

PLACE OF WONDER

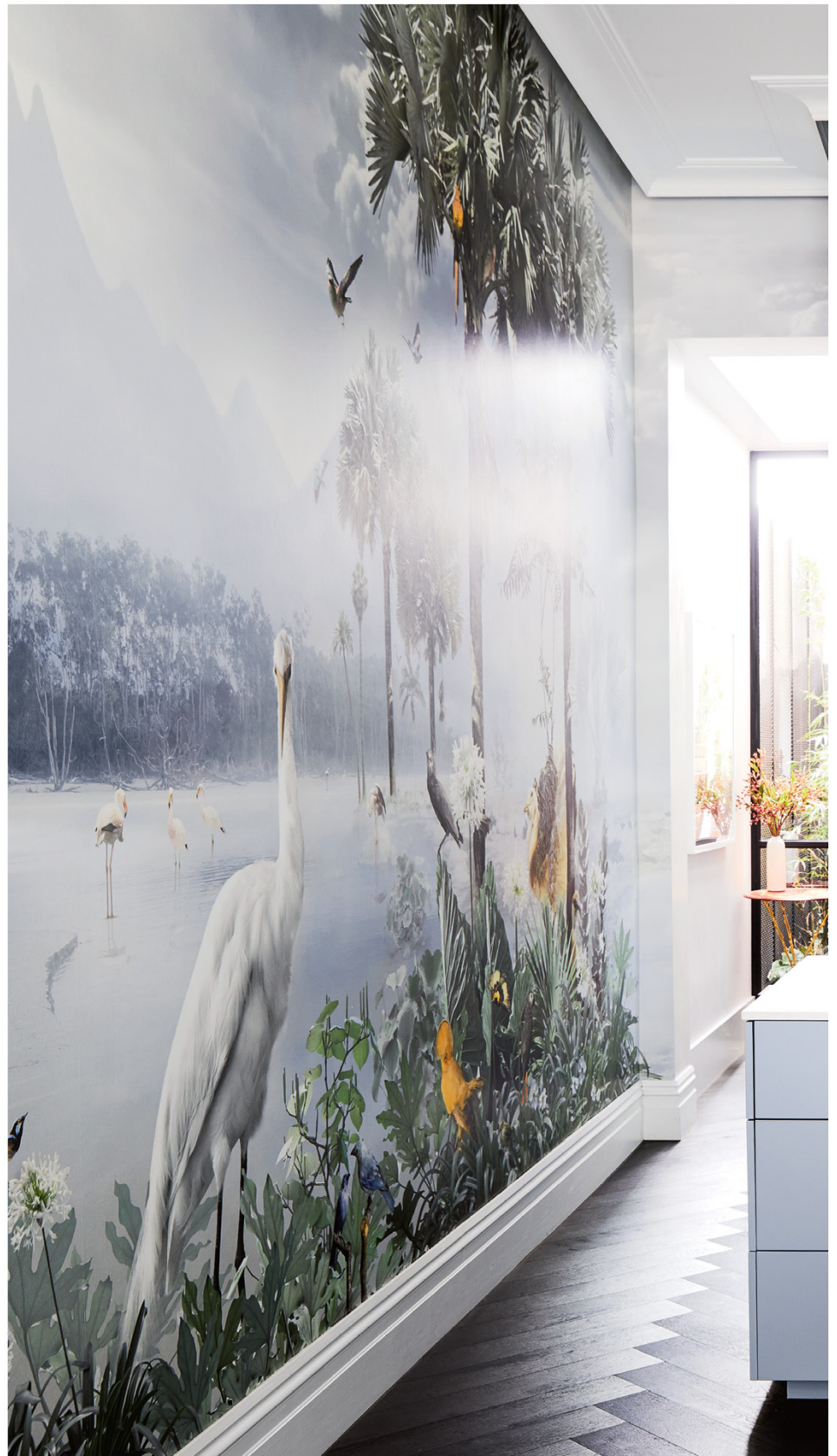
This Melbourne home dabbles in the fantastical, turning to pure artistry to create an enchanting retreat of escape, drama and whimsy.

BY ANNEMARIE KIELY PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHARYN CAIRNS

“I love the idea
of a house
having different
atmospheres,
both light and
dark, as you
walk through it,
just like walking
through an
exterior
landscape”

KATE CHALLIS

THESE PAGES in the kitchen and dining area, two-pack polyurethane cabinetry in Resene Dusted Blue; splashback and benchtop in Calacatta marble from CDK Stone; dining table from Mark Tuckey; Friends & Founders La Pipe dining chairs from Fred International; *Le Vol I* and *Le Vol II* art installations by Valerie Sparks.





