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IN LONDON

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Meet three Irish interior designers reimagining London's interiors

WORDS BY AMANDA COCHRANE

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hat is it about Irish design that continues to resonate far beyond our shores? Perhaps it is an instinctive understanding of craft, a deep-rooted sense of place, or a talent for weaving narrative into every interior. Whatever the reason, Irish designers, in all fields, are exerting a growing influence on the international stage. We meet three leading creatives shaping some of London's most accomplished homes, bringing a distinctly Irish perspective to contemporary interiors.

Róisín Lafferty

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BEN ANDERS

Róisín Lafferty, whose work takes her around the world, is juggling numerous projects in London, including the interior design of this London penthouse apartment in Nine Elms, South West London. With sweeping views across the Thames, Róisín's first thought when asked to complete the apartment was she wanted to create a sanctuary above the city.

Róisín's brief for the penthouse was to design a home that felt inviting and purposeful, while making better use of the large open-plan spaces. She focussed on clearly defined areas without losing the overall sense of openness which resulted in a welcoming home rather than a space that felt too austere or overly polished. "I kept coming back to this idea of looking at the city through rose-tinted glasses," says Róisín.

"We wanted every area to have a reason for being there, from more formal settings to spaces that feel relaxed and intimate," she explains. "The aim was to create the feeling of a collector's home, with beautiful pieces and vignettes at every sightline, but still somewhere that felt lived in rather than staged."

The changing London sky was another huge influence on Róisín's design. High above the city she observed the constantly shifting colours and the interiors almost drifting into the landscape. "We drew on those soft, hazy tones and translated them into clay, dusty rose, wine and earthy colours throughout the apartment," explains Róisín. Italian design and craftsmanship were other major inspirations. "We wanted that sense of craftsmanship and individuality to run throughout the apartment, with pieces that each bring their own character while still feeling part of a cohesive whole."

There is a softness and warmth to Róisín's colour palette that's obvious on entering the apartment. It has allowed her to transform the space with her selection of furniture, lighting, paint finishes, fabrics and inimitable styling. "That was one of the most interesting aspects of the project because it demonstrated how dramatically you can change the experience of an interior without major architectural intervention," explains Róisín.

"Each of those elements became a way of changing not only how the apartment looked, but how it felt to move through and inhabit," she adds. "We brought together earthy tones, rich timbers, tactile finishes and sculptural pieces throughout, creating something that feels elevated but still genuinely comfortable and liveable."

Colour was central to Róisín's design and was based on warm, earthy and rose-inspired tones throughout. "We brought shades from my Prestige by Fleetwood Paint collection into the apartment, and it was incredible to see how transformative colour could be in an existing space," she explains.

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In the dining room Róisín chose a custom travertine table and paired it with a smoke-brown Murano glass chandelier, creating a beautiful contrast between solidity and lightness. "It becomes almost a sculptural composition against the skyline, but at the same time it is a very practical space designed for people to gather around and enjoy," she adds.

IN LONDON



Emily Cunnane

PHOTOGRAPHED BY RUTH MARIA MURPHY

A cool and minimalist townhouse in Fulham, west London is a contemporary reworking of a late-Victorian stock-brick terrace with the interiors, furnishings and art sourced by the interior designer Emily Cunnane.

It was a comprehensive brief. Emily was appointed to do the interior design, furnish and style the house, which was completely empty when the clients moved in. She worked closely with architect Pascal Husar, who likes to mix original features with contemporary additions. “It’s an ethos I closely share with Pascal,” says Emily. “When I took on these interior elements, I picked up on that same mix of new and old and carried it through the home.”

Creating the interiors for this London project was particularly exciting for the designer, as it represented a complete departure from the clients’ previous property in Wicklow, which was much more traditional in style and also designed by Emily. “The owners recognised that London represented a total gear shift in their lives and wanted to stretch themselves with a more contemporary design aesthetic,” explains Emily.

Passionate collectors of craft – particularly ceramics and textiles – the owners asked Emily to create a bespoke home that would blend with the fabric of the original building.

“The brief was to design something that would seamlessly integrate bespoke furnishings by skilled craftspeople with the building’s contemporary interventions,” she says.

Driven by their passion for the Arts & Crafts movement, the clients wanted to create a home that felt collected rather than decorated and a space that was defined by a selection of carefully curated pieces honouring the skill and story of the artists, designers and artisans. “Furnishing pieces like the Rob Street Carter timber and hand-cast bronze tied chair, the vintage linen floor lamp, and the myriad ceramics and fabrics really display this perfectly,” she says.

It was the perfect project for Emily, whose work is shifting towards commercial and residential projects

that allow her more freedom to produce interesting designs with artists and makers. “The clients have excellent taste, and ours is very much a collaborative relationship,” she adds. “They often came to me with textiles or crafts they’d discovered and loved, or items that they owned and wished to feature, and we would explore together how those pieces might fit into the overall scheme.”

Emily and the couple developed an easy and natural rhythm designing the new London abode. “There was a strong foundation of trust, which gave me the freedom to be quite bold in my design approach,” says Emily, who enjoyed choosing some of the art pieces. “Being given free rein by my client to find unusual art pieces and unique makers really made this a special project to work on.”



The owners recognised that London represented a total gear shift in their lives and wanted to stretch themselves.

Max Lipsey’s Woven Series armchair in the kitchen, which despite its severe appearance is apparently remarkably comfortable, was sourced by Emily from the Mint Gallery. A myriad of ceramics and fabrics, plus some very cool lighting including the Galunthus lampbase and Heavenly Hemp lampshade, both by House of Hackney, are all excellent examples of Emily’s creative and colourful approach to interior design. “I think my lifestyle is allowing me to design in a different way because I’m meeting so many creative people, particularly here in Lisbon,” says Emily. “And I think that is what’s pushed me into this new way of designing.”