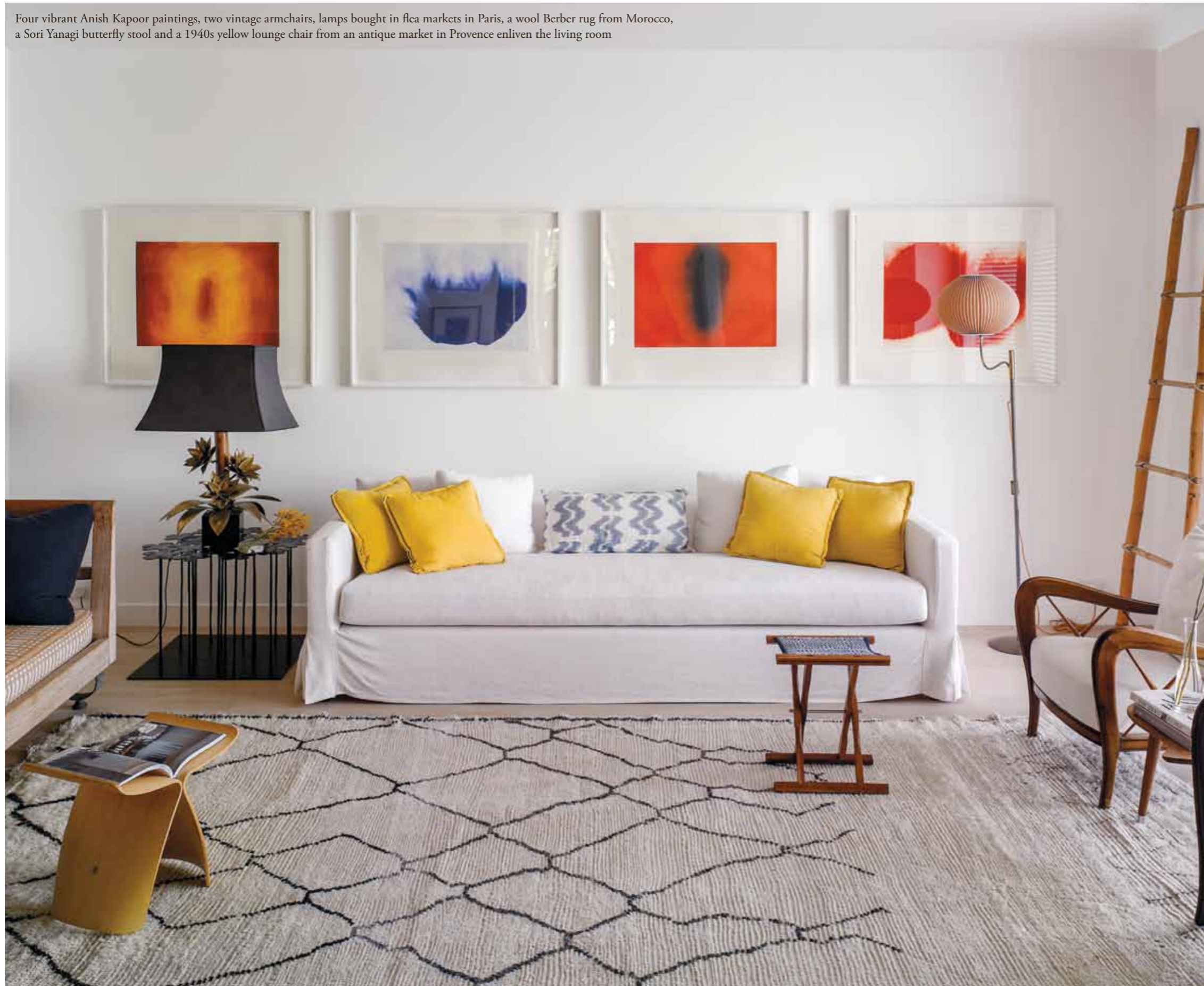


Four vibrant Anish Kapoor paintings, two vintage armchairs, lamps bought in flea markets in Paris, a wool Berber rug from Morocco, a Sori Yanagi butterfly stool and a 1940s yellow lounge chair from an antique market in Provence enliven the living room



