

# Rooms

Furniture and Interior Designers

Tucked between Russia, Turkey and the Black Sea, the country of Georgia isn't often found at the top of many must-visit lists. But the long-overlooked country is experiencing something of a cultural moment as of late, thanks in large part to a group of artistic stars including—along with Georgian fashion designer Demna Gvesalia—creative partners Nata Janberidze and Ketil Toloraia. Comprising the creative duo known as Rooms, Nata and Ketil draw on Georgia's Soviet past to design furniture, hotels, restaurants, retail spaces, and even a Holiday Inn, bringing about a newfound enthusiasm for design tourism in their native land.

## What is your ideal office?

NJ — Space with a lot of light, high ceilings, spacious rooms in the old building of old Tbilisi, and nice friendly people around—that's our office.

## What is a sight, smell or sound that captures the spirit of Georgia for you?

NJ — Spring with almond trees and Autumn with rich colors, the smell of “oldness” and timber, “lightness of being..”

KT — My favorite moment is in summer, when it's already very hot and the city feels completely deserted to walk past the Music Conservatory in the old part of Tbilisi—where the sound of students practicing their instruments spreads out onto the empty streets.

## What is the strangest or most challenging brief you've ever received?

KT — I guess, most challenging brief is the “Le Meridien” hotel (that we are working on right now) simply because of its scale.

## What is your favorite shape at the moment?

NJ — Circle.

## When's the last time you cried, and why?

Keti - 10 days ago, when I finished reading *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, a book by Afghan writer Khaled Hosseini.

## What moment in history do you wish you could experience first-hand?

NJ — The future.

## If Rooms were commissioned to design a doctor's office waiting room, what are three features that might define it?

NJ — Vintage display with intriguing medical lab equipment, wooden floors to feel homey and protected, tranquil music.

## What elements of your Soviet upbringing emerge in your designs?

NJ — Soviet architectural shapes, and the spirit of the 60s.

## What is the most beautiful word in the Georgian language?

NJ — ჰაერი, “haeri” (air).

## What do you think has caused the recent artistic renaissance in Tbilisi?

NJ — 10 years of stagnation that caused the “late bloomers.””

## What ancient building or structure do you admire most?

NJ — Georgian “Mesxuri saxli” (Meskhetian house) with its story...

KT — “Jvari” Monastery in Mtsketa, built in the 6th century.

## When was the last time you two disagreed about work?

KT — We disagree often, but that's an integral part of the creative process. As soon as we “sleep on it” all of a sudden we're on the same wavelength again.

## What song would make a fitting soundtrack for your aesthetic?

NJ — It's All So Quiet by Björk or Nerissimo by Blixa Bargeld and Teho Teardo.

KT — November by Max Richter.



Photography Levan Maisuradze