

At Home with the FT House & Home

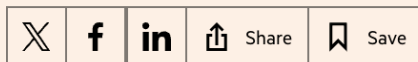
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Artist Landon Metz: 'It's hard to imagine living in a normal home'

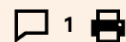
The 19th-century Gothic Revival church is a modern-day domestic sanctuary for the Brooklyn-based artist



Landon Metz and his wife, fashion designer Hannah Kristina Metz, have put a distinctive stamp on their home



Victoria Woodcock / Photographed for the FT by Clément Pascal YESTERDAY

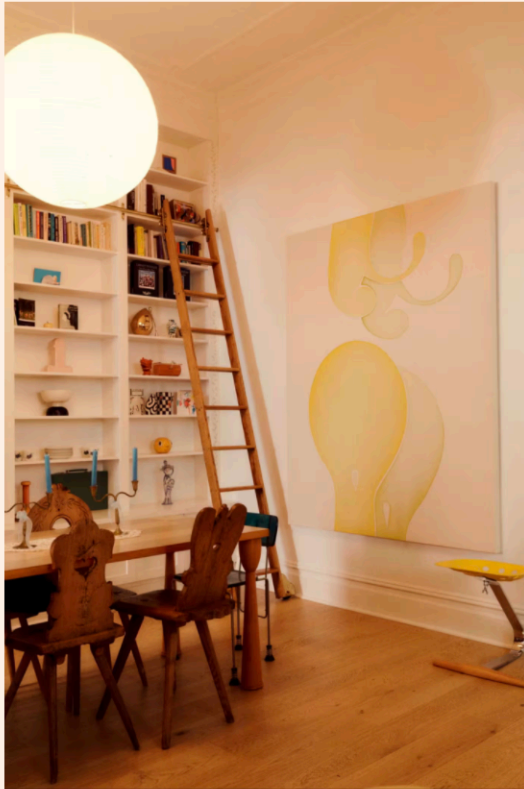


Landon Metz's abstract paintings are rhythmic and repetitive. The Arizona-born, New York-based artist creates graceful biomorphic compositions by pooling paint on raw canvas: a process that is both meditative and meticulous; the results sparse and minimalist. All of which makes his choice of home — a 19th-century Gothic Revival church complete with intricate stained glass windows — seem somewhat surprising.

Yet, "having lived in a quirky place like this, it's hard to imagine living in a 'normal' home," says Metz of the imposing structure, which sits amid the leafy, brownstone-lined streets of [Brooklyn Heights](#).

After "giving art school a try" in Los Angeles, Metz dropped out to move to New York in 2009 with his wife, fashion designer Hannah Kristina Metz. For more than a decade they lived in Williamsburg and Bedford-Stuyvesant, before setting their sights on Brooklyn Heights — the increasingly chichi waterfront neighbourhood just south of the Brooklyn Bridge, sought-after for its low-rise, often historic houses. Finding somewhere to buy was a challenge. "The area is really expensive now," says Metz. "The town houses in our price point just needed so much work. And, well, this place is really cool."

Built in 1850, the Presbyterian church was a place of worship until the 1970s. "At the time, a lot of [artists](#) and writers were hanging out over here. Warhol shot a lot of his films in the neighbourhood," says Metz. "When the parish disbanded it became a queer arts space for a while."



A painting by Landon Metz hangs in the dining room next to the Ettore Sottsass table with its Gaetano Pesce vase and Karl Hagenauer candelabras © Erede Ettore Sottsass DACS, London 2024



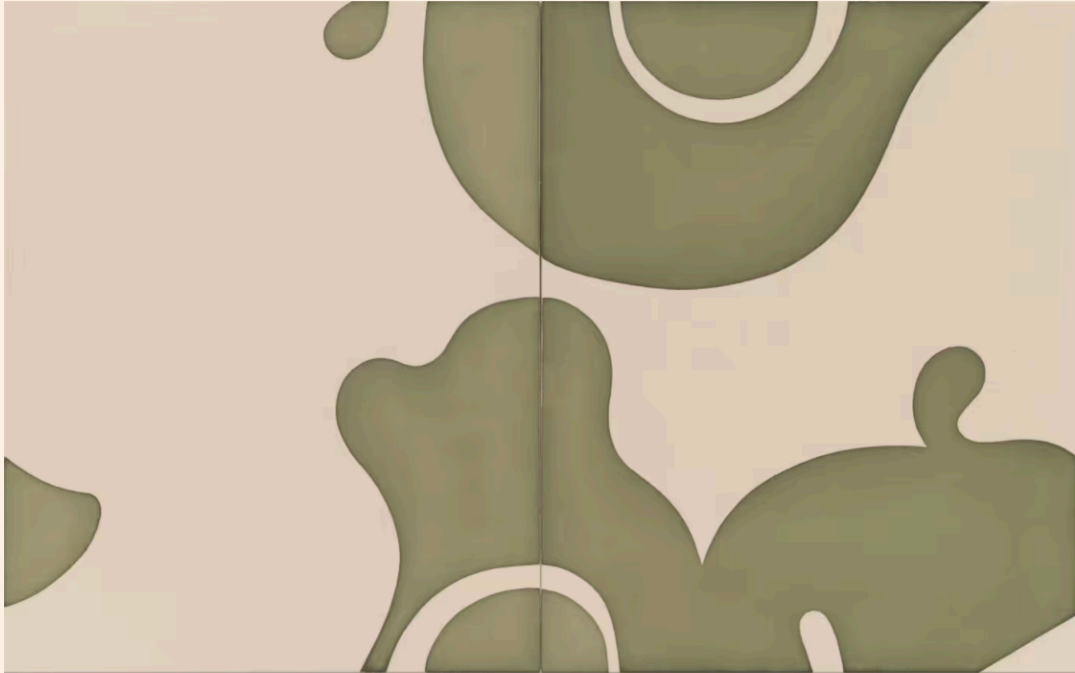
'This little spot is just the best,' says Metz, of the nook, with its drawings by David Shrigley, photographs by Luigi Ghirri, Ettore Sottsass lamp, and painted murals of trailing flowers by Metz's wife © David Shrigley. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2024; © Erede Ettore Sottsass DACS, London 2024

