

AD 100

COMFORT
ZONES
INVITING
INTERIORS
FROM
LONDON
TO THE
LONE STAR
STATE

BEST OF THE BEST
THE TOP 100 ARCHITECTS AND
DESIGNERS OF THE YEAR



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Artistic Excellence

On a picturesque London street, *India Mahdavi* combines two neighboring houses to make a one-of-a-kind statement for renowned collector *Maja Hoffmann*

TEXT BY ALICE RAWSTHORN PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANÇOIS HALARD



ARTWORKS BY SIGMAR POLKE (ABOVE MANTEL) AND RIRIKRIT TIRAVANIJA (RIGHT) ADORN A DRAWING ROOM. JEAN ROYÈRE ARMCHAIRS AND SOFA; FRANZ WEST FLOOR LAMP. OPPOSITE AN OLAFUR ELIASSON ARTWORK ILLUMINATES THE STAIRWELL. FOR DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.



ABOVE VINTAGE FURNISHINGS BY A ROSTER OF DESIGN ICONS DECORATE A DRAWING ROOM: JEAN ROYÈRE SEATING AND COCKTAIL TABLE; A CHARLOTTE PERRIAND CONSOLE; A RISPAL FLOOR LAMP (LEFT BY DOOR); AND A JEAN PROUVÉ SHELF AND TABLE (ON RIGHT). **ON WALL**, ARTWORKS BY JEFF KOONS (LEFT) AND DAMIEN HIRST. **OPPOSITE** WORKS BY (FROM LEFT) GILBERT & GEORGE, FRANZ WEST, AND BETTY WOODMAN GREET VISITORS IN AN ENTRY.

JEFF KOONS: HOLE II, 2008 © JEFF KOONS; © DAMIEN HIRST AND SCIENCE LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED/DACS, LONDON/ARS, NY 2018



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ome parts are gently faded and others unmistakably shabby. What were once the exquisitely painted moldings designed in the 1770s by the great Scottish architects Robert and James Adam for the drawing room ceiling of a house on Mansfield Street in the Marylebone area of central London now look distinctly played down.

So they are. The house's owner, the Swiss philanthropist and art patron Maja Hoffmann, was so taken by the elegantly dilapidated moldings that she decided to conserve them thoughtfully. "They had such a special quality and were too beautiful to be repainted," says Hoffmann. "So we left them raw and unfinished."

From Harewood House and Nostell Priory in Yorkshire to all of Mansfield Street, the Adam brothers designed some of the grandest homes in late-18th century Britain, where their elegant interpretation of neoclassicism—dubbed the "Adam style"—was synonymous with sophistication. The surviving Adam houses are among London's most sought-after properties. Hoffmann owns two, having bought the first in 2006 and then its next-door neighbor two years later. →



INDIA MAHDAVI
DESIGNED A CUSTOM
BANQUETTE FOR
THE SMALL DINING
ROOM. JEAN ROYÈRE
CHANDELIER OVER
TABLE; ARTWORKS BY
MARTINO GAMPER
TABLE; ARTWORKS BY
JIM HODGES (LEFT)
AND ELAD LASSRY.
OPPOSITE THE
TERRACE IS SET FOR
OUTDOOR DINING.



FROM TOP A WEST SCULPTURE IS INSTALLED IN THE BAS SMETS-DESIGNED GARDEN; A BESPOKE BATHROOM. **OPPOSITE** COLORFUL TILEWORK DECORATES A GARDEN-LEVEL ENTRY; ARMCHAIR BY ALESSANDRO MENDINI.

“I found the first house by chance,” she recalls. “I walked in and was so taken by the entrance with its black-and-white floor, and daylight streaming through the skylight above the grand staircase with its wrought-iron railings.”

Working with the Iranian-born AD100 architect and interior designer India Mahdavi, Hoffmann, an heiress to the Hoffmann-La Roche pharmaceutical fortune, transformed the first house into a family home for herself, her partner, the film producer Stanley F. Buchthal, and their two children. The second house was turned into her work space and a place where she hosts dinners for the Tate, Serpentine Galleries, and other art institutions she supports in a vast drawing room with a gilded-copper ceiling in which the artist Rudolf Stingel has installed a spectacular series of carpets.

