

WEB-EXCLUSIVE HOME TOUR

An “Architectural Oddity” in London Gets Infused With Plenty of Light and Energy

The update pays homage to famous female architects and the swinging '60s

By Katherine Burns Olson

Photography by Henry Bourne

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Situated along one of the world’s priciest blocks in London, in a Richard Seifert–designed Brutalist building, a worldly collector’s residence by [Sally Mackereth](#) is admittedly something of “an architectural oddity,” as the architect puts it. But the peculiarities are, for the principal of [Studio Mackereth](#), part of the charm. “It had good bones. We needed to transform it and adapt it in such a way that would effectively celebrate London in the swinging ’60s. This building has got that swagger and spirit. [But] when we first saw it, it was in a fairly sorry state.”

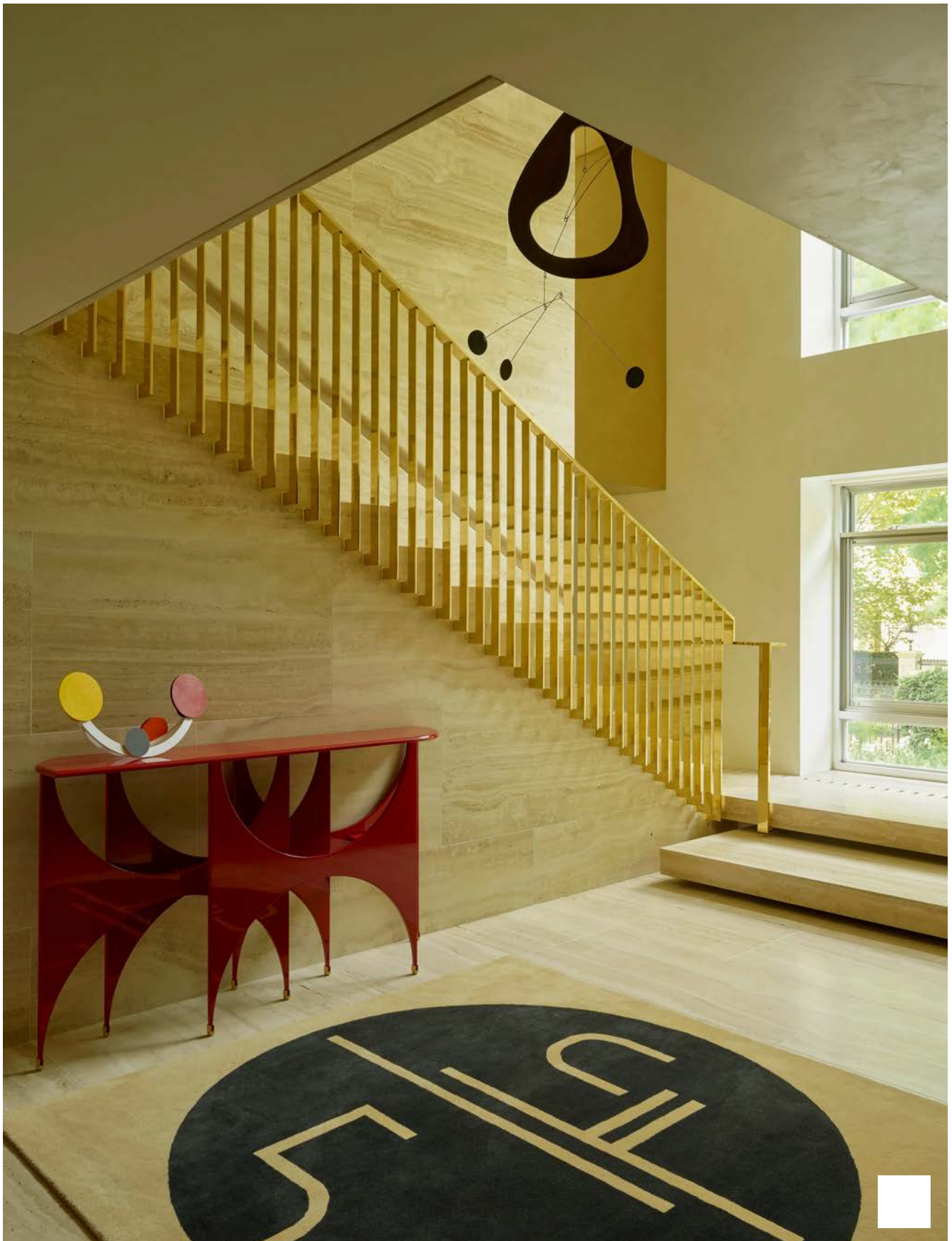
Over the years, its sprawling 5,000-plus square feet had been parsed into “quite pokey little spaces,” a veritable stagnation of the original midcentury design. “A modernist plan needs to flow. You need to get a sense of space,” Mackereth explains. The project’s nostalgic spirit—with neither camp nor kitsch—was inspired, for Mackereth, by the boundary-breaking female architects who came before her. Fittingly, she placed [Charlotte Perriand’s Ventaglio desk](#) in the study and [Eileen Gray’s St. Tropez rug](#) in the entrance hall.