The building was first converted into apartments in the 1990s, and the Metzses moved in two years ago, with their five-year-old son, Eze, and two cats. They are one of 10 co-operative owners. At the side of the church, their arched front door was originally the choir entrance; their first-floor bedrooms are in the choir loft; and what is now the living room was where part of the congregation once sat.

"I see 'the church' more as a sanctuary than a place of worship," says Metz, who attended Christian schools while growing up, but doesn't consider himself to be religious. "This place has a good energy. My wife thinks it's because it was a queer church."

Today, the building is historically protected. "There's still a lot of the original features: the wooden beams, columns, the twisting staircase," says Metz. "The stained glass can't be changed."





'MMXXIV XXIX' by Landon Metz (2024) © Courtesy Waddington Custot

This hasn't stopped them putting their stamp on the place, though. "My wife has been slowly painting the house," says Metz. The mostly all-white walls are brought to life here and there — around door frames and over stair risers — with delicate murals of trailing flowers. Colourful design pieces and thrift-shop finds further decorate the spaces. "I seem to collect mostly Italian mid-century and contemporary stuff," says Metz. "A lot of [Memphis](#) [Milano], some [Gaetano Pesce](#)."

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Among the pieces by Pesce — the pioneering designer and architect who passed away in April — are a pair of Broadway Chairs (combined with more rustic Alpine seats around the dining table) and a face-shaped lamp, both wrought in his signature brightly-hued resin. Playful sculptural lighting is a theme. Memphis Milano examples range from Ettore Sottsass's statement Ashoka lamp — positioned above a fireplace alongside a pair of antique ceramic dogs — to squiggles and stripes by Michele De Lucchi and Martine Bedin, whose fun, four-footed Terminus floor lamp illuminates a reading nook at the top of the stairs.

"This little spot is just the best," says Metz of the space surrounded by four slim, pointed windows, but also numerous artworks. There are drawings by British artist [David Shrigley](#) — a friend who gifted Metz an image of a pearl-laden oyster shell; a reference to his son, whose middle name is Perla — and small-scale photographs by Luigi Ghirri. In the stairwell, a sculptural, braid-like canvas by fellow New Yorker Josh Sperling is paired with an elongated paper lantern by [Isamu Noguchi](#). With its sensual string of shapes, it is perhaps the piece that displays the most kinship with Metz's own paintings

— one of which is hung near to the dining table, alongside floor-to-ceiling shelves full of books and bibelots.

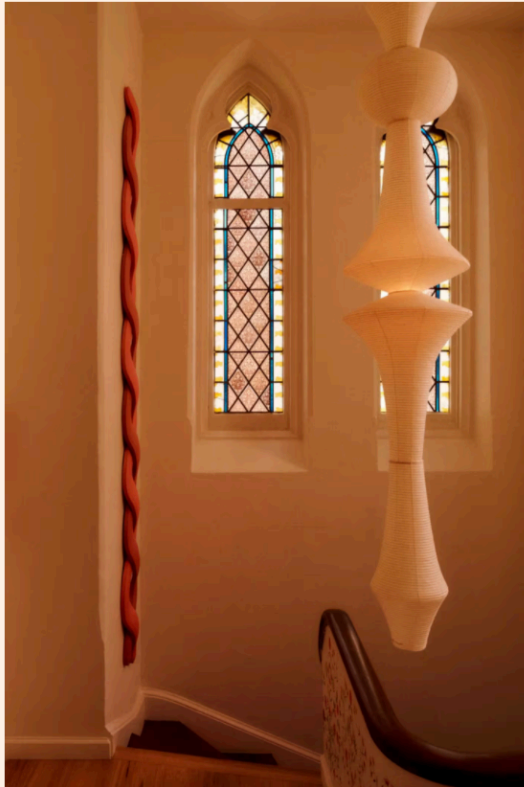


Landon Metz outside the former Presbyterian church in Brooklyn Heights that is now his home

Overall, the effect is eclectic, erring on haphazard — something that Metz embraces. “I like the nonchalance of a home,” he says. “It’s a place for security and comfort, a loving, nurturing environment. It’s much less meticulous than my studio, for sure.”

