



Report by **François Épin**  
 Photography by  
**Steven Papandropoulos**

## **AMPERSAND HOUSE & GALLERY**

DESIGN AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
 AS A LIFESTYLE

Located in a mansion in central Brussels, Ampersand House & Gallery is conceived as a cleverly orchestrated mix of photography, contemporary art, vintage furniture and design. Settled in what has been dubbed the 'Golden Triangle' of the city, Kathryn Smith and Ike Udechuku have recently invested a considerable amount of time in revamping a building, bathed in light, which reflects the rich diversity of their influences and interests. They welcome collectors eager to find XXth century pieces displayed in their rightful context, in this case a family home. The decor is a reflection of their philosophy of life. With no particular preconceptions, it elegantly and harmoniously mixes design icons with new talents. The temporal boundaries merge, creating dialogue between the arts, eras and materials.

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Furthermore, the cosmopolitan hosts find it only natural to initiate meetings between the contemporary artists whom they represent. The suggestion of a collaboration between lighting designer Nathalie Dewez and a ceramist may soon result in a collection of original lamps.

#### **Quirkiness, image and lighting**

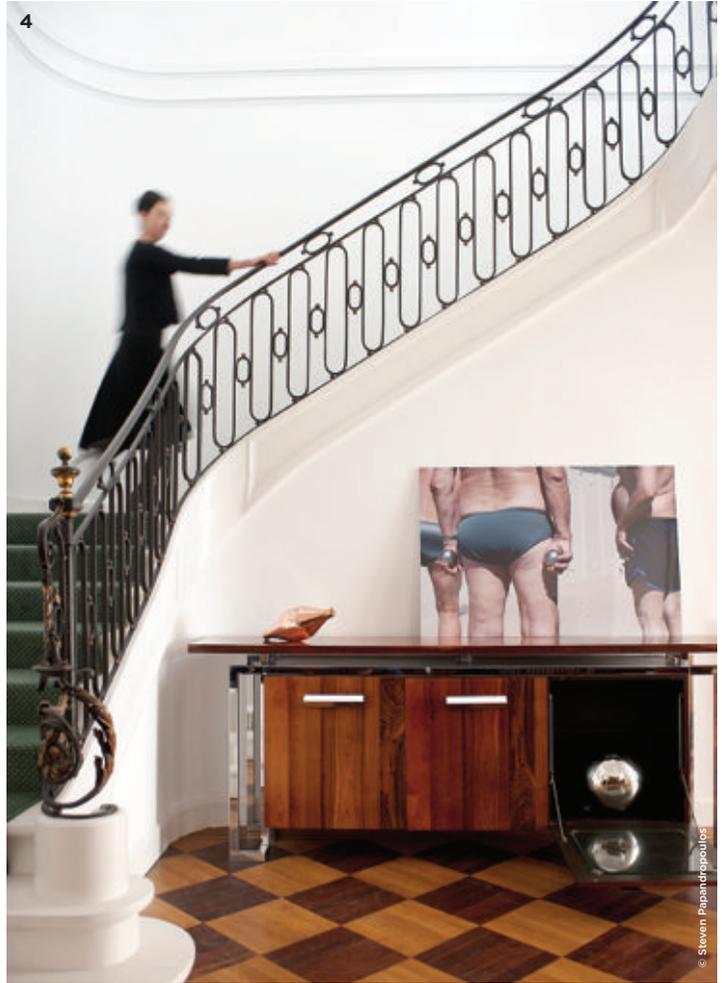
Walking through the large voluminous spaces within the mansion, the visitor will be seduced by the colourful and quirky photographs of Steven Papandropoulos. In the reception area, the clichés of 'pétanque' players taken on a beach in Belgium is reminiscent of scenes of

life on the Anglo-Saxon coast that are so dear to Martin Parr. They blend comfortably with the retro furniture. If the suspension lamps by Nathalie Dewez, graphic with clean lines, provide some pure solid colour which coordinates with the modernist decor in the rest of the apartment, the floor lamps also correspond to the industrial and mystical universe of Neil Woods' prints. His poetic, photographic eye revealing the hinges that would come with the latest pair of fashionable glasses.

#### **Design against design**

Upstairs, a lounge arranged like a game of geometry is an invitation to conversation. A

very 1970s circular wall lamp brushes next to another well-rounded subject; a photo by Richard Caldicott, its square frame following the same harmonious lines as the Heine Design coffee table, which in turn echo the lines of the Hans Wegner sofa bed. All this contradicted by the dispersed triangular composition of a delicate paper Star lamp by Tom Dixon. Simply placed on the table, its sculptural character is true-to-life. We can leave the house with the memory of Sean Justice's photograph Ceramic71 that epitomises the harmony of the place, the marriage of contrasts taking place between photography and design whilst playing with the times and styles.



**1 Ground floor front exhibition room**

Easy chairs by Peter Hvidt and Orla Mølgaard Nielsen for France & Daverkosen; featured in Mad Men, episode two, series one, photograph: "My Phone" by Stephen Papandropoulos / German brass art deco lamp, unknown designer / Danish rosewood sideboard manufactured by Vejen Møbelfabrik / Heart-shaped vases by Per Lütken for Holmegaards Glasværk

**2 First floor landing**

Scanned image: Shades by Neil Wood, from the Mythologies series, digital images made by scanning everyday objects / Danish sofa bed by unknown designer / German candlesticks designed by Stöff for Nagel / Upper lamp: La Plic light by Nathalie Dewez for Ligne Roset / Lower lamp: spiral filament tube bulb from the Historic / Lighting Company lying on a beaten aluminium dish from the Lebanon

**3 Ceramic 71 by Sean Justice**

**4 Sweeping staircase in reception area**

Photograph: "Ready to Play" by Stephen Papandropoulos / Mandarin Series credenza in rosewood, designed by Tim Bates for Pieff / Copper-coated Spun Vase by Edward Robinson

**5 Ampersand Office**

Photograph: "Pier" by Stephen Papandropoulos, sculpture: Italian, 1970s bronze relief sculpture, artist unknown / Danish teak 1960s sideboard, unknown designer / Three-seater "Tongue" chair by Nigel Coates for SCP / "Lamp06" by Nathalie Dewez for Ligne Roset

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**Studio / reception room**

Photograph: "Combination Black, 1995" by Richard Caldicott, Danish student daybed by Hans J. Wegner for Getama / German 1970s circular wall lamp produced by Staff / Paper Star Light by Tom Dixon / Heine Design steel and glass coffee table / Danish Gallery Stool by Hans Sandgren Jacobsen

