



art & elegance



A Brazilian artist elevates the style quotient of her home through expressive art works, attention to detail and a touch of nostalgia

Text **Joseph Lim**
Photography **Justin Loh**, Shining Head Media



Having made Singapore her permanent base since 2003, Heloiza Montuori is close by to some of her favourite things such as Asian antiques and accessories, food and cultures. Asia is always a source of inspiration for her. If she's not working on her oil canvas art works, the cheery Brazilian mother of two daughters is flicking through the pages of top interior magazines to get a dose of inspiration. In her spare time, she loves visiting art galleries during her weekend jaunts.

Sao Paulo to Singapore

Heloiza prefers old properties because in her own words, "they have so much personality and soul". She enjoys patching them back either to their old form or creating a brand new identity. She says: "When renovating a space, I always start with a vision. Even though Sao Paulo is where our friends and family are, we have lived in Asia for more than 20 years. We decided to create a second home here and to create a new life that is flexible and hassle free—think no pets, less possessions and fewer plants."

Less is more

In this 1,184-square-foot resale apartment in River Valley, Heloiza wanted to create a cosy and stylish but space-savvy home for herself and her husband. So, they decided to ship most of their possessions back to Brazil and keep those that were relevant for their life in Singapore. The concept was to live on less but have lots of passion to travel, discover new things and make new friends.



You have a deep passion for interior design and home decorating. Share with us some unique features of the home.

Heloiza: I think the personality of the home comes through all thanks to my oil paintings and metal origami sculptures. And if you observe the details of my home, you'll notice that I also kept the old window frames which might otherwise have been thrown out had it been a young couple moving in. I think I appreciate the aged beauty of old things. Anyhow, I think older windows seem to let in more breeze because of the way they were designed.



“We can do sit-down dinners that are intimate or something more relaxed and casual. I think the largest gathering I organised was for 16 people. They were all comfortably seated and I served a Brazilian feijoada feast.”

Heloiza Montuori,
designer & homeowner





What do you love most about your home?

I love the feeling and the atmosphere of this flat. There is a touch of nostalgia of old Singapore, courtesy of the Peranakan tiles and the spacious balcony. I wanted to make sure the flat was done up in a way to maximise the “lifestyle flow”—how one moves from room to room without going through unnecessary doors or tight passageways, if you know what I mean.

So with the renovation I had a few things I wanted to accomplish: to bring back the open balcony, to ensure that the balcony could provide amazing views of leafy River Valley which one does not

see often. But more than just enjoying the amazing views, I created a modern space with an industrial touch (notice my cement screed flooring!) and the door is always open because I enjoy drinks during sunset and impromptu coffee chats with my next-door neighbours.

What kind of advice would you give to people about space management?

Thinking ahead and planning extra storage are very important in a small place. You want to live in a beautiful, cosy flat so you really need to declutter and buy things judiciously. To give a sense of openness

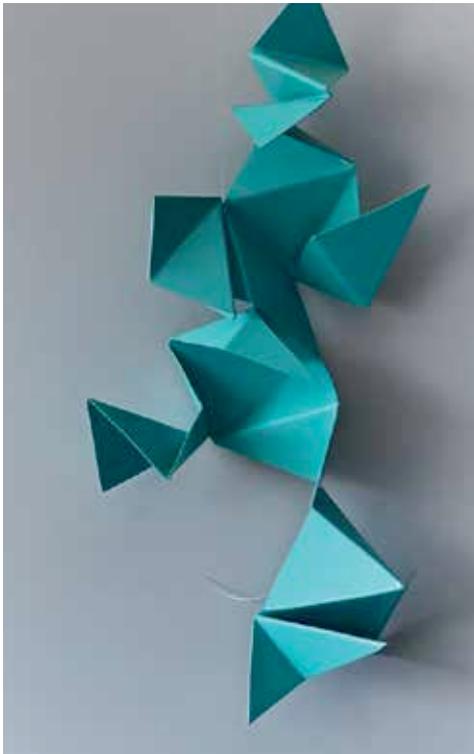


living spaces



“ In our apartment, grey sets the tone, and we pepper it with bright colours found in cushions, accessories and art works. ”

Heloiza Montuori, designer & homeowner









and cohesion in my home's theme, the colour scheme runs consistently throughout the house. In our apartment, grey sets the tone, and we pepper it with bright colours found in cushions, accessories and art works.

When you conceived the idea in your mind, did you follow through with all your plans?

I don't believe in a project that starts and finishes exactly the way you conceptualise it in your head. For us, we believe it should be evolving. Of course, the main ideas remain but the mood and detailing are the elements that create character for the home to make it feel personalised. I think even till this day, decorating is still a work in progress rather than something set in stone.

Where can we find your art pieces that you have created?

The last four years I have done more renovations than exhibitions, so maybe it's easier to see the flats I've done rather than the paintings. At the moment, I would have to say, the art pieces can be found in many houses where these art collectors are friends of mine.

Can you reveal any interior tips that you would like to share with a layman?

I like to make all of my homes simple and open. If the 'shell' (surfaces and walls) is done right, anything you put inside will look beautiful. There is nothing more frustrating than trying to make things work in an environment that is too complex or with too many ideas, materials and textures. ■