Minimal, curated, and tactile interiors: AP Design House

by Gillian Serisier | 22 August, 2022

Reimagining a well-known and loved Woollahra landmark, Alexandra Ponting of AP Design House has created an interior to match this timeless classic.

Once the home of Leonard Joel Auctioneers, the red brick Art Deco building with featured herringbone panel and tall narrow ribs has more recently been converted to two apartments.

With a plan to convert the apartments to a single dwelling at some time in the future, the current task was to retain this configuration while updating the aesthetic. Alexandra Ponting, the founder of AP Design House, was brought on board and her interior acumen is clearly evident in her creation of a varied and textured home of interesting and beautiful moments.

Taking her cues from the building's Deco heritage and its commercial life as an auction house, Ponting has selected artisan pieces for use throughout the home.

Importantly, these pieces, which range from a Murano glass shelf or Carmen Dapollonio lamp base in the bedroom to full incursions, are very much about living and not simply showpieces.

The living room, for example, pairs a custom lounge with a circa 1938 lamp by Pietro Chiesa for FontanaArte and 1960s Italian glass console. An Art Nouveau sculpted timber mirror from Aix-en-Provence, a mid-century Italian travertine coffee table with a Jacques Adnet glass and an original 18th-century oil on linen painting, which Ponting found in a Parisienne flea market, complete the room. Elegantly arranged, each object is proportionally exact to the room's needs.

The pairing of contemporary with antiques is explored well with the custom steel cabinetry and Cormatin Classic oven (Lacanche) in the kitchen, providing a burnished backdrop to the 18th-century Spanish chestnut and wrought-iron refectory table.

Completing the kitchen is microcement custom joinery. Designed by AP, the cabinetry feature the same slight and elegantly realised bespoke knobs used with the steel iteration. They are also lined with walnut for that exceptional attention to detail.

A two-shade terrazzo floor (charcoal with an olive border) defines the space well, while a FontanaArte chiselled glass and chrome-plated brass pendant light, circa 1960, presides overhead.

One of the most delightful elements of this design is the custom curved walls of the main bathroom. Here tadelakt, a waterproof plaster surface that is typically used in Moroccan styles of architecture, has been carved and polished into a pair of walls.

One high and one short, these softly curving tactile walls are a delight. Paired with honed Navona travertine slabs and tiles (Granite and Marble Works) plus a custom vanity in the same stone, this room has the warm glow of natural stone. It also has the aforementioned Murano glass shelf.

The powder room is perhaps the most eclectic of the bathrooms with an antique marble basin which Ponting sourced in Greece, teamed with a splashback of custom tiles from Lucca, Italy.

A 1960s backlit mirror with hand-blown textured, clear and green Murano glass panels (Mazzega) could not be more beautiful, as are the Murano glass wall sconce and glass towel rack Ponting found in Italy. The ensuite is sparser and arguably more quotidian with terrazzo walls and floor (Surface Gallery) combined with the perfection of a custom-mottled sheet of glass.

AP's design is effectively artisan in its nature. Moreover, it embodies the idea of the collector with the design's main elements, creating a setting for the loose aspects of design and art, which can be changed and rearranged as desired.

Project Details
Interiors – AP Design House
Photography – Rory Gardiner and Matteo Dal Vera

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