

ST JAMES'S

CORRESPONDENT

SUMMER 2016

Grace Gilfeather

Patternity

Royal Academy



SINCE 1661

ISSUE 13

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06 – 09
LCM: Grace Gilfeather



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EDITOR'S LETTER

Pattern Natter

Spots, stripes, camo, plaid. Sartorially speaking, patterns make a crucial quip in the fashion-as-self-expression dialogue. A tie speckled with pink puppies beckons conversation. A pinstripe suit recalls Wall Street wolves. Bitsy florals welcome spring, whereas nothing suggests sophistication at leisure like a nautical stripe. But patterns are more than the clothing they adorn, and in this issue of *The Correspondent*, we explore the many stories that a pattern can tell.

Take a pair of tartan socks for example. What may be a means to add a playful punch to one's golfing attire is rooted in a long history of Scottish heritage, and plays a lesser known role in the history of one African dictator's indulgences. Also, textures like seersucker and houndstooth, now rather limited to office workers and wedding attendees, have a more humble origin on the backs of locomotive workers and shepherds respectively.

Sometimes a pattern isn't how you wear it, but how you see it. We invited the east London pattern-spotters, Patternity, to roam and photograph the patterns we don't always see in St James's. They especially loved how the rich marble and textured stone are punctuated by the bright spurts of colour of scarlet phone boxes or flourishes of foliage, and we loved learning the virtue of taking the time to stop and observe the pitter-patterns around us.

It is perhaps no coincidence that this is a particularly fashion-forward issue of *The Correspondent*. Into June, the rhythmic patterns of the fashion calendar indicate that London Collections Men is upon us. This of course means the annual Jermyn Street St James's runway show, where the wares of the many heritage garment-makers of the neighbourhood are walked down the catwalk. This year, we've enlisted the help of *GQ*'s fashion editor Grace Gilfeather to style the show, and look forward to seeing the results on the runway – in all their spotty, stripy, checked and paisley glory.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Blitz at The Ritz

If The Ritz Hotel on Piccadilly is the physical manifestation of proving a point, it's that it will take more than bombs to dampen London's spirit. During the Second World War, The Ritz became a pocket of decadence amid austerity; an important gathering place for well-heeled refugees and the city's elite. The great hotels of the city – Dorchester, Savoy, Claridge's and The Ritz – bore the illusion of safety, as if stepping into these hotels' grand entrance halls was to step into another world. And with its blackout balls and a quietly raging bar in the basement, The Ritz became a place where, for those who could afford it, there was still fun to be had.

The hotel, which recently celebrated its 110th birthday, was opened in 1906 by the distinguished Swiss hotelier César Ritz. He had already found his fortune in Paris when he opened the first Ritz Hotel eight years prior. It became a new bastion of British luxury: French château style architecture, plush furnishing, a bathroom for each hotel room and bed frames made from brass rather than wood. In a bout of humility, Mr Ritz once said his London hotel was a “house to which I am proud to see my name attached.”

During the war years, the hotel reached new heights in vogue. It became a place for the upper crust to meet, to drink and to live. The Albanian royal family moved in, so too did royals from Denmark, Luxembourg and Norway. (The Albanian royals took an entire floor to themselves. Rumour had it they paid their bills with their country's gold reserves and had their own private air raid shelter installed). In the Marie Antoinette Suite, history was written as Churchill, de Gaulle and Eisenhower, over candlelight and under furrowed brows, plotted the Allies' next move. In a basement bar below the hotel meanwhile, the 'Pink Sink' swung on as a social space for the gay community. Today the same space is an underground casino, though no longer owned by The Ritz.

Despite falling shells – one narrowly missed the hotel and shattered several windows in its blast – cocktail hour ticked on. In this bubble of the West End front, the war was fought on the dance floor with a cocktail in hand. Patriotism took the form of swilling gin and stared adversity in the teeth. Even the threat of Nazi rule couldn't dampen polite debauchery at The Ritz.

Top left:
First-class footwear
at Cheaney's Jermyn
Street shop.

Below Left:
Fully booked:
the stacked shelves
at the London Library.

Below:
Heavenly croquetas
are coming soon to
St James's Market. Photo
by Kris Kirkham.

Opposite:
Illustrations by
James Graham



Putting the right foot forward

Good things are afoot at Cheaney. The 130-year-old British footwear maker was recently honoured with the esteemed Queen's Award, recognising business excellence in International Trade. Although their flagship sits on Jermyn Street, Joseph Cheaney & Sons has grown its presence in America, Japan and the rest of Europe. The Queen's Award is the most prestigious business award in the UK – now that would put a spring in anyone's step!

cheaney.co.uk
[@cheaneyshoes](https://www.instagram.com/cheaneyshoes)

Make it Norwegian Rain

Norwegian Rain proves that trench coats can be conceptual without sacrificing their function. With a short term let on Piccadilly, their chic high-tech outerwear is coming to St James's for the first time this September, as part of a three-way collaboration with Scandi furniture brand Modern Tribute and T-Michael, Norwegian Rain tailor's own fashion line. The goods come to us all the way from Bergen, Norway's beautiful westernmost fishing port.

norwegianrain.com
[@norwegianrain](https://www.instagram.com/norwegianrain)

Lady's first

The history of Savile Row is a relatively long, albeit well-suited one. Tailors began opening their shops here in the late 18th century, establishing this strip as the global epicentre for bespoke suiting. History took another step forward this spring when Kathryn Sargent became the first woman to open a tailoring house on Savile Row. Sargent, originally from Leeds, has over 20 years experience, and spent the last 15 years honing her needlework at Gieves & Hawkes.

kathrynsargent.com
[@ksargentbespoke](https://www.instagram.com/ksargentbespoke)



For it's a jolly good library

In 1840, Thomas Carlyle was unimpressed. He could never find a seat at the British Museum Library and he felt its cataloguing lacked rigour. London, he declared before a crowd, needed a new lending library. Today, The London Library is celebrating its 175th year, and an illustrious heritage with principals that include Lord Alfred Tennyson and T.S. Eliot.

londonlibrary.co.uk
[@thelondonlib](https://www.instagram.com/thelondonlib)

Walk the walk

While London Collections Men is taking the city by storm, our friends at Apsley also had big runway show plans of their own in a decidedly more exotic locale. Coinciding with the Formula 1 Grand Prix in Monaco, a collection of the top F1 drivers modelled bespoke Apsley suiting as part of a charity runway show.

apsleytailors.com
[@apsleybespoke](https://www.instagram.com/apsleybespoke)

Polo Season at La Martina

Saddle up those steeds, polo season is officially underway, with a wealth of events to attend throughout the UK. While perhaps a horseback tournament may not be on the cards for us all, looking sharp certainly is. For all things polo, visit La Martina on Jermyn Street.

lamartina.com
[@lamartinapolo](https://www.instagram.com/lamartinapolo)

Moving day

After years at the current Regent Street-adjacent address, The Crown Estate is loading their moving trucks and coming down to St James's Market. This exciting move comes after considerable work went into creating this new West End destination and business address. Or perhaps after years of reading this fine newspaper, they've decided to take the bait!

thecrownestate.co.uk
[@thecrownestate](https://www.instagram.com/thecrownestate)



New kids on the block

In St James's Market, a food boom is underway. The Salt Yard Group, who have delighted Londoners with their dizzyingly delicious Spanish and Italian tapas, charcuterie and cheese boards, are moving in. The good news is that they are just one of the many dining destinations to move into St James's Market (New York's Michelin-starred Aquavit is also onboard). The less good news is our wardrobes may feel a tad pinched – luckily, Jermyn Street is always near by.

saltyardgroup.co.uk
[@saltyardgroup](https://www.instagram.com/saltyardgroup)

We've invited *GQ*'s Grace Gilfeather to style the Jermyn Street St James's show for London Collections Men – the annual showcase where the fashion intelligentsia flocks in and all eyes are on British menswear. We check in to talk about St James's fashion heritage and why English suiting is here to stay.

