

# Livingetc

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WHY IT WORKS

# The perfectly balanced LIVING ROOM

How this room's features and furnishings create its harmonious mood

## It's pleasingly symmetrical

Symmetry can create an underlying sense of serenity and, as with many rooms that work well, this living space is carefully balanced. Designed by Joanna Berryman at interior design company Matrushka, the room's focus is the original fireplace, as it is in many period homes. Bookshelves have been built into the alcoves and not only do they provide plentiful storage, they help to create focus either side of the chimney breast in what would otherwise be empty space. Joanna has taken the reading room theme one step further with these 20th century ladders salvaged from a Chicago library. As well as serving a practical purpose – books on the top shelves are always accessible – their strong, graphic look means they add a sense of equilibrium, enhanced by the twin tables either side of the fireplace. On the mantelpiece, a pair of identical-style vases, one in black and one in white, throws things off balance nicely.

## It plays with scale

The furnishings within the room play with scale to great effect. The tall, slender ladders appear to reach even higher next to the round, squat tables, while a floor lamp that resembles an oversized table lamp adds an element of *Alice in Wonderland* charm.

WORDS: CLAUDIA BAILLIE PHOTOGRAPHY: LEO BIBER

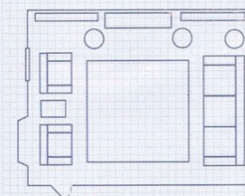
## The colours are well considered

Not only is there balance within the layout, the colours used to decorate the shell of the room are carefully thought through. Joanna purposely chose a pared-down palette against which to display textiles and artworks. 'I wanted to create a classical framework, with dark floors and a pale ceiling,' she says. 'All the woodwork, such as the skirting, architraves and window frames, are painted the same muted colour in order to make the room seem less patchworked and more like a blank canvas for the decorative accents.' Black floorboards help to ground the scheme.

## It's packed with personality

Joanna has filled the space with carefully selected pieces that add personality to the grand backdrop. Blank walls can make a room feel empty, but impressive artworks fill the space perfectly. The bold Vivienne Westwood rug is like an artwork in itself and, along with the graphic cushion, adds decorative detail without making the room look cluttered. The artfully placed high-gloss green tables pick up on accents within the rug as well as eliminating the need for a central coffee table, which would obscure the design. 'Books are also a great way of filling wall space,' says Joanna. 'They add colour, texture and a touch of controlled chaos, which can look really pleasing.'

## THE PLAN



Magnolia Black rug, £2,941, Vivienne Westwood at The Rug Company. Bespoke leather chairs, from £1,195 each, The Sofa & Chair Company. Bespoke Chesterfield sofa in Roma grey velvet, Riley Upholsterers. Chrome table, Alfies Antique Market. Lamp, Absolute Vintage. Hanna Man green tables, £1,550 each, Soane. Souls IV butterfly print, Damien Hirst at Paul Stolper gallery.