

The London Magazine

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Lavish lettings

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR?

Life in a mansion block

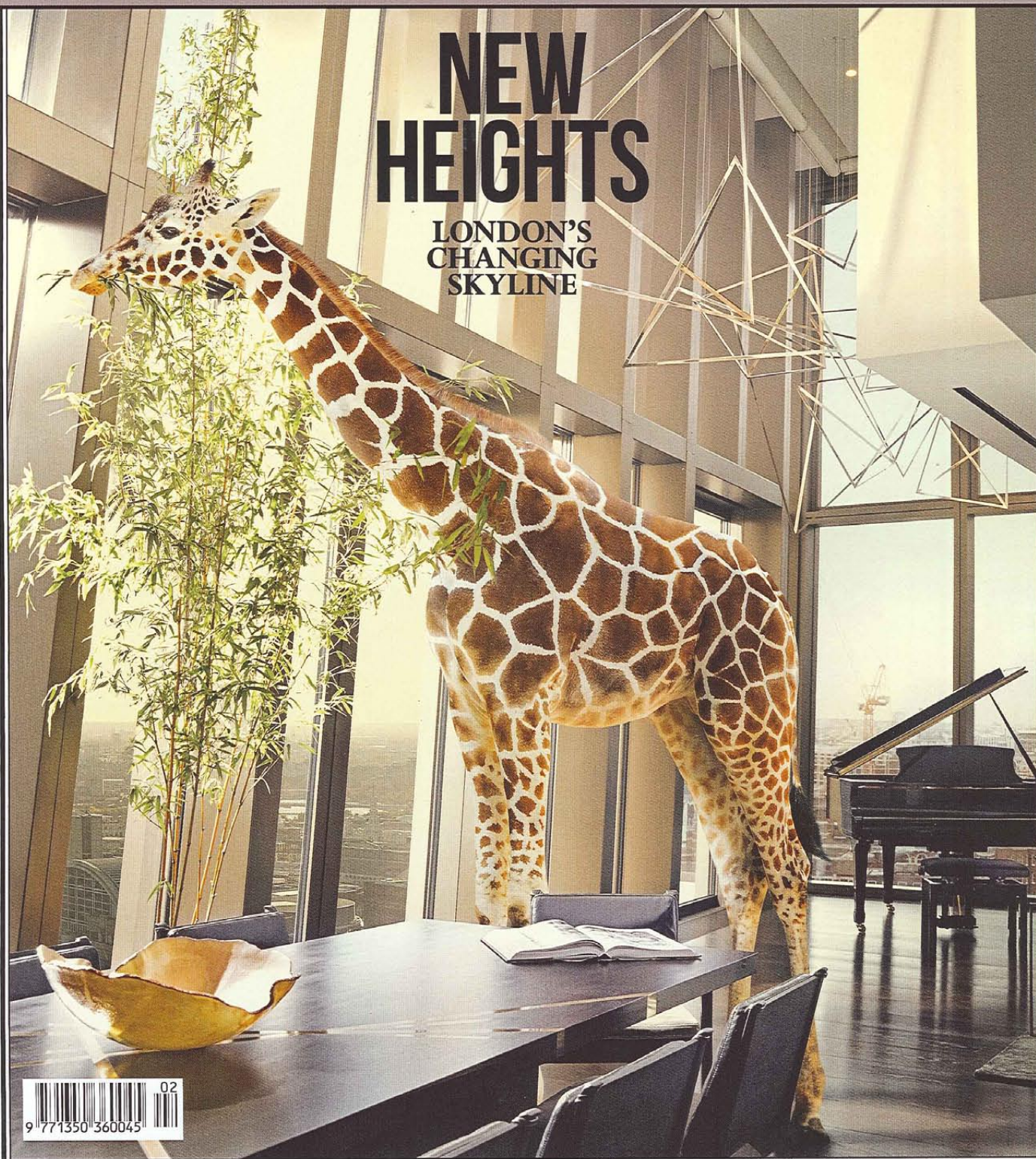
UNA STUBBS

On Sherlock and garden squares

LONDON'S LARGEST CIRCULATION PROPERTY MAGAZINE

NEW HEIGHTS

LONDON'S
CHANGING
SKYLINE

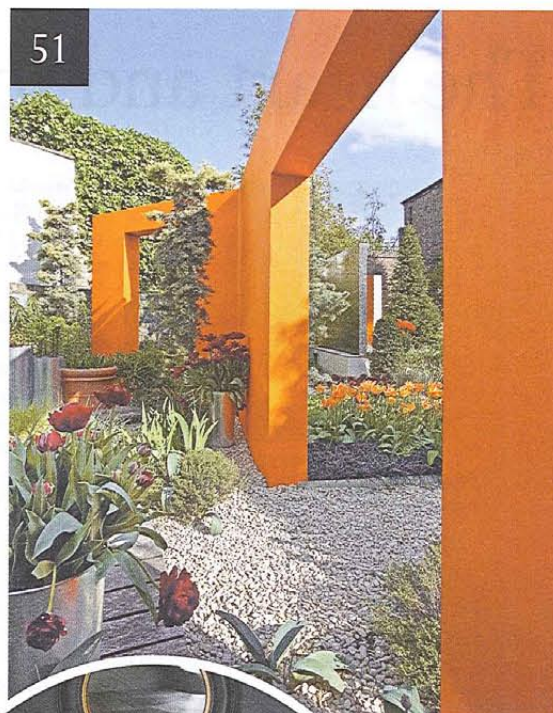


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Cover photograph: Rebecca Pierce

Retouching: Studio Invisible
Shot on Location at Penthouse Four 13.04, Kings Gate, through Strutt & Parker (struttandparker.com), with special thanks to Land Securities (landsecurities.com)



OUT OF AFRICA A pair of George III Giltwood Mirrors in the drawing room next to a painting by Jean Souverbie, who taught Ghizlan's father at École des Beaux-Arts, in Paris