GRACE GILFEATHER

PHOTOGRAPHY
Josh Shinner





“When you go further along down Regent Street, into Soho and then eventually out into East London, you see modern interpretations or the cheaper interpretations of them, but the very best and where it all began is in St James’s and Savile Row.”



We're with Grace Gilfeather at New & Lingwood on Jermyn Street, and she's on a mission. It's four weeks to London Collections Men and on top of her work as fashion editor at British *GQ*, she's collaborating with St James's to style a runway show that showcases the best this historic menswear hub has to offer. New & Lingwood is just one of the twenty brands that will be featured on the runway and she's here to start pulling pieces for the show.

The shop's shelves are neatly stacked with shirts in all colours. Soft red carpet is underfoot, deft sales associates in pristine brogues float through the space as they help the well-suited clientele. Gilfeather has jacket, trouser and shirt options sprawled neatly on the table and takes a step back to consider the ensemble. She walks to the window to see how her selection fares in natural light, and asks Charles (in the brogues) for a different size. The New & Lingwood PR, with whom she is touring the shop, suggests they look at a pair of trousers actor Owen Teale wore to a *Game of Thrones* premiere in Los Angeles.

As someone who works and breathes menswear, it's a part of town Gilfeather knows well. She's embracing the ethos of the area, remixing it ever so slightly with the *GQ* sensibility. "I'm going to make it look as modern as possible using sneakers with suits and sunglasses," she says. "That's the essence of Jermyn Street, marrying the tradition with these

carefully selected modern brands like Barbour and Sunspel."

Gilfeather's work with *GQ* brings her into St James's often; as menswear and the hype around it evolves, its history remains rooted here. "They've stood the test of time," she says of the historic businesses that line Jermyn Street. As for traditional English suiting? "It's never going to go away. These silhouettes are still relevant. When you go further along down Regent Street, into Soho and then eventually out into East London, you see modern interpretations or the cheaper interpretations of them, but the very best and where it all began is in St James's and Savile Row."

And what St James's has done over the last centuries, the rest of the menswear business has followed suit (pun intended). According to Gilfeather, "All the high street brands, all of the big Italian fashion designers copy what goes on in Savile Row. They're all following that same block and that same silhouette. They are the real craftsmen of British menswear."

As part of her work with *GQ*, Gilfeather does more than just style shoots. "You have to have foresight. Pick up on trends." She says, "you see what goes on in Milan and Paris and then you have to observe what the interpretations are from more premium brands and the high street."

As a result, her work is an ongoing hunt for new photographers, locations and new talent.

Her fascination with menswear extends well beyond the last seven years she's spent at *GQ*. Growing up with three brothers, a young, tomboyish Gilfeather began her career early making her own men's fashion magazines. The hand-drawn pages were crammed into wire folders with covers printed from an aging PC. She wrote style advice on dressing like a cowboy and sold the magazines to her brothers' friends. Sometimes there were stickers.

"You know my mother still has them in the attic somewhere. I'll have to get them down one day."

As Gilfeather scours St James's for the perfect ensembles, we're working hard to cordon off part of Jermyn Street for an outdoor runway. Food trucks are sorted, champagne pops ordered and we've invited everyone we know. This street is always somewhat of a catwalk; for the tailors in their crisp suits and measuring tapes around their shoulders, and for the bespectacled gentlemen who buy from them, but also for one day a year when we invite the fashion world to watch.

@gracegilfeather
#jermynstjames
gq-magazine.co.uk
stjameslondon.co.uk



Summer Science Exhibition at the Royal Society



Judy Blame at the ICA



Champagne dinner at The Ritz



Roman 1st century marble relief at London Art Week

John Smedley: Store opening

13 June, 2pm
John Smedley
55 Jermyn Street, SW1Y 6LX

Purveyors of ever-so-fine British knitwear, cottons and cashmere, John Smedley has just set up a brand new shop on Jermyn Street. Not one to sit out of the London Collections Men festivities, the new location will host a fête of their own to ring in the opening of the new Jermyn Street store. Welcome to the neighbourhood Mr Smedley! We'll be drinking to that indeed.

Tel. +44 (0)20 7907 9234
johnsmedley.com
@j_smedley

Judy Blame: Never Again

29 June – 4 September
ICA
The Mall, SW1Y 5AH

Punk – the raucous celebration of youth, safety pins and generally not giving two hoots – is entering middle age. Retrospectives are taking place throughout London to mark the movement's 40th anniversary. The ICA will host the first major solo exhibition of designer, art director and fashion stylist Judy Blame, whose fearless aesthetic helped define publications such as *i-D*, and has worked as image consultant for Boy George and Björk.

Tel. +44 (0)20 7930 3647
ica.org.uk
@icalondon

Theatre Royal Haymarket: Breakfast at Tiffany's

30 June ongoing
Theatre Royal Haymarket
Haymarket, SW1Y 4HT

Holly Golightly, who was immortalised in the early '60s thanks to one Audrey Hepburn, is reborn again at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. Capote's story of a Manhattan socialite in the throes of love, money and upward ascent, finds itself on stage, adapted by Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg, with Pixie Lott playing the lead role of Ms Golightly.

Tel. +44 (0)20 7930 8800
trh.co.uk
@trh_london

London Art Week

1 – 8 July
Preview 30 June
Various locations
around St James's

It's time again for the world's most important gallery-based celebration of pre-modern art, when St James's art dealers open their doors to the public and put together exhibitions of artworks from the private art market. Highlights cover the full landscape, from newcomer Peter Finer, which specialises in antique armour, to the wonderfully expressive works-on-paper of Stephen Ongpin. The event also coincides with the 30th birthday of Weiss Gallery, who have put together an exhibition of sixteenth century painter Cornelius Johnson – expect austere Tudor courtiers in intricate lace and full ruffles. The week paints a picture of London's most successful art gallery district.

londonartweek.co.uk
@londonartweek

Royal Society: Summer Science Exhibition

4–10 July
The Royal Society
6–9 Carlton House Terrace,
SW1Y 5AG

Science fairs have evolved considerably since the baking soda and vinegar volcano explosions of yore. Every year the Royal Society hosts a showcase of science and innovation from across the UK. As an indication of what's to come, last year's exhibitions examined the mystery of King Richard III's remains, the hidden information in human faces, and an investigation of cosmic rays – and nary a DIY volcano in sight.

Tel. +44 (0)20 7451 2500
royalsociety.org
@royalsociety

Dream Ball

7 July, 6.30pm
Lancaster House
Stable Yard, SW1A 1BB

Both the Prince's Trust and the Big Change Charitable Trust endeavor to aid young people overcome challenges and disadvantages. And to benefit both these organisations, a swish evening awaits. The historic Grade I listed Lancaster House has been used as a backdrop for films such as *The King's Speech*, and on this night will host much dining and revelry, with Anton Du Beke of *Strictly Come Dancing* as master of ceremonies. Black tie clad attendees can bid on hotel stays, cases of champagne and even a private breakfast with Boris Johnson.

Tel. +44 (0)20 3091 8787
dreamball.co.uk

Waterstones: The Litro Magazine Salon – An Evening of Cuban Culture

12 July, 5.30pm
Waterstones Piccadilly
203 – 206 Piccadilly, W1J 9HD

Litro Magazine, a cerebral look at literature, is celebrating the launch of its Cuba-themed issue. The publication will explore fiction from around the country, extending beyond the streets of Havana into the country's remote communities, delving into the heart of this fascinating island. The publication is released in July and will be celebrated with talks, readings and live music at Waterstones Piccadilly.

