



WOMEN IN DESIGN

They've shaped our homes, fashioned an authentically Australian aesthetic and enriched our design culture. From trailblazers to rising stars, we celebrate our design talent.

STORY BY KAREN MCCARTNEY

Some of the biggest names in the architecture and design world are women. Take Iraqi-born British 'starchitect' Zaha Hadid, for example, who in 2004 became the first woman to win the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize. Then there are furniture designers such as Patricia Urquiola and Hella Jongerius, who tap into craft cultures and reinterpret them in revolutionary ways. Magazine editor-turned-designer Ilse Crawford

recently produced a new range of furniture for Ikea, and numerous female/male design duos are driving the design agenda globally.

In order to get a handle on the prevailing mood I sent questions to 14 successful Australian designers whose work I have admired for many years. I worded my questions carefully, addressing their profession first, gender second. I tried to glean what it was they did differently from their male colleagues. More often than ►

TEXTILE DESIGNERS



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◀ not, I found it was a matter of perspective rather than gender. As interior designer Meryl Hare notes: “I love to cook and entertain, so that is intrinsic to the way I approach kitchen design. I think that each designer, irrespective of gender, brings their own aesthetic to their work. But perhaps there is a more nurturing approach from women, which manifests in warm and comfortable interiors”.

Product designer Rina Bernabei of Bernabeifreeman, concurs, pointing out that many of her design concepts come from an “emotional perspective”. Although this is not necessarily a female-only

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approach, Bernabei suggests that female designers “connect with some things more because we have a feminine history, such as memories of home and domesticity”.

Architect Hannah Tribe’s ‘emotional perspective’ manifests in an obsession with laundry design. “I loathe housework so I apply myself with rigour and fiendish dedication to designing pretty and easy-to-use laundries,” she says. “I see it as a kind of relationship insurance; if our clients can do as little housework as possible, and what they simply must do is pleasurable, then they will have more time for spending together doing fun things’.

What is interesting to note is the confidence that these creative women have in claiming their territory. There is no longer fear attached to admitting a ▶

continued on page 45



Jacqui Fink Little Dandelion

As if staging a one-woman protest against mass production, Jacqui knits the Little Dandelion oversized textiles herself. She is an advocate for all things handcrafted, collaborating with Temple & Webster to curate the online retailer’s Handmade Market series.

Pepa Martin & Karen Davis Shibori

Pepa (seated) and Karen’s company takes its name from the traditional Japanese craft of *shibori*. The duo is constantly pushing the limits of the technique, applying it to everything from linen and leather to wallpaper and rugs.

Sally Campbell Sally Campbell Handmade Textiles

Combining her passions for fabrics and India, Sally spends several months a year on the subcontinent, overseeing the design and production of her eponymous range of handmade textiles.

Chrissie Jeffery No Chintz

With more than 30 years in the industry, Chrissie is an authority on textiles. Her exquisite designs are brought to life as fabrics for her store No Chintz, which offers everything from craft workshops to interior-design services.

Helen Lennie Signature Prints

Helen is an unmistakable figure on the Australian decorative-arts landscape. Her Sydney-based business was influential in introducing the ground-breaking designs of Florence Broadhurst to a new generation of fans.

Grace Garrett Grace Garrett

With awards aplenty to her name, Grace is one of the leading lights in Australian textile design today. Her latest collection, *A Sunburnt Country*, features the bold designs and rich colours of the outback.

Text by Sarah Pickette. Styling by Janet James. Photograph by Priue Ruscoe.