

FROM THE TOP FLOOR OF HIS BEIRUT PENTHOUSE, LEBANESE ARCHITECT BERNARD KHOURY NEVER LOSES SIGHT OF THE UNRULY ENERGY OF HIS BELOVED HOMETOWN

Enter the apartment of Lebanese architect Bernard Khoury and the first thing to hit you is the city. Perched at the top tribute to the post-war rebuilding of a residential building he designed in Beirut's Mathaf effort. But the Société libanaise neighborhood in 2013, it's centered around a 24-foot-high floor-to-ceiling window that pulls the chaotic urban fabric inside. Located near the civil-war demarcation line and surrounded by institutional buildings, the Mathaf district has not quite reached the same density of other areas in an amnesiac approach, skipping Beirut, which is exactly what drew Khoury here.

"My relationship with this house starts with my re- Lebanese Republic in their preslationship with the city," Khoury says as he opens the window, leaving the entire front of the apartment exposed to the streets below. "In any Mediterranean city, apartments turn their back to the city and look toward the sea. the West." I've chosen to do the exact opposite, to have a very constant relationship with this landscape." Khoury describes the speed with which Beirut's urban fabric has changed since the 1950s as "scary." "Beirut is evolving without any master plan. There is a very high exploitation factor that kept on going up. The ARCHITECT BERNARD KHOURY KICKS BACK bankruptcy of the state in the Living ROOM of his Penthouse basically on the ninth floor of a residential translates into what you see, this incredible cacophony."

Khoury returned Master of Architecture country's most sought-after architects.

BUILDING HE BUILT IN 2013 IN BEIRUT'S MATHAF DISTRICT. TRAINED AT HARVARD, KHOURY to Beirut in the 1990s RETURNED TO THE LEBANESE CAPITAL IN THE after completing his 1990S AND HAS SINCE BECOME ONE OF THE

degree at Harvard, keen to conpour le développement et la reconstruction (Solidere), set up by the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri to rebuild Beirut's city center, had over the modern history of the ervation plans. For Khoury, it denied the present and "surrendered to a history that was a product of

And so he jumped to plan B, becoming the posterboy for the entertainment industry, designing nightclubs, rooftop cocktail bars, and restaurants for Beirutis only interested in the present. "I started these processes that were in complete contradiction to what I had initially imagined. I didn't get any museums, didn't build any institutional buildings... It was a way of trying to produce meaning on alternative territories." B 018 (1998) remains Khoury's most legendary





KHOURY'S APARTMENT FEATURES AN ECLECTIC MIX OF FURNITURE, INCLUDING PENTAGONAL-SHAPED **ARMCHAIR LUI 5 BY SWISS DESIGNER PHILIPPE BESTENHEIDER. A SPIRAL** STAIRCASE LEADS UP TO THE SECOND FLOOR AND A MEZZANINE LIBRARY THAT **FEATURES WRAPAROUND METAL** CATWALK.

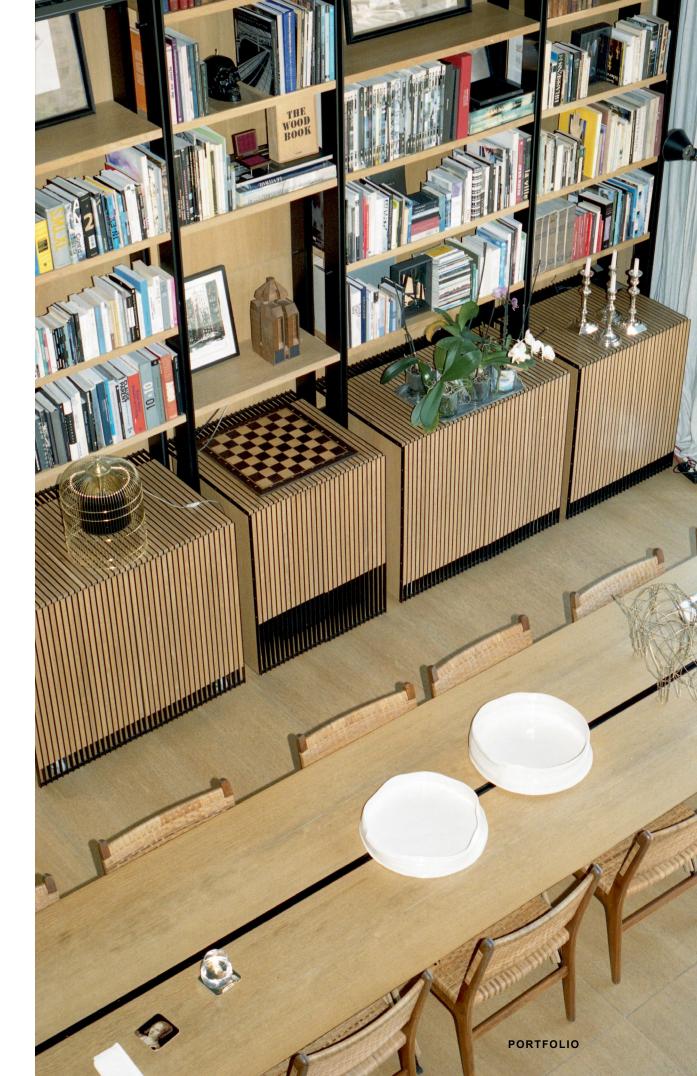
work: a hole in the ground resembling a bunker or a mass grave, it's a nightclub with a retractable