Fresh Approach

Text / Michele Koh Morollo

Images / Alessandro Rizzi

Selecting the best and most suitable furniture and decorative elements for a space takes knowledge and intuition, and the ability to choose wisely is one of the key skills that Eve Mercier believes a well-trained interior designer should have. Mercier's own talent for choosing truly amazing character pieces and creating striking interior concepts is apparent in her own home in Stanley, Hong Kong.

It also forms a key tenet of Mercier's INSIGHT school of interior design in Hong Kong, which she founded in February 2013 as a place for students to not only learn the theories of design, but get hands-on practice and industry exposure as well.

Born in Paris and brought up in Versailles, Mercier's creative skill set and experience — she has run Eve Mercier Interiors since 2008, she worked for luxury London interior design house Candy & Candy, designed fashion accessories and clothing for Shanghai Tang, worked at Christie's auction houses in Paris and London, and wrote about art for a French newspaper — has equipped her with a well-rounded perspective, as well as industry contacts who can help aspiring interior designers to realise their dreams.

At approximately 400 square metres, with four spacious and bright classrooms, the INSIGHT 'campus' in Chai Wan offers short courses on specific subjects such as designing for small spaces and the history of 20th-century furniture as well as part-time courses, executive courses and a year-long diploma course.

The curriculum includes lessons in construction, ergonomics, circulation, electrical and ventilation planning,

historical styles and types of furniture, courses on furniture, fittings and equipment, and lessons in business practice, as well as courses on Feng Shui and Chinese antiquities.

