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# IN CONVERSATION WITH NOUR AL NIMER



# A Mag meets the up-and-coming Turkish-Palestinian luxury home décor designer, whose background and identity is deeply embedded in her exquisite creations. We tip her for great things

Nour al Nimer speaks with a softness and matter of factness you'd normally attribute to someone twice her age. That might be because she's had twice the amount of life experience for her years. At 31 Nimer has studied, worked and travelled all over the world, and by 28 had established her own tableware and home décor business. Appropriately named Nimerology, her works are sold online and exhibited in both London and Beirut. She's never looked back.

Raised by a Turkish mother and Palestinian father, Nour grew up in Beirut surrounded by art, courtesy of her art collector dad Rami's Dar El-Nimer, an independent non-profit foundation for arts and culture. It's that upbringing that spurred her interest in chinaware.

"My love for ceramics was instigated whilst growing up because of my father's Islamic art collection, particularly Ottoman art that consists mainly of ceramics, manuscripts, textiles and furniture," she says. "I grew up with a lot of it around me and found his Iznik pottery collection simply exquisite. I'm captivated by the impact Chinese porcelain had on Ottoman ceramics and what a significant role it had in its production and decoration and on its influence on European porcelain like Meissen and Rococo Turquerie. I am also very passionate about textiles and embroidery, Ottoman and Mogul textiles from my father's collection inspire my floral designs. And above all Palestinian cross-stitch embroidery, which is a vital and valuable symbol of my Palestinian heritage and roots."



For Nimer designing tableware is important because it goes back to the tradition of inviting neighbors and friends into the home to share a meal. This is especially applicable to occasions such as weddings, funerals, and others. "People always come together and socialize around food," she says.

Her designs feature floral illustrations, patterns – even historic photographs, and cover everything from fabrics, tableware and chairs, and her inspiration comes on the whole from her travels and multicultural background.

Nimer left Beirut when she was 17 to study in Britain, completing a degree in Surface Print Design at the London College of Communication, and later an MA in Fine Arts from the Chelsea School of Art and Design. She moved to Istanbul last year after 13 years in London, looking for change and new beginnings, returning to a city she spent time in as a child. And though the Turkish metropolis is her base it's the visual experience she brings back from her travels that fills her thought provoking designs.

"I travel a lot and I try to experience new cultures as much as I can, which is what most of my collections are based on," she says. Her most recent project, I Left My ♥ in Mexico, came about after a trip to the South American country, and comprised a limited edition collection of 200 plates for traveling decorative arts gallery Gabrielle & Guillaume. They sold out in a week. The plates were inspired by Mexican textile and sculpture, made clear through the earthly colors of deep blue, teal, and maroon, and embroidered with flowers and animals in black and gold, highlighting Nimer's fascination with nature.

Her experience in Mexico and the way it is manifested in her work is mostly personal, for it's not entirely obvious to everyone that the plates were inspired by that particular country. It's her own interpretation of what she saw, she says.

"When you look at my collection, you can't immediately tell it's from Mexico," Nimer says. "Each individual connection [to the works] could be different."

Her work also includes bowls, cups, saucers, cake stands, teapots, and dinner sets, and as well as being sold at various outlets, she has been exhibited both in Europe and the Middle East. Nimerology's plates are replete with colours, nature motifs, and iconic landmarks, like one of two birds of prey perched atop a blue-painted St. Mark's Basilica.

"Nature and texture are an integral part of my design. You will always find flowers or animal motifs in every one of my collections. Flowers, trees, plants are often plucked from nature and brought into our homes to make them

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a coming collection.

Nimer emphasizes that as a designer, she is driven by her love of beautiful things, a further reason why travel is so important to her work: her exposure to different cultures and sceneries allows her to express what she has seen and felt in her designs.

What's the purpose of it all? To bring happiness to people's homes, she says: "If I go into someone's home and I see a beautiful table, it makes me happy. As an artist I wish to project the same feeling that I get when I see beautiful things through my designs."

"I love finding the beautiful in something that initially can start off as not so aesthetically appealing: a burnt wooden bench for example. But from there you can look at the formation the ashes have created, the different tones of burnt wood, all the lines that are formed are extremely inspiring," Nimer says. "I want what I make to be welcoming, romantic, but mysterious at the same time."

[Nimerology.com](http://Nimerology.com)

more beautiful. I try to explore that in my designs and products by adding those elements," she says.

While Nimer sees Beirut and London, the cities she grew up in and spent much of her early adulthood, as home, and has been moulded by her Palestinian and Turkish heritage, her constant travel means she also manifests as belonging to a larger global heritage. "I definitely see myself as being half Palestinian, half Turkish... Being Palestinian is a big part of who I am, my growing up and my identity. My childhood is in Lebanon but I also spent a big chunk of my life in London. I'm everywhere."

Most recently she's been to Angkor Wat in Siem Reap, Cambodia, which had a profound effect. Watching the sunrise at the temple complex and studying people's reactions to it proved to be a "very special and spiritual" experience, inspiring her to incorporate what she saw in

Previous pages and this page: 'I left my heart in Mexico,' limited edition collection exclusive to Gabrielle & Guillaume

