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ARABIA

FALL/WINTER 2023

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The New York home of Apparatus' star designer

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FALL'S SWEET BLISS

DINE IN DESIGN

Spectacular tables by Arabia's leading creatives

THE ART



OF DESIGN

With his eclectic style, interior architect Gregory Gatslerelia works wonders with artworks and unique design pieces. He opens the doors to his latest project in La Citadelle tower in the heart of Beirut

Photography EWA SZUMILAS *Words* JUMANA ABDEL-RAZZAQ

In the living room, a 1955 sofa from Federico Munari, a pair of blue Maticubo sculptures by Pietro Consagra, and a pair of blue and gold 7A/8 – 7B/8 sculptures by Jean-Claude Farhi and César Baldaccini from the 1960s **OPPOSITE** Robert Longo's charcoal Sweet Tiger looks over a Solune coffee table by Ado Chale, Carlo Lorenzetti's Goosefish lamp, and Annie Morris's Sculpture Stack



There are few interior architects that marry art and design better than Gregory Gatsereia, the Beirut-based designer who has built a global name through his elevated interiors and artistic curations. One such example is his latest project, a contemporary apartment located within La Citadelle tower in Beirut's Ain El Mreysseh district, mere minutes from the city's picturesque waterfront of Zaytunay Bay.

With its 360-degree views of city and sea, the 1,100sqm, five-bedroom home weaves together a rich tapestry of mementos and pieces representing diverse cultures, eras, and materials. Here, Gatsereia successfully brings together geometric shapes with splashes of color that integrate artworks and other unique design pieces. The space offers an apt example of the designer's knack for curating the interior space like an art gallery. "It is a testament to the beauty of dialogue and contrasts between different collectibles, a harmonious fusion of aesthetics," Gatsereia says. "I can define my style generally as eclectic, with art-inspired elements that blend diverse cultural influences, historical periods, and artistic movements."

Raised and educated in France until 1967, Gatsereia, who is of Georgian descent, followed his passion for art and design to Lebanon, where he received a degree from the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts. He then went on to establish Gatsereia Design International in Toronto with his brother Alexander in 1987, eventually relocating its central office to Beirut nearly a decade later. Gatsereia saw an opportunity to contribute to Lebanon's reconstruction after the civil war, taking part in the remarkably architectural renaissance that came shortly after.

With a background in art curation, the interior architect sought to bring a creative touch to the La Citadelle apartment, which sits on the 29th floor and features expansive living spaces and playful design elements. Gatsereia knew the space needed a complete renovation, with the end result seeing the flooring in Statuario marble and brass inserts, providing both durability and aesthetic appeal, with a design that unifies the entire space. The walls are also clad in Statuario marble and brass, creating an optimum level of sophistication – one that is rich, yet minimalist – while the lighting is customizable for every mood and task.

A further example symbolizing this intricate marriage of functionality and artistry is a midcentury modern Gio Ponti lounge chair, which stands alongside a handmade Perugia coffee table by Alessandro Mendini. Art from all

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ends of the globe dot the room – a Japanese ceramic vase by Chieko Katsumata, a Carpe d'Or sculpture in resin covered in gold by Francois-Xavier Lalanne, and Danish glass sculptures by Stine Bidstrup, sit among pieces by Max Ingrand, Hiquily, Ado Chale, and Ettore Sottsass.

"These artifacts share space on a polished stainless-steel bookshelf that I designed, hinting at the knowledge that transcends cultural boundaries. It's a celebration of the human journey, where each piece tells a story," Gatsereia says. Along with a large reception space and dining room, the apartment also includes a TV room, a family room, two guest toilets on opposite sides of the floor, and a master bedroom with two walk-in dressing rooms and two bathrooms, and four additional bedrooms. A standout feature in the home is the spa, which comes complete with massage, nail, and hairdresser stations.

As a believer in the transformative power of art, Gatsereia opened Smogallery in Beirut in 2011, which, in addition to international guests, seeks to promote local artists and designers. Gatsereia and the gallery have taken part in major exhibitions, such as PAD London and PAD Paris, promoting up-and-coming talent. This passion is evident in the works of art that adorn the walls and corners of the La Citadelle tower apartment, which include Bertrand Lavier, Anish Kapoor, Tony Cragg, Victor Vasarely, Alessandro Mendini, Jeff Koons, Jean-Michel Othoniel, Robert Longo, Wendell Castle, George Kovacs, and Monique Rozanes. "I like to mix mediums and styles, paintings, prints, sculptures, textiles, and even functional art pieces, without being limited," he says. "There are also 20 exclusively crafted pieces by The Great Design Disaster, a project I co-founded in Milan in 2019 with fellow designer Joy Herro," Gatsereia adds. "The studio is a one-stop-solution for anyone looking to create site-specific design and art installations." A start-up and creative initiative, The Great Design Disaster helps collectors bring their own creativity to the works they acquire. The initiative walks collectors through the entire creative process with handpicked artisans as they render the pieces they envision, allowing them to conceive one-of-a-kind, custom-made pieces. This supports the work of skilled artisans and, more broadly, the culture of design itself.

In his multi-decade career, the designer has embarked on and curated projects from all over the world. In Dubai, Gatsereia worked on apartments and villas as well as L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon restaurant in DIFC, and he's also collaborated on restaurants in Saudi Arabia and Cairo. Further abroad, he has designed apartments in Paris and London, as well as L'Atelier Robuchon in Cyprus. "We are also about to complete a private terminal airport in Jebel Ali, many more restaurants in Saudi Arabia, and a few residences in Paris and Africa," he adds. In the end, Gatsereia's heart remains in Beirut, as he continues to fulfill the promise he made in the late 1990s to elevate the city's creative scene. "Beirut is, and will always be, a diverse city with various cultural influences."



ABOVE The living space, with a cabinet of curiosity and dining table by Gregory Gatslerelia and Anish Kapoor's Red Sky Mirror on the wall **RIGHT** A Pair sculpture by Tony Cragg **BELOW** Cocoon by Fernando and Humberto Campana for Louis Vuitton, and a coffee table by The Great Design Disaster







A Gregory Gatsrelia sideboard stands amid Sculpture Stack by Annie Morris, as well as Jeff Koons' Dom Pérignon Balloon Venus and Hitomi Uchikura's Bright Cells



ABOVE A Gio Ponti armchair, Vincenzo De Cotiis coffee table, gold Perugia coffee table by Alessandro Mendini, and Pegasi sculptural lamp by Emmanuel Jonckers
ABOVE RIGHT Red Sky Mirror sculpture by Anish Kapoor, sideboard by Gregory Gatserebia, and Dom Pérignon Balloon Venus sculpture by Jeff Koons
RIGHT Display shelves by Gregory Gatserebia
OPPOSITE The master bedroom features night tables, a bench, and a chandelier by The Great Design Disaster