A cultural heritage

Daughter of a prominent Moroccan artist and a French model, Ghizlan El Glaoui brings together two continents in her Chelsea townhouse, writes **Carolyn Asome**

Photography by David Cleveland

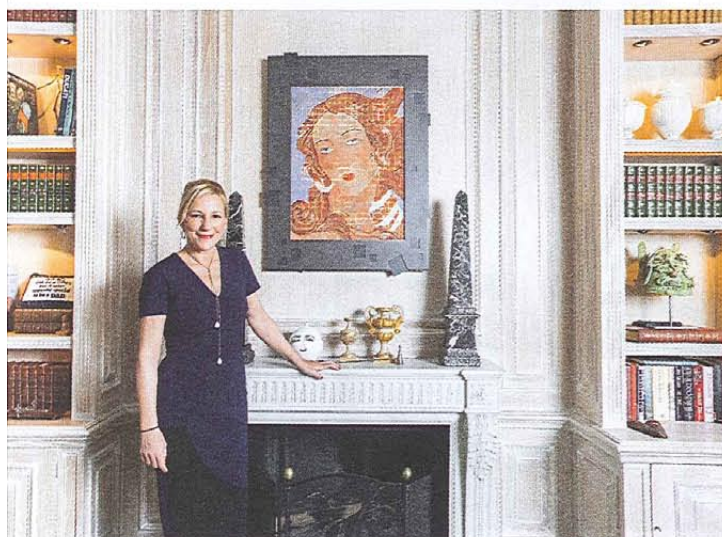
For some, living up to the achievements of a famous family can be a daunting prospect, but for the London based, Moroccan artist, Ghizlan El Glaoui, she has especially big boots to fill. Her grandfather was the last Pasha of Marrakech, an art collector and friend of Winston Churchill, her father, Hassan El Glaoui, is one of Morocco's best-known painters and her French mother, Christine Legendre, modelled for Givenchy.

