

INTERIOR DESIGN YEARBOOK 2022

A modern living room with a large window overlooking a city skyline. The room features a low coffee table, two armchairs, and a large textured blanket draped over a chair in the foreground.

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FABRIC & TEXTILES IN INTERIOR DESIGN

BY SOPHIE PATERSON

Founder, Sophie Paterson Interiors

Sophie Paterson Interiors is a leading interior design and interior architecture studio with a focus on high end residential projects. Established in 2008 by Sophie, the studio has since grown to a team of 12 highly experienced and skilled designers and interior architects working on projects globally, from the Middle East, across Europe and America. The studio has become well known for creating elegant interiors that balance practicality for their predominantly family clients as well as enduring elegance that will weather trends. Sophie has become an authority on luxury interior design and is regularly asked to speak at top interior design events. The brand now includes several product collections from a wallpaper collection with Fromental, a monogrammed linen collection with Coze, a fabric and cushion collection with Andrew Martin and several more exciting product categories set to launch imminently.

Fabrics and textiles can make or break a project. Our approach at SPI is to constantly balance aesthetic and luxury with practicality. Many of our clients have young families or entertain on a large scale and it's important to both us and them that they are able to relax in, and enjoy their homes rather than worry about stains or marking. We check the spec of all fabrics with the manufacturers and often apply a scotch guarding protection if possible but we also conduct our own in-house testing. Some of the things that you can't tell from manufacturer warranties is how well a fabric will hide stains or pick up dye from dark indigo jeans for example, or how easily the threads might pull. I instil in all our team to test every fabric themselves against sharp objects such as jewellery that might catch the fabric and denim or dark clothing to see how it stands up to day to day



Above: Fabric in Interiors by Sophie Paterson

SOPHIE PATERSON

situations that it will encounter once upholstered and in a home. It's not glamorous or fun but it's such an essential part of choosing the right finishes.

Another increasingly popular approach is to use indoor/outdoor fabrics in an interior with particularly high traffic or kids. One of the brands we love to use for this is Perennials fabrics, they have some beautiful indoor/outdoor fabric that doesn't have that hard/ plasticky feel that many other outdoor fabrics can have. They are solution dyed acrylic and so the dye runs all the way through the fabric meaning you can even bleach stains out

without affecting the colour of the fabric. The only downsides to this are sometimes with thicker fabrics such as these, on a sofa for example it can become less giving and comfortable. It's a balance you have to weigh up in each situation and there are such a wide variety of fabrics they do, some that are more giving than others so we always ensure we go for the softest options.

There is a growing appreciation across the industry towards patterned fabrics, not only as accent fabrics on cushions but for pieces of upholstery too. I find headboards a particularly effective item to



upholster in a pattern, it adds so much impact and interest in a room especially when combined with further patterns in front. Small scale patterns are particularly easy and effective to use and across a room their 'busyness' is distilled and looks less dramatic than when you view them in a mood board or tray setting. It's important to bear in mind and remind your clients that when you look at fabrics condensed into a mood board they will look much busier in a tray than once they are dispersed into a room and so I would always say to err on the side of impact as once installed it will still look sophisticated, but won't look flat or boring.

For cushions I love to use a combination of large-scale pattern, small scale pattern and a block solid colour as a grouping. These will all be combined with a variety of trims. The unfortunate result of this is that cushions can easily become like a piece of couture and whilst they add so much beauty to a room some clients may understandably balk at the cost. For this reason, I designed a cushion and fabric

collection with Andrew Martin last year to bring the same level of detail on cushions with brush fringing, beautiful piping and beautiful fabrics at a much more reasonable cost. Cushions retail from £75 to £155 which when you compare to some of the bespoke options we create that can cost up to £500 for a single cushion once you add in all the various fabrics and trims and cost of making, provides great value for money.

If you look through recent projects of many of the top UK based interior designers and internationally you will see a wider emergence of warmer tones in fabrics, I see a move away from the cooler greys and a tendency towards cream, tan, ochre, deep burgundy as well as emerald green and soft sage green. As we spend more time at home we are drawn towards comforting tones seen in nature and that feel suitable all year round. If you are naturally drawn to neutrals and have a grey base don't despair, grey works beautifully with accents of these warmer tones added in through cushions, throws and accessories. I will always maintain my approach to colour which ensures our interiors stand the test of time and can weather any colour trend by keeping the large pieces neutral and adding colour through smaller pieces of upholstery and soft furnishings. Texture is hugely important with fabrics, I always ensure the textiles we use on sofas, chairs and any item that will regularly be in contact with you skin is soft and tactile. My personal favourite fabric texture to work with is Linen- it's so versatile, from chunky weaves that work beautifully on sofas to finer weaves with a printed pattern. I like a slightly pared back rustic luxe approach to our projects, even the

grandest of interiors will balance luxurious textiles with more pared back and simple fabrics and finishes to ensure it feels restrained and elegant rather than over the top. Great texture combinations involve contrast so linen against velvet or leather looks beautiful and allows the beauty of each one to stand out even more. I love using different fabrics on the front and back of a dining chair or armchair for example- what you need from the fabric on the seat is comfort and practicality but the back of a chair should have interest and detail so a patterned or embroidered fabric can be perfect in this situation, allowing you to fully appreciate the repeat of a larger pattern.

The last thing to bear in mind is to have fun with your fabrics! It's probably the best part about interior design and what most designers love best about the design process so have fun and try out new colour combinations, combine unexpected textures together and create a beautiful scheme that is memorable and give your clients happiness for years to come.

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