Ambitious work began in the entry, with Mackereth removing a portion of the original floor slab to accommodate a double-height entrance hall, including a jaw-dropping staircase that features a recessed handrail carved meticulously from solid travertine. “We made incisions—like architectural surgery,” she says. The apartment’s sheer size and its height are unusual. It’s “very rare in London to have volume,” says the architect, who remains particularly taken with the entry’s “fabulous, rather indulgent sense of volume.”

A meet-cute between form and function, the apartment hosts tactile delights at seemingly every turn. In the primary bath, you’ll spot “a big fluffy mohair window seat—why not?”; in the dressing room, tender leather flooring by [Alma Leather](#) lies underfoot; in the reception room, [Verne](#)

garden, with landscaping by Chelsea Gold Award–winning [Chris Moss](#), are rarely more than a sliding wall or moveable screen away. “All the bits you touch are important,” Mackereth says.

The home also possesses a particular “excitement about something that appears to be one thing but turns out to be another.” Shelves and drawers in the study are mitred. “All the tedious stuff,” such as air conditioning, is hidden by artfully aligned wood grain. It takes precision to achieve that, whether performing scrupulous joinery of individual corners or excavating reinforced concrete to craft the staircase of one’s dreams. “Enormous effort goes into making something effortless and right,” Mackereth says. But the results are clearly worth it. “To run your fingers along the staircase is a pleasure. It’s not *just* functional.”



Art: Terry Frost © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London

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The entrance hall features a riveting custom travertine staircase, adorned with both a brass handrail by [Architectural Metalwork](#) and a recessed handrail carved from solid slab by Stone Specialists. The St. Tropez rug, designed by Eileen Gray for [Classicon](#), sits before the Butterfly console designed by Hannes Peer for [SEM](#), which holds a sculpture, *The Rocker*, by artist Terry Frost. A vintage suspended kinetic mobile crafted of balsa wood and metal by artist Derrick Pobell dangles delicately from above.



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In the living area, a fireplace with sliding walnut overpanels and a black Portoro marble hearth “give the room a focus and a sense of warmth,” Mackereth explains. Vintage pieces—the De Sede sofa in Petrol blue leather and the Karl Springer Cloud coffee table—provide curvilinear character. The bespoke pivoting screen, crafted of aerated aluminum and designed by Studio Mackereth to allow diffuse light into the space, sits back-center. Overhead, Dedar Modenista fabric-clad paneling adorns the ceiling. A Bliss wool and silk rug from CC Tapis can also be seen. PSLab Lighting Design provided light consulting for the project. SD Shopfitting served as the primary contractor.



Art: Terry Frost © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London

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The articulated walnut slatted wall, similar in form and function to a curved roll-top desk, provides maximum flexibility. A collage by artist Terry Frost hangs at center. Elsewhere, an array of Grand Prix dining chairs, upholstered in leather with timber legs and designed by Arne Jacobsen for [Fritz Hansen](#), surround the Ordinal black stained oak dining table, which was designed by Michael Anastassiades for [Cassina](#).



