





Opposite page

Prince Charles, a mixed-media work, looks down on an orange lacquered storage cabinet in the sitting room.

Left

Another treasured artwork, *Pig's Arse*, was inspired by a scene from a meat market in St Petersburg.

Right

A dining table made from three recycled pine church pews is one of Genevieve Lilley's favourites.



cuttingedge

Contemporary artworks are used to strong effect throughout this Paddington terrace.

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Photography **Dieu Tan**
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Striking contemporary artworks make a bold statement in the Paddington terrace of architect and jewellery designer Genevieve Lilley and her husband Kingsley Wallman, a corporate lawyer who became a gemologist. And it's a toss-up whether the boldest piece in their collection is *Prince Charles* or *Pig's Arse*.

The former, hanging in the sitting room, is a quirky mixed media work by British artist Hew Locke. The latter – displayed on a kitchen wall designed especially for it – is an enormous, confronting oil painting by London-based Martin McGinn, with whom Lilley and Wallman became well-acquainted during the decade they worked in England. "That picture formed part of an exhibition based on photographs I took at a meat market in St Petersburg when a group of us, including the artist, visited for a weekend," explains 40-year-old Lilley. "We have several of McGinn's works. But *Pig's Arse* was our last hurrah when we were leaving the UK – we figured we'd never have a bank account full of pounds again."

In London, Lilley worked for seven years with the renowned architect David Chipperfield before establishing her own architectural practice. Wallman was a general counsel for a large multinational telecommunications company. Four years ago, the couple moved back to Sydney with their then one-year-old son, Sebastian. Soon after that their daughter, Charmian, was born. Within a month of returning, they bought the Paddington terrace and at the same time Wallman, now 43, decided to quit law and pursue a career in gemology. His passion for Australian opals and gems was nurtured through his family's 30 years' experience in the gemstone business.

"We were gripped by a mad kind of euphoria that comes from 'hey, we've sold a small London apartment so let's buy a whole house in Sydney'. But this place was derelict and totally uninhabitable. There were no bathrooms, just one blocked outside toilet," says Lilley, who had a clear vision of how to renovate the property. "The average Paddington terrace bores me to tears; they're all the same. So I turned this house on its head and moved the living areas upstairs. Basically, we kept the roof and two walls and rebuilt the rest."

While caring for two babies and redesigning the terrace, Lilley also found time to create Venerari, the duo's jewellery store on the ground floor of the Strand Arcade. The Latin word means to revere and adore and the store is a showcase for Lilley's pared-back designs, made by craftspeople working in her office a few floors above the shop. →

Lilley's home is a testament to her architectural talents and commitment to sustainability – hidden under the garage is a 4000-litre rainwater tank that supplies the laundry and garden. Situated on the elevated side of a steeply sloping avenue near the top of the Paddington ridge, the house originally spanned two levels, but Lilley extended into the pitched roof to create a third level with an attic bedroom and ensuite.

"It's the Eurotrash suite," she quips. "Between November and March we have British and European friends constantly in residence." With the main bedrooms at entry level, and the kitchen and living areas on the mid-level, guests can arrive and leave without disturbing the rest of the house. On the ground floor, a wide hallway connecting the main bedroom and the children's bedrooms also serves as a home office, library and gallery. Hanging above a long desk is another large McGinn painting – "the first piece of art we ever bought," says Lilley.

More artworks adorn the walls of the children's bedrooms and the main bedroom. Most of the couple's furniture and art was acquired abroad. "We bought a lot of stuff in London and also in Amsterdam, where you can buy things inexpensively," says Lilley. Placed around the long dining table – made of three recycled pine church pews – are six Eames chairs "picked up for about 20 quid each at a South London shop". The superbly crafted table is part of a collection designed by Lilley in collaboration with a reclamation company. "They'd find the materials, I'd design the furniture, we'd have items made in limited editions, then throw roaring big parties to sell them," she says.

Lilley also designed a pair of eye-catching orange lacquered storage cabinets in the sitting/dining area. "These have five coats of orange paint and about 100 coats of clear lacquer over the top. It took about three months to cure the lacquer," she notes.

In sharp colour contrast to the orange cabinets is a purple Bertoia Bird lounge chair and ottoman – part of Harry Bertoia's circa-1952 seating collection sculpted from bent metal rods – that Lilley gave to Wallman when their first child was born. "I figure a father needs a proper armchair and footstool to sit upon with his child on his knee," she says.

Adjacent are a Noguchi coffee table and a multi-coloured rug originally used as a sample carpet in a department store. "It was made for customers to choose a colour from when ordering wall-to-wall carpet," says Lilley. "I tend to have a lot of colours in the house; I always have lived with a mixture of colours rather than any particular colour scheme. I think in Australia where the natural light is robust, we gravitate toward stronger colours."

Practicality is a major consideration. "With two small children, we can't afford to have anything too precious," says Lilley. "I also believe modern furniture should be lived on as much as possible. In the children's bedrooms is a pair of Le Corbusier chairs that are quite beaten up. I don't think these items need be precious, precise and fully restored."

Lilley has the same attitude to art. "My husband often says to me, 'Do you think that painting should be hanging above the cooktop?' But I cook a lot and like to look at that picture, so I don't mind if it gets a bit of grease on it."

However she's more careful with precious works such as *Prince Charles*, which is hung well away from the kitchen and safely out of reach of small fingers. "Hew Locke is very famous now," says Lilley. "A lot of his works are in the Tate."

"It's the Eurotrash suite. Between November and March we have British and European friends constantly in residence."



Above right

The couple extended into the pitched roof to create an attic bedroom and ensuite.

Right

Many of the elegant touches throughout the house were acquired abroad.

Below left

Contemporary artworks are carefully placed for maximum impact.





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