

IN CLAIRE TABOURET AND NATHAN THELEN'S L.A. HOME, TABOURET PAINTED THE CEILING WITH TAROT CARD IMAGERY AND THELEN MADE THE SOFAS AND COCKTAIL TABLE. OPPOSITE IN THE FOYER, PAINTED IN FARROW & BALL'S SUDBURY YELLOW, THE ARTWORKS ARE BY KATARINA JANECKOVA WALSH (LEFT) AND TABOURET (RIGHT). THE CABINET IS A FRENCH ANTIQUE.



house of cards

ART: CLAIRE TABOURET; NICHOLAS OSMOND/DAK BELLINGER GALLERY; KATARINA JANECKOVA WALSH/ALAN AVERY ART COMPANY.

From a ceiling covered in tarot imagery to a fireplace coated in colorful hues, painter Claire Tabouret's LA home has become her latest canvas

TEXT BY HANNAH MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS JAUSSAUD





LEFT TABOURET AND THELEN WITH THEIR DAUGHTER, MATTEA, AND DOGS GEORGE (LEFT) AND PEPE. THE FRAMED DRAWING ABOVE THEM IS BY TABOURET.

card is inspired by their electrician. “I like the idea that the house holds these memories—this energy.”

The ceiling set the tone for the rest of the Mediterranean-style dwelling, which they bought in 2019 and spent some time in before making too many changes. “It gave a sense of playfulness and freedom to the house,” says the artist.

This wasn’t the first time Tabouret had taken her brushes to a ceiling. Back in 2017, at the request of AD100 designer Pierre Yovanovitch, she created a totally imagined environment inside the former chapel of Château de Fabrègues, Yovanovitch’s own Provence estate. “It’s a completely immersive experience,” she says of the walls and ceiling covered with imagery of children in traditional dress. “I think that’s what we are doing here too. Of course it’s just the beginning.”

After a few years in the house, the couple made some minor renovations—combining two bedrooms to make a large primary suite, redoing the tiles in the primary bathroom. Observing how the LA light brought the space to life over the course of the day, they chose a palette of Farrow & Ball colors accordingly: a terra-cotta hue called Red Earth for the dining room, Sudbury Yellow in the sunny breakfast room, and a dusty blue called De Nimes in the lower-level family room. “It’s a matter of telling a story, transitioning from one room to another in a natural way,” Tabouret says of the process.

Thelen, a musician and carpenter, made much of the furniture, working with sycamore, walnut, African mahogany, and purple heart wood to create the sofas, cocktail table, bed, and more. “I get the lumber; then the wood sort of dictates what happens next,” he explains of his intuitive process (he often sources locally from Angel City Lumber, an organization that collects fallen trees in the LA area). He doesn’t plan things out too much in advance, but a subtle leaf motif, seen in the sofa legs and cocktail table, does recur in several pieces. Those handmade furnishings sit alongside thrift-store finds and family heirlooms, like an antique bentwood rocking chair and a cuckoo clock made by Thelen’s great-uncle, both snagged from his childhood home in South Dakota. A few blue-chip collectibles emerge from the eclectic mix, like the pair of Pierre Jeanneret teak-and-cane armchairs in the living room.

Much of the artwork in the house is Tabouret’s own, and rather personal in subject matter—a self-portrait with their dog George; a picture of Thelen’s eldest daughter, Bebel; a gaggle of girls painted soon after she moved to LA to keep her company in an empty apartment. These pieces mingle with works the couple have collected over the years from

ART: CLAIRE TABOURET



THE PATIO IS OUTFITTED WITH CHAIRS BY RUSSELL WOODARD AND TILE FROM MISSION TILE WEST. BELOW THE DINING CHAIRS AND TABLE WERE SCORED AT A THRIFT STORE; THE CENTER LEAF WAS CRAFTED BY THELEN. THE PAINTING IS BY TABOURET, THE CERAMICS ARE BY KEVIN WILLIS, AND THE CLOCK IS A FAMILY HEIRLOOM.



ilt your head back in Claire Tabouret and Nathan Thelen’s LA home and you’re in for a visual delight. There’s a robed noblewoman, a falcon on her arm—the Nine of Pentacles. A kneeling nude, pouring liquid from two jugs onto water and land—the Star. A couple, the Lovers, split in two by what resembles a compass—the Wheel of Fortune. It’s all imagery from a classic tarot card deck, illustrated in the early 20th century by artist Pamela Colman Smith, which Tabouret has whimsically re-created across the wood-beamed ceiling of her family’s 1920s home in Los Feliz.

“That was the first thing we did while the house was still empty,” says Tabouret, a French painter whose moody, figurative works are represented by Perrotin gallery. She recalls the giant scaffolding she and Thelen built to lift her up 16 feet to the height of her expansive canvas. She worked in little nods to her own domestic life—the Moon card depicts their two dogs, George and Pepe; their daughter, Mattea, rides the horse in the Sun card; and the lantern-toting man in the Hermit



THE FAMILY ROOM FEATURES AN RH SOFA, NESTING TABLES FROM LA TRÉSORERIE, AND A ROCKER BY POTTERY BARN KIDS. BELOW IN THE BATH, TILES FROM TABARKA STUDIO AND MISSION TILE WEST COMPLEMENT THE HOME'S DECO-ERA ORIGINS. THE VANITY AND LIGHTING ARE BY RH, THE MIRROR IS BY WATERWORKS, AND THE CURTAINS ARE BY THE SHADE STORE.

“We think of it as an artwork that’ll never really be finished,” says *Tabouret*.

friends—like the ceramist Kevin Willis—and others, such as Nicholas Osmond, Katarina Janeckova Walshe, and Elizabeth Glaessner.

MAKING A HOME TOGETHER came naturally to the pair. “We work next to each other in the studio,” explains Tabouret of their shared workspace in Pico-Union. “And I think we have a similar approach to how we make things—how I build an image, how he builds a piece of furniture—for both of us it’s a very handmade, intuitive process.”

It’s an overlap they will explore more deeply in their first-ever collaboration, which they’ll unveil with Night Gallery at the FOG Design+Art fair in January. Of the works—mirrors and stained-glass pieces inspired, again, by the fantastically occult illustrations of Pamela Colman Smith—Tabouret explains, “Usually our collaboration is just bouncing ideas from each other’s work, since we’re next to each other, but this is the first time we would be actually making a four-hand piece.”

As for the house, Tabouret says, “We think of it as an artwork that’ll never really be finished.” Maybe she’ll paint the walls with animals and monsters for baby Mattea to discover as she gets older. They’ve planted the garden outside, and plan to install a bronze fountain. Examining a partially painted fireplace, Tabouret says, “Little by little I will finish painting it so there is no longer any white. Maybe that’s what will happen to the whole house over time. I’m sure in two years it’ll be more and more alive.” ▲



A PAINTING BY TABOURET HANGS OVER THE FIREPLACE, WHICH THE ARTIST IS SLOWLY COLORING. THE PAIR OF VINTAGE CHAIRS IS BY PIERRE JEANNERET, AND THE RUGS ARE VINTAGE MOROCCAN.