Tel. +44 (0)20 7851 2400
waterstones.com
@waterstonespicc

Champagne Dinner: Voyage de Champagne

22 July, 7pm
The Ritz, William Kent House
150 Piccadilly, W1J 9BR

If a summer of traipsing the French countryside with champagne flute in hand isn't on the cards, The Ritz has you covered. Its summer Champagne Dinner will pack all of this and more into a single evening. The dinner will be prepared by The Ritz's executive chef using British ingredients, inspired by Auguste Escoffier, the French chef whose work in the late 19th century defined French cuisine. The bubbles on offer tour the finest of the Champagne region: Ruinart, Veuve Clicquot, Dom Pérignon and Krug.

Tel. +44 (0)20 7493 8181
theritzlondon.com
@theritzlondon

Double Duty

A bookshop that is just a bookshop has its merits, but isn’t life more fun when that bookshop also has a cocktail bar?



Photo: Tian Khee Siong

One of the many things that make St James’s such a special place is there’s always more to it than meets the eye. Narrow passageways lead to tiny galleries, courtyards to historic pubs, and flagship stores to fabulous dining. These places may be out of sight, but they certainly aren’t out of mind. In our ongoing quest to uncover the nooks and crannies of this fine slice of the city, we seek out th best eating and drinking that’s tucked out of view in St James’s.



SADDLERY CAFÉ

Osprey London’s Regent Street location is a cabinet of curiosities – one with a café in its basement. The leading act continues to be the handmade leather bags, belts and accessories, but the eccentric knick-knacks, such as glass-encased scorpions or thumb-sized beetles, all add to the mystique of the brand’s world-travelling founder Graeme Ellisdon. Head downstairs to the Saddlery Café, housed in old bank vaults for tasty lunch specials, coffees and equally curious foodstuffs for purchase: small-batch chutneys, walnut honey, and Osprey London’s own special tea blends.

Downstairs at Osprey London
27 Regent Street St James’s, SW1Y 4NQ
Tel. +44 (0)20 7851 9960
ospreylondon.com
@ospreylondon



DIAMOND JUBILEE TEA SALON

Heritage grocer Fortnum and Mason has created a centuries-long legacy of packing hampers that are best enjoyed in a grassy park. But those who prefer to enjoy the fruits of Fortnum’s from the convenience of the great indoors, or more specifically, delivered on a silver platter, should try the Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon. Tucked away in the Piccadilly department store, three-tier towers laden with delicate finger sandwiches, plump scones and rosy cakes ring in the afternoon with a regal dose of pomp.

Upstairs at Fortnum and Mason
181 Piccadilly, W1A 1ER
Tel. +44 (0)20 7734 8040
fortnumandmason.com
@fortnums



SWANS BAR

The only thing better than clutching one of Assouline’s larger-than-life books in hand is to clutch a glass of wine in the other. Swans Bar is the suitably scholarly restaurant and bar at Assouline’s flagship, where luxury brands, world-class artists and old world glamour is reincarnated in coffee table tomes. This bar then is where bookish indulgence is rewarded with the boozier sort, a place to wine, dine and read in elegant surroundings that feel a far cry from bustling Piccadilly outside.

Inside Maison Assouline
196A Piccadilly, W1J 9EY
Tel. +44 (0)20 3327 9370
assouline.com/london-piccadilly
@maisonassouline

THE AMERICAN BAR

Is a wall still a wall if it isn’t crammed with pictures, badges and baseball caps? According to The American Bar, which looks as though it were decorated by Uncle Sam himself, the answer is no. Inspired by our neighbours on the other side of the Atlantic, The American Bar is where the guests of the plush Stafford Hotel come to loosen their ties, and – after sampling the macaroni and cheese, Buffalo wings and Caesar salad – loosen their belts. The private courtyard is a leafy, cobblestoned affair, but like the American dream, it takes some hustling to get a seat.

The back of the Stafford Hotel
16 St James’s Place, SW1A 1RH
Tel. +44 (0)20 7493 0111
thestaffordlondon.com/the-american-bar
@staffordlondon



PALL MALL FINE WINE

In a narrow shop, in a historic arcade, in a big bustling city lies this tiny wine bar. The Grade I listed Royal Opera Arcade is a hop and a skip from Trafalgar Square and is the oldest shopping arcade in London, designed by Regency architect John Nash – perhaps better known for Marble Arch and Buckingham Palace. Inside, Pall Mall Fine Wine is an unassuming vino boutique, selling the finest from trusted Old World classics to up-and-coming New World vineyards. The aptly named “La Cave” is a place where shoppers can try a glass or two, accompanied by French charcuterie platters. A handsome vinyl collection is at the disposal of the patron, as is a piano waiting to be played. They’ve even made use of their sidewalk area for drinking al fresco in the arcade – perfect for the London summer.

Inside the Royal Opera Arcade
6–8 Royal Opera Arcade, SW1Y 1UY
Tel. +44 (0)20 7321 2529
pallmallfinewine.co.uk
@pallmallwine

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Royal Academy Schools,
yesterday and today

STATE OF THE ART

The Royal Academy has long been known as a tour-de-force institution in London's art world – its exhibitions draw thousands every year to see significant works by big name artists. But behind the scenes, there's also a bustling art school, and one that for the last 247 years has been educating a select few of very gifted young artists. In preparation for their final show, we were invited to explore the unique landscape of Britain's oldest art school.





Every year, just 17 students are accepted to study at the RA. As far as postgraduate programmes go, this is decidedly small; but that’s the point. Here, they’ll rub shoulders with some of the world’s leading art figures, engage in critical debate, and participate in highly visible exhibitions. They’ll also work really, really hard.

The curriculum at the Royal Academy is simple in that there isn’t really one. Because it is an independent art school, it’s not tied to a particular curriculum or examination process, which allows the instructors to be responsive to the artists’ needs. “It gives the rare opportunity for artists to scrutinise their practice, to be challenged and to develop their work in a critical and supportive environment,” says Brian Griffiths, an RA tutor who spends two days out of the week teaching and the rest working out of his own studio. Everyone who works in the school is a practising artist.

The weeks have a loose rhythm to them. They start with a Monday morning lecture that explores the philosophical or theoretical side of the visual arts. Critiques and tutorials with invited instructors pepper the week, and then ends with an artists’ talk on late Friday afternoon.

Admission to the school isn’t easy. For the 17 spots, 900 apply, and it’s more than their portfolio that gets them

noticed. “The schools are firstly looking for applicants with established and strong practices,” says Griffiths. “Second, that the candidate is looking for evolution in their artwork; and third, that they have a desire and capacity to be critically engaged with their own work and that of others.” The programme is rigorous, and is a year longer than most post-grad fine arts programmes – and, ever since its foundation in 1769, its tuition is free.

“This is because the Royal Academicians, when they founded the RA, came up with a brilliant business model – that the school should be free, and paid for by an annual exhibition. This is, of course, now the Summer Exhibition,” says Eliza Bonham Carter, Head of the Royal Academy Schools. A call to artists internationally, the Summer Exhibition is the world’s largest open submission exhibition. And entered anonymously, it has turned the hallowed halls of the RA into a level playing field every June since 1769. Last year, over 5,000 works were displayed and sold, and artists were awarded £50,000 in prizes.

In the weeks and months leading up, the RA 17 are also working fastidiously and furiously on their final pieces, which will be displayed as part at the Summer Schools Show on 23 June. It’s a rare opportunity to see both the works and inside the school. “I think that this show

is particularly important as they, as artists, are free in this show in a way that is very rare,” Bonham Carter continues. “It is not an exam, it is not a commercial show with the pressures that this can bring, and nor is it a show where the artists have to deal with a curator. It is an opportunity to make a clear and independent statement.”

Indeed, for these students, it’s an art show like no other that they will have in their career. When asked what to expect, Griffiths says “beautiful things, absurd moments and big thoughts.”

