

T&C'S FALL FASHION GUIDE TOWN & COUNTRY

SEPTEMBER 2015

KIRSTEN DUNST

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MUSE,
AND
MAMA'S
GIRL**

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OF GREECE'S
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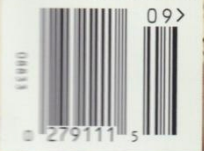
**UNIQUE
CHIC
LUXURY
PIECES
THAT LAST**

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MASTERS OF HER DOMAIN

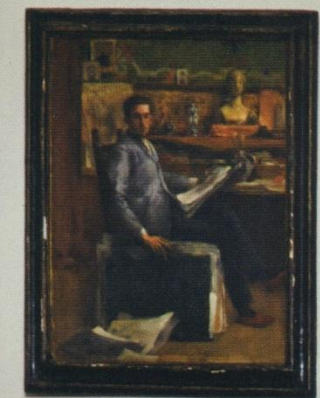
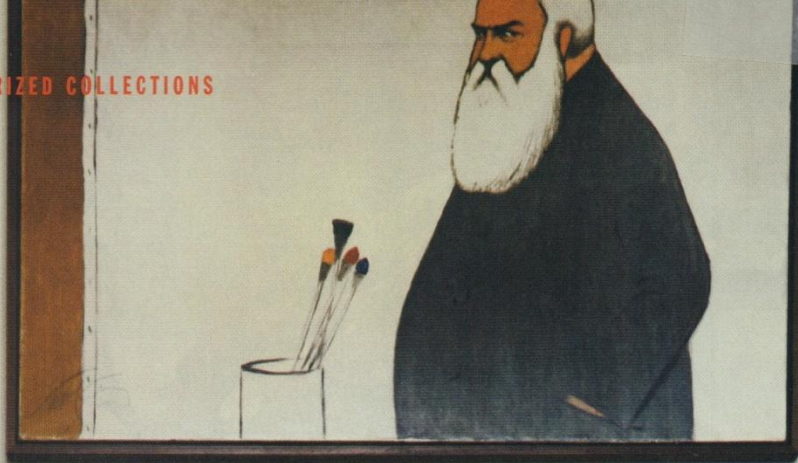
A PARTICULAR
OBSESSION STRETCHING
BACK TO THE
RENAISSANCE, HAS
TRANSFORMED A HOUSE
IN LONDON INTO THE
ULTIMATE PRIVATE
MUSEUM.

By Pilar Viladas

Photographs by Miguel Flores-Vianna
Produced by Martina Mondadori Sarlo

DEALER'S CHOICE

An oil portrait of the elderly Claude Monet by the French actor, writer, and filmmaker Sacha Guitry hangs above the doorway to the lower living room in Katrin Bellinger's London house. *Opposite:* Bellinger, in her upper living room, surrounded by paintings that give her a sense of "looking over the artist's shoulder."





OBJECT LESSON

Left: An antique coral branch is adorned with folk objects. *Below:* Traditional Chinese scholar objects mingle with French art glass.



SMALL WORLD

Left: The lower living room features mostly works on paper. *Right:* A miniature self-portrait by the 19th-century Belgian artist Edouard Duyck.



PRIZED COLLECTIONS



“I could literally collect everything,” Katrin Bellinger declares. One look at her spacious Victorian terrace house in London makes it clear that she isn’t kidding. Bellinger lives here with her husband Christoph Henkel, an investor and heir to a chemicals and consumer goods fortune, and the walls of nearly every room—as well as tabletops and mantelpieces—are so encrusted with small artistic gems that the house might as well be a museum.

Bellinger is not simply an enthusiast, she is a prominent dealer and collector known for her cool head and keen intellect. She decided three decades ago to focus on Old Master drawings, eventually becoming a dealer, with clients ranging from museums such as the Met in New York City and the Getty in Los Angeles to private clients who are so, well, private she won’t even utter their names. Since 2002 she has operated out of the venerable London gallery Colnaghi.

For her formidable personal collection—more than 900 works, including paintings, prints, photographs, and sculptures—Bellinger narrowed her focus to a particular theme: artists at work, from the Renaissance to the present. She chose the topic because she loved the idea of “looking over the artist’s shoulder” and because it didn’t conflict with her clients’ holdings. It also allowed her to build a collection for less than a king’s ransom, and it reminds her of her youthful ambitions. “I studied art for a year,” she says, “and quickly realized my limited talent. But it helps to have learned how art is made.”

