THE GRAND TOUR

This Very Green Lisbon Home Is a Cabinet of Curiosities

Portuguese artist, architect, and designer Joana Astolfi draws visual inspiration from an eclectic universe of found objects

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The 1950s Danish wood oval dining table surrounded by wood-upholstered vintage chairs mana the dining area both stylish and functional. Francisco Nogueira

Joana with her daughter Duna in their Lisbon apartment. Francisco Nogueira

"Good light is crucial for me," Joana Astolfi says. "The building's location, at the corner of a major intersection, brings an abundance of natural light through its many windows into all sides and rooms." This is what convinced the Portuguese artist, architect, and designer to move into her 1,400-square-foot apartment nestled on the fifth floor of a classic Estado Novo building in Lisbon, which she shares with her daughter Duna and dog Lola.

Even though Joana is resting the flat, she made it her own through very personal decoration. "I painted all the walls, central corridor, and kitchen cupboards, choosing different colors for the different spaces," she says. Joana transformed two of the four bedrooms into a home office and a room that works as a library and music and guest room, combining comfort and playfulness in every nook. The sense of history is what characterizes her interior design and architectural work, and she applied the same vision to her home, which is filled with mix-and-match furniture and accessories, accented by lush plants.

Vintage Scandinavian furniture prevails in Joana's living room, which is divided into two distinct spaces: The dining area and the lounge and TV area. Francisco Nogueira

Adorned with a Yamaha piano, this space acts as a library, a music room, and a guest room all at the same time. The Adam Junior chair is from IKEA. Francisco Nogueira

In the lounge and TV area of the living room, the Bioethanol fireplace by Gizeofire creates a cozy atmosphere. Francisco Nogueira

"Distinctive surfaces, fixtures, details, textures, and patinas bring depth and complexity to clean, simple lines and illuminated open spaces," Joana says. The dusty green and weathered blue color palette courtesy of Farrow & Ball is complemented by the carpets, curtains, upholstery, and vintage Scandinavian furniture. "It looks like a lot of stuff—and it is a lot of stuff—but nothing is thoughtless or random: I'm very selective, and I've been gathering these pieces one by one for my whole life," she says. "If a piece has that special je ne sais quoi, I know when I see it. I am drawn to weathered wood and textiles, patina on metal, evidence of the handling of edges, even fissures and cracks—proof that something is unique and that it has really lived."

A mix and match of eclectic objects characterizes Joana's home. Francisco Nogueira

The vintage chaise longue with leather upholstery is from Vintage Department, and the 1950s wood sideboard was bought from one of Joana's friends. Francisco Nogueira

Everywhere she has traveled, Joana has brought something back with her, whether it is a blanket with a beautiful texture, an old book, or antique photographs, "anything that speaks to the history of the place and the soul of its people," she says. "I have no interest in dropping the names of brands and designers." So when Joana wants to shop, her favorites are flea markets, vintage shops, street fairs, and artisan workshops that she discovers by chance. "The exceptions to this no-names rule are the many pieces that have come into my collection from friends in the field, such as Spanish designer Jaime Hayón, French designer Sam Baron, and Portuguese artists Pedro Batista, Diogo Barros Pires, Inês Norton, and Vasco Aguas," she says. "These people are part of my life, and their pieces lend truly personal texture, color, and personality to my home."

Several lamps from Area Store and a collection of ceramic tableware pieces adorn the kitchen, which features Portuguese Lioz countertops. The walls and cupboards were painted in Farrow & Ball's Worsted. Francisco Nogueira

Joana considers her refuge an embodiment of her personality, where her passions, memories, and narratives are captured through the objects on display. "Just imagine if this sideboard had eyes to see and a mouth to gossip," she says about a midcentury Scandinavian piece in the living room. "And that armoire with odd bibelots, porcelain, and vintage toys? It comes from a hospital pharmacy before the Revolution."

In the daughter's bedroom, the walls were painted in Farrow & Ball's Vert de Terre. The art hanging above the bed, a watercolor made with 4,763 pencils, was created by Joana. The pink bedside table lamp is from Menu, and the 1950s Danish armchair was purchased at Carolina do Vintage. Francisco Nogueira

The combination of decorative accessories brings a textured, cozy feeling to every nook. Francisco Nogueira

In the primary bedroom, which is filled with natural light thanks to the window that opens onto the terrace, the macramé wall hanging is by Vasco Aguas, a.k.a. Barbudo Abornecido. Francisco Nogueira

Even if Joana loves her current home, she has a bigger dream. "I would like to completely refurbish, define the layout, and choose all the materials and finishes of a three- or four-level building in the center of Lisbon, in the Principe Real neighborhood," she says. "I would create my studio, workshop, and furniture showroom at street level, a few flats in the middle floors, and my home on the top level. One day, I'll do it. Home is an extension of me—and so is my work."

The dusty green and weathered blue color palette was chosen to cover the walls of the 1,400-square-foot apartment. Francisco Nogueira