

Gallacher in the dining room. Photo: Oskar Proctor. Art: Ohad Meromi/56 Henry, New York.

MAGAZINE

It Brit Designer Jermaine Gallacher Brings Off-Kilter Verve and Expert Craft to His First Residential Project

The moody, Georgian town house he designed for an artist-client is located in London's Clerkenwell neighborhood



By Hannah Martin

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The main sitting room of a London town house designed by Jermaine Gallacher features a Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler sofa, a Tommaso Barbi ceramic floor lamp, a pair of 19th-century chairs, and a lioness sculpture by Ohad Meromi. Photo: Oskar Proctor. Art: Ohad Meromi/56 Henry, New York.

It's hard to keep pace with design polymath Jermaine Gallacher. One moment, he's holding court at a snug table in Bistro Freddie, a hip Shoreditch restaurant he decorated. The next, he's cracking open a beer at the South Bermondsey studio of metalworker Barnaby Lewis before zipping over to visit glassblower Miranda Keyes at her nearby live-work space. All the while, he talks fast, enthusiastically hopscotching among subjects, from Charles and Maggie Jencks's postmodern mansion, the Cosmic House ("it's high art, academic, and unashamedly fun all at once"), to raves—like the party he threw at Barts the Great church in November to launch the second issue of *Ton*, an irreverent new magazine he started with two friends.



In the small sitting room, A Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler armchair and a 1970s Italian table from Rose Uniacke mingle with a Miranda Keyes sconce and mirror from Gallacher's gallery. Photo: Oskar Proctor



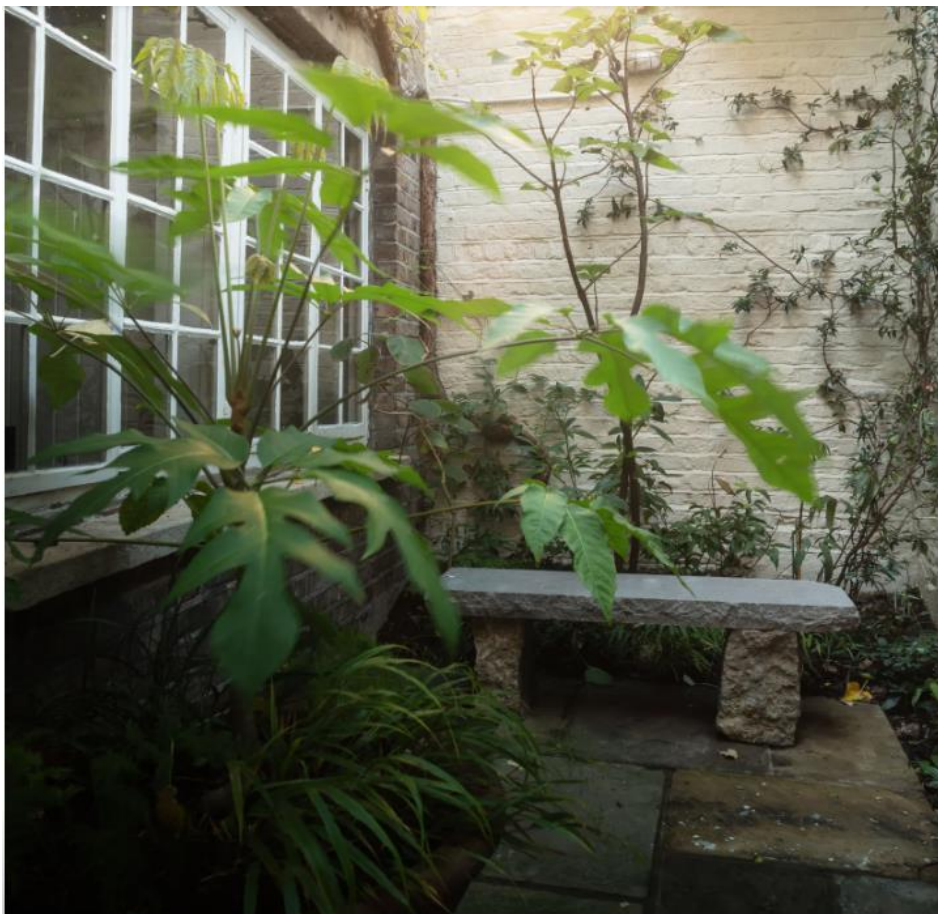
An alabaster ceiling light, suspended from a custom chain by Barnaby Lewis, hangs over the lacquered dining table. Photo: Oskar Proctor

