

C E D A R

By ANNEMARIE KIELY Photographed by ANSON SMART



Bringing an *outsider's perspective* to an arboreous Mosman address, KENNEDY NOLAN makes an '80s home the best version of its ORIGINAL SELF, starting with the *remedying* of a stark central fireplace into a site-specific sculpture.

H O L I S M

This page in the living room of this Mosman home, Cloudscape sofa by Diesel for Moroso, enquiries to Mobilia; Garcé & Dimofski Mimi coffee table and Bolete side table by Batten & Kamp and Henry D'Ath from Studio Gardner; Dessus Dessous pedestal sculpture by Léa Bigot; Akari L7 pendant light by Isamu Noguchi; Manila Hemp wallpaper by Phillip Jeffries from The Textile Company. *Opposite page* in the study, Pebble desk from Made; Razionalista chair by Dimorestudio; cabinetry produced by Calibre Project Group in Western Red cedar; Lambert & Fils Parc 05 floor lamp from Living Edge; original cedar ceiling; Galet carpet in Sienna from Bremworth. *Details, last pages.*





STYLIST: JOSEPH GARDNER (LIVING ROOM IMAGES)

This page in the kitchen, **island** produced by Calibre Project Group in Western Red cedar with benchtop in Tiberio marble and base in Momoyama Japanese ceramic tiles from Artedomus; **Baga console** by Aurélien Serre; **internal cladding** in Western Red cedar Diamond Clad from Modinex; **vase** (on island) by Floris Wubben; Yamagiwa Mayuhana **pendant light** from Euroluce. *Opposite page* in another view of the living room, Utrecht **chair** by Gerrit Thomas Rietveld for Cassina from Mobilia; **vase** (in kitchen) by Floris Wubben; Cheminees Philippe **fireplace** with surround in Momoyama Japanese ceramic tiles from Artedomus; Kilim **rug** from Cadrys.

This page in another view of the living room, **side table** (in background) by Floris Wubben; Aqua ceramic **vase** and **wall piece** by Ditte Løndahl from Composition; woodfired **vase** by Sophie Vaidie, vintage Japanese **bowl** and Fantasma **floor lamp** by Tobia Scarpa for Flos, all from Studio Gardner; Conical **wall lights** in Bronze from Studio Henry Wilson; Laconia Air Mokum **curtain** from Colleve. *Opposite page* in a view of the kitchen from the garden terrace, *Cloud 3 sculpture* by Guan Wei; **floor** in Striato travertine tiles from RMS Natural Stone.



In an effort to contextualise a new Kennedy Nolan project in the north-east coastal basin of Sydney, designer Patrick Kennedy pulls up a bird's-eye perspective of Mosman on Google Earth. It flattens the waterside suburb into a grid of grey streets abutting green reserves running into topaz-blue waters etched with the white wake of zooming boats. "A veritable Ken Done painting," ventures Kennedy of the exuberant art made by the Mosman resident who has serially recorded the site's vista with such saturated, seasonally nuanced liveliness that the sea spray can almost be felt and the grape-soda whiff of jacarandas smelt.

The comparison deflects discussion to the genius of a prolific artist who is now being discovered by a new generation immune to the old critiques that condemned Done's commercialism to cliché. But clichés are born of overuse and are a function of something's populist success, argues Kennedy who admits to leaning into such "critically damned" design when it is of aesthetic merit, well-made and invested with meanings about the moment in which it was produced.

To wit, this wire-cut brick house, built in the early 1980s, by a builder-owner who, it is assumed, had more than a passing interest in the Sydney School of architecture — the post-war group championing nature-responsive housing with a 'nuts and berries' rusticity and raked roofs. Call the Mosman house a clichéd approximation of the school's thinking, "but it was well-built, well-proportioned and well-planned," says Kennedy of the three-level structure that "battle-axed down" a sandstone escarpment from a big driveway to a lush park accessing a private stretch of beach. "It wasn't showy or ostentatious because smart luxury homes of that era were not as large, or as decorous as they are now.

"But if you try to open them up, they instantly lose their vital intimacy," he reasons of the group decision to retain the "handsome" hip-roofed rectangle and its airy compressions of space, while working surface to reflect wider nature and the clients' want to vibe their birth city.

