

## People

Despite fusing India and Scotland, Doshi Levien's designs are anything but cliché East-meets-West

## Places

This month, our show review focuses on the furniture highlights seen at this year's Salone del Mobile

## Products

Continuing the Milan theme, we look at the innovative appliances showcased as part of Eurocucina 2018

## Projects

The design team had just four months to create a luxurious penthouse home in the heart of London

## Professional

How much should creatives charge for their work? We catch up with six design leaders to find out

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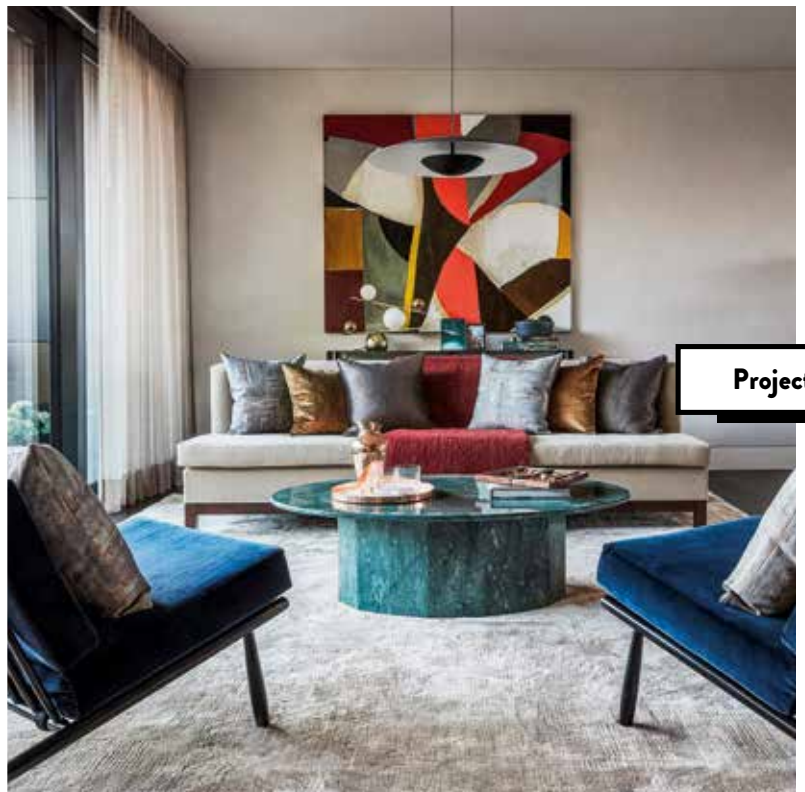
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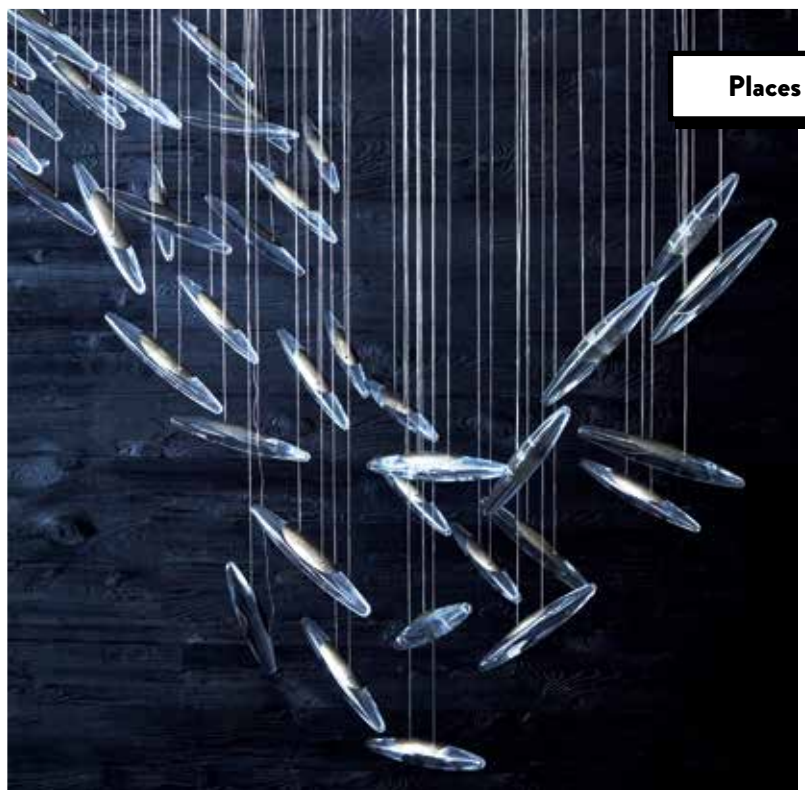
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People



