

DOMESTIC INTERIORS NOW

LINKS

Nicola et Adélaïde Marchi architects

Flat extension

Paris, France

Inasmuch as architecture is generated by a series of requirements, the task of designing within the limitations of a previously existing building often generates unexpected new solutions while relieving the architect of the responsibility of the primary structure; the result is relaxing and liberating. In this case, the architects had to work with a Paris flat previously gutted by a developer, leaving a rectangle open to the north and west, partly hidden by the facing flat, with the entrance located in the middle of the site. The 64 sqm space was a tight fit for this couple and their first child. Partitioning the area into small rooms, as foreseen in the initial layout, seemed an uninspiring prospect and the designers encouraged them to adapt the house to the lifestyle and not vice versa.

The idea of making maximum use of natural light dictated the guidelines. Removing unnecessary barriers would allow light to penetrate into the depths of the flat and provide it with greater fluidity, simultaneously achieving an increase in available floor space. Another seminal idea was the dream of so many city dwellers, that they discover a previously unnoticed extra room. Following up this fantasy, the project managers did their utmost to draw out the extra square and cubic meterage but with only 2,85 meters ceiling height, their wasn't enough headroom to squeeze in any kind of mezzanine. Thus, seeking the non-existent space for use and pleasure led to the solution: Contemplating and addressing the space as a whole generated the idea of treating it in layers, projections and folds, enabling space to opening out or close back into itself. Besides the baby's room and bathroom, no fixed partitions have been implemented. The lounge, the dining room, the kitchen, and the hallway are all in one volume, lit by four windows, creating an airy space uncluttered with storage cabinetry. The secret is under the carpet: the necessary storage in the living room, the master bedroom and child's room is underneath the floor, which was raised 40 cm, and even 60 cm in the bathroom. Trap doors make this space accessible, whereby 16m² were added to the apartment, amounting to the equivalent of 6 sqm of closets. Moreover, in the living room and the master bedroom normal upright closets are also provided, mounted on a pivot so they can swing open like a saloon door, constituting a pair next to the sliding closet, providing deep recesses to house items such as the TV. Unlettered thinking and cleverness show in every detail. The bathroom receives natural light through a window that opens into the child's bedroom; to facilitate the child's access into the multi-ply pine bath tub sunken in the fill material it has been bordered by a small hidden stair. Like the proverbial conjuror's hat, this flat is full of surprises.

Photographic:
Gaëlle Le Boulouet

Architects:
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Area:
64 sqm
Cost:
75 000 €

