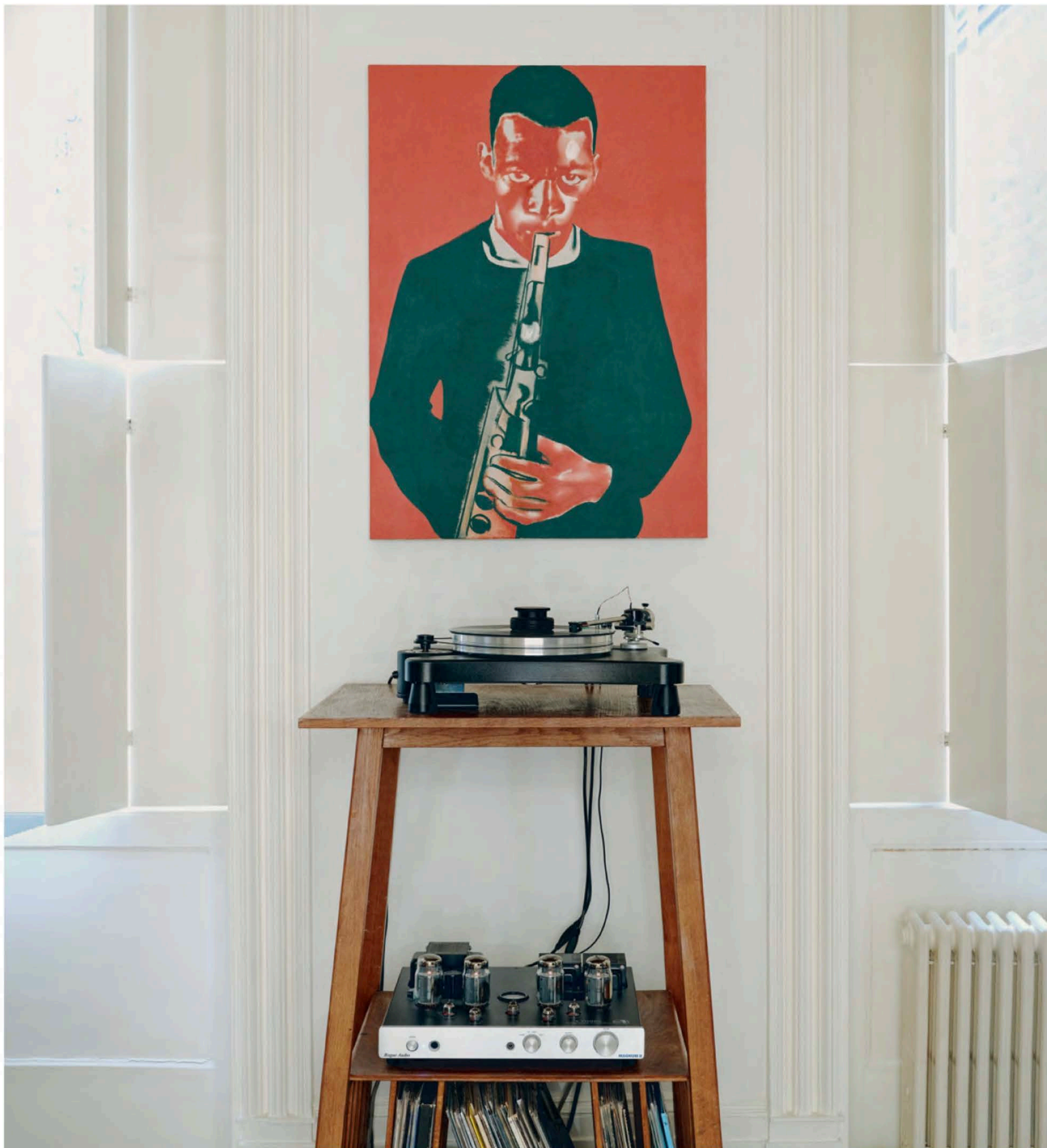
