

VOGUE AUSTRALIA LIVING

PARISIAN SPIRIT

A FINE ART WATCHES AND JEWELLERY

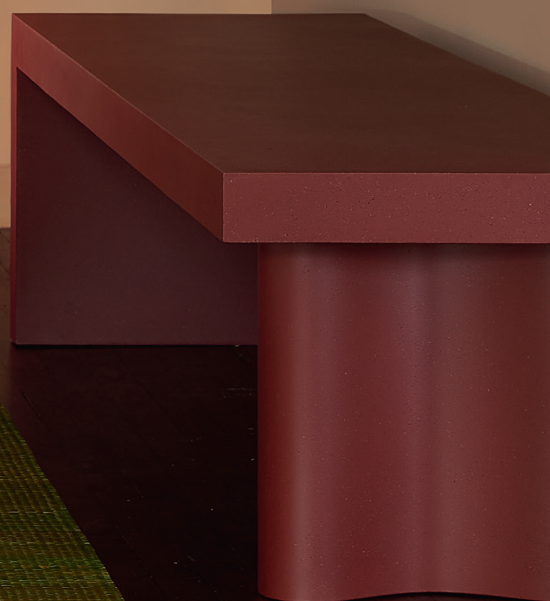
FRENCH REVOLUTION

Given free reign in a friend's apartment, designer RODOLPHE PARENTE creates *seductive tension* between art and architecture by invigorating its 'very Parisian' identity with the *rebellious spirit* of RADICALISM and his own *contemporary vision*.



These pages in the entry of this Paris apartment, Ultrafragola **mirror/light** by Ettore Sottsass for Poltronova; Mirror Mirror **console** by Jasper Morrison for Glas Italia; Azo **bench** by François Bauchet from Galerie Kreo; Grotto **candelabras** by Jenna Kaës from Southway Studio; **rug** from Codimat Collection. *Details, last pages.*

By LINDYL ZANBAKA *Photographed by* CLAIRE ISRAEL



This page in another view of the entry, Parola **table lamp** by Gae Aulenti and Piero Castiglioni for FontanaArte; *Hyper Nuit artwork* by Nanténé Traoré from Galerie Sultana. *Opposite page* in the living room, Groovy **armchair** by Pierre Paulin for Artifort; **andirons** (on fireplace hearth) by Jean-Pierre Boutillier from Nans Design; Calici Milanesi **glass** from La Romaine Editions; Golosa **floor lamp** by Rodolphe Parente; custom **rug** by Codimat Collection; *Peinture périmée (Bouquets) artwork* by Olivier Millagou from Galerie Sultana; original **bas-relief** (above fireplace).







These pages in another view of the living room, custom **sofa** by Rodolphe Parente; Gli Seacchi **coffee table** by Mario Bellini and **ashtray** by Jean-Michel Wilmotte from Nes Gallery; The Silent Village **side table** by Brynjar Sigurðarson from Galerie Kreo; Nambo **plate** from Maison Intègre; **curtains** from Chase Erwin; framed **drawing** by Mœbius.



There's no escaping screens these days, Rodolphe Parente knows that. Still, the Paris-based interior designer is more interested in what's happening off-screen, in the world beyond the frame. He made a compelling suggestion at the Toulon 2022 Design Parade, where, as president of the jury and guest of honour, he was given *carte blanche* to take over a space and create at will. His exhibition, *Contre Soirée* — its English equivalent, 'counter party', doesn't sound quite as cool — manifested the places that exist outside the margins of the main event, in this instance, the iridescent corridors and closed-off rooms of a house party, where the real fun happens.

Two years later, he reveals another dopamine-dripping design dream, this time in the Art Deco apartment of a friend who lives in the seventh arrondissement. "The idea of stepping outside, of off-screen culture" came up in conversation between designer and owner, who, Parente clarifies, "is of the same generation as me". Their discussions revealed natural affinities and shared aesthetic influences that eventually green-lit a few radical ideas. "I want to arouse curiosity and I like to create little accidents. It has to scratch the eye a bit," Parente says of his willingness to raise eyebrows and the friction that can be found in every one of his projects.

Granted "great freedom" to invigorate the interior architecture and decoration, Parente, despite his taste for radicalism, first proceeded to sensitively preserve the heritage "that anchored the apartment in a very Parisian style". Parente, who knows good design when he sees it, retained the "very functional" star-shape floor plan that circulates dining room, kitchen, library, and a bedroom and bathroom around the living room. "When apartments are not too modified, there is an intelligence of flow that must be preserved and maintained in contemporary use," elucidates Parente, who attributes his mastery of space to a tertiary education at prestigious arts *écoles*, followed by years spent working with Andrée Putman, the designer dubbed "an icon of French taste" despite a career spent baulking at stuffy notions of that very thing.


