

## INTERIORS

Amidst its overblown neighbours, this docklands apartment strikes a note of subtlety and understatement

# LESS *is* MORE

In seeking to create a sophisticated space that detaches from the buzz of the city, “we aimed to achieve a sense of immediate calm with an understated, premium aesthetic,” says Michelle Dunne, creative director at Realm Concepts. She’s speaking of the recently completed year-long renovation of a waterfront duplex penthouse in one of the quieter - albeit most sought-after - Dublin docklands blocks. Though a gem of a project, Dunne and the team at Realm Concepts (led by Richard Fagan, who is also founder and owner of Bulthaup in Ireland) carefully considered its scope before taking it on. After all, it was newly built with a spec that most clients would consider absolutely desirable as it was. But when the architect Albert Noonan, with whom they had worked on a number of prior projects, introduced them to the duplex’s new owner, they were immediately struck by her understated but obsessive desire to create something very beautiful. Dunne explains: “We got an ‘everything-must-go brief’, with every millimetre to be considered in terms of maximising space but also in the choice of materiality and tactility of the finishes which were hugely important to the client.”

Unpicking the interior of a luxury apartment may seem counter-intuitive: there was nothing terribly wrong with it. It had all the usual ingredients - a snazzy kitchen, a living and dining area, a wraparound roof garden. But, both Dunne and her new client could see that what it lacked was refinement. It would benefit from a total rethink of the layout, de-compartmentalising it into a fluid, more functional floorplan. Most importantly, the Auckland-based client wanted a home in Dublin that suited her lifestyle. Constantly travelling, sometimes with team in tow, wardrobe forwarded to her next destination, she wanted a calm environment, somewhat retreat-like, that functioned beautifully and felt like a home from home. Both client and design team’s thinking was ad idem: they were perfectly matched in their mutual desire to imbue even the most modest elements of the apartment with simplicity and elegance. “What our client stood for was sustainable, pure and simple luxury,” says Dunne. “It was exciting for us to work with someone who pushed our own critical thinking further to deliver an outcome that exceeded their expectations.”

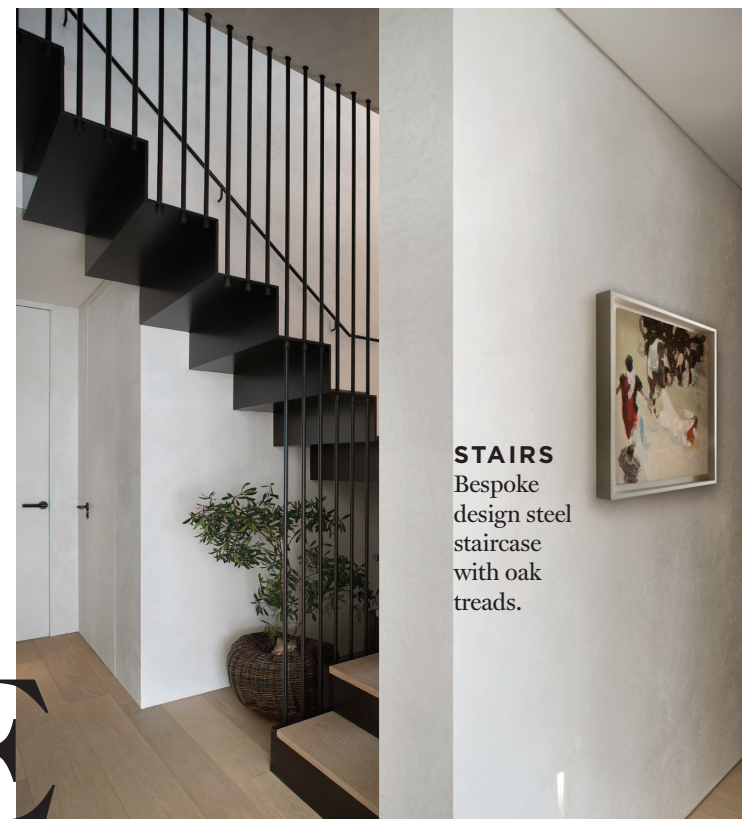
### FLOORS

Continental oak floor, rug by Kvadrat, armchair and table by Living Divani.



### STAIRS

Bespoke design steel staircase with oak treads.



**KITCHEN** Bulthaup melamine resin doors, b3 natural aluminium wall panels conceal storage. Bulthaup b2 stainless steel and honed granite freestanding island. **DINING** Stools by Carl Hansen.



**LIVING** Credenza by Carl Hansen, seating by Living Divani. Artwork by Gareth Reid.