"Possibly I was crazy to ever decide on being an artist," El Glaoui smiles warmly, "for my mother was always encouraging me to be something safe, like become a lawyer or a doctor. My father has been very fortunate in that his art allowed him to raise a whole family."

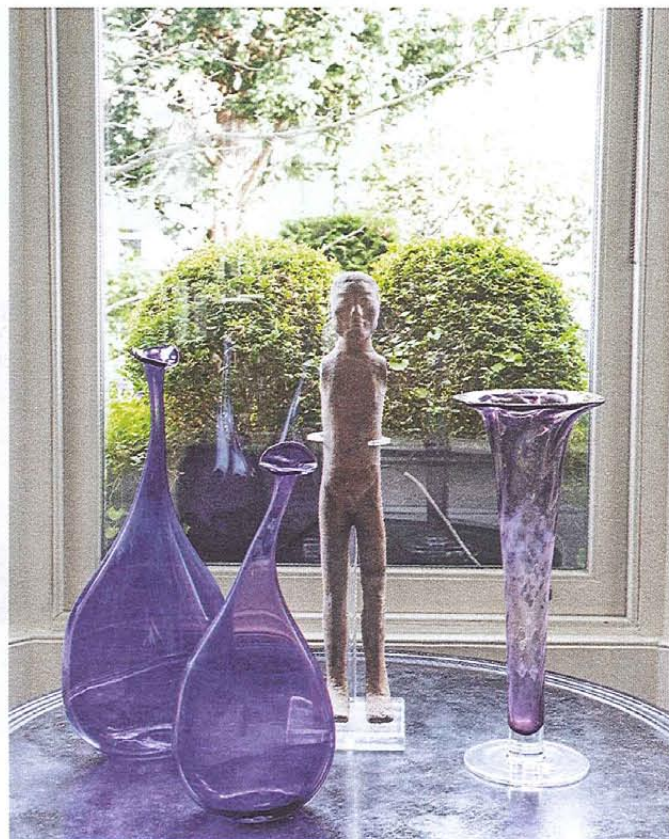
Judging by her paintings however, which quite literally light up the walls thanks to whizzy pyrotechnics which illuminate her portraits from behind, bestowing different warm and cold



ON THE TILES Two of Ghizlan's mosaic portraits in the hallway, in front of a painting by Jean Souverbie, belonging to her husband, who "has a very refined eye"



FAMILY VALUES Clockwise from top left: Water Monopoly bath and Czech & Speake accessories in the bathroom; vases from William Yeoward and a Han Dynasty statue in the sitting room; Ghizlan in front of one of her mosaic portraits, which is back-lit with LED lights



lights that offer an arresting depth, the gamble certainly paid off.

When Hubert de Givenchy first met the young El Glaoui and saw her paintings, he remarked that she had all the talent of her father and the looks of her mother. While growing up in Rabat, she spent much of her childhood in her father's studio, posing for his portraits. It perhaps explains her fascination with faces. It definitely explains how she came to acquire a portrait album that documents her early years rather than the quotidian family photo album.

Her mix of Moroccan and European heritage certainly imbues everything that El Glaoui turns her hand to, not least the impeccably decorated 3,400 sq ft Chelsea townhouse built in 1876 that she shares with her family in Carlyle Square, off Kings Road. Spread over five floors, the five-bedroom home is where she lives with her husband, who works in finance. She has four children, Shawn and Mina are the oldest and her two youngest, Clémentia and Céline, live with her in Chelsea. Conveniently, her home is a few minutes' walk from her studio and

new gallery in Glebe Place and her daughters' school.

When she moved in with her husband, he very thoughtfully offered to redecorate the entire house. "I know I'm the artist but he has a very refined eye," she says.

He knew, for instance, that she loved plaster walls, which remind her of Morocco, so the pinkish, pale egg plaster throughout the hallway is a nod to that.

