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Managing consultant Corinne Ng's safe space filled with playful details



Managing consultant Corinne Ng in her Brutalist home. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

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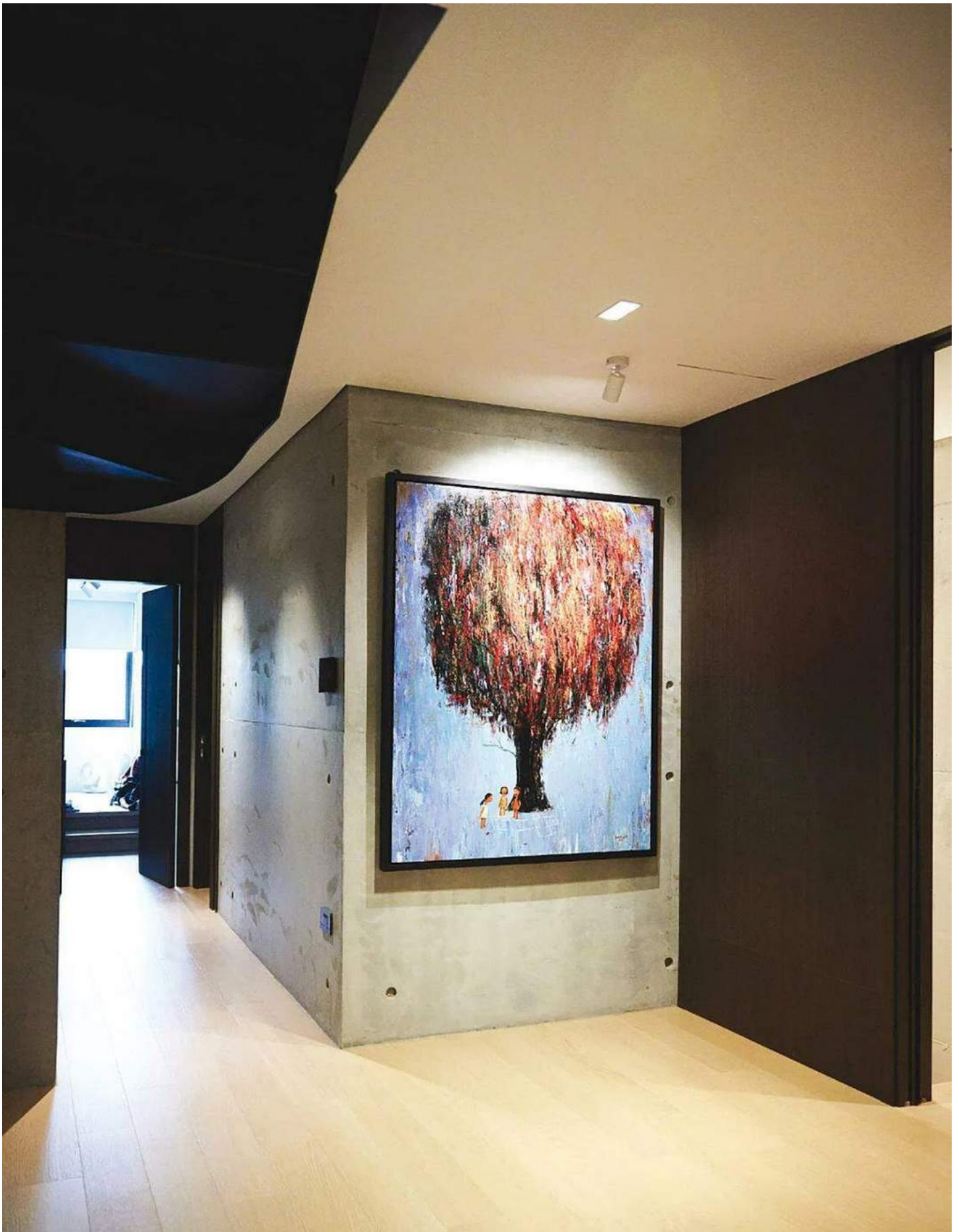
SINGAPORE – Having honed and cultivated a directional sense of taste – thanks to an illustrious career in fashion media and marketing that has spanned over 20 years – managing consultant Corinne Ng, 50, employs the same approach to her home curation as she does her wardrobe.

