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THEBAIDE 'S FOUNDER, Alexandra de Garidel, is a concept creator whose style can be identified, ever so subtly, through the narrative underpinning the design, as well as the emotional context of the interiors she crafts.

Her approach to a project, whether residential or commercial, starts with “writing a story”, inspired by the clients’ personality, the location and various elements that capture the essence and help define the main theme. The result is a space where you feel at ease – a space that you don’t want to leave, (hence the thebaide, a retreat) and interiors that are recognisable for their unorthodox approach and at the same time, are difficult to define or associate with a signature commercial style.

De Garidel is obsessive about detail and would often go to great lengths, designing and drawing her own furniture, cutlery and tableware in general because, she says, no matter how useful and beautiful the detail, it has to also be accurate and functional. Preserving the fine balance between technical efficiency and creativity is one of her trademarks, in fact.

A daring visionary, she mixes styles effortlessly and is frequently tasked with selecting art works that are destined to become heritage pieces. She believes that one cannot create a strong atmosphere without art and works with, and commissions a number of artists.

From a private bank to a house in Africa, to a thoroughly modern home in California, to Swiss chalets, she has a vast and varied repertoire of projects under her belt and enjoys her work immensely.

Love Counts, a massive Swiss Alps chalet that exemplifies her approach perfectly, is full of coded romantic messages, whose main elements, ice, fire and water, are interwoven in every detail, from colour to texture to selection of art works.

When the designer speaks of 10 shades of ice colour, she means it: while the swimming pool has a frozen water shade, with the curve reminiscent of iced mountain paths (and at the same time symbolising the curve love follows), sculptures could be the whitest, almost cream-like white. Cupboards are in the shape of a wall of snow,

while the black metal entrance gates project a fortress-like impression from the outside, emphasising the nest-like ambiance on the inside. The cool cut in half igloo fireplace is juxtaposed with elements capturing the explosive nature of love as an emotion.

Another distinctive project of hers is Mellow Blue, a vast contemporary home in Carolina, US.

The challenge there was to humanise the sheer scale of the building while retaining a strong modernistic feeling and proper perspective. The property’s position – literally on the beach and facing the ocean – had to retain that “ocean side” feel, contemporary style notwithstanding, and this has been achieved with great aplomb.

A bold and unconventional creator of unique spaces, Alexandra de Garidel is a design artist driven by passion but also respect for clients’ imperatives.

1. LOVE COUNTS

Living room

Made to measure Fire place made of metal, cow skin, stone, leather

Stools from Philippe Cramer

Coffee and pedestal from Hervé Van Der Straeten

Sofa: made to measure, velvet fabric On the floor, sculpture “Bouquetin” from Les Lalannes



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2. MELLOW BLUE

Stair Case
Steps in resine with integrated LED
"HAUTS-RELIEFS situés"
by Daniel Buren
Photography by George Rousse

LOVE COUNTS

3. Sculpture "Ours N°5" from
Xavier Veilhan

4. Entrance

Door: metal, design from
Alexandra de Garidel (AGT)

Curve wall in gold, black, white material
by Pierre Bonnefille (design Alexandra
de Garidel)

Sculpture: Tony Cragg
Chandelier: Atelier Van Lieshout

5. Master bedroom

Fire place: "Open igloo", execution
by Pierre Bonnefille

Coffee table: Robert Stadler
(Carpenter Workshop)

Chair LC4 daybed by le Corbusier

Firedogs: Adam and Eve by Hubert le
Gall



6.



7.

MELLOW BLUE

6. Living room

Art piece triptyque by Lozano Hemmer
Coffee table et stools by Robert Bristow
Swing (on metal chain) by Jim Zivic

7. Dining room

Lights from David Weeks, custom made
Painting by Shirazeh Houshiary (Lisson
Gallery London)

Pieces from Robert Courtright "Cast
Bronze Masques"

Dining table and chair from Chris
Lehrecke

8. Family room

Sofa Roche Bobois, Missoni fabric
Table (colored chenille) kid root design
piece (Miami)

Painting by Jonathan Monk



8.