Project



Places

for residential design professionals

## Projects

# Post haste

by Rebecca Hoh-Hale

**Echlin's team were given only four months to design the interiors of this flagship penthouse apartment, created from the shell of a former Royal Mail sorting office.**

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**THIS INTERIORS PROJECT** by residential design studio Echlin has a lot resting on its 2,892 sq ft penthouse shoulders. Not only is it part of the largest ever development in Great Portland Estates's £3 billion real estate portfolio, it is also situated in the iconic former Royal Mail Sorting Office. The mixed-use overhaul, just 150 metres from the eagerly awaited new Crossrail hub at Tottenham Court Road, is expected to regenerate the area, with the penthouses something of a jewel in its central-London-transforming crown. The homes were architecturally delivered by Make Architects; Echlin was commissioned in to dress this penthouse to a turnkey level and as a flagship statement of the wider masterplan for the prestigious evolution of the area.

No pressure on Echlin, then. The team, founded in 2011 by Mark O'Callaghan and Sam McNally, was established on the principles of wellbeing and craftsmanship. To inform their design, they have looked to the local area, which meant drawing from the location's Arts and Crafts heritage in the heart of the Bloomsbury Group's stomping ground, as well as the area's current vibrant tone - mixed cultures, food scene and creative businesses make up its 2018 DNA. As a result, the interiors palette references all those late Victorian, early 20th century rich and decadent colour tones - but in the form of modern furniture, finishes, and a double height layout, with the layers of craft and art represented in all design choices.

"We wanted to bring a timeless or 'collected' feel to the apartment, where artworks of varying media are present - from

sculpture by local makers through to photography and striking examples of oil on canvas," says Sam McNally, design director and Echlin co-founder. "The aim is that the apartment feels it has a connection to the surrounding area, and has been built up over time by an enthusiast. We also wanted a serene colour palette of blues, greens, nudes, and chalky whites, along with materials such as linen, velvet and leather which all come together to create a sanctuary in the city - tranquil yet seamlessly connected to the bustling, fast-changing neighbourhood. These tones were chosen to enhance the grandeur of the penthouse, but without using antique furniture pieces that could feel out-of-place with Make's contemporary architecture."

This feel can be experienced throughout the duplex property, starting with the bespoke spiral staircase which puts craftsmanship immediately and impressively on the map in the entrance space for maximum impact. Beside it sits a Dirk van der Kooij table, which again gives a period reference seemingly in traditional marble, but with a modern twist: it is actually formed from a composite recycled plastic. This scene leads up to the reception and main entertaining areas, which feature a bespoke wall finish in waxed chalk lime. Echlin custom-designed the UK-made sofas in responsibly sourced forest green leather. There are also the Confident armchairs by Piero Lissoni and lamps by Bert Frank, all beautiful moments in an interesting sculpture-meets-function hybrid. A scorched timber and brass mobile - a little Alexander

