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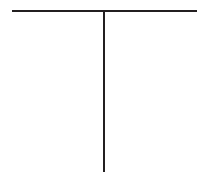
PRODUCTION *Mark Serra*

PHOTOS *Paris Brummer*

WORDS *Lynette Botha*

H O U S E

*This liveable art gallery in the heart of
RIEBEEK-KASTEEL
is both a masterpiece in design
and an ode to South African artisans.*



Bella by Anton Momberg takes pride of place beneath the home-gallery's circular skylight.

It's not every day that a once-in-a-lifetime brief hits your desk. But for Strukk Architects' Niel and Ashleigh Basson, that day struck almost three years ago, when their clients asked them to create the Kunshuis. Originally from Port Elizabeth, but currently living and working in Monaco, the owners' love for South African art drew them to the small and vibrant town of Riebeek-Kasteel in the Western Cape because of its active artist community, which they have since become entrenched in.

"The brief was for the structure to, first and foremost, be an open-door art gallery to celebrate and showcase the owners' impressive collection of South African art," explains Niel, who is Strukk's principal architect. "A secondary goal was to incorporate functional living spaces that they could reside in for part of the year. This informed a lot of our decision-making throughout the design and building process. It was such a unique brief, and our clients entrusted us with bringing their dream to life. The freedom we had to discover the project's potential was a real highlight."

"Apart from being a place to showcase art, the Kunshuis was always supposed to be a seasonal home for the owners – who are also investors in Riebeek-Kasteel's annual Solo Studios art festival – to reside in when spending time in South Africa," says Ashleigh, who oversaw the construction of the property. The inspiration for the Kunshuis was the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni on Venice's Grand Canal that houses the Peggy Guggenheim art collection – one of the most celebrated and important museums of 20th-century European and American art. Not a small act to follow.

"With a brief like this, it's not easy to know where to start," says Niel. "For us, it made sense to request an inventory of the art collection. Based on those images, the design process could begin. The architecture had to focus on creating space for the art, and ensuring a warm quality to the materials for when it would become the owners' residence. The views were also a consideration – we set out to frame them and treat them with the same importance as the art."

The art collection may be second to none, but it certainly doesn't overshadow the incredible architecture and design. To manage the light in the gallery areas and protect the art from direct sunlight, the property was oriented to face true north, with a secondary axis to retain a street edge. Notable too are the sliding steel screens that act as shading and security and, as there is no boundary wall, help to strengthen the street edge.

The Strukk team also took care of the interiors. "We chose every detail, down to the napkins," says Ashleigh. "We kept the palette neutral so that nothing clashed with the art, and what we're extremely proud of is that all the interiors and decor feature both established and new South African designers."

From concept to completion, the project took two-and-a-half years and was mostly plain sailing. "With Riebeek-Kasteel being a small town filled with mostly traditional structures, our brief was a first for the area," says Niel. "We had to be respectful of the surrounding homes and their inhabitants, which we did through texturing the exterior walls, the scale of the building, and manipulating the landscape. We know that not everyone may be a fan – but we think the structure is growing on them."

strukk.co.za

"The brief was for the structure to, first and foremost, be an OPEN-DOOR ART GALLERY to celebrate and showcase the owners' impressive collection of SOUTH AFRICAN ART."

– Niel Basson, architect



OPPOSITE TOP *Gandhi* by Anton Momberg welcomes guests to the entrance courtyard. **OPPOSITE CENTRE** The Hula lounge chair by Haldane provides the perfect spot to take in the view - or to admire Anton Momberg's *Bella*. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** The simplistic exterior of the home gives no hint of the magic that lies within.

The Kunshuis will form part of the Solo Studios 2022 exhibitions from 26 to 28 August. solostudios.co.za





A treasure trove of art and local design, the main living area includes works by Jonathan Silverman, Lionel Smit, Anthony Harris, Thembaletu Manqunyana, Elizabeth Balcombe, Anton Momberg and Anton Smit. These are perfectly complemented by a Loop chair by Dokter and Misses, a coffee table by Leighton Calder and a side table by Bofred.