Both houses are filled with works by Stingel and other artists in Hoffmann’s lovingly assembled art collection, including Isa Genzken, Sigmar Polke, and Wolfgang Tillmans. Standing alongside the art is furniture designed by modernist pioneers such as Charlotte Perriand and Jean Prouvé, mixed with contemporary pieces by Martino Gamper and the Bouroullec brothers.

“This is a beautiful house with lots of people, and a beautiful house when you’re here by yourself,” says Hoffmann. “It’s vast and very vertical, but it’s also cozy, intimate, and always luminous. It’s odd to say this of a London house, but its warmth and light always make me think a little of Naples.”

When Hoffmann found the first Mansfield Street house, she was working with Mahdavi in southern France, where Hoffmann is building a cultural complex, Luma Arles, including a \$175 million Frank Gehry tower. She had commissioned Mahdavi to design Villa des Alyscamps as a place where the curators and artists in what she calls her “core group” of advisers could stay. Renowned for her exuberant aesthetic, Mahdavi enlivened the stone walls and floors of the historic Provençal building with adroit splashes of color, and adopted a similar approach to Hoffmann’s austere lovely Adam home.

From the outset, she and Hoffmann knew that the original architectural features of both houses had to be preserved to meet conservation regulations. For the same reason, the two houses needed to remain separate. They are connected by a row of mews houses that, typically for London, run behind them, and a tropical garden designed by the Dutch landscape architect Bas Smets in what was once the courtyard of Hoffmann’s first Mansfield Street house.

“The Adams’ houses are remarkable, with wonderful proportions and detailing,” says Mahdavi. “We’d have wanted to keep the original features anyway, as they are beautiful reminders of the houses’ history.”

Hoffmann was eager for the main rooms to remain aesthetically neutral, with white walls to complement her artworks. A huge Olafur Eliasson light sculpture is suspended above the grand staircase that she fell for on her first visit, and a very big, very yellow Franz West sculpture is surrounded by palm





FROM TOP CUSTOM LIGHTING CROWNS THE STUDY, WHERE FRANK GEHRY CHAIRS SURROUND A MARTIN SZEKELY TABLE; RUDOLF STINGEL-DESIGNED CARPETS ARE SHOWCASED IN A COPPER-CEILINGED DRAWING ROOM. **OPPOSITE** VINTAGE JEAN PROUVÉ TABLE AND CHAIRS IN THE KITCHEN.



trees in Smets's garden. Mahdavi kitted out the kitchens and bathrooms, and added expressive elements, such as a staircase wallpapered with one of Josef Frank's vibrant floral patterns. She was given free rein in the mews, which is now a sequence of spaces, including a swimming pool and gym. "We had a lot of fun there," Hoffmann recalls. "The colors India used are really amazing." Mahdavi also designed bespoke pieces throughout both houses, including a green velvet banquette to accompany a dining table made by Gamper from remnants of the furniture designed by Gio Ponti in the early 1960s for hotel Parco dei Principi in Sorrento, Italy, and a sinuous Jean Royère brass ceiling light.

"There are no rules with Maja," notes Mahdavi. "All her homes are remarkable buildings and all very different. She doesn't like things to be repeated and is incredibly open to new ideas, which makes her homes super-personal."

Mahdavi is now working on small projects for Hoffmann in New York and Paris, and on extending Le Cloître, the hotel she designed for her in Arles. Whenever Mahdavi returns to Mansfield Street, she spots intriguing changes because Hoffmann will have added new art and furniture, and removed other pieces, treating both houses as constant works in progress.

"You always meet extraordinary people at Maja's—great artists and writers, and filmmakers she knows through Stanley," says the Swiss curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, a friend and member of the core group. "There's a wonderful informality to the spaces. People don't necessarily gravitate to the same room, because it's great to spend time in all of them, so conversations can happen anywhere." ▲

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THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE, WHITE WALLS PROVIDE A NEUTRAL BACKDROP FOR ART. SOFAS BY MAHDAVI; PIERRE JEANNERET CHAIRS. OPPOSITE A MOSAIC BY PIERRE MESGUICH WRAPS THE POOL ROOM.