In designing his light-filled Milan flat, Samer Alanen conjured a space fit for his playful and unique creations.

Writet: Chiara del Canto
Photography: Heleno Barbetta
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Flooded with natural light and boasting a large terrace, the house-studio-gallery has become Samer Alameen’s HQ.

Alameen has chosen one of the liveliest squares in Milan and found an apartment with the exact layout he had in mind, on the top floor of a building that still retains its original features. Flooded with natural light and boasting a very large terrace, the house-studio-gallery where industrial designer Samer Alameen lives has quickly also become his headquarters.

Lebanese-born Alameen studied and worked in Beirut until 2012, which is when he moved to Milan, discovering the city with the same enthusiasm of those who have always lived there. “I could have moved to London, where I wouldn’t have had to learn a new language,” he says. “But design is in Milan.”

After working in graphic design and advertising and founding his own studio in Beirut where he organized events for major brands, he realized that his passion lay in design. It all began with the classic Thonet chair, once the undisputed protagonist of Beirut cafes, before they were replaced with cheap plastic knock-offs. Alameen decided to rethink the chair using steel to embellish it, returning all the dignity that had been stripped away from it. The result was a surprising and immediate success, which garnered him plenty of media attention, a Masters degree from the Scuola Politecnica di Design in Milan, a debut exhibition during the Salone del Mobile 2014 and later, step by step, the creation of a collection that would showcase his unique design language.

Alameen has a taste for challenges, a sense of genuine Mediterranean hospitality, and a cunning marketing acumen. His ambitions are those of someone who masters the mechanisms of advertising well— he does not undertake typical routes, nor does he wait for opportunities to fall serendipitously into his lap. Instead, Alameen encourages and provokes them.

In his large living room are two pieces of Marbrebois, the table he designed to transform into three different tops made of three different marbles—depending on the inspiration of the moment. The tables are accompanied by the Khayyaran chairs, the steel version of the Thonet seats that gave rise to everything. From here, the large terrace in sight, where Leaf Me Alone seats can be found—and even be used as single beds outdoors.

For the smallest room, one devoted to relaxation, the owner has chosen a strong text colour to cover the sofa and the wall behind it, in a sort of orange peel effect. The walls in the rest of the house, however, are painted white. “I can stay in a baroque hotel, but the house must be white like the canvas of a painter,” explains Alameen. A corridor to the bedrooms and the study guarantees extra privacy.

The furniture, created by the owner himself, fits the house as though it had been designed specifically for its dimensions and feel. Some of the pieces express a slightly surreal mood, such as the Kip mirror, while others—like the Light-and-Seek lamp, ranked by The New York Times among the 10 most interesting lamps of the Salone del Mobile 2016—reveal a more conceptual approach. Modularity and scalability are part of Alameen’s vision, through which he does not approach design as simply furnishing a space. He explores a broader view instead, building and weaving stories in the process, and this house is undoubtedly the best testament to his wonderfully unique style.

In the relaxation room, the coffee table from the Uncovered collection in copper and Carrara marble stands out. The copper is part of the Mosaic collection by Golran and the Tactile handpainted door opens to the designer Samer Alameen’s HQ.
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In the relaxation room, the coffee table from the Undercover collection is in copper and Carrara marble with inlays. The copper top is part of the collection designed by Golran and the Tercio lamp by Flos, Opposite: Designer Samer Alameen.

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In the living room, the United Division cabinet, covered in fabric by the designer, Around the Mescalosa table are the Kajafellion chairs in steel, on sale at Dilmos.

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