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interiors

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LONDON LIVING

Keen to bring the colour and energy of the east end of London to this interior, the designer chose elements authentic to the area

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BARBARA CORSICO**



Panelling and joinery was designed by KLD to create depth and texture in the once-blend room, as well as providing substantial display and storage space. Incorporating mirror in the unit reflects light, colour and pattern. The feather light is by Eos.



ABOVE: The KLD-designed and detailed joinery was made by Moore O'Gorman, Dublin. The brass deer-head is from Baha; the sketch from Nelly Duff; both shops on Columbia Road. **THIS PICTURE:** In the bijou garden, a Moroccan-style tiled fountain and metal chair were found in a local market.

London Fields is a park in the borough of Hackney in east London. It's close to the famous Columbia Road flower market where the owners of this apartment used to live before they moved to a larger – albeit initially blander, featureless – space. And bland is not something you would associate with Brona and Tom Karlsson. Both work in financial services in the City. Their working life is very busy, with early starts and long days, so downtime spent embracing the vibrancy, multiculturalism and character of this part of east London is important to them both. The couple wanted to bring some of the personality and energy of their surroundings into their living space.

When interior designer Róisín Lafferty visited their former home, amid the warehouses and small workshops of the flower market area, she got a flavour of the Karlssons' openness to colour and ideas. Their floral sofa from House Of Hackney was one clue, and their collections of books and objects from their travels, displayed against the exposed brickwork, another. The challenge was while they had found a larger space close by, it had none of the character of their former home. Knowing that the founder of Kingston Lafferty Design had delivered exciting projects, they engaged her to help them re-design and decorate. Lafferty's plans are based entirely around her clients – she



In the hall, the palm wallpaper is by House Of Hackney.



The kitchen, to a design by KLD, and made by Sola Kitchens, is simple with subtle grey-green streamlined units with finger-grip handles. The backsplash is Carrera marble, the counter-top is Silestone, in Lyra. The copper pot, lighting and plant display was custom-designed by KLD, as was the ladder, designed to reach storage in the bulkhead. The "Underground-style" tiles and surround are from H&E Smith. The patterned floor tiles are from Best Tiles.



ABOVE: Facing the kitchen, a dining nook was created with a built-in bench framed with storage. The table is from Heyl Interiors. The copper lights are by Tom Dixon, the wall lights by Rockett St George. The cushions are from House Of Hackney. A gilded mirror was given a new look by building up layers of neon yellow paint. By extending the paint outwards from the mirror onto the wall, it becomes integral to the space. **RIGHT:** A view from the hallway to the kitchen, with the floor a combination of chevron semi-solid timber boards and patterned tiling. The latter draws the eye upwards to the copper pot and lighting display, created by KLD.



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places human behaviour at the core of her designs, her primary objective being to create spaces that enhance day-to-day life for their occupiers, in a manner that combines the functional with the aesthetically pleasing. For the Karlssons, she was the designer who could bring it all together. “They are lovely, brave clients,” says Lafferty, “open to ideas and having fun with the design process.”

As her clients wanted a space to relax in where friends could gather in casual comfort, injecting fun into the scheme was a prerequisite for Lafferty. It was also an opportunity to seek out interesting, even eccentric elements from the many markets and small design shops in the vicinity. The two-bedroom space on two levels was roomy but, with a baby on the way, needed to be designed for maximum storage and functionality. A wide semi-solid timber chevron-patterned floor was laid throughout, and the sitting room, “a cream box”, was given an entire wall of joinery for display and storage. The use of mirror bounces light and makes the room appear bigger, a device used elsewhere in the apartment. The kitchen was redesigned to reflect Tom Karlsson’s Scandinavian background: it is low-key and streamlined, devoid of clutter, the perfect “hangout” kitchen when friends gather. Lafferty’s design was to incorporate ceiling-height storage either side of the built-in banquette seat and in the specially designed tiled bulkhead above the sink area. A custom-made ladder was made to facilitate access to kitchen and sitting room storage. At the lower level, the master bedroom opens to a small but interesting courtyard garden. Throughout the space, use is made of the wares of nearby Columbia Road flower market, with lots of greenery and indoor plants deployed.



In the living area, the starting point was the owners' patterned velvet House of Hackney sofa. Panelling in dark grey was designed by KLD and executed by Moore O'Gorman Joinery, Dublin. The flamingo print is from Nelly Duff in Columbia Road.



ABOVE: The console in the hall was designed specially for the space by KLD. **BELOW:** The bedroom has a mix of local finds with a light from made.com, bedlinen and blankets from Foxford and antique embroidered cushions from HM Jones in Columbia Road.



DESIGNER'S EYE: RÓISÍN LAFFERTY



ON PATTERN
"We used the House Of Hackney sofa as a starting point, and added a mix of cushions, the palm print picking up the wallpaper in the hall as well as the planting in the room."



COPPER LIGHTS
"We wanted to create an intimate restaurant-style setting; these copper lights emit very low light and are reflected in the mirror to give the illusion of more."



TEAL TOUCH
"We ran the tiling in from the hall so there was no division between the flooring, and used a teal colour above very simple white tiles and minimalist sanitary ware." ■