

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

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MAGAZINE

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SUZY SAYS

OLIVIA SHARPE speaks to international design consultant and local resident Suzy Hoodless and finds, like her bold and expressive interiors, she is just as outspoken in person

SUZY HOODLESS' RISE TO success was not via a laborious climb up the career ladder but rather an express lift to the top, entering into the design industry working for Designers Guild founder Tricia Guild. This was followed by a five year stint as Interiors Editor of *Wallpaper* magazine, established by Tyler Brule. During this time, Suzy travelled the world reporting on design trends and picked up the tools she would need to set up her own design consultancy which she did in 2000.

Since starting in the industry, Britain's leading design trend-setter has filled more Rolodexes than most of us could hope for in a lifetime, with commercial clients listing from Candy & Candy and Colefax & Fowler to Gucci and Italian *Vogue*, not to mention her directory of residential customers. Suzy's designs have become an extension of her personality. Refusing to follow trends, she mixes contrasting styles, periods and colours, challenging previous conceptions of traditional design practice to create visionary statements with true artistic panache.

What first attracted you to the industry?

Working for Tricia Guild at Designers Guild first attracted me. She is dynamic, devoted and it is in her genetic make-up. It just seemed to be the only industry I wanted to be in after working for her.

How would you define your trademark?

I am known for mixing periods and styles. I don't believe in following a look or a trend but I am instinctive. I am often asked how I make interiors work with pieces that shouldn't really go together but in my mind they do go together. I like juxtaposition and I see combinations of styles, textures and pattern as an essential rhythm.

Who is your typical customer?

My clients are discerning and come to me with a level of understanding about design. They often know the big name designers and manufacturers but don't necessarily have the resources or the time. They also look to me for confidence and the fun of collaborating.

What changes have you noted on the London interior design scene from when you initially began?

It's grown exponentially. When I first started, 100% Design was just opening at the Chelsea Barracks and only a few small designers showed; it's now an international festival. The industry is far bigger and far more commercial.

What do you like about living in Ladbrooke Grove?

I love the diversity. Rather like my interiors, I love the eclectic mix, vibrancy and energy of West London. The majority of my clients live in Kensington and Chelsea so it makes sense for me to be here.

Have you noticed any particular design trends in your area?

It would have to be the need for quality and an understanding of provenance. Clients want value with backbone.

What is your favourite room in the house and why?

My eldest daughter's bedroom. It was a challenge when designing it as I am not into cutesy interiors. The walls are the pink from the fashion label Acne's carrier bags and there is Black Vitsoe shelving, a bespoke rug from The Rug

Company, a large cabinet from Barber Osgerby and my Flamingo wall hanging also from The Rug Company. I love it and just hope she does too.

How would you describe the overall style of your home?

It's a family home, user friendly, comfortable and classic. I want people to enjoy it and feel welcome and at home. I mix Scandinavian furniture with 20th and 21st century classics. I am lucky enough to own a Bridget Riley, a Gerald Laing and a Julian Opie, amongst others.

What's next for Suzy Hoodless?

I am fortunate in that I love what I do and I want to continue doing more of the same. We have a wallpaper collection with Osborne and Little and a rug collection with The Rug Company. We are continuing to develop products as well as our interiors. ■

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