



# INTERIORS BY ARIANNE

*Interior designer Arianne Kamyab reveals the colour theories, artists and fashion influences behind her family home in London*

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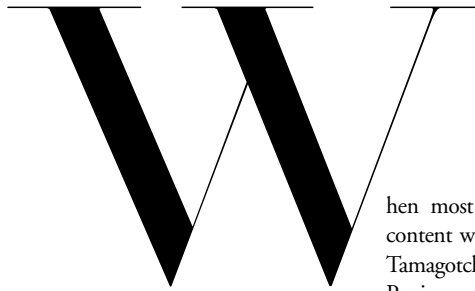
*Arianne Kamyab,  
interior designer*



Arianne sits in front of a poster of her favourite film, Audrey Hepburn's *Funny Face*. Dress, Rachel Comey; Shoes, Manolo Blahnik



Arianne's St John's Wood home features quirky architecture. Below: Her romantic English garden



When most little girls were content with their Barbies, Tamagotchis and My Little Ponies, nine-year-old

Arianne Kamyab had more interest in cushion covers. Obsessed with the film *Annie*, she begged her mother for throw pillows like the ones in little orphan Annie's room in Daddy Warbuck's house. It was a prescient indication of her future as an interior designer, but it would take Arianne several more years to reach there.

After pleasing her quintessentially Iranian parents with a university degree in Computer Science and Management, she set out to further her studies in art and interiors at London's prestigious Inchbald School of Design. Since graduating in 2009, she's become a successful independent interior designer, as well as a writer, contributing to titles such as *Bazaar Interiors*. Her company, Interiors by Arianne, works on projects as varied as high-end residential homes in London, Dubai, Paris and Cannes, to palatial development projects and seamless home dressing. Her family home in tony St John's Wood is at the core of her creative energies, a quirky yet calming abode where she can relax with her family and imagine beautiful spaces for her select clients.

Arianne and her husband Ali, a property investor and developer with his company ARK Group, and their two boys, Roman, five, and Kasra, four, moved into the house last winter. "We wanted a home that was closer to central London yet still had a suburban feel. This property had me at the front gate," recalls Arianne, whose family was previously living in Hampstead. The layout is eccentric and very lateral with abundant living space on the ground floor, and five bedrooms spread across two further floors stacked above one half of the house. "From the outside, it looks like a Tetris game," she laughs.

The property, constructed in 1984 by an English architect, is filled with unusual and visually appealing details. However, this came with its own design challenges, such as the dramatic triple-height ceilings, which needed to integrate with the rest of the property. "A ceiling that high should always have a connection with what lies beneath, so I wanted to paint the ceiling in the same colour as the walls below," she says. "It took a large number of very skilled painters to achieve the precision that I am always looking for."

Another design challenge presented itself with the "offensive" salmon-pink marble flooring, which she tempered with just the right tone of grey. "It shouldn't have worked but something told me it just needed some nurturing, so I restored it and made it current with complementary grey walls."

Following her interior design plan to the tee, the refurbishment was completed in just two months. "The existing architecture of the space and I had a mutual respect for each other; it was a really pleasant structure to work with," she says fondly. The first thing Arianne did after moving in on a chilly day in November



2014 was to gather her family around the property's divine limestone fireplace.

Petite, pretty and stylish, Arianne often finds fashion influences her interiors and vice versa. "Fashion and interiors go hand in hand," she enthuses. "I love incorporating seasonal fabrics and patterns into my designs

through accessories. My models are cushions, throws, lampshades, vases and anything else that can be easily switched or moved when the trends turn. And by the same token, I love incorporating interior trends into my wardrobe: A Toile de Jouy scarf, a structured brocade cape, colour-block dresses and rigid architectural coats are amongst my most prized wardrobe possessions."

Her skills with colour, fabrics and trends are some of the key offerings Arianne provides her clients. As an interior design student, she was fascinated by the Bauhaus school and their theories on evoking particular moods and emotions through choice colour palettes. This has stayed with her, and has become one of her favourite components of working on residential interior design projects. "Colour is such a ubiquitous part of every visual thing we encounter. However, choosing colour is not as intuitive as some may think, it takes a lot of work and research into my clients' needs and personalities to get it right. During my early design days working with developers, I did not have the chance to work with colour theory too much, but now I find nothing more enjoyable than getting ➤

A spectacular 19th century mirror and Tom Dixon orb lights in the living room. Inset: A painting by Iranian artist Samirah Alikhanzadeh in the dining room



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to know my clients personally and helping them achieve a space that is subconsciously inspirational to them.”

Arianne maintains a close connection with her Persian heritage and much of her dexterity with colour stems from her Middle Eastern background. She has spent many summers in Iran, travelling through the region, and the country continues to inspire her. “The ancient architecture and interiors never fail to capture my attention and inspire me: The vernacular architecture in the enchanting city of Yazd; the beaming turquoise tiles and domes of the Safavid palaces in Isfahan; the mirror-clad shrines and kaleidoscopes of coloured glass in the mosques of Shiraz; the monumental ruins of Persepolis, which are simply breathtaking.”

She also offers her clientele an art sourcing service, frequently encouraging them to purchase Middle Eastern art. “There is so much emerging talent in the arts, particularly in the Middle East where political influence is in abundance and where creativity has attitude and a prominent voice.”

Her work, and a family home on Palm Jumeirah in Dubai, frequently brings



Above: Arianne stands by a painting by Iranian artist Sassan Behnam Bakhtiar. Top, Balenciaga; Culottes, 3x1; Shoes, Prada

her to the region. For a luxury residence on The Palm Arianne consulted on a number of aspects, including furniture layouts, bespoke furniture design, and sourcing international textiles from Europe, like a unique Toile de Jouy fabric that was particularly difficult to find.

One stand-out project for the designer was in London's sought-after Primrose Hill for a Middle Eastern family. Given a large budget, she was able to source from high-end brands such as Boffi, B&B Italia, Hermes, Christopher Guy, Lutron and Crestron – every interior designer's ideal assignment. "I worked with everything from reclaimed antique fireplaces to unimaginably large slabs of Arabescata, a stone I personally have a fetish for. It was dreamy to say the least," she muses.

And while such projects of grandeur are the norm in her professional life, in her personal space her approach is refined yet cosy. She often references the work of interior designers Rose Uniacke and Rose Cummings. "Uniacke has a restrained and refined aesthetic with a certain grandeur that I haven't seen in any other designer's style. She mixes a lot of old and new and there's plenty of that

going on in my home. In great contrast, Rose Cummings was the eccentric and flamboyant 1920s New York interior decorator whose work taught me how to love extravagance and never to be afraid of bold colour or pattern. My acceptance of chintz, satin upholstery and smoked mirrors is wholly inspired by her and I even possess a few Baroque and Rococo pieces."

Although the Kamyab's London home showcases plenty of valuable pieces of artwork and furniture, amongst her most prized possessions is a pair of vintage brass side tables that she rescued from London's Portobello Market on a rainy day many years ago. Though they were filthy and falling apart, she lovingly restored them, turning them into elegant accents in the sitting room of every home she has lived in.

Another flea market find, a 1950s Ercol chest, was given a bespoke treatment by Arianne's sons. "I gave the boys a few pots of their own paints, some of my own brushes and a license to leave no inch of oak uncovered! It is by far the most valuable piece of art we own," she says with a smile.

The study, Arianne's favourite room where she could "eat, sleep, work and repeat" quite easily, houses her precious collection of books. From here, she can look out onto the lush, romantic English garden and watch her children cherish their outdoor play in a way they couldn't in their previous homes. It is an idyllic location, a perfect balance of peace and quietude for the busy working mum of two, whilst still close enough to the hustle and bustle of central London and just a short distance away from the suburbs where the rest of her friends and family are based. ■