

THE LOCAL PROJECT



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THE MADE BY STOREY SERIES

SOLID AIR

—
ANNA.CARIN DESIGN STUDIO

Words by Millie Thwaites • Photography by Pablo Veiga • Interior Design by Anna.Carín Design Studio • Build by Kilbri
Joinery by Joinery Hub • Timber Flooring by Made by Storey

One summer's morning, interior designer Anna-Carin McNamara was sitting at the dining table in her Elizabeth Bay apartment with the windows open when a lorikeet flew over, perched on the sill beside her and stayed a while. This anecdote is deeply emblematic of the underlying philosophy of the project, which was, as Anna-Carin explains, to "open it up - to my neighbours, to my family, to my friends and to the light." The result is that this once dark and cramped art deco apartment is now defined by openness and serenity, grounded by an adept understanding of scale and the nuances of colour.

Anna-Carin's approach to interiors is hemmed by two principles: finding and creating rhythm, and responding to the needs of a space. This apartment demanded an involved approach to both. As she shares, Solid Air was very much a collaboration between herself and her partner - a fellow creative whose prints adorn the walls. "His photographs are quite dark and moody, and I'm all about the light, so he very much brought an aesthetic to the project." Other elements such as their shared interest in music and Anna-Carin's Swedish heritage, which brings an attitude grounded by ease, hospitality and openness, have heavily informed the resulting essence of this space.

Located on the north-east corner of a characterful 1920s-era building, the existing layout did little for internal liveability and, as such, Anna-Carin has reimagined the floorplan to orient the living spaces towards the light and take advantage of the original bay windows. As she says of the now open plan living, kitchen and dining area, "it's extraordinary; we're

surrounded by trees and because [the apartment] sits on the corner of the building, the sun comes in in the morning and walks around the room over the course of the day."

As redefining the layout came naturally to Anna-Carin, much of this project's prevailing identity rests on her intuitive approach to colour and materiality. A custom green-grey hue - created by Anna.Carin Design Studio in collaboration with Wattyl and inspired by a shade of Arne Jacobsen-designed VOLA tapware - coats the interiors. "I really wanted it all to be quite homogenous because it supports that notion of serenity." She adds, "it doesn't mean you can't have a bit of colour here and there, but I felt that a unified colour made it feel more spacious and peaceful." Used across the ceilings, walls and woodwork, this consistent shade, which changes throughout the day from a strong green to a light blue, results in a tonality that is both harmonious and dynamic.





The spaces offer a warm and welcoming atmosphere, reflecting Anna-Carin's love of hosting family and friends.



French oak flooring in Cloud from Made by Storey provides a calming foundation for the gentle palette.



The influence of the designer's Swedish heritage is felt throughout the apartment.

The colour and materiality play a leading role in the rhythm of the project, as does Anna-Carin's heritage; she shares, "I can't wash out the Scandinavian in me – I've tried!" And whilst she admits it is a "very Swedish thing to do a light timber floor," the decision to employ light oak floors in her own home was largely informed by a project-specific pursuit for subtlety. Made by Storey's Cloud – a French oak board with soft, natural grains and a gentle luminosity – was the perfect complement to the surrounding green-grey shade. Natural light plays on the surface of the floors and walls, as well as on several custom mirrors with a mottled finish, bouncing a calming hue around the apartment and, again, leaning heavily into the concept of tonality as a defining feature of this space.

The wide natural oak planks also work to accentuate scale, creating a generosity seldom associated with apartment typologies. "We spent quite a lot of time working on the transitions," Anna-Carin explains. "When you put

in a timber floor, you can't just lay them all in one direction; it's important that you consider transitions and that comes down to the rhythm." This is beautifully illustrated at a threshold in the hallway where two sections of parallel planks are broken by a single, perpendicular plank, creating covert delineation. As Anna-Carin offers, "even though it's the same material, it just hints at something new to follow." This threshold features an arched alcove – a new addition emulating the radius of the brick arches on the building's façade – which also brings "softness and definition".

Solid Air is a deeply personal project imbued with the designer's own sense of sincerity and candour. Her affinity for "being open – to ideas, suggestions and to people" is easily discernible; the door is often open, and guests are gladly welcomed. As Anna-Carin shares, "everyone who comes and spends time here asks, 'can I sit here for a while? Do you mind if I stay?'" The answer would undoubtedly be a resounding 'yes'.





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