

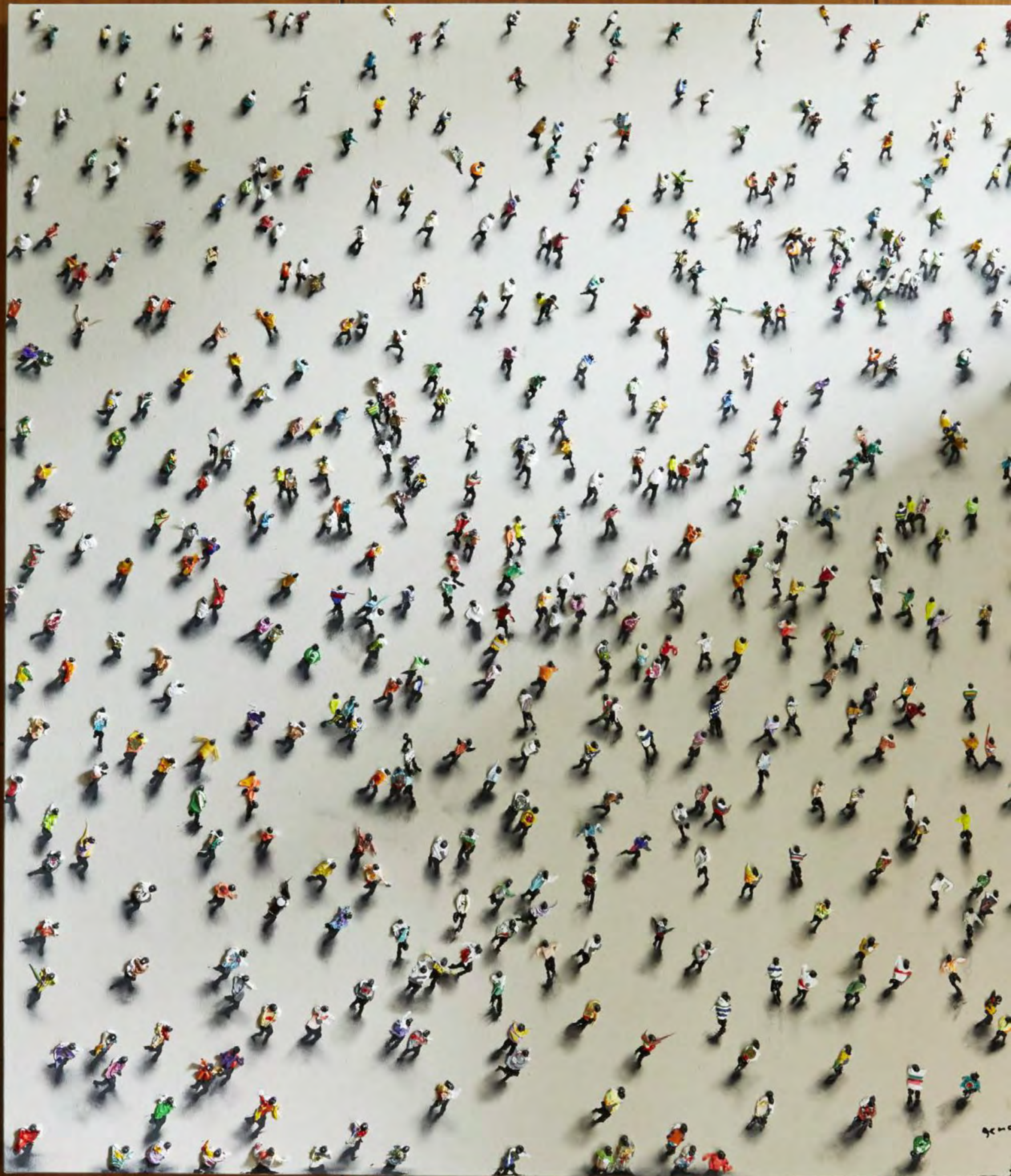
# design anthology

INTERIORS / ART / ARCHITECTURE / TRAVEL / STYLE



ASIA EDITION / ISSUE 27









HOME / Hong Kong

# Daily Inspiration



There are three things that Chicago-born, Milan-based designer Eric Egan believes characterise his work: the celebration of artisanal craft, comfort, and the creation of a space for people and their things that feels like their own.

