The New Romantic: A Peek into the World of Textile Designer Molly Mahon

Description

A romantic sensibility runs through the patterned textiles of British designer Molly Mahon, whose vibrant, whimsical patterns are produced using traditional block print techniques. Her fabrics feature motifs inspired by the natural world, which she reimagines using bold, contemporary colours, and busy, intricate motifs that enliven the spaces they inhabit. She also places a strong emphasis on sustainability, working in small batches with eco-friendly paints and fabrics, maintaining the simplest production methods possible.

Now based in Sussex, in Ashdown Forest, UK, Mahonâ??s business began small, at her kitchen table, while her children were babies. She recalls, â??Having run an events company, I was used to being busy and needed something to focus the mind while at home with the new babies. Creativity was inherent in my upbringing so I naturally turned to artistic outlets. I stumbled on block printing and it stole my heart and imagination, sparking a remarkable sense of personal elation.â?•

A block printing course became the catalyst for her new venture into pattern design, as she explains, â??I was so inspired by the bursting shelves of wooden blocks at a printing course I attended, that I soon became obsessed with colour and pattern and found a way to create my own designs.â• Initially a passion project, it was when Mahonâ??s friends started buying her printed textiles that she realised there was potential to grow into something much bigger. â??It wasnâ??t until a friend actually ordered something I was making,â• she says, â??that I realised I could turn my passion into a new career!â•

From small beginnings Mahon has grown the company into a full business, with family and friends at the centre. She says, â??Our Sussex office comprises of my husband Rollo, who runs the finance side of things, Sarah, our Brand Ambassador, Maud who does just about everything and Lucy who supports me with my workshops.â• This family-led ethos remains at the centre of their design brand, even after securing work with major fashion and interior brands including Christieâ??s, Boden, Cabbages & Roses, and more.

As the business has grown, so, too, has the number of employees. Mahon notes, â??I work with block printers, fabric and wallpaper printers, stationary makers, seamstresses, lampshade makers and more. I work very closely with all the people that help transform my designs into finished pieces.â?•

Even so, she has maintained a firm grasp on her own artistic vision, which centres around a romantic, vintage sensibility, infused with accents of crisp modernity. â??I feel free in my use of colour, somehow uninhibited by my surroundings,â?• she says. â??I choose colours that bring me joy and contentment. To me, putting colours together feels natural and fun. We live in a world bursting with colour and endless opportunities and I consistently capture and seize new colours and ideas as my life unfolds.â?•

Having a home in the wilderness is an endless source of inspiration, as she explains, â??Our home is in the middle of the Ashdown Forest so I can come into the studio feeling inspired by the surrounding nature and wildlife and get designing and printing. There is no Wi-Fi or computers and my phone has no signal, itâ??s just me (and usually Radio 4!).â?•

Another key influence on Mahonâ??s work are the patterned textiles of India. She has visited numerous times throughout her life, and always finds something new to bring back to the studio. â??My love for colour and pattern is reignited whenever I visit India,â?• she says. â??Every time I visit, I learn so many new things and come away bursting with new ideas. Itâ??s the most incredible place and I canâ??t wait to plan my next visit.â?•

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