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# space by paul lieleveld

INTERVIEW: MATTHEW FREEMANTLE  
PHOTOGRAPHER: KASIA GATKOWSKA  
INTERIORS: PAUL LELIEVELD

When reading up on—and eventually speaking to—Dutch designer and interiors aficionado Paul Lieleveld, the word *timeless* comes up often and emphatically. Lieleveld homes in on this idea, and he uses it as a design principle as much as a guiding beacon in the skittish, impatient, and often messily ostentatious world of design. The resulting work is difficult to categorise neatly into one of the various and limited design genres, as much as it might alternately hint at early 20th-century Parisian, North African colonial, or indeed Scandinavian midcentury modern. Perhaps being hard to categorise is precisely the point. As Lieleveld enters his tenth year as owner of his eponymous interiors company, he spoke to RIKA about inspiration, dream dinner guests, and why he chose to divide his time between Amsterdam and Marrakesh.













# they make the path by walking

PHOTOS AND ARTWORKS: ANOUK GRIFFIOEN

“Creative in beating HIV” is the slogan of Orange Babies, a Dutch non-governmental organization whose founders are deeply rooted in the Dutch fashion and design world. Sixteen years ago, they decided to start raising money to help HIV-positive mothers in Africa to give birth to healthy babies by celebrating the festive side of life: beauty and art. Last November, co-founder Stef Bakker and ambassador Fiona Hering made a field trip to visit the projects in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Lusaka, Zambia, and they brought along Rotterdam-based artist Anouk Griffioen. The trip resulted in the extraordinary exhibition *They Make the Path by Walking*, which features life-sized black-and-white charcoal and pencil drawings on paper, on view in the Kers Gallery in Amsterdam.





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**W**hat is the ideal natural or urban setting for a home fitted with your interiors?  
I'm flexible. It could be a loft or a classical Parisian apartment.

*Your style borders on midcentury modern. Do you have a preference for how it is categorised?*

I'm not a big fan of retro style, and am more enthusiastic about what, for instance, the French designers did back in the 1930s. Today their designs are still looking very timeless and therefore modern.

*Would you say that a finished room is like a portrait of one's inner self? Shouldn't it be a reflection of the person living there?*

*Morocco has long been an inspiration to artists, painters, and designers, from Matisse to Bowles to Burroughs. Can you tell me how this place has influenced you creatively?*

It's fantastic to see the craftsmanship the Moroccan people have, and I love the Islamic decorations. If you see what they are able to do with the most simple tools! It is so inspiring to combine all that with more contemporary shapes and forms.

*In spite of the Moroccan influence, your designs are still arguably equally Scandinavian in influence. Is this fair to say?*

Maybe the cleanliness or simplicity—but let's not give the Scandinavians all the credit for that, as the French are also very good at it.

*Can design change the world? If so, how?*

We are not saving lives here. But without making it sound too pretentious, or design too important, I still believe a good surrounding can make a difference in someone's well-being.

*Which designer today is the most inspiring to watch?*

Recently my eye was caught by a guy named Hozan Zangana, who fled Iraq and came to Holland. He managed to graduate from the Design Academy in Eindhoven. He uses experiences from the past and puts elements in a beautiful new context.

*Which corners of your own home do you spend most of your time in?*

I could easily live in a hotel room, and I love my bedroom. [There is] nothing more comfortable than lounging in bed.

*If you could have a dinner party of six at your house, which famous people would join you?*

I would want my party to be as diverse as possible. Why not go for [Belgian rapper] Stromae, Jennifer Lawrence, Dutch designer and innovator Daan Roosegaarde, Adele, and then Amma, the Hindu hugging mother. Could be fun. Finally, Jeff Buckley has to be there!

*Are you a solitary worker, or do you enjoy collaborating?*

I like collaborating, working and sharing with other people, especially with my partner. I travel a lot by myself, though.

*What would you like to have achieved in ten years' time?*

To be fulfilled and yet be inspired.