



Climb Every Mountain

The Messner Mountain Museum in Corones, Italy, was born of an extraordinary collaboration between mountaineer Reinhold Messner, mountain tourism experts Skirama Kronplatz and Zaha Hadid, star of contemporary architecture

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TIMELESS TEXTURE

Text: Michele Koh Morollo Photography: © Amit Geron

Israeli architect Pitsou Kedem brings the old world into the new with a home he recently built for himself in a neighbourhood of Brutalist-style buildings in Israel's Ramat HaSharon



Above
The strong, perennial qualities of Brutalism were a source of inspiration for this 380 sq-m home, which expresses the architectural language of the 1950s with a modern parlance

Right and left
Circular openings are used on walls in the interior to create visual connections between various rooms

Dense groves of eucalyptus trees set the stage in the neighbourhood where architect Pitsou Kedem built his family home last year. Established in the 1950s by army veterans, this neighbourhood in the city of Ramat HaSharon is characterised by Brutalist-style concrete buildings with low silhouettes and horizontal lines.

Kedem, who has worked on high profile projects like a historical house in the ancient port city of Jaffa, and the renovation of the former apartment of the first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, says that the strong, perennial qualities of Brutalism were a source of inspiration for this 380 sq-m project, which expresses the architectural language of the 1950s with a modern parlance.

"I designed the house with the horizontal lines and a clear, tight grid that characterises the humble, timeless style of this period," he explains. "I also chose to use the same materials, aiming not for a fashionable home, but one I hope will be relevant for many years."





The structure is composed of two squares, one stacked on top of the other on a sloping 720 sq-m plot

Combining elements such as a concrete ceiling and continuous windows with materials in their raw state such as exposed concrete, iron, uncoloured wood and silicate bricks into a streamlined, linear structure, Kedem created a paradoxically rough-hewn yet graceful sanctuary that appears enclosed and fortress-like when seen from the outside, but that opens up with a surprising abundance of space and sunlight inside.

The concrete ceiling, with a continuous window along its entire length, appears to float above the entrance floor. The main concrete wall creates a sense of groundedness, but this is mediated by a roof with a band of glazing separating it from the top of the wall. "This

allows the ceiling to be separate from the structure's walls and creates a feeling of etherealness in the building's mass and the white painted, iron ramp that leads to the floating entrance lobby," says Kedem.

This glazing is shielded by timbre louvres, which can be electronically controlled for privacy and to alter the amount of light and shadow along the façade and within the interior spaces. The structure is composed of two squares, one stacked on top of the other on a sloping 720 sq-m plot. The lower square, which serves as the first floor, takes up the lower end of the slope, while the upper square — the second floor — is located on the higher section of the slope, fringed by the road yet shielded from it by evergreen trees.

From left

The main concrete wall creates a sense of groundedness, but this is mediated by a roof with a band of glazing separating it from the top of the wall • Combining elements such as a concrete ceiling and continuous windows with materials in their raw state such as exposed concrete, iron, uncoloured wood and silicate bricks, Kedem has created a rough-hewn yet graceful sanctuary