A Gregor Jenkin dining table, vintage mid-century chairs and end chairs by Bofred ground the open-plan dining space. Anton Mombert's *Freedom Statues* and *Roxanne* occupy the left of the room, with Brunn Kramer artworks above the oven and pantry cupboards. To the right, an Elizabeth Balcombe sculpture rests on the top step, while Anthony Harris paintings adorn the wall opposite. Pieces by Cobus Haupt sit on the table, and bar stools from Weylandts provide seating at the kitchen counter.



ABOVE In the "gallery", the incredible array of art includes pieces by Georgina Gratrix, Cecil Skotnes, Walter Meyer, Emma Willemse, Alexander Rose-Innes, Gregory Kerr, Johannes Meintjes and more. The bench by Deft is an ideal viewing spot. **BELOW** An Andrew Dominic table and stools by Greg Marshall invite visitors to enjoy the wine cellar and media room. All lighting is by Gary Bosch of Gigi's Design House. **OPPOSITE** The lounge boasts views of the garden - conceptualised and executed by André Beaurain and Corné Pretorius of the Riebeek Valley Garden Centre - and of the valley, alongside vivid artworks that can be appreciated from the Weylandts couch.

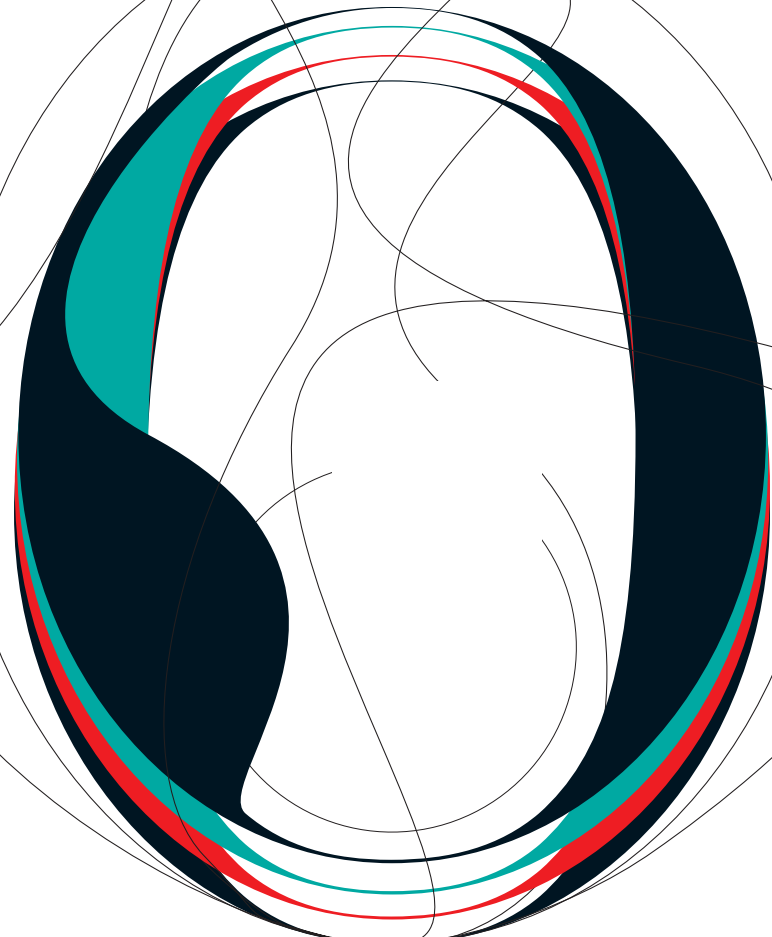




THIS PAGE The bedroom is pared-back, with a Willem Pretorius artwork above the Weylandts bed, and statues by Anton Momberg on the bedside table. OPPOSITE A Hannalie Taute masterpiece brightens up the bathroom.



WORDS *Phendu Ntata*



OPEN

For its new HEADQUARTERS, local advertising agency Grey's brief was to combine a CONTEMPORARY South African feel with a FRESH, MODERN, VIBRANT aesthetic. And the architectural design firm nailed it.