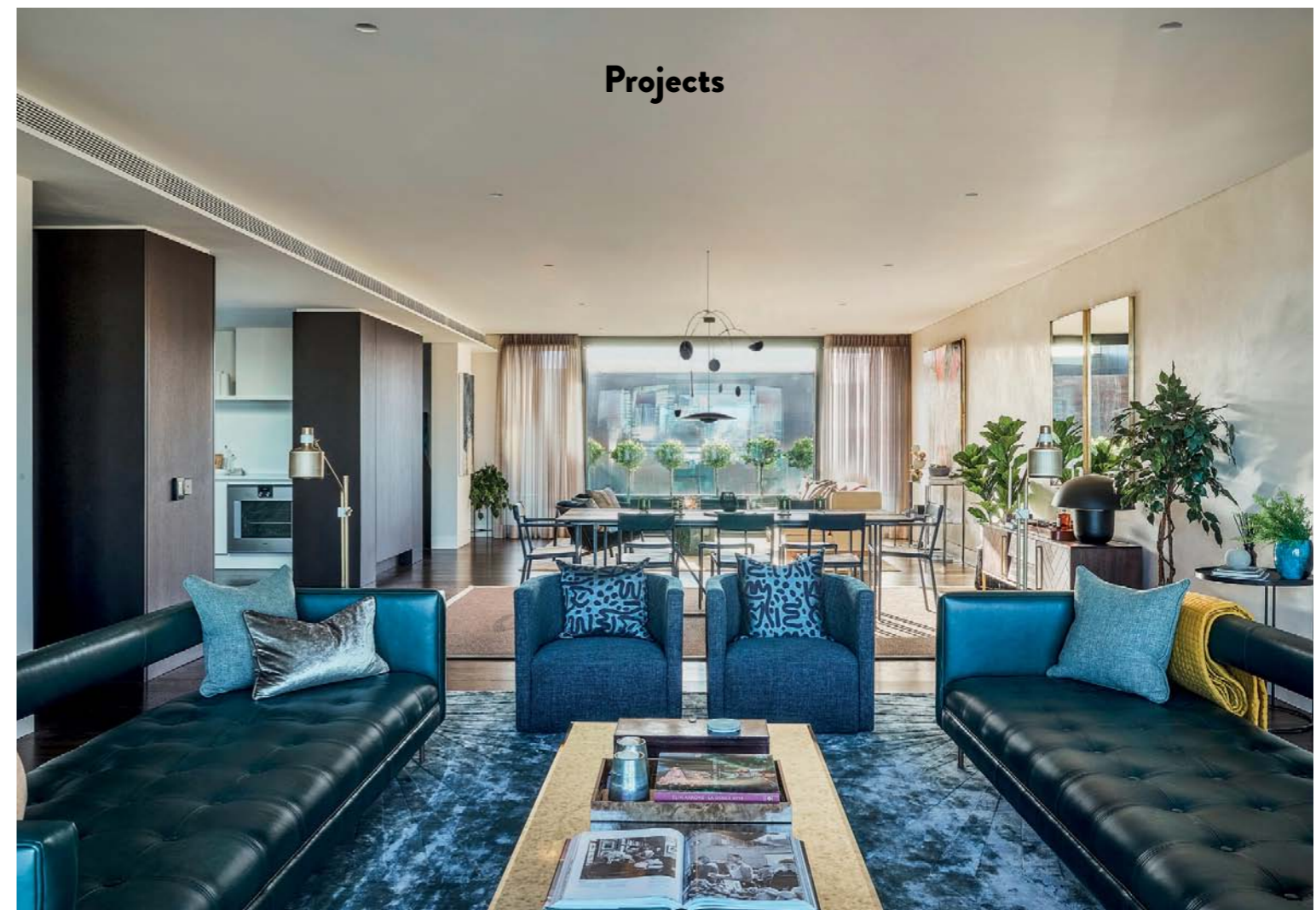
Calder-esque and definitely part of the mid-century modern references that punctuate throughout - was also commissioned from Corrie Williamson. It hangs above the eight-seater dining table by Heerenhuis. The dining chairs by Ochre are clad in Italian saddle leather, with hand-sewn pinched seams, scalloped corner details, and brass footbar. Craftsmanship shines through at every corner.