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The kitchen, by Boffi, can be concealed via a sliding pocket door, crafted with a solid timber frame and fluted walnut.



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The architect created a custom walnut-and-brass library replete with a galleried mezzanine set into precast concrete floor panels. The space is filled with the Pinwheel series of small walnut tables with satin polished brass legs, designed by Hvidt & Mølgaard for &Tradition, and the Relax sofa by Florence Knoll, in Eva Dedar fabric, at the right. “There’s something very nice about being given very strict, rigid, modernist straight lines of the original architecture, but interrupting that with some much more fluid, curvaceous elements,” Mackereth reflects.



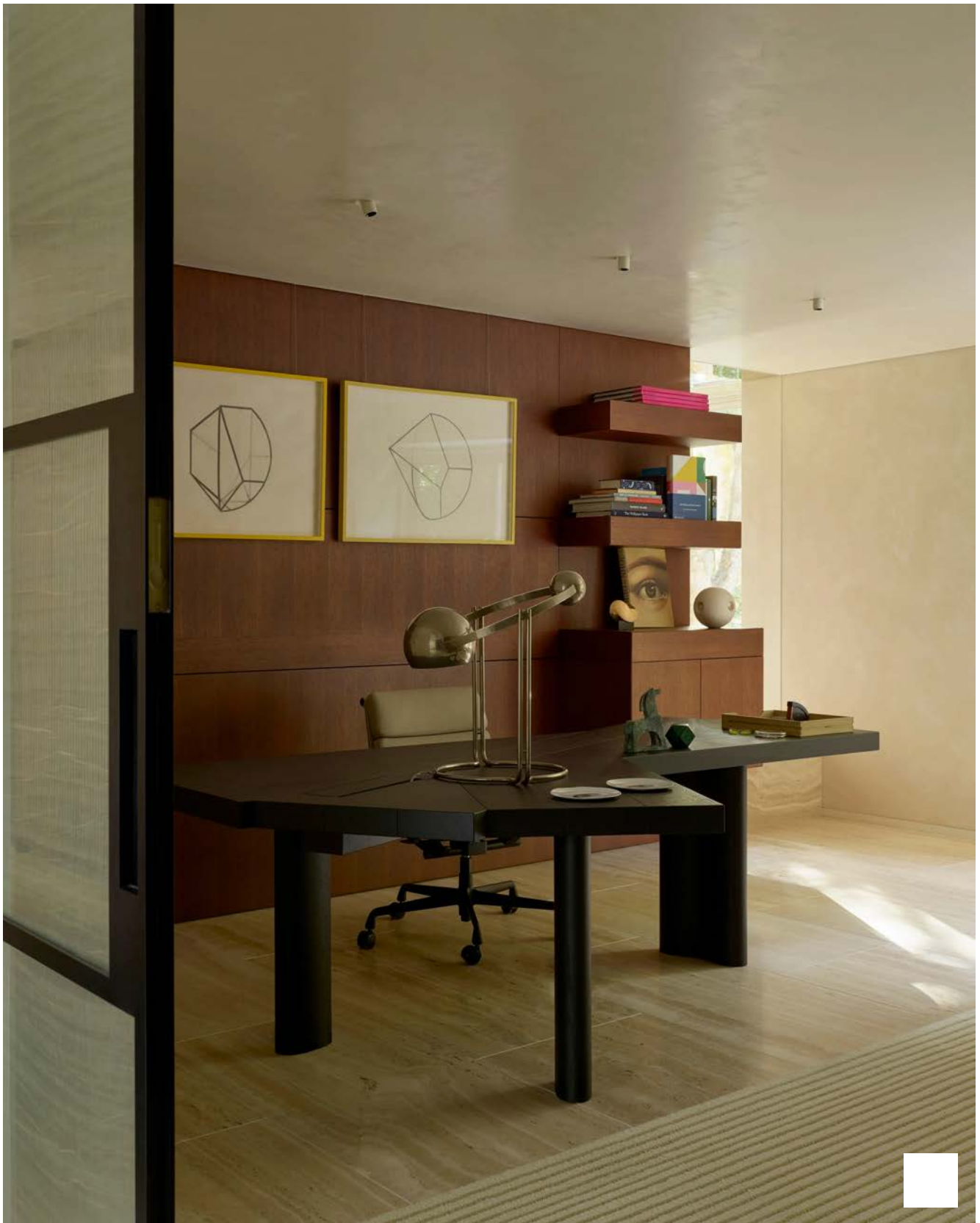
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In the media sitting room, the Noctambule glass floor lamp, designed by Konstantin Grcic for [Flos](#), towers behind a vintage Serpentine sofa by Vladimir Kagan. The Odin sofa, designed by Grcic for [ClassiCon](#), clad in Cuba by Sahco [Kvadrat](#) fabric, faces floor-to-ceiling windows. A Barrel desk in curved brushed aluminum with black leather top, designed by Poll Studio, flanks the Odin, with a Minitopo desk lamp designed by Joe Colombo for [Stilnovo](#) atop it. A Malachite Persian hand-knotted wool rug from [Luke Irwin](#) grounds the space.



