



PEEP SHOW

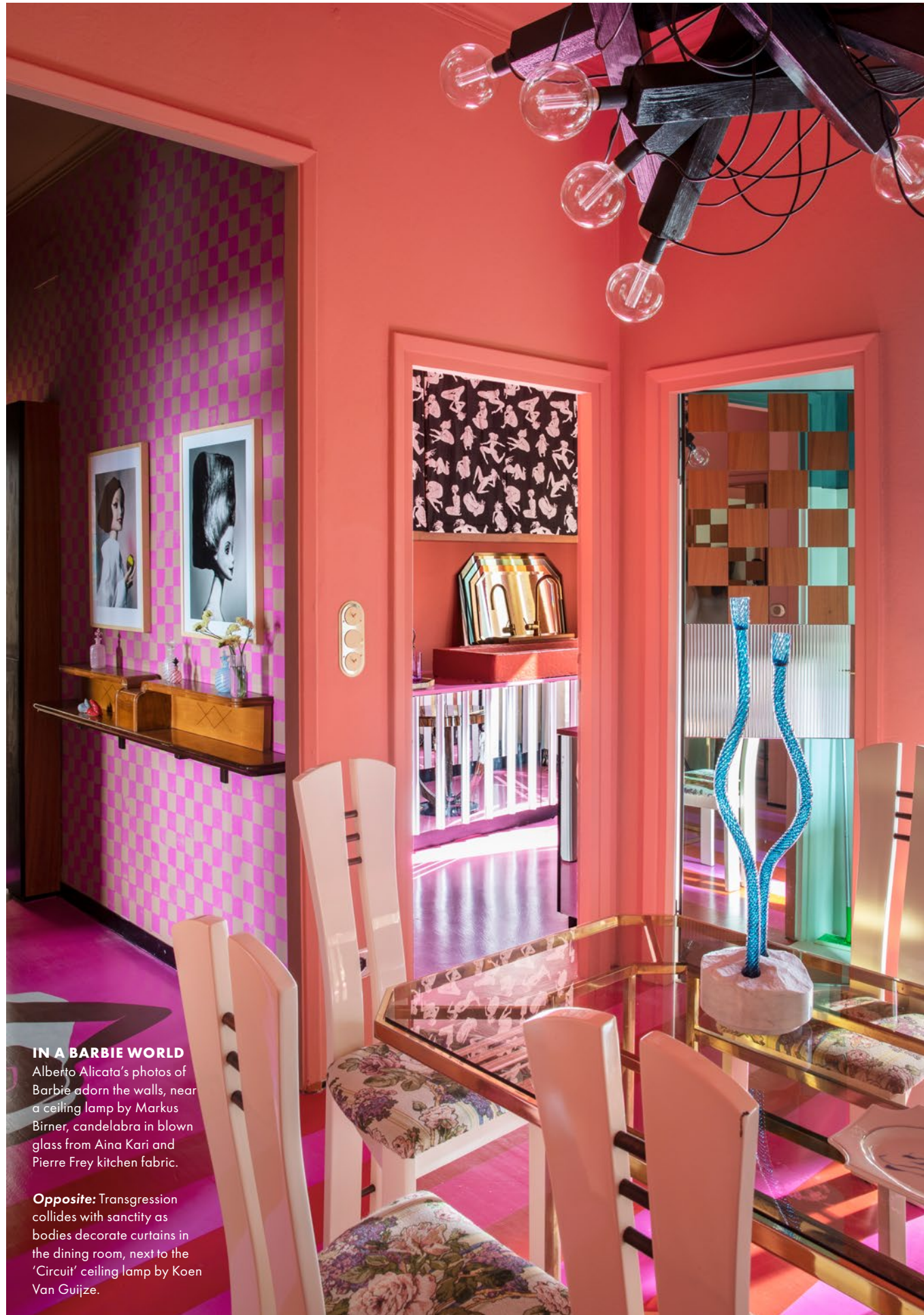
For Salone del Mobile, designer Maria Vittoria Paggini transformed her Milan apartment, creating a maximalist colourful 'part abode, part gallery' that is tinged with the surreal and the sensual.

PHOTOGRAPHY HELENIO BARBETTA • WORDS ANNA BISAZZA



RHAPSODY IN PINK
The abode is one long conversation in colour, with black pendant lamp by Markus Birner, vintage table and chairs, plus door design by Maria Vittoria Paggini.

Opposite: The living room stars rounded minimalist sofas, parquet floors plus whimsical wallpaper from Tatiana Brodatch.



IN A BARBIE WORLD

Alberto Alicata's photos of Barbie adorn the walls, near a ceiling lamp by Markus Birner, candelabra in blown glass from Aina Kari and Pierre Frey kitchen fabric.

Opposite: Transgression collides with sanctity as bodies decorate curtains in the dining room, next to the 'Circuit' ceiling lamp by Koen Van Gujze.



VINTAGE FINDS

The vintage 'Domus' white and blue chair and vintage gold floor lamp share space with the pink vanity designed by Ilaria Ferraro.

Opposite: In a bedroom, a scene by illustrator Damiano Groppi depicts moments of conviviality, illuminated by a FontanaArte lamp.





