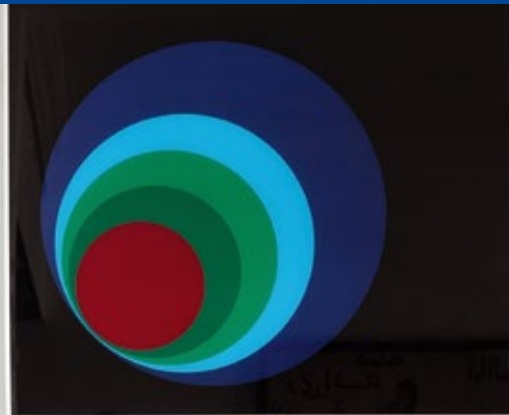


**The Levantine  
designer Nada  
Debs opens the  
doors of her  
colourful Beirut  
apartment,  
a lesson in  
achieving a  
soothing  
equilibrium  
between  
decoration  
and restraint**



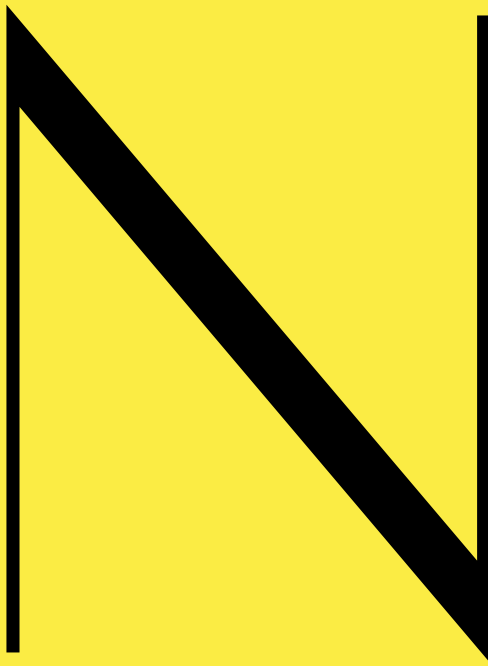
Words Marzia Nicolini  
Photography Alessandra Ianniello

# BALANCING ACT





“  
The beauty of  
Beirut is the  
quality of the  
light. It changes  
every single day  
”



**ADA DEBS LIKES TO CALL** her approach to design 'handmade and heartmade', and the Beirut apartment where she lives and works mirrors her ability to distil culture and craftsmanship, creating pieces that are imbued with emotion.

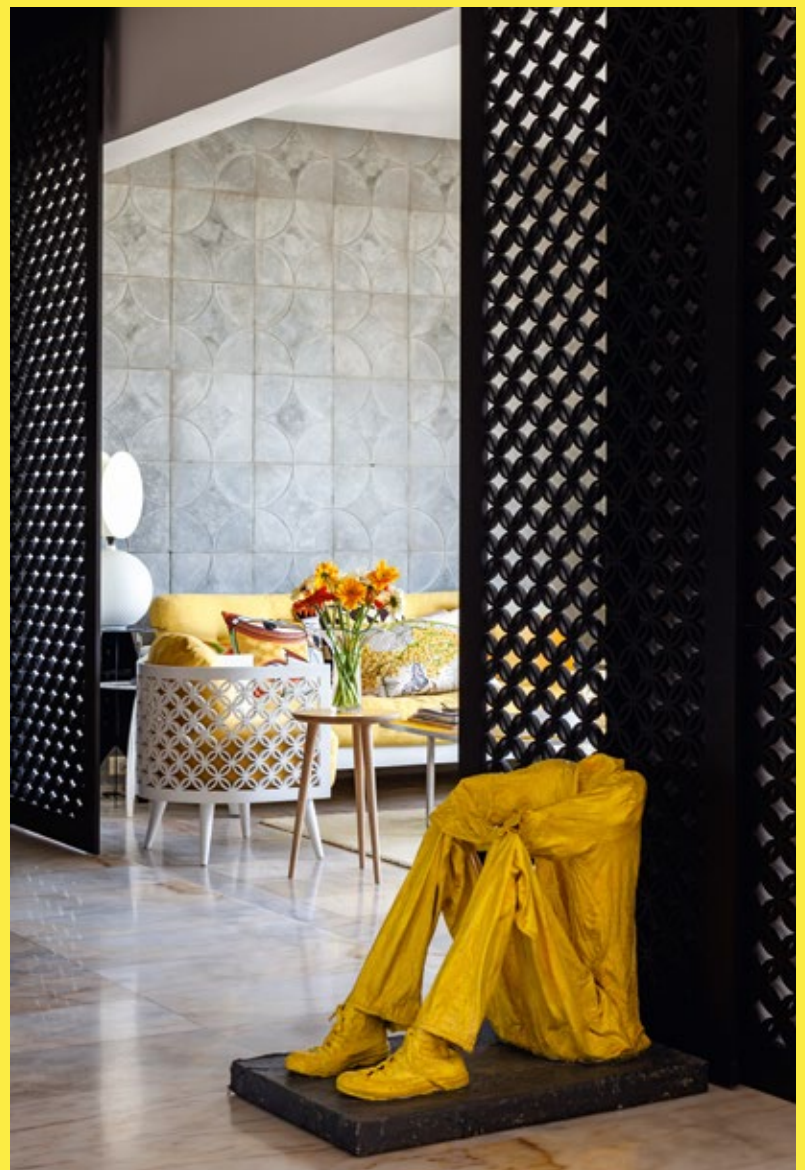
"This was a home my parents had purchased in the Eighties, thinking that when they get older, they will move back to Beirut from Japan, where they have been settled for over 50 years," says Debs, who is swathed in a royal blue outfit that merges with velvet sofa she is sitting on. "They never chose to come back to Beirut, so they offered it to me when I decided to live here in 2000."

The modernist apartment building is located in West Beirut, in an area that was "considered quite high-end in the Eighties and Nineties," Debs explains. "Over the years it has changed in character to a mix of commercial and residential." Which suits her just fine; she's all about evolution and characterful spaces. Before Debs' arrival, it looked like a very typical family apartment, with a series of small living spaces and not much character. Now, the floorplan has been opened up to let more natural light in, and filled with statement furniture and art.

"I have a beautiful view of the sea and mountains, so I moved my dining area, which is also used sometimes as my study, to face the outdoors," says Debs. "I also took one large bedroom and transformed it into a bathroom, all made in white Carrara marble."

In addition to making the layout of the apartment more comfortable and contemporary, Debs has carefully curated the decor, from the sophisticated colour combinations (think electric blue and rust) to the characterful mix of furniture.

The bright, free-flowing living-dining area features many furniture prototypes of Deb's designs, together with vintage finds from the flea market in Beirut, as well as some contemporary pieces like the shelving unit by Marten Baas and a cabinet by Wrongwoods for Established & Sons. Debs has a keen interest in craft techniques from around the world, collecting objects wherever she travels: there are vases from Brazil, ceramics from Japan, and pieces from around the Middle East. She also



**ABOVE:** A view of the yellow room. The sculpture is by Lebanese artist Randa Ali Ahmad. The concrete wall tiles and Arabesque armchairs are by Studio Nada Debs.

**OPPOSITE:** The dining area has a You & I carpet (used as a wall hanging) Marquetry Mania dining table and pendant lights by Studio Nada Debs.

collects contemporary art from the region. The apartment offers a living laboratory to test her own designs, too. "As a furniture designer, this was the perfect place to experiment with different prototypes of my furniture," she adds. "Basically, what you see is a lot of experimental materials, objects and shapes."

There's also a shifting chromatic conversation going on; Debs recently collaborated with Jotun to dream up a paint hue, and she has themed different areas of her home by colour, counterbalancing strong shots of yellow, blue and pink with moody greys. In part, the colours help to zone the open-plan spaces. "Because they are all open to each other, I've used vintage carpets to create spaces to gather around," she says. "For example, the round terracotta Chinese carpet comes from my great uncle, who brought it back from Shanghai in the 1950s."

Her favourite rooms are more private, yet connected to the city below: "All the bedrooms face the sea and enjoy a nice view. To me, the beauty of Beirut is the quality of the light and the colour of the sea, which changes every single day." [nadadebs.com](http://nadadebs.com)



The red and blue living area features a Curvaceous sofa, Roses bar cabinet, Coffee Bean table and red Squid side tables, all by Studio Nada Debs. The tapestry is from London design gallery Mint.

“

**As a furniture designer, this is the perfect place to experiment with prototypes of my furniture**

”





The bedroom features a headboard and stool dressed in Manuel Canova fabric. The artwork is by Ismail Fatah.

OPPOSITE:  
A painting by Jean-Marc Dallanegra hangs in the pale pink kitchen. The chairs are from Bokja.