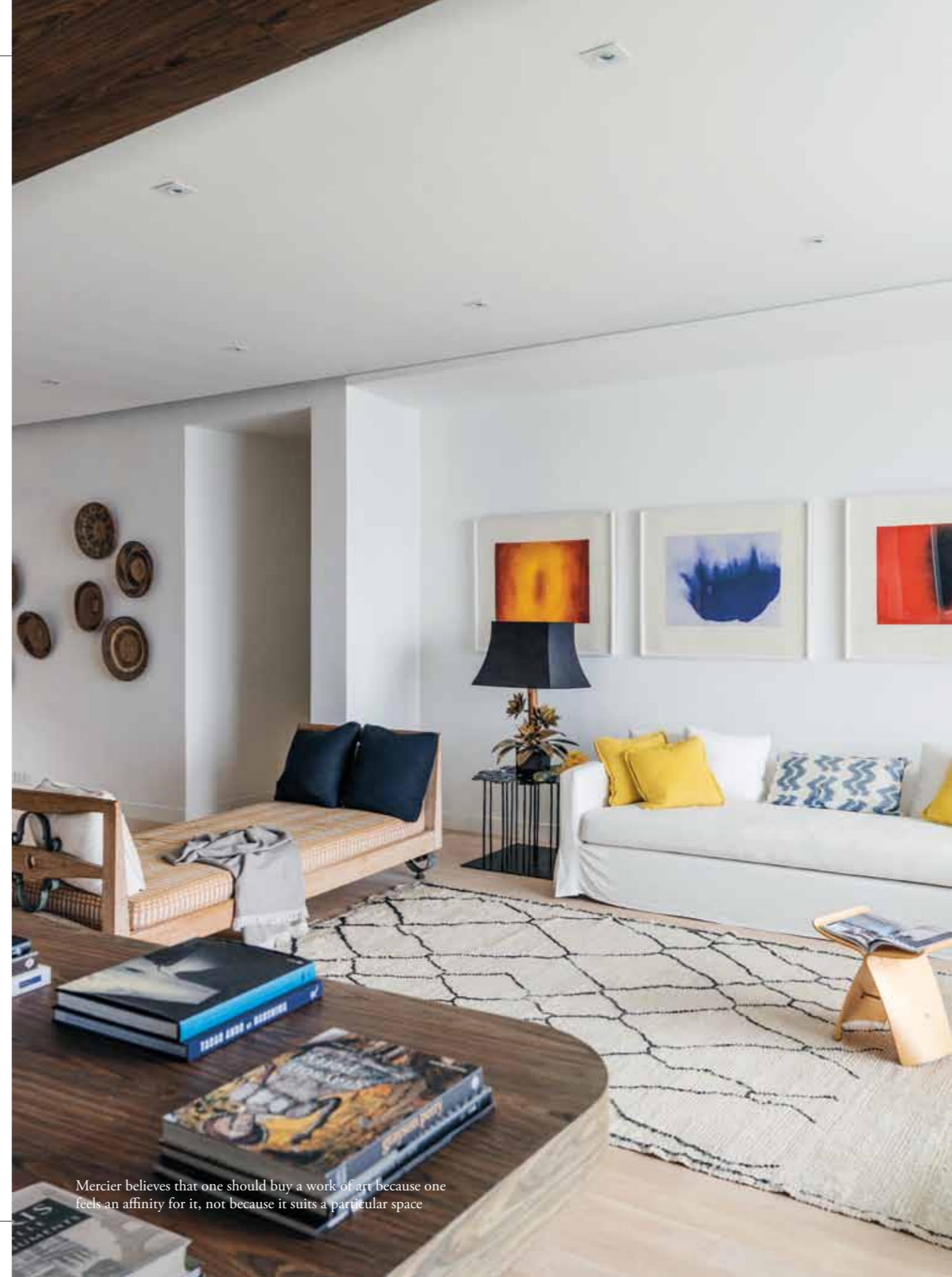
And there is a genuine and growing need for skilled interior designers in Hong Kong, says Mercier. 'Fifteen years ago, there was no interest in interior design here in Hong Kong, but now awareness is growing,' she says. 'Unfortunately, most working interior designers in the region are architects, and few are professionally trained in interior design.'

According to Mercier, in-depth knowledge of materials, the history of style and sustainable design is essential to a good designer. 'Students need to learn how to pitch, go on site, interview clients and take briefs, meet people and build their own professional networks,' she says. 'At INSIGHT, we want them to learn from tutors who are all industry professionals at the top of their game.'

Mercier's own home — a 180-square-metre, three-bedroom apartment in a 1950s sea-facing building in Stanley — is a project that could certainly serve as inspiration for INSIGHT students.

'I knew my home was going to be by the sea, so I wanted a fresh and colourful "California meets Hong Kong" look. All the artwork and furniture are from my old homes in London and Provence,' she says.

'I like mixing and matching pieces from different periods and continents,' she adds. 'A good piece of furniture or art should complement other pieces and work well in any setting, regardless of its cultural or historical roots.'

