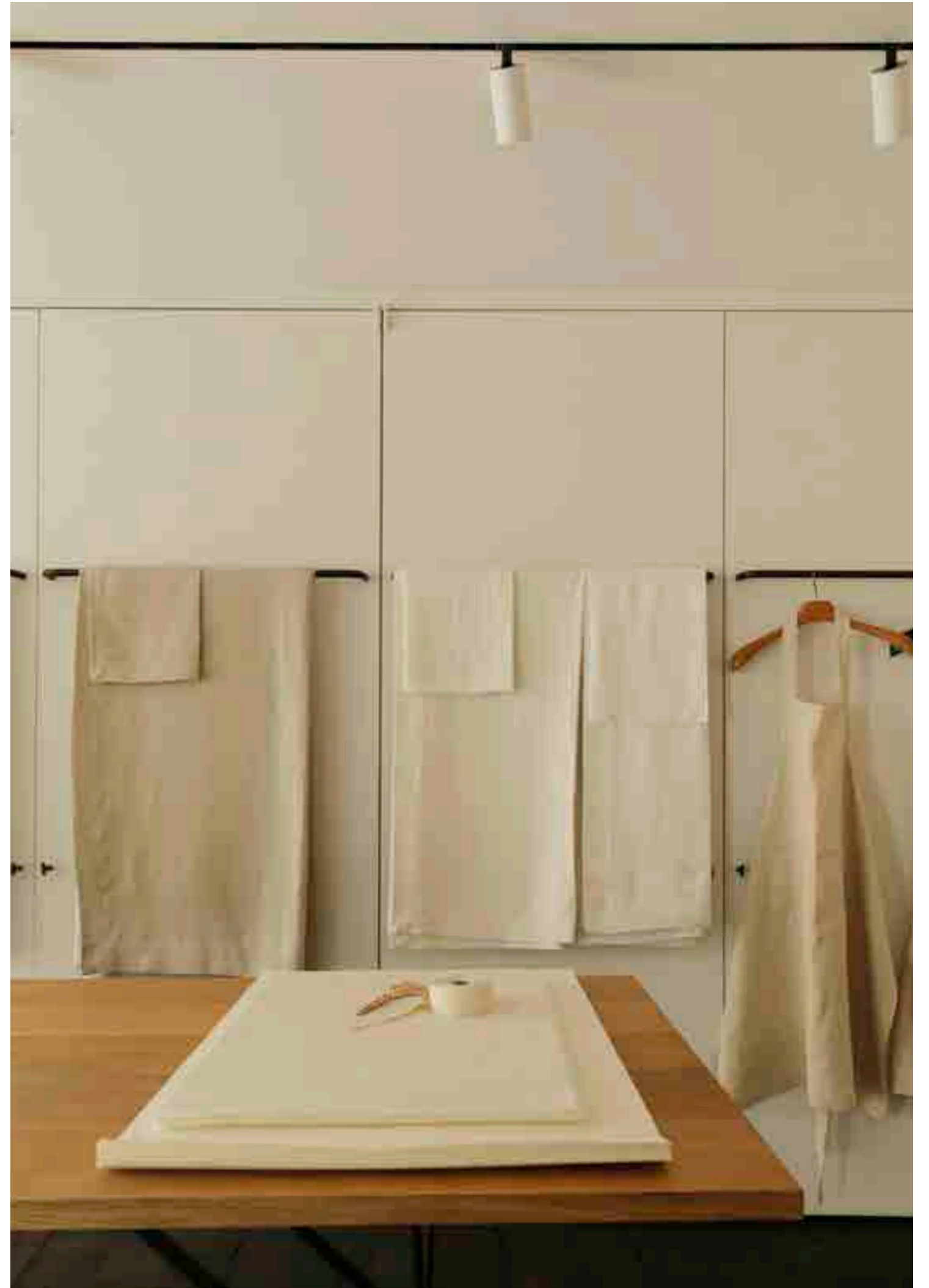














**Fabric details, page 257:**

Large fabric panels hanging on hooks.

Easy to see and touch.

**Fabric store, pages 258–59:**

The ground floor with its unadorned architecture. The gentle curve at the cornice relaxes the room. RU hooks, drapers tables, theatre chairs, and large cone lights hanging above. Black and white. Nothing more than is needed.

**Blankets and table, page 260:**

Long rails on the wall for blankets.

RU table in solid black granite.

**Staircase, page 261:**

The staircase, curving and elegant. The thinnest handrail, softly shaped so it is very comfortable to hold. The large stairwell and generous wide stair allowing maximum light to flood downstairs, drawing you down.