But a recent project, arguably his most ambitious yet, has forced him to slow down. "It's my first house," Gallacher says of the Grade II-listed home in London's Clerkenwell neighborhood that he designed for an artist friend eager "to take a risk." When they began working on the place, a four-story Georgian gem dating from 1830, it needed a little TLC—floors, windows, and several walls had to be restored. Along the way, they uncovered a stenciled pattern in toffee hues that set the moody palette. With the help of decorative painting specialists at Rag Arts, they restored that motif in the stairwell (Gallacher likes to call it "nicotine yellow") and created a similarly weathered-looking wall finish in the main sitting room. Elsewhere, they collaborated with Francesca's Paints on custom colors: khaki green for another sitting room and oxblood for the bedroom. "It's a dark house," Gallacher notes. "But proper old London houses are dark."



The bespoke stainless-steel kitchen was made by Stuart Indge; barstools by Giandomenico Belotti. Photo: Oskar Proctor

He's always been one to lean into the vibe. In recent years, he has created some of London's most experimental interiors, among them a psychedelic office (think metal-clad walls and purple carpet) for a local barrister and the buzzy Bar Crispin, which he enveloped in bright grassy green. Prior to those projects, he had built a name selling vintage and antique furnishings, first at the Spitalfields Market stall he opened as a drawing student at Camberwell College of Arts and later in the terrazzo-lined room of a friend's bookstore. Six years ago, he moved into his current South London studio and gallery, where he exhibits works by contemporary makers alongside his own lines and whatever else catches his eye.

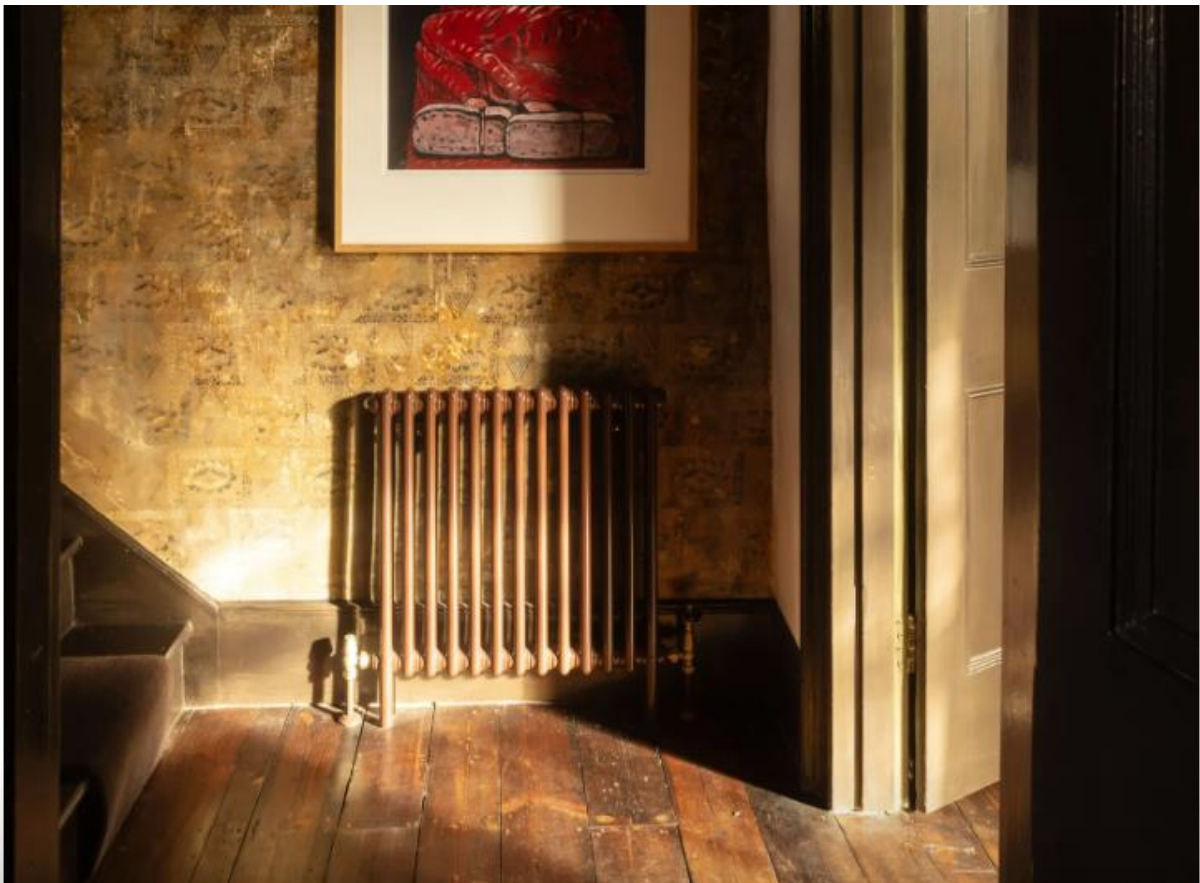


A stone bench in the garden, which was updated by Charlie Chase Audsley of Chase Gardens. Photo: Oskar Proctor

