

design

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home

MINDFUL of **OUR SPIRIT**

seeking
the sublime

BLACK + WHITE DESIGN

FINDING BALANCE

C'est du beau

A vintage kimono. Italian porcelain stoneware tiles. Chairs by Moritz Schmid. A vintage kimono. Italian porcelain stoneware tiles. Chairs by Moritz Schmid. A vintage kimono. Italian porcelain stoneware tiles. Chairs by Moritz Schmid. A vintage kimono. Italian porcelain stoneware tiles. Chairs by Moritz Schmid. A vintage kimono. Italian porcelain stoneware tiles. Chairs by Moritz Schmid. A vintage kimono. Italian porcelain stoneware tiles. Chairs by Moritz Schmid. A vintage kimono. Italian porcelain stoneware tiles. Chairs by Moritz Schmid. A vintage kimono. Italian porcelain stoneware tiles. Chairs by Moritz Schmid.



Designer Isabelle Richards elicits a bohemian design sensibility

ENTRANCE Richards transformed the existing front door, painting it a bronze tone and changing the hardware. Disparate pieces define the **LIVING ROOM**. Le Corbusier's Lampe de Marseille, a secondhand Malawi rattan armchair and a USM Haller credenza shares space with a terracotta carafe from Atelier Polyhedre.

Delémont, Switzerland

A blank slate can be overwhelming or inspirational. And whether one sees the possibilities as endless or in short supply, transforming standard-issue, off-the-rack rooms into interiors of distinction is no easy operation. But when done deftly – as Isabelle Richards has at her residence in Switzerland – banality is banished but good.

Built in 2003, the house she calls home in Delémont, the capital of the Swiss canton of Jura, in the Jura mountains bordering France, was a ho-hum, open-plan affair with little in the way of pleasing charm or detail when she acquired it in 2019. “The main challenge,” she describes, “was to rearrange the spaces, which were poorly defined, to delineate them according to function, and to bring value to the whole with sober, natural, quality finishing materials.”

Although the house now presents a simple, direct and unassuming aspect, it took quite an intervention to achieve this effect. The kitchen and bathroom were utterly reworked, and the staircase, which opened directly onto the kitchen, was refreshed and closed off a bit with a partition wall to create a better flow and visual definition. “All the floors were renovated,” notes Richards. “Italian porcelain stoneware tiles bring a touch of minerality to the first floor, while upstairs, genuine Swiss-made linoleum was chosen for its ecological and insulating properties.”

“Because the standardized aspect of the house was not entirely erased by the renovation, the furnishings and décor were carefully thought out, allowing me to give the house its own identity,” shares Richards. “Objects are displayed as a piece of art with no particular function other than to intrigue. But each object has been chosen to harmonize with the whole, and I’ve left nothing to chance.”

Richards’ approach is evident at every turn. In the living room, she hung a vintage kimono on the wall above a low cabinet from the long-established Swiss manufacturer, USM. Her office is outfitted with a classic Eames molded fiberglass chair and an antique watchmaker’s stool that belonged to her grandparents. A rustic bench found in a French flea market sits at the foot of her bed. For the entrance, she designed a storage unit, which was made by a local carpenter of reclaimed oak from an old Jura farm. Swiss design and craftsmanship are abundantly reflected in the home, with chairs by Moritz Schmid and Max Bill’s Ulm Stool, copper vases and alabaster boxes from Zürich’s Atelier Volvox and bespoke fabrics infused with plant-based dyes from the Lausanne-based studio, Ottuno.



The simple kitchen features oak cabinets and quartz countertops.



Truly designed for rest, the **PRIMARY BEDROOM** is punctuated with pleasingly scaled pieces, including a Bonbon pendant lamp by Hay and Jasper Morrison cork stools. **BATHROOM** A cantilevered vanity is backed by large-format stoneware tiles from La Roche di Rex.

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For all the intentionality of her design, Richards muses that the choices one makes sometimes spring from something deeper than the immediate aims of a project. "I think that in Switzerland, as in the rest of the world, there are a lot of style trends circulating at the same time, with varied color palettes. I have interior designer friends in Switzerland who have a very different universe

from mine, very colorful and punchy. My rather neutral, natural palette, with a few colorful touches, such as terra-cotta or lemon yellow, and natural materials – wood, ceramics, cotton and linen – are in line with my personality and philosophy of life. I'm sensitive to the themes of ecology, nature, animals and plants, and this probably has a major influence on my aesthetic and ethical choices."



HOME OFFICE
Richards works from a simple desk made of three-ply oiled spruce, mounted on industrial legs.