DRESSED TO THRILL
Paggini's personal clothes hang above a coffee table designed by her, with the design on the wardrobe by Michele Chiocciolini.

Opposite: The bathroom features original Girotondo furnishings by Mamoli plus a vintage mirror.





THE MUSE THAT ROARED

Paggini relies on her instinct to “raise or lower the volume” in a room, here combining curtains by Michele Chiocciolini, a green coffee table designed by Paggini and Tisettanta sofa.

“I love exaggerating contrasts, taking them to an extreme. Everything is a challenge, really.”

Fasten your seatbelts. Maria Vittoria Paggini wants to test your perceptions by taking you on a riveting journey through Casa Ornella, her ‘part home, part gallery’ apartment in Milan. For the second year in a row, the exuberant interior designer gave the 150 square metre abode a complete makeover, unveiling it during the annual Milan Design Week. Set in a 1930s residential building in the area of Navigli, and with this year’s catchy theme – ‘Porno Chic’ – it was guaranteed to surprise. “Despite the exaggeration of nude figures, as you can see, the house doesn’t want to be pornographic. By normalising these images I almost want them to disappear, inviting viewers to move beyond exposed bodies,” explains Paggini.

The show begins in the living room under a circus-inspired ceiling that creates an uplifting optical effect. The space is animated by curtains covered in childlike illustrations, hand-painted by artist and designer Michele Chiocciolini. While living in the apartment for a week, he drew on bedsheets that Paggini later transformed into drapes by adding trimmings and velvet. The room also has a sculptural light installation, rounded minimalist sofas and parquet floors painted in black and white. What’s the thread going through it?

“My gut feeling, actually. And the more distant I feel from a given object in terms of aesthetic, the more I want to use it. I love exaggerating contrasts, taking them to an extreme. Everything is a challenge, really.”

With no clear signal of a period or a place, this home is meant to disorient, to be strange, to send viewers reaching for their own buoy. “While often designers tend to be bound by rules, matching elements to create fluid spaces, by choice I go the complete opposite direction. I see it as freedom to dip into my own imagination in order to fully expose my character and soul.”

Paggini also consciously avoids finding inspiration in film or other sorts of images to preserve her own untainted artistic expression. The only ingredients to stir the right mood are good music – with the intoxicating song by Raffaella Carrà, *A far l’amore comincia tu*, as this year’s soundtrack for Casa Ornella – and a bottle of bubbly.

The foot rug left to hang from the sofa to the ground, as if it were usable art, is by artist Tatiana Brodatch. “She was already part of the project because the wallpaper I created for the study uses the images of her nude plasticine bodies, reworked into a graphic setting. In one of our meetings, I saw her drawing of the

foot and was immediately attracted to it because I’ve always had this awkward reticence to show my feet. I guess it’s my indirect way to get over it!”

At the centre of the home, the dining room with flowery 1970s-style chairs is surrounded by the entrance, the wardrobe room, the kitchen and the bathroom, all dimensions in their own right behind custom-made doors in mirror, flute glass and chequered wood. The long narrow kitchen exudes a disco feel with a neon LED lamp accentuating the predominant pink hues. Pierre Frey fabric is turned into sliding panels that hide shelves. An Egyptian pharaoh lamp from a flea market sits next to a double induction hob. Lower push cabinets in slated wood and mirror encase everything else a kitchen needs. The photograph of the Barbie, among others in the home, is by Alberto Alicata, a project in collaboration with Mattel to recreate iconic fashion shoots.

“In this house every time you turn around you notice a different detail, particularly through the reflections from small and large mirrors or through actual holes in the wall,” says Paggini. For example, a first glimpse of the bathroom, with its yellow-and-white striped curtains mixed with a turquoise ceiling, may evoke images of Amalfi’s fresh summery vibe.

Once inside, however, whether by rotating the luscious rounded mixers designed by Paggini with Mamoli, or noticing the reflection of the seemingly innocent monochromatic mural, one’s whole perception changes.

Because of the variety of all elements, it’s all too easy to think that the designer just randomly assembles unrelated items.

“Sure, I work a lot on instinct, but my choices are reasoned following a balance of my own. I know exactly where to raise or lower the volume,” she says.

Probably the strongest clash and most beautiful scene is viewed when peeping into the bedroom from the circular wall hole in the study. Grandma’s embroidered bedspread and floral curtains are surmounted by a stunning pop mural by illustrator Damiano Groppi. Perceived transgression and sanctity co-exist, becoming pure poetry. Perhaps there is no conflict at all and erotic figures, homosexuality and grandmothers should all belong to the same natural realm.

During the week-long event, more than 10,000 people lined up to get a taste of Paggini’s eccentric aesthetic. “I’m very happy that this year’s theme had such a positive response,” she says. “It could have gone wrong in so many ways: be labelled as trashy or excessively hardcore. Instead it appealed to people of all ages and more importantly they understood the underlying playfulness that I wanted to convey.”

MILAN APARTMENT

GAME OF PEEKABOO

Before you look into the bedroom through the porthole, admire this room's 'Pole Dancers' lamp by Koen Van Gujze, the glass and marble candelabra from Aina Kari and table designed by Paggini.

