



## IN LIVING COLOUR

*With a passion for art, history and design, Nour al Nimer's bold Istanbul home is a lesson in fusing culture with creature comforts*

*Photography by ETHAN MANN  
Words by MADDISON GLENDINNING*

As the doors open to Nour al Nimer's spacious Istanbul home, you're immediately welcomed into a space that is part home, part private art gallery. The walls are lined with artworks – “most of which are from my father's private collection,” the 32-year-old Turkish-Palestinian tells *Bazaar* – and the interior has been purposefully designed with copious amounts of character. Furniture is oversized, the colours bold, and that's exactly the way Nour had envisioned her home of nearly two years to be. “The house has an eclectic, modern style. Our close family friend, the talented Berna Bora, orchestrated the construction. She has an early modernist style and impeccable attention to detail, which I greatly admire. Berna is heavily influenced by the legendary Pierre Chareau, Charlotte Perriand and Eileen Gray, a pioneer of the Modern Movement in architecture.” Before moving into the four-bedroom house, which she shares with her dog Mr Miyagi, Nour lived in London for 13 years. “I felt like it was time for a change,” she says of the move. “Even though I am half-Turkish and have spent a lot of time in Istanbul over the years, I had never really lived there full-time except for a brief period when I was very young. After a few years of construction work, the house was finally ready and I thought that it was the right moment to live in Turkey.” ▶

Nour al Nimer atop the bespoke marble table that forms the centre of her dining room in Istanbul. The paintings are by Egyptian artist Omar El-Nagdi. Nour wears a jacket by Balmain and shoes by Gucci





Nour wears dress by Erdem. Shoes by Gucci



The living room features lounge chairs by Carl Hansen, floor lamps "in the style of Angelo Lelli for Arredoluce, Italy circa 1952", Murano, Gino Cenedese table lamps, antique carpets from her father's collection and paintings by Laila Shawa, Abdul Rahman Katanani and Raed Issa

Istanbul is a city that's close to her heart, and the Grand Bazaar is one of her favourite places in town. "There's something so magical about it," she says. "It feels like a maze, always leading you to something new and delightful." The Chora church is another highlight. "It's a Byzantine church which was converted into a mosque during the Ottoman era that has since turned into a museum. It has the most beautiful surviving mosaics and frescoes. The rich colour purple that's very dominant in the mosaics is that of Byzantium, and you can also see it on the murals of the Hagia Sophia." She adds, "If you visit Istanbul at the end of April you can see the Bosphorus lined with Judas trees and the city is cloaked in that magnificent purple."

Nour describes her house as her sanctuary. "I aspire to have a functional living space that is aesthetically appealing. What I love about my home is the amount of light that shines through, the high ceilings and the garden. In summer, the garden is magical and the ultimate luxury."

An avid collector, her home is decorated with artworks and antiques that she's sourced "from various galleries and fairs in Brussels and Paris, as well as from Mozaik and 1930s antique shops in Istanbul." She makes informed purchases and likes to have a good level of knowledge about the creator before investing. One of her favourite paintings is by Palestinian artist Abdul Rahman Katanani that hangs in the living room. "He lives in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon. Most of the materials he uses, such as barbed wire and scrap metal, are sourced from the camp. I visited his studio in the camp a few years ago before he became increasingly famous and I was impressed and moved by his work. I have the most profound respect for him and the work he does," she explains passionately.

A supporter of Turkish artists in particular, other treasured artworks include three pieces by the up-and-coming artist Gokcen Dilek Acay, who uses human hair to create "the most beautiful and intricate art pieces," and her living room ceiling, a masterpiece in itself, is encrusted with glass artwork by Muge Arslan, which is also present on cabinet walls. The next work she is hoping to add to her collection is a video installation by female multimedia artist Inci Eviner from Polath, who is based in Istanbul.

