

Vibrancy and Fun: The Playful Pattern Design of Ottoline

Description



There is a spirited and playful quality to the textile and wallpaper designs of Dutch maker Ottoline de Vries, who established her eponymous company, simply called â??Ottolineâ??, in 2011; since then her work has become an international success, gracing magazine spreads and interiors throughout the world. Ottoline, now based in London, is widely recognised for merging her fascination in the shapes and patterns of nature and cities with a cultural understanding for early 20th century art and design, particularly the Bauhaus and The Ballets Russes. She says, â??I find inspiration in everything! Art by others such as Matisse, Kandinsky, Ballets Russes, etc. â?¦ What I always aim to do though is to draw inspiration from the past but bring it my own, contemporary twist.â?•


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Ottolineâ??s path towards a creative life was winding; after pursuing a successful career in law for many years, she did not arrive at pattern design until buying her first home and settling with young children. However, her childhood, (in Quito, Ecuador, for the first three years, followed by the village of Aerdenhout in the Netherlands) was filled with artistic influences, as she explains, â??I grew up surrounded by design influences but I was unaware of my own creativity.â?•



She cites the creativity of her mother and grandmother as her greatest source of inspiration, remembering, â??If my mother wasnâ??t painting the house, she was at the sewing machine making curtains, chair covers or clothes. Her mother was a decorative wizard. She once made me a four-poster bed and a desk for my bedroom. In her later years, she made detailed dollsâ?? houses â?? my three siblings and I are fortunate enough to own one each.â?•





She adds, â??Instead, I studied law and, although I didnâ??t love the profession, I did enjoy it. When my children were born, we began to renovate our family home near Amsterdam, and I started playing with colour and fabrics and upcycling furniture.â?• Ottolineâ??s earliest designs took inspiration from the scattered patterns of her childhood in the Netherlands, which emerged from hand-drawn sketches of paper. â??When my first design, Skyline, The Hague, was printed onto wallpaper,â?• she says, â??I knew Iâ??d found my metier. It was initially a sketch on paper. Later, when I developed my digital skills, I tweaked it a little.â?• Success spiralled soon after: â??After a local store sold all my upcycled pieces virtually overnight, in 2011, I was ready to give up law and start my own business,â?• she remembers.



Her creative process has evolved over time, and she now relies on digital technology as a starting point, explaining, â??Now all of my designs are created on screen. Iâ??m inspired by traditional techniques, such as Japanese block printing, fabric dyeing and weaving motifs, interpreting them in a new way with my â??digital penâ??.â?• Making her designs through a freestyle digital drawing process gives her patterns their trademark whimsical, playful and endlessly experimental quality that she likens t David Hockneyâ??s iPad paintings recently shown at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. She remains endlessly open-minded and ambitious with the look and feel of her designs. â??I like to push the boundaries by thinking big,â?• she notes. â??Large-scale designs and unlimited colours are a textile makerâ??s dream.â?•



Ottoline carefully selects fabrics with sustainability in mind, choosing woven linen for its flax origins which requires low water consumption, and can be used in its entirety. She also works with highly skilled local artisan weavers and printers to bring her designs to life, responding intuitively to a consumer desire for high quality, durable products that are built to last, and last.

CATEGORY

1. COMMUNITY
2. TEXTILE DESIGN

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