

Maye

Up-and-coming Mexican interior designer Maye Ruiz celebrates exuberant colour and pattern

Who is she? Mexican interior designer Maye Ruiz had the best of all motives for joining her profession: it brought her joy. As a high-school student, she almost chose a 'sensible' career path, but ultimately opted to follow her instincts. 'At first I decided it would be smarter to pursue a job in administration where there would be better opportunities,' she remembers. 'But this made me realise that the creative world was what truly brightened my soul.' Having spent her childhood building 'country houses' from sheets and chairs in her grandmother's garden, interiors felt like a natural mode of expression, and she went to La Salle University in Philadelphia to study environmental and spatial design. She then taught interior-design courses and spent five years in Mexico City working in the studio of Andrés Gutiérrez, known for his colourful interiors. In 2021, she opened her eponymous practice in San Miguel de Allende, a city known for its Spanish baroque architecture.



Left Interior designer Maye Ruiz sits on an 'Anni' chair, created in collaboration with Comité De Proyectos
Above Casa Dominga in San Miguel de Allende was a chance to showcase Ruiz and the homeowners' love of director Pedro Almodóvar's signature palette



Expert advice

Maye Ruiz on how to decorate unapologetically, using bold colours and patterns

Make strong shades and patterns work by sticking to a strict, coherent palette. At Casa Coa, there is lots of colour, but the themes are well-defined: green decor with burgundy accents, chequerboard patterns and leaf-print wallpapers are the ideas repeated throughout. Finally, we introduced some yellow accents, which added a lot of light.

Use darker tones to define areas and lighter tones to add luminosity. One way to do this is to paint ceilings and mouldings in a dark hue and walls in a lighter variation of the same tone. We did this in the green living and dining rooms at Casa Coa, and it makes both colours seem brighter and cosier.

When it comes to patterns, think of them like clothing: mixing florals, stripes, and checks is allowed, but it's important to look at them all together and keep them curated. I like the final result to be eclectic, not too much like a tailored suit.

With a symphony of colour, you need points of rest and light. I love to use rich browns and burgundies, then layer white and neutrals on top as smaller accents. For balance, I think it helps to keep walls and floors the same shade; I've done this in my own home, where tones of vibrant orange form the backdrop.

WORDS: AMY BRADFORD PICTURES: MARIANA ACHACH-HERROZ, LEANDRO BUZZANO

What are her recent projects? Casa Coa, a residential design on one of San Miguel de Allende's most beautiful streets, was inspired by Alfonso Cuarón's 1998 film adaptation of *Great Expectations* and showcases Ruiz's flamboyant style to magnificent effect. 'It's a dramatic yet serene, sensual, romantic house, adorned with plenty of chequerboard patterns, botanical-print wallpapers, and snake references,' says the designer.

She has also just completed Espacio Santa Tere, a cultural hub with work spaces, which is where her own studio is based. Set in an old brick building that has been converted using materials recycled from the site, it is decorated in primary hues, reflecting historic colours that were discovered during construction. 'It was a really fun project, with strong postmodern and geometric touches,' says Ruiz. 'It has lots of personality, and tells the story of its neighbourhood, San Antonio.' >



From top The primary-hued kitchen area in Santa Tere, a set of office spaces, interior designed by Ruiz, that includes her own studio; a slightly more muted take on Ruiz's love of vibrancy in Casa Coa, where oversized lighting makes as much of a statement as the colours



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Both projects reflect Ruiz's signature look, which she describes as 'dramatic and colourful'; she is inspired by the architects Ricardo Bofill and Luis Barragán, and Anni Albers, the textile designer. 'I also love retrofuturism, postmodernism and 1980s style, and am greatly influenced by the contemporary Swedish designer Tekla Evelina Severin, who has built a career around the use of colour,' she adds.

What is she currently working on?

As well as juggling several residential renovations, Ruiz is about to begin the construction phase of her biggest project so far, a 48-room hotel in Acapulco, by the sea. She is also designing a new bar in Mexico City. Both projects will bring her exuberant aesthetic to a wider audience.

She says: 'I am still discovering my own style, but for me it's important that there are no "random" elements, that ideas and materials are repeated over and over again; in design and in life, I try to be consistent.' maye.mx **ED**



From top Office design for Requeiz Sillas as part of Maye's Santa Tere project; burgundy and green are used playfully, with pattern and texture key, in Casa Coa; a new artisanal-inspired interior for Casa Arca, a restaurant local to Ruiz



Dramatic and colourful, Ruiz's work is inspired by architects Ricardo Bofill and Luis Barragán, as well as a love of retrofuturism, postmodernism and 1980s style



The little black book

Every successful project requires access to the experts and artisans who make magic possible

Lighting I love Danish brand Hay, and in particular I'm a big fan of its lighting. I have some of the 'Matin' lamps with red pleated shades, and I think they look great in any space. hay.dk

Textiles Designers Guild was one of the first brands I came across when I was studying interior design, and it inspired my way of seeing and valuing colour. For one of my early projects, I used a geometric fabric in turquoise and lime tones – it really enhanced a basic armchair. designersguild.com

Mexican design When it comes to interesting objects, some very intriguing design galleries have emerged in Mexico. Two of my favourites are Ballista Space, which sells a mix of homeware and functional art by local talents, and Ago Projects, which focuses on the handmade and environmentally conscious design. ballista.space; ago-projects.com

Furniture Goodmoods in Paris has a great furniture collection. The 1990s-inspired 'T4' lounge chair, by Holloway Li for Turkish brand Uma, fascinates me: it comes in vibrant citrus shades and is made of fibreglass with an upholstered seat. goodmoods.com