

# PERFORMANCE ART

By MARINA HEMONET Photographed by FRANÇOIS COQUEREL Styled by SARAH DE BEAUMONT



Architect MARINE BONNEFOY refashions a *Belle Époque* home in the image of its owner by creating SCENES of whimsy and joy that work in harmony with the *theatrical light* of its local Paris neighbourhood.



*This page* in the living room of this Paris apartment in the Invalides district, **table** by Chi Wing Lo for Giorgetti; **chairs** by Roberto Lazzeroni for Ceccotti; **console** by Pao Hui Kao from Spazio Nobile; **vase** from Galerie Vauclair; vintage Mazzega Murano **pendant light**. *Opposite page* in the entrance, ceramic Medici **vase** by Bella Hunt & DDC from Southway Studio; custom marble **stand**; walls in velvet Pierre Frey wallpaper; Celestia **ceiling lamp** by Tobia Scarpa for Flos. *Details, last pages.*



*These pages in the living room, Eko sofas by Christophe Delcourt from Delcourt Collection; Progetti armchair from Giorgetti; Kyoto coffee table by Gianfranco Prattini; Napoleon III bonbonnière (on table); Athena lamp (on fireplace mantel, left) by Georgia Jacob; Élitis curtains from Dena France; vintage Laver Kirman rug; Oculus wall installation by Juliette Minchin.*

wanted something very theatrical and lively for this apartment. Right from the moment you enter, something that makes an impact,” says Marine Bonnefoy, the architect behind the renovation of this 360-square-metre family home. Of the entrance, she says, “I opted for glossy brown velvet on the walls, the creation of an arch to mark the space, the addition of a niche with a marble saddle and a stained-glass window to blur the view of the courtyard, all associated with a canvas ceiling light with imposing dimensions by Tobia Scarpa. Similarly, for the small glass walkway that provides the transition to the bedrooms, I sought to make it more atypical, with frilly curtains in a Venetian spirit.”

The interiors are in line with the whimsical personality of the owner, who initially brought her own furniture and settled in without really thinking about the decoration. The existing decor was informed by a mix of cultures — her English nationality and time spent living in Kuwait and Italy. “You choose what you want from the furniture and what you don’t take, we sell it,” Bonnefoy says, repeating the owner’s first instruction. In other words, the architect was given total carte blanche. Ultimately, 99 per cent of the furniture was let go — apart from a few vintage gems and old tapestries — in order to find new pieces at auction houses and online auction sites.

The many tapestries from the 16th and 17th centuries punctuate the apartment with historical touches. If at first the architect was a little sceptical about the idea of reusing them, she ended up marrying them with contemporary pieces, including a sculpture by Daphné Corregan titled *Le Souffle*, which makes perfect sense in the music room, and a wax work by Juliette Minchin, which adorns one of the living room walls.

Known for orchestrating receptions that welcome all of Paris — notably, she organised the inauguration of an exhibition dedicated to photographer Frank Horvat by Jeu de Paume at her home — the owner wanted a relaxed and versatile place to both receive guests and live with her family, where they can move around easily.

“This Belle Époque apartment refers to notions of pleasure, hedonism and cheerfulness. There is also a reference to Art Nouveau with gardens. The dining room has something of a hanging garden, a winter garden, and the table has been designed in ironwork, as if it were an outdoor table. We tried to work on all these universes and mix them so that it would be a celebration,” explains Bonnefoy. And then there is the artistic past of this 1910 building, which at the beginning of the 20th century housed a ‘convent of birds’ where the painter Henri Matisse lived with his family and created his painting school. This story is fitting for the owner who is so close to the art world and is overflowing with imagination. Breaking away from the codes of decoration, she does not hesitate to use the reverse side of fabrics for her cushions and curtains, or put wallpaper only on the bedroom doors.

In the living room, simple curtains are used to let in light, a light that changes according to the seasons and rooms. The light also offers different atmospheres depending on the colour of the paint on the walls — ranging from yellow to mauve — making it possible to accentuate the materials used, such as sisal in the bedrooms, which provides additional warmth.

The main suite’s bathroom was previously a bedroom, and by retaining its original volume the space is large enough to accommodate a bath installed on a platform. “I like the idea of staging everyday gestures, like climbing a step to reach the bathtub,” the architect explains. The kitchen was completely redone using liquid amber wood, red wood and a copper sink, and opens onto the dining room. “I tried to imagine a place in parentheses, which appeals to the imagination, to dreams, to poetry, to elsewhere,” she says. “This apartment is a theatrical place, a scene that evolves over the days and months, and also the seasons.” ■ [marinebonnefoy.com](http://marinebonnefoy.com)

*Opposite page* in another view of the living room with a view of the music room, vintage **table** from Robert Kime; Hat Trick **chair** by Frank Gehry for Knoll; *Le Souffle* **sculpture** by Daphné Corregan.





*These pages* in the dining room, ironwork **table** with resin top by Marine Bonnefoy; Haldenstein **chairs** by Peter Zumthor for Lucas Schnäidt 1890; **vase** from Galerie Vauclair; vintage Murano **glassware**; *Drosera* **wall installation** by Humberto and Fernando Campana.



*This page* in the kitchen, Khaya **cabinetry**; copper **sink** from Jandelle Paris; marble **benchtop** from Décomarbre; vintage **jug**; *Untitled artworks* from Amelie Maison d'Art. *Opposite page* in another view of the dining room, 1970s Hans Kögl **floor lamp**; *Oiseau 2* cast-iron **sculpture** (on harpsichord) by Vincent Beaurin from Strouk Gallery.



*These pages* in the main bathroom, Family **chair** in metal mesh by Junya Ishigami; **bath**tub from Victoria + Albert; wall **tiles** from Céramiques du Beaujolais; **platform** in Calacatta Viola marble. *Details, last pages.*