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Design talks with Anna Kovalchenko

May 19, 2015

Anna Kovalchenko is a russian interior designer, owner of the design blog L'Essenziale Home Designs, writer for Architectural Digest Russia and with an upcoming interior project in Bahrain. Anna shared with us her design philosophy and inspiration, as well a very clear and interesting picture of the design industry in Russia.

Between questions and answers, you'll find some images of one of Anna's project as interior designer/decorator.



1. As an Interior Designer, how would you describe your style? Do you have a signature touch?

I would describe it as «eclectic» and «bohemian» – I like gathering different things of various styles and origin, mixing east and west, old and new... I am a big fan of vintage and handmade items: according to me they have this «soulfulness» which is so hard to define, but which gives life and personality to any space, so wherever possible I try to incorporate them.

2. Where do you draw your inspiration from?

Travel is the big source of inspiration for me. Wherever I go I take my camera with me and take pictures of everything that caught my attention – whether it is unusual combination of colours, beautiful architecture or interesting pattern on a dress... I love visiting antique shops, local bazaars and flea markets and my home is full of interesting objects which I brought from all over the world.

3. BRABBU also finds a lot of its inspiration in travel. It is one of the most enriching experiences for a designer. Talking about designers, who's your biggest design reference?

I have several, actually, Christopher Hall, Axel Vervoordt, Kelly Hoppen, Martyn Lawrence Bullard, Sera Hersham-Loftus, just to name a few.

4. What do you love about being an interior designer?

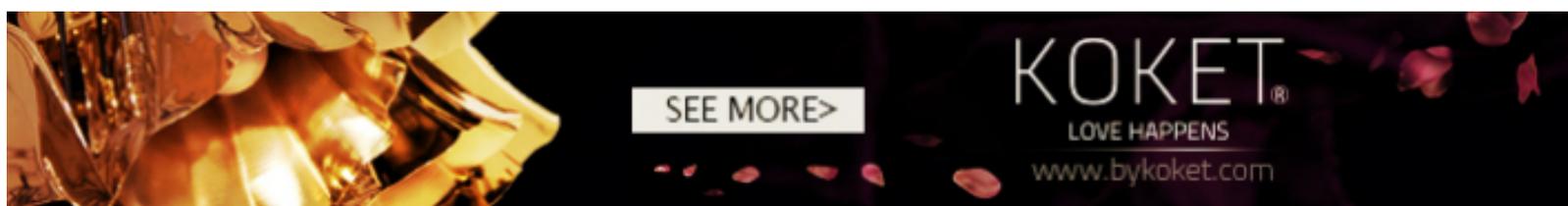
I like everything about my job: from the first time I meet with clients and we discuss what they would like to have, to the moment when they see the finished project and I can see from their eyes that they love it (this part is of course the most exciting).

5. From interior designers to furniture design. Which colours, textures and techniques do you prefer in furniture design?

I like bold and eye-catching accent pieces – something which is impossible not to notice, when you enter the room. I always loved handmade furniture made by skillful artisans and from natural materials – [wood](#), stone, natural textiles for [upholstery](#).

7. Which design brands do you love the most? And why?

Baker Furniture, Ralph Pucci, Koket, [Brabbu](#) – these brands produce furniture that I can describe with just two words «timeless elegance».



8. From editor to editor, once you also write for AD Russia and you have your own blog “L’Essenziale Home Designs”. What can design lovers find in your articles?

My articles for [AD](#) are mainly about [interior design trends](#), new interesting products and emerging talents, while on [L’Essenziale Blog](#) I tend to be more personal and share with my readers the projects I am currently busy with, my design musings and inspirations. I want my blog to be not only visually appealing (there are plenty of other design blogs that mainly focus on images of beautiful interiors only), but useful and interesting in terms of content, so in every post I try to give some practical [design tips, tricks and advice](#).

10. What are the biggest challenges that you find working as an interior designer in Russia?

The biggest challenge is that Russia has always lagged behind Europe in terms of design: this refers not only to materials and furniture that is currently in trend here and there, but also the mindset of people. Luckily with the access to the Internet more and more people are well aware of world trends and don’t want to recreate in their tiny apartments Versailles Palace with golden taps, rocaille furniture and silk velvet, which here in Russia in the 90s and early 2000s were considered to be signs of luxury and well-being.

12. Is there anything exciting that you are working on at the moment that you can tell us about? Any new projects?

Next month I am planning to work on one residential project in Bahrain. I am very excited about it, as was always fascinated and mesmerized by Arabic culture, so this project will give me opportunity to soak it in, which will definitely influence the look of interiors that I am going to create.

13. What you think about Brabbu’s style? What kind of projects you think that BRABBU products will fit better?

Brabbu’s style is contemporary yet timeless, very posh but at the same time very classic and elegant. Brabbu pieces will perfectly suit contemporary minimalistic interiors in cosmopolitan style. They are also very versatile in terms that they will successfully fit both residential and commercial spaces.

14. Just to finish Anna: pick up three BRABBU’s products and let us know why.

[SEQUIOIA center table](#) is so graceful. And refined. I want it in my home! Another table that I am deeply in love with is [KOI](#) – it’s so unusual and opulent. [SIKA armchair](#) is simply spectacular – in any interior it will become a statement piece!



Anna Kovalchenko is the first interior designer to feature in our new rubric “Design Talks”, where BRABBU team will continue to bring good insights about the design professionals world.