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A Japanese-inspired Dwelling with Surprising Features

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Gēn Apartment

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A built-in sofa with a marble planter is a special feature in this HDB flat inspired by Japanese interiors.

HDB flats typically feature cloistered layouts where functionality is prioritised over mood. In this 1,000-square-foot, four-room BTO unit, Right Angle Studio has created a balance of both.

“The homeowners are a couple with a huge love for Japan’s rich heritage and design culture. They enjoy peaceful, quiet environments. As they travel a lot for work, they wanted a home where they would look forward to return to,” says Alex Liu, the design director and co-founder of the interior design firm founded in 2015 together with Jay Liu.

The project has been named “Gen Apartment”. With a double meaning of both the Chinese character ‘根’ or ‘root’, and the

English word ‘genesis’, it alludes to the unfinished state of the Statuario marble block in the living area as a key feature and conceptual starting point in the home’s design.

This bespoke marble planter sits at the edge of the custom built-in sofa, effectively elevating the simple seating arrangement. “Intentionally left in its raw state, the marble slab pays homage to the material’s state of origin and references nature,” describes Alex. Such a singular gesture immediately embodies the Japanese sensibility of both wabi-sabi imperfection and the simplicity of a Zen garden, whose spot of green rising from an abstracted form provides a small delight in this modest home in the city.

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