

estTM

exceptional living
Issue #54

TIME TO PLAY

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Arent&Pyke · Crina Arghirescu Rogard · Giampiero Tagliaferri · Kennedy Nolan · Marion Mailaender
Mim Design · Ome Dezin · Pasquale Cook · Poco Designs · Roisin Lafferty · Sebastian Zuchowicki
Sophie Dries Architect · Studio Mellone · Studio Tate · Tamsin Johnson · Welsh + Major · YSG Studio

WHERE ARCHITECTS LIVE

SOPHIE DRIES

LOCATION Paris, France DESIGN Sophie Dries PHOTOGRAPHY Christophe
Coënon INTERVIEW Yvette Caprioglio



In the dining room, a Songye dining table in solid oak and rusted steel by SDA with a vintage chair by Philippe Starck made for Café Costes Beaubourg in 1986 sits beneath a brass & papier-mâché Glow chandelier by SDA for Kaia. Behind, a medium wood cabinet by Martin Szekeley from Rémi Gerbeau Gallery and a fragment of Chris Schanck furniture on the wall. On the left, wall photography by Gilles Uzan, a vintage Tooth stool by Philippe Starck, and a 80s vintage floor lamp by Alessandro Mendini from Remi Gerbeau gallery. On the right, a metal chair by Bob Wilson from Paul Bourdet Gallery and on the right wall, diptyque by Izumi Kato from Galerie Perrotin.



Designer Sophie Dries in the living room of her apartment with a Nobody's Perfect chair by Gaetano Pesce.

Architect Sophie Dries talks to us about her home, which is also a gallery for her work, her paradoxical approach to mixing raw and precious materials and the influence of her artistic community.

Who lives here?

My husband, sculptor Marc Leschelier, our child and I. The home is also a gallery where I receive clients and press to show them my furniture pieces in a domestic context, on top of my studio Rive Gauche, which is more of a mess of drawings and samples.

How is your space a reflection of you?

The space shows a paradoxical aspect of my approach to mixing eras: a typical 19th-century Haussmannian interior with contemporary and 80s vintage furniture.

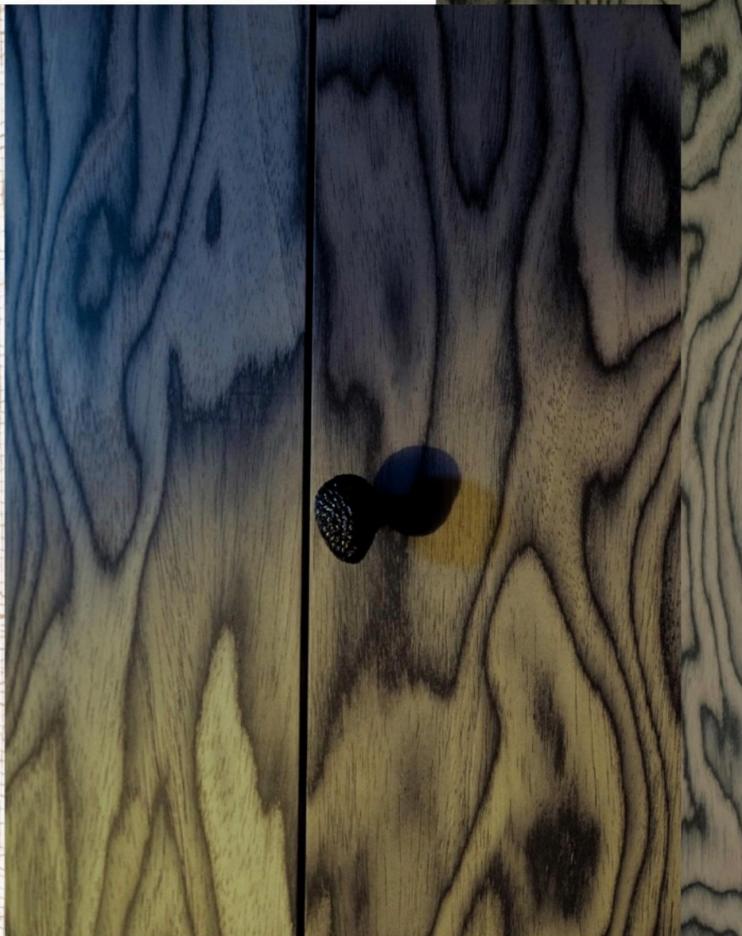
There is no hierarchy of what luxury is; I combine precious materials like marble and wood marquetry with raw materials such as plaster, cinder block, and resin.

