

# From Woe To Wow

**BIID Registered Interior Designer® Giulia Adams has worked as a designer for over 20 years, providing bespoke interior design services in London and the South West for both residential design and commercial interiors.**

**After studying Art History and English at University College London and completing an MA in Interior Design at the Royal College of Art, Giulia work for several well respected architects and designers before setting up her own practice, Giulia Adams Interiors, in 2007.**

**L**ast year I was contracted by a busy working mother to design the refurbishment of her six bedroom house in Roehampton, London. Originally built by a developer in the early 2000s, the property had impressive large, airy rooms, but with basic finishes and no personality.

The brief was based on a stylish contemporary renovation to create suitable areas for the family, their three children, and a large family dog, as well as sophisticated areas for adult entertaining. In total, the project included 200m<sup>2</sup> of reception rooms, six bathrooms, and an impressive double height entrance hall with a double



The entrance hall and staircase was the focal point of the new scheme







Handmade glass pendants from Curiousa & Curiousa were installed over the island unit and dining table



▲ staircase which linked all the spaces and would be a focal point of the new scheme.

I always start each project by sketching out a measured plan to ensure the spaces will flow. Here, I can easily experiment with different furniture arrangements and can solve any issues that need to be addressed. In this project I had to overcome the large amount of oak flooring, doors and stairs, which the client disliked.

I researched various finishes and stains and found a Mylands Pale Slate hard wax oil for the floor boards to create a softer more muted background colour. The doors were painted in Little Greene Mirage II with the skirtings and architraves in a more subtle shade, Whisper. To add contrast, I dramatised the double staircase with a velvet purple carpet runner. This scheme heavily reduced the amount of oak, with the only visible trace left on the balustrade.

To ensure all the colours and materials work well together I create a palette of materials, fabrics and finishes and gradually edit this. Simultaneously, I work on pencil perspective sketches, where I position the furniture and try out different items. When I am happy with the effect, I ink these up and paint them in watercolour. These form the focus of my presentation boards and are very useful to the client who can immediately grasp the concept of the proposed design.

On this project I worked closely with a decorative artist, Pierre Clement of Clement Interiors ([www.clementinteriors.co.uk](http://www.clementinteriors.co.uk)), to create wall finishes for the three main reception rooms.

The grasscloth wallpaper I suggested for the sitting room was too expensive, so he

A bespoke L shaped sofa from Greengate creates a cosy place



created a linen effect paint finish in burnt umber and rose which was warm and subtle, working well in daylight and glowing softly under artificial light. Contrast was added by the dark purple Trevira curtains from Designers Guild with a taupe border, hung on bronze poles made by Fabricant.

For the kitchen and family room, he made a textured scuffed burnt umber effect which

created an informal and fresh backdrop for the cyan Chenille sofa and blue Ikat curtain fabrics from Osborne and Little.

Finally, the vast double height hall needed warmth and texture. Here Pierre used a burnt umber colourwash with a Mirage II undercoat. By using artists' paints to combine warm and cool colours, he created effects that were unique and inimitable. ▼

The sitting room has a large L shaped Marea sofa from Arketipo







The upstairs bathrooms each have a different mosaics

▲ The large hall invited grand gestures so the end wall was papered in a large patterned Cole & Son wallpaper, Cocoa, portraying the beanstalks climbing up from the ground to the top floor. The front wall has five sash windows flooding the room with natural light. To provide privacy we hung the windows with beige linen banners which also helps to filter the light if required. Motorised roman blinds were installed by my curtain maker in a luxurious Decortex mauve silk to break up the wall.

I also used bold pattern in the circular 'Knot'

rug from Kappa Lambda. The purple and taupe colours worked well with the existing limestone floor.

With space for a chandelier, I sketched out an idea for a cascade of coloured glass discs. In consultation with Sans Souci, we developed the product and had it manufactured in the Czech Republic. Sans Souci provided technical oversight and installed the finished piece in a professional manner. The result was 3m long suspended discs of handmade glass in purple, violet, amber and gold, hanging from a bronze

coloured disc with four downlights.

Without doubt this is my favourite design element of the project. The effect it created was just as I had imagined and the client was so thrilled with it. It can be seen as you descend the stairs and come in through the front door, acting as a beautiful focal point.

The use of coloured glass continues in the hand-made mosaics from Ann Sacks that appear in the cloakroom as a feature wall. The upstairs bathrooms each have a different colour and size of mosaic for ▼



▲ the shower enclosures and splashbacks, from the Spa mosaics range supplied by Walton Ceramics. The colour palette of purples and golds also stretches to include blues which were used in the kitchen and conservatory. Handmade glass pendants in purple and slate grey from Curiousa & Curiousa were installed over the island unit and dining table.

Large rooms require large furniture so I commissioned a bespoke L shaped sofa from Greengate for the family room, plus a corner seat and ottoman, to create a cosy place for the family to gather. The sitting room has a large L shaped Marea sofa from Arketipo, which is lower and more urbane. The look is completed with black glass coffee tables at each end and shaggy Lustre rugs from Jacaranda.

The concept for the designs began in May 2015 and was completed by November. Contractors CA Projects Ltd ([www.caprojects.net](http://www.caprojects.net)) project managed the whole scheme, supplied all joinery, installed the AV and

electrics and completed the decorating. I supplied all the furniture, fittings, curtains and lights. Having worked on many projects together we have built a strong working relationship with effective communication.

By planning the programme together and keeping an eye on costs throughout, the client is assured that the project will run smoothly without needing to get involved.

Unfortunately, my available spend for decorative furnishings was cut during the project to accommodate the cost of AV installations. However, this had no detrimental effect on the project as I managed to replace some items with cheaper substitutes – without compromising on style.

This allowed me to keep essential elements of the scheme and the big 'wow' factor pieces!

[www.gainteriors.com](http://www.gainteriors.com)



Dark purple Trevira curtains from Designers Guild hang on bronze poles by Fabricant



The chandelier by Sans Souci is Giulia's favourite design element of this project