

# Galerie

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## CREATIVE MINDS

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# Taking Shape

Orchestrating her own Paris residence sparked designer Emma Donnersberg to create a masterful collection of furniture

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALICE MESGUICH



In the living room of Emma Donnersberg's Paris apartment, the designer's Wave sofa, U&Me table, and Girolle rug are paired with artworks by Djibril Boukhenaiïssi (left) and Mia Chaplin as well as a vintage chair by Poul Kjærholm and Jørgen Høj. A wicker chair by Marc Newson rounds out the mix.

## DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT



Donnersberg with one of her Mushroom tables.  
LEFT: The designer represents Mexican artist Ileana García Magoda, whose painting animates a reading area set with Donnersberg's Hug armchairs, Us table, and Ring candleholders.

**F**rench interior designer Emma Donnersberg orchestrates residences for clients that artfully bring together one-of-a-kind collectible design with custom furnishings. So when it came to curating her own apartment in the seventh arrondissement of Paris, only a similar, bespoke mix would do. She got to work—imagining pieces perfectly tailored to both her needs and her aesthetic. “The sofas and dining table had to be functional, but I wanted to treat them like sculptures,” she says.

To fill the airy second-floor unit in a picture-perfect Haussmann-style building, Donnersberg conceived furniture that reflects her love of sinuous lines, such as the Wave sofa, an oversize fusion of deep, pebble-shaped cushions; and the U&Me table, a substantial creation of interlocking amoebic forms. “Everything for the space is made in the shapes I like.”

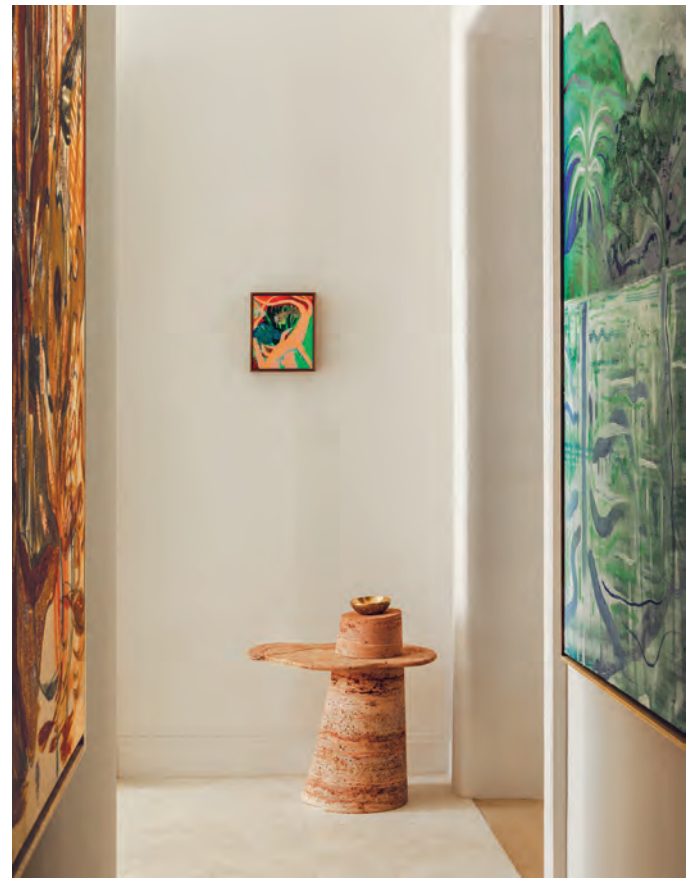
When visitors started to take notice of these elements, Donnersberg’s design collection, now offered through galleries such as Maison Gerard and StudioTwentySeven, was born. “It all started from this apartment,” she explains of the pieces that are distinct for their ability to be reconfigured into myriad formations or, like the Cloud chairs, come in similar

# DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

but singular shapes. “One of the most important things for my work is for it to be modular and not static. I try to break the pattern of being in a box; that’s not what I want in my life, so that’s how I design.”

Truly personalizing the home—which previously belonged to Françoise Giroud, a famous French journalist and activist for women’s rights—meant gutting the interior, removing walls, swapping out windows, and reimagining the kitchen, now a muted space punctuated with heavily veined marble and an island wrapped in hypnotic emerald green ceramic tiles. The voluptuous fireplace surround in the dining room is sheathed in a creamy travertine from Carrara, Italy.

The kitchen features an island wrapped in green ceramic tiles paired with jewel tone Karen Swami vessels. The stools are Donnersberg’s design. RIGHT: Works by (from left) Ileana García Magoda, Anna Jung Seo, and Marcella Barceló join one of Donnersberg’s pink travertine Cloud tables in the entryway.



“I love to collect art and design, and to me it makes the space even richer”

EMMA DONNERSBERG

Having purchased the entire block of stone, Donnersberg used the material as a through line for the interior, employing it to enhance a more modern fireplace in the living room and outfit the walls in the primary bath. “I like that there is a link between the different rooms,” she says. “There’s a thread to the creativity. I treat the apartment like it’s one painting.”

Indeed, all the rooms reflect a unified aesthetic—a soothing palette invigorated by moments of rich color, sumptuous materials, and curves aplenty. A free-form rug made in collaboration with Atelier Février echoes the outline and engraving found on top of one of her dewdrop-shaped Mushroom tables. A Marc Newson chair of invitingly molded wicker sits opposite a canvas depicting lush botanicals by Mexican artist Ileana García Magoda, whom the designer met while traveling to Mexico City to discover fresh talent.

Another quest brought her to South African painter Esther

“I treat the whole apartment like it’s one painting”

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In the primary bedroom, a Sasha Ferré wall work is flanked by a pair of Ingo Maurer sconces over the bed, dressed in Frette linens. RIGHT: Travertine envelops the walls and floor of the primary bath, which features a dramatic sink carved from onyx.

Mahlangu, whose bold geometric artworks energize an otherwise monochromatic entry and dining area, and Mia Chaplin, whose abstract depiction of a tangle of bodies commands attention above the living room fireplace. “It’s important for me to know the story of these people; it brings a unique spirit into your house,” she says of the works in her collection. “I didn’t want this to look like a showroom with no soul.”

In the earthy-colored bedroom, a fiery oil stick work by Sasha Ferré is centered between a pair of fan-shaped Ingo Maurer sconces, while built-in shelves display an array of minerals Donnersberg discovered on trips to Mexico, South Africa, and Turkey. “To me, it makes the space even richer,” she says of the treasures she’s accumulated, which include artworks by Clotilde Jiménez and Pierre Soulages, as well as a growing assortment of contemporary ceramics.

And all of these elements do indeed work together to create a very powerful, cohesive statement. “Everybody who comes here doesn’t want to leave. They say there is a very special energy.” □