The Summer Schools Show runs 23 June – 3 July

The Royal Academy Schools
Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1J 0BD
royalacademy.org.uk/the-ra-school
[@royalacademy](https://www.instagram.com/royalacademy)

Previous:
‘Students in the
Royal Academy Schools’
photograph by Russell
Westwood, 1953

Left:
The Life Drawing Room,
photograph by Richard
Waite, 2016

Below:
Eliza Bonham Carter,
the Head of the
Royal Academy Schools,
portrait by Oliver Vanes,
2016

Right:
One of the RA 17 working
in the large complex of
studios on Piccadilly and
Burlington Gardens,
photograph by Benedict
Johnson, 2016



“I think that this show is particularly important as they, as artists, are free in this show in a way that is very rare.”

Patterns with New & Lingwood

This Jermyn Street outfitter does not cower in the face of a bold paisley.



New & Lingwood is the place where the sartorial volume knob is turned to 11. A trophy of antlers hangs on the wall with newsboy caps hung from it, adjacent to a penny farthing. Jackets come in stark black and white stripes, trousers in tartan and dressing gowns in exotic paisley. Ties spotted with mallard ducks are referred to as “conversationalists;” cufflinks come in classic shapes, but also as tiny cigar-smoking bulldogs. “When someone steps into our shop, we can dress them from the most sober to the most outrageous,” says Simon Maloney. Their suiting plays in the realm of navy, grey and black for a clientele that may choose to dress conservatively during the week, and then let loose come Friday 5pm. But even the quieter jackets will have a cheeky pop of pattern in the pocket lining.

New & Lingwood knows what it does best. It reflects fashion, but is not fashion forward. It is a classic tailor with kooky Duke of Windsor, Tommy Nutter influences, but one that remains resolutely

true to its English DNA. It is most certainly not afraid of colour. This is all according to Maloney, who has stood at the helm of New & Lingwood’s design output for over five years.

The bright colours and full-bodied patterns at New & Lingwood are anchored in their 150-year history. The company was founded in 1865 in Eton where it served, and still does, as the outfitter of the college’s uniforms. The crisp shirts, dickey bows and tailcoats haven’t changed since Victorian years, although they’ve done away with the top hats, presumably to the relief of the pupils. The day-to-day class wear is staunch black and white, but leisure hours is when the colour comes in.

At Eton there are over 140 societies (sports teams, clubs, and the like) and each of these come, as they should, with their own signifying sock. These are often designed by the boys themselves and can be quite eclectic. The sporting colours too are unafraid to employ a lurid stripe, and this is where it all began. Today, Maloney continues to find inspiration in Eton’s 575-year history. The skull and crossbones insignia of a centuries-old society lives on on the face of ties and handkerchiefs. Centuries-old rowing paddles decorate the shop; archival imagery on the walls.

In the 1920s, New & Lingwood opened its first shop on Jermyn Street, where they built their business with bespoke shoes and shirting. This slowly expanded out to jackets, cufflinks and outerwear, along with relics of the “Downton Abbey lifestyle” (which Maloney references often when describing their clientele), such as velvet slippers and smoking hats.

About ten years ago there was a conscious decision to liven up the colour palette of their London offering with the vivacity of the Eton portfolio. After all, their manufacturing methods have not veered from the traditional benchmarks of English-made quality, so why not celebrate that with a splashy stripe. And from the feet of schoolboys, the multicoloured legacy migrated upwards and into their Jermyn Street store.



Photos: Josh Shinner

New & Lingwood
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newandlingwood.com
@newlingwood1865

HOW TO WEAR PATTERN

A 7-step guide

Patterns can be a fickle thing. When executed well, they can feel classic and distinguished, or carry a pleasant punch. When assembled haphazardly however, they are best observed while wearing a pair of sunglasses. Simon Maloney breaks down the do’s and don’ts when incorporating pattern into your wardrobe.

Illustration: Lauren Rolwing



01 IT’S ALL A BALANCING ACT

Temper a bold jacket with a plain or semi-plain shirt and tie. Try it vice versa, but avoid matching bold with bold. Mixing two patterns is encouraged, three with caution. “If I wear a bold jacket, I wear a plain tie because I want the jacket to speak,” he says. Remember that patterns compete with one another. Tone it down to let a single pattern shine through.

02 COMPLEMENTARY COLOURS 101

A colour wheel is a just quick google away, and is best referenced for entry-level matching. Colours situated on opposite ends of the wheel create a contrast that’s intriguing to the eye. That’s a broad brush tip as to what goes with what, and applies to more than patterns.

03 COLOUR, SET AND MATCH

Observe the details. Bring out a nuanced fleck of colour in a paisley tie or pocket square, for instance, by echoing it in a shirt. This can also work well with textured patterns like tweeds or tartans. Tie the look together by matching the innate colours to another piece in the ensemble.

04 CONFIDENCE IS KEY

People can smell fear, and the same can be said when sartorial confidence is lacking. As soon as the ensemble is on, the wearer shouldn’t think about it. “If you’re a bit of a shrinking violet, don’t try it because the suit’s going to be wearing you.”

05 CONSIDER TEXTURE

Remember that patterns aren’t only print, they are texture too. Textured patterns such as a herringbone or a tweed are a safe way to keep it interesting. Contrast a matt jacket with the shine of a silk tie. If the jacket is lustrous, keep the tie matt.

06 SIZE DOESN’T MATTER

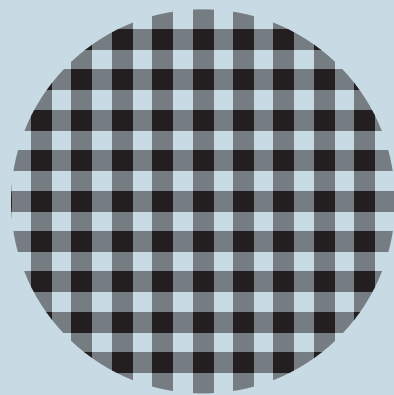
There is no such thing as a pattern too big if the wearer feels comfortable in it. Otherwise, says Maloney, they wouldn’t make half the things in the store. Some of the most successful auctioneers or art dealers have created a personal trademark of wearing something flashy. It all depends on personality.

07 DON’T DOUBLE UP

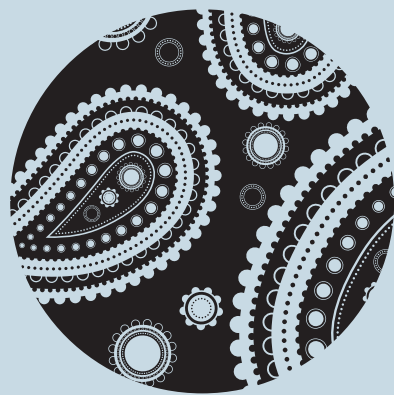
Never match your pocket square with your tie. “If I wear a tartan tie, I would never wear a tartan pocket handkerchief,” Maloney says. “I may decide the tie is enough on its own, or I may wear a bow in my pocket hole to bring out the colour.”

Pattern perception

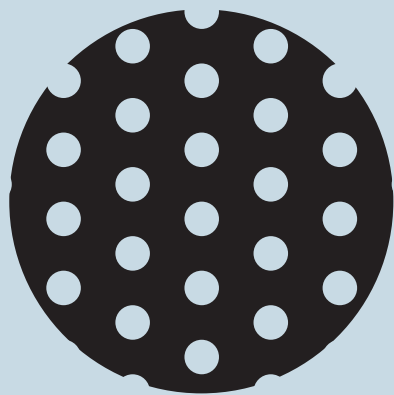
We see them everywhere, but what do they actually mean? The patterns in our wardrobe are rife with history and cultural context, and we find the facts behind the flourish.



