

# MOUJEH

## STEP UP

UNPACKING TRENDS,  
TACKLING TABOOS  
AND EMBRACING YOUR  
STRONGEST SELF YET



MOJEH steps into the home of RARARES Gallery founder Marina Baisel — a haven of calming colours, striking textures, rare collectibles and odes to the feminine form

PHOTOGRAPHED BY FARRAH HATHOUT  
WORDS BY HAFSA LODI

Amid a sanctuary of neutral tones, sculptures crafted from natural elements and minimalist décor pieces in Marina Baisel's living room, the eye is drawn to a comparatively colourful painting by artist and skater Dakota Schuetz. It depicts a red, three-eyed figure walking its dog up a slope, surrounded by chalked symbols, illustrations and affirmations, such as 'love yourself', 'you can do it' and the largest — 'take the first step'.

"It's the brightest painting in my house," Marina tells *MOJEH*. "It reminds me of myself a little bit — the climbing up the wall with my dog, and the message to not be afraid, save yourself, and take the first step, which can sometimes be difficult."

For the artist and interior designer, this first step was making the decision to leave her home in Russia and start afresh in Dubai, with her husband and three children. "The choice was between the Emirates and Cyprus — but here, I felt I could do more," she explains.

She moved to Dubai in 2022, with the help of Marina Braginskaya, founder of Braginskaya & Architects, who had been her teacher at design school in Russia before relocating to Dubai. She found a uniquely-upgraded home in the Meadows, and the two Marinas collaborated to complete the interiors of the five-bedroom, two-storey home. "She was the only person I could trust here — I knew nobody, and now we've become more like friends" says Marina.

Specialising in collectible art pieces and having enjoyed a regular presence at prestigious fairs and shows in Russia, Marina opened RARARES Gallery in DIFC earlier this year, and is currently preparing for her *Art Meets Design* exhibition this September. "I have my taste, and I wanted to represent that here. I do what I like, and I hope people will like it too. But it's more like a hobby — it's something I need for myself more than for someone else," she says.

Marina's aesthetic is grounded by sandy tones and abstract art pieces — a refined yet eclectic concoction of tones and textures. "The main word would be natural. I look for natural materials like stone, wood and clay — I don't like artificial materials," she says. Take her dining room, for example, which features plain white walls, save for a spectacular, three-dimensional tapestry crafted from natural flax seeds and tufts of flax straw, which are used to make linen.

Marina conceptualised and sketched the piece, which was produced by LeLin Studio in Russia. "It's a reminder of my homeland," says Marina fondly as she gestures towards the tapestry, which rustles with movement. "We spend a large part of our lives at home, so it's important to thoughtfully choose what surrounds us, what we touch and what catches our eye. Each one plays a specific role to make the entire interior sound like a harmonious orchestra." 🎧

WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE

"It's important to thoughtfully choose what surrounds us, what we touch and what catches our eye."

MARINA BAISEL



LIFESTYLE

**What is the first thing you do in the morning?**

I have a freshly brewed cup of Earl Grey tea.

**Where do you spend most of your time?**

In my living room — it's where we meet, communicate and discuss the day that has passed.

**What are you currently reading?**

*The Architecture of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio*, who was a celebrated Roman architect.

**Where do you source most of your furniture and home décor?**

Crate & Barrel, Indigo Living, Ferm Living, Bernhardt, Ulm Gallery and, of course, RARARES Gallery.

**What is your top rule for entertaining at home?**

I am quite a private person and only invite my closest friends over. To me, a successful evening is an intimate one.

**How do you keep your home so minimalist while having children?**

Oh, it's quite easy. I just don't get involved with the rooms that are dedicated to children for their creative expression.

**What might make you fall in love with a new piece of art?**

It's an amazing and magical feeling when you encounter a painting that makes you feel like you're entering the artist's world, learning about their philosophy and only then experiencing pure pleasure.

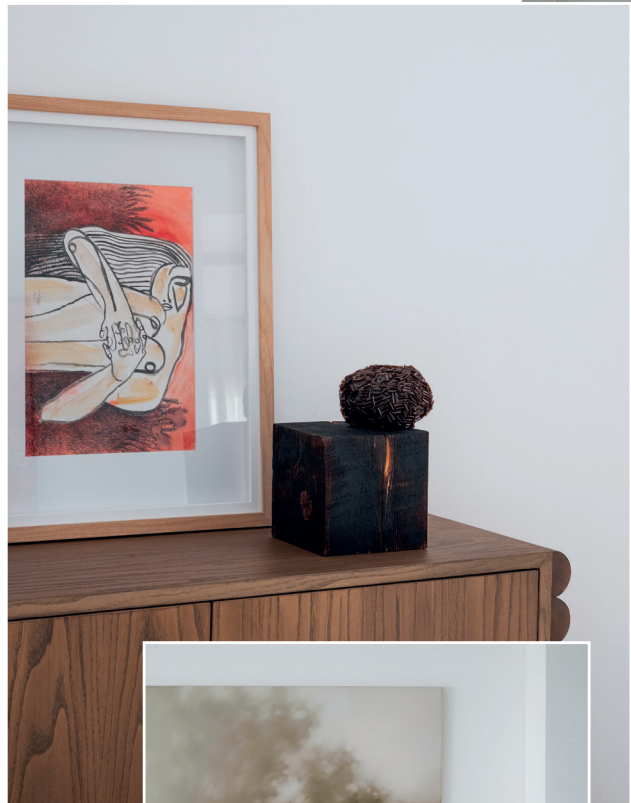
**What is your ideal 'escape' from Dubai?**

