

Anni wouldn't mind being a more modern decorator, but her love for old furniture and objects that reveal their creators' imprint is too strong for that. The ceramic vase by Viktor Sundman from Artek and photographic work by Kreetta Järvenpää add a contemporary layer to her home.

THE PAST HERE AND NOW

In a small studio apartment in central Helsinki, a pale colour palette, beautiful paintwork and natural materials create an enticing mood that's both down-to-earth and dignified at the same time.

A sense of peace, serenity and being present in the moment take hold already in the hallway. I would love to describe the home of **Anni Rantasalo** with exclamation marks, but instead of shrieking, the space invites to admire in silence. Anni has purposefully set out to make her home into a place of rest as an antidote to the hecticness of daily life. Despite her determination, coincidence has had a starring role in the way the home appears today. The colour palette was partly dictated by chance.

'I carried out a complete overhaul in my apartment six years ago, which began by carefully charting its colour history. In practice, I scraped the walls layer by layer with a surgical knife to uncover the paintwork accumulated on the walls over the last hundred years. The building was completed in 1913, but I ended up returning my home to its 1930s colour palette because the finishes from that era were the best preserved', Anni recalls. Anni peeled off the original, patinated paintwork on a

couple of entire walls, leaving them exposed. She painted the rest of the walls with tempera, oil and chalk paint to match the apartment's 1930s colour palette.

Anni runs her own company Maamusta, specialising in restoring interiors and facades of period buildings as well as refurbishment planning and documentation. Initially, her own home served as a test lab for experimenting with various traditional painting methods: the kitchen was painted with linseed oil paint, the hallway with egg tempera and the bedroom with chalk paint. She mixed all the shades herself using pigments, and one cannot but admire her keen eye for colour. However, Anni herself wishes to highlight her predecessors, painters of old.

'Painters were respected tradesmen in the past. I believe their vast knowledge and strong eye for colour were the result of a closer connection to nature, ensuring harmonious colour combinations. I've often thought to myself that I'd never be able to outsmart the colour designs of my predecessors from the early-1900s', Anni claims.

In other words, the colour palette in Anni's home

SELINA VIENOLA PHOTOGRAPHY KREETTA JÄRVENPÄÄ





The wonderful stone walls, which are bare except for a few mirrors and framed postcards, are works of art in themselves.

The special atmosphere in Anni Rantasalo's home can be sensed already in the hallway. It's a place for surrounding yourself with the ambience of the past decades while being strongly present in the moment. The functionalist-style mirror is from Old Times and the table is a flea market find.



Anni's company Maamusta used to also specialise in restoring furniture. Anni has refurbished the chair by the window and all the peasant-style pieces of furniture in her home.



was actually determined by her colleagues from the 1930s. At the time, the now trendy Punavuori district where she lives was a poor, working-class residential neighbourhood, money largely dictating the shades that ended up on the walls. They now glow in warm, earthy tones of yellow ochre and brown umbra, which were inexpensive pigments in the 1930s.

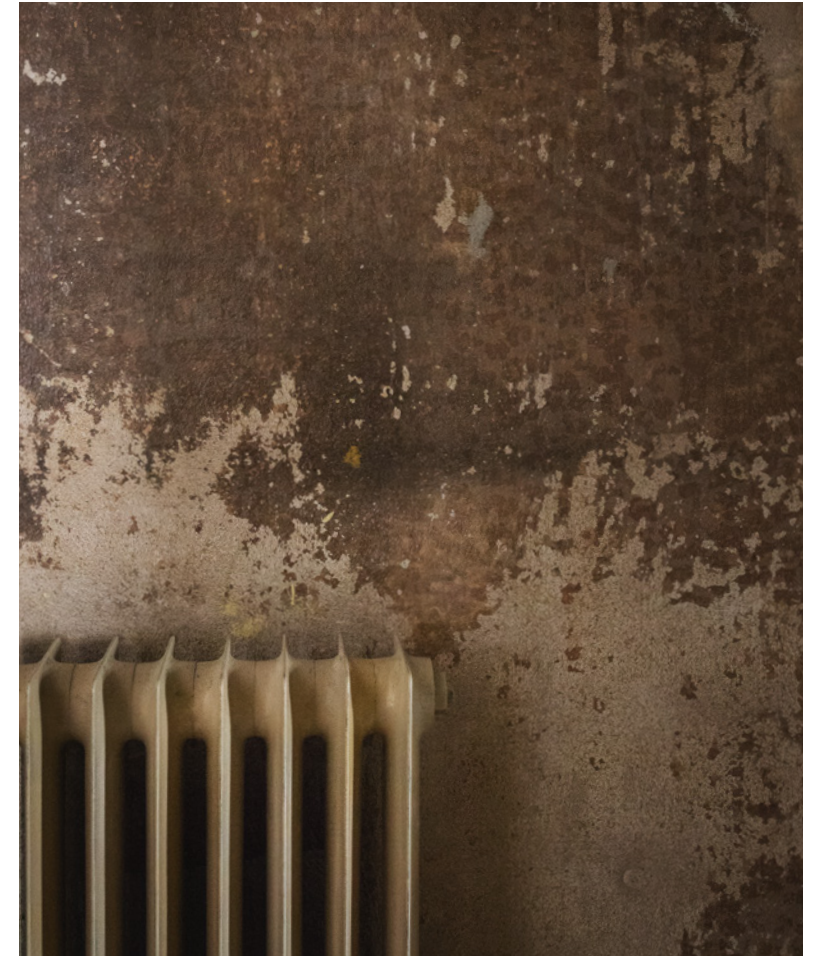
Anni's home is an impressive example of how it's worth considering the style and period of the building when renovating.

'In my opinion, it's important to accept a home as it is rather than trying to turn it into something else. My small, 40-square-metre home was completed over a century ago in a working-class neighbourhood, so fine mouldings and ornamental ceiling roses simply don't belong here', she considers.

'In refurbishing my own home, I almost went to the extremes in considering the characteristics of the apartment. I'm aware I couldn't have made all the same choices if it were a case of a family with children. Sometimes less is more. For instance, in the home of my boyfriend and his children, refurbishing the original double doors into their original shade was enough to set the right mood', Anni describes.

Anni's home is a beautiful statement in favour of a pared-down aesthetic, conservation and sustainable choices. Stone surfaces and wooden floorboards coated with traditional paint receive a lovely time-worn patina. The way it will look in years to come is just as important as the way it looks now. ■

Anni picked out the shades for the hallway from the well-preserved 1930s paint layers behind the radiator.





The windowsills in their bare, oiled concrete finish look lovely and are easy to maintain.

Anni feels that she didn't actually plan the renovation – listening to the apartment did the work for her. The teapot by Ulla Procopé was a second-hand find. Rice cups from Artek.

