

IMPRESSIVE STUCCO ROSETTES ON CHINESE CONSOLES
ADD TO THE UNIQUE ATMOSPHERE OF LAZARO ROSA
VIOLAN'S HOME. (22) HELP TO FORM DIVIDES BETWEEN
THE DINING AND MEETING AREAS. BLACK AND WHITE
BROUGHTERIAL THUS, ON THE OPPOSITE, WERE
DESIGNED AND PRODUCED FOR THE PULITZER HOTEL
ROOMS BY REISA VIOLAN'S CONTEMPORAIN STUDIO.
A PAIR OF VASES, WHICH THE DESIGNER HAS SINCE
TRANSFORMED INTO LAMPS, PRESIDE ON A CHINESE
CONSOLE TO THE LEFT. CUSTOM-MADE CERULEAN CORAL
VASES (BELOW) HAVE BEEN REINVENTED AS LAMPS BY
CONTEMPORAIN STUDIO. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.


Spanish EYES

New and old mix in designer Lázaro Rosa-Violán's eclectic home-cum-studio in a former cotton warehouse in Barcelona.

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CHAIRS FROM THE 1960s, UPHOLSTERED IN CHESTNUT-COLOURED SUEDE, SIT AROUND A CONTEMPORAIN PROTOTYPE 'SAN PANCRACIO' TABLE IN THE MEETING AREA. ABOVE IT HANGS A CHANDELIER DESIGNED IN THE '70s BY PACO RABANNE FOR A CLUB ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA. THE SIDEBBOARD OF BEVELLED MIRRORED TILES WAS CUSTOM-DESIGNED BY CONTEMPORAIN STUDIO AND THE LARGE ARTWORKS ARE BY ROSA-VIOLÁN. THE SMALL DRAWING FRAMED IN MIRROR IS A PABLO PICASSO SKETCH. THE GREY WAITING CANAPE, OPPOSITE, COMES FROM AN OLD HOTEL IN MARSEILLE.

IN HIS VAST home studio in Spain's Catalan capital, artist-turned-interior designer Lázaro Rosa-Violán is immersed in animated dialogue with his colleagues. The place is alive with unique prototypes, collections of vintage retro chairs, *objets d'art* and large-scale paintings (by Rosa-Violán himself). Most have their own story to tell, having been picked up on travels or from sacred sources Rosa-Violán is rather averse to divulging. Some are destined for hotel projects as far flung as Buenos Aires, while others are earmarked for bars and restaurants in Marrakech, in Rome or closer to home.

"Anything you see here could go tomorrow," remarks the Barcelonian with the wave of an arm, indicating how the place has become a private showroom of sorts. But there's no sign of chaos; this is an ordered place of unexpected intimacy. Yet as Rosa-Violán, svelte and studiously unshaven, his beloved weimaraner Bosco (named after the painter) at his feet, says, consolidating work and home like this was "never on the cards".

The apartment is set behind one of the gracious *facades* that line the wide avenues of Eixample ('extension' in Catalan), one of the key areas developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries after the Ciutat Vella ('old city') walls were demolished. Eixample went on to become known for its striking Modernista heritage (similar to Art Nouveau), influenced by the likes of Antoni Gaudí and his acclaimed Casa Milà and Sagrada Família landmarks, among others.

A 1900s FRENCH BRONZE FRAME, ONCE A CEILING DECORATION IN THE FORMER OFFICES OF NEWSPAPER LA VANGUARDIA, IS PROPPED AGAINST A MODERNIST MIRROR ON THE MANTELPIECE. THE HOME'S SECOND PACO RABANNE-DESIGNED CHANDELIER HANGS ABOVE. OPPOSITE: THE CUSTOM COFFEE TABLE IN BEVELLED BLACK GLASS TILES WITH STEEL BASE IS BY CONTEMPORAIN STUDIO. SURROUNDING IT ARE WELL-WORN, MOCHA-COLOURED LEATHER CHESTERFIELDS FROM BELGIUM AND CUSTOM WHITE LEATHER ARMCHAIRS BY CONTEMPORAIN.







FEATURING AN EARLY 20TH-CENTURY CHINESE SETTLERS SCREEN FROM THE CATALAN PROVINCE OF OLOT, THE KITCHEN IS MADE UP OF RECLAIMED CABINETS AND A CENTRAL WORKBENCH ORIGINALLY USED AS A CUTTING TABLE IN A TEXTILES FACTORY. OPPOSITE: A VINTAGE MURANO CHANDELIER HANGS ABOVE A CHINESE OCCASIONAL TABLE SURROUNDED BY '60s SWEDISH OFFICE CHAIRS.





GLASS PANNELLED DOORS RECLAIMED FROM THE OLD RITZ HOTEL IN BARCELONA CREATE AN ELEGANT DIVIDE BETWEEN KITCHEN AND DINING AND SHOWCASE ROSA-VIOLAN'S EXTENSIVE PORCELAIN AND GLASSWARE COLLECTION. ORIGINALLY THE RECEPTION AREA OF A TEXTILES WAREHOUSE AND HEADQUARTERS, THE BATHROOM'S WOOD PANNELLING, OPPOSITE, STILL CONCEALS A SAFETY BOX. THE BATHTUB IS BY PHILIPPE STARCK AND THE STOOL IS FROM SEMPRE.

The previous occupants, a family, ran their cotton empire (with outposts across North and Latin America) from the first-floor apartment for generations. That was until five years ago, when Rosa-Violán spotted packing boxes stacked up inside the offices from the window of his apartment on the other side of the courtyard. "I'd had my eye on the place – with its huge terrace – thinking how it would make an ideal studio," he recalls.

While it took just two days to move in, renovations and the opening out of the 200-square-metre floor plan continued over the next two months and included the creation of a bedroom, with a wall made from mirror-panelled doors reclaimed from a Catalan palace; a guest room; a kitchen made up of antique cabinets; and a sky-lit bathroom in the place of the original reception area, where the oak panelling still conceals an old safe box.

As for working arrangements, an oversized table converts to a desk that sits all eight staff members and their computers. This is central to a transitional area that connects one end of the salon, with its white table and mirrored sideboard (both company prototypes), to the kitchen. Featuring a sensational Chinese screen, the kitchen is where Rosa-Violán spends his downtime. As a colleague says: "He's a real whiz, especially when it comes to desserts."

Rosa-Violán studied fine arts in Madrid and is an established artist in his own right. When a friend asked him to help decorate a restaurant on the tiny Balearic island of Formentera, other requests followed, leading him to set up Contemporain Studio in 2003 on the impetus, he says, that few bars and restaurants are designed so that their decor, lighting, ambience and food work together as a coherent whole.





HAND-BRAIDED FIBREGLASS SEATING FROM LOBSTER'S DAY IS MIXED WITH TABLES AND CHAIRS FROM CLEYBERGH AND S'EMPRE, AMONG OTHERS, SPREAD OUT ACROSS THE 400 SQUARE-METRE TERRACE, A RARE FIND IN THE MIDDLE OF BARCELONA. OPPOSITE, A PAINTING BY ROSA VIOLÁN SITS ON A LOUIS XVIII TABLE, AN INK SKETCH BY HANS ERNI SITS ON THE FLOOR. THE WHEELS ON THE WALL WERE ONCE USED TO LIFT CASH PAYMENTS FROM THE FORMER COTTON WAREHOUSE UP TO THE FIRST FLOOR OFFICES. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.

Of his 16 colleagues, eight, including architects and an industrial designer, work in the studio while a team of craftsmen, described as the "muscle" of the company, operate from various workshops around Barcelona. "We try to perceive each project as fresh and unique," says Rosa-Violán. "At the same time, I like to create a core feeling of history through the components, as if they had always been there."

This philosophy is evident in Rosa-Violán's own space. Whereas the oak-lined walls, arched windows and parquet floors that grace the main salon are all original, other features have been introduced, such as the striking glass panels that divide the kitchen and dining room, salvaged from the old Ritz hotel in Barcelona. "Our trade team works wonders to create or transform," says Rosa-Violán, explaining that, more often, this means expanding on functionality and giving new life, whether architectural or decorative; from the stand-out pair of stucco rosettes that define areas in the salon to a pair of coral-shaped vases in cerulean blue he had fashioned into lamps.

With a balmy Mediterranean climate conducive to outdoor living, Rosa-Violán (a nightlife arbiter, according to a colleague) takes full advantage of the 600-square-metre terrace. One of the designers breezes through the kitchen to grab a coffee as a meeting gathers – club-style – on the lounges and low-slung tables beneath the pergolas outside. "The place has essentially become a calling card that's constantly changing and evolving with our ideas," concurs Rosa-Violán. Small wonder, then, that he and his team of loyal acolytes are in such demand. **VZ**