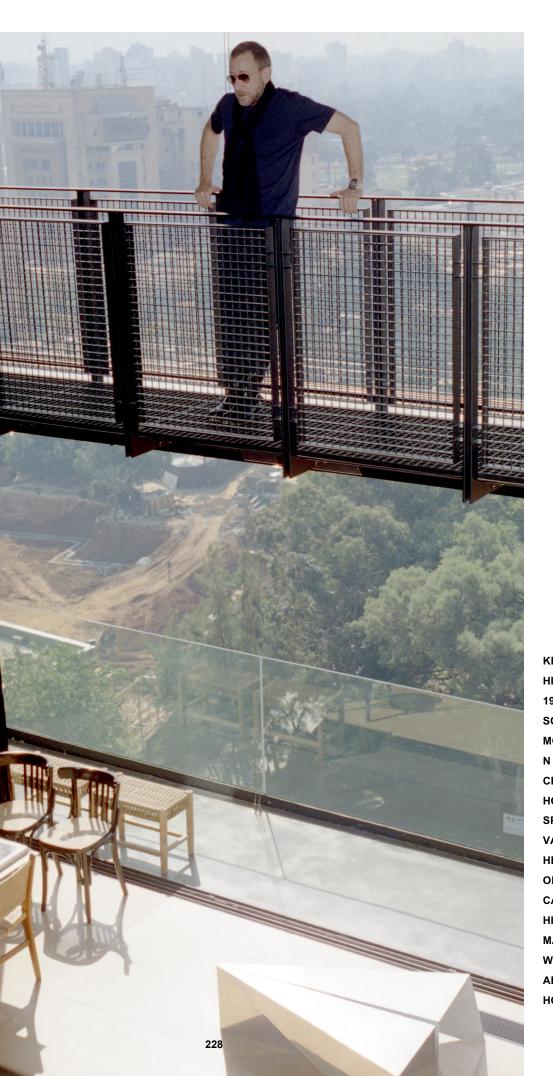
roof that allows rev- KHALIL elers to dance under FATHER, WAS AN the stars. B 018's lo- ARCHITECT OF THE cation on the site of WHO BUILT A TOTAL a massacre of pre- EVERYTHING DOWN dominantly Palestin- TO THE LAST FIXTURE. ian refugees during the tradition with a the civil war forces DINING TABLE OF HIS OWN DESIGN. IT WAS discussion of its MADE FROM A SINGLE tragic past and re- LOCAL CRAFTSPEOPLE, purposes a rare ur- JUST LIKE THE SHELVING ban void.

BERNARD KHOURY'S MODERNIST TRADITION EXPERIENCE, DESIGNING KHOURY JR. CONTINUES PIECE OF WOOD BY AND CABINETRY, WHICH **ELEGANTLY HIDES THE** HEATING AND SOUND

I n s i d e SYSTEMS.

Khoury's apartment every detail is precisely designed, showcasing the work of local craftsmanship in an approach influenced by Carlo Scarpa and Jean Prouvé. A black-metal structure runs round the main reception space, carrying a perimeter footbridge and providing the frame for wooden shelving. "This is my machine," Khoury says, nodding toward the ceiling centerpiece, a matte-black oval housing fans, lighting, and air-conditioning equipment. "It's the optimum way of cooling and ventilating this space. You usually associate plaster with very classical ceilings, not with contemporary architecture and certainly not with black." From solid-wood cabinets to a 24-foot light fixture that doubles as a ladder — allowing bulbs to be changed with ease - everything is made locally.