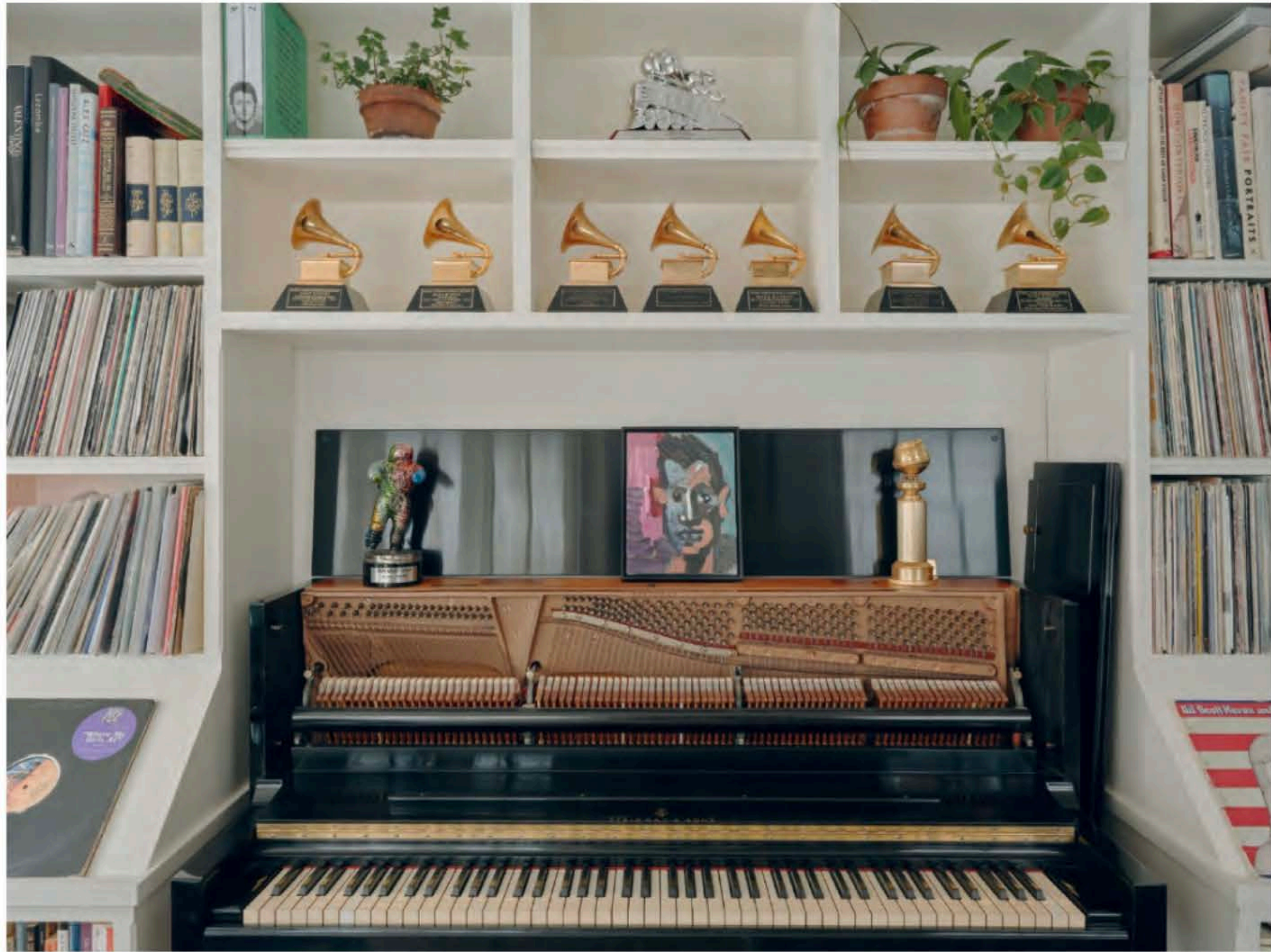


