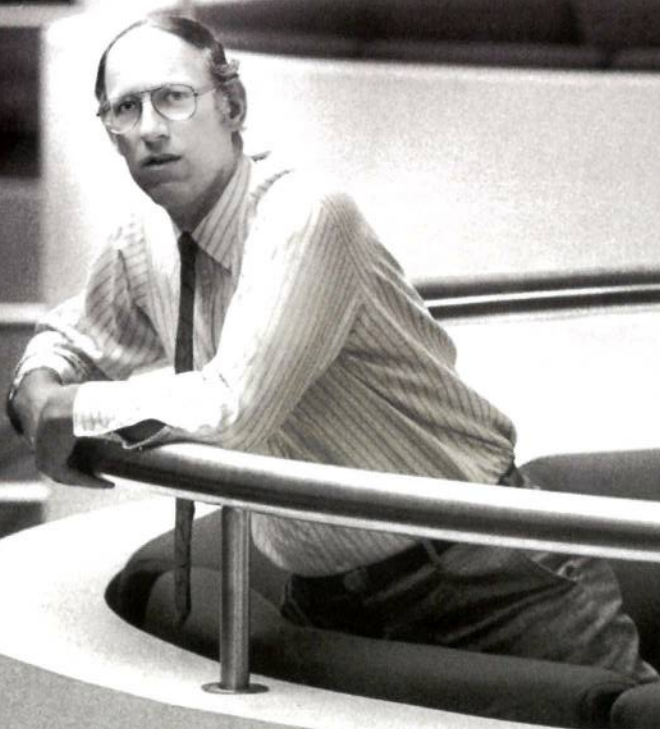


INTERIOR DESIGN[®]

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into the future
a tribute to art gensler



Gemstone greens—along with a spectrum of other bold, jewel colors—bring unexpected calm to a house in Cork, Ireland, by Kingston Lafferty Design

an emerald isle

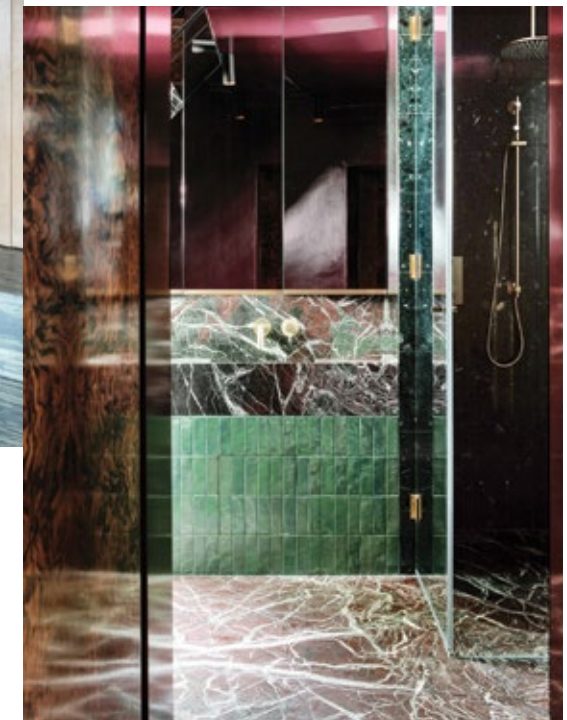
text: dan rubinstein photography: ruth maria murphy/living inside



When the design history of the pandemic is written, it will be told with tales of firms completing projects without ever physically meeting clients, setting foot inside job sites before they're finished, and other protracted, unexpected developments. Lovers Walk—a residence in Cork, Ireland, by Kingston Lafferty Design—is one of those stories. "It started as a small decoration job for us," founder and creative director Róisín Lafferty recounts. "But it grew legs and ended up as a substantial design project." The two-story, four-bedroom suburban house was purchased by a couple looking to return to Ireland from abroad to raise their young son. As the pandemic struck and timelines extended, the scope kept evolving to encompass every element of the house. "We had to think on our feet," Lafferty concedes.

At first, the house looked solidly built, but project collaborators Kiosk Architects discovered that the structure had major issues with energy efficiency. Original flooring needed to be removed, and the exterior required extra work to meet current standards. "The clients put a lot of trust in us," Lafferty says, "which was bold and brave considering that we didn't meet in person until the end of construction."

The house was built in the 1940's. What attracted the homeowners—and informed KLD's concept—was the central staircase, part of a '70's addition and somewhat in that era's style. Lafferty loved its warm, almost orange-toned oak joinery, which creates a strong impression on both levels. "It's quite dominant," notes the designer, to whom the clients had first turned for her firm's signature look. The 11-year-old practice has earned a reputation for experimenting with bold swaths of solid color, mostly in paint: blood-red walls for a café in London; a deep-blue theater for a corporate office in Skerries, Ireland; and, most notably, a widely published Victorian house in Dublin with blue walls, a green ceiling, and a ruby-red dining table. ➤



Previous spread: Verde Alpi marble clads the fireplace wall in the living room of a 1940's house in Cork, Ireland, renovated by Kingston Lafferty Design.

Left: The kitchen's island, backsplash walls, and countertops are polished quartzite while custom cabinetry and millwork are rosewood veneer. **Right top:** Upholstered in cotton velvet, the living room's Mario Marengo sofa is backed by a wall sheathed with painted wood slats. **Right center:** The oak stair and paneling in the entry hall are part of a '70's addition to the house. **Right bottom:** Glossy tile fronting the main bathroom vanity contrasts with its Rosso Levanto marble backsplash and flooring.

The house, located on a cliff overlooking the city, is surrounded by large oak trees. “We wanted to bring in that depth of green,” says Lafferty, who, along with KLD lead designer Fiona Stone, went beyond paint to inject the rooms with warmth and color that complemented the site. Hence much of the living room is wrapped in moss-green marble; forest-green heavy wool curtains hang in the child’s room, which is painted a similar shade, his favorite color; and the primary bedroom’s headboard wall is clad in jade porcelain tiles (by Gio Ponti, no less).

The layout of the living room, which had been fussy, was streamlined. A sofa upholstered in deep-navy velvet adds punch to the space. Similar jewel tones were chosen to balance the room’s marble-rich palette, which reminded Lafferty of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion. “We needed a poppiness to jar against that,” she notes. Adding another layer to the mix, the clients allowed their contemporary art collection—mostly playful, abstract works—to be positioned throughout the house as the design best allowed. “They weren’t precious about it,” Lafferty reports.

To add drama to the journey from the entry hall to the kitchen and dining area, Lafferty and Stone inserted a tunnellike portal lined with red finger tiles between the spaces. The clients didn’t want the kitchen to be overwhelmed with storage cabinets, so the designers kept them at base level, covering the countertops, island, and two wall-size backsplashes with pink quartzite that’s “like rock candy,” Lafferty says—a move that places added emphasis on the above-sink picture window and its view out onto nature. While Lafferty admits some might consider the rosewood-veneer cabinetry to be outdated, she relished the idea of pushing the materials so they’re “almost on the cusp of clashing.”


Upstairs, each of the three bedrooms—for the couple, their son, and guests, respectively—has its own color story. Riffing off the ’70’s vibe, the guest room juxtaposes cobalt blue curtains against walls painted a buff pink called Dead Salmon; a navy shaglike carpet adds to the theme, which Lafferty describes as “almost disgusting.” The designers are particularly proud of the primary bedroom, “a small space that needed to look sleek and effortless,” Stone notes. Access is via a wide, open passageway with chevron-pattern oak flooring and three large, angled skylights set into the sloped roofline. A vanity of burgundy marble is tucked under the eaves on one side of the room; a walk-in closet and the bathroom lie behind the opposite wall, which is ➤



Left: Living room lighting includes Juanma Lizana’s painted iron chandelier and a Vico Magistretti table lamp; the floor is polished concrete.

Opposite top, from left: Shaglike carpeting, a wall of floor-to-ceiling curtains, and a George Nelson pendant outfit the guest bedroom. Debonademeo’s disklike sconce presides over the kitchen dining area’s leather-upholstered custom banquette and sofa. **Opposite bottom, from left:** In the son’s room, a Roly Poly chair by Faye Toogood and painted built-ins pop against curtains and Form Us With Love’s Unfold pendant fixture in the child’s favorite color. Another Debonademeo sconce hangs on the finger tile-clad wall of the portal connecting the kitchen to the entry hall.



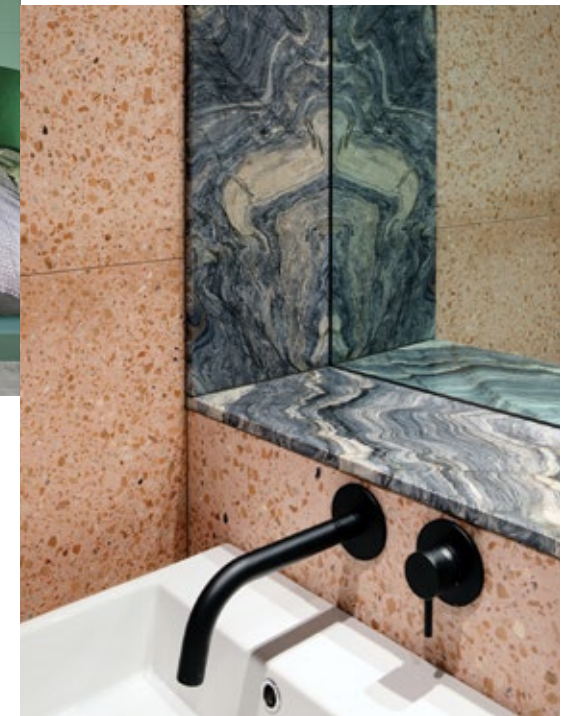
faced in lacquered walnut-burl veneer that abuts the green tile of the headboard wall around the corner. "It's like a jewelry box with so many materials used," Stone continues. "But it feels incredibly calm. There's almost a nostalgic air about it"—a verdict with which the clients agree. It seems their trust in KLD's boldly unconventional aesthetic has paid off handsomely. 

PROJECT TEAM

KIOSK ARCHITECTS: ARCHITECT OF RECORD. **HERRICK ELECTRICAL:** MEP. **DFL:** WOODWORK. **MILLER BROTHERS:** STONEWORK. **CAMELEO:** PLASTERWORK. **ROSE CONSTRUCTION:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT **ARFLEX:** SOFA, OTTOMAN (LIVING ROOM). **MODERN HILL FURNITURE:** ORANGE CHAIR. **MOORE O'GORMAN JOINERY:** CUSTOM COCKTAIL TABLE. **FEST AMSTERDAM:** SIDE TABLE. **OLUCE:** TABLE LAMP. **URBAN NATURE CULTURE:** VASE. **MUURLA:** GRAY BOWL. **HKLIVING:** BLUE BOWL. **JUANMA LIZANA:** CHANDELIER. **JOVER:** CURTAIN FABRIC (LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN). **FLOS:** PENDANT FIXTURE (KITCHEN). **MIELE:** COOKTOP, OVENS, REFRIGERATOR. **BLANCO:** SINK. **QUOOKER:** SINK FITTINGS. **CINCA:** FINGER TILE (PORTAL). **ASTEP:** PENDANT FIXTURE (ENTRY HALL). **WOW DESIGN:** VANITY FRONT TILE (MAIN BATHROOM). **RMC:** SHOWER WALL TILE. **THROUGH 1STDIBS:** CHAIR (GUEST BEDROOM). **HAY:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **EDMUND BELL:** CURTAIN FABRIC. **SCATTER BOX:** BEDSPREAD. **JACARANDA CARPETS:** CARPET (GUEST, CHILD BEDROOMS). **DRIADE:** CHAIR (CHILD BEDROOM). **MUUTO:** PENDANT FIXTURE. **KVADRAT:** CURTAIN FABRIC. **TRUNK FLOOR:** CUSTOM WOOD FLOORING (CHILD, MAIN BEDROOMS). **STRADITION:** SOFA (DINING AREA). **YARWOOD LEATHER:** BANQUETTE UPHOLSTERY. **ZAVA LUCE:** SCONCES (DINING AREA, PORTAL). **GUBI:** VANITY CHAIR (MAIN BEDROOM). **NATUZZI ITALIA:** BED, NIGHTSTAND. **SALVIATI:** SCONCE. **TAL:** SPOTLIGHTS. **TEAMWORK ITALY:** WALL TILE. **LOUISE ROE COPENHAGEN:** VASES. **MASON EDITIONS:** PENDANT FIXTURE (FAMILY BATHROOM). **CROSSWATER:** TOWEL RING. **NIC DESIGN:** SINK (FAMILY, GUEST BATHROOMS). **THROUGHOUT** **ASTRO LIGHTING:** DOWNLIGHTS. **STONE SEAL:** CONCRETE FLOORING. **CORK GLASS CENTER:** BATHROOM GLASS, MIRROR, SHOWER SCREENS. **VOS:** BATHROOM SINK FITTINGS. **MINIMA HOME:** FURNITURE SUPPLIER. **FARROW & BALL:** PAINT.



Left: A skylit passageway outfitted with a custom vanity leads to the main bedroom, where the headboard wall hosts Gio Ponti porcelain tiles.

Right top, from left: GamFratesi's Tail chair, upholstered in velvet, pulls up to the Rosso Levanto vanity. A Verde Alpi marble frame and walls faced in mirror and terrazzo tile set off Serena Confalonieri's pendant fixture in the family bathroom. **Right bottom, from left:** Birch-plywood steps service the built-in bunk bed in the child's room. The family bathroom materials in a different palette distinguish the guest bathroom, which also sports identical PVD-coated brass fittings and a wall-mounted sink.