

UNDER THE RAFTERS

photography **James Stokes**
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A SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED
APARTMENT IS WHAT THIS YOUNG
COUPLE HAD ENVISIONED. USING
THEIR PROFESSIONAL KNOW-HOW
THEY TURNED THIS ATTIC SPACE
INTO A DREAM HOME FOR TWO.
OR THREE.



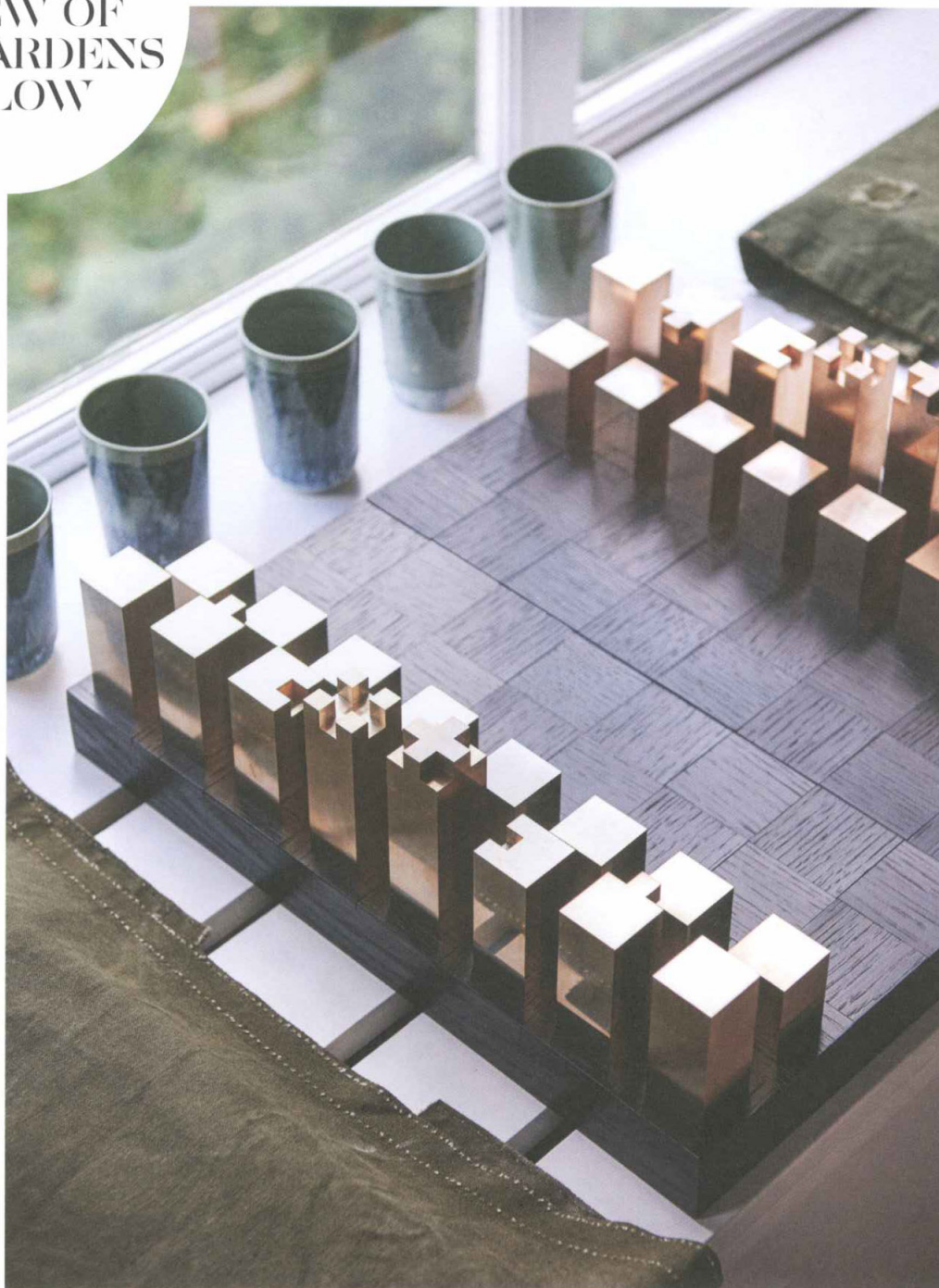
Apartment Cris Bartels and his American girlfriend Renée Habib bought their apartment on Amsterdam's Herengracht in January 2016. The dwelling, situated on the second floor of the rear house, has a beautiful view of the downstairs neighbours' garden. Bartels: "We fell for the mezzanine. It gives the house such character. At approximately 68 m² (220 square feet) our apartment is one of the smallest in the building. But as our wise neighbour pointed out: 'You're better off with the smallest room in an expensive hotel than the biggest room in a seedy one.'" Despite its location in the centre of town, it's tranquil. Bartels: "It's almost like living in a village." Habib: "We've got the best of both worlds here. Indoors it's super quiet and outside you feel you live in a city."