I enjoy creating unexpected dialogues between people and the spaces I design, using edgy art rather than 'ticking boxes' works, as well as incorporating historical features and context, alongside my iconic vintage references from my '80s and '90s generation, such as Gaetano Pesce, Philippe Starck, Sottsass, and Martin Szekeley.

What did you set out to create in the interior spaces?

The structure is still very classical with perfect symmetry in the reception rooms, and the ultra-contemporary furniture respects a classical arrangement—following axes, proportions and the composition of the Hotel particulier style of existing context.

I have designed most key furniture pieces, including the dining table, sofa, mirrors, chandelier and textile elements like curtains, rugs and the bedhead. I've also created 'the drawing cabinet', the green room, as a special box room with dark green straw paper on the walls, displaying our works on paper and small-format collection.



This page: In the kitchen, a dark blue concrete benchtop and floor are offset by beige lacquer cabinetry and raw hemp curtains. A set of vintage Alessi coffee and teapots, ceramics by Trame, and a rubber vase by Gaetano Pesce sit atop the bench. *Opposite page:* The 'drawing cabinet' space features dark Chinese straw paper on the walls, a Traces carpet by SDA for Nilufar Gallery on the floor, and a resin chair by Gaetano Pesce.



How does your environment influence the way you live?

I am very influenced by my artistic community of painters, designers, curators, and filmmakers. I like to work with and display my friends' works, purchasing some of their studio prototypes or swapping them with my design or my husband's works.

Social media is quite influential to the style of interior designers and clients, as well as nostalgia, which feels very safe in such insecure times. My approach is different and more enthusiastic; I like creating new dialogues and supporting my generation of creative people.

There's a notable mix of distinctive pieces, such as the orange rubber coffee table, the beautiful pendant light over the dining table, and the concrete and steel console—can you reveal more about some of these?

The coffee table in orange resin is a carte blanche I gave to my talented colleague Max Lamb in 2020. He had total freedom, and I never asked for drawings or samples; it was pure surprise when I received the crate.

All the concrete pieces are specially made for our home by my husband, Marc Leschelier, who normally creates non-functional sculptures.

The dining table and the egg Glow lighting are my designs, and I change them sometimes when I sell to collectors or institutions, lately French Mobilier National.

The vintage pieces are found in galleries that I work with and at auctions while we should be buying for our clients. These include gems like many of the Gaetano Pesce tables, chairs, and vases. I even have more Starck and Frank Gehry in storage; it will be for the next house, maybe an old manor in the countryside with playful contemporary artefacts or a minimal warehouse in concrete with medieval and vernacular wood furniture; who knows.



This page: Greene Street chair by Gaetano Pesce for Vitra from Gastou Gallery, with curtains in raw linen canvas by SDA. All of the concrete pieces are specially made for the home by Dries' husband, Marc Leschelier, who normally creates non-functional sculptures. A vase in Murano glass by SDA for Nilufar Gallery features atop the concrete blocks. Opposite page: In the living room, a sofa in dark oak burl and aubergine velvet by SDA and a Poly coffee table in orange rubber by Max Lamb.

Your interiors reveal a sense of tactility and materiality—are these common threads and hallmarks of your work?

I am obsessed with textures, and I like to say that I sometimes ‘torture materials’ as I like to explore the limits of what is possible to make with rugs, glass, plaster, or metal.

My design research is about chemistry and how to discover things in design with the magicians, who are my artisanal partners in Murano, France, and Italy.

The home is punctuated by colour—from wall coverings to the bedhead and furniture. What is your approach to using colour in interiors, and how does it inform your mood?

I don’t describe myself as having a colourful approach; that comes after design and texture. But I am not so rigid as to erase any tone and do only monochrome interiors, which would be easier than being radical.

I like to work with colours that mimic texture, like the aubergine sofa with the dark brown burl wood. The green room was chosen to emphasise the cosy box effect, which I like in smaller spaces, but it could have been Bordeaux. The rug came after the green walls and featured purple because it complements green.

First come the lines, then the textures, and finally the colours.



This page: Another vintage ‘Tooth’ stool by Philippe Starck. *Opposite page:* Bedroom with a bedhead in tainted linen by SDA, a painting above by Ana Karkar, Totem side tables in turned wood by SDA with vintage 60s leather and metal lamps by Gino Sarfatti for Arteluce, a set of Météor rugs by SDA on the floor and a vintage BBPR desk for Olivetti from Nilufar Gallery, with a metal sculpture by Marc Leschelier.

