

# A dark drama

Designer Daniele Daminelli's  
home in northern Italy plays  
theatrically with light and shade

*Words / Tami Christiansen  
Images / Nathalie Krag/Living Inside*



Young designer Daniele Daminelli's home in Treviglio, northern Italy, is a poetic interpretation of past, present and future, submerged in a sea of dark blue. When he and his partner Giulia Crippa bought the apartment on a tree-lined historic promenade, it was love at first sight. "Light flooded the rooms, and everything was in fabulous condition, even the original windows and the parquet flooring," says Daminelli, the founder of multidisciplinary design firm Studio 2046.

Elio Frisia, an engineer and architect who worked with the great Milanese builders of the 20th century, designed the villa in the 1930s for the managerial staff of Treviglio's Gerosa glass factory opposite. He followed a rationalist style, with rigid shapes, large rectangular windows and the high-quality workmanship that is evident in all the details. The 180 sqm flat has now been transformed, including the removal of false ceilings, revealing rooms that are four metres high. "Our goal was to respect Frisia's work as much as possible," says Daminelli. "In our projects, we try to leave the given division of the rooms and thus their soul as untouched as possible."

Mixing vintage and contemporary, old and new, classic and modern is in the DNA of Studio 2046. Before founding the company in 2017, Daminelli spent eight years working as an interior designer for Emiliano Salci and Britt Moran of Dimore Studio, and says that the experience "taught me immensely, giving me a strong foundation while enriching my culture in design."

Here, the objective was to create rooms that had strong character with the use of colour and wallpaper, adding exceptional design pieces to great effect. One particular book, *The Private World of Yves Saint Laurent & Pierre Bergé*, proved to be a starting point for inspiration. "The photos of the two of them at home in Paris simply captivated me: the entrance with its lavishly decorated wallpaper, those of travel and explorations of found objects from around the globe, the contrasts of materials and colours. The book reveals a similar view to the aesthetic of my projects."

Swimming in the ocean of time, everything here is submerged in a primeval dark blue and its various nuances. "I adore dark colours because they help create atmospheric rooms," says Daminelli. In the living area, objects and memorabilia are juxtaposed against this moody backdrop: the rooms have mainly been furnished with Italian furniture and Swedish lighting from the mid 20th century. "I prefer to combine historical pieces by the masters of the 20th century with our contemporary Studio 2046 designs to create contrast," says Daminelli, namechecking Gae Aulenti, Carlo Scarpa, Ignazio Gardella, Piero Portaluppi and Josef Hoffmann as among those he admires.

In the entry hall, lush flowering plants on the chinoiserie wallpaper bend gracefully. "All the colours in this apartment were derived from that wallpaper," says Daminelli. Only a few monumental pieces of furniture, such as the wall of rosewood shelves in the living space, seem to break out of the deep blue that swallows almost everything. The designer was also inspired by the Italian Baroque painter Caravaggio, not just in his use of colour but in the dramatic play of light and darkness that provides such an alluring backdrop. Moving through the space in the apartment, sunshine fans out the blue base tone, changing over the course of a day and highlighting the lighter materials, such as the white marble top of the Saarinen Tulip table. This contemporary version of Caravaggio's *chiaroscuro* – the treatment of light and shade for which the artist is known – has become something of a Studio 2046 trademark.

He doesn't like to choose, but Daminelli says that "maybe" the 1940s sideboard in the dining area is his favourite piece: for him, it is "a unique example of excellent craftsmanship with perfect proportions". A carved relief with a harvest scene decorates its front, while a cantilevered mirror casts light into the room. "I believe that well-designed objects and rooms are timeless and will always remain beautiful," says the designer. "I do not create loud contradictions and contrasts, instead preferring to focus like a camera flash in the dark of history – capturing a subtle impression."

Previous page  
Daminelli has kept original features as far as possible, including the bedroom wardrobes

Facing page  
Early 1990s steel dining chairs by Jordan Mozer are paired with two side-by-side marble tables of Daminelli's design





Facing page  
The apartment – one of three in the building – was constructed to house the managerial staff of Treviglio's Gerosa glass factory

Above  
Daminelli's dramatic use of light and shade is a signature of his practice, inspired by the work of Baroque painter Caravaggio

Above  
In the hallway, wallpaper by Braquenié, based on an 18th-century original, inspired the apartment's entire colour scheme

Next page  
Architect Elio Frisia's original 1930s windows frame the view. The Mantilla sofas were designed in the 1970s by Kazuhide Takahama





Above  
Daylight glints off the resin floor and dark painted ceiling in the hallway

Facing page  
The children's bedroom, with its original wardrobes and a vintage rug

Next page  
In the kitchen, the eye is drawn to the lighter, brighter elements: a marble-topped Saarinen table, and a lacquered 1970s cupboard by Kazuhide Takahama







Facing page  
Mid-20th-century vitrine-like glass wardrobes bring a sense of theatre to the master bedroom; the chaise longue is by Marcel Breuer for Isokon

Above  
Daminelli has retained the original layout of the 1930s apartment, echoing the taste of its original era and layering vintage, antique and new pieces