

design anthology

INTERIORS / ART / ARCHITECTURE / TRAVEL



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Home Crafting

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London-based
designers Zoe
Chan Eayrs and
Merlin Eayrs in the
study of their latest
project, The Beldi.
The two are seated
on a Settle bench
at a Trunk dining
table with terrazzo
top, both by Sue
Skeen for The New
Craftsmen

Image by The
Modern House /
Taran Wilkhu

Facing page
A Stumpy bench
with rush cushion
by Sue Skeen for
The New Craftsmen
sits below a wall
hanging from the
couple's travels in
South America

London-based Zoe Chan Eayrs and Merlin Eayrs of Chan + Eayrs are very different from other architects and interior designers. For starters, they are their own clients, so they have carte blanche for every project they work on. 'We find and purchase our own sites, then design, make and choreograph everything right down to the cups on the table, so every site stems from our own dream and our interest in it as a place for our home,' explains Chan Eayrs.

While Chan Eayrs's parents are from Hong Kong and Shanghai, the couple met as students at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. 'We immediately became friends, and quickly realised that we also had chemistry in terms of our outlook on life and aesthetic sensibilities,' says the hands-on Eayrs, who works closely with artisans to create their homes.

Their latest creation is The Beldi, a loft in post-industrial Shoreditch chosen for its lateral sprawl. Formerly a shoe factory, the 280-square-metre unit is located at one end of an industrial building, has a quadruple aspect so is flooded with light all day, and boasts stunning views over the treetops surrounding the adjacent church. 'The shoe factory would've been open-plan, but the space had been divided up by its previous owner, a set designer. To stay true to its original form, we removed all the walls and lived for a year in the raw, empty space to understand the light, temperature and volumes before deciding how to shape the interior. We kept the plan as open as possible, delineating the "rooms" with patterned and textured flooring instead of walls,' says Chan Eayrs.

Inspired by Marrakech riads, the couple tiled the loft with *bejmat* tiles throughout. In the

living room, the pattern transitions from a basket-weave bond motif found in traditional English brickwork to a herringbone pattern, and then again into an interlocking pattern inspired by a courtyard house the couple visited in Suzhou, China. On the walls is leaf-green plaster, chosen to reference the verdant views. 'That was a conscious decision to amplify the nature outside, creating an oasis of green and blue in the urban jungle,' says Eayrs. These shades are repeated on the handmade mugs by the late potter Christopher Magarshack, the deep green Plank Settle bench by furniture maker Sue Skeen for The New Craftsmen, and artwork by Faye Wei Wei.

The window shutters, which the pair designed in collaboration with weaver Christabel Balfour, are made of woven fabric. 'They had to be thick enough to block out light, sufficiently rigid for foldability but soft enough for hanging,' explains Eayrs, who did much experimenting in a steel workshop before arriving at the solution. In the bedrooms, Once Milano hand-painted quilts covered in pagan symbols by designer Faye Toogood lay next to bold, architectural-looking plants, and in one of the bathrooms, a large avocado-green bath by The Water Monopoly takes pride of place.

Decor was also chosen thoughtfully, with the couple's favourite pieces including the Zyklus chairs by Peter Maly in the sitting area, which were reupholstered in Pierre Frey velvet; a Brodgar chair by Gareth Neal and Kevin Gauld for The New Craftsmen; and Stephen Wright paintings that bring a sense of the ethereal. As in all their homes, The Beldi reflects the duo's keen eye for detail and their immersive and soulful approach. 'Every day we touch the earth that our home sits on, and the materials it's shaped from. We live and breathe every home we create.'





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In the open-plan living space, a vintage Mario Bellini Camaleonda sofa is paired with vintage Poul Kjaerholm and Jørgen Høj Sneckerier lounge chairs. Antique Murano blown-glass cage lights are suspended above the kitchen island

Facing page
A cosy study space seen from the living room

This page
Details of utilitarian yet beautiful objects in a kitchen drawer





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The dining room overlooks the treetops of a neighbouring churchyard. Indoor potted plants and mint-green Venetian plaster echo the verdant colour palette

Facing page
Cabinetry throughout has been custom-built for the space in a rough-hewn oak, which holds colour-coordinated glassware in the kitchen

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An antique stone basin and vanity in the master bathroom





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In the spacious master suite, Faye Toogood bedsheets from Once Milano sit comfortably among an eclectic mix of antique and mid-century pieces collected by the couple

Facing page
A free-standing bathtub in avocado green by Water Monopoly sits atop a Moroccan *bejmat*-tiled floor inspired by the Marrakech riads where the couple got married

This page
Three artworks by Stephen Wright hang above a Brodgar chair by Gareth Neal and Kevin Gauld for The New Craftsmen