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HAPPY HOUSE

Vibrant artworks, sculptures and furniture inject personality and individuality into this contemporary Melbourne home. **Rebecca Gross** writes.

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Vibrant, eye-catching art makes an impact in this house from the moment you near the entry. Art consultant and designer **Sweet Lim**, of Sweet Design, worked with the owners to source and commission unique and distinctive artworks and sculptures that would add bold personality to the modernist-inspired house.

The clients engaged Lim following the redesign of their Melbourne house by Austin Design Associates, who created a sophisticated and stylish home and selected key furniture and feature lighting. The crisp palette of black timber joinery against white stone and walls created an elegant backdrop for Lim to enliven with vibrant artwork, furniture and objects. "The interior was very minimalist and black and white, so I

wanted to use colour and sculptural artforms to inject energy and fun into the house, particularly as the clients had young children," says Lim. "They were also very adventurous and embraced life, and I wanted the art to reflect this."

Lim and the clients started by identifying key locations where art would have an impact. The first location was outside the entrance to the house, where **Steven John Clark's** sculpture creates a "wow experience," as Lim describes. She commissioned Clark to create the work – a totemic sculpture with curvaceous and organic forms. Made with South Australian limestone, the large-scale piece is seen from outside and inside, framed by the fine black edge of the windows.

Inside the front entry, an artwork commissioned from German artist **Jan Albers** is another bold statement. "The artwork is the first thing you see when you enter the house, creating an eye-catching, whimsical moment," says Lim. Albers' abstract artwork plays with texture and dimension, through faceted geometric forms and an intense gradient of hues. **Anna Glynn's** kangaroo sculptures add an ethereal quality, while the voluptuous shape of the Roly Poly Chair and geometric lines of **Michael Hourigan's** painting have contrasting forms, yet are united by their golden tones. "We chose the tangerine hues, reminiscent of sunshine, to contrast against the green outdoors," says Lim.

Like in the front entry, a mix of art mediums is used throughout the house. Lim paired colour-infused abstract artworks by **Jennifer Goodman** with natural timber sculptures by **Jo Wilson** in the dining room. The hand-turned wooden totems made from old telegraph poles were commissioned for the client, as was a third painting by Goodman to create a dynamic triptych. "Commissioning artworks is risky and challenging, but I wanted unique large-scale art and sculptural works that create moments for contemplation and enjoyment," says Lim. Through commissioning and acquiring pieces, there are more than 15 artists represented through the house.





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A landscape by photographic artist **Kate Ballis** infuses the living room with an atmospheric moodiness. Using infra-red technology, Ballis isolates colours within the spectrum to create an otherworldliness in familiar scenes. **Pat Brassington's** photomontage and **Ryan Hoffmann's** circular artwork in the bedroom also have a surreal and enigmatic quality. Brassington's black-and-white palette balances the jewel-like greens, blues and rich velvets, while Hoffman's layers of textured, coloured paint play with light and dimension.

The Ivy floor light by **Lucie Koldova** and sculptural side table by denHolm are more imaginative touches. Clark, who created the outdoor sculpture, is the

artist behind denHolm. This table is from a series of ten, each with its own abstract form reflecting cloud formations.

Adding impact throughout the house, the bold artworks, sculptures and furniture inject personality and individuality into the contemporary home. And while the client was interested in art but did not have much knowledge of it at the start of the process, they enjoyed the journey so much that Lim and client nicknamed the house Maison Du Bonheur, which translates to House of Happiness. "The home is sophisticated, full of life and unashamedly whimsical," says Lim.





1 / In this open living space, the greens of the view to a tennis court and hedge are contrasted with warm-toned artworks. At left is a Michael Hourigan artwork, from Studio Gallery; in the centre is a Jan Albers, an art commission from Van Horn Gallery, Dusseldorf, Germany and at right is Anna Glynn's Kangaroos in Gowns from Fletcher Art. The Driade Roly Poly chair is by Faye Toogood

2 / The mirror artwork is by Ella Saddington from Cordon Salon, while the two small Peter Cole sculptures on the right are from Fletcher Art.

3 / A harmony of curves with an artwork by Ryan Hoffmann from Sophie Gannon Gallery, a sculptural Brokis Ivy floor lamp from Spence and Lyda, a Moroso Redondo armchair and ottoman from Mobilia and a denHolm sculptural side table.

4 / The dining room is made dynamic with the directional forces of the Jennifer Goodman paintings, from Gallerysmith and Jo Wilson sculptures

5 / The playful Bruce Earl artwork enhances the delightful decoration in a child's room.

6 / *The flight of the Duchess*, by Pat Brassington, from Arc One Gallery hangs above the bed.

7 / A moody Kate Ballis landscape from Gallerysmith creates an atmosphere in the living room.

8 / The commissioned sculpture *Hawick*, by Steven John Clark, of DenHolm, animates the garden with its curved, angular forms jostling against the straight architectural lines of the house.

