

*Classic simplicity* Arne Jacobsen Series 7 chairs sit around the classic Superellipse table for Fritz Hansen in the breakfast area off the sleek kitchen in this Walsh Bay apartment in Sydney.

# NATURE BOY

Architect, designer and artist *Misbo* drew on the imperfection of natural materials when furnishing his warm, three-bedroom waterside apartment.

**Text by Michael Walters. Photography by Simon Kenny.**

*View to a thrill* Louvres on the balcony can be lowered to block out the western sun or to protect the area from rain. Misho – known only by his first name – painted the artwork hanging over the breakfast area as one of a series of paintings inspired by Coalcliff, north of Wollongong. The terracotta wall is colour-matched to a soil sample Misho picked up on a holiday in Central Australia.





*Sofa, so good above* Two Harry sofas by B&B Italia are lined up end-to-end to provide a grand bank of seating in the main living area. Hanging above the sofas are artworks by Misho. Above the slab of red gum that doubles as a television stand hang two artworks called *Kindling* by James Brown. The wall on which they hang is clad in golden sassafras timber. **below left** Another angle of the modern kitchen reveals the practicality of its layout.

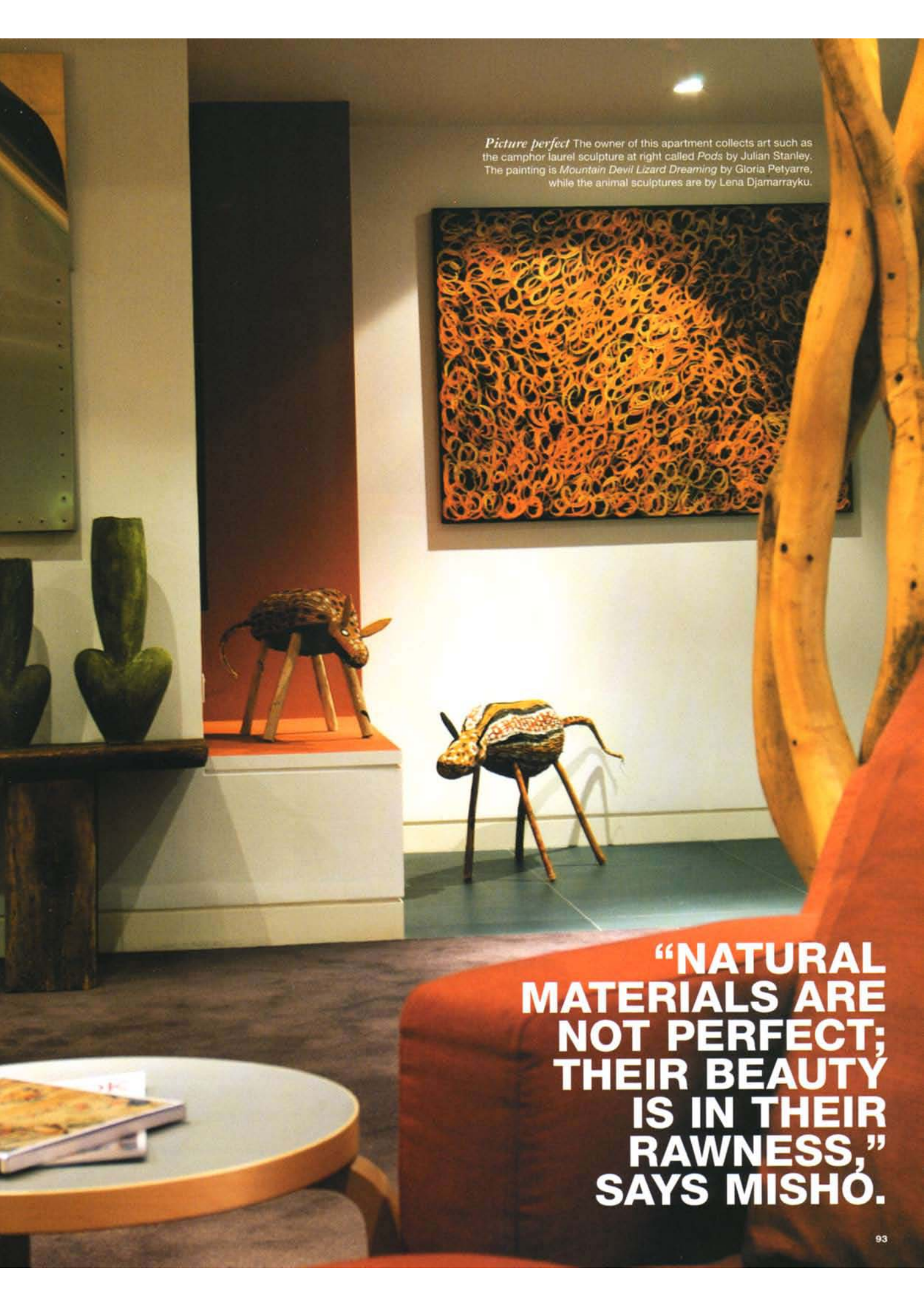


ARCHITECT, INTERIOR DESIGNER, AND ARTIST MISHO IS A MAN OF many talents. And the three-bedroom apartment he shares with his partner, jewellery designer Linda van Niekerk, at The Pier wharf in Sydney's Walsh Bay is a tribute to his love of art and imperfection.

Abstract and Aboriginal artworks abound in this home warmed by wood and grounded by the earthy tones of terracotta painted walls – all designed to offset the ample water views from the apartment. Only the kitchen and the home office have a sleek, modern coolness about them, while the rest of the home suggests a practical and cosy lifestyle.