In Parente's imaginative world, paint is more than a surface treatment — he introduces colour to create volume, and even structure, "to delineate junctions and support architectural transitions". Work was done on the wood parquet "to enhance its hue" and in several rooms he used two different neutrals, one warm and one cool. "I wanted to mix a contemporary approach into the traditional context, to keep the Parisian spirit. In Paris, the light has peculiar tones throughout the day — this is what I call 'false colours', or 'in-between shades'," says Parente before pointing out that what appears to be a "powdery colour" on the walls during the day will deepen into smouldering tobacco tones as evening descends.

The slow burn of tobacco is replaced with the dopamine spike of reflective furniture in the entrance, where Ettore Sottsass's framing of a woman's curves and wavy hair makes a Glas Italia Mirror Mirror console blush. Parente says the Ultrafragola can't help imposing itself, but it does make the space more "glamorous, sensual and graphic". In the kitchen, the neon glow of those mirrored surfaces is replaced with the pleasant acidity of a ceiling the same colour as pink grapefruit juice. "The owner wanted to engage with colour in the kitchen, so we chose to twist poor and rich natural materials, like cork with radical stainless-steel cabinet fronts and the freshness of pink," he says of the tangy mix.

Parente oriented the living room around the fireplace's original terracotta bas-relief and designed a curved sofa in response to the corner apartment's architecture and rounded windows. "It's a unifying piece," says Parente, who still couldn't resist the urge to "collide it with Mario Bellini's modular coffee table, which represents the idea of versatility and free composition". In the library, which is framed by a custom-designed bookcase, he rolls out more curves in the form of an Isamu Noguchi floor lamp, adjustable Eileen Gray side table and an O'Step ladder by Julie Richoz with the jaunty circular cut-outs of an André Courrèges dress.

The bedroom, bathroom and dressing room are contained within a private suite designed to anticipate and enhance the owner's daily rituals. Parente likens the bedroom to a box with a violet-coloured ceiling and custom purple lacquered headboard with a seductive satin finish and mirrored panels. An artwork above the bed by Celia Hempton is one of many pieces sourced from Galerie Sultana, which Parente includes in a list of current inspirations. "Art and design are an integral part of a project, but they are also part of life and that's what I try to convey. I try to create tension between the works and the architecture. Art is used for architecture, and vice-versa," says the designer, who acquired several works for this project with the guidance of art advisor Sibylle Rochat.

Parente may be looking off-screen, but that doesn't mean he's offline. Everyone in his studio has Co-Star, the astrology app that deciphers the birth charts of its users to glean daily horoscopes and insights that might explain a weird mood or romantic tiff. "It began as a joke in the studio, now it's evolved into a fun connection. We're all assessing compatibility and the day's vibe," says the designer, who, coincidentally, is very good at picking up on, and bringing, vibes. "I am inspired by everyday life... of artistic feelings," Parente says of his more subconscious influences. "I have always been touched by singular beauties, but there isn't a singular approach to design. For me, design must surpass the constraints of style." ■ rodolpheparente.com



This page in the dining room, **En Forme Libre table** by Charlotte Perriand for Cassina; **S11 chairs** by Pierre Chapo from Galerie Desprez Breheret; **Shimmer console** by Patricia Urquiola for Glas Italia; **Fruits et légumes decorative objects** from Maison Intègre; **chandelier** by Gino Sarfatti for Flos; **rug** from Sibylle De Tavernost; **Untitled artwork** by Neil Beloufa curated by Sibylle Rochat.





This page in the kitchen, custom **banquette** by Rodolphe Parente upholstered in Pierre Frey fabric; metal **bowl** from Mes Gallery; **plates** by Angelo Mangiarotti from Galerie Modernariato; Saliscendi **suspension light** by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni for Stilnovo. *Opposite page* in another view of the kitchen, **table** by Jesper Stahl for Karl Andersson & Söner; Slow Love **chair** by Christophe Pillet, and **teapot** and **carafe** by Claude Dumas, all from Remix Gallery; small **plate** and **glasses** from La Romaine Editions; **tray** by Piero Fornasetti from Galerie Modernariato.

This page in the library, **bookcase** in walnut by Rodolphe Parente; **daybed** by Hans J. Wegner from Galerie Paradis; **ClassiCon E1027 side table** by Eileen Grey; **O'Step ladder** by Julie Richoz from Galerie Kreo; **Akari 10A floor lamp** by Isamu Noguchi; **rug** from Jacaranda. *Opposite page* in the main bedroom and bathroom, **bath** from Bette; custom **headboard** by Rodolphe Parente; **bed linen** from Haomy; **Daphine table lamp** from Lumina; wood **stool** from Galerie Paradis; **Jacaranda rug** from IDO; bathroom **floor** in Perlato D'Olympe marble; *Unknown Location, 14th October 2022 artwork* by Celia Hempton from Galerie Sultana. *Details, last pages.*



