

CAROLINE SARKOZY

INTERIORS

Caroline Sarkozy founded her interior design company, 'CS decoration', in 1998.

Since then, her idiosyncratic style has turned a multitude of spaces into statement interiors. On the following pages, Caroline Sarkozy allows a private insight into her aesthetic convictions and stimuli.

Image by Reto Guntli / Zapimage



WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

I was born in Paris. At the age of nine I moved to the United States with my mother and her husband, an American diplomat. Early on, our new life took us to exotic destinations which shaped my vision and curiosity, and without a doubt nurtured a sensibility to all forms of aestheticism. As a young girl, I was already particularly sensitive to jewels, fashion, elegance, style and décor. I was very determined in my convictions for all that referred to 'good' taste. My French and American grandmothers – two formidable, sophisticated and refined women – had a strong role in my upbringing and a strong influence on me. They lived in marvellous houses and were very attentive to the notion of comfort and receiving – no details escaped their attention. They were delighted to finally have a grandchild who preferred to set a beautiful table with them, rather than play with her Barbie's. Finally my Hungarian father (an avid art collector) occupied his free time with the conception of homes without the unwelcomed advice of a succession of wives or decorators. This rich and varied cultural heritage, similar to the pieces of a puzzle, surely anchored me in the field that I practice today.

WHERE DOES YOUR PASSION FOR ANCIENT AND ETHNIC TEXTILE STEM FROM?

My mother and stepfather were posted to Zambia, Egypt, the Philippines and finally India. This nomad life was enriched by other non-professional travels, motivated by my parent's curiosity and the pleasure my stepfather took in sharing his passion for world cultures with his children. The exposure to different parts of the world was constant and intense. My childhood was a series of discoveries, cultural and visual shocks, as well as emotions. Craftsmanship quickly became a focal point for me, and more precisely the art of weaving. Fabrics are the mirror and memory of civilization, a 'know how' often passed through generations by women. They capture the essence and identity of a civilization and remain timelessly seductive through the strength of natural colours, motifs, and the quality of hand weaving. My first savings quickly melted as I began buying fabrics, and started a collection. I recently used a Turkish Ottoman fabric for sofa cushions I had bought on a trip to Istanbul, 25 years ago. Integrating unique pieces into urban, modern homes and playing with the contrasts of origins by mixing period artefacts and sophisticated contemporary materials is an exercise that I love, and is always successful.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIXING DIFFERENT CULTURES IN YOUR WORK?

Family history and a nomadic childhood have formed my identity. I believe that this heritage has enhanced and enriched my creative and intellectual capacity to orchestrate interiors; an open vision where different sources of inspiration meet and confront each other to create emotions and sensations seems essential to me. I am incapable of creating a monolithic, monochromic, soundless space. A decor gains in depth and strength as bridges are built, uniting diverse influences and genres. My clients have their own history and heritage, which becomes the heart of each project through careful interlacing and subtle combinations. My client's heritage is the clue to each interior I create for them, it is their heritage that is reflected – that is absolutely essential. This is perhaps the reason I have clients from very different cultural backgrounds.

Images by Mathieu Garçon
Projects in collaboration with the architect Laurent Bourgois
Orange and black seat designed by CS Decoration



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE TODAY'S PERCEPTION OF ONE'S HOME?

The first decade of the 21st century has been synonymous with contemporary design; a race towards systematic and radical modernism. The minimalist approach has created interiors to look at and to photograph, but not to live in. The traditional notion of comfort and hospitality was readily brushed aside to give way to a frozen aesthetic. In this 'global age' – where intimacy is harder and harder to preserve – there is a trend towards the 'invested' personalized home; homes that reflect the identity and personality of their owners and mark their difference.

WHICH PAINTING OR PIECE OF ART ILLUSTRATES YOUR AESTHETIC IDEAL?

The German Pavilion built by Mies Van der Rohe for the 1929 Universal Exposition is an amazing example. It was dismantled at the end of the exhibit and reconstructed on the same sight in 1983. It is one of the most emblematic monuments of the history of Modern Architecture. A glass frame, framed lines and simple forms created with the most noble of materials: marbles, red onyx, travertine; a forceful symbol of elegance, timelessness.

WHAT IS YOUR FORECAST FOR INTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW?

I believe that interior design is more of a global subject than it has ever been, as a result the eye is better trained, better educated and can therefore take more liberties and distance. Easier access to new materials and technologies will enrich all possibilities, creating a larger, more open and dense creative spectrum. The notion of 'good and bad taste' will take on new proprieties, which is already happening. Internet erases frontiers and limits, no matter your origin and place of residence. More and more people have access to Architecture, Design and Decoration and develop an active interest in these subjects.

The notion of cross cultures is more and more present in the decorative arts and can be a strong vector for a positive message. Our way of living will have to evolve in view of a changing world-ecology, and will demand new solutions from architects and designers. Globalization has also given a more pronounced need for the 'home'. The home remains the place where one can cultivate and impose one's identity and personality, find intimacy and protection; a cocoon removed from the tremors of the world.

WHAT ARE THE THREE KEY CHARACTER TRAITS YOU BELIEVE A WOMAN MUST HAVE TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS?

Being able to unite freedom, openness and enthusiasm in one's work gives tremendous energy. This is the secret to living your professional life as an extraordinary adventure. It enables you to give your best.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

My children are dearer to me than everything. They oblige me to open my eyes and raise my spirits, rethink my fundamental beliefs. They give me enthusiasm and make me want to put on those *Sevenleague* boots every morning!



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