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A view down the hallway frames a vintage sculpture from [Monument Store](#). The bespoke pivoting screen at left, designed by Studio Mackereth, is a favorite moment for the architect. "Seeing the sun grace the sculpture and come through that perforated screen is very pleasing to me," she shares.



Art: Nigel O'Neill

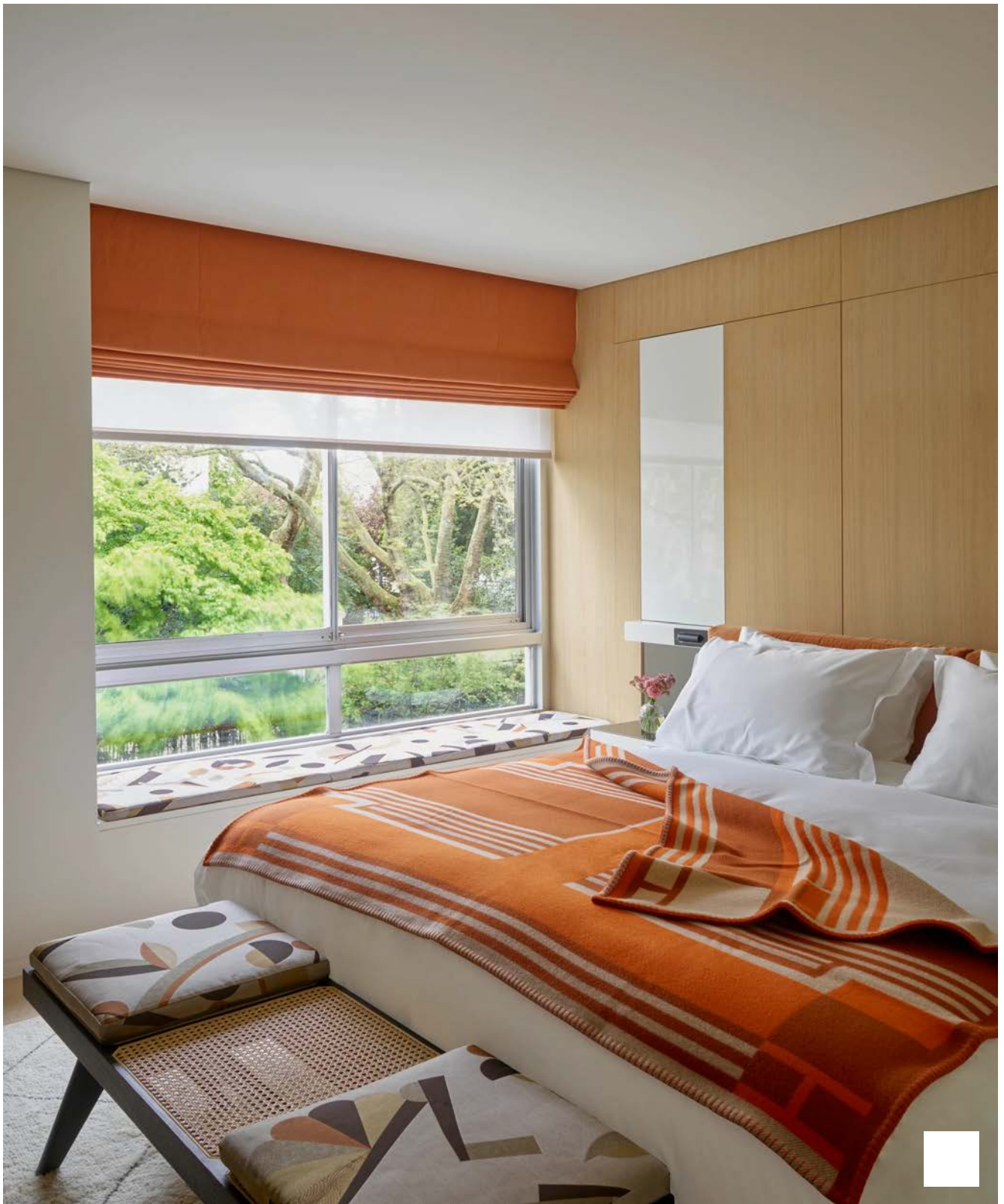
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The Ventaglio black-stained oak desk, designed by Charlotte Perriand for Cassina, is the study's focal point, accompanied by Vitra's EA 217 Soft Pad leather chair. "My female architect Modernist heroes, I champion," Mackereth says of Perriand and others. A 1970s table lamp, designed by Pierre Soulié, completes the room. To the left, a sliding steel-framed, double-glazed partition is outfitted with a fabric gauze interlayer to provide an ideal level of privacy and light.