Most recently responsible for the design of Australia's Animal World at the Sydney Aquarium at Darling Harbour, Misho – who goes by his first name only – studied interior design at Sydney College of the Arts and architecture at University of Technology Sydney. An advocate of natural materials and finishes, he believes that "society has gotten hung up on perfection". "Natural materials aren't perfect; their beauty is in their rawness," he says. "Likewise, manmade finishes don't show the beauty of age and wear; things are not supposed to be perfect."

In the living room a piece by Sculpture by the Sea alumni Julian Stanley, called *Pods*, looms large over the room. Its three intertwined pieces of skinned camphor laurel trunks reach for the ceiling while the tree's root balls, roughly cut back into a sphere, provide a stabilising base. Fellow artist James Brown (whose work has also featured in the popular Sculpture by the Sea exhibition – an annual event which places artworks along the Bondi to Bronte cliff top in Sydney) also features in the apartment. His two artworks called *Kindling*, a semi-structured square tangle of wood, create intricate shadows with the setting sun against the golden sassafras timber-clad wall on which they hang. On the same wall, a low-hung bark-edged slab of red gum provides a shelf for the couple's curios and the home's LCD television.



*Picture perfect* The owner of this apartment collects art such as the camphor laurel sculpture at right called *Pods* by Julian Stanley. The painting is *Mountain Devil Lizard Dreaming* by Gloria Petyarre, while the animal sculptures are by Lena Djamarayku.

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*Earthy colours top left Kindling, the James Brown sculptures that hang on the living room wall, cast moody shadows that change according to the light. right A close-up of Julian Stanley's Pods. below The Spotted Tiger lights glow warmly in the bedroom.*

Behind the coffee table (once an old school lab table before its legs were shortened), two B&B Italia Harry sofas in red provide a long row of seating. Above the lounges are three artworks Misho painted, predominately in vivid blues, of Coalcliff north of Wollongong in NSW. A fourth painting from the same series, depicting the rising sun, sits above the Superellipse table for Fritz Hansen in the small breakfast area off the kitchen.

In the dining room, a stainless steel table made by Misho and topped with a circular piece of Austral black Adelaide granite is surrounded by four Stylecraft chairs. On one wall a large Peter Poulet painting in mustard yellow depicts an abstract landscape while nestled in the corner hang knitted brass baskets made by Linda, trapping odd feathers and seed pods.

Dominating the dining room is a four-panel abstract artwork constructed by Misho for Linda as a gift to mark their one-year anniversary together. The combination of stainless steel and gold leaf panels reflects the ambient light and changes with the daylight.

Along the generous-sized balcony which runs the length of the apartment, fully adjustable steel awnings can be completely closed to block out the western sun or placed horizontally to stop the rain from cutting into the space.

"I love the sculptural element of this place," Misho says. "It's like living on a boat where everything has to be moved based on the prevailing weather, much like adjusting the spinnaker on a yacht."

Making the most of their outdoor room, a Balinese daybed sits invitingly, ready for curling up with a good book; two Anibou stools overlook the railing to provide the perfect sunset perch; and another dining table is topped with black granite designed by Misho, surrounded by yellow chairs from Space.

Warming up the bedroom, Misho has repeated his use of the Tasmanian timber golden sassafras to clad one wall and create additional joinery for storage and artwork display. A 2.2-metre male New Guinea statue stands guard outside the bedroom's ensuite while a purpose-built bookshelf juts out from the wall to slice the large bedroom in half, creating two distinctive spaces for sleeping and dressing.

The warm glow from the modern circular pillbox-shaped Spotted Tiger lights from JSB complements the terracotta-painted wall that bookends the apartment in the dining room and master bedroom. The rich colour was matched exactly to a soil sample the couple took while visiting Central Australia, providing an authentic grounding anchor to an otherwise airy apartment. □

*Cosy and inviting* A landscape by Peter Poulet dominates the dining table, made by Misho and topped with black Adelaide granite. **below** Misho also designed the balcony dining table, with chairs from Space Furniture.



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*Design notebook...*

*furniture* Arne Jacobsen **chairs** and Superellipse **table** for Fritz Hansen (off kitchen) are available from Corporate Culture, tel (02) 9690 0077, (03) 9654 8522. **bar stools** from Anibou, tel (02) 9319 0655, (03) 9654 5222, [www.anibou.com.au](http://www.anibou.com.au) **dining chairs** (in dining room) from Stylecraft, [www.stylecraft.com.au](http://www.stylecraft.com.au) **dining chairs** (on balcony) and B&B Italia **sofas** from Space Furniture, tel (02) 8339 7588, (03) 9426 3000, (07) 3253 6000, [www.spacefurniture.com](http://www.spacefurniture.com) Spotted Tiger **lights** by Globe from JSB Lighting, tel (02) 9571 8800. *artwork* Aboriginal **artworks** from Maningrida Arts & Culture, [www.maningrida.com](http://www.maningrida.com); from Jinta Desert Art, tel (02) 9290 3639, [www.jintaart.com.au](http://www.jintaart.com.au); and Gallery Gondwana, tel (08) 8953 1577, [www.gallerygondwana.com.au](http://www.gallerygondwana.com.au) Desert Art, tel (02) 9290 3639, [www.jintaart.com.au](http://www.jintaart.com.au); and Gallery Gondwana, tel (08) 8953 1577, [www.gallerygondwana.com.au](http://www.gallerygondwana.com.au)

