



The first-level living area exhibits artist Basmat Levin's personal taste with happy, warm colors. — Wang Rongjiang

An artist living the lanehouse life in color



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Basmat Levin
Artist

Patsy Yang

The charm of this three-storey lanehouse lies in the stories Basmat Levin tells, stories that are layered on its walls and in every nook and cranny.

The artist showcases her aesthetic sensibility and personal taste throughout her family home with happy, warm colors and a boundless creativity.

Before moving into this house with its distinctive Shanghai characteristics, she and her family had lived in different, but always modern, apartments in the former French concession. "I wanted the romance of living in a Shanghai lane house, but I was worried about the downsides, like insulation in the winter. Finally, though, I decided to give it a try," she said.

After scouring the area for three months, Basmat finally found her ideal house four years ago on the corner of Wuyuan Road and Wulumuqi Road.

"It had been nicely renovated by the landlord, with double-glazed windows and floor heating. It's bright, spacious, and more importantly, it was totally devoid of furniture, so we had complete freedom to decorate it ourselves," she added. "In addition, the location is so central — we have easy access to everything we need, and are close to dining and entertainment, making socializing very convenient."

The first floor living and dining areas overlook the terrace from the floor-to-ceiling windows. In creating the ambience, Basmat says she wanted to create a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere for her family of four, rather



The dining area is decorated with Basmat's impressive creations.

than a specific style. It was important, she says, that the family and their occasional houseguests feel at home and at ease.

Basmat enjoys being surrounded by things she can both love and live with, and the same is true of this house. "The ambience is very warm and inviting, with our house filled as it is with objects that we've custom-made according to our tastes and that we like to see and use," she said.

The first change the artist made to the interior was to paint the walls in "her colors." "My colors are also reflected in my paintings — always bold and happy. I used a mixture of shades throughout the house — from greenish yellow to burgundy."

Furniture came from a custom furniture shop Arnold, and Basmat had a full set of new furniture for their home, mixing and matching with furniture from Danish brand HAY.



Top: The dining and open kitchen area is Basmat's favorite spot where she invites guests for intimate evenings.

Above: Basmat creates her own line of cushions.

Left: A vintage mirror with funky decorations.

She had a large 16-seat dining table made, the setting for many intimate evenings of food, wine, and laughter.

The simple lines of the furniture are offset by the vivid colors of her own colorful, playful artwork, giving the interior a fresh dimension.

Basmat, who comes from a family of artists, says of her work, "My art comes directly from my heart with a natural instinct when it comes to colors and energies." Her paintings are in constant rotation, giving the home a different vibe and mood. Her favorite piece, she says, is the portrait of a Tang Dynasty queen in the dining room, the centerpiece of the space.

The second floor houses the master bedroom and the family room, where the family often gathers for movie nights, and where her son plays instrument. The children's bedrooms are on the attic-style third floor, where a large skylight can be opened up.

The interior is unique with a very personal touch, with every single aspect designed to create a highly functional and liveable space, where a feeling of lightness was created through a combination of materials, textures and hues.

ASK THE OWNER

Q: What's the best thing about living in Shanghai?

A: The energy of the people and the daily surprises.

Q: Describe your home in three words.

A: Happy, warm, and cosy.

Q: What's the first thing you do when you get home?

A: Saying hi to my dog and then go upstairs to look for my family.

Q: How do you unwind?

A: Talking to my family over dinner, and having a nice glass of wine.

Q: Where do you spend most of your time at home?

A: At the dinner table and in the family room.

Q: What's the best view outside your window?

A: My garden — and I love the greenery!

Q: How do you scent your home?

A: With fresh air as much as possible and flowers!

Q: What's your favorite object at home?

A: It is not in the house, but it is a minute from the house -- the best thing ever for living where I am is the location. I am a minute away from the Avocado Lady!

Q: Where do you source furniture in Shanghai?

A: We found an amazing guy, Arnold, who custom makes great looking furniture.

DESIGNER

Anna Agapova



Design & Technologicity

Who is she?

Anna Agapova is the creative director of the Oleg Klodt Architecture & Design Studio, where she leads the design department.

Tell us about some of your projects and name the one that you are most proud of.

I have two projects that come to mind. The first is our project at Bor'by Square (<http://www.olegklodt.com/portfolio/project/49>). This project is very dear to me because it was the first time that I saw the results of my work with my very own eyes. It was the first project of this scale which Oleg and I completed from start to finish. It was a very emotional moment when I went on-site and saw the first interior project that I had completed.

In addition to that, I like the style of the project: a kind of Belgian-French classic, with calm relief on the walls and beautiful oak herring-bone patterned floors. A spiritual and intelligent atmosphere. It's the kind of interior I could happily live in myself, and I'd like my own home to be like that.

The second project would be our project on Rublevka (<http://www.olegklodt.com/portfolio/project/83>). The client was a truly amazing individual and someone with whom I'd studied Constructivist architecture. I would say that this project promoted my work and established it on an entirely new level. I discovered a great number of new things as I worked on the Rublevka Residence. It gave me a new vision of interior design, a direction which can be seen in my work today.

Are you currently involved with any project?

Of course! We have 60 staff in our team and we are involved in dozens of projects at the same time. I set the design concept for all of our ongoing projects and supervise the

work of all our designers.

Describe your design style.

That's a very tough question! In today's world, the definition of style has become somewhat mixed. I don't like to be pigeonholed, and I couldn't say that I work in one specific style or another. All of our interiors are very different and they often allude to historic styles. For example, we really like Art Deco, yet there isn't one of our interiors which has been done in that style. We create contemporary, sophisticated and intelligent interiors and spaces which are comfortable to live in. Everything is reborn and evolves - styles are changing. Who can say now what name will be given in the future to the work that we are doing right now?

Where are you most creative?

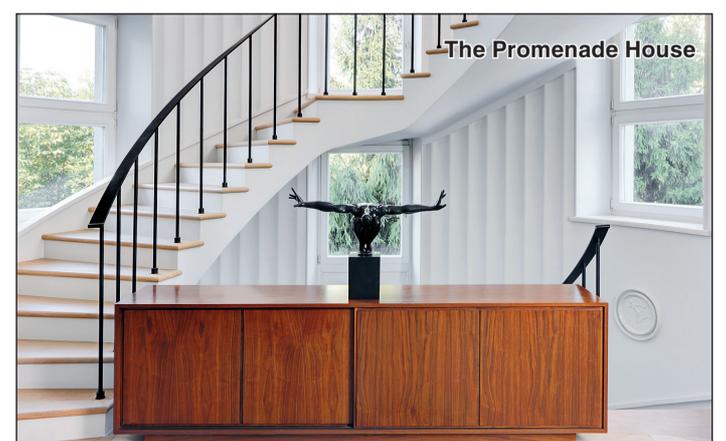
I love to analyze and to discover design items. I'm involved in a continuous and ongoing search for new brands because it's something I find fascinating. My other passion is light fittings. I create custom-made decorative lighting for our projects.

What does home mean to you?

Everyone has their own personal idea of what home means. It's a place where nothing disturbs you, where you feel safe and comfortable.

What will be the next big design trend?

The main trend is "technologicity" and it won't be going away soon. Technology and functionality are now the two key elements. We take styles which have been developed over centuries, and whose emergence has needed a huge amount of time, but time is in desperately short supply in our modern world. We transform styles using the latest technological trends, and this is how design is developing.



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