BACK IN THE NOUGHTIES,

when Kate Challis bought a decommissioned shop in Fitzroy's Gertrude Street – the hipster heart of Melbourne – she had a PhD in art history and a hankering to practise design. As she recalls it, the neighbourhood was then a rub-up of the city's rich and poor – a diamond in the rough with an outlaw reputation, a counterculture vibe and not a barista within cooee.

"THAT WAS years ago," says Challis, who has since traded academia for a design practice that now specifies art instead of studying it. The growth of her family and the reformation of Gertrude Street determined that her home's 19th-century structure be recast in content and character.

Collaborating with Ridolfi Architecture, Challis upended the original ground-floor plan of her semi-detached property, siting an open kitchen at street front to sync with the commercial nature of the strip. The flip felt more receptive to the rhythms of the day and Challis's dream of designing around Melbourne artist Valerie Sparks's dramatic, large-scale work.

"I have loved Valerie's work forever," says Challis. "I fell in love with her *Le Vol* series and then met her." Challis commissioned *Le Vol* as a space-engulfing installation. Sparks was on board but had to find a way of wrapping her artwork – a play on the 19th-century panoramic wallpapers produced by Joseph Dufour – around a kitchen nearly four metres high. The process was complex but the outcome astounding and made more fantastically so by Christopher Boots's build of a 300-kilogram light from crystal quartz stone.

A small powder room is painted a strong pink colour inspired by the hue of flowing gums in a favourite Margaret Preston artwork, which also influenced the downstairs living area. "I wanted a blast of intense colour to create a real sense of atmosphere," says Challis. "I liked the idea of it being an immersive experience." Upstairs, Challis's son chose the dynamic blue-and-white Popham Design tile that lines the walls and floor. "I knew the design could grow with him," says Challis.

In the main ensuite, deep grey Tadelakt plaster was applied to the walls and then small feather-shaped tiles in a mix of sage green, pale pink and deeper green were arranged in organically shaped sections, to play up the sense of age and, says Challis, "to look like they'd partly fallen off". "Creating the pattern and shape was a design dilemma, but in the end the solution was informed by the skills of the craftsman, and we did it by hand with him," she adds. katechallis.com; ridolfi.net.au
As featured in the November/December 2018 edition of Vogue Living.



THIS PAGE in the dining area, custom banquette upholstered in Antoine d'Albion Drap de Flandres linen, enquiries to Boyac; custom shelving; custom Petra pendant light from Christopher Boots; *Le Vol II* art installation by Valerie Sparks.

THIS PAGE in the ensuite, bath from Apaiser; tapware from Brodware; walls in Botteganova Plumage mosaic tiles by Cristina Celestino from Byzantine Design and Tadelakt plaster. **OPPOSITE PAGE** in the powder room, Falper Lavamani basin from Rogerseller; Yokato tapware from Brodware; mirror by Carlo Scarpa for Venini from Nicholas & Alistair; custom Petra wall sconce from Christopher Boots; walls painted in Porter's Paints Bloom.





Victoria+Albert
Vetralla freestanding
bath, \$4595, from
Harvey Norman;
harveynorman.com.au



Smeg 900mm Linea
6-zone induction cooktop
in Black Ceramic, POA,
from Winning Appliances;
winningappliances.com.au



ABOVE Petra II Twin
wall sconce, POA,
from Christopher Boots;
christopherboots.com

BELOW Terrazzo Teak
+ Neroli soap, \$16, and
Wave soap dish in Dusty
Pink, \$45, from Fazeek;
fazeek.com.au

BOTTOM Cube wall
basin, \$703, from
Caroma; caroma.com.au



“The ensuite
brings me
joy whenever
I use it”
KATE CHALLIS

BELOW Yokato
wall mixer set,
\$923, from
Brodware;
brodware.com



ABOVE Zafferano
Veneziano carafe in
Red, \$125, from Casa
e Cucina; casaecucina.com.au **RIGHT** Lokki
hand towel, \$30,
from Marimekko;
marimekko.com

ABOVE Gubi Randaccio
mirror by Gio Ponti,
from \$1139, from Cult;
cultdesign.com.au



STYLE AGENDA

The VL edit

A curated hit list inspired
by the practical yet polished
hubs of this home.



BELOW *Le Vol 1*
custom wallpaper
art installation, POA,
from Valerie Sparks;
valeriesparks.com.au