This dedication to and focus on artisan work, and the support of UK high end craft design names is something Great Portland Estates knew they could expect from Echlin. But creating this multi-brand and -artist scene above the busy, buzzing streets was not without its trials.

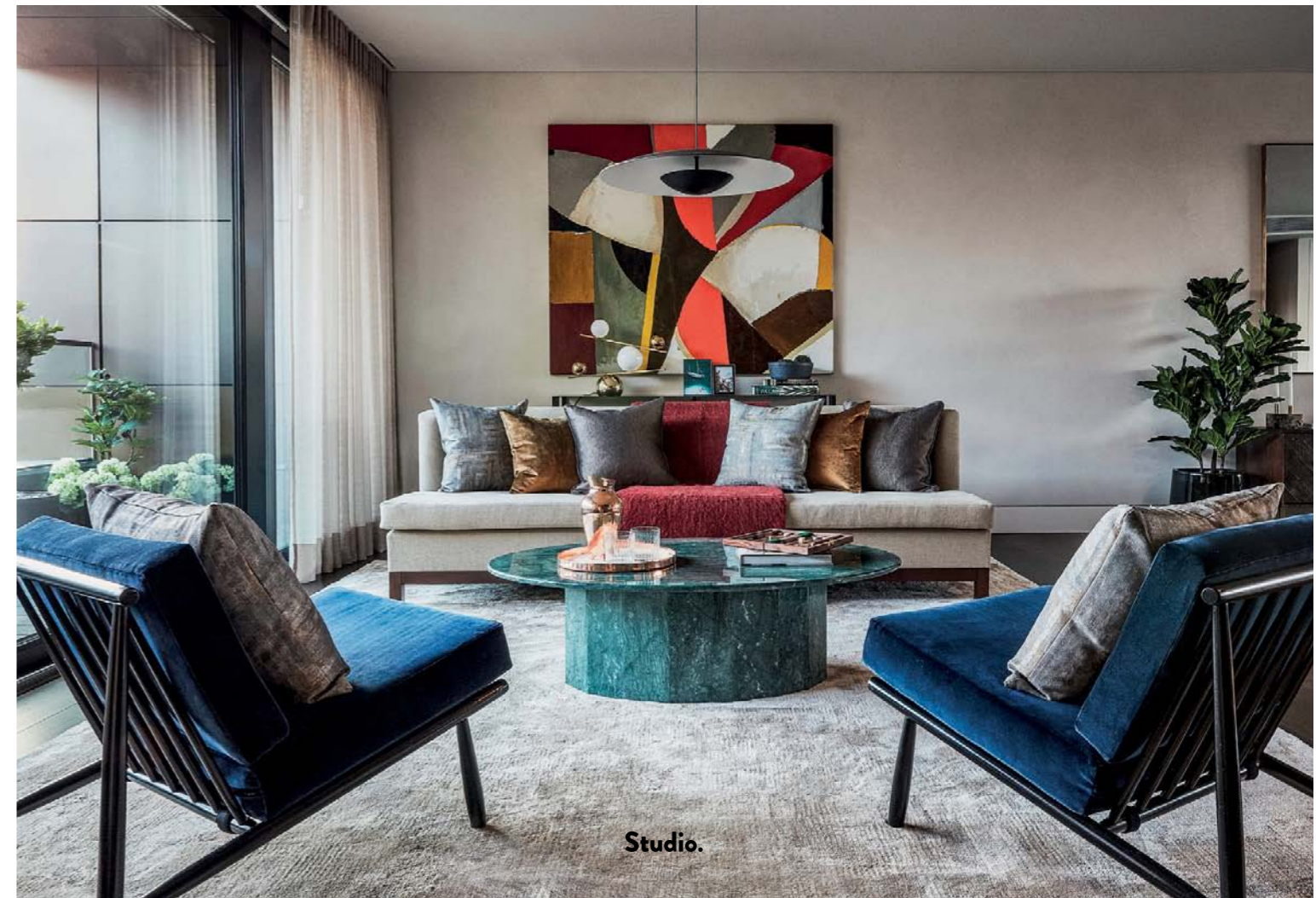
"There were many challenging aspects to the project," describes McNally. "But probably the most challenging part was bringing all the incredible pieces of furniture and art to such a central London location. The apartment is located off a bustling yet quaint London lane. This meant bringing together valuable pieces of art, sculpture, and furniture from all over the world to arrive in one place. Sometimes we had special handlers carrying items by hand through people walking between meetings or on their way to lunch - it was quite an experience."