The London house, which has four and a half floors, includes two adjoining living rooms, one a step down from the other, the upper one filled with light and devoted to paintings (the light is too strong for drawings). Here you’ll find a self-portrait by the 19th-century painter Henri Fantin-Latour, its dark shadows pierced by a flash of light on the artist’s hand. An oil by the French actor and writer Sacha Guitry—of an elderly, glowering Claude Monet, standing, hand in pocket, in front of a large blank canvas—commands the wall above the doorway to the darker lower living room. There, a beguiling drawing by Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, *Punchinello as a Portrait Painter*, hangs above the fireplace. ➤

SLIDE SHOW

Above, from left: A guest bedroom is also filled with art; a drawing by Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (*bottom right*) hangs above the fireplace in the lower living room.



IN GOOD COMPANY
The velvet-lined study, off the lower living room, showcases 19th-century drawings and watercolors.



**ANGLE OF
REPOSE**
Bellinger, in the
study, sits next
to a dark blue
lacquer table
purchased from
the Chinese art
dealer C.T. Loo
in Paris.

➔ Fifteen of Bellinger's pieces are currently on loan to Sir John Soane's Museum in London for its exhibition "Drawn from the Antique: Artists and the Classical Ideal," which runs through September 26. The works in the show focus on the importance of classical sculpture in the education of artists from the Renaissance through the end of the 19th century—"the ideal of the human figure that influenced Western art," says Bellinger, who is a Soane's Museum trustee.

Sir John Soane is something of a role model for Bellinger. The revered early-19th-century architect filled his own neoclassical house and studio (now the museum) with classical sculptures and architectural fragments, as well as paintings and drawings, and welcomed his students to look and learn. Bellinger's house may not be open to students, but it is certainly designed for the enjoyment and appreciation of art. Somehow it also manages to be a cozy and comfortable place to live.

Henkel and Bellinger bought the house in the mid-1990s and turned to a friend, architect Annabelle Selldorf, to renovate it. (Selldorf later designed a very contemporary house for the couple at Dunton Hot Springs, Colorado, an abandoned mining town that the couple has turned into a resort.) The two women grew up a few blocks apart in Cologne, Germany, a center of contemporary art collecting. Bellinger's parents (her family owned a chain of department stores) collected German Expressionist art, and Katrin's school curriculum included studying the work of Joseph Beuys. Selldorf comes from a design background. Her father was an architect, and one of her grandmothers founded Vica, an interior design studio. She has become known for such projects as her sensitive renovation of the Neue Galerie in New York and

the sleek new Chelsea gallery she designed for David Zwirner. "Annabelle and I have very similar sensibilities, even though hers are more contemporary than mine," Bellinger says. "Her great strengths are her unerring sense of proportion and never losing the human scale."

The London house was completely stripped of its traditional ornament in the 1950s by the modernist architect Sir Denys Lasdun, but subsequent owners restored the interior to its full Victorian glory—and then some. "It was so Victorian it made your skin crawl," Selldorf says. She replaced some of the more flamboyant touches—like the "really ugly" fireplaces—and installed a dark wood floor. Other than that, she says, "the idea was to change the house as little as possible. There was a decision not to have a modern interior."

The furniture—a mix of mostly Midcentury and antiques from Bellinger's grandparents—includes a corner sofa designed by Selldorf in the study off the lower living room. You'll also find several pieces from Selldorf's Vica line and lacquer tables from the (now closed) Chinese art gallery C.T. Loo, in Paris. Henkel made it clear that he preferred bright colors, and "they do make the house more vibrant," Selldorf says. The kitchen, which looks onto a garden designed by Miranda Brooks, was the only room that was redesigned, its minimalist lines softened by putting an old wooden butcher's table in the breakfast room.

Bellinger plans to close her business at the end of the year. She'll continue to work with her Tavolozza Foundation (established in 2001, the name is the Italian word for an artist's palette), which supports museums, galleries, and other cultural and educational institutions, in addition to administering her



CENTER OF ATTENTION
Among the paintings in this corner of the upper living room is Russian artist N. Almazov's 1893 self-portrait at his easel.



SHADED AREA
A painting by German artist Jörg Immendorff hangs in the dining room, which is devoted exclusively to modern and contemporary art.

collection. Earlier this year the foundation lent five paintings to the Gagosian Gallery's "In the Studio" exhibition, a survey of artists' workspaces, a subject so close to her heart.

And, of course, Bellinger plans to continue accumulating her own treasures. "You're either a collector or you're not," she says. "I collected tins as a child. To this day I can't go on a walk without stopping to pick up a rock or a feather. My husband is not a collector. He says to me, 'Do you never stop?' No, I'll never stop. It gives me too much pleasure." «



TALKING HEADS

Clockwise from above: A portrait of the 17th-century Dutch artist Cornelis Bega, juxtaposed with an Alaskan Inuit mask; a drawing by 19th-century French artist Jacques-Léonard Goussier, situated above a portrait by Anthony van Dyck; Petrus van Schendel's *Artist in His Studio*, the largest painting above an 18th-century desk that belonged to Bellinger's grandparents.

Hair and makeup by Ruth Brown