"Funnily enough there's hardly any of my work displayed here. My husband has always had a very keen eye for art and plenty of art himself. Curiously, when we first met, I was showing him a catalogue of my father's work that mentioned that he attended the École des Beaux-Arts, in Paris.

"He pointed to the mantelpiece and the hallway, and there, hanging on the walls were pictures by Jean Souverbie, my father's teacher. It was an unusual choice of art for an Englishman to collect, but I took it as a sign that it was meant to be."

She has lived in London for the past 20 years. "My mother was an avid anglophile because she had

done foreign exchanges in her youth, so from an early age, she instilled in me a love for mint sauce and piccalilli."

I wonder if she found it hard combining their joint art works? "Not at all, it was easy to mix our possessions and antiques that we have acquired over the years. We never fight about it and most of our decisions have been made in half an hour in terms of decorating. We enjoy travelling the world and finding lovely things together."

El Glaoui looks for art in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, where she is a patron, and for furniture she visits Christian Liaigre and Bottega Veneta. "What we look for most are pieces with individual character. And I love finding Moroccan artefacts."

The rooms in the house are tall and well proportioned. The ground floor sitting room with its parquet flooring is an elegant assortment of neutral hues textures: velvet sofas that look modern and luxurious invite you to sit back and relax. The library that leads off it has built-in panelling which has been stained an ashy shade of white in order to lighten the room.

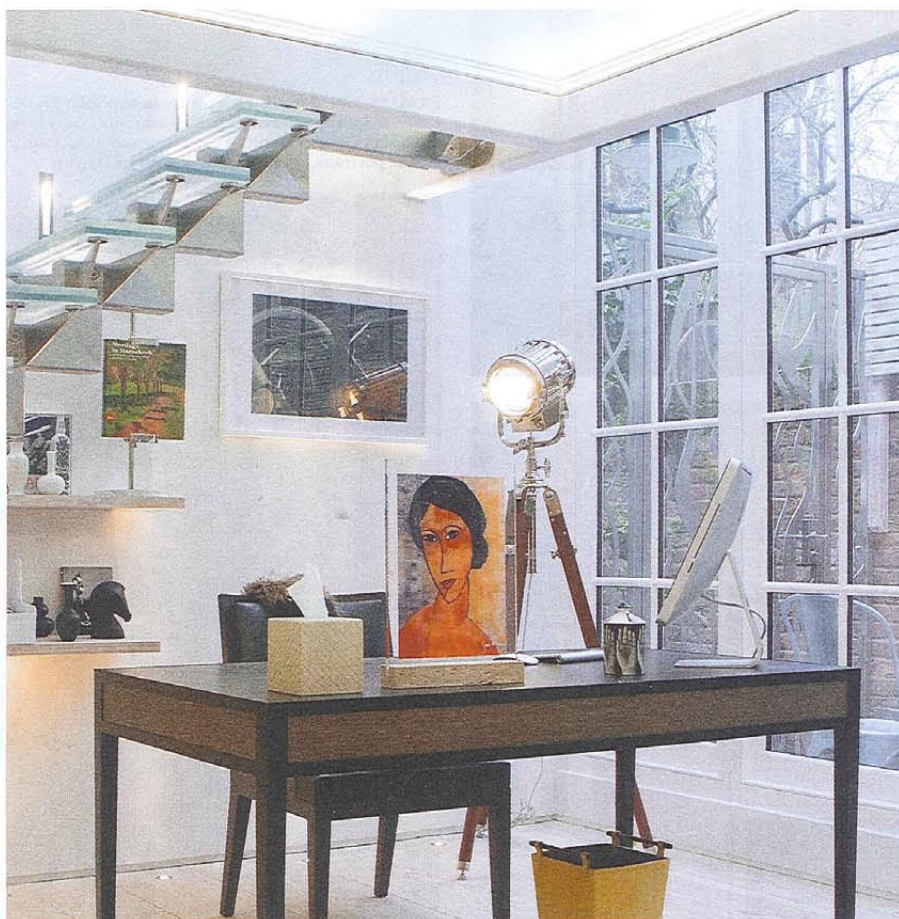
On the first floor is the master bedroom suite, in soothing pale greys and soft lilacs. Shagreen chests of drawers flank either side of the bed. The mirrored dressing room leads on to a bathroom that recalls the decadence of the 1930s with its Water Monopoly bath and Czech & Speake accessories.