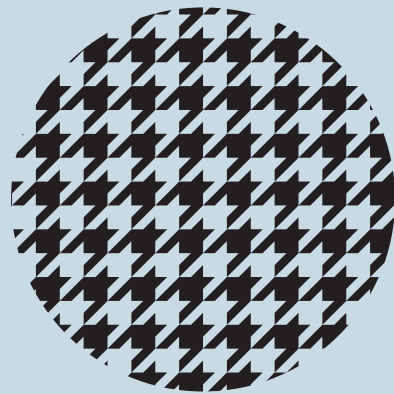
GINGHAM



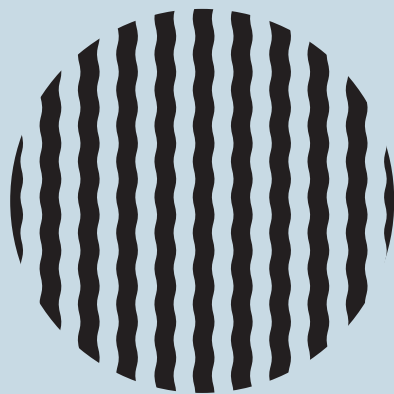
PAISLEY



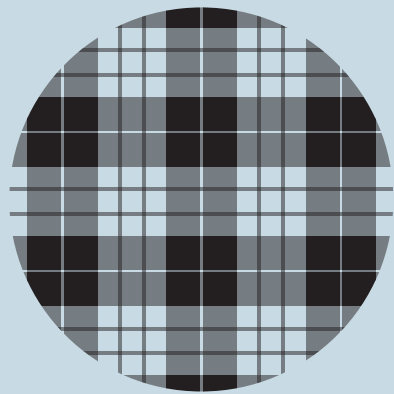
POLKA DOTS



HOUNDSTOOTH



SEERSUCKER



TARTAN



CAMOUFLAGE



HERRINGBONE

GINGHAM

This earnest check became popular in Holland, slowly moving over to the mills of Manchester in the 18th century. It was cheap to produce, and was commonly used for easily soil-able home textiles: aprons, dishcloths and tablecloths. Indeed, today gingham is still synonymous with spaghetti-splattered tablecloths at Italian restaurants, but has its chicer moments too: at Miu Miu’s spring/summer 2016, Miuccia layered sheer ruffled tunics atop crisp gingham shirting.

PAISLEY

Is it a lotus leaf? A feather? Cypress pine, date shoot or a leech? While we don’t know exactly what this pattern is, we do know it is roughly 1,000 years old and has its origins in the region that now encompasses Iran, Pakistan and India. During the French colonial era, Napoleon’s wife Josephine began collecting hand-woven Kashmiri paisley shawls, which means it was only a matter of time until the rest of Europe was absolutely mad for them. Since then, the pattern grew in complexity as weaving technology evolved, and remained at the height of fashion until the 1870s when the blow of the Franco-Prussian war left France too impoverished for such finery.

POLKA DOTS

No one would have dreamt of wearing polka dots in the Medieval years. Without the help of machinery, any attempt at a dotted pattern would result in irregularly spaced spots, and bore a too canny resemblance to leprosy, smallpox and the plague. Fast forward to the polka music craze of the 1840s, along with which came a whole slew of polka merchandise (from polka hats to polka suspenders to polka pudding) but it was the dots, which are assumed to be a visual interpretation of the light, half-step dance, that survived.

HOUNDSTOOTH

Shepherds in the Scottish Highlands of yore favoured this geometric textile as it did a fine job hiding the mud that splashed and sullied their outerwear. The pattern turned out to be quite the social climber. Edward, Duke of Windsor began tailoring his suits in this pattern – and the masses followed suit. It was later firmly fastened into MidCentury fashion lore when it was popularised by Christian Dior.

SEERSUCKER

A Missouri state legislator once tried to ban anyone over the age of eight from wearing seersucker suits because they looked, in his words, “ridiculous.” British imperialists in India would beg to differ, who preferred this puckered silk fabric in warmer climates. Indeed, the name is derived from the Hindi word śīrśakkar, which means milk and sugar, a reference to the smooth and grainy textures of the fabric. In the 19th century, a cheaper cotton version became the workwear uniform until the 1920s, when fashionable undergrads began wearing the stuff to poke fun at the material’s association with the working class.

TARTAN

The history of plaid is of course closely tied to the Scottish Highlands, where different variations of tartan were, and still are, representative of different clans. The oldest example of tartan dates back to the third century. Over a millennium later, in 1746, it was banned altogether for about 40 years by the British – people were forced to take an oath that they wouldn’t wear the pattern, and those caught were punished with death.

CAMOUFLAGE

For European militaries, the need for camouflage came with the ubiquity of the rifle. The brightly-coloured military uniforms of the mid-eighteenth century proved rather counter-productive when they turned their wearers into highly visible moving targets. Modern camouflage came with the invention of the airplane, the French were the first to paint their cannons and tanks to blend with their surroundings. With the increasing threat of aerial attacks by WWII, camouflage grew into scores of different uniform designs, depending on country and surroundings.

HERRINGBONE

Herringbone is an ancient woven pattern that is actually a variant of twill. Its defining quality occurs during production, when the twill is reversed, resulting in diagonal line chevrons. It can be traced back to ancient Egyptian textiles, although the oldest example was found near present-day Vienna and the most famous is the Shroud of Turin. The pattern, which gets its name from its resemblance to a fish skeleton, continues to be associated with smart suiting today.

MEWS

AS MUSE

PHOTOGRAPHY

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STYLIST

Poppy Waddell

GROOMING/MAKE-UP

Thomas Silverman
& Louise O'Neill

ART DIRECTION

dn&co.

When it comes to pattern, we're often far more fearless with our curtains than our clothes. But really, isn't ticking cotton just a soft furnishing equivalent of shirt poplin, and damask a more robust expression of paisley? Inspired by the chance to shoot in a new mews house at Cleveland Court designed by interior design dynamos Studio Ashby (full story on page 40), we set ourselves a challenge – to identify St James's distinctive pattern patter. We hope our muse on a mews amuses.

Blue stripes have an ever freshness. Structural but not too stark, bright but not blinding, they recreate the joyful impression of summer sun streaming through shutters. This **New & Lingwood** jacket has reassuring solid stripes, and is paired with their classic blue check shirt, a cobalt blue trouser and punch of vermillion with the socks.



Patterns on pattern! Here on this backpack we see the classic **Gucci** monogram sliced into fragments by a graphic set of zigzag stripes, available at **Dover Street Market**. The much quieter pattern sitting in the background is made up of loopback cotton shorts and a jacket, both from **Sunspel**.



Leather has a beautiful natural texture and brown is an oft chosen colour to best celebrate its inherent fractured, dare-we-say wrinkled, surface. These soft leather trainers by **John Lobb** are framed with clean white soles and shown here with ribbed orange socks by **Hilditch & Key** and rolled-up suit pants by **New & Lingwood**.



Grey is great for showing patterns with depth, especially those with natural flecks and intricate weaves. This is a sneak peek of a beautiful check by **Aquascutum**, with soft grey marl base and the faint hints of blue and purple, pulled out here by these wonderful two-tone heather and grape herringbone socks by **Hilditch & Key**. The black lace-up boots are by **John Lobb**. Check mate.



Clap for this overlapping green and black 'V'-patterned bomber jacket by **Gieves & Hawkes**, available at **Fortnum and Mason** in their menswear department, and draping a traffic light red cashmere zip top by Piccadilly boutique **N.Peal**. Rinse and repeat.



Never change your spots with this polka-printed black sports jacket from **Dover Street Market**. Directly screen-printed to the fabric, attempt to join the dots as they appear and disappear in the light. The jacket is paired with fresh white shirt, also by **COMME des GARÇONS**.