MAY 2022

THE WORLD OF INTERIORS



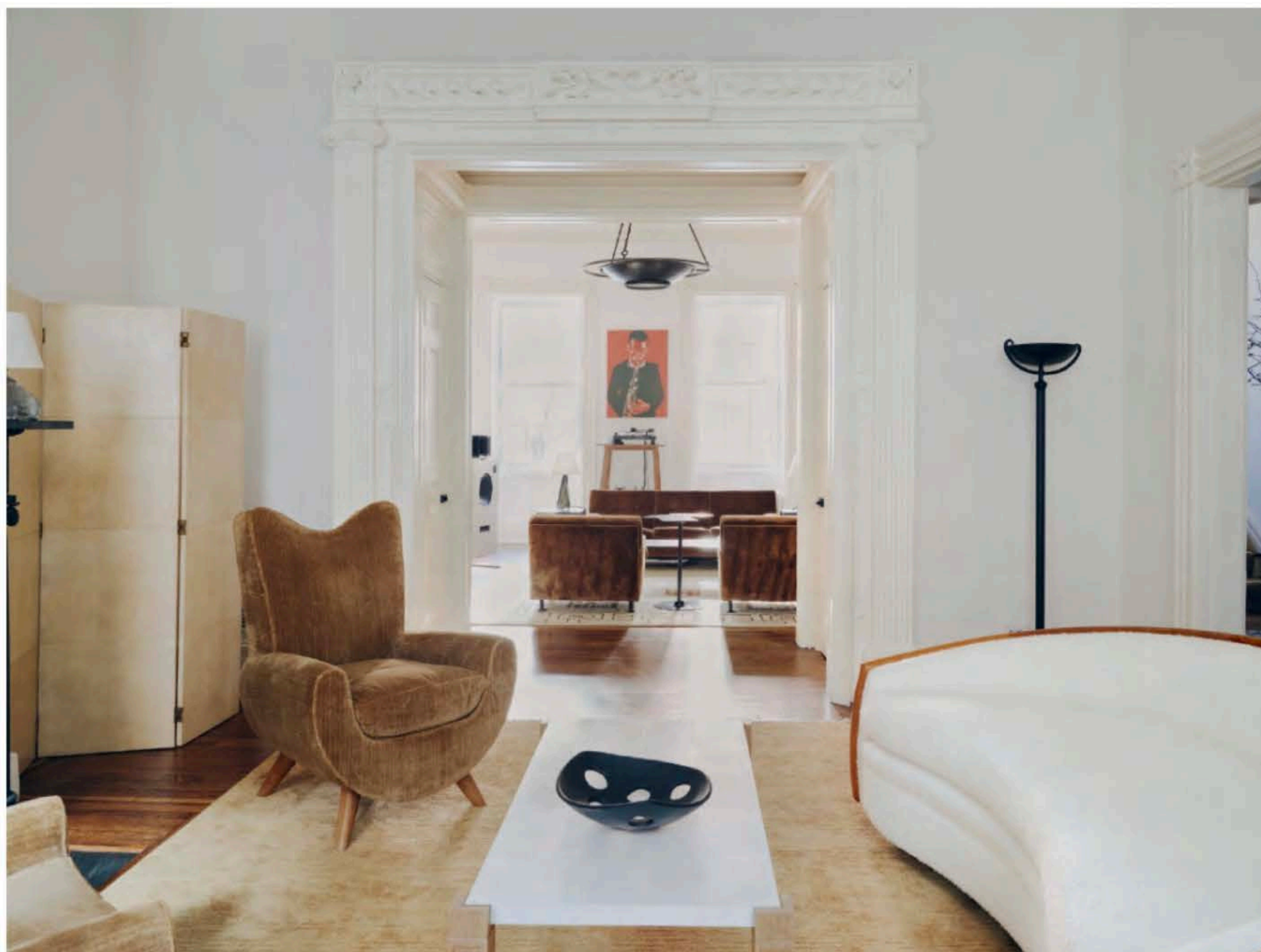


KEYS TO MY HEART

Actor Grace Gummer moved into songwriter and record producer Mark Ronson's Federalist house in Manhattan just a few days before the couple got married. With he bringing his collection of female nudes, and she her chic colour palette, this was a makeover forged in romance, all orchestrated by a decorator versed in deluxe Art Deco and an architect adept at historic renovation. Their four-part harmony certainly strikes a chord with Christopher Mason. Photography: Tyler Mitchell

Top: in the piano room, Ronson's seven Grammy awards are displayed above a 1960s upright Steinway, on which sits George Condo's *Sketch of Mark*, a gift from his mother, Ann Dexter-Jones. Opposite: in the music room, Wilhelm Sasnal's 2020 portrait of saxophonist Ornette Coleman hangs above vinyl from the producer's DJ days. *Sittings* editor: Hamish Bowles





WHEN Mark Ronson bought a grandly scaled Manhattan town house with five bedrooms just over two years ago, he was 44, newly single and eager to fall in love and multiply. ‘Start as you mean to go on,’ he says, wryly. The Federal-style property had been divided into apartments, so he hired Brian Sawyer, a New York architect renowned for his adroit restorations of 19th-century houses, to return the redbrick terrace house to its original 1827 single-family glory.