‘When you look at some houses, it looks like the decorator was there and the client wasn’t. In my work, I try to make a space look like the client’s house and not like my house that they get to live in,’ says Egan, who is the founder of interior design firm L’Artigianato.

An art collection can play an important part in this, and Egan often works with collectors, creating spaces that allow their collections as well as their personalities to shine.

The characteristics that unite Egan’s oeuvre are clear in this five-bedroom home in Deep Water Bay, Hong Kong — a showcase of the family’s art collection that includes work by Juan Genovés, Anish Kapoor, François-Xavier Lalanne, Chun Kwang Young and Tom Otterness, among others. ‘The project was about adapting their collection to a new space,’ says Egan, whose task was to move the family and their belongings from a 1,000-square-metre home into one 20 per cent smaller. An unenviable task, but not an unfamiliar one.

‘We want to help clients understand which pieces are important and which are superfluous. We have a methodology that’s Marie Kondo without the kiss-your-stuff-goodbye part,’ the designer explains. ‘It’s about what you’re using and what you’re not, and asking what’s helping and what’s hurting. That’s how we end up with the best items.’

In this case, the items that remained include a George Nakashima bench, Hervé Van der Straeten console, Gio Ponti-style chairs and Ruhlmann-esque furnishings, all of which provide a background for the art. For that is what comes first: the artwork, and finding each piece a place where it can breathe and be seen and enjoyed.

Then there’s the balance of liveability and looking good. ‘How do you live in the house and have it look spare and calm but also have the necessities of a large family’s life?’ Egan asks. ‘It’s not so glamorous but it’s a reality,’ he adds, giving the example of a large walk-in shoe closet that was concealed behind a wall in the entrance hall.

Egan made minimal structural changes to the space. He worked with local craftspeople to produce the wood-panelled walls and built-in shelves that transform the living area into a multifunctional space. ‘So often these formal living rooms are the largest rooms in the house but no one sits in them. We worked on turning it into a comfortable, cosy, inviting space,’ he says. Here the focus is the music system, since the homeowner is a collector not only of art but also of stereo equipment, from turntables to vacuum amps.

Compared to Egan’s other projects, this was fairly light work. ‘We often build from the ground up, designing everything, and it can take years, but this home was quicker — it was a haiku. I love doing projects like this. There’s an immediacy; you quickly see the fruits of your labour.’

*Text*

Rachel Duffell

*Images*

Ricardo Labougale

*Previous page*

Milan-based designer Eric Egan helped his clients downsize their considerable design collection and focused on the artworks they have amassed over many years, including a painting by Juan Genovés that now hangs above their George Nakashima-designed bench in the home’s entrance hall

*Facing page*

In the living room, displays of books and sculptures — by the likes of François-Xavier Lalanne, Tom Otterness, Su Blackwell and Alexandre Noll — surround armchairs and a sofa from the clients’ previous home, with new carpeting from Fort Street Studio underfoot













The owners are avid collectors of art and design, but also of audio equipment and books, many of which fill the built-in shelving Egan created with local craftspeople. The rich tones of the wood panelling and shelves are complemented by a pair of violet 1950s wingback chairs









Facing page  
One of Korean artist Chun Kwang  
Young's large mixed-media *Aggregation*  
13 series is given pride of place on a wall

This page  
A Hervé van der Straeten console and a  
silver vessel are set against a hammered  
silver-clad room divider (repurposed  
from its previous home) to form a  
dramatic vignette





Large sculptures match the proportions of the walnut dining table in the dining room, which opens out to a swimming pool









A one-tonne *Menina* by Manolo Valdés in olive wood commands a corner of the dining room (left), while an Anish Kapoor concave dome and a Tord Boontje-designed Swarovski chandelier (right) add shine to the room













Separating the staircase from the dining area, a room divider becomes a canvas on which Murano glass pendants and a silk work by Eunice Cheung Wai Man are hung, above a sideboard by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann





Wood wall panelling and minimal furnishings in the master bedroom accentuate the wine-red tones of an ink work by Chen Jialing