Designing for daily domestic life, however, has ignited his creativity in a new way. In the kitchen, he devised sinuous stainless-steel counters with integrated appliances. (“It had to have soul.”) In the top-floor bedroom suite, meanwhile, he added a tiled tub and vanity inspired by the sculptural bath at George Nakashima’s Pennsylvania home. Gallacher’s homage features vaguely floral motifs based on his client’s illustrations.



The bedroom features an Irish-wool blanket by Gallacher, an antique chaise longue upholstered in a Fortuny fabric, and An 18th-Century painting of a Maltichon; lamp by Jamb. Photo: Oskar Proctor

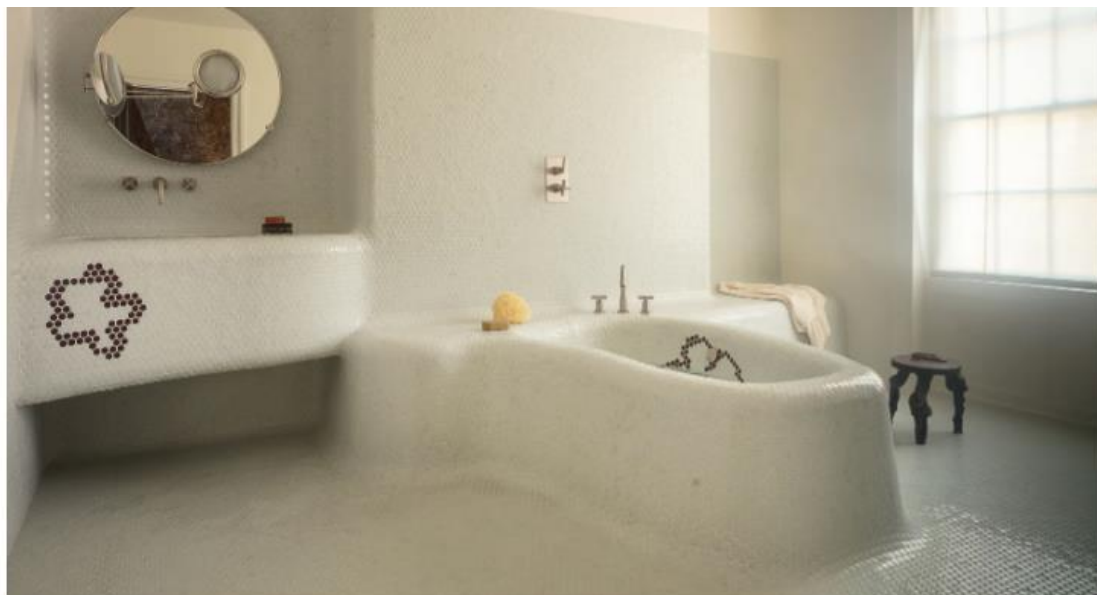


The home’s original wall stenciling, restored by RAG Arts, is visible in the hallway. Adelphi lantern from Jamb, and painting by Philip Guston. Photo: Oskar Proctor

When it came time to decorate, Gallacher took a tightly edited, less-is-more approach: “They’re not big rooms,” he explains. “So you have to get the right things.” For the dining room, he chose a set of chairs with low backs the height of the client’s lacquered table; for the bedroom suite, a sleigh-like antique chaise longue upholstered in a metallic Fortuny cotton; and for the main sitting room, Tommaso Barbi ceramic floor lamps and 19th-century chairs. Gallacher also enlisted makers from his gallery’s roster to deliver their special touch. Lewis, the aforementioned metalsmith, forged a spiky chain for the dining room’s alabaster hanging light while Keyes created ethereal glass sconces in the form of calla lilies.



Gallacher designed the bathroom’s wooden bench to conceal the toilet. Photo: Oskar Proctor



The tiled primary bath features an Eileen Gray mirror from the Invisible Collection and an antique grape-vine stool. Photo: Oskar Proctor

“I like things to have heart; to feel like they’ve really been made, thought about, and considered,” says Gallacher, contemplating the thread that runs through his practice. Or put simply: “I like things and I like people who make things.” jermainegallacher.com