"They originate from Melbourne and work in media production," Kennedy says of a couple, with three children, who he presumes chose his studio for its innate grasp on the city's creative pluralism. "Melbourne is our default position." Yes, Kennedy Nolan are expert at drilling down to the southern city's bookish diffidence to trend while setting it, but they are not so tied to place that their clashing 'isms', narrative concepts, contra-indicated colours and regard for cliché can't wrap around another regional vernacular and vibe. "This job became a question of how to dress an armature and make it the best version of its 1980s self. We didn't want to fight what was there and were conscious of not creating something that looked like an overlay."

A large part of the home's re-presentation was to make the garden more present, explains Kennedy, "opening perimeter walls with greater expanses of glass", in multi-panel sliding doors or large portholes and extending the cedar of existing soffits into vertical battened surface to suggest an inner continuum of the area's outer Angophora trees. Their red-to-pink trunks colour the kitchen — Tiberio stone surfacing splashback and an island-bench that part-wraps in cedar wall engineered to elevate when food-prep mess visually pollutes adjacent living area. Kennedy Nolan's cedar holism added square-frame weight to existing glass balustrades and a sensuality of texture that melted stark structure into a tree house simulacrum.

Where a central fireplace divided living from dining room with a severe, cellular logic, Kennedy Nolan swallowed its ignominious industrial form in a circumnavigable double-height sculpture — "one that made an object with some personality" — then clad it with fingers of terracotta tile in variegated pinks, a function of baking differentials.

He concedes that the ruddy end of the palette is currently "big" in interiors. "But the [Mosman] clients were concerned about such tones outmoding," recalls Kennedy, who repeats his rationale that everything dates, but "if you decide on the most considered version" of a colour or object, then design importantly codifies a moment in culture.

It leads to talk of Maison La Roche, the 1925 house designed by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret in which 'Corb' first experimented with the colour theories described in his book *PolyChromie Architecturale*. Of the master's curation of colours into the categories of dynamic, transitional and constructive, the Mosman house accounts for the latter; its natural ochre to sienna-pink pigments creating atmospheres that alter the perception of space, establish harmony and warmth, and work a connection with outer environment.

"To be modern is not a fashion, it is a state," reminds the Corbusian wisdom. "It is necessary to understand history, and he who understands history knows how to find continuity between that which was, that which is, and that which will be." Kennedy believes it important to block out the noise on fashion and enter that Corbusian 'state' of historical understanding that knows to surface the floor in a silvery travertine that is both telling of 1980s design trends and the porous stones stepping down to a sea where the shallows lap "eau de nil green". The watery shade informs surfaces in simply articulated bathrooms that open to the newly layered canopies of green planted by Dangar Barin Smith to reinstate "lushness to a parched and dusty landscape".

Of the debate over 'Who does it better? — Sydney or Melbourne?', Kennedy replies that his practice brought the outsider's perspective to an inordinately lush place and argued the virtues of cliché. "Fresh eyes on old form and the assumptions of identity." ■ kennedynolan.com.au



This page in the dining area with a view to the entry, table by Andrew Lowe; DC09 chairs from Inoda + Svejce; ceramic bowl from Clay Canoe; Portrait V mirror (on console) in cast brass by Annie Paxton; Goldie bronze wall lights from Jardan.



These pages in the dining area, **cabinetry** produced by Calibre Project Group in Western Red cedar; **splashback** in Tiberio marble from Artedomus; **Saori Q2 ceiling lights** by Kazuhide Takahama from Nemo Lighting.



This page in the main bedroom's ensuite, **vanity** and **basin** produced by Granite & Marble Works in Faustina marble from Artedomus; **mirrors** produced by Calibre Project Group; **tapware** from Brodware; Lepus **wall hook** by V.Brokk; Anton **wall lights** from Volker Haug Studio; **walls** in Suki turquoise penny round mosaic tiles from Teranova; **floor** in Rocketman terrazzo tiles from Fibonacci. *Opposite page* in the main bedroom, **bedspread** from Toast; Razionalista **chair** by Dimorestudio; **cabinetry** produced by Calibre Project Group in Western Red cedar and rattan; Galet **carpet** from Bremworth; Wästberg W182 Pastille **table lamp**; Manila Hemp **wallpaper** by Phillip Jeffries from The Textile Company; Laconia Air Mokum **curtain** by Colleve; *King of Comedy* (1993) **artwork** by David Band. *Details, last pages.*

