

Presented with a lofty apartment within a landmark London building, renowned New York designer Kelly Behun translates The Whiteley's fashionable history and early opulence for a modern world. *Photographed by Paul Raeside*





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In the dining and sitting areas of this London apartment, vessels (on dining table) by Humberto and Fernando Campana, and Gaetano Pesce; Lanterna ceiling lamps by Dimore Studio from The Invisible Collection; Lek armchairs by Christophe Delcourt for Collection Particulière from The Future Perfect; custom sofa and mosaic table by Kelly Behun Studio; Touch trays from SCP; Moroccan rug from Soufiane Zarib. Obviously commissioned artwork by William Finlayson.

Being invited to design a light-filled show apartment in [The Whiteley](#) “felt like the stars had aligned”, enthuses stellar New York-based interior designer [Kelly Behun](#). “When I was sent the details of the building and the team behind it, I was hooked. The volume of space, the abundance of natural light, the apartment sitting behind the original façade complete with heritage-style windows. It was impossible not to do it,” Behun says of her London debut.



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Kelly Behun in the living area beside a commissioned artwork by Kathleen Mullaniff.

The billion-dollar residential, retail and hospitality project in the heart of London’s Bayswater has an all-star cast involved. Global architecture studio [Foster + Partners](#) reimagined the striking building that was formerly known as Whiteleys—a department store turned shopping centre—with luxurious private residences as well as a hotel, spa and serviced apartments overseen by the wellness-focused Six Senses group. “I love working in buildings that were once something else and are now being reborn in a fresh, modern way,” shares Behun.



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In the living area, Minitore armchairs by Pierre Augustin Rose from The Invisible Collection; Repose sofa by Adam Court; custom coffee tables by Marbera and Kelly Behun Studio; side table (foreground) from Galerie Anne Jacquemin Sablon; bronze sculpture by Voukenas Petrides from Gallery Fumi; Sunray Gold rug by Mary Katrantzou from The Rug Company; commissioned Torchiere wall sconces by Chris Wolston.

While Behun says her design process is usually “highly personal, echoing a very intimate relationship with the client,” here she had the freedom “to fantasise” about who might live in the palatial loft-style open-plan apartment she was assigned by development manager Finchatton and joint venture investment partners MARK and Hong Kong-based C C Land. “Although I had in my mind an imaginary family with two teenagers, ultimately, if I’m going to be candid, I started to design it a little bit for myself,” Behun reveals. “If you’re trying to appeal to everyone, you end up charming no one. I would much rather go into a space with a highly curated personality, even if it’s not my own, because I can appreciate the effort that has gone into it and it helps me to imagine what might be possible.”





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In the dining area, custom dining table by Benoit Viaene; Paolo dining chairs by Studio Van den Akker upholstered in Pierre Frey Vitali Midas fabric; custom console by Kelly Behun Studio; custom tapestry designed by Kelly Behun Studio, painted by Sarah Oliphant.

This meant bringing a sophisticated yet still convivial point of view into the three-bedroom apartment, which effortlessly flows from the evocative entry and study (with richly textured lime paint on the walls) through to the kitchen-living-dining areas and then on to the generously proportioned bedrooms, each one executed in a different style. And all this while embracing magnificent four-metre-high ceilings and windows. Behun connected with the kitchen's placement at the heart of the apartment's expansive living space—"it addresses the way people are living today", she says. "There's a harmony... even if people tend to gravitate towards the kitchen, there is also a casual dining space where you can gather around the table, whether you're eating or at your laptop, taking a phone call or reading the newspaper. You feel completely immersed in it."



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In the foyer, After Postmodern Rope chair by Tom Dixon; candelabra by Lynn Chadwick from Willer Gallery; antique Chinese Deco rug; vintage stained-glass ceiling lamp from Ground One Six; Echelon chandelier from YLighting; Gem 20 artwork (top) and Gem 21 artwork by Makiko Harris.

Drawing on The Whiteley's stone's-throw proximity to Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens (the largest green space in inner-London), Behun conjured a seductive palette of hues inspired by the abundance of nature nearby, traversing gentle sunrise shades of dusky rose, lavender and pale blue through to rustic ambers, golds, earthy browns and leafy greens. "I wanted these interiors to feel serene—a respite from the 24/7

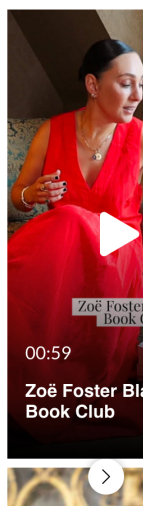
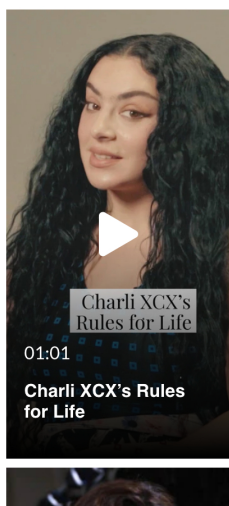
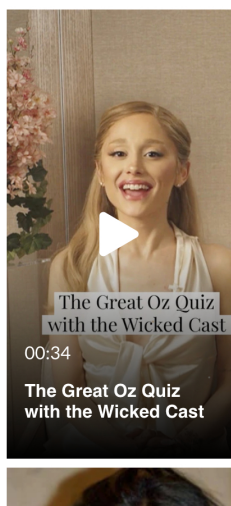
hubbub outside—which is so important when living within a busy urban landscape,” Behun explains.

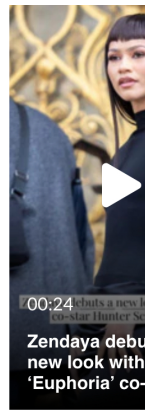
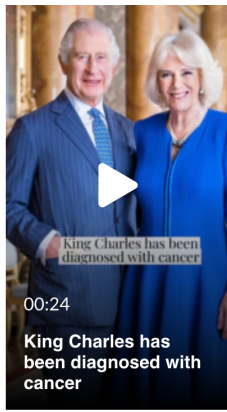
