

Scandinavian Sophistication

BIID Associate Nicola Holden has been passionate about interiors her whole life. After achieving a degree in Manufacturing Engineering and several years working in the manufacturing industry, Nicola decided to focus on her real love - interior design - and completed a course at Chelsea's prestigious KLC School of Design. Thanks to her degree and previous career, she understands the importance of designing spaces to fit her clients' needs.

Owner and head designer at Nicola Holden Designs, Nicola creates bespoke contemporary interiors that closely reflect her client's individual lifestyle. Her Zimbabwean roots and love of international travel also provide inspiration for her designs. Nicola's personal and company design ethos is to 'create a unique living space for you, inspired by artefacts, objects and memories that are important to you.'

The owner of this house in Long Ditton, Surrey wanted to breathe life into his characterless new-build home. The design brief was to transform the middle floor spaces into something with a contemporary Scandinavian style, incorporating bright colours and playful elements. The middle floor of his home consists of an adult living room and the master bedroom. Given that both rooms are visible from the central stairwell, the client wanted the design to be cohesive in terms of colour and style.

The starting point for the design was the existing dark wood floor that featured throughout. To balance the dark flooring

with its surroundings I layered a neutral palette of warm greys; Farrow & Ball's Pavilion Gray on the walls, and a variety of textures to add interest to the scheme. The large lacquered GoModern bookshelf,



Nicola Holden

The large lacquered GoModern bookshelf gives a stylish personal and homely touch



The Lunar pendant from CTO Lighting illuminates the room

▲ filled with the client's favourite books, family photographs and possessions, gives the living room a stylish personal and homely touch.

Continuing with texture, I incorporated a Tania Johnson rug to ground the seating area in the formal living room. The designer's inspiration for this rug is light and reflection on water, instilling a calming ambience into the space.

The chic, contemporary lines of the Living Divani sofa and armchair contrast with the more natural textures and shape of the sleek French Connection club chair. A mix of high street and designer side tables break up any uniformity in the design, with the gold finishes adding a touch of sophistication, and the concrete bringing in a playful element.

The Lunar pendant from CTO Lighting is set in the corner of the room to allow the piece to stand out on its own as a sculptural element within the design, challenging any pre-conceived ideas that the pendant should hang above the coffee table.

Finally, to incorporate the bright colours of the client's Keith Haring artwork, I added splashes of vibrant colour in cushions, as well as the gorgeous GPJ Baker Botanical Garden curtains. The combination of appliqué and embroidery in the fabric creates an additional array of textures.

The space within the living room allowed for the creation of a reading area in front of the GoModern bookshelves. The elegant simplicity of the Grasshopper reclining chair, the Flos floor lamp and the Carrara Bong table achieve this, bringing a sense of luxurious calm without distracting from the busy-ness of the shelves. The client's ▼

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The bedroom design evolved around the owner's bright patchwork quilt

▲ Danish Boyesen Monkey is the perfect Scandinavian accessory and adds another fun element to the scheme.

In the bedroom, the design evolved around the bright patchwork quilt that the client owned. To maximise the impact of this piece I chose a beautifully textured fabric from Chase Erwin that gently plays with the light on the headboard and bed base.

I layered the room with lacquered bedside cabinets from GoModern, and a monochrome embroidered Calvin Klein

fabric for the curtains. Again concrete makes an appearance in this room in the bedside pendants from Such and Such. The bed sits on an Angora shaggy rug which provides an exquisitely luxurious softness underfoot.

The dressing table, like the bedside cabinets, is GoModern, however I chose a playful, hand-painted stool from Feather & Black to reflect the bright colours of the quilt. To finish the scheme I introduced Scandinavian elements through the minimalistic Lumi mirror above the dressing table and the leaner Georg mirror, both from Skandium.

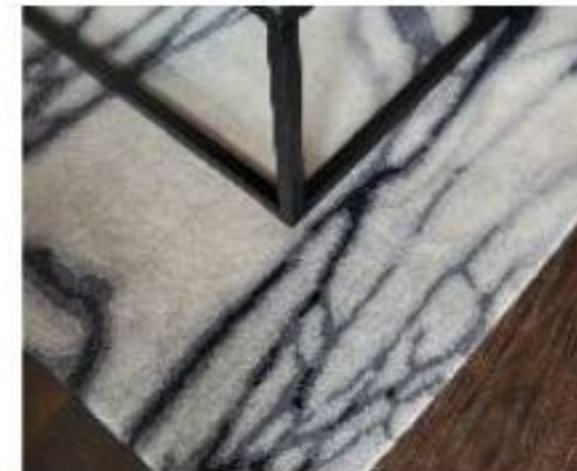
It is really difficult to pick just one aspect of this design that is my favourite, as the focus of any interior design project is to create a complete solution where everything sits comfortably together. Having said this, I am really pleased with how the colours and patterns work together so well in the scheme. If I have to choose just one item as my favourite, it would probably be the Lunar pendant from CTO Lighting, with its aura of refined, luxurious modernity.

One thing that made the design slightly challenging is that none of the rooms ▼

square, and some of the walls are slightly curved or off at an angle; this required a bit more thought to be put into furniture placements. However, a far greater challenge was incorporating the original new-build Legrand switches and sockets into the scheme, which the client wanted to retain.

Communicating with French company Legrand proved a bit of a challenge for my electrical contractor, but through a combination of resilience and persistence we got there in the end!

Having married into a Swedish family I have been itching to create an interior that is heavily influenced by Scandinavian design and this was my chance. Furniture from the Nordic nations generally has a quiet, understated aesthetic. However, Scandi design is far more than this. With much of Scandinavia being dark for long hours during the winter, the design aesthetic is about adding glowing moments to the shadows. From this mix, you can then introduce the bright colours and bold patterns of Josef Frank's designs from Svenskt Tenn and, of course, Marimekko.



A Tania Johnson rug grounds the seating area in the formal living room

One of the main reasons why the colours and patterns of Josef Frank and Marimekko resonate with me is because they remind me so much of the African wax prints that surrounded me during my childhood in Zimbabwe.

So there you have it – one of my recent projects, taking on a playful Scandinavian-influenced interior. This finished scheme is one of sophistication and elegance that doesn't take itself too seriously!

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