ART CONSULTANT, FURNISHING AND STYLING: SWEE LIM OF SWEE DESIGN. INTERIOR DESIGN AND FURNISHINGS: AUSTIN DESIGN ASSOCIATES. PHOTOS: SHANNON McGRATH. COURTESY: SWEE DESIGN



/ EXPERT EYE /

PERFECT MATCHMAKERS

Rebecca Gross speaks to three art and design experts who show how artworks can be curated to create feeling, mood and diversity throughout spaces in your home.



When acquiring or curating new art, collectors and experts advise not to match your art to your sofa, curtains or existing pieces. So what should you consider in building a varied collection of artworks? The consensus from these art and design experts is to embrace diversity, buy pieces that stir an emotional response and curate the art for the mood of the room.

Interior designer **Amelda Wilde** designed Foam House to create a boutique holiday accommodation in Torquay, Victoria drawing on notions of nostalgia

and play to create a sense of escapism. The owners had an art collection they built over many years. Artworks varied in size, medium and expression with interesting aesthetics and intent, but the commonality was that pieces provoked a feeling in their owners.

"Art is so deeply personal and an opportunity to be playful and visually express things that make you feel something. Warmth, intrigue, haunted, mystery – it could be a range of things, but for me, you have to feel something," says Wilde.



1 / An uplifted mood is created in this dining room with the thoughtful placement of a Marisa Purcell painting.

PHOTO: SHANNON McGRATH. COURTESY: SWEE DESIGN.

2 / By displaying diverse paintings, by Fraser Grant Fair, Jiri Tibor and Cat Rabbit, together on a wall in an asymmetrical arrangement, a playful mood is created in a holiday home.

PHOTO: CRICKET SALEH. COURTESY: AMELDA WILDE INTERIOR DESIGN.

3 / The balance of tone and commonality of stretched limbs in these photographs makes for a harmonious pairing of works by Tamara Dean and Petrina Hicks.

PHOTO: DAVE WHEELER. COURTESY: SE DÉA AND ATELIER LAB.

4 / A non-traditional hang evokes an emotional response with the unexpected pairing of works by Jordan Richardson and Stanislas Piechaczek.

PHOTO: CRICKET SALEH. COURTESY: AMELDA WILDE INTERIOR DESIGN.

She curated four artworks on the living room wall. At first glance, they are different styles and subjects, however there is harmony in their colour palette and Australian identity. “These pieces are by local artists – **Fraser Grant Fair, Cat Rabbit and Jiri Tibor Novak** – and were selected for their colours and unpredictable relationship with one another,” says Wilde. The asymmetric and offset arrangement, with three artworks to the left and one to the right, reinforces that unpredictability and contributes to the relaxed, playful mood of the holiday house.

Like Wilde, designer and art consultant **Swee Lim** says, “The most important thing when buying and collecting is to ‘feel’ your art. It should lift your spirits or make you feel an emotion when you look at it.” Lim worked with the owners of Jade House to build a diverse collection that reflects a variety of cultures and styles, as they regularly travel overseas. “Diversity across art forms and subject matters brings interest, variety and richness into a home. You also want rooms to convey different moods and emotions through varied styles, mediums and sizes of artworks, and to think about how someone will be viewing a work,” says Lim.

She paired a contemporary figurative artwork by **Rhys Lee** with a small, textural artwork by **Jacob Leary** to infuse the living room with a romantic, feminine mood and give it a sense of luxury. The pairing of images also invites different perspectives of the artworks. With a broad view of the room, the undulating form of the pendant echoes the wide-brimmed hat in Lee’s work, while the sculptural, three-dimensional detail of Leary’s artwork invites an up-close look.

The artwork next to the dining table is different yet. The abstract emerald-toned work by **Marisa Purcell** injects the dining room and kitchen with uplifting colour, and its intricate detail is mesmerising, making it a restful piece to look at while dining or cooking.

“Embracing diversity encourages collectors to think critically about the connections and contrasts between different artworks. The key is to align it with the collector’s vision and preferences, whether that involves matching or embracing variety,” says **Jack Milenkovic**, creative director of Atelier Lab. Milenkovic collaborated with architecture studio Se Déa in curating artworks for Fletcher House in Tamarama, Sydney. Se Déa’s approach to the architecture and design provided a warm, casual home for the clients’ bold, edgy and vintage taste, and for eclectic artworks that evoke intrigue through their expression and display.

This is captured in the unexpected pairing and non-traditional hang of two artworks above the sideboard. The pieces, by **Jordan Richardson and Stanislas Piechaczek**, are different sizes and expressions, yet are of a similar subject and the juxtaposition amplifies the emotional response. “The offset placement and colour in the art create an unexpected moment and add playfulness within the room,” says Samantha Birtles, director of Se Déa.

The dining room has a softer, subtle ambience with two artworks, by **Tamara Dean and Petrina Hicks**. While being quite different artistic expressions, they are balanced through their harmonious palettes – green and light tones – and the sinuous forms and outstretched limbs of the subjects.

When it comes to acquiring art and building a collection, buying pieces that evoke a feeling is the most important aspect. Creativity and experimentation can follow in how you hang and curate your works and the feeling, mood and emotional response that can stir.