PHOTOS *Paris Brummer*



Grey Advertising Africa's open-plan HQ in Bryanston is a colour-filled, creative-meets-industrial reflection of the agency's "Open" work philosophy. The line-art wall drawing is by Italian artist Agnes Cecile.





DESIGNED TO INSPIRE, GREY ADVERTISING Africa's new headquarters is a space to breathe, dream, and invite creativity and collaboration. The agency moved from the bustling Sandton CBD to a new location in Bryanston – an area that has always been regarded as one of Johannesburg's most attractive and verdant suburban spaces, and one that the team felt had the best prospect of developing as a new corporate headquarters hub.

The project was a revamp of a four-storey office building that was redesigned and given a facelift by architectural designer Julian van der Linde and his team. The re-imagined building consists of three floors of spacious offices, and a mezzanine café with views

of Midrand and the Magaliesberg mountains. It's a space that aligns with CEO of Grey Africa Paul Jackson's vision of building a creative business culture that inspires others to be the best they can be. It's something he describes as their "Open" work culture.

"With this Open philosophy in mind," says Paul, "we wanted to evolve the agency from a collective of old, closeted individual offices into a state-of-the-art, open and collaborative workspace. We wanted to bring the beauty of nature inside. And we wanted to reflect the creative energy and spirit of our beautiful country and its people."

One of the key design features, therefore, was blurring the boundaries between the building's interior and its surroundings.

"We wanted to bring the BEAUTY OF NATURE inside. And we wanted to reflect the CREATIVE ENERGY and SPIRIT of our BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY and its PEOPLE."
 – Julian van der Linde, architectural designer

The natural light that streams into the double-volume atrium provides dramatic light movement and shadow effect, along with serving a very obvious energy-saving function.

Items such as the reception desk, the red screens, the conversation pods, the custom boardroom tables and the centre-column features are all bespoke design elements courtesy of Julian and his team, and incorporate the design brief of reflecting the creative energy of Africa and inviting open collaboration. Julian's use of a bright, Afro-modern colour palette throughout the space, combined with the locally designed contemporary furniture, has made for a free-flowing space that oozes positivity and creativity.

One of the biggest challenges of the construction was that most of it took place during Covid lockdowns. So while offices were closed and the staff were working remotely, Julian and his team were working frenetically to re-invent the space. "When the Grey staff returned to the offices post-lockdown, they were delighted with their newly re-energised space, which worked to lift spirits after a particularly difficult period," he says.

And that's hardly a surprise. Julian's design team has created a wonderfully optimistic working environment that promotes hope and confidence – sentiments that the designer describes feeling every time he interacts with the inspiring and creative people of Grey. grey.com

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A red staircase leads to the rooftop canteen; the reception entrance; the casual lounge features Weylandts furniture, rugs by Hertex and a bespoke steel screen by architectural designers Julian van der Linde and Lou-Marie Meyer; in the reception area, the wooden wall detail was designed by Lou-Marie; the exterior staircase mirrors the red accents used inside; the Skyla rocking chair in the casual lounge is by Schönn. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** The industrial steel-and-glass entrance to Grey HQ; Julian van der Linde, whose team took on the renovation; the triple-volume atrium entrance with wooden detail by Lou-Marie; the first-floor boardroom hovers in a glass "cube" above the atrium entrance, and a seating/shelving unit by Julian and Lou-Marie; the industrial steel pod was also designed by Julian and Lou-Marie; view from above into the lobby, with Selma chairs by Schönn.

The light-filled casual lounge offers a space for informal meetings. The tiled reception counter is the work of Wolkberg Casting Studios, the yellow artwork is by Julian, and the tapered side table is from Iconomy.





THIS PAGE Casual, informal meeting areas abound throughout the building, in keeping with Grey's ethos of creating an open and collaborative work environment. **OPPOSITE** The triple-volume entrance lobby is all industrial angles and red accents.





THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE Glass partitions designate smaller boardrooms within the open-plan space, yet still maintain a sense of collaboration. The green chair is from SHF Living, and the rug is from Hertex.

