

# PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

*The world of architecture is not just about erecting imposing buildings or creating luxurious interiors. It's about **TELLING A STORY**, bringing an experience to life in stone, wood, and glass. No one understands this better than **ARJAAN DE FEYTER**, an interior architect who writes another chapter with each new assignment.*

**T**oday we take you to a breathtaking project in Bruges, a project in which De Feyter collaborated with VDD Project Development. This developer is known for repurposing historic buildings, where architectural renewal and respect for heritage go hand in hand. Arjaan De Feyter's designs are not mere constructions, but rather narratives in materialisation and form. His approach combines craftsmanship and emotion, with each space forming a harmonious interplay between functionality, aesthetics and the personal identity of its occupants. Materials are carefully chosen for their texture, ageing and character, giving each space a unique soul. His architecture transcends trends and fads; it is timeless, rooted in

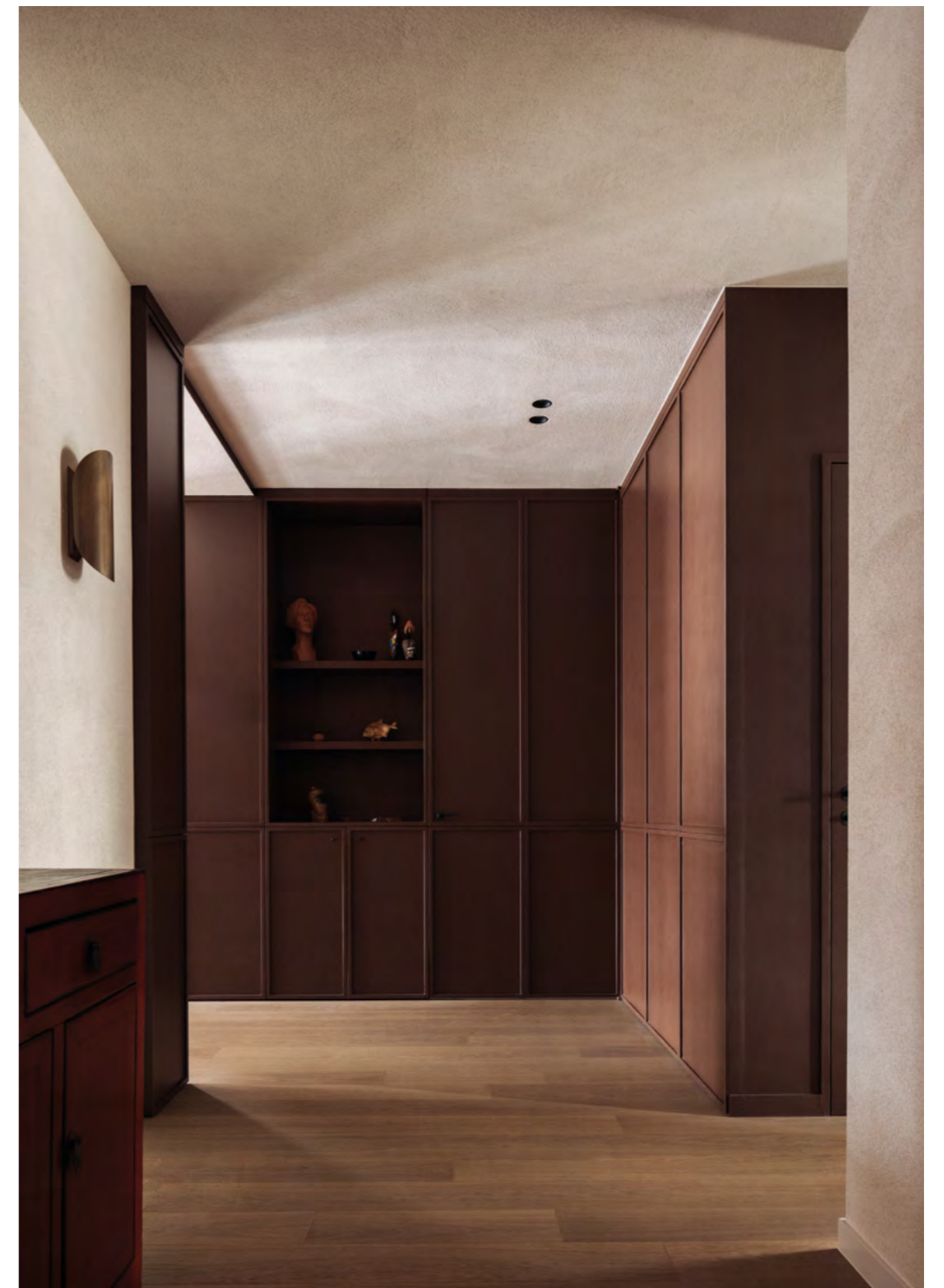
context and meaning. Through subtle nuances in colour, light and form, he creates interiors that are not only visually appealing, but also evoke a deeper experience. This creates spaces that tell stories, cherish memories and have a lasting impact on their occupants. This is why each project is unique, tailored to the soul of its occupants and the historical context of the location. This makes him and VDD the perfect duo for a commission. And that is what the project we are proposing is an example of: a fusion of old and new, of tranquillity and character. The new residents of this project are a couple who have travelled the world. They spent time in Africa and Asia, discovered cultures, absorbed colours and textures and finally decided to re-anchor their lives in their





home base: West Flanders. As the cliché would have it, they sought tranquillity but not without personality and sophistication. When they bought the apartment, it was still an empty, simple space. There was a basic bathroom and parquet floor, but otherwise the canvas was open. Arjaan De Feyter and his team grabbed this opportunity with both hands and began their transformation, with a keen eye for both aesthetics and functionality.

One of the first challenges was the fireplace. The existing structure was complex and did not fit the architect's vision. Instead of keeping the existing elements, it was decided to completely re-imagine the fireplace wall. The result? An architectural masterpiece that not only creates a warm atmosphere, but is also an unmistakable eye-catcher in the room. One of the core values in his approach is the materialisation of a space. He believes in the honesty of materials



— how they feel, how they age, how they give a space character. For this project, he carefully chose a palette that reflects the residents' worldly experiences. One of the most striking choices is the deep terracotta colour that was incorporated into the interior. This warm, earthy pigment is reminiscent of the hues of Asian landscapes and African clay soils. It is a bold choice, but one that perfectly matches the personality and memories of the residents.

'People who have travelled a lot tend to be more open to colour,' notes the interior architect. 'They understand the impact a hue can have on a space,

***'THE MORE PERSONAL  
A DESIGN, THE  
HAPPIER THE RESIDENTS  
WILL BE IN IT. AND IN  
THE END, THAT'S WHAT  
I DO IT FOR.'***



on a state of mind.' Besides colour, material plays a big role in the design. The kitchen island, a central feature of the house, was executed in dark-tinted, black stainless steel. This material adds an industrial touch to the interior and offers a subtle contrast to the warmer elements in the home. Painting techniques were also used to add extra depth to the walls and structures. 'Painting techniques can offer enormous added value. For example, they add a tactile dimension that brings a space to life,' De Feyter tells us. In the bathroom, another special detail was added: a combination of Levanto natural stone with a refined relief, to which a

painting technique was applied. This creates a play of light and shadow, a subtle texture that enriches the room and enhances the pure character of the materials.

**A PLACE FOR PASSIONS**

The top floor of the project, the attic, was given a very specific function. The man of the house is an avid Formula 1 fan, and De Feyter decided to transform this space into his personal sanctuary. 'We deliberately opened up the attic. It had to become a place where he could fully immerse himself in his passion,' says

the architect. The result is a space that is not only functional, but also a reflection of the resident himself - a place where memories are created and dreams are lived. What makes this home truly special is the way personal elements have been incorporated into the design. The architect places great importance on making a home not only visually appealing, but also meaningful for

its occupants. One example is the stained-glass window that came from the couple's wife's childhood home. This heirloom, with its emotional value and nostalgic appeal, was given a place of honour in the home. According to him, it is just such details that make a house a home. The more personal a design, the happier the residents will be in it. And in the end, that is what he does it for.

A project of this scale and finesse does not come about without the right partners. Working with VDD Project Development proved crucial to

*'PEOPLE WHO HAVE TRAVELLED A LOT TEND TO BE MORE OPEN TO COLOUR. THEY UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT A HUE CAN HAVE ON A SPACE, ON A STATE OF MIND.'*





the success of this transformation. ‘They are like-minded people. They understand how important it is to breathe new life into historical heritage without compromising the original soul of a building,’ says De Feyter. This project in Bruges is a perfect example of that. Contemporary architecture and the historical context are woven together in harmonious symbiosis. The result is not just a beautiful home, but a home with character, layering and a soul. It is a model of how architecture can tell a story, how a space can be shaped by memories, journeys and passions. In this home, colours, materials and stories come together in harmony. It is a place of tranquillity, but also of expression. A place where the past meets the future. And above all: a home in which the residents can fully recognise themselves.

In short, in the transformation of this project in Bruges lies a deep philosophy about what a home can truly be. It is not just about aesthetics, but about creating an environment that reflects the personality of its occupants and brings their stories to life. Arjaan De Feyter knows better than anyone how to use architecture to capture the emotion of a space. His designs are not static, finished projects, but dynamic processes in

***‘PAINTING TECHNIQUES CAN ADD TREMENDOUS VALUE. THEY ADD A TACTILE DIMENSION THAT BRINGS A SPACE TO LIFE.’***

which time and history play a central role. The involvement of the residents in this process was therefore essential. Their worldly experiences, gained during travels, were the inspiration for many of the choices in materials and colours. The respect for both the past and the future has resulted in a unique home that deserves its place in history. This home is not just a design; it is a story that tells who the residents are, where they come from and what they value. It reflects their life experiences, their passions and their dreams. This is what architecture in its purest form can do: create a home that feels like an extension of the soul of its occupants. (Text: Elke Aerts)



Photography by Tjib Wenneken

# FRANCESCO BALZANO

Instead, a dynamic emerges, with perspective and shadow constantly shifting depending on how one approaches the work. Negative space plays an equally crucial role as the physical structure, allowing each object to breathe and move within its environment. The combination of noble materials – warm oak and refined white lacquer – creates a subtle contrast, a dialogue between nature and abstraction. This interplay of textures evokes a sense of tranquil luxury, a reflection of his quest for pure, essential beauty. Like the classic Italian gardens from which the collection originates, Fiori transcends trends. Monolithic, sculptural and designed to stand

the test of time, the works exude tranquility yet remain intriguing, as if always in motion. With this limited series, Balzano brings the soul of Italian landscapes into the interior, in a perfect balance between tradition and modernity. Fiori is a reflection of what is enduring: a quiet tribute to proportion, light and the poetry of simplicity. Each object acts as a bridge between past and present, between craftsmanship and forward-thinking design. It is a collection not only to be seen but to be experienced—a fusion of tangible silence and timeless refinement. (Text: Elke Aerts)



**W**ith the Fiori collection, Francesco Balzano translates the harmony of Italian gardens into sculptural, architectural objects. Inspired by the geometric precision and serene balance of historical landscapes, he distills natural forms into pure, minimalist structures. Each piece in this series exudes the simplicity and elegance for which the designer is known: a subtle balance between matter and emptiness, between clean lines and organic rhythms. Fiori is more than a collection of furniture; it is an ode to timeless beauty. Guided by the principles of classical symmetry and the rationalist architecture of Italy, Balzano avoids rigidity.

***THE COMBINATION OF WARM OAK AND REFINED WHITE LACQUER CREATES A SUBTLE CONTRAST, A DIALOGUE BETWEEN NATURE AND ABSTRACTION***



© STUDIO WENTSEVEN gallery and kokkoze gallery Design by FRANCESCO BALZANO