In the dining room is a rectangular 575 Gio Ponti wall lamp from the 1960s, one of her favourite antiques, and a bespoke marble table with brass legs that's perfect for entertaining (her go-to dish is spicy minced beef tacos). This is fitting given that stylish entertaining is the driving

Below: "The hand forged silver and brass three-globes candleholders are from my favourite store in Stockholm called Svenskt Tenn. Sigurd Persson designed them in the 1960s and I just love their organic form. I travel a lot and I collect objects from most places I visit to create everlasting memories"



"These are plates from my Sunehra collection, which was inspired by one of my trips to Rajasthan"



Nour wears jacket by Valentino, trousers by Alice + Olivia and shoes by Gianvito Rossi





"Most of the pieces in the library are personal items that were sourced from different places that I have visited over the years. The framed drawings are by Gustave Fraipont. They are sketches from his travels in Asia. They are a gift from my father and are especially dear to me," says Nour. Dress, Rami Kadl. Bags, Céline

force behind Nour's business. She founded luxury tableware company Nimerology in London in 2012 after studying surface print design and mastering in Fine Arts at Chelsea College of Art and Design. "After college, I worked with ceramics, furniture, textiles and wallpaper and this is where my passion for tableware started," she tells *Bazaar*, though she adds that her family also played an integral role in her career choice. "There's no question that my interest in porcelain comes from growing up surrounded by my father's Ottoman art collection. Plus, my mother's elegantly dressed dinner table played a big role in what I do today."

Nour's inspiration for new collections originates from her extensive travels, before materialising into her intricate designs – the collection she is currently working on is inspired by "Ottoman floral motifs and geometric patterns" that will launch in late spring. Overall, she says, Nimerology is about high-end, luxury tableware in limited edition designs using the highest quality European porcelain or bone china – "I like to think of it as haute couture tableware design."

When it comes to her interior style, Nour says she's "definitely attracted to bold colours and prints" and this aesthetic translates into her wardrobe. Brimming with bright, graphic pieces and several statement handbags in a myriad of colours, you get the sense that the maximalist vibe that Gucci's Alessandro Michele has ushered back in is her sartorial soulmate. "As much as I appreciate and admire fashion, I also love its lighter and more playful side," she says pointing to a graphic printed two-piece silk suit by Sandra Mansour, "What initially attracted me to this was the text on the shirt that says 'psycho!'" she laughs.

When getting dressed, Nour says she always considers comfort "unless we're talking about shoes. Then comfort takes a back seat." Accessorising comes naturally to her and she has a passion for jewellery in particular. "I assume I was probably a jewellery designer in my previous life. I appreciate everything about it, from its craftsmanship to shapes and forms. The right piece can lighten up the simplest outfits and lift the lowest of moods." Her favourites include "a scarab ring gifted to me by my mother and designed by a dear friend of hers. She wears a similar ring, which makes it all the more special. My other favourite piece is a turquoise ring I bought from an Afghani jeweller in Portobello market when I first moved to London 15 years ago."

Nour's wardrobe is also home to an abundance of handbags by ethical Lebanese designer Sarah Beydoun, whose bags are handcrafted by female prisoners. "Sarah's creations are optimistic and whimsical," Nour says of what draws her to them. "Beyond her design talent, I also have a lot of admiration for Sarah and the work that she and her team do to empower underprivileged women in Lebanon. I have so much respect for her – we need more women like her."

With her eye for detail and heart for pieces with purpose, from accessories to antiques, Nour al Nimer's house is a indeed sanctuary. And whether in her plates, paintings or playful pieces of clothing, she truly leads a colourful life. ■



Bags by Sarah's Bag and sunglasses by Illesteva. (Insert) Bags clockwise from top: Hermès, Edie Parker, Balenciaga, Sarah's Bag, Fendi, Les Petits Joueurs, Fendi



Bags, Chanel. Boots, Saint Laurent

STYLING: MALAK FABBAT



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*Nour al Nimer*

Nour wears shirt and trousers by Sandra Mansour. Shoes by Miu Miu. (On the floor) Bag by Sarah's Bag. Shoes (from left) Aquazzura and Manolo Blahnik. (On table) Bag by Butler & Wilson. Sunglasses by Miu Miu