The chic abode, which she shares with her 50-year-old husband, who works in finance, and two daughters – 20-year-old Li-En and 16-year-old Kae-Lin – is the perfect backdrop to her expressive style and artistic narrative.

Built from the ground up, the concrete-and-steel construct is the result of a 2½-year journey embarked upon by the couple and renowned architect Edmund Ng, who is known for his modernist, clean-lined designs.

Ms Ng became acquainted with Mr Ng through his wife Jazz Chong, a friend of hers who owns local gallery Ode To Art.

While Ms Ng deferred to her husband's penchant for an industrial aesthetic and monochrome palette, she was very much involved when it came to injecting warmth and joy in colour.



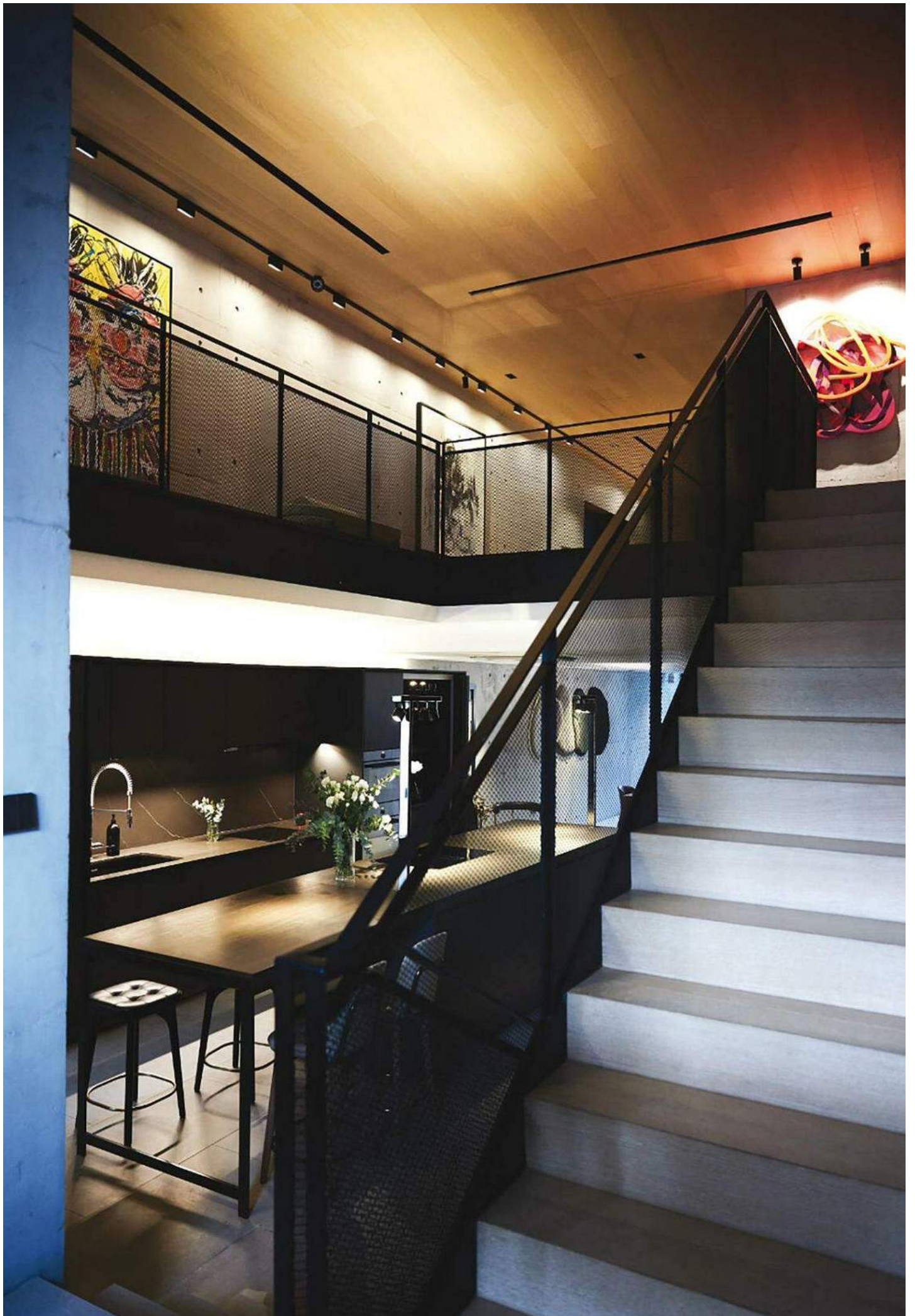
A striking artwork by Indonesian artist Hono Sun brings colour to the fair-faced concrete wall. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

