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Eastern *elegance*

Inspiring ideas to bring beauty
and balance to your space

**WALLS
THAT
WOW**

A city apartment
with bold designs

**AT HOME WITH AUTHOR
ANNABEL KANTARIA**

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IF WALLS COULD TALK

Gorgeous wallcovering designs bring character and colour to this London home

Words: Lucy Land

“This home is very close to my heart,” reveals award-winning interior designer Niloufar Bakhtiar-Bakhtiari, referring to a four-bedroom apartment in Albert Hall Mansions, a red-brick property overlooking Hyde Park in South Kensington, London. The apartment belongs to a high-profile Italian woman, who chose its location to be closer to her children and grandchildren. “My client is very polite and charming and an absolute pleasure to work with – she likes to keep things simple, is decisive, yet is also very open-minded.”

The homeowner was looking for an easy-to-maintain property. Having already seen Niloufar’s work, she chose to meet Niloufar at her home, rather than her office at NBB Design, to glean ideas for her own property. “It was very useful because she would pick out exactly what she liked and didn’t like from my home.” They also visited Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour, where the client fell in love with an ink colour dragonfly print wallpaper designed by Palmetto Demoiselle for Harlequin, which was then used in the boys’ bedroom. Indeed, the walls became the starting point throughout the project.

Niloufar’s biggest challenge was using stucco – a classic way of treating walls that requires a lot of skill – at her client’s request. “I booked in a specialist, who used thin brush strokes so that the walls would look as smooth as possible,” she reveals. The master bedroom provided another challenge: it has a feature wall, which couldn’t be removed because it contained essential plumbing pipes. Embracing the challenge, a stunning bespoke design from de Gournay was commissioned to give the wall a wow factor. The bed was positioned against it, providing a prime view towards the large windows that afford stunning views across London.

The wall also functions as a divider, with the area behind the bed offering a dressing area. The back wall contains built-in wardrobes that are camouflaged by fabric, while a console table and chair add cosiness. “I normally choose large bedside tables with a few drawers to store things you use in the evening, such as books and night creams, but the walkway created by the feature wall reduced the space.” The solution? Hanging lights were used instead of bedside table lamps to free up precious space. With a partially concealed TV in the bedroom, the resulting space is free of clutter. “The effect is very calming. It’s simply a space to sleep.”



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Hanging lights were also used above the Saarinen table in the dining area, with two circular lights on the back wall. Together, they form a frame for the iconic piece of furniture. In the soft white living room, featuring cashmere curtains, a pop of colour was added, with two bright pink chairs.

As no-one would be living in the home full time, Niloufar was able to go all out on the bedrooms without fearing the children would tire of the colours. Whimsical Stars wallpaper from Cole & Son was used in the soothing, pale pink girl's bedroom. Niloufar continued the pink into the en-suite bathroom by using glass on the pink walls instead of tiles in the shower, while mirrored cabinets under the washbasin further enhanced the space. She also used glass and mirrors in the boys' en-suite bathroom to continue the flow of colour and make the space appear larger. The walls on one side of the apartment were slanted, however, which affected the window spaces in the bedrooms.

“I usually prefer curtains for bedroom windows because they provide a warmer atmosphere than blinds, but curtains would be too heavy for small windows, so I used transparent blinds instead and added warmth with window treatments.”

Niloufar is renowned for transforming awkward spaces into stunning places, and her client gave her free reign on the guest washroom. “It was the first time a client has asked me to go crazy with a space. Initially I gave her three options, but she reiterated that she wanted a complete surprise.” Working with artist Bruno Romette, who translated her vision of raining gold by painting lozenge-like teardrops in gold leaf directly onto the walls, Niloufar created a glamorous look, while the striking gold basin from The Water Monopoly gives the finishing touch to the narrow room. Just like the rest of the apartment, it's a bold, fun and elegant look that doesn't overwhelm the space.

nbbdesign.com



HOME COMFORTS

My interior design rule is...
Treat every room as a living space. Corridors, for example, are often overlooked yet we use them constantly to move from one room to another.

My top décor tip is...
Spend money on things you can't change easily, such as wallpaper, floors and curtains, as well as bathrooms and kitchens.

Another top tip is...
Use dimmer light switches in bathrooms, so you don't have to suffer glaring light early in the morning or late at night.

I don't like...
Classic, white ceramic bathrooms – I prefer to use glass, colour and metal in them.