"This is a form of resistance to the construction industry, to the shit from China that's completely banned in my house," Khoury exclaims.

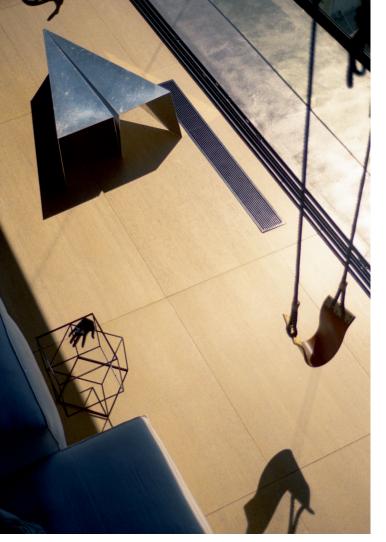
While many rooftops in Beirut are a dumping ground for water tanks and satellite dishes, Khoury has incorporated a selfcontained flat for guests and a pool. Two cannon-like light fixtures protrude from above. Though he insists it's a design based on practicality not provocation, the army's secret services came round to investigate. "One of the co-owners was also convinced that if we have another war with Israel, the building would be targeted. I told him it would be great if they hit us. I would be the martyr of my own architectural absurdities," he laughs.

Some of Khoury's buildings have become victims of Bei-KHOURY, WHO MADE rut's lack of ur-NAME IN THE ban planning; the BY DESIGNING restaurant Cen-SPECTACULAR trale in the Gem-NIGHTCLUBS, mayzeh district, KNOWS for example, has CREATE been boxed in by SPACES WITH UNUSUAL other buildings HERE HE IS STANDING SINCE COMPletion ON ONE OF THE METAL in 2001. "What CATWALKS THAT CIRCLE you end up with APARTMENT'S in Beirut is an ex-WHERE THE PROLIFIC treme density of **ENJOYS** solitary buildings. HOSTING FRIENDS. It's as if you put



THEARCHITECT BELIEVES ARCHITECTURE AND ITS USERS SHOULD HAVE A DIALOGUE WITH THEIR URBAN ENVIRONMENT. INSTEAD OF FACING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, LIKE MOST BUILDINGS IN BEIRUT, KHOURY'S APARTMENT FEATURES WINDOWS THAT OPEN WIDE TO THE CITY, INCLUDING A VIEW OVER THE NEARBY MARONITE CEMETERY.

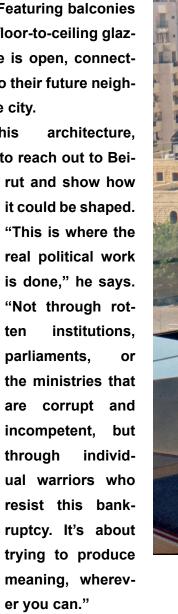




200 people in a room who turned their backs on each other," he says. Plot #1282, also known as Factory Lofts, was designed in response to this. Completed in 2015 in an area surrounded by yet-tobe-developed land, the building's unusual shape was born out of its imagined future neighbors closing in. Each floor is offset inwards to allow breathing space if new structures rise on its perimeter. "I didn't design [the apartments], the absurdity of the situation produced them." Featuring balconies set in front of floor-to-ceiling glazing, the façade is open, connecting residents to their future neighbors and to the city.

With his architecture, Khoury seeks to reach out to Beirut and show how LIGHT-DRENCHED THE it could be shaped. APARTMENT IS HOME TO "This is where the real political work IDIOSYNCRATIC is done," he says. NUMEROUS "Not through rot-TOUCHES, INCLUDING A SUPERten institutions, SIZE ANT FROM THE HISTORIC parliaments, the ministries that **PARISIAN TAXIDERMIST** are corrupt and incompetent, but DEYROLLE. THE BRASS AND through individ-LEATHER SWING INSTALLED IN Ual warriors who resist this bank-THE LIVING ROOM ALLOWS FOR ruptcy. It's about trying to produce **PLAYFUL SWINGING ABOVE THE** meaning, wherev-

ROOFTOPS OF BEIRUT.







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