

PRODUCT DESIGNER PROFILE

Imogen HEATH

It's all about beautiful pattern and print for Imogen, who believes in being more colour confident in the home. Here, she shares what she loves most about her work

FEATURE EMMA FOALE | PHOTO DULCIE WAGSTAFF



Where did you grow up and how has your childhood influenced your work?

My upbringing has definitely been hugely influential, so it's hard to be brief or talk about anyone in particular. I grew up in South West London where my grandad ran his own interior design business. I have strong memories of his home, set within the railway arches behind Queenstown Road tube; a remarkable and beautiful space. My mother learnt her trade within his firm, moving onto set design, before becoming an illustrator and fine artist herself. Our home, quite rough around the edges in comparison, was very much a family home to four kids with creative activity in every corner, and everything made from scratch. So, I suppose you could say my entrepreneurial flair and vision came from my grandad, and my mum still provides artistic inspiration to this day.

be out shopping and see the Dahlia and Meadow print in their shop windows. I'd come a long way by that point and it felt so good to see my hard work paying off.

How would you describe your design style and aesthetic? My ideas are based on memories and nostalgia, but also things observed in the natural world. I'd describe it as fresh, elegant and contemporary.

What are your thoughts on trends? How can we be more colour confident in our homes? In order to be more colour confident you need to introduce colour gradually, start with adding accents and live with them, then if you like it, build on them. For a space to work it needs to be timeless to the individual, and filled with things you love and not to follow any trend. Personally, I observe trends from a distance and eek out the best bits.

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What path did you take to get into textile design?

I studied textile design and business studies at the University of Brighton, specialising in woven textiles. Weave design jobs were few and far between when I graduated, so I tried my hand at fashion buying while working on my design portfolio. I finally got my own design agent, creating paper weave designs, and they were expanding the collection at the time and asked me to design some floral prints for both fashion and interiors. The success of these printed designs encouraged me to take the plunge and set up my own textile design studio.

Have any places you've travelled to particularly influenced you?

I've spent much of my life in France as my parents live there, in a very remote location to the west. So much of my design work is influenced by the memories I have of their place and the beautiful countryside surrounding their little farmhouse. I never really did the travelling thing, but I have been to New York and Italy many times for work, I even lived in Italy for a year when I was starting out in design. Much of my family are now in Australia, so it's only a matter of time before I visit.

Do you remember your first pattern and how excited were you to see it in print?

No, but I wish I did. When working for my agent I had to create large print collections every four weeks, and I was never allowed to know where they had sold. However, I do remember the first exclusive collection of prints that I created for Heal's when I started my business and how rewarding it was to

Have you been inspired by any designers or artists past or present?

Yes, many more than I can list. Many from the past including Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Morandi, Matisse, Paul Klee, Bonnard, The Bauhaus and the Bloomsbury group. And today there are many whose work I admire too such as Timorous Beasties, Marimekko and Louise Body.

Can you describe your studio to us?

It is a big industrial office space, with large windows and cement floors. It's light and bright with white walls and plenty of greenery and birch to complement all the patterns.

What's your favourite part of your job?

Developing new work. I measure my success by how much time I have to do this, and I am always happier when I am in the throws of creating something new.

Do you have a favourite possession at home you can tell us about?

It would have to be the collection of illustrations and artwork collected from my mother and hers.

What can we expect from you in the next year? Have you got anything launching imminently that we should look out for?

I have designed many more fabrics this year, and have begun working on a rug collection, so watch out for those. I also recently finished a collaboration with Sofa.com, which was launched in February this year. Wallpaper may also be in the pipeline too! **EKBB imogenheath.com**

TOP Imogen's fabrics add a bright and colourful touch to soft furnishings. The Fingal three seater sofa, £1,080, and Fingal armchair, £820, are both shown in Leaves Ivy fabric. The Iggy footstool is in Geometric Spring Green, £350; Birch Chevron rug, from £279. All from Sofa.com

MIDDLE On a beautifully styled dining table: fabrics start from £75 per metre and the round trays start at £35 each

BOTTOM Part of a collaborative collection with Sofa.com, the Angelica double bed is shown here in Leaves Jasmine. It's £1,200

BELOW A gorgeous colour palette defines the spring/summer fabric collection designed by Imogen. The fabrics include the following: Beasties in Indigo; Wood for the Trees in Teal, and Beasties in Green (listed from top to bottom)



Imogen Heath

Designer Imogen, aged 36, specialised in woven textiles while studying at university and after graduating, she tried her hand at fashion. She set up her own company in 2012 and she is now known for her decorative fabrics and surface patterns for both residential and commercial interiors. Her work is produced either by hand or in British mills.