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# GLOBAL STYLE

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# NIEUWE DUTCH

In her Amsterdam abode, Mariska Meijers twists up tradition with a spin of the color wheel

BY ALYSSA BIRD | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STOKES

**Dramatic Entry**  
Fornasetti's Nuvolette wall covering and a portrait by artist duo E2 make a statement in the hallway (THIS PAGE); both the table and chair, upholstered in Mariska Meijers's Palm Beach fabric, are Swedish antiques. (OPPOSITE) Black metallic backsplash tiles reflect light in the compact kitchen, where vintage chairs surround a French table. See Resources.



**Business And  
Pleasure**

Pendant lights by  
Ay Illuminate hang  
above a Heerenhuis  
table and a vintage  
Moroccan rug in  
Meijers's workspace.  
Like much of the  
apartment, the  
custom built-in  
shelving unit is  
painted Farrow &  
Ball's Hague Blue.  
See Resources.

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or a long time, Mariska Meijers indulged her creative impulses only on weekends, using painting as a way to relieve the stress of her high-flying career in finance law. But in 2006, with the economic crisis looming, she decided to jump ship. "I wanted to get out before things got ugly," says Meijers, a Netherlands native who had lived in London, Singapore, and Stockholm before settling down permanently in Amsterdam in 2003. These days, Meijers splits her time between painting, running a home decor shop, and designing interiors and furnishings with vivid patterns that range from ikats to birds to playfully abstracted florals.

"I was clueless at first as to which direction I wanted to go in, but I've always had a love of interiors and furnishings," says Meijers. As a child, she was intrigued by the costumes and sets of the Dutch National Opera—in which her mother performed—and observed her father painting and making music in his spare time. In 2008, after spending two years exhibiting her own work—still lifes inspired by India and Southeast Asia and small abstract canvases—Meijers began



### Artful Strokes

(THIS PAGE) Meijers's pillows and lampshades dress up the living area. (OPPOSITE TOP TO BOTTOM) The canvas between the living and dining areas is by Hans Ansems. A grouping of artwork includes, from top left, a nude found at a Paris flea market, a figure drawing by Clara Anna Koelensmid, a portrait by Skyler Chen, and a piece by an unknown Vietnamese artist. See *Resources*.



to produce pillows. "Initially, they featured prints of actual paintings I had done, but I eventually taught myself how to create repeat patterns," she says. "I would carry the pillows around Amsterdam in my bicycle basket, going from store to store and getting feedback from shop owners." Now, a decade later, Meijers produces a full range of fabrics, wallpaper, lampshades, stationery, trays, and tray tables, which she sells both locally and abroad in both North and South America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and other countries across Europe. A little more than a year ago, having outgrown her design studio-cum-retail space, she opened a proper storefront in the city center.

Meijers recently moved house as well, settling into a converted 1896 granary on a pier in Amsterdam's Houthavens neighborhood, a hot spot for raves, house parties, and graffiti artists until about 15

years ago. "The area is creative and funky, with some rough edges," Meijers says. "It reminds me of New York's Meatpacking District." The designer, who normally travels two weeks a month to trade shows and to see clients, was drawn to the 860-square-foot two-bedroom because it's "more like a hotel suite. My daughter and son are away at school, and I was experiencing empty-nest syndrome big-time. I wanted a place on the water that felt like home, but wasn't too large."

An open floor plan—she knocked down a few walls—and expansive windows overlooking the harbor make the modestly sized apartment feel more spacious. So much so that the living room now doubles as her design studio, with a work table fronting a wall of shelves that house reference books. A dining table and a compact kitchen featuring black cabinetry and black metallic backsplash tiles com-

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**More is More**  
 Meijers (THIS PAGE TOP RIGHT) designed the wallpaper and most of the pillows in the master bedroom (ALL OTHER IMAGES), where a photograph by Margriet Smulders hangs above the bed and a black-and-white photograph by Barry Kornbluh rests against an original brick wall from 1896. The Indian silk rug is from Eveline and the settee is a Swedish antique. See Resources.



plete the main living space. "I'm not a very good housekeeper, so I didn't want to be reminded that I have a kitchen," Meijers says with a laugh. "Black is very chic and not so in-your-face."  
 Most of the rest of the apartment is decked out in Farrow & Ball's Hague Blue, which Meijers says she "had to have after seeing it in a friend's canal house. It ties in with the water." Adding even more color are jewel-toned Moroccan, Persian, and Indian rugs; patterned pillows, wallpaper, and lampshades of her design; vintage furnishings; and an art collection that ranges from flea market finds to contemporary pieces to a handful of her own small abstract works. "People are always surprised by the way I combine colors, and I think my time in Asia has influenced me deeply. My decorating style is eclectic, but shifts toward classic with a modern twist. In everything I do, I try not to think about how things will work together and just let them flow freely." ✨