The next two floors are taken over by children's bedrooms and the large attic doubles up as a den for her two young daughters.

"It was relatively straightforward doing this house up. Unlike the studio round the corner," she admits that the Dinesen floor boards that she had fitted in the ground floor of her studio, some of which were 7 metre long planks of wood, were something of a headache to install.

"They had to close parts of Sloane Square and Kings Road when they delivered the flooring. The truck also got stuck on the roundabout. In the end, they had to be hauled over someone's garden and lifted in, one by one." She gives a little Gallic shrug. "Thank goodness we were on holiday." ■

ghizlanelglaoui.com



STUDIO 45 Clockwise from left: Ghizlan El Glaoui's Glebe Garden Gallery at 45 Glebe Place, SW3; Robert Young Antiques at Masterpiece art fair; Whitford Fine Art; the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition

IN THE PICTURE

Ghizlan El Glaoui on her ten favourite galleries in London to buy art

1 Hanina Fine Arts, W1

For sculpture and art from the post-war school of Paris, including a wide selection of works by female artists such as Dora Maar. 21 Woodstock Street, W1C 2AP. haninafinearts.com

2 Whitford Fine Art, SW1

A gallery specialising in French and British 20th century painting and sculpture, including one of my favourites Jean Souverbie. 6 Duke Street, SW1Y 6BN. whitfordfineart.com

3 Eleven Fine Art, SW1

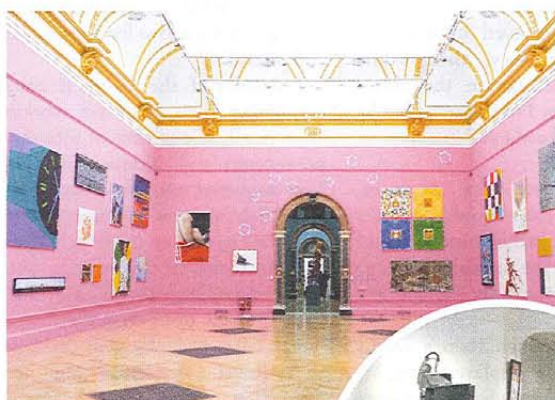
I go to this gallery in Belgravia to collect works by the graphic artist and painter Natasha Law. 11 Eccleston Street, London, SW1W 9LX. elevenfineart.com

4 Opera Gallery, W1

Full of my favourite art from around the world. 134 New Bond Street, W1S 2TF. operagallery.com

5 Plus One Gallery, SW1

A fascinating gallery specialising in



hyperrealist art works. 89-91 Pimlico Road, London, SW1W 8PH. plusonegallery.com

6 Carpenters Workshop Gallery, W1

Sculpture, ceramics and furniture pieces that are art works in themselves. 3 Albemarle Street, W1S 4HE. carpentersworkshopgallery.com

7 Apter-Fredericks, SW3

Like an art gallery for furniture. I buy beautiful antique mirrors here.



265 - 267 Fulham Road, SW3 6HY. apter-fredericks.com

8 Masterpiece London, SW3

Curated by my friend Philip Hewat-Jaboor, this year the annual



art fair takes place in Chelsea (30 June-6 July). masterpiecefair.com

9 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, W1

Every year I come here as somewhere to buy art as well as look at it (13 June - 21 August). Piccadilly, W1J 0BD. royalacademy.org.uk

10 Frieze London, NW1

Now one of the leading international art fairs in the world (6-9 October). Regent's Park, NW1 4NR. friezelondon.com