There's an expression: 'my home is my castle.' So probably my home, where my family is, is the perfect place to escape.



Opposite page: Marina wears Taller Marmo dress, Begum Khan earrings and Karen Wazen bracelet. Above: Marina wears Versace blouse, skirt and shoes with Karen Wazen bracelet. Above left: Painting by Dakota Schuetz.





A neutral palette contrasted with monochrome tiling, abstract art pieces and wooden touches set a soothing tone to Marina's interiors.



While rare, intricately crafted pieces are displayed across Marina's home, the atmosphere is exceedingly warm and welcoming. Upon stepping into the entrance — which features a monochrome tiled floor depicting stately hexagonal shapes — guests are asked to remove their shoes and given soft beige house slippers to wear.

The hexagonal pattern is emulated in the elaborate textured ceiling of the kitchen, almost reminiscent of honeycomb. Kitchen cabinets are white and pristine, while counters — bare, except for a small smart garden growing herbs, peppers and tomatoes — are marble. Gold accents and wood flooring

complete the space. Marina tells *MOJEH* that she opted for a neutral colour palette for her home because it's so timeless: "You don't get tired of it. Our eyes and brain have so many distractions — when we go out it can be blinding, too bright, with bold colours and bling everywhere you look. Here, I wanted something that would be really soft, and make you feel relaxed."

Marina's favourite room is her bedroom. "It's my world, with my favourite paintings, and everything that always carries positive energy," she says. Whites and greys are complemented by wooden side tables and statement fringed hanging lights, which

Marina conceptualised herself. "These Ai Tai pendant lights are made of agave fibre, and can be translated from Japanese as 'drifting clouds,' the image of which immediately came to my mind when I saw the volume of the master bedroom," she explains. Between these two lights hangs a minimalist Anna Pepe painting of female bodies, outlined in beige. On the dresser sits a sculpture by Evelyne Brader-Frank, also inspired by the female body, and a similar piece is situated on a coffee table downstairs. Marina recently exhibited Evelyne's sculptures at RARARES, and says that she is drawn to images inspired by the feminine form. "It's not just about the

body, but more about the beauty of the shapes," she explains. One painting, which she got from a gallery in Alserkal Avenue, shows a woman sitting and hugging her knees — but Marina has placed it on its side. "I like it this way, it's more of an acrobatic shape," she explains.

In the living room, near a majestic Ingo Maurer white Japanese paper lamp and burlwood shelves housing travel tomes and books about Givenchy and Karl Lagerfeld, hangs a Pablo Picasso lithograph. It comprises three lines and a series of dots — one

separate from the rest. "For me, this has a lot philosophical meaning," says Marina. "It's like if you are doing something and you are alone, when the crowd is doing something different, or judging you — there's a strict division between you and the crowd. But you don't have to look at anyone else, just take the first step."

Marina references the colourful painting hanging in the room next door, demonstrating how, within the peace and serenity that punctuates her home, the art pieces speak to one another.



Above: Marina exhibited her own pieces at prestigious exhibitions in Russia, and now showcases at RARARES. Below: Marina wears Taller Marmo dress and Karen Wazen bracelet.



## PERSONAL STYLE

### How would you describe your fashion aesthetic?

My clothing style heavily depends on the plans for the day and any scheduled meetings. The only unconditional rule is natural materials and preferably achromatic shades.

### What are your go-to beauty products?

Hand cream and sunscreen are essential for me.

### What is your most sentimental piece of jewellery?

I'm not a big fan of jewellery — I feel constrained when wearing precious items.

### What are your go-to shoes for an evening out?

I have very difficult feet, so 90 per cent of shoe models don't fit me in terms of width. But the Hermès Heden heels are uniquely comfortable and at the same time, timeless.

### What was your most recent fashion splurge?

I just bought a Prada silk pyjama suit with rhinestones.

### Which fashion houses do you most frequently gravitate towards?

Givenchy, Dior and Prada — their cuts and fits are always perfect.

### What is the next handbag you plan on investing in?

At the moment, the Hermès Kelly Pochette in Chèvre Mysore leather is at the top of my wish list. 