Metz’s studio is in Manhattan’s Chinatown: a former factory building above the bustle of Canal Street, which he walks to in the mornings. The 50-minute journey is not only a literal threshold, “it’s also an emotional one”, he says. “Walking over the East River, being high up on the Brooklyn Bridge, does something to punctuate my family life and my work life. It helps me metabolise what’s going on in both.”

Since 2011, Metz's work has been the subject of solo shows from Mexico City to Seoul, Copenhagen to New York. His newest series of paintings are on show at Waddington Custot gallery in London's Cork Street. The distinct yet amorphous, softly dyed forms ebb and flow around the space, clustered in corners and meandering across multiple canvases. "My work often responds to the environment it inhabits," says Metz. "It's moving towards the boundaries of what is permissible in a painting, and the space itself becomes a part of the language."



An elongated paper lantern by Isamu Noguchi hangs in the stairwell; its sensual shapes have a kinship with Metz's own paintings © The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum/ARS, New York and DACS, London 2024



A Bořek Šípek chair and Gaetano Pesce vase sit at the bottom of the church's original curved staircase

The shapes themselves appear as some sort of punctuation; there's a syncopation to the rhythm — and music is something that Metz has also turned his hand to. His dreamy, ambient debut album, *Six Days At the Orange House*, was released on Sensitive Records in 2023.

"Each [painting] is a snapshot of my thoughts and feelings on that day. A lot of the core theories in my practice directly apply to the way I hope to live my life," he says.

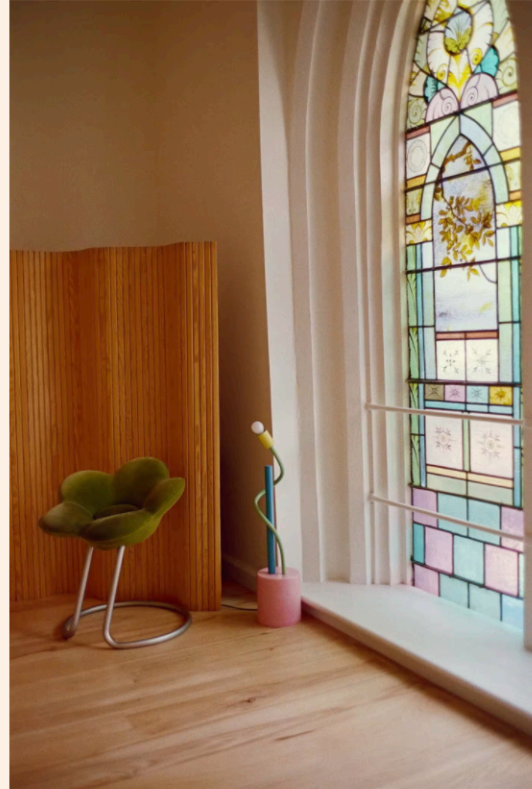
To illustrate this work-life crossover he gives the example of reading to his son at bedtime: "We oscillate between picture books and chapter books, but sometimes, if he won't fall asleep, I'll just read whatever I'm reading — about painting or philosophy."

Another more literal link between work and home is Giancarlo Valle, a hotly favoured designer whose practice spans architecture, interior design and furniture — and who is also Metz's studio neighbour. "He's a good friend and has done the plans for the phase-two renovation of our home," says Metz. "We're completely gutting the bathrooms and the kitchen, and possibly adding a third floor in the basement. We just keep saying,

‘Next summer, we’ll do it.’ He laughs. ‘But maybe next summer we’ll do it.’



A Michele De Lucchi Oceanic Lamp for Memphis Milano on a shelf beside Ettore Sottsass ceramics, and bowl by Gaetano Pesce. Bobo the cat sits on the antique Shaker rocking chair © Errede Ettore Sottsass DACS, London 2024



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New kitchen or not, Metz feels settled in his ecclesiastical corner of Brooklyn. One small bugbear is the lack of outdoor space — “we have a tiny planted area between the church and the sidewalk”, he says. “But it’s hard to imagine living anywhere else at this moment. Our son is in school up the street so we feel very kind of rooted in our neighbourhood. Although one day it would be cool to have a summer home somewhere . . .”

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Metz turns 40 next year and despite his work embodying a sense of slowing down, he isn’t going to forgo the city buzz for more bucolic surroundings any time soon. A major tie is the camaraderie of New York’s creative scene. He describes the area around his studio as “a densely populated arts district where people want to hang out, to talk, to learn about what everyone’s doing. That vibrant community is what it’s all about, really.”

Even the downsides don’t deter him. “New York is expensive, it’s extremely competitive and it takes a lot of extra bandwidth just to do anything, but I feel like the pressure pushes me to consistently stay focused,” he says. “I love the grind. I think maybe I’m a little bit addicted to it. I mean, if I wasn’t doing this, what would I be doing every day? It feels like the juice is worth the squeeze.”

Landon Metz is on at Waddington Custot until August 9, waddingtoncustot.com

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