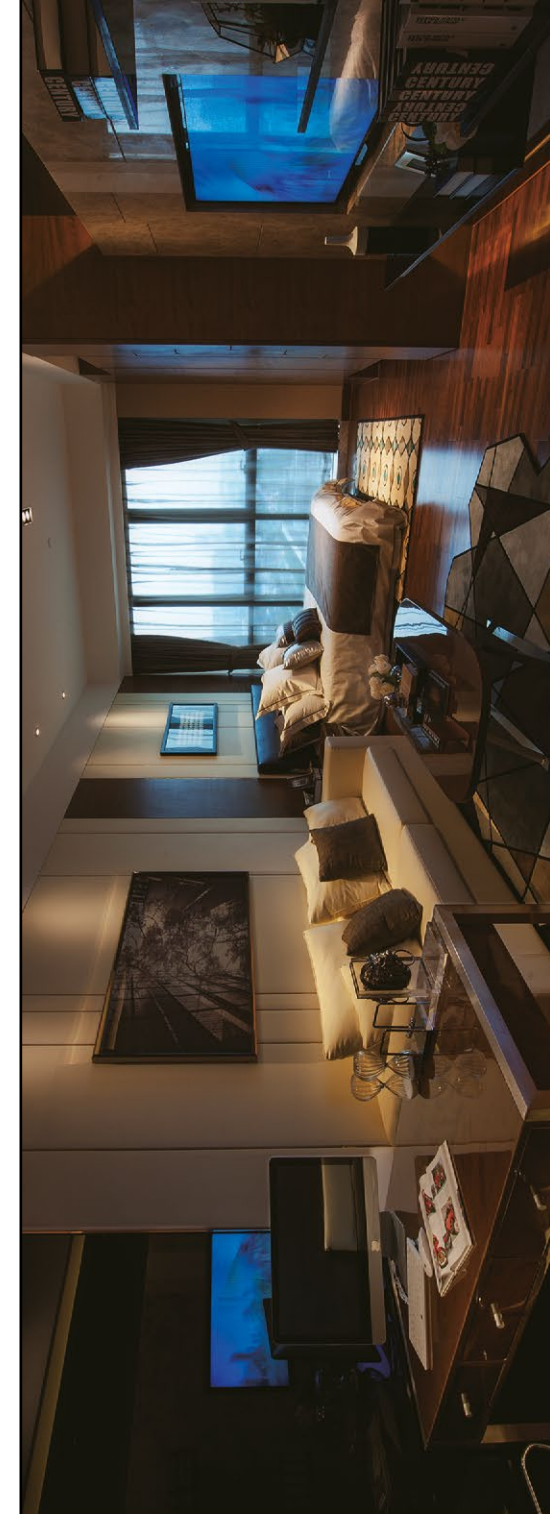


Dense groves of eucalyptus trees set the stage in the neighbourhood where architect Pitsou Kedem built this family home last year

Located on the upper level, an entrance door is positioned at the centre of the building, in the cross-section of a stairwell constructed with uniquely textured metal, and enclosed between two walls of exposed silicate bricks. This entrance door leads into an open kitchen, living and dining area with a frameless window at the opposite end, that offers calming views of the eucalyptus trees surrounding the plot. The brick walls sandwiching the stairwell also support the ceiling and divide the two floors into

rectangles, so the living areas are in one side of the plan and the master bedroom and study are in the other.

A skylight, half concealed by wooded slats, runs the entire length above the stairwell, flooding the space with natural light. Circular holes of different sizes are cut out from the silicate brick walls, allowing the light from the skylight to disperse within the space. Similar circular openings are used on other walls in the interior to create visual connections between the various rooms.



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Inside, the raw materials once again work their magic, creating the perfect backdrop for almost gallery-like spaces where books and artwork from classical and contemporary Israeli artists grace the walls and shelves.

Both for the architecture and the interior, Kedem chose materials that he felt would age well over time. Furniture and light fixtures from designers such as Piero Lissoni, Patricia Urquiola, Dan Yafe and others and from leading brands including MDF Italia, B&B Italia, Desalto and Living Divani, were carefully chosen to complement the timeless elegance of the space.

"The use of raw materials in their original state — exposed concrete, wood and unpainted iron — conveyed and magnified both the material and sensational experience of home," he says. Beyond the rewards of building a place he and his family can call home, Kedem says he discovered more about the practical aspects of architecture, and what it's like to be a client through this project.

One source of inspiration for Kedem were the childhood memories of his wife's kibbutz, which to him seemed to capture the elusive idea of "timeless architecture". Using scale and restraint, his goal was to express a balance between modernity and enduring traditions. "I wanted to make my family's home cosy yet architectural. My decision was to create not high spaces but rooms with a human scale," he says. ●



From top

A frameless window offers calming views of the eucalyptus trees surrounding the plot • The building is shielded by timbre louvers, which can be electronically controlled for privacy and to alter the amount of light and shadow along the façade and within the interior spaces