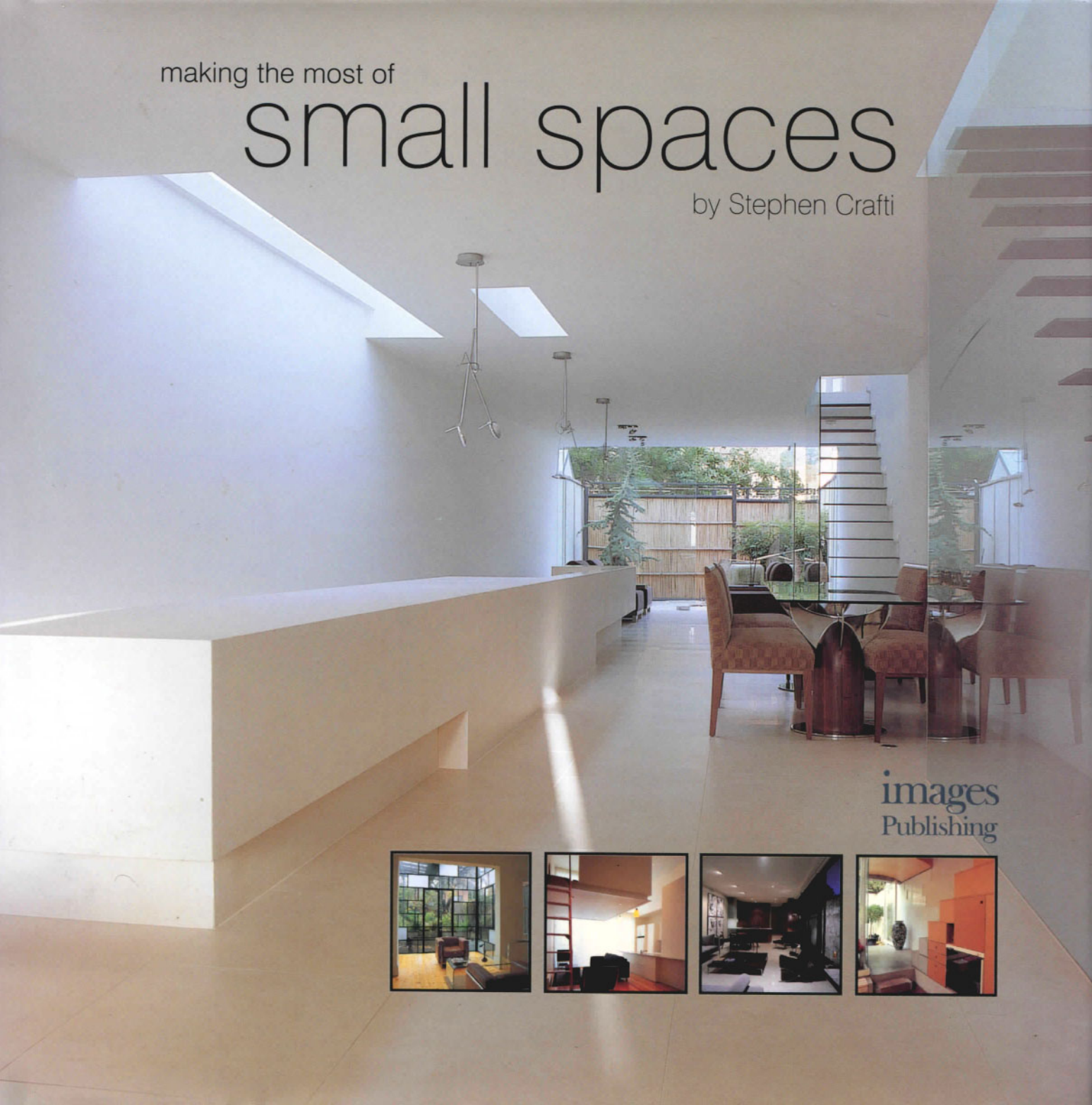


making the most of

small spaces

by Stephen Crafti



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Publishing



A LITTLE GEM FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

Photography: Petrina Tinslay



■ This compact seven square maisonette is a fine example of a place where every millimetre counts. Named 'Montrose', the maisonette was originally designed by architect Neville Gruzman in 1955. When designers Trudi Scrymgour and Keith Glover of Form Follows Function were commissioned to redesign the landmark building, they were keen to retain its integrity.

Using materials reminiscent of the post-war period, the duo approached the design with sensitivity. 'We used reflective materials such as colour-backed glass in the kitchen, and simply laminated the front cupboards. We really used elements that were already there. The perforated plywood lighting pelmets were reinstated', says Scrymgour. In the bedroom, study and open living area, the spaces are relatively deceptive due to the large floor-to-ceiling window walls. 'The appeal of many apartments of this vintage is that they are light, have high ceilings and are usually open plan. It is what people are looking for now', she says. However, instead of simply restoring this Gruzman classic, new decorative elements, such as a graphic laminate mural, were included. The aubergine, black and white feature wall is one of the few bold elements in the space.

The kitchen, which forms part of the central column, is partially concealed behind the laminate wall. Like a drawer that can be opened when things are needed, the kitchen appliances, such as the pantry and refrigerator, are only revealed when needed. While the materials in the kitchen are new, they were carefully selected to evoke the period; glass mosaic tiles, terrazzo bench tops, laminate cabinets, colour-backed glass and stainless steel fittings.

As Scrymgour says, 'The renovation focuses on producing an interior to continue the clarity and form of the external envelope. The rectilinear strength of the space was extended by opening the existing kitchen to create one expansive space'. The partially louvered windows also create a continuous circulation of air, eliminating the problem of heat caused by so many glazed windows.

The Montrose maisonette reflects the confidence and optimism of the post-war era. Nearly half a century later, this home still has a sharp and contemporary edge.



