

INTROSPECTIVE MAGAZINE

The 1stDibs Virtual Showhouse: 10 Interior Designers Reimagine Iconic Rooms

Forum Baths, Pompeii

Creator: Unknown • Built: ca. 79 B.C.

REIMAGINED BY: NICOLE FULLER INTERIORS



Until the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, in 79 A.D., the citizens of Pompeii enjoyed daily excursions to the public baths, located behind the Temple of Jupiter. A favorite spot for the men was the *caldarium*, or hot bath, a vaulted hall filled with steam and containing a basin of cold water at one end in a domed niche. When designer [Nicole Fuller](#), who has offices in Los Angeles and New York, saw a picture of this ancient space, she recalls, “I immediately had this concept of light, chromotherapy and reflection. It spoke to me about introspection, self-care.”

Like many of us, she craved a respite from the tumult of our times. Her response, possible only in a virtual world, flagrantly flouts all standards of architectural preservation. Fuller blew out the ceiling and walls, replacing them with multicolored stained glass, and flooded the room with water to create a pool. A round bed now floats where the cold basin once stood, a polychromatic fresco swirling overhead. In the real world, this would have been desecration, but here it becomes a mesmerizing flight of fancy.



“It has light, which has an incredible stimulating effect on the human psyche,” Fuller says of the new solarium. “It has color therapy, which can really alter someone’s mood. It can give you confidence and boost your spirits. And it has water. Water, water therapy and the movement of water are very stimulating

and can have a lot of healing properties. With everything that's happened in the world, it has been a time to just heal, to care for yourself and care for others around you, and to be really quiet."

The contemplative aquatic environment, she continues, was meant "for you to swim to the bed through the color, through the reflections of light, come up and be there with God's rays of light. To meditate and reflect on who you are — as a creative, as a businessman or woman, or as an activist." The domed niche is simply appointed with an Italian 16th-century Botticelli-like portrait flanked by plaster Giacometti-style sconces and the fresco. The bed had to be round, Fuller felt, to represent "infinity and endless possibilities. An opportunity to love more, laugh more, create more." Certainly, all things seem possible in the stillness induced here.

