

# FLUID SPACES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HANI DAHMAN

Suspended on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor of Dubai's Daman Tower, Karim Nader's Daman 26 Dreams unfolds as a spatial meditation—an apartment conceived less as a container of objects than as a vessel of atmosphere. ►







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Against the hyper-urban skyline of the DIFC district, the project proposes not opposition, but quiet withdrawal: a soft reclamation of silence within the city's accelerating verticality. ***"The project is an ode to a Dubai that went back to its essence: the awesome silence of emptiness"***, says Nader. ***"We wanted to create a cocoon"***, he adds. It is a deliberate gesture of stillness—a refusal to compete with spectacle, and instead a movement inward, toward slowness and self-awareness. In a city defined by momentum, Daman 26 Dreams offers a rare spatial pause, where dwelling becomes a form of reflection rather than accumulation. Instead of embracing the visual language of the metropolis below, Nader reaches toward something older, quieter. This return is articulated through a language of tactility.

The palette—sands, muted pinks, vegetal greens—draws from the surrounding landscape, both real and remembered. ***"Nature builds us and we build upon nature"***, Nader reflects, invoking a reciprocal relationship between body and environment.

The apartment opens onto a view of Zabeel palace gardens; their tones—beige earth, intermittent green—are extended inward through the use of off-white travertine with horizontal veining, touches of brass, and raw linen.

The materials are not imposed, but rather received, as though excavated from the desert itself: ***"The materials are all natural and it is for the sake of extending the natural realm below"***.

The insistence on natural materials and soft surfaces serves not only to quieten the space, but to expand it—psychically and emotionally. In the absence of harsh contrast—no blacks, no absolute whites—the space favours a chromatic flow that resists punctuation. ***"To flow in nature, one should encounter fluidity and smoothness"***, Nader explains. Colour appears not as a directive, but as emergence. ***"Can you imagine a fertile desert?"***, he asks, proposing a vision in which pinks, oranges, and blues ***"grow out of this unexpected sand"***.

The palette is a poetic merging of place: the mineral clarity of Dubai and the layered fertility of Lebanon. Within this environment, art plays a generative role. It is not added to complete the project—it begins it. ***"The whole project started with a Mansour El Habre collage"*** Nader recalls.

Though the original piece proved unavailable, it became the chromatic and conceptual seed for a commissioned diptych—now sliding panels concealing a television. ►







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The apartment gradually became a field for “coups-de-cœur”, with works by Studio Lenca, Cornelia Craft, and Jenny Brosinski inhabiting rooms not as statements, but as presences. From a hand-painted Japanese garden in the guest bathroom by de Gournay to pieces discovered at Art Dubai and abroad, each artwork reflects a moment of encounter, selected not for coherence but resonance. Indeed, coherence itself is gently resisted.

Daman 26 Dreams unfolds not as a strict visual narrative, but as a collection of intuitions. **“We believe that inconsistency should be our freedom”**, Nader notes. The project resists the tyranny of total design. Instead, form, colour, and texture are allowed to converse, gently, within the grounding frame of the sand-hued architecture. **“We freely explore forms, colours, and textures within the guideline that has drawn itself as evident both from our perception of the beautiful Zabeel view and our mutual sensitivities as free perceiving individuals”**, he explains.

There is an elegance in this looseness. Furniture by Cassina, Meridiani, and Poltrona Frau coexist with custom pieces—such as a one-off cabinet by Thomas Trad—chosen not to impress, but to belong. Carpets by David/Nicolas Studio and Iwan Maktabi add softness underfoot, echoing the project’s tactile intelligence. Light, too, is treated not as ornament, but as atmosphere. Working in collaboration with Atelier33, Nader devised a lighting concept designed not to illuminate, but to listen. **“It is a minimal amount of light that enhances the mystery of the desert, but this time like stars at night in a barely moonlit night”**. Decorative pieces by Giopato & Coombes and Alain Ellouz contribute moments of sculptural presence, but the overall effect is subdued. The apartment glows rather than shines. It suggests more than it reveals. Ultimately, Daman 26 Dreams is less about dwelling than about inhabiting—a spatial act that honours interiority as much as place. It is a soft architecture, one that privileges spirit over spectacle, and invites a slow unfolding of perception. Here, to live is to attune—to light, to texture, to memory. What emerges is not simply a home, but a philosophy of space: one that values presence over performance, slowness over show. Karim Nader’s creation does not declare itself; it waits. It trusts that those who enter will know how to listen. ■





WE FREELY EXPLORE  
FORMS, COLOURS,  
AND TEXTURES



BY MARIE CLAIRE MAISON



MIRROR  
“Eclipse” double mirror  
Roche Bobois

LIGHT  
“Plusminus”  
lighting system  
Vibia

CHAIR  
“Trampoline”  
Cassina

VASE  
“Sestiere”  
Cassina

COFFEE TABLE  
“Lens”  
Paolo Castelli

CUSHION  
“Third Eye”  
La DoubleJ

FLOOR LAMP  
“Bolle Stelo”  
Gallotti&Radice

DAYBED  
“Quilton Lift”  
Hay