They pencilled their first designs for the house on a sketchpad after a few whiskies too many at L&B Whisky café on Korte Leidsedwardsstraat. That evening, Cris even made some financial calculations and wrote in capital letters underneath them: 'stick to it and suck it up.' That turned out to be no mean feat. Creative director Bartels: "As an interior decorator, Renée has a penchant for the most beautiful finishing and materials. Ultimately we had to cut costs in that department." They thought carefully about which materials to use. Habib: "The floors of the apartment used to be covered with carpets and lino. We went for robust materials like wood and natural stone, which are more sustainable and become more appealing over time."

The apartment is freshly finished and not a moment too soon, as Renée has recently given birth to the couple's first child, a beautiful baby girl. The mezzanine currently serves as a lounge area with a beanbag and books, but now that the baby has arrived Cris and Renée will use this space as their bedroom. The small ladder leading up to it is a unique piece that was made for them by designer and fellow Design Academy alum Maarten Baas. The small steps from the kitchen into the living room – which the couple have nick-named 'Brooklyn' – is the part of the house they both love most. Habib: "When either Cris or I are in the kitchen, the other one will come and sit on the steps. Just like in Brooklyn, New York, where steps have more than one function. I have tried to design the apartment as if it were a city. Including active and peaceful zones." Bartels: "The kitchen is an active zone. The kitchen block is reinforced, so you could even dance on it, although Renée won't allow it."

Page left Solvay table by Jean Prouvé, Aim lamp by the Bouroullecs, two Wishbone Chairs by Hans Wegner, Carbon Copy by Bertjan Pot, a vintage wire chair by Cees Braakman, a vintage Eames DSR and a vintage Revolt by Friso Kramer, the mask on the table is also by Bertjan Pot, the dish by De Intuïtiefabriek. On the floor Misfit vase by Hella Jongerius

THE WINDOW
SEAT OFFERS
A VIEW OF
THE GARDENS
BELOW



This page Solid bronze chess set that Cris designed twenty years ago, but was only recently manufactured by his father Frans Bartels.
Page right The 'Clay Stairs' by Maarten Baas, vintage sofa bed by Martin Visser for Spectrum, a metal side table by the Bouroullecs for Vitra, Solvay stool by Jean Prouvé for Vitra and a vintage armchair by Ole Wancher.





This page On the vintage cupboard Vaso di Culo vase by Parra for Case Studyo
Page right Kitchen by Piet Boon Kitchen, tap from Piet Boon by Cocoon, soapdispenser by Piet Boon by Formani



EVERY
PIECE OF
FURNITURE
HAS A DISTINCT
DESIGN
HERITAGE



This page On a vintage chest of drawers a Cobra lamp by Elio Martinelli and a Paper Cup by Hay
Page right Vintage armchair by Ole Wancher and stool by Jean Prouvé, jar with lid by Scholten & Baijings for Arita