Anne Morrison

Anne Morrison, Chair of the Board at BAFTA, knows a thing or two about navigating a throng of photographers on the red carpet. She tunes it out, starts on one side and just works her way through (it’s a trick she learned from Stephen Fry).



Photo: Ivan Jones

“Growing up in Belfast at the height of the Troubles, it was often quite dangerous to go out at night. So we watched a lot of television. This was the window on the outside world.”

We met with Morrison at the iconic BAFTA headquarters at 195 Piccadilly. The buzzing building oozes cinema. Here, films are screened, scripts are written, and deals are made. And where Morrison has spent much of the last five years of her life, first on the board and the last two as its Chair, pushing frontiers forward in film, television and games.

CORRESPONDENT What do you do?
ANNE MORRISON What do I do? Essentially I help steer the strategy of the organisation working closely with Jane Lush who will take over after me as Chair. We swap roles and I become her Deputy next year. We do everything from overseeing the awards ceremonies, the new talent programme and the events.

C What was your mandate within BAFTA? How did you want to move the organisation?
AM Well I think anyone who knows me knows my commitment to diversity and looking back on the two years that I’ve had here, it is an issue we’ve definitely moved forward. The other thing is making BAFTA into a more international organisation. Making sure that the branches in New York, LA and Asia work together constructively and are all part of one organisation, which is a British take on the international world of film, TV and games. The third is launching the fundraising campaign for 195 Piccadilly in order to refurbish and expand this glorious building we have. We’re working with The Crown Estate to secure continued occupation so we can make the most of this amazing asset.

C Why is diversity important in film and TV?
AM These are the eyes through which we see the world. This is how we reflect the world back to ourselves. If we’re only telling stories based on the knowledge of a small demographic, that’s the way we’ll think the world is. So we need actors, writers, directors from all backgrounds who can tell us their stories because we need to hear all the voices.

C In your previous work as director of the BBC Academy and now with BAFTA, a lot of your work focuses on helping people progress their early careers. Why is mentorship important in this industry?

AM Creativity is about confidence. Sometimes we all need a boost to know when something that we’ve done is good. I’ve been lucky enough to have several really good mentors in my life who have taken an interest in my career. I say to anyone who wants to progress, try to cultivate mentors, and be a person that someone will want to mentor. We have our scholarships because a lot of people find it very tricky to get in unless they have connections in the industry already, or the bank of mum and dad that can fund them while they’re doing unpaid work experience. So we try to take away some of those barriers and get the most talented people into the industry, because otherwise those talents are lost.

C What impact did film and television have on you growing up?
AM Growing up in Belfast at the height of the Troubles, it was often quite dangerous to go out at night. So we watched a lot of television. It was a real treat to go to the cinema. So I saw how important that was. It took on an added importance, I think, because this was the window on the outside world from a slightly more restricted life. It gave me a thrill later on to work at the BBC in Belfast.

C You studied English Literature at Cambridge. How did you end up working in television?
AM When I was leaving university, I didn’t know what to do. I got one of these coveted graduate training places at the BBC, which was just as well because I applied for 47 different jobs and I got 46 rejections. So I often say that to people who are applying for lots of jobs that they shouldn’t get discouraged if they get quite a lot of rejections.

C How has the industry changed since you’ve started your career?
AM When I joined the broadcasting industry in the early ’80s it did feel very much like a boys’ club. It felt a bit uphill and I’d often go to a meeting where I was the only woman. So it was very, very different times, and over the 30 years that I’ve worked in television I have seen tremendous progress. But sometimes it feels like we’re taking two steps forward, one step back. We mustn’t be complacent as there’s still much work to be done.

C You’ve been working in this area for five years now. What do you love about it the most?

AM I love that as soon as I get out of the tube at Piccadilly Circus, you’ve got all the lights. It’s just throbbing and buzzing. It makes me really excited to be in London. I thoroughly enjoy my walk from the tube to BAFTA, even though it’s only a few hundred yards.

C This building certainly conveys a cinematic quality, doesn’t it.
AM When people walk in off the street, I feel a bit of the glamour of the red carpet rubs off. That when they see the mask it conjures up the award ceremonies. It brings a little bit of that into daily life. It’s a beautiful building, it was originally built for the Royal Watercolour Society. We have these beautiful skylights from when they were exhibiting their paintings and needed natural light. If you could trace the origin of so many film, TV and games projects, you’d end up at our bar. When I sit there, as I do quite often for meetings, I can’t help overhearing what’s going on at the surrounding tables. Some people are doing casting sessions. Other people are having script meetings. Other people are closing a business deal or interviewing people.

C How do you feel about moving on?
AM I feel very lucky to be working with an institution that has such good values and wants to enhance the quality of the moving image. I look back on my two years with enormous pleasure. I’ve really thrown myself into it. I won’t look back and wish I’d given it a bit more, because I have given it my all. And however much I’ve given it, it has given me more back because I’ve had such fun. With all the good we do in the world I also love the dressing up and the red carpet and the dancing afterwards. I’m there until the lights go on at 3am. I’ve had a tremendous time and I hope that my successor has half as good a time as I did.

bafta.org
@bafta
@morria20

Chris Cecil-Wright

This St James’s Street super yacht broker asks us to look beyond the stereotype and venture into the uncharted waters of adventure yachting.

There are people in this life that have got it together. Who know what they’re good at, what makes them happy, and what success really looks like. Chris Cecil-Wright is one of that rare breed. He embodies living life as the big adventure, whether it’s walking to the two poles or setting up one of the most exciting new super yacht brokerage companies in recent times. So we decided to pay a visit to his base on St James’s Street to find out if life on the high seas has really all been smooth sailing.

But first, a note of warning. “The thing about big yachts is that people only think there’s one lifestyle.” This is no behind-the-scenes, up-the-skirt look at a life of excess. No hedonistic odyssey of self-destruction and rehab redemption. No bronzed bikini-clad ladies of Calypso. No champagne corks bouncing off the sunburnt bellies of oligarchs. But what we can offer is an insight into the other world of super yachts – a port to the starboard of tabloid titillation.

“When you get to 60-metres-long, there’s nowhere on the planet you can’t go,” Cecil-Wright explains the definition of what he prefers to call “big yachts.” It’s a class of boat that is all about unanchored freedom, able to carry enough fuel and provisions to make a more-than-comfortable trip anywhere and back. This is a new frontier kind of luxury lifestyle, and it’s not for the faint-hearted. This is adventure yachting.

“You have to have the adventure bug.” Cecil-Wright sets the scene: Imagine, if you will, someone who’s about pushing his limits, who starts mountain climbing in the Peak District, or driving to the south of France to ski for the weekend. And then his fortunes change dramatically – he now finds himself uninhibited by money and able to travel anywhere at the drop of the hat. The world becomes a very small place. “Time and space become much more condensed for these guys. The world is their oyster – it’s just down to imagination.”

Imagination is exactly what we might need here. “To a layman like you and I, the difference equates to that between a

Range Rover and a Land Rover Defender. The Defender isn’t about a nice smart polish – it has rivets and the panels are almost wavy. And that’s the adventure yacht too: a boat that can go anywhere – bash itself through ice, or be slammed up against commercial ports in Venezuela – yet inside has all the luxuries of a super yacht.” Going anywhere also requires a lot of equipment. Cecil-Wright lists an ark-load of off-road vehicles, mountain bikes, and support team trailers, not forgetting a landing craft to get one from t’other.

Sitting at his base in a St James’s Street mansion block apartment, he rolls up his shirtsleeves to reveal elbows swollen to the size of tennis balls. It’s the result of his most recent trip with a client and friend, where they ran and mountain biked a 600-kilometre circuitous route through the Namibian Desert. He gets out the computer and pulls up pictures of steaks cooking over a mountaintop fire at sunset, or regales of encountering a black rhino on their daily marathon – a truly incredible sight when you consider there are only a mere two thousand left covering the whole of southern Africa.

