

Exuberant green

JEWEL

Ester Bruzkus Architekten transformed a top-floor apartment into a cosy attic for a Berlin couple living a vegan lifestyle.

Photography by Robert Rieger



Instead of applying a conventional approach by creating a series of rooms, the design team at Ester Bruzkus Architekten opted to place a green millwork box in the center of this long apartment. Surrounding the stage are rooms that look out on two sides towards the view of the city while, inside, a more private string of bathing rooms. Thanks to the open floor plan, circulation can flow around all sides making the most of existing material conditions such as large floor-to-ceiling windows and exposed concrete walls.

Throughout the apartment the rich palette of colors and materials has been used: travertine, marble, limestone, quartzite, glasses of different characters, brass, stainless steel, and rich colored fabrics. Furthermore, since the owners are vegan, no animal products were used.

As soon as you enter the house you see the box lacquered in a deep green where one edge of it is a built-in library that anchors the generous living room. It pairs perfectly with warm golds, violets and brown tones to play off the cool concrete ceiling and wall - contrasting materials and colors, and carefully crafted details to make a home that is at once fresh and welcoming. On the opposite side, a hearth made from travertine Sierra ebru stone, red travertine, brass, and thin plates of stainless steel was placed - the design strategy is to create relationships between the boxes. The hand-tufted from botanical silks carpet and the earthy chartreuse sofa take up the colors of the hearth.



“Mixing cold and warm tones in just the right way is very important.”
Ester Bruzkus, Founder and architect at Ester Bruzkus Architekten



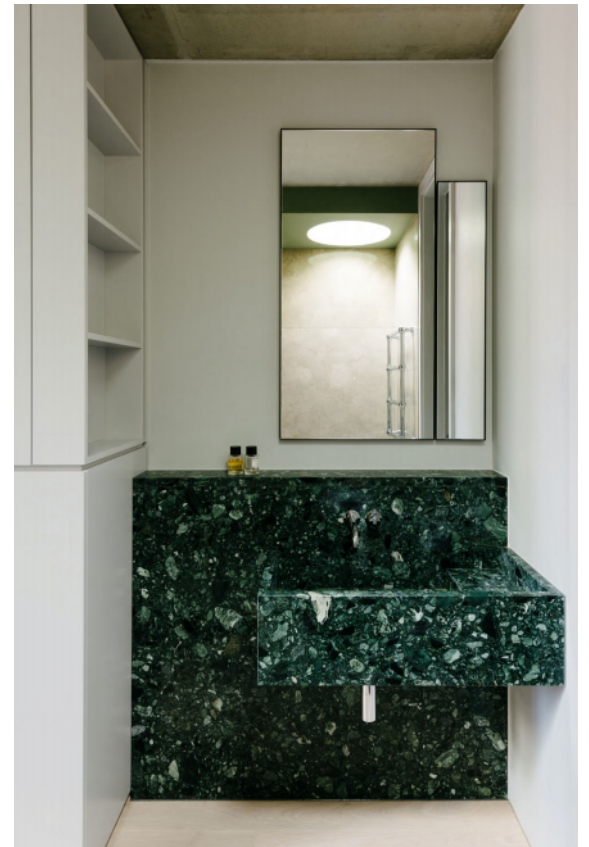
“I thought it would be fun to have a green kitchen. When you expect everything to be one way, it should absolutely be another.”
Ester Bruzkus



On one of the two glazed sides there is the kitchen which opens onto continuous balconies which allow the space to expand outwards. The kitchen-cabinet occupies one of the long sides of the green box; a roll-out modular sauna is also hidden inside. An important detail is that the ceiling is part of the box and is held away from the concrete ceiling. In this way, the “box” is not just a freestanding object, but it makes rooms. The kitchen counter, backsplash and shelves are made of natural green-and-violet quartzite. The cooking island combines the quartzite and the lacquered wood with black-tinted glass and is covered by a playful and sculptural lighting by

PSLab, who provided all of the lights for the apartment. Ribbed boards form the front of the built-in refrigerator door.

On the opposite side there are the two bathrooms, one for the master and one for the guests, united by the use of green marble and custom-made wardrobes in shades of dove gray and purple. In both spaces we find green marble sinks, black steel door fronts and pink Corian basins; the shower and bathtub are made from a pale limestone that harmonizes with the other tones. The design also uses the simple geometry of the circle in a number of ways: in the design of handles for the cabinetry, in an oversized round mirror, and



in a circular skylight that was built above the shower. All of the materials are brought together with the careful detailing that characterizes the work of Ester Bruzкус Architekten.





“To be a good designer, one has to be a good listener: not only to the needs of the clients, but also to the space - the building really tells you what it wants to be. We think good design combines rational and logical planning with playful contrasts of materials and forms.”
Peter Greenberg, Architect at Ester Bruzкус Architekten

On the fourth side there is a cosy and well-lit bedroom. The centerpiece here is the custom headboard upholstered in exuberant fabric by Josef Frank produced by Svenskt Tenn. An aluminium bedside table by Frama completes the minimalism design. Next to it we find some wardrobes where some mirrored glass walls playfully reflect the green box and the exposed concrete shell. There is also a violet and gray desk integrated with the large circle that acts as a handle (thus recalling a similar detail present in the bathroom).

