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Next generation

Charles Blackman's children launch a range that takes his iconic images inside the home



Page turner

Books, books and more books. A clever renovation in Prahran uses a wall of storage to link old and new, writes Veronica Ridge.

With their confined rooms and little storage or display options, the Victorians of the late 19th century clearly led simpler – or maybe more cluttered – lives.

This complete lack of facilities to embrace a fast-paced modern world was what faced celebrated Melbourne design team studiofour on a project in Alfred Street, Prahran.

A busy professional couple with two young children asked them to remodel a single-fronted brick Victorian terrace that already had a hotch-potch 1980s renovation.

The demands on the '80s kitchen were high and it was an ineffective space, functioning as a combined cooking, storage and laundry zone.

"It became clear that in the peak times

before and after school, the functions of homework, play, house administration, meals preparation and eating were not only inefficient, but very disjointed," explains Sarah Henry of studiofour.

It was also seen as advantageous by this young family to physically and mentally distance themselves from the television, particularly at meal times. By removing the dining table from the living room and locating it within the kitchen, Henry says family interaction has been strengthened and "the ritual of eating together has become embedded in their family dynamic".

At the same time, fresh air was ensured with a stronger connection to the adjacent outdoor dining area.

"Being a central courtyard bounded by a five-metre-high party wall and deciduous trees, its secure nature enables the family to

keep the doors open as much as possible," Henry says.

To add to the design challenges the clients sought to showcase their collection of art, books and objects while keeping the interior light and peaceful with a vibe of measured control.

Accordingly, new storage and display elements throughout the home were used as key design tools.

In the living area, a full-height book wall in oak provides the transition between the old and new spaces, as well as a contained solution for the family's collection. The books en masse add a pleasing layer of texture to what is a sizeable area and the thick timber frames and shelving give a streamlined appearance.

Similarly, as a backdrop to the kitchen and dining space, fine steel shelves were incorporated. These long shelves were used not only to reiterate the fluidity of the space, but to act as display of essential cooking utensils and supplies.

But it is wood in all its earthy glory that is used as the common denominator to furnish each space... from tables that serve as bridges from the outside patio to the kitchen, bedside tables and raw timber in a modern bathroom.

Pale oak has a delightful supporting role in this project, especially in the kitchen where white walls serve as a blank canvas.

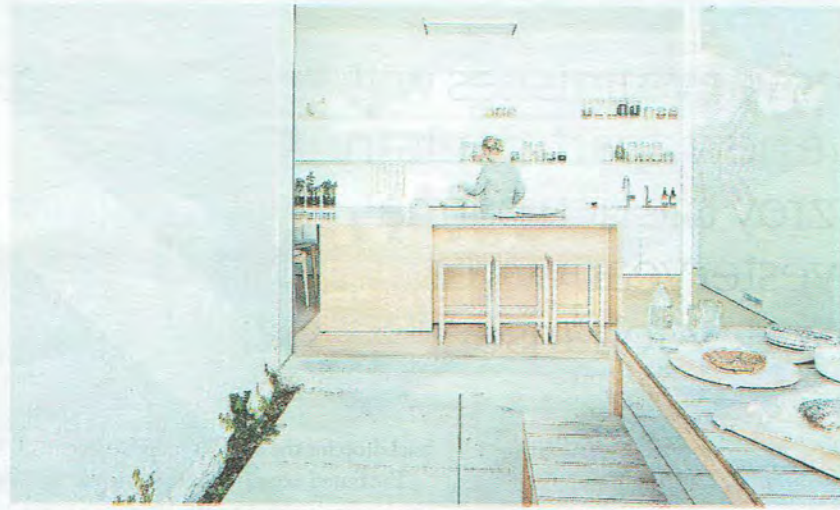
As an emerging multidisciplinary design business, studiofour first captured the world's attention with their Ridge Road house as a finalist in the Houses Awards, while also gaining a special mention in the internationally acclaimed architect a+ awards.

It was one of their first projects since the women formed a partnership in 2010 after realising they shared a holistic approach to creating bespoke dwellings and a shared vision for a practice that blended the disciplines of art, architecture, landscape and interiors.

This artistic methodology includes initial workshops for all members of the family, including the youngsters, whose bedrooms in a new upstairs extension include a playful outlook over chimneys and the adjacent rooftops of inner-urban Melbourne.

"Studiofour feel that this process of involving the children in the development of the design of their home is both beneficial and necessary," Henry says. "It helps them feel comfortable with the changes occurring in their home environment."

studiofour.net.au



AT A GLANCE

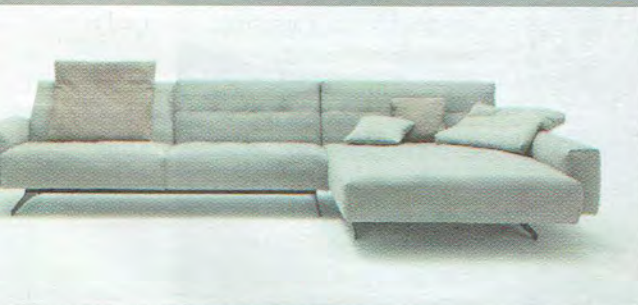
- Franke kitchen sinks
- Miele appliances
- Qasair rangehood
- Bathroom fixtures from Rogerseller and Reece
- Jetmaster fireplace
- Jordan sofa
- Tretford rug
- Max Alto armchairs from Space
- Mark Tuckey coffee table
- Muuto side table and Lean lamp from Great Dane
- Bemboka throw rugs from Luke Furniture
- Carl Hansen dining chairs from Cult
- Ceramics from Hub Furniture and Living Edge
- Bemboka bed linen from Luke Furniture
- Jielde lamps from Euroluce

PHOTOS: Shannon McGrath. Clockwise from previous page: this modern family needed ample bookshelves; pale oak cabinets complement the kitchen; bringing light and nature into the home; a soft white and gray palette is deliberately understated in the bathroom and kitchen.



Scopia

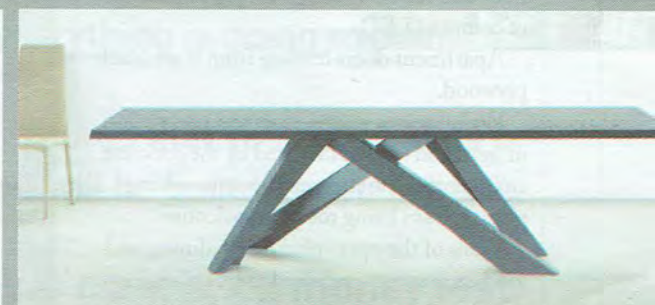
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Float Bed



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