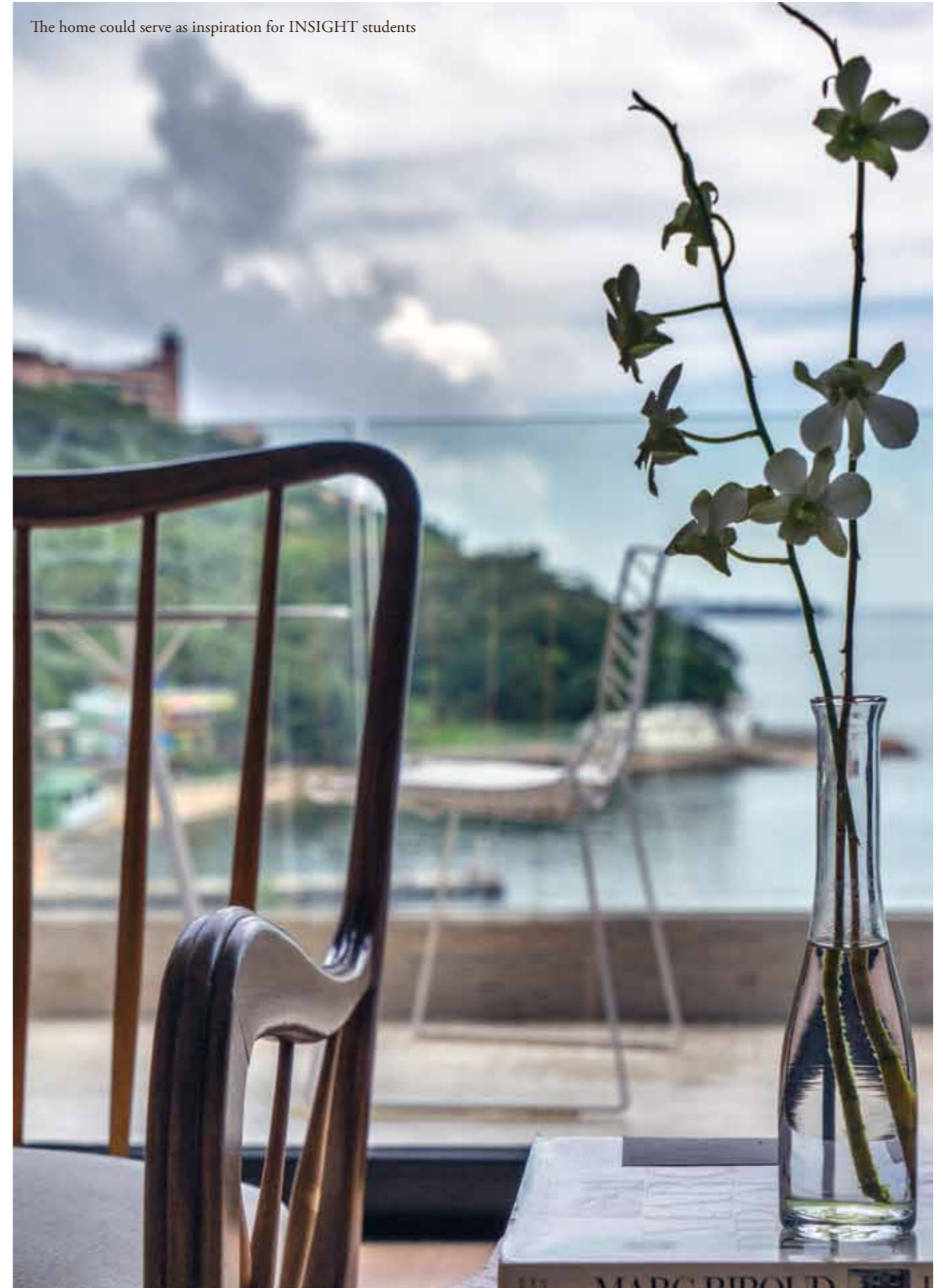


Mercier believes that one should buy a work of art because one feels an affinity for it, not because it suits a particular space

