

# ART, BOOKS & BLOGS

For lovers of the finer things in life



## ART OF THE INTERIOR

Graham Fletcher is a painter and sculptor who has covered a wide range of styles and subjects over the years. Currently he is working on a series of domestic interiors – scenes that will be familiar to readers of this magazine – but they are not quite what they seem. First, they are modern but dated, culled from magazines of the 1950s. Second, they contain figures or masks from so-called “primitive” cultures. These appear in a subordinate role as trophies

or decor items. It is unclear whether they are kept with reverence or as patronised curios. Fletcher has Samoan ancestry and his paintings are ironic metaphors for uneasy relations between peoples of European and Pacific origins. We all live in the same room, but are we entirely at home with each other? The paintings also recall the 1980s debate about the influence of primitivism on 20th century art. Perhaps the primitives were the true moderns? *Warwick Brown*

### GRAHAM FLETCHER

**Age:** 44

**Lives in:** Dunedin

**Dealer:** Melanie Roger, Auckland (melanierogergallery.com)

**Price range:** \$2500-\$20,000

**Next exhibition:** Melanie Roger Gallery, July 3-27

**Title of painting:** *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?*, 2012, oil on canvas, 1365 x 1365mm



ARTWORK PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF MELANIE ROGER GALLERY

## The Iconic Interior

DOMINIC BRADBURY

Thames & Hudson, \$85, 352 pages, hardback



This wonderful collection of 100 “important and influential” interiors from 1900 to the present has names to conjure with, and not just in the fields of interior design and architecture. After a broad overview introducing the period’s main stylistic movements (arts and crafts, art deco, modernism, minimalism etc), the collection opens with a charming 1902 Massachusetts neoclassical pile. It was built for, co-designed by and decorated by one Edith Wharton. Yes, that’s *the* Edith Wharton, the famous novelist (whose first book turns out to have been a little number called *The Decoration of Houses*). The interiors that follow are chronologically organised but stylistically various. Over a few pages we’re ushered through Bloomsbury group artists Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell’s exuberantly bohemian Charleston (1916) and Coco Chanel’s gilt-edged, theatrical Paris show home (c 1920). Later the primary colours and tubular steel of modernist Sonneveld House (1933)



give way to the elegant art deco of Dorchester House (1936). Later still, earth-toned, sunbaked sinuousness (Marrakesh’s Ministerio del Gusto, 1998) is succeeded by the super-cool empty white spaces of John Pawson’s Pawson House (1999). There’s no doubt that Bradbury’s selection earns its claim to “suggest the importance of individual imagination, originality and character as well as aesthetic beauty and style”. In places, character is in such abundant supply, it seems to balloon into eccentricity and beyond (vis Tony Duquette, Bart Prince). My favourites? For the moment, the cutie on the cover (Oscar Niemeyer’s Strick House), Axel Vervoordt’s Gravenwezel and a truly sublime room in Ricardo Bofill’s converted cement factory in Barcelona. But next time I dip in, who knows? *Jan Chilwell is a NZ House & Garden sub-editor*

## Good Food Made Simple

ALLYSON GOFTON

Penguin, \$50, 304 pages, softback

Cookbooks that offer more than just great recipes put themselves ahead of the pack, and this is one of them. Along with a wealth of really useful dishes – tasty, uncomplicated things you’re likely to make more than once – there is interesting information on every spread about such things as ingredients, techniques and recipe variations. That makes *Good Food Made Simple* an excellent choice for both beginner cooks and those simply seeking a solution for dinner. The chapters cover rice, pasta and noodles, grills and stir-fries, bowl food (curries, hotpots etc), salads, pies and pizzas, roasts

and bakes and sweets. Although the recipes are straightforward they’re certainly not mundane, thanks to the tempting flavour combos and clever presentations, such as the “pull-apart” smoked chicken and asparagus tart. From the noodle cake curry to the fruit loaf made with condensed tomato soup, this is another excellent compilation from one of this country’s best and most dependable food writers. *Sally Butters is NZ H&G’s food editor*



Mel Chesneau.

## STYLE SPOTTER

*Armoire, Pegs & Casserole* is the blog of Mel Chesneau; originally from Sydney, she lives in Auckland with her French husband and three children. Her dream of owning a shop filled with beautiful things is on hold, so she’s created a blog full of stylish finds and decor inspiration. These are some of her favourite sites:

[sfgirlbybay.com](http://sfgirlbybay.com)

I love Victoria Smith’s cool, bohemian modern style. She shares affordable design inspiration along with house tours to die for.

[eclectictrends.com](http://eclectictrends.com)

Gudy, a German girl living in Barcelona, is an interiors stylist and international trainer for visual merchandising, who goes to all the major design trade shows. She reports on trends she spots and posts gorgeous European shop tours.

[decor8blog.com](http://decor8blog.com)

Holly would have to be one of the most influential home decoration bloggers. Reading her posts is like receiving notes from a friend. She delivers loads of tips on how to bring life to interiors.

[thedesigndesigner.com](http://thedesigndesigner.com)

New Zealand-based Michelle has a great eye and curates a wonderful selection of what’s on the web with a Scandinavian influence, along with supporting and showcasing local talent.

[pinterest.com](http://pinterest.com)

This has to be one of the most inspiring and influential places on the net at the moment. Build a good selection of pinners to follow and you’ll soon know what trends are sweeping the world. >