There is also a more casual reception area featuring colourful footstools by Portuguese designer Muranti, as well as 'Composition 150' - a rich, earthy toned artwork by Gabriele Cappelli sourced from Cadogan Contemporary in Kensington. A circular marble coffee table designed by Echlin brings out the green tones - reminiscent of ▶

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## Projects



Previous page: The more casual living area features greens and aquas

Above: Corrie Williamson made the bespoke scorched brass and timber mobile that hangs above the Heerenhuis dining table with its eight saddle leather clad chairs

Above right: In the entrance, the bespoke spiral staircase creates maximum impact. The marble-look Dirk van der Kooij table next to it is actually made from recycled plastic

Right: In the kitchen, the Calacatta marble worktop balances out the dark cabinetry and floors. Once again, aqua appears - this time in the form of an artwork



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jewellery featuring emeralds - again, alongside more aqua hues in the form of vintage velvet lounge chairs by Alf Svensson.

This area also houses the kitchen. Designed by the architects Make, it features dark walnut storage joinery which is lifted by the Calacatta marble worktops' shades of grey. Completing this floor is a tranquil master bedroom, with an ensuite and a walk-in dressing room, and two further bedrooms. All three suites are furnished with bespoke beds made in Oxfordshire, upholstered in Pierre Frey velvet, as well as de Le Cuona textured sheer linen curtains. Brass and dark wood reign in the master bedroom, with the brown vellum tables by Julian Chichester, brass Signal side lamps by Souda Brooklyn, and walnut floors and wall veneers.

Much of the ensuite was specified by Make architects, with Corian surface bench tops, a marble feature wall, and chrome faucets. However Echlin made a forward thinking intervention in terms of working with make-up artist Charlotte Cowen on the addition of a chilled cosmetic fridge, which the team says is "already a real trend in the Asian market but they are most definitely catching on in the UK and are becoming a must have at the top end of the luxury market".

The lower floor houses two more double bedrooms, one ensuite, and a separate family bathroom. These feature more of the calming

tone, handmade beds, and carefully selected artworks - such a piece inspired by the Royal Mail sorting office, with its archetypal depictions of a day in London, commuting, post boxes, and even a trip to the lido. The classic mid-century modern elements continue in the form of an LC1 Le Corbusier chair alongside modern day classics like the Hay 'Don't Leave Me' side table.

Many different themes run through this vast project. As with the art and design, they have been curated with consideration to allow them to co-habit harmoniously, creating a new narrative that matches the spirit of the regeneration in which it resides.

"We are very pleased with the final result, which we feel encapsulates the ethos of the development as a whole, together with the culture and heritage of the local area," say O'Callaghan and McNally. "Our team worked tirelessly to create something totally unique and yet with such a tangible and relatable story. That is something we are very proud of, particularly in the given delivery time frame of four months. When pulling together such bold use of colours, textures, and materiality, you need confidence. No amount of sketches, moodboards, or drawings will quite reproduce the final atmosphere of the spaces. In addition to the usual design tools, we rely a lot on instinct and, of course, a very talented group of suppliers and makers who we've built up over the years." 

Below: The balcony affords sprawling views over central London while still retaining a sense of privacy

Below right: Specified by Make Architects, the ensuite features a cosmetics fridge



## Projects



The bedrooms are furnished with bespoke beds upholstered in Pierre Frey velvet and textured sheer linen curtains by De Le Cuona

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