

BEST OF
LIVING DESIGN



BRAUN

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! e m o n

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Imprint

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Translation: Stephen Roche, Hamburg

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Preface

The idea of the living room as the focal point of private life has undergone a transformation in recent years. Having come to regard it as a mere retreat, a kind of introverted cocoon, we now increasingly recognize its importance in representing us to the outside world. Much like the parlor of old it serves as a meeting place for family and friends. This indicates a significant development; namely the crumbling of spatial boundaries. One no longer finds a closed reception room, but rather floor plans that open up and naturally incorporate functional areas such as the kitchen into the dining or living areas. Thus social trends such as the new passion for cooking together are reflected in the architectural design of the living room. The new use of form is open, unfussy and clearly structured; the debt to modernism is apparent. Not only are functional zones such as the kitchen being given an open look, but even the bathroom is being revaluated. This formerly introverted space frequently features expansive, light-giving windows. Spaces are also being opened up vertically, with ceiling heights of over three meters no longer a rarity. Where possible, ceilings are removed altogether, creating an upper gallery.

Notwithstanding these clearly identifiable trends, this selection of about forty projects from around the world also testifies to the sheer variety of design possibilities represented by modern living spaces. Whether inspired by local materials and traditions or by modern materials, all of these projects have one thing in common: they are not concerned with creating superficial (re-)design solutions such as those featured in home makeover shows, but



are grounded in the necessary basis of all good interior design – well thought-out architecture. When it comes to designing living areas there appear to be as many desires and ideas as there are design suggestions to realize them. Designers are challenged to find creative ways to fulfill various needs – from an open view of the countryside through panoramic windows to the warmth and comfort of a crackling fire. Indeed, stoves and fireplaces are often at the heart of new apartments. A stove fulfills not only a functional but also a sculptural role alongside other monolithic design elements such as worktops, furniture or open staircases that often define the aesthetics of new living spaces. There is also great variety and freshness in the use of materials; on the one hand there is a resurgence in the use of wood, in all color tones (even a modern take on floor-to-ceiling paneling is no taboo); on the other hand, concrete is finding greater favor as an exciting and contrasting material. Although the inhabitants of these spaces are absent from all of the photos, it is clear that the designed interiors of these new living rooms invite their occupants to spend as much time as possible at home.





Black boxes intersect and
overlap, **facing the landscape**
in **different** directions