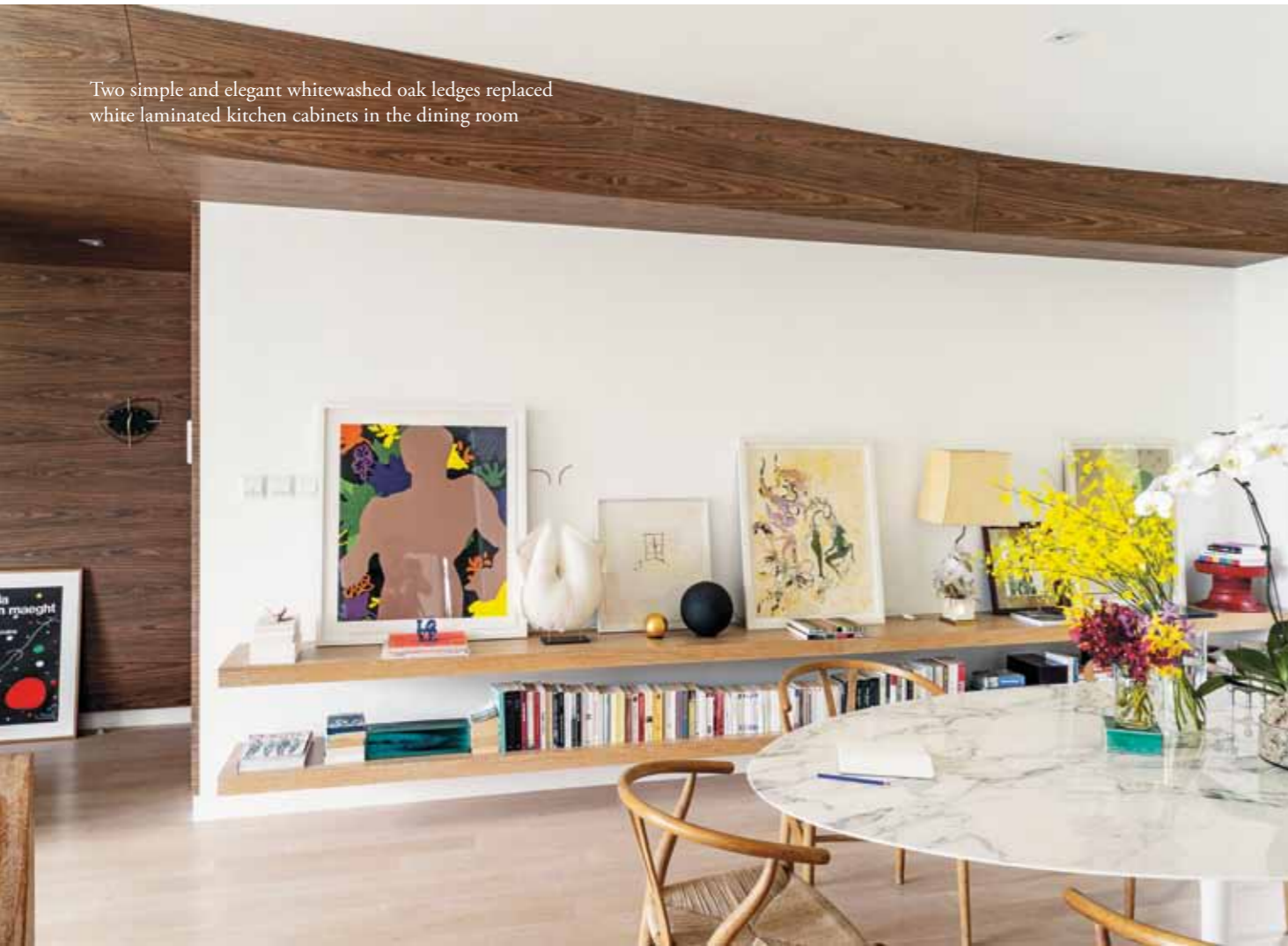
Oriental accents in the form of a woven stool from a flea market in Beijing and a red Chinese chair bought in Zhuhai add yet more character to the living room



The home could serve as inspiration for INSIGHT students



Two simple and elegant whitewashed oak ledges replaced white laminated kitchen cabinets in the dining room



Geometric-patterned woven baskets from a flea market in Cape Town

A 1950s vintage armchair from a flea market in London's Old Church Street was lovingly reupholstered from grey to cherry-blossom pink



Pink hues in the bedroom create a light and feminine ambience

Bold colours against a white background make for a lively, warm and breezy children's room



'I knew my home was going to be by the sea, so I wanted a fresh and colourful "California meets Hong Kong" look,' says Mercier



The view from 'Casa Stanley'