Renovations were under way when Ronson – a reflexively diffident British-born songwriter and record producer who won an Oscar, a Golden Globe and a Grammy (his seventh) for *Shallow*, the song he co-wrote with Lady Gaga – went on a first date with actor Grace Gummer. Warm and funny, Gummer played a flame-haired FBI agent in the acclaimed television series *Mr Robot*. She made her screen acting debut, aged seven, in *The House of the Spirits* as the younger version of Clara del Valle, the character played by her real-life mother, Meryl Streep.

Ronson had spotted Gummer at a Yola Mezcal launch party in Mexico City in 2016 and was smitten. ‘I saw this shock of red hair and this elegant, beautiful woman,’ he recalls. ‘I was still married, so I was forcing myself not to look over.’ When they finally dined in New York four years later, at a fashionable restaurant called Frenchette, it was *amour fou* at first bite.

Better still, Gummer loved Ronson’s house and shared his fascination with Hudson Square, a historic three-block neighbourhood sandwiched between SoHo and Greenwich Village. The five-storey structure was built on the former site of Richmond Hill, a 26-acre country estate once requisitioned as George Washington’s headquarters during the Revolutionary War. Attentive fans of *Hamilton*, the rap musical, may recall that Vice-President Aaron Burr was living at Richmond Hill in splendour in 1804 when he challenged Alexander Hamilton, his long-time political antagonist, to a duel and summarily dispatched him. Disgraced in the aftermath and pursued by creditors, Burr sold the property to millionaire John Jacob Astor, who divided it into town-house lots.

A rarity in New York City, the eight-metre-wide house has retained almost all its period details: original plaster mouldings, floor-to-ceiling windows, wood-burning fireplaces framed by opulent Italian marble mantels, folding window shutters, mahogany stairs and hardwood floors. (They are, in fact, the very sort of atmospheric details that distinguish the old-money brownstone where Gummer’s sister Louisa Jacobson lives as penniless Marian Brook in *The Gilded Age*, Julian Fellowes’s follow-up to *Downton Abbey*.) Gummer bonded instantly with Ronson’s interior designer, Michael Bargo, a specialist in deluxe Mid-

Top: a bowl by Marianne Vissiere sits amid a Jean Royère suite in the front parlour, with its original plaster mouldings of 1827. Opposite: in the music room, Keith Haring’s ‘Totem’ (1988) overlooks a coffee table, c.1950, by Robert and Jean Cloutier. Custom speakers, by Devon Turnbull of Ojas.nyc, face a 1962 Marco Zanuso sofa and chairs in their original velvet





Top: Moise Kisling's *Khera* (*Kiki de Montmartre*) (1932), hangs above an original Italian marble mantel. To its left, a Pierre Jeanneret bench is covered with a Holland & Sherry bouclé. Above: sitting on an Ivan da Silva Bruhns rug with Aztec motifs – a Beauvais reproduction – the oxidised-metal fan table is a Galerie MCDE edition of Pierre Chareau's design for the *Maison de Verre* in Paris, 1929. Opposite: an antique Ethiopian Jimma chair is from Hemingway African Gallery in TriBeCa





century Modern. ‘Grace and Mark were incredibly lovely and charming,’ the designer recalls. ‘She had a stronger sense of an aesthetic she wanted; Mark was open to guidance. Once he became immersed, he was very curious and wanted to learn more.’

Celebrated for his musical collaborations with Amy Winehouse, Adele, Miley Cyrus and Bruno Mars, Ronson was craving a sophisticated counterpoint to the vibrant décor of his previous residence in Los Angeles, a Spanish Revival funhouse with emerald-green walls, black-lacquered banisters, zingy yellow wallpaper patterned with leaping zebras. ‘A friend described my old place as California Clown Pants,’ Ronson says, laughing. ‘In all the places I’ve lived, I’d never thought about the design in a macro way. Michael and Grace have an understated palette, and I love it.’

Gummer had grown up in Connecticut with all-white walls, a neutral backdrop for artwork favoured as well as fashioned by her sculptor father, Don Gummer, and she sought a similar serenity in her new house. She and Ronson moved in a few days prior to their wedding last September. Bargo showed the couple 19 shades of white before they settled on ‘Mountain Peak White’, a lustrous ‘not too hot, not too cool’ non-colour by Benjamin Moore. But when the actor casually suggested painting the entry hall’s mahogany newel post white, too, Sawyer, an architectural purist,

reacted with mock horror. Recalling the incident, Ronson breaks into a hilarious impression of Sawyer dramatically spreadeagled against the dark-wood banister like an impassioned suffragette chained to a railing and pleading for a noble cause. Sawyer prevailed: the staircase’s shellacked mahogany, imported from South America at extravagant cost in the early 19th century, remains untouched.

The result of the collaboration is a calm oasis that seems a universe away from Hollywood, notwithstanding the pile of movie scripts sitting on a vintage Dutch desk in the couple’s third-floor bedroom. In the front parlour, blue-chip mid-century furniture by Jean Royère and Pierre Jeanneret keeps company with portraits of women from Ronson’s diverse collection. A painting of a seated female nude with an abstractly Asian visage by Moïse Kisling, a Polish-born artist from the School of Paris who is one of Ronson’s favourite painters, hangs above the fireplace. To the left is a photograph of a black female nude, *Mother Tongue* (2013), by Deana Lawson; on the facing wall hangs a large canvas by Ella Kruglyanskaya of a jaunty dame who resembles a plump, cracked chess piece. Between the windows facing the street, two photographic collages with watercolour by Lorna Simpson are joined by a spherical desk lamp and a lotus-root-like bowl by French ceramicist Marianne Vissiere.

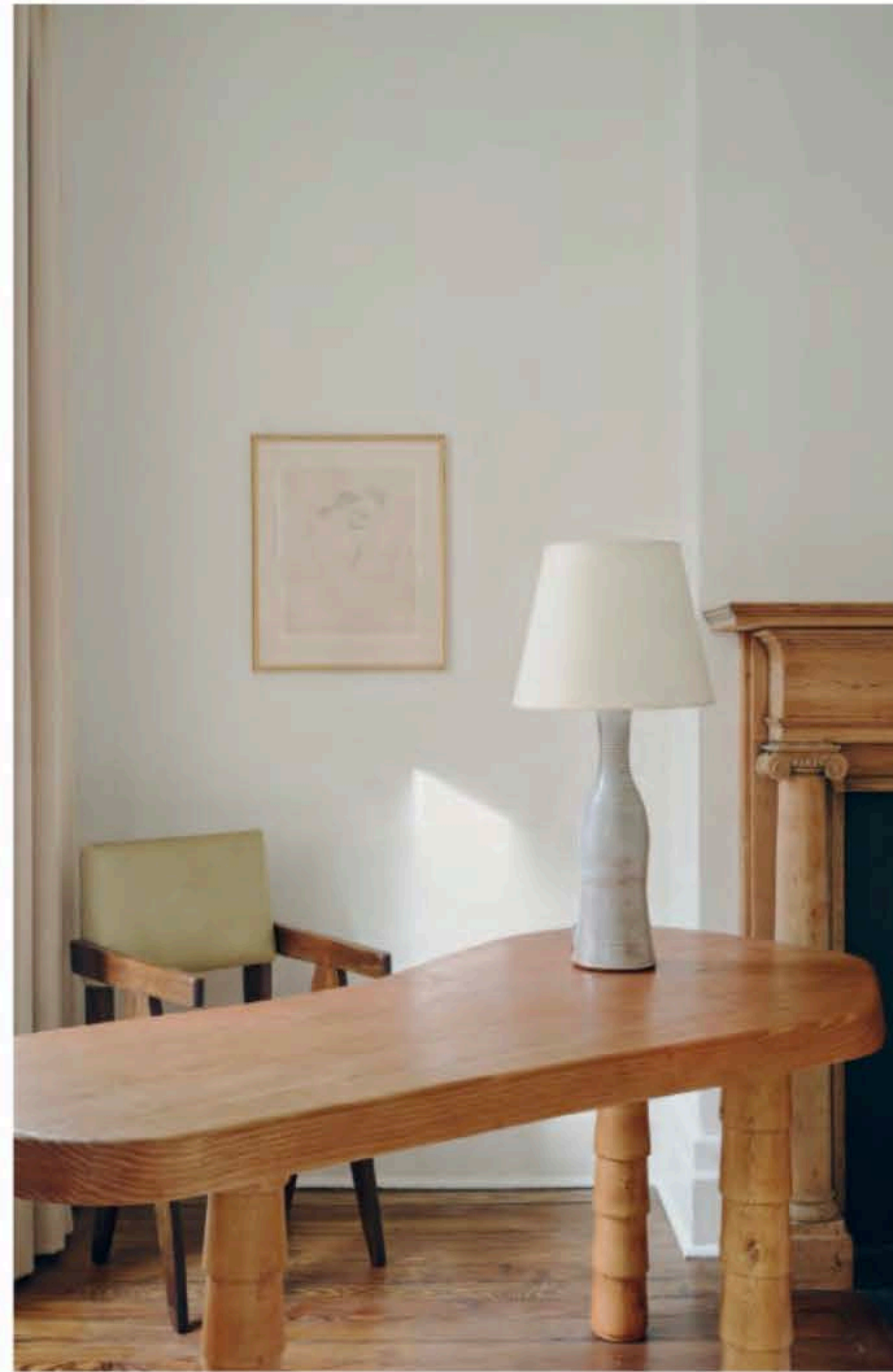
Top: in the TV room, lit by a 1950s Noguchi standard lamp, a pair of sheepskin-covered Danish armchairs were found in Southampton, New York. The sofa, slip-covered in Pierre Frey fabric, is the only piece of furniture that’s survived from Ronson’s former home in Los Angeles. Opposite: the old kitchen was gutted, and the fireplace and custom cabinets are new







Opposite: in the main bathroom, the French 17th-century cupboard with hammered iron nails was found in L.A. A fetishist collage, *Pattern for Tichý 2* (2013) by Goshka Macuga, almost overshadows a small framed drawing of a female nude by Grace's father, Don Gummer. This page, top: a pair of 1950s mirrors inspired by Gio Ponti are flanked by Deco-style 'Savoy' sconces from Jamb. Above: the antique-brass push-button light switches are from House of Antique Hardware



‘This room feels very feminine to me,’ Gummer says, ‘with all the curves, circles and all these portraits of women.’ The collection includes a vintage magazine displayed on a black Jeanneret desk: a 1981 issue of *Interview*, the cover devoted to a Richard Bernstein image of writer Fran Lebowitz in a lavender sweater. ‘I’ve known Fran since I was a kid,’ Ronson explains. ‘She’s having this amazing run right now,’ he adds, referring to *Pretend It’s a City*, the Netflix series featuring the director Martin Scorsese, playing the straight man to deadpan Fran, in conversations about old and current New York.

The back parlour, known as the music room, is decidedly more masculine. A graffiti-inspired totem by Keith Haring hangs over the fireplace and could be interpreted as a boisterous crucifix or a daunting phallus, or both, depending on your point of view. ‘It’s like we’re worshipping it,’ Gummer observes.

Born in London but raised in New York, Ronson remains British enough to be mortified about tooting his own trumpet. To remove all doubt, he assigned the choice of where to situate his numerous gilded trophies to Bargo, the design professional. ‘It was a bit surreal placing all those awards,’ Bargo says. ‘Everyone took turns giving their fake acceptance speech.’ He arranged Ronson’s seven Grammys on the shelves above the upright Steinway in the so-called piano

room, at the back of the house, along with the Golden Globe and MTV awards. Figuring out where to place the Academy award was a weightier decision.

‘I asked Grace: “Where does your mom keep hers?”’ Bargo says, referring to Streep, who has three. ‘She told me they’re hidden on a back shelf in a room no-one visits.’ Undeterred, Bargo decided that Oscar belonged on the music room’s mantel in all its golden glory. Propped insouciantly against a wall is a framed gift from Brian Roettinger, who designed the cover for the single version of Ronson’s song *Uptown Funk*. Featuring vocals by Bruno Mars, it spent 14 consecutive weeks at number one on the US Billboard Hot 100 and seven weeks at the top of the UK singles chart. It remains one of the best-selling singles of all time and has been viewed over five billion times on YouTube. ‘*Uptown Funk* became this omnipresent thing,’ Ronson says. ‘Brian gave me his initial sketch for my birthday that year.’

So far, the congenial triumvirate of Gummer, Ronson and Bargo has not yet tackled the top floor, where three generously proportioned bedrooms are perfectly capable of being converted into nurseries, should the occasion arise. A riotously colourful Kruglyanskaya painting of a pregnant lady dominates a wall in the newlyweds’ bedroom. No pressure ■

Brian Sawyer. Ring 001 212 244 3055, or visit sawyerberson.com. Michael Bargo. Visit michaelbargo.com

Top left: in the master bedroom, the bed and nightstand were custom-made. Top right: seen beyond a vintage Dutch desk and above a Pierre Jeanneret chair, *Sleeping Boy* (1956), a drawing by Andy Warhol, hangs in one corner. Opposite: overlooking a Jean Royère lounge chair is a painting of a pregnant woman, *Striped Expectations* (2017), by Ella Kruglyanskaya