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In the study, a woven leather seat pad sits atop the travertine window seat, with a frameless glass partition, seen in the background, that allows additional light to seep in. The room is outfitted with full-height, high-gloss lacquered wall cabinetry. Vintage Eye chairs, designed by Eivind Johansson, sit around the Bell-High meeting table with a smoke glass base and brass/black lacquered glass top, designed by Sebastian Herkner for [ClassiCon](#). The Ply hand-tufted rug is crafted by [MUT](#) for [GAN](#).



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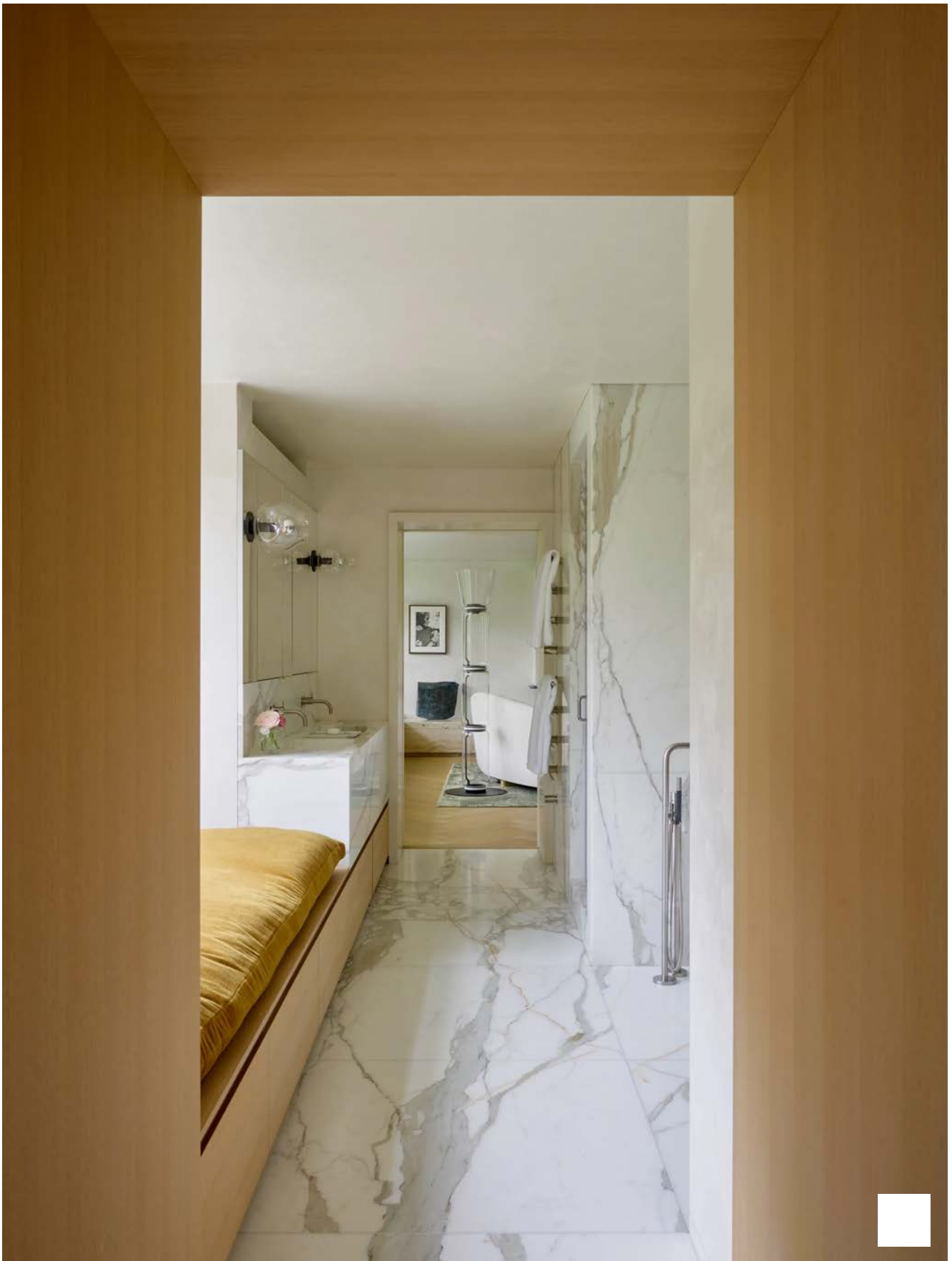
A Civil bench designed by Charlotte Perriand for [Cassina](#), adorned with silk cushion pads in Manifesto Futurista Dedar fabric, sits at the foot of the Clarence bed from [Conran Shop](#), outfitted in [Dedar's](#) Dante fabric. An [Hermès](#) terra-cotta-tangerine blanket graces the bed, while the window seat pad is done in Manifesto Futurista fabric, by [Dedar](#). Ledtube wall-mounted reading lamps from [Marset](#) float above the head of the bed.



Art: © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, 2023

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A vintage lithograph by artist Joseph Albers floats above the Rockwell bath from The Water Monopoly with Vola tapware in the primary bathroom. The dressing room, at right, features leather-clad doors and flooring.



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Calacatta marble tiling lines the primary bathroom, steeped in natural light thanks to the thoughtful architectural plan. Additional luminescence is provided by Branching glass wall lights from [Lindsey Adelman](#), at left, and the Noctambule glass floor lamp, designed by Konstantin Grcic for [Flos](#), at right. Feather seat pads complete the window seat.



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At the heart of the primary bedroom, the headboard, crafted of walnut and brass inlay with pattern designed by Beirut designer [Nada Debs](#), provides a fitting crown for the Prestige bed by [Vispring](#). Vintage 1960s Murano glass wall lamps hover above, while Roy Parete Diffusa copper bronze lamps, designed by Mario Nanni for [Viabizzuno](#), provide illumination for nighttime reading. The window seat's feather seat pads are Bold mohair velvet by [Pierre Frey](#). A vintage stool by Gio Ponti faces the foot of the bed, and the Burgundy Mist Twist, a hand-knotted wool rug designed by Michael Boyd for [Christopher Farr](#), anchors the room.