

SIMPLY RED

*This Danish home has a calm white, classically Scandinavian design
enlivened by an intense pop of bright red at its heart*

Words **CAMILLA ALFTHAN** Photography **BIRGITTA WOLFGANG DREJER**



Living room Le Corbusier's 'LC2' sofa and armchairs for Cassina are arranged with two 'LCM' chairs by Charles and Ray Eames for Herman Miller. The rug is by Irish artist Eileen Gray and the coffee table is by Gae Aulenti for Fontana Arte
Dining room Arne Jacobsen's iconic 'Ant' chairs for Fritz Hansen gather around a table by Charles and Ray Eames (available from Iconic Interiors in the UK). The French chandelier is from a local antiques shop **Stockist details on p162 ►**



Danish painter Bent Holstein has lived in this 19th-century top-floor apartment in the heart of Copenhagen with his Finnish wife, Mekki, for the past 30 years. The couple originally moved to this spot to join the building's creative community – they knew of several other artists who lived here. Upon moving in, they immediately painted the walls white and stained the original wood floor to create a minimalist, gallery-like space befitting of artists in residence. Even the windowsills were removed, as they were deemed unaesthetic, and replaced with shelves above the radiators to display curated clusters of *objets d'art*. 'Art is a great way to express yourself, but we try to keep our home simple by constantly clearing out and throwing things away,' says Bent. 'I sometimes feel that a black bin bag is one of man's best inventions.'

This monochromatic simplicity, however, is interrupted by a shot of vivid colour in the entrance hall. 'I call it English red. It's a red/ochre pigment in three shades that I mixed with an acrylic binder,' Bent says. 'The hallway was dark to begin with, so we decided to make it even darker. The red colour absorbs the light and works really well with the old paintings, which we've hung in the traditional style, in groups. The overall effect is a historic feeling that reflects the architecture of the building, and we like the idea that the white living space beyond is so unexpected.'

Bent paints for up to seven hours a day in his attic studio, and his work is displayed throughout the apartment. In the living room, his abstract paintings are carefully arranged alongside drawings and prints (a collection of his own work and that of other artists). The couple's friend, Danish sculptor Peter Bonnéen, created the cubistic figures which are displayed on the floor. There's also an orange painting by Danish artist Freddie A Lerche that is a treasured piece. 'We've had it for forty years and still enjoy looking at it,' Bent says.

Tasteful arrangements of furniture complement the artworks. The chaise longue by Le Corbusier, upholstered in its original leather, has been in the couple's home for decades and creates a restful corner where they can recline and contemplate. Set against the white floors, it becomes a sculpture in its own right. The same can be said for the black-and-white rug by Irish artist Eileen Gray. 'The most important thing, however, is what the pieces express, rather than who the designer is,' says Bent. 'And that we have a few great things that we can keep for many years.' *Bent's work will be exhibited at the Blackshed Gallery in East Sussex from 27 May (theblackshedgallery.org.uk; gallerikant.dk).*



Top Homeowners Danish painter Bent Holstein and his wife Mekki **Above and left** The red lacquered cabinet, which brings a touch of the hallway's colour scheme into the dining room, is from Habitat and the picture hanging above it is by Spanish artist Antoni Tàpies. The ceramics are by Danish artist Bodil Manz **Stockist details on p162**



Hallway Three red pigments were mixed by hand to achieve this shade, which Bent applied in layers to create an intensity of colour. The walls are adorned with old paintings that include a Rembrandt and a piece by Bent's great grandfather ►



THE PAINTER'S PALETTE

This apartment's interior is defined by the contrast of two colours. Here, Bent Holstein explains his scheme in more detail

WHITE

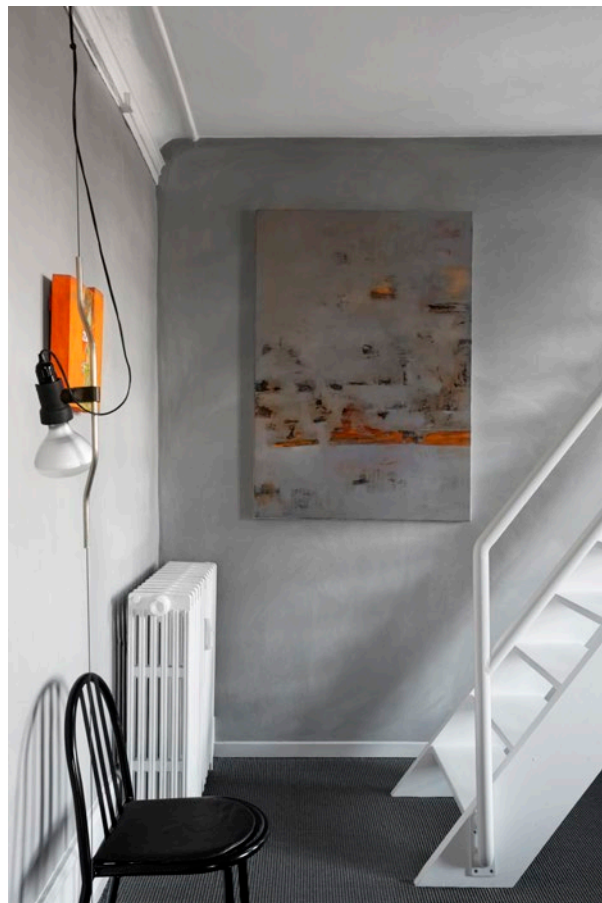
Painting walls white is a Scandinavian tradition, as it illuminates a room during the long winter days. Enhancing the light in a home is very important in this country, as it's dark outside for six months of the year. The white surroundings also create a blank canvas for our art. The design of each room is shaped by our artworks – not the other way around.

RED

I mixed the vibrant shade in the entrance hall from artists' pigment, and painted the walls in layers to build up an intensity of colour [Myland's 'Arts Club' is a close match; mylands.co.uk]. The colour is quite traditional, as is the art that decorates the walls. To help the transition from bright red to white, we used pieces of furniture that pick out similar hues – for example, the cabinet in the minimalist dining room adds a small, complementary splash of red.



Studio Artist Bent is currently working on this canvas, an impression from the Cayman Islands, in his attic studio. The figures on the shelves were collected on various trips around the world. For similar enamelled pendant lighting, try Urban Cottage Industries **Stockist details on p162**



Bedroom The floor light beside the bed is by Serge Mouille (available from Jas Boutique in the UK). The metal chair is from By Lassen. A 'Parentesi' spotlight by Achille Castiglioni and Pio Manzu for Flos hangs next to a small artwork by Marika Mäkala. The large canvas is an abstract painting by the homeowner **Stockist details on p162** **ED**