

children only



by jeannette altherr



tenderness

evolution

Laura. A young designer and her family live and work in this two-story rural house. On the ground floor are the carpentry and textile workshops, and on the upper floor the family's rooms. The daughter, Laura, only three months old, still sleeps with her parents and has no room of her own. Design: Katrin Arens and Omero Gasparetti (Italy)

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The house, with its milky walls, is redolent of the owner's particular perfume, a woman who works to unite her personal and professional lives by creating a bridge between past and present. She lives with her family in a universe of her own making, surrounded by objects she has made herself. Her work is to renew old wooden materials, creating new things that bear the stamp of time in their fabric. It is a philosophy which is at one and the same time loving toward the past and critical of contemporary consumerist society, which moves fast with little time for nostalgia.

"I've always been passionate about 'poor' materials and cast-offs. For many years I've been taking unwanted timber from construction sites and derelict houses, and I love to make them live again in a new context. The fun is in transforming something unwanted into an object with an intention."







„... DIE LEUTE HABEN STERNE, ABER
DIE REISEN, SIND DIE SEINE FÜHRER,
FÜR WIEDER ANDERE, DIE GELEHRT
WAREN SIE GOLD, ABER ALLE DIESE STERNE
NIEMAND HAT... WENN DU BEI NACHT
ALLE STERNE, WEIL ICH AUF EINEM
DU ALLEIN WIRST STERNE HABEN, DU
UND ER LACHTE WIEDER.“





For instance, for her daughter Laura, she has made a rocking crib out of an old barrel, a changing table, and a crib with bars, bearing inscriptions in pencil from "The Little Prince" by Antoine Saint-Exupery (for when she can read them). As with the rest of the wooden objects in the house, they are treated with an old craft technique which weathers them, leaving them looking like pieces of driftwood washed up on the beach.

"Laura will sleep in our room until she's three at least, because we know that small children need to be where their parents are. Instead of a room of her own, she'll have a corner of her own in every room in the house. In our room, she has her bed and her books; in the workshop, a table and stool to sit on; in the hallway she'll have a roll of paper for drawing; and in the kitchen a tent or a little kitchen all her own..."



Pom, Tita, Hella, Mop. Cuttings and cast-offs that survive the ravages of time, so that fashion from the past are renewed to appear as something new. These garments, made from the clothes of adults, embody the idea of transformation of old into new, reconciling the past with the present with a clear anti-consumerist message.

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The same philosophy of simplicity which lies behind the furniture in the house was also driving force for a collection of clothing and accessories for children called VaterMutterK (FatherMotherChild). The collection is made from old adult clothes and fabric off-cuts, and practice is fairly evocative of old Shaker designs, with natural colors and materials, rooted a simple rural life.



Reduced to kid-sized proportions, the designs wear their recycled origins with pride, with old pockets, lapels and cuffs on display. The collection, which at the moment covers children from zero to three years old, has been inspired by the designer's daughter Laura. "The idea for VaterMutterKind started almost as a joke. I began by making shirts and pyjamas for baby Laura, but she goes on growing, and with her the idea..."







What stands out here, as much in the house and its fixtures, as in the clothing Katrin designs, is a respect for the passing of time. "I'd love it if we used things for a thousand years. I feel secure surrounded by objects that tell their own story. And deciding to make a garment for your baby out of our old shirts is another affirmation of this cyclic aspect of our lives. It's almost as if the human warmth remains impregnated in the fabric itself, allowing us to embrace the child by extension."