Cecil-Wright remembers his first encounter with a big yacht as the real turning point. When breaking his back paragliding spelled the end of his promising army career – he had just started helicopter training at Middle Wallop – he then began working for boat builders Camper Nicholson by driving port-to-port in the south of France hand-delivering the company newsletter along with a copy of the *FT*. That’s when he first went aboard *Talitha G* – a 1927 motor yacht designed and built for John Paul Getty. “It was the most mind-bogglingly glorious thing. And I remember thinking this is a totally different market.”

The new business – simply called Cecil Wright – only deals with the absolute top of the market, a lesson he said was learnt after twenty years working at Edmiston, also on St James’s Street. “Every buyer expects to feel he’s the most important man when he’s buying or

building a yacht. But the market has become huge, so the only way was to look after a small group at the very top. Our mantra is fewer clients, serviced better.”

We ask him if he’s always sailed. After describing his earliest memories on a boat called Ajax with his father and brother “between Keyhaven and Cowes – extremely noisy and cold, being bashed around, soaking wet, and happy as Larry,” he goes on to add that adventure yachting isn’t all about thrills but family. “The discretion and the disappearing is a huge part of it. Just look at the royal family. In the biggest and most glorious yacht of its day, they’d take it up to deserted beaches in Scotland and barbecue on the sand. And that’s what goes on. There are lots of people you’ve never heard of, with yachts you’ve never heard of, who simply enjoy a big boat for all the kids and grandkids. I mean, once you experience the level of service, privacy, fun – it’s very hard to go back to a hotel.”

Hook, line and sinker – his sales pitch is compelling. Or that might be the imagination talking. But it isn’t so much a pitch at all. Perhaps there’s a little bit of pride in his business, and rightly so, but overwhelmingly there’s just an ease that, one imagines, comes with living life to its fullest. And that doesn’t mean grandiose body-pushing extreme achievements, but in recognising the value of all of life’s adventures. We ask a little about his trips to the poles, but he’s more alive talking about racing boats with his middle daughter Grace, which he does every Monday out of Lymington.

Many of us can probably stretch our imagination to commissioning a bespoke shirt, suit or shoes, but a yacht is something else entirely. But if you want to go that extra mile, and ensure you enjoy the ride, you’d be best served by someone who understands the true meaning of adventure.

Cecil Wright
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Illustration: James Graham



Patternity is an image archive, design studio and think tank, with pattern as its common thread. We sent the team out to explore the spots, stripes and grids in the urban details of St James's.



Photo: Josh Shinner

PATTERNITY LEAVE

PHOTOGRAPHY

Anna Murray &
Grace Winteringham



LEFT

**Clean lines and robust structures
on Carlton House Terrace**

RIGHT

**The warm stucco and light grey
marble stairs on Waterloo Place**



LEFT

**Bright, painterly camo skirt
by St James's Church**

RIGHT

**Black, white and yellow outside
art auction house Christie's**



LEFT

The speckles of a wise tree at Waterloo Place

RIGHT

Façade marbling to get lost in, on Pall Mall



Photo: Josh Shinner

There is contentment to be found in the nuances of repetition in our visual landscape, but to see it, first we must look.

At a recent talk at the V&A, a woman in her late '70s approached Anna Murray and Grace Winteringham as they stepped off the podium. She was emphatic. “She said ‘I’ve always looked at the world this way!’ she looked so excited to find someone who sees things the way she does,” says Murray, who alongside Winteringham makes up Patternity. The image archive turned design studio turned think tank focuses on one simple idea at its nucleus: pattern. Seeing patterns in the everyday, learning from them, and applying them to the bigger picture. “Patterns are part of our DNA, part of our history and how we used to find food,” Murray continues. When we were wearing loin cloths and living in caves, knowing the patterns of our landscape was integral to our survival.

Several millennia later, we met with Patternity at their studio in Shoreditch to talk pattern-finding in St James’s. “Because London has so many parks, which is quite rare for so many cities, there’s a really good balance between nature and concrete,” says Winteringham. “So that’s really nice to have water and trees in contrast to amazing skylines.” The city, it seems, is full of patterns. Grids. Ripples in the Thames. The Gherkin, which gets its shape from the thousands of triangles it’s made of. In St James’s, Murray noticed the soft pastels of marble and stone architecture, and how they are broken up by pops of colour – be it from a phone booth or the area’s ample greenery.

Murray and Winteringham originally bonded over a shared aesthetic and an image research obsession eight years ago. Patternity kicked off as a fashion, art and design photography blog in the late

2000s. Commissions came knocking, starting with a pair of tights they designed for Selfridges, and evolved into further collaborations with Clarks Originals, London Design Week, Nike and a tea set for Fortnum’s. Their image archive, meanwhile, has grown to over 5,000, and has evolved from fashion and design to include images from history, mathematics and biology.

“It’s worth mentioning, we’re not scientists,” Winteringham interjects. “But we dabble.” Their work has lead them into a wormhole of likeminded “pattern obsessives” – the world is full of them – like a neurophilosopher in California who created a film putting brainwave patterns to music. Or an architect who scans minerals and prints them onto scarves. They explore patterns in nature, and how they echo throughout our visual understanding. Our lungs are made of fractals that branch out like the roots of a tree. The cross section of cabbage is the same as our brain. Cauliflower pillows out like a cloud. “I think there’s some harmony there and a sense of balance,” Murray continues. “That opens you up to a whole other way of looking at patterns in a non-visual sense. You start thinking about your behavioural patterns, and the patterns of wider society – are they healthy patterns?” To Anna and Grace, the answer is no, not really, and that’s where Patternity finds its way in.

People have referred to what they do as a holistic movement, aimed at mindfulness and how we interact with the world around us. There is contentment to be found in the nuances of repetition in our visual landscape, but to see it, first we

must look. In their events and pattern tours, Winteringham explains they ask participants to turn off their phones. “There’s the presence side of it, which is just to actually notice the details,” she says. “It’s more like the serendipitous shadows and the textures they create. As the observer, you’re aware of those things in that moment. You recognise those things that are happening in front of you, of their existence and their beauty.” Patterns, while ubiquitous, can also be fleeting, and to recognize them before the shadows shift or the composition dissolves is what participants have responded to so positively. “People definitely get in touch after our events to say they’ve felt really joyful after the experience,” Winteringham continues. “But it’s not one of those things you do once, it’s a whole shift in your mind set and how you go about your day-to-day.”

When she explored St James’s, Murray mentions capturing the transient moments of clouds passing by reflective windows high above, or the dappled light through tree-lined pavements outside the ICA. “It felt like there was such a sense of solidity that was contrasted by a real sense of lightness.”

@patternitweet
patternity.org



IMAGES
Cleveland Court

“People are moving away from the slick, minimalist look, and towards creating real homes – real, lived-in, and full of soul.”



With the completion of a collection of new mews houses in St James’s, The Crown Estate asked three leading interior designers to each take a house as their canvas. Struck by the work of Studio Ashby, we caught up with founder Sophie Ashby on her on particular approach to the art of creating a home.

CORRESPONDENT How important is the concept of home in interior design?
SOPHIE ASHBY I think people in London are moving away from the slick, minimalist look we’ve seen everywhere in years gone by, and towards creating real homes. We want to make our designs feel real, lived-in, and full of soul. It’s an individual’s quirks and passions that’s the story.

c What were your first thoughts of the new mews houses at Cleveland Court – your potential new canvas so-to-speak?
SA I was incredibly happy. The mews houses celebrate the history and heritage of St James’s, but without losing sight of being livable, lovable modern homes. I suppose one challenge though – as it always is – was figuring out how best to use the given space.
Unusually, at the top of the house is the sitting room, opening out onto the terrace. It’s an interesting shape and was a challenge to come up with an effective furniture layout. I had the idea of making it a calm, white sanctuary, so everything is very light and ethereal.

