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The office in a Miami apartment conceived by Kara Mann.

PHOTO: NATHAN KIRKMAN

A Minimalist Miami Getaway Wows with Spectacular Wrap-Around Views

In a cutting-edge Piero Lissoni building, designer Kara Mann crafts an airy retreat punctuated with bold artworks by Sol Lewitt and Ai Wei Wei

BY JILL SIERACKI

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Interior design clients can run the gamut—from those who are hands off and say “just make it nice” to those who want to be intimately involved in every last detail. But designer Kara Mann had a unique experience when she was approached by a homeowner already established in the industry to create an apartment for her and her family in Miami. “She’s smart, she’s savvy, and she knew what was on her plate at the time, so she reached out to us,” says Mann of her client, who she got to know over the project’s two years of construction. “It was fun to bring something to the table to a peer. It was like half of the battle was gone because she knows the process. She’s such an awesome person and I’m so happy she’s in my life from both a client and friend perspective.”

<https://galeriemagazine.com/kara-mann-miami-apartment/>



A plush custom sectional anchors the living room that boasts a trio of Slab tables from Imperfetto Lab, Stephane Parmentier Scala side table, and Arne Jacobsen chair from Sika Design, set upon a Stark rug.

PHOTO: NATHAN KIRKMAN

The client owned two units in a waterfront South Florida building designed by Italian architect Piero Lissoni that they wanted to reconfigure into one 8,500-square-foot retreat. Mann and her team were tasked with completely reimagining the interior architecture and establishing a new floor plan, something that allowed her to introduce a separate catering kitchen and carve out a glam Art Deco bar in the living room to support the family's love of entertaining, as well as devise a playful bunk room with climbing area and movie room for the kids. By conjoining the spaces, they were also able to access spectacular wrap-around views over ocean, city, and bay, something the wife wanted to fully take advantage of, primarily in the main bath, which she requested to be situated on an exterior wall.



Two vibrant Brent Wadden textile works overlook a custom marble shelf with nickel accents by Kara Mann and trio of Julian Watts sculptures in the dining room.

PHOTO: NATHAN KIRKMAN

For the palette, the client wanted it to be “Miami,” without ardently adhering to the city’s penchant for sleek, crisp white design and bright coastal shades. “She tends to like more monochromatic palettes and then her art was the pop,” says Mann, who coated the interior in Benjamin Moore’s White Dove, then added small doses of subtle beige, pink, and green hues in furniture and accessories. “We wanted it to feel light and airy and ethereal.”

To that end, the designer installed a honed white marble flooring with pale gray veining throughout. The tranquil living room inspires a sense of serenity with its plush cream-colored custom sofa, trifecta of white Slab tables from Imperfetto Lab, and neutral Stark rug. The main bath is a knockout with bookended slabs of Arabescato Corchia marble, a sumptuous Luteca daybed, and modern Stand bathtub from Ex.t.



In the family room, a pair of sofas designed by Kara Mann, Vladimir Kagan slipper chair, custom calf-hair bench, Sebastian Herkner floor lamp, and Sabine Marcelis Candy Cube side table surround a cocktail table by Martha Sturdy.

PHOTO: NATHAN KIRKMAN

The exception to the plan is in the living room where a pair of Sabine Marcellis Candy Cube side tables kicked off a more saturated array of colors, including a matching Vladimir Kagan slipper chair, noirish calfskin bench, and Keung Caputo Sand chair from Salon 94.

Richer hues are also on display in the husband's office where a custom lacquer and vellum desk is surrounded by dark-brown cabinetry inset with a striking artwork by Jorinde Voight, Cassina chairs, and cabernet-colored rug from Woven. "Because the rest of the house is mostly white, we wanted to see how we can make this room feel different," says Mann. "We wanted it to feel masculine but modern. I love the white leather sofa against the dark millwork—we did it in his office to set the tone, but I think that high contrast is something she really loves."



The office in a Miami apartment conceived by Kara Mann features an Jorinde Voigt artwork that overlooks a custom desk. A Cassina armchair, De Padova sofa, and Atlantis Tavoli Bassi cocktail table from Suite NY are situated atop a rug from Woven, while the sconce is from Avenue Road.

PHOTO: NATHAN KIRKMAN

Lighting was also an important element in the residential design. Mann flanked the entry hall with a pair of sculptural sconces from Dimorestudio and added an eye-catching trio of Apparatus sconces to the main bath. “We were very purposeful in how we approached the decorative and architectural lighting,” says Mann.

There was also a very intentional effort to balance the apartment’s smooth surfaces and and the more earthy textures, including the two vibrant textile works by Brent Wadden that animate the dining room that’s defined by an expansive 16-foot dining table, customized from a single slab of bleached ash that needed to be craned into the apartment. “I love when there are two opposite things working together to create this harmony,” says Mann. “If you took those warm, textural, nubby things out, this would feel like a totally different apartment. Adding that texture is almost required to tone that space down.”

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A custom bar cabinet in the living room reflects the Vladimir Kagan slipper chair.
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Providing the finishing touch were remarkable works from the client's extensive collection of art. In the hallway a Sol Lewitt sculpture sits in close proximity to a large-scale canvas by Julie Knifer. Outside the powder room is a piece by Ai Weiwei while a grouping of wooden ball sculptures by Julian Watts animates the dining room. But with so much open space, the apartment offers myriad opportunities for new acquisitions. "I think it's important to build with room to grow," says Mann. "We wanted the home to feel beautiful and elevated but also fun and not too precious."