



HAUTE BOHEMIANS GREECE

MIGUEL FLORES-VIANNA



ATHENIAN GOLD

LEDA ATHANASOPOULOU

LYCABETTUS, ATHENS

Leda Athanasopoulou is only thirty-one years old, and I am most impressed by her aesthetic vision. In the early summer of 2021, Leda's mother, the architect Katerina Tsigarida, invited me to see her daughter's house. I learned of her parents' high aesthetic standards after photographing their charming refuge in the Pelion Peninsula the year before, but I thought that Leda's house would more closely resemble the work of those still early in their careers.

On a summer evening, soon after receiving the invitation, I walked up the streets of Kolonaki to Leda's house, enjoying the sight of the nearby Lycabettus forest glistening in the last rays of the setting sun. I was in for a surprise. From the moment the front door opened, and as we progressed from room to room, it was impressive to witness the maturity of her taste and, most of all, her focus and commitment to her vision. Everything in that three-story house—which she found in ruins and set out to restore and decorate—had been put in place after a conscious thought process. From wall openings to room proportions, from paintings to towel hooks, nothing escaped her exacting vision. Some complain that the younger generations lack references, but Leda is full of them, from the popular ceramics of her country to Wiener Werkstätte design to Florentine Renaissance sculptures. And at an age when most of us tend to be impatient to get on, she is happy to wait until the right piece lands in her hands, or until the appropriate solution to a design challenge is found.

There is a certain insouciance that one detects when talking to her. I imagine her saying that, from her point of view, there is not much to explain. Certain things—when putting her house, her world, together—just have to be that way: colors must have a certain softness, something is needed to dramatize a specific wall, here I stop adding objects.















The house is one of the very few in the area that has not been demolished and replaced by new apartment buildings. The ground floor and basement were built in the late 1800s, when Lycabettus was a small suburb of Athens. In the early 1930s the first floor was added, serving as a separate apartment. This interwar period is visible in the facade of the building. In the late 1950s the first refurbishment of the house took place, giving a bourgeois touch still evident from the marble staircase and the different types of terrazzo, as well as the herringbone-patterned floors. The second restoration was done in 2018 by Leda, when the two sections of the house were connected from first floor to second floor and from room to room, to create a new, unified space.

[250–251] A view of Athens and the Acropolis taken from the Lycabettus neighborhood, where the house is situated. [253] A small portrait of Leda by Gina Marcou is placed in her dressing room. [254–255] *Bathers Surrounded by Dolphins*, an oil by Charles Nallod, hangs in the living room. Like the rest of the house, the walls are covered in natural lime paint, and, because the original floors could not be saved, Leda replaced them with antique floorboards. [256] The French doors leading from the living room to the terrace are flanked by two works on paper by Nikos Engonopoulos. [257] The kitchen showcases Leda's love of mixing her own design with antique and vintage pieces of Greek handicrafts. [259] One of the dining room's walls is covered by a large seventeenth-century tapestry depicting Alexander the Great and the King of Kings, Darius of the Persians. [260] In the study is an oil by the twentieth-century Thessaloniki artist Polykleitos Regkos. The vintage lamp on the desk was found in Athens. [261] The 1930s brass bedside lamps came from the Athens flea market. They sit on nineteenth-century Ottoman trays, for which Leda designed bases. [262–263] Pieces from Leda's antique Greek jewelry collection. [264] Leda designed these glass-fronted cupboards in one of the bathrooms.