**Paint, page 262:**

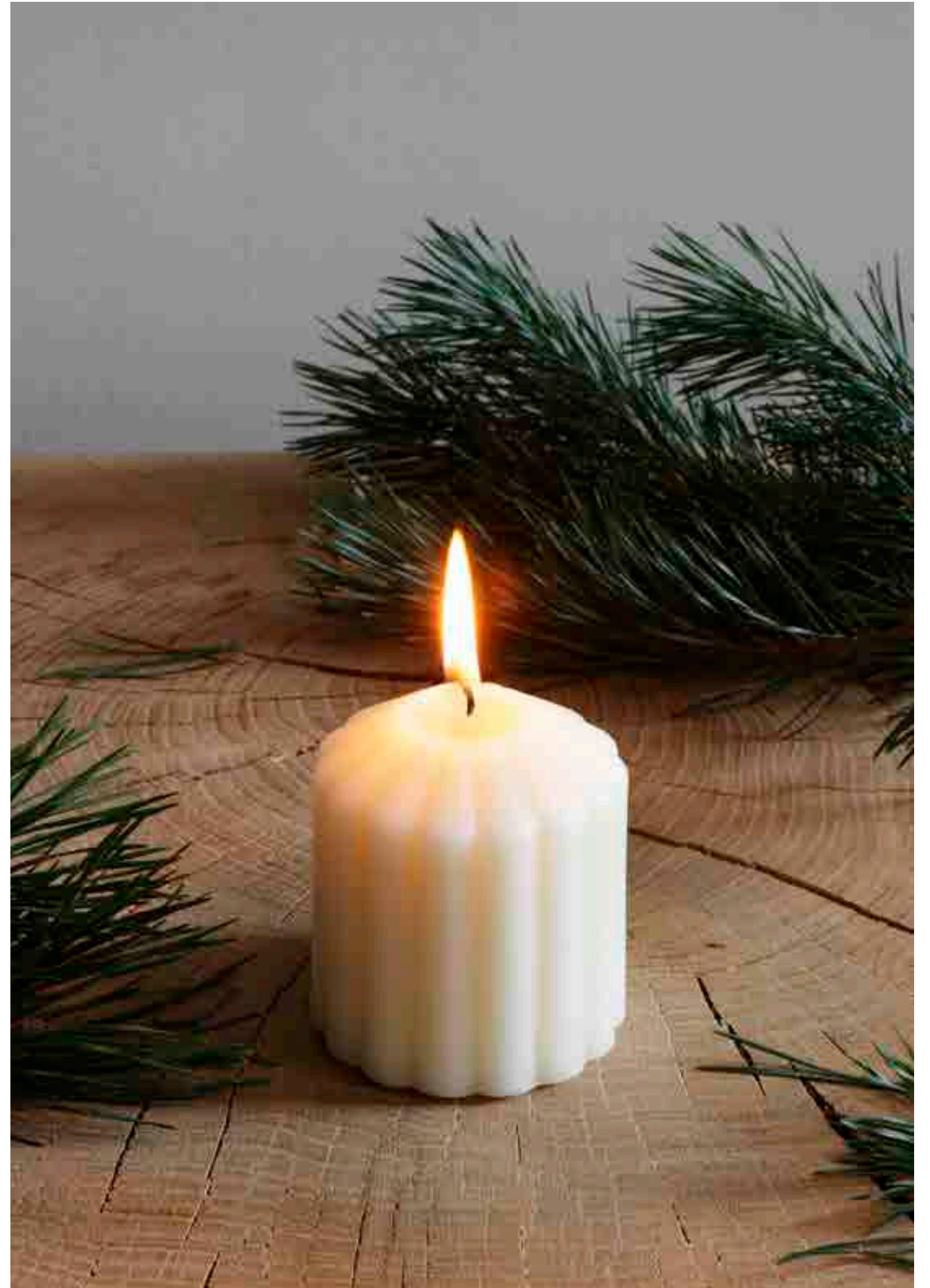
Some of the neutrals in RU paint collection. These are lime-based paints, with very high environmental credentials.

**Home line, page 263:**

Some of our home line on show. Tablecloths and napkins hanging on long rods with coat hangers and aprons.

**Candle, page 265:**

The hand-poured scented, fluted candle, inspired by the smell of the pine logs burning at home. I wanted it to feel like a moulded jelly. If you buy one of these candles, you will find it wrapped in a unique cello wrap called NatureFlex, which is both biodegradable and compostable, making it one of the most eco-friendly packages available.





## EDITIONS

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