



THIJS DEMEULEMEESTER
DIANE HENDRIKX

**ECCENTRIC
HOMES**

**BELGIQUE
EXCENTRIQUE**

LUSTER

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Over the years, Dirk and Alex have built up all sorts of thematic collections of objects, such as silverware, ceramics and nudes. / Met de jaren bouwden Dirk en Alex allerlei thematische ensembles op van verzamelobjecten, zoals zilverwerk, keramiek of naaktstudies. / Au fil des années, Dirk et Alex ont constitué toutes sortes d'ensembles thématiques d'objets de collection, comme l'argenterie, la céramique ou les nus.





JOÉVIN
ORTJENS

DOWNTOWN APARTMENT





YANNICK
DAVID

DISCREET PARKSIDE BUNGALOW



Brussels welcomed another eccentric interior decorator in 2013: Maryam Mahdavi. Her sensual style appeals to a wealthy clientele, from Paris and New York to the Middle East. The sophisticated Parisienne with Iranian roots lives in a traditional town house next to the Ixelles Ponds. She has decorated her home with many classical features, albeit in very daring combinations. "I deliberately flirt with the limits of bad taste. As one of my American clients once aptly put it: 'Everything is so ugly here, Maryam. But there's so much sex appeal.' It's like a film star with distinctive character features: his nose may be too big and his ears too small, but the total look is really appealing."

Mahdavi's house is one big surrealistic exercise in seduction, with tactile fabrics, provocative combinations and unexpected functionalities, such as a bed in the dining room, the entrance hall furnished as a living room and the bedroom that acts as a design studio. The laws governing what is ugly and beautiful are constantly being questioned. "The house looks as if anything goes, but actually a great deal of thought has gone into it. You need culture to be able to discard the cultural codes." Maryam Mahdavi sees her house as a theatrical fashion show, in which everything has been staged, including the occupant herself. "You could safely call this place a parade of emotions. As soon as you walk through the door, you find yourself on a catwalk. Life is theatre, so let the show begin! You can also sense my background as a fashion stylist in the small details everywhere in the house. The front door, for example, is covered in curtain material that reminds you of an evening dress. Hanging in the central hall are ballet tutu chandeliers, which are a reference to the creations of fashion designer Giambattista Valli. The dining-room curtains have intentionally been cut too short in order to look like a skirt."

Mahdavi studied as a fashion stylist before going on to the École du Louvre. She started work at *Harper's Bazaar* and then spent some time at the Louvre as a restorer before landing a job in the company of the English interior decorator David Hicks. "I have the soul of a nomad", she explains. "As the daughter of an ambassador, I lived everywhere and nowhere. Everything in our house was always ready to be packed up again. And that's also the case here. Just look at the paintings: they're not hung up – just propped against the wall, ready to go." Mahdavi's house is a folly full of unexpected combinations, with Middle Eastern and classical European elements. "Flick through almost any interior-design magazine and you'll see the same furniture by mid-century designers. That look is so boring and predictable. Yes, of course I could hang a superb chandelier here by a Scandinavian designer. But I choose to have an old-fashioned castle model, on which you can just imagine the cobwebs. At least that's unexpected. I'd like to give all those aesthetically pleasing designer interiors a good kick up the backside. Who wants to live in a furniture showroom? Surely that's anything but sexy!"

The house is one big surrealistic exercise in seduction, with tactile fabrics and provocative combinations. Maryam Mahdavi chooses interior elements that few people would spontaneously want.







**JOB SMEETS
& NYNKE TYNAGEL**

LOFT IN A FORMER WAREHOUSE

