



My own private view

With photographs on every wall, gallery owner Michael Hoppen's home could easily be mistaken for his workplace

REPORT Vinny Lee PHOTOGRAPHS Darren Chung



A portrait by Desiree Dolron hangs above the fireplace, with the Malatesta & Mason chairs below. Opposite: the Calder wall hanging and dining suite from the Savoy



The upper-level sitting room. Below left: the dining table doubles as a desk. Below right: the bedroom



Immediate family are often happy to chip in with advice – wanted or not – when it comes to decorating your home. But if that was the case for gallery owner Michael Hoppen, he clearly chose to ignore them. His mother, Stephanie, is an author and authority on antiques, and might well have suggested how best to display the many collections he has accumulated, but they are scattered around the flat in a gloriously jumbled mix.

Hoppen's younger sister is the interior designer and *Dragon's Den* entrepreneur

Kelly Hoppen, but you'll find none of her famed taupe minimalism in his west London home. "The T word is banned in this flat," he says with a laugh, referring to his sister's favourite colour scheme. The only visible trace of her input is an oversized scented candle and a couple of childhood photographs.

Not even Michael Hoppen's four daughters appear to have held any sway. Daisy and Mimi work in fashion and PR, while the younger two, Plum and Ella, are finishing their education. "If anything, we've inherited Dad's mania for collecting and we're used to

all his stuff," says Daisy. "It's just part of him."

Hoppen moved into the flat two years ago, although with all the fabrics and pictures, books, taxidermy and artefacts it feels as if he has been here far longer.

"I started taking pictures when I was eight years old and I still have my old Leica," he says. Hoppen trained as a photographer and worked for national newspapers and advertising agencies for 20 years. Early in 1990 he sold all his equipment and converted a studio into his gallery.

"I started collecting photographs in the ➔

Eighties," he says. "Because I trained and worked as a photographer, I have an empathy with other photographers and their images. It also makes me curious about them, about the construction and history. I've found photographs all over the place, from 18th-century albums in Portobello Road to single images in Paris markets.

"I remember some years ago telling a friend that I had bid more than £1,000 for a photograph at Christie's, and he told me I was mad. At that time I seemed to be the only idiot in town who saw that photographs are able to show other people's lives. A painting is an interpretation of how the artist sees it, but a photograph can really show how it is."

Hoppen's gallery features images from renowned photographers such as Bill Brandt and Guy Bourdin, as well as works by contemporaries, including Tim Walker and Sarah Moon, and up and coming artists.

There are framed photographs on every wall of Hoppen's home, including the bathroom, and more rest on stacks of books or are propped up against the walls. "I constantly change things around," he says. "I like to refresh what I have on the walls."

Hoppen exhibits at PAD, the 20th-century art fair, and when it is in London he often buys from other dealers. "We all do it," he



A ventriloquist's dummy and vintage chair covered in skull fabric

'Photographs are able to show people's lives. A painting is an interpretation... a photograph can really show how it is'

says. "It's a bit of a joke, really. We are supposed to be there for the public, but we all end up buying things from each other."

The elegant Malatesta & Mason chairs in front of the fireplace in the upper sitting room are a PAD find, as is the Calder textile hanging on the wall in the lower-level dining area. The table and chairs, however, have been with Hoppen for a long time.

"I bought them in 1978, for £200, from the basement of Alfies Antique Market. They were from a suite at the Savoy hotel that had been refurbished. The table has been used for family dining and as an office desk. Now it's a dining table again. It has a patina and history," he says, touching its mellow brown surface. But then again, most of the things in his home have a patina and history – or at least a tale to tell. ■

The Michael Hoppen Gallery is showing Views and Horizons at PAD London, October 15-19 (pad-fairs.com)