





PURPOSE BUILT

FOR THIS JOBURG BASED CREATIVE COUPLE HOME IS A SPACE THAT
INSPIRES FAMILY TIME AGAINST AN EVER-CHANGING CANVAS OF ART

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It was as if this home designed by Jo Noero from Noero Architects in an oak-studded corner of Johannesburg's Forest Town was commissioned specifically to meet the needs of Lucia and Piet Boer. The Boers wanted a home that merged with its exterior, offering an extended living environment in which to enjoy the plentiful sunny highveld days with their five-year-old son, Richard, and Babette, their basset hound, but just as important to them was an interior space that would function as a backdrop for their growing collection of modern and contemporary art. 'It struck us immediately that the simplicity of the house's L-shaped layout and all the natural light that entered would bring the art to the fore,' says Piet, an architect with Boogertman + Partners.

The engaging collection is an ongoing by-product of what was meant to be an interim job for Lucia with Warren Siebrits Modern and Contemporary Art when the couple moved to Johannesburg from Pretoria in 2004. 'At the time Piet was working with Warren's wife, interior designer Lunetta Bartz, and they asked me if I would be willing to help out in the gallery



for a month or two,' explains the attorney-turned-art consultant who was looking for legal advising work at the time. Within a week Lucia was hooked and ended up spending nine years with the gallery.

Their first piece, an etching by Eric Mbatha entitled 'Mother and Young Ones', keeps venerable company today: Cecil Skotnes, Cecily Sash and Hannes Hars, as well as contemporary pieces by Stefanus Rademeyer, Gerhard Marx, Jo Ratcliffe and Mandy Johnston. 'I really admire print making as an art form and the works by Wopko Jensma are among my favourites but fortunately Piet and I have similar taste and we both love sculpture,' says Lucia who, by way of explanation, motions to a recently acquired work by Stephan Erasmus which hovers over the dining-room table.

As it stands the house belies the work involved in establishing the airy, light-filled interior that envelops the garden. Ceilings were replaced, aluminium doors and windows were installed and the original terracotta floors were restored. 'Throughout the process we kept our focus on the spatial quality inherent in



the original compact design,' says Piet who explains that while their previous home offered vast expanses of wall space to accommodate their collection it didn't offer the intimacy they felt was essential to family life. 'The house showcases both the art inside and the garden beyond, and as we envisioned,' says Piet. 'It allows us to make the most of both environments.'

The garden's seasonal change inspires Lucia and Piet to rotate the collection, putting certain pieces in storage for a period of time and moving others around. Existing works also make way for new pieces. A praying woman by Zoë Frank who gazed through a small window in the main bedroom now welcomes you at the front door. Outside, a cluster of neon-orange traffic cones by Gordon Froud has been shifted to make it more visible from the living area. 'As an art lover it's a profound privilege to live in a space where you are provoked by a work or compelled to admire it no matter where you find yourself,' says Lucia.

On a wall in the dining area a small landscape dwarfed by a dramatic charcoal portrait by Marieke Kruger brings a surprising but happy disparity to the Boers' installation.

Estimated to be around 120 years old, the restored painting inherited by Piet from his Dutch grandparents bravely holds its own beside a Cecil Skotnes landscape. 'Unfortunately we've not been able to establish the artist or provenance but it must have been very special for Piet's grandparents to bring it to South Africa and it's therefore a treasured piece in our collection,' says Lucia. □ **Boogertman + Partners, 011-790-1600, boogertman.com; Lucia Boer, KUNS, 082-879-6391; Noero Architects noeroarchitects.com; Warren Siebrits Modern and Contemporary Art warrensiebrits.co.za**

ABOVE, FROM FAR LEFT In the garden of Lucia and Piet Boer's Joburg home a Gordon Froud sculpture is situated in full view of the living area; new doors and windows were installed to provide optimum views of the expansive garden; a Stephan Erasmus sculpture appropriately titled 'Cloud' floats above the dining-room table; the red and black print high up on the kitchen wall is 'Die Swart Gevaar' by Wopko Jensma. PREVIOUS PAGE The Boers have created a living environment where art is engaged with in every space and the garden is no exception.



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ABOVE Marieke Kruger's charcoal drawing 'Untitled' dominates the gallery wall in the open-plan living area beside works by Wopko Jensma, Gerhard Marx and Jo Ratcliffe. The cushion is by Hendrieka Schmitt, an artist and printmaker that the Boers have known since youth. OPPOSITE The passage walls feature printed fabrics by Wopko Jensma. Beside the front door stands Zoë Frank's 'Praying Woman' and a sculpture by Lerole Dalson Dikgale titled 'Unhappily Married'.



LUCIA AND PIET'S HOME TRUTHS

Style is keeping it simple and personal (Lucia); one's personality embraced (Piet). **The best thing about living where we do is** opening the sliding doors on a Saturday morning and hearing all the animal sounds coming from Johannesburg Zoo (Lucia); the massive trees, architectural heritage and that it's central to everything (Piet). **When displaying art in my home** I like to hang works that relate to one another in some way, whether by colour or subject matter, together in a collage formation. That way your display tells a story (Lucia). **Our rule for living with art is** always buy what you love and not necessarily because it is a good investment (both). **If I had space for another artwork in my home it would be** Judith Mason's 'The Singer' or a work by Diane Victor (Lucia); a photograph by Leon Krige from the '(In)Visible City' series, '3680 Tudhope East Fog' (Piet). **My favourite artwork is** a sculpture titled 'Tafelboek' by Willem Boshoff (Piet). **Local artists we're keeping an eye on are** Stephan Erasmus, Mongezi Ncapayi, Mandy Johnston and Gabrielle Goliath (both). **If we could visit any gallery in the world it would be** the Museum of Modern Art in New York (both). **Architecturally I'm inspired by** tangible handmade buildings with a humanistic approach. Simply put, buildings designed for people (Piet). **My favourite building in Johannesburg is** the FNB Stadium (Lucia); Circa Gallery as a sculptural object and the Constitutional Court as a handmade building with local identity (Piet).



ABOVE, FROM LEFT Lucia bought the skull artwork at the Food Wine Design Fair (now the Sanlam Handmade Contemporary Fair) last year to work with a Gerhard Marx silkscreen of a skull on the opposite wall; some of the wire baobab trees were found at a gallery in Prince Albert and the rest were sourced from various crafters beside the road; in the main bedroom a sculpture entitled 'Dancing Man' peers out a window and a Jozi table top by Goet is mounted against the wall opposite the bed.