


David and Yuge Bromley, and their daughter Wen, in their Melbourne store Bromley & Co. On the wall are (from left) Bromley's painting *Tough Boy* and Datsun Tran's *I am the Wilderness*. An old church counter painted with black lacquer is topped by (from left) Bromley's sculpture *Leap Frog* and Robert Klippel's sculpture *RK 432*. A range of I-O-N pendants by Porcelain Bear provide lighting, while the rug is vintage Moroccan.



*the big*  
**PICTURE**

A RETAIL EXPERIENCE  
IN ITS PUREST, MOST  
PLEASING FORM IS THE  
LATEST PROJECT FOR  
ARTIST DAVID BROMLEY.



**W**hen artist David Bromley is challenged to nominate a retail equivalent of Bromley & Co, the emporium that he and wife Yuge have opened in Melbourne's Windsor, he defers not to a building but to the BBC.

Or more specifically, their made-for-television series *The Paradise*, which brought Emile Zola's novel *Au Bonheur des Dames* to life.

It is a period drama, set in a Parisian department store run by the charismatic and entrepreneurial Octave Mouret, who strives to elevate the purchase of artisan product into pure theatre. He fights against the onslaught of soulless competition, all the while falling for a beautiful store assistant who supports his pursuit.

Not only does *The Paradise's* narrative parallel the Bromleys' love story — Yuge is a former lawyer who did a short stint on David's shop floor — and the current clash of bricks and mortar with the burgeoning internet, it embodies the couple's desire to wind the clock back on consumer culture. "I yearn for that time when you could enter a store and be transported by its total experience," says David, standing in the re-invented space of an old furniture warehouse at the 'boho' south end of Chapel Street. "Every country town has one of those community-centric shops where you go for your bag of oats and a winter coat. I thought, 'Why can't we create our example of that here?' Yes, art is my life, but you can find art in music, in handmade shoes, in clothes, in sculpture, in books."

While the couple aren't peddling coats and oats, they have, true to their word, sourced all those things that fascinate them, by all those talents they admire, and mixed them into one magnificent soup — an evocative release of different but complementary flavours.

"It's more a minestrone," adds Yuge, before chasing 19-month-old daughter Wen across a shop floor styled with her husband's signature bronze boys, Dean Bowen sculptures and paintings, Featherston chairs, potted palms and tables toppling with Joost ceramics. She weaves between installations of handmade Italian boots, racks of Bromley silks stitched to her design, Charlie their bull-mastiff and the many outcomes of their arty associations with the Charles Blackman Trust, pausing only to steady a cobalt-blue Blossom Jar by Michael Pugh. (The Queensland potter's works will be exhibited at Bromley & Co from Saturday, 22 November.)

It's a wonder that nothing comes crashing down. But then so adroit is Beijing-born Yuge — deftly moving focus and foot between another Bromley & Co shop in Daylesford, country Victoria, a hospitality fit-out in Singapore, apartment interiors in Melbourne's CBD and her husband's endless international exhibitions — that second-guessing Wen's next step is a cinch.

Yes, it's far removed from the relaxation of their former Byron Bay base, but as a serial renovator who sees every surface as the canvas for his brush, David Bromley was never going to stay still for long. "There's always a next project," explains the peripatetic artist, "and always a passion to fulfil."

*Bromley & Co, 93-95 Chapel Street, Windsor Vic, (03) 9510 8990; 45A Vincent Street, Daylesford Vic, (03) 5348 3979; bromleyandco.com. VL*

**ABOVE RIGHT:** another wall features (from left) *Light Blue Two Light* by Jasper Knight, four of Datsun Tran's bird paintings and *The Sailor* by McLean Edwards. Also on display are ceramic shapes and mugs by David Bromley, a leather bag by Italian label Numero 10, a handmade olive leather satchel by Bromley & Co, pot-like Chinese papier-mâché wine bottles and a Moroccan Berber rug. **RIGHT:** a striking Michael Pugh Blossom Jar sits behind Bromley's sculpture *Treasure Hunters*. In the background, partly obscured, are Bromley's painting *The Road*, his *Orange Butterflies* embroidery and two Chinese Ming period polychrome Guanyins.