We’ve used delicate lighting and fabrics, and overlaid cream rugs to create a relaxed haven of light.
Although working for a speculative buyer, we always work like we’re designing and creating a real home – one that looks as if the owner has just left the room.

c But is designing a show home different to designing for someone’s home?
SA I don’t differentiate that much – the way I know how to design is to imagine something as my own. So in a sense we become the owner, which in my mind means ‘the collector’, and to design with authenticity in creating a real home, even if the eventual owner isn’t around just yet.
In the case of Cleveland Court, I wanted to experience the journey personally, and make selections and decisions based on what I would want. We then married those with what would work within the architecture of the house and be representative of a St James’s lifestyle.

c Do you balance client tastes and your own aesthetic?
SA Whether it’s a villa in France or a penthouse on the South Bank, we work with clients to create something special to them. I think people know I work in such a personal way when they approach me, and that it is this hands-on way of working that makes them choose Studio Ashby!

c How do you feel about your final design? What feels particularly special?
SA Really pleased. It’s full of colour, life and personality.
I’m especially proud of the pieces we’ve had made bespoke for the project; the table in the kitchen is very special, it has a stunning black fossil marble top and a very simple black metal base. I think the whole kitchen has quite a modernist edge and the long kitchen table with the mohair bench really adds to this feel.
I’ve been happy with the amount of art we’ve worked into the project – I love Tim Hall’s series of photos taken at Lake Skadar in the Balkans, for instance, which we’ve hung as pendants in the kitchen.

c There’s a lot of great art in Cleveland Court – how important is the art? And where do you find your artists?

SA I think people live with bare walls because they are intimidated by the art market or the idea of investing in art. But really your walls should just be filled with the things you love.
Art is central to my process. I’m a young patron of the Royal Academy and always try to work emerging artists into all of my projects. People shouldn’t be afraid to buy and collect art; even framing prints or postcards and then layering them with books, plants and personal objects really brings a room together.

c What is the Studio Ashby aesthetic?
SA Studio Ashby is eclectic, layered, colourful and homely. Art is the central theme, which, when surrounded by books, beautiful objects, antique furniture and beautiful textures, comes together to create a real and authentic sense of home. I believe it’s the story behind the stuff that makes interiors interesting.

c And what’s Sophie’s story?
SA I was art-obsessed growing up and so I knew I had to do something creative. But I was also quite driven by the idea of having a business and so the thought of being a struggling artist didn’t appeal.
My parents moved a lot when I was younger and so I was aware of the property market and the process of furnishing a home. Every time we moved, it was another chance to rearrange the furniture in my bedroom, pick paint colours with my Dad, and experiment with upcycling old furniture.
I began working for other designers and then started out on my own when I was 25. I have loved running my own business – I can be creative but also take control of the projects I work on and the direction of my company. For me, interior design is the perfect combination of art, business and property.

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Top:
A collection of landscape photographs by Tim Hall of Lake Skadar, on the border between Albania and Montenegro, have been transformed into a decorative pendant installation over the kitchen's dining table

Right:
Studio Ashby's aesthetic is characterised by large framed artworks and assemblages of objets d'art, here including a large sgraffito bowl by Silvia K Ceramics from The New Craftsmen on North Row



Photo: Mariona Villarós

TEAM ST JAMES’S

Charlotte Benjamin

On a tour around their new mews houses at Cleveland Court, Residential Asset Manager Charlotte Benjamin explains why her job is a constant inspiration.

VALUATION IS AN ART NOT A SCIENCE.

People put completely different values on property because of what it's worth to them. With an office relocation it's about a purpose, whereas with residential; it's more a case of your heart ruling than your head.

IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US.

Charles Copper and I not only look after residential in St James's, but also Regent Street, Kensington Palace Gardens, Regents Park and the traditional portfolio – so Richmond, Hampton, Eltham.

TRENDS MAKE RESIDENTIAL COMPLICATED.

It's difficult because it's normally two or three years between design and completion and fashions can change.

A neutral palette and high quality materials go some way, but adding in furniture and art can change a feel easily too.

WE ONLY GAVE THE DESIGNERS A SHORT TIME FRAME.

Around 12 weeks, for the design and installation of the three mews houses at Cleveland Court. Using a different designer for each mews has given them a point of difference, it was interesting to see how each worked and how each mews reflects their individual styles.

WE WENT ON A TRIP TO PICK THE STONE.

We have Volakas and Striato Olimpico stones from Greece, and Carrara marble from Italy. We went to pick out the actual stone because of its natural variation and to ensure the quality. It sounds more glamorous than it was – it was very long days and it snowed!

SURVEYING IS THE FAMILY BUSINESS.

My dad's a surveyor, my sister's a surveyor, my godfather's a surveyor. I really enjoy the tangible side of our job, it's great to be able to help shape and change London.

I WALK THROUGH ST JAMES’S EVERY DAY.

I arrive into Vauxhall, put the radio on and walk – it's a good way to start the day. And it's handy; as I pass our properties I think oh! I need to do this or that.

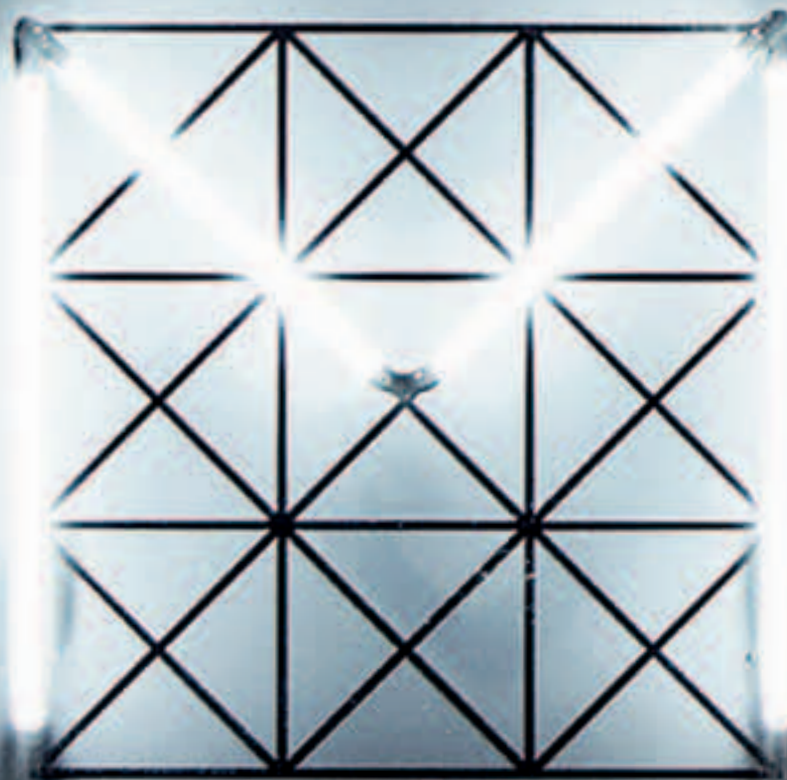
THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE THAT CARE ABOUT ST JAMES’S.

It really feels like a community. And I love that you have that culture here. I recently heard about the little square behind Berry Bros. where the last duel took place. It's like stepping into another world. But it also moves with the times – there's some great work going on in St James's.

OUR HOUSE NEEDS SO MUCH WORK.

We just bought our first house. It had not been touched for 20 years and so it's a complete refurbishment job – most of our weekends are spent doing DIY, but I love it! I also enjoy visiting antiques markets. Kempton racecourse hosts one every second and last Tuesday of the month. It opens at 6.30am, which means you can be in and out before work. Working with people like Sophie from Studio Ashby also gives me lots of great ideas for my house, another reason why I love this job!

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