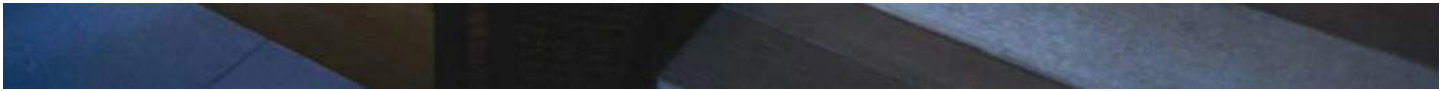
The couple's shared love for Brutalist architecture is reflected in the monolithic appearance of the house and the use of fair-faced concrete throughout.

“I first visited the Barbican Centre in London when I was a teenager, and subsequently saw more Brutalist architecture in Antwerp, Belgium. It’s very cold and imposing, but there’s something strangely comforting about it,” she says.

The house’s quiet front is softened by an unassuming corten steel facade with a laser-cut pattern inspired by the foliage of a tree. It belies an intimate, fortress-like interior – a protected retreat for the family made cosy by light timber flooring and ceilings, tasteful furnishings, an abundance of daylight, and scenic views of the nature reserve behind the house.

“We’ve looked out to see monkeys and wild boars eating our neighbour’s leaves and fruit,” she says.





Split levels offer privacy without compromising on space. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

Although plans for a basement fell through, a series of split-levels with sight-lines to other floors give the 3½-storey house a spacious, multilayered feel.

Stepping through the main door, one can descend a short flight of steps into the open-plan kitchen and dining area – the more social areas of the house that speak to the couple's fondness for cooking and entertaining – or up the stairs to the more private living room.

The two spaces were conceptualised to be separate, but also connected, by way of the corridor on the second storey that is likened to an observation deck.

Ms Ng considers her favourite part of her home to be the kitchen, which comes as no surprise.





The generous kitchen counter mirrors Ms Corinne Ng's passion for cooking and entertaining guests. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

Food is the heart of the house – the generous 3.5m-long Molteni&C kitchen counter by Belgian architect Vincent Van Duysen and a custom Maerich lighting feature on it are testament to that.



The dining area features a hand-tufted artwork. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

It is where family and friends gather to share food, conversation and laughter. A hand-tufted artwork by Kelsey Taylor Hunt, former merchandising manager of Etsy, complements the Naan dining table by Italian architect Piero Lissoni for Italian manufacturer Cassina.

“A construction feat,” says Ms Ng of the solid tabletop supported by slender legs.

The grey walls act as a canvas for the couple's collection of paintings and sculptures positioned in various nooks, passageways and rooms. An art piece by Indonesian artist Windu Pranata titled Summer Swift greets you as you walk up the stairs to the living room.

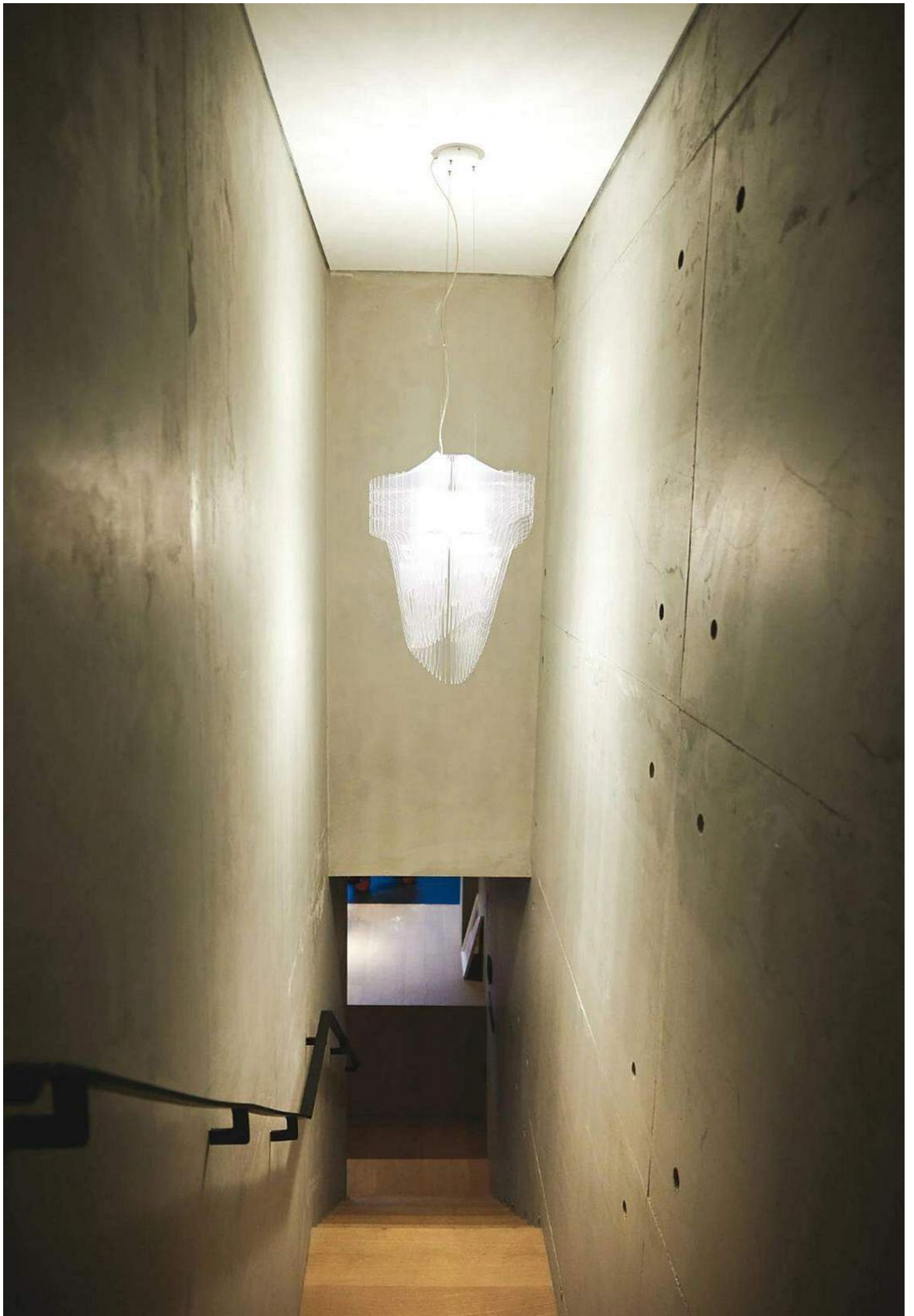
“It's like a doodle. I come home, look at this and go, ‘that's my brain today’. Art imitates life.”



The living room, bathed in light, accentuates Ms Corinne Ng's favourite furniture and art pieces, such as a red hippopotamus sculpture by French artist Richard Orlinski. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

Ms Ng's most treasured piece? A red hippopotamus sculpture by French artist Richard Orlinski – one of the earliest investments the couple made in art – which stands by the living room window.

She also has a sentimental love for furniture that has borne witness to milestones in their marriage, like the white Cassina Prive Chaise Lounge by French industrial architect Philippe Starck that has followed the couple from home to home.



The staircase, lit by British-Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid's Aria pendant lamp, leads up to the daughters' bedrooms and the study. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

Hidden behind a wall in the living room and closed off with a sliding door, there is a staircase lit by British-Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid's undulating Aria pendant lamp that required careful on-site assembly.

This leads up to her daughters' bedrooms and the study. "The idea is that this becomes a two-storey apartment for my family. Nobody else can access it," says Ms Ng.

In the study, which she shares with her husband on days they work from home, sits a Steinway baby grand played by Ms Ng and Li-En.



The master bedroom serves as a calming respite from the hustle and bustle. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

The second storey is linked to the master bedroom through a black, angular steel staircase, enveloped by concrete and brilliantly lit by a skylight with an open view of the sky.

Outside the couple's wing, The Priest by Vietnamese artist Van Tho, one of Ms Ng's favourite paintings, lends a pop of colour.





Ms Corinne Ng poses beside the Wink Armchair in the master bedroom. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

Inside, a mix of black and grey shades as well as wood accents contribute to a calm and soothing vibe. Ms Ng often lounges on the Wink Armchair by Japanese designer Toshiyuki Kita for Cassina, which is inspired by the spirited silhouette of Mickey Mouse. It adds a touch of fun and whimsy to the space.

“For me, collecting pieces with a sense of humour is important. If it can still make you laugh years after you’ve bought it, you know it’s a worthwhile investment.”

This extends to her sartorial choices. She collects archival designs from some of the industry’s most venerated names.

“I approach buying like a collector. A lot of my fashion items are collector pieces,” she says of her prized possessions. These include a 1996 Dior bag by John Galliano; an embellished long vest “akin to armour” from Prada’s 2018 spring collection; and a floral dress from Gucci fall 2018, “Alessandro Michele’s most bizarre collection”.

They hang in her walk-in wardrobe next to the master bedroom. The Molteni&C wardrobe is also by Van Duysen, who designed the kitchen system. The design-savvy couple admire his use of pure and tactile materials that convey a minimalist aesthetic.

Ms Ng’s style, on the other hand, veers towards maximalism. “I like to experiment with clashing prints, like polka dots and stripes, or varied florals with a slight colour thread.”



Ms Corinne Ng's prized possessions and archival pieces hang in her wardrobe. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

She inherited her unconventional sense of style from her late mum, whose outfits, though pared down and understated, were often punctuated with an unexpected accessory.

“Every now and then, she’d appear with something out of character, like a brooch or a multi-strand tiger’s eye beaded necklace with a seahorse clasp. I guess even the most classic dresser has eccentric moments.”



A collection of accessories Ms Corinne Ng inherited from her late mother, ranging from a Dior bag to Versace and YSL rings to Monet necklaces. PHOTO: NATSUKO TERUYA; STYLING: GRACIA PHANG

In the same vein, her mum shaped the way she now makes purchases, with longevity in mind.

“Whenever my mum bought something, she really took care of it, which is why I now own these accessories from her that have been incredibly well-preserved,” she says. “My father gifted my mum a Dior bag in the 1980s, which I still have today. It has the original Dior logo print. There’s also a vintage watch necklace that my mum used to wear with everything. It’s often the memories that make a piece.”

There is something intensely connecting about beloved pieces getting a new lease of life on a different generation. Ms Ng’s collection of Jacquemus, Monse and Balenciaga ready-to-wear items have migrated to her firstborn’s wardrobe.

“Li-En wants my very first Balenciaga City Bag in Anthracite (as old as she is) and has ‘reserved’ it. Meaning, ‘hands off this, sister,’” says the doting mother with a laugh.

Kae-Lin, on the other hand, has unearthed a fuchsia Calvin Klein bag. “I got it in my first job. It was so expensive at that time. Twenty-five years later, Kae-Lin has claimed it as her own.”