

HOMES | HOME TOURS

Home Tour: This Minimalist Apartment in Brazil is a Family's Artistic Sanctuary

By Cheryl Lai-Lim | Aug 17, 2021



COVER Lined with a row of flourishing house plants, this cosy terrace allows one to enjoy a moment of calm

**Boasting enviable views and a calming
ambience, this light-filled home designed
by Carolina Maluhy in Brazil is a treasure
trove of art, antiques and greenery**

Nestled within a towering apartment building in the Jardim Europa neighbourhood in [São Paulo, Brazil](#), is a cosy residence that offers a sprawling scenic view of the iconic Ibirapuera Park, first designed by influential Brazilian architect [Oscar Niemeyer](#).

Large windows line the length of an entire wall within the apartment, allowing both natural daylight to stream in as well as framing a picturesque panorama of the green oasis in the heart of sleek skyscrapers.

The homeowners—Stefania and Francisco Cestero, a well-travelled couple who are ardent art collectors—tasked Brazilian architect [Carolina Maluhy](#) with transforming the space into a comfortable and art-filled abode for them and their two children.



ABOVE The lofty abode boasts scenic views that one can gaze at through the glass windows

Maluhy, who heads her namesake design and architecture studio with offices based in both London and Brazil, sought to fill the home with a soulful character inspired by the owners' love of art as well as the striking surrounding view.

"Given their love for art, design and architecture, they were looking for a simple and bright space to enhance their collection of works of art and vintage furniture, with no unnecessary distractions," says Maluhy. "The concept of this project is the play of light using different shades of white. The art pieces are the protagonists and the counterpart we chose is the lighting."

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- Brazilian architect Carolina Maluhy -

As the homeowners are also fans of hosting musical soirées, the designer centered the design of the lower floor living room around the grand piano, which she deemed as the focal point.

"The personality of the couple, who are both passionate about art, design, music and philanthropy, was key to understanding how to design the perfect setting to display their art and design collection; we also had to accommodate an intimate venue for one of the owner's main hobbies: jam sessions with musicians and friends around the grand piano," Maluhy explains. "The style needed to be minimalistic and neutral, predominantly white with plenty of natural light and simple lines, so as to provide a stage where the exquisite collection and the musical soirées could stand out."



ABOVE The lower living room, furnished with vintage furniture, emits a serene and calming vibe

The striking white palette exudes a serene and calm ambience in the living area. The design team used different textures and tones of white to break up the monotony of the monochromatic palette.

As a nod to Brazilian architecture where wood plays an important vernacular statement, wooden furnishings as well as vintage pieces featuring different kinds of wood with various tones and patterns are incorporated into the living space.

“The neutral tones of the environment make the furniture and artworks the main protagonists of the residence,” says Maluhy. “Brazilian vintage design is known for its handcraft and the use of hardwood, such as is the case in the rare tables and Dinamarquesa armchairs by Jorge Zalsupin, as well as in the iconic Jangada chair by Jean Gillon.”

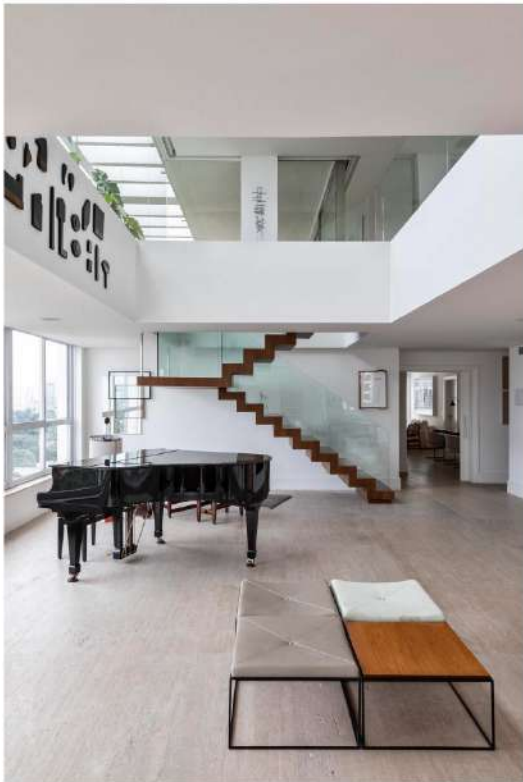


PHOTO 1 OF 3 The grand piano is the focal point of the lower living area, accompanied by Capri benches by Jorge Zalsupin



PHOTO 2 OF 3 The Jangada chair by Jean Gillon, accompanied by a lamp by Sergio Rodrigues, occupy the space alongside the bespoke staircase



PHOTO 3 OF 3 The floating staircase, crafted from Cumaru wood and glass, leads to the upper mezzanine

The grand piano takes pride of place beside a bespoke floating staircase crafted from Cumaru wood, typical of the Northern region of Brazil, as well as glass guardrails. The lofty living space opens up to the upper mezzanine, flooding the space with natural light. An art installation by Brazilian artist Ana Mazzei draws the eye upwards, while Capri benches by Jorge Zalszupin create a cosy seating arrangement for soirées and jam sessions held near the piano.



ABOVE The design team added an automated brise-soleil to help control light flooding into the space



ABOVE A small dining area, with a table by Hugo Franca and chairs by Geraldo de Barros, offers a scenic spot for guests to gather

Upstairs, the previous open terrace was rebuilt from scratch and converted into an alternate communal space that also houses the couple's master bedroom. The ceiling is built with a set of wooden automatic brise soleils, which helps to regulate the natural illumination.

Here, an inviting gathering space is formed with an original vintage raw leather armchair by Lina Bo Bardi, a leather armchair and ottoman by Sergio Rodrigues, and a couple of white armchairs in linen by Joaquim Tenreiro. A decorative pendant wood sculpture by Brazilian contemporary artist Marepe stands out at the back, accompanied by wall art by Alfredo Jaar, Luiz Camitzer, Cildo Meirelles, Gabriel Orozco, and Jorge Machi.



ABOVE The upper living room is an alternate communal living space

A large white linen sofa from Casual Móveis adds to the snug appeal of the living area. Chic wooden coffee tables by Jorge Zalzipin as well as armchairs with cushions upholstered with brown velvet add warmth and depth. A stylish console crafted from Pau Ferro wood designed by Maluhy is home to a couple of smaller artworks and trinkets.

Outside, the eye is immediately drawn to the lush green foliage surrounding the open area. Glass doors sliding through iron frames connect the interior space to the outdoor area. The design team worked closely with landscape designer Renata Tilli to best showcase the verdant greens that line the perimeter of the veranda. A couple of sofas and a wooden coffee table from atelier Pedro Petry create a welcoming retreat where one can lounge and soak in the peaceful ambience.



PHOTO 1 OF 2 The cosy living area allows one to luxuriate outdoors and enjoy a moment of peace



PHOTO 2 OF 2 Glass doors sliding through iron frames connect both spaces

"I like working on projects that privilege natural lighting—clarity is essential for my projects, as well as ventilation. I believe these are two aspects of my work that were happily translated into the design of this particular residence," says Maluhy.

The unified elements are also of importance for the designer. "I think that unity, together with natural light and ventilation, brings a feeling of calmness and serenity, which I deeply value. Adding on the choice of simple and straight lines, another constant in my approach to architecture and design, I believe we were able to achieve this in this project."



ABOVE An artwork by Sara Ramos hangs above a wooden console by Joaquim Tenreiro



ABOVE A cosy nook features a statement art piece by Jonathan de Andrade and a chair by Hugo Franca

The result of eight months of hard work and dedication is a contemporary abode that functions as the perfect stage for the homeowners' diverse art collection and vintage furniture. On the homeowners' favourite spaces around the home, Maluhy shares, "I would say they will enjoy the intimate venue for jam sessions with musicians and friends around the grand piano the most. Also, being surrounded by their beloved art pieces and objects, which helps bring out memories of their day to day life."

Credits

Photography Ruy Teixeira