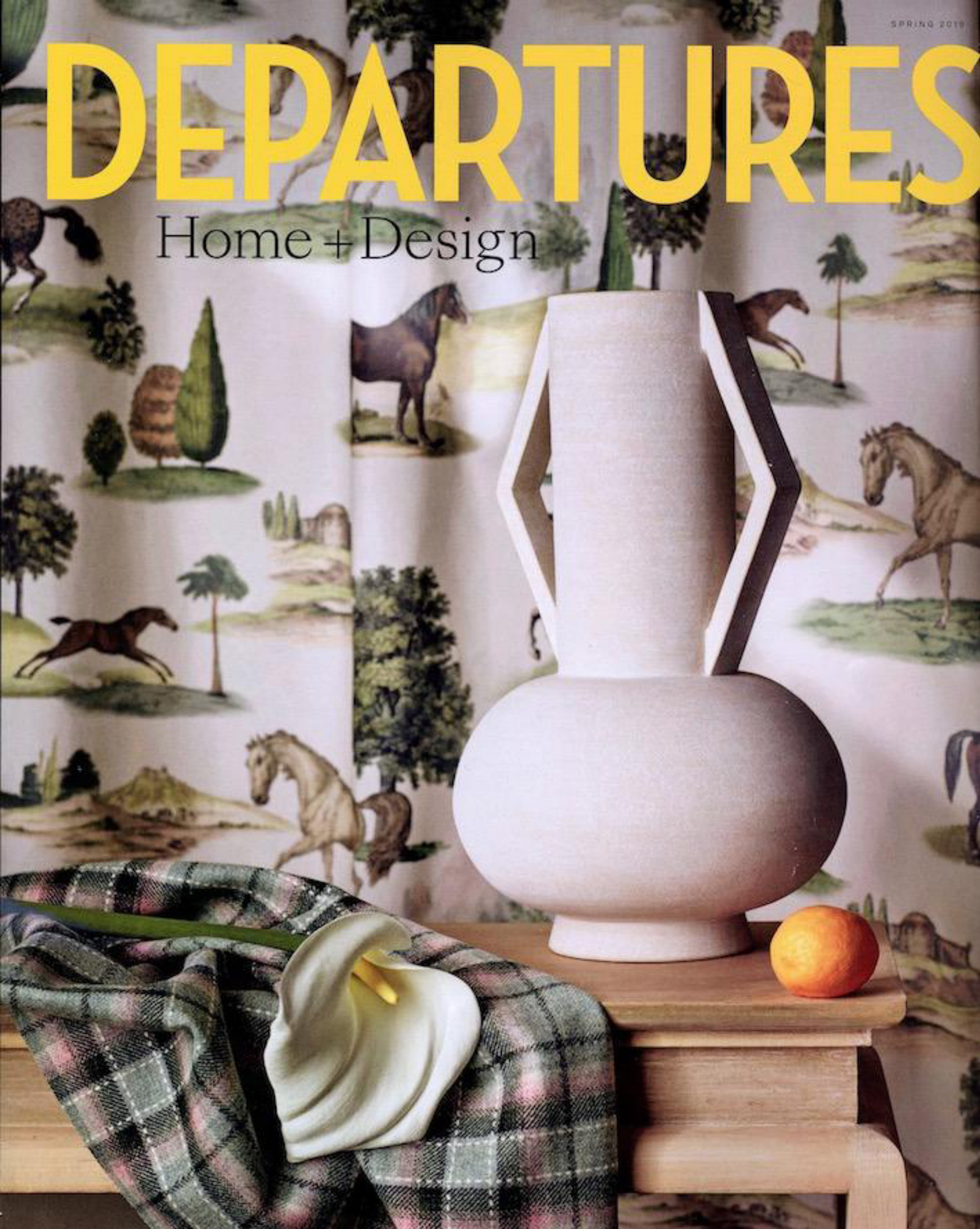


DEPARTURES

Home + Design





Left: Fleetwood paint was used for the mantel and walls of this Dublin home designed by Róisín Lafferty. Above: Charles de Lisle created a custom wallcovering with Zak + Fox linen for a San Francisco project.

The Rainbow Connection

When it comes to color, the old rules need not apply. These days the design world is seeing red, pink, blue... *by Rima Suqi*

CHARLES DE LISLE, an interior designer based in San Francisco, spent the past 15 years in what he now realizes was a “neutral rut.” While he’s always been a fan of colors, especially ones that don’t necessarily match, his clients were not. His version of mixing hues was often limited to what he describes as “vibrating neutrals—flax, tan, sesame, and beige.” Oh, how times have changed. “I have clients who are now asking about and interested in bolder things,” de Lisle says. Pointing to mood boards filled with runway looks from Gucci, Dries Van Noten, and

Valentino, de Lisle says these days his clients are following a similar approach for interiors. He now mixes “that really crazy hot red with a really bright periwinkle, or a lipstick red with a mossy green.”

This new acceptance of colors and what would previously have been considered ghastly combinations thereof is quickly permeating residential interiors, from the paint on the walls to the carpets on the floors and all the furnishings in between. At last year’s Kips Bay Decorator Show House in New York, designer Sasha Bikoff broke the Internet with her

Memphis Group–inspired staircase—an extravaganza of color and seemingly mismatched patterns on the floors and walls.

Until recently, a colorful commission was not typical for Dublin-based designer Róisín Lafferty. In Ireland, “people tend to gravitate toward white, and that horrible off-yellow peachy tone, because they think that’s going to brighten up the space,” she says. So she was excited when a client shared a love of the “vibrant, bright, and energetic” interiors of Marrakech, which allowed Lafferty to transform a newly purchased Victorian home into “a jewel box.” The living and dining areas are painted in primary colors—several shades of blue, with a mint ceiling and red and pink accents. The kitchen features large plum built-ins lined with Moroccan *zellige* tiles in jewel tones and a sitting area with a bright blue sofa and a yellow occasional chair.

Color and pattern have been percolating into home design for a few years, but first crept onto fashion runways and into commercial spaces. In 2014, India Mahdavi designed London’s Sketch restaurant with powder pink walls and pink velvet upholstery. The following year, Gucci’s Alessandro Michele sent models down the runway in a *Royal Tenenbaums*–esque mélange of color, pattern, and texture.



Clockwise from top: One corner of the Lafferty-designed project; a Garden of Eden hand-knotted wool rug by India Mahdavi for Golran (from \$8,000, ralphpucci.net); a Charlotte Perriand table in the Verde Salvia finish by Charlotte Perriand from Cassina (\$11,500, cassina.com).

A few months later in Miami, the Faena Hotel opened showcasing lush shades of red, cyan, and gold, with a heavy dose of animal print to boot. Design companies are following suit, reissuing classic pieces by the likes of Frank Lloyd Wright, Charlotte Perriand, and Achille Castiglioni in never-before-seen hues.

“Ten years ago I’d flip through magazines and what I’d see was that the world was beige but the art was vibrant. What I feel has happened is that the art has come off the walls,” observed David Alhadeff, owner of the Future Perfect, a contemporary-design gallery with outposts in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Collectors, he says, have traditionally been color-averse because they didn’t want anything in the room to distract from or compete with their blue-chip works of art. Those clients are now coming around to the idea of using color as an accent element in a room. Alhadeff adds, “I think people are shopping more in this contemporary [furnishings] space that’s gotten a little wild because the worlds of art and design have once again converged.”

In other words, today there’s no rule that things should match, and what once might have been considered in bad taste is not only au courant but celebrated. “My clients are bringing up combinations that I’m not used to looking at but am excited about,” says de Lisle. “Color is part of the cool culture now.”