

# Openhouse

Issue N°22



Turning Life into a Work of Art

In Issue N°22, we draw inspiration from personalities committed to transforming life into art. We explore impressive settings such as *Linde Freya Tangelder's* new atelier in Asse, Belgium, and *Comida Codac*—a singular restaurant in Barcelona where dishes are abstract culinary creations. We delve into *Latitude 43*, an exclusive residence designed by *Dimorestudio* in Saint-Tropez. *Palinda Kannangara* unveils his first residential project in Bangalore, India. Meanwhile, the soothing water sounds at *Boca de Agua* immerse us in the oneiric retreat crafted by *Frida Escobedo Studio* in Bacalar, Mexico.



Introducing  
**Honestly...**  
Ketiv Toloraia

Ketiv Toloraia sewed the seeds of her craft without knowing it had a name. Born and raised in Tbilisi, Georgia, her early life was immersed in the art of transformation, a natural prelude to her eventual path in interior design. This was not a mere choice, but rather a calling that beckoned her from a young age. She spent countless hours rearranging spaces, “building cardboard houses in the yard,” and experimenting with design long before realising it could be a career. “What was once just a game for me as a child is what I do for a living today,” she reflects, a senti-

ment that captures the seamless fusion of passion and profession that defines her work.

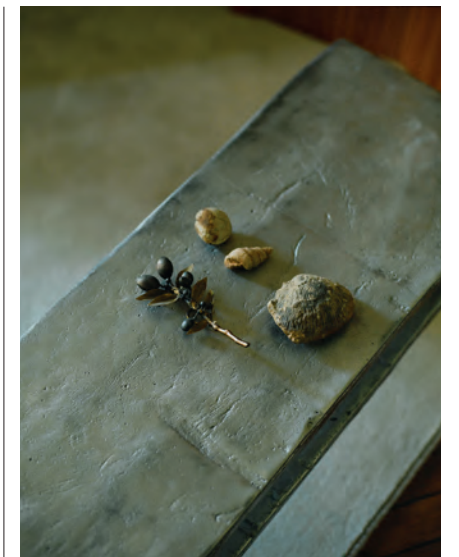
In 2007, Ketiv co-founded Rooms Studio with her college friend Nata Janberidze. This partnership, born out of a shared vision rather than a calculated strategy, marked the inception of a journey that would see them emerge as pioneers in the Georgian creative

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scene. What began as an instinctive pursuit of enthusiasm has evolved over seventeen years into a practice defined by its unique — an “elusive concept,” as Ketiv puts it— visual language. Their early projects were heavily influenced by European styles, a result of the “Soviet vacuum” in which they were raised. However, as travel and exposure to global perspectives expanded, they began to carve out a distinct identity.

This evolution was about finding a voice that resonated with their roots — “an honest expression of ourselves,” Ketiv prefers to say.





Both she and Nata grew up during a time of great political upheaval in Georgia, a period that remarkably shaped their work. The chaos and challenges of their Soviet childhood are mirrored in the contrasts that define Rooms Studio's creations: blending brutality with a subtle feminist approach, merging tradition with innovation, and harmonising functionality with decoration. Keti skillfully navigates the tension between these opposing forces: "Contradictions are something I am quite familiar with." Their undertaking, she emphasises, is not about creating grand narratives but about reflecting the present, capturing the dynamic energy of the here and now while "subtly acknowledging the past." The future is not a fixation for her.

For Keti, design is not merely about aesthetics; it is a "powerful cultural artefact", a means of communication that goes beyond the visual to touch on the emotional. "Design is functionality, and art is an expression

of emotions. I think our practice intuitively combines both through our instincts," she explains. This approach –multidisciplinary by nature, or "a chain reaction" in her words– is evident in Rooms Studio's work, where each collectible piece and space is sculpted to evoke a feeling, to tell a story that resonates on a deeply personal level.

Her creative process is profoundly moulded by her experiences of place, both in Georgia and Paris, where she currently resides. These two cities, though geographically distant, share a certain "authenticity and artistic lifestyle" that ignites Keti's creativity. Tbilisi, with its rich historical tapestry ranging from folk art to Soviet brutality, serves as a wellspring of inspiration. Yet, Keti remains focused on the present time. "It's about observing the current moment and integrating that dynamic energy into our work."

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Embedded within their expansive portfolio is a significant endeavour: redefining a new vernacular for Georgian design by echoing the country's rich cultural heritage while embracing modern sensibilities. This commitment explains why this duo's philosophy is unavoidably rooted in a sincere respect for local craftsmanship. "Think globally, act locally" is their guiding mantra. By employing traditional materials and techniques, such as "reclaimed timber from demolished houses and locally sourced natural stones," Rooms Studio creates designs that are not only beautiful but also meaningful, bridging the past with the now in a way that feels both authentic and innovative.

Keti's home in 'la ville lumière' is a testament to this philosophy. With its classic Parisian character—white walls, high ceilings—it serves as both a canvas and a mirror. "In many ways this home serves as a self-portrait—a reflection of both myself and the essence of Rooms Studio," she admits, underscoring the intimate connection between the inhabitant and the space. Stepping into this ethereal environment, one is immediately enveloped by the sense of serenity that permeates the space. It is a feeling she intentionally cultivates, understanding that interior design is not just about creating beautiful spaces but about making people feel at ease. A friend once remarked that Keti's apartment made her feel "very calm" after her first visit, a compliment that speaks to the heart of Keti's ethos: to conceive, craft, and deliver with honesty.

As she looks to the future, Keti channels her energy into the work at hand, confident that the rest will naturally follow. For her, the path of design is not about reaching a destination but about continuing the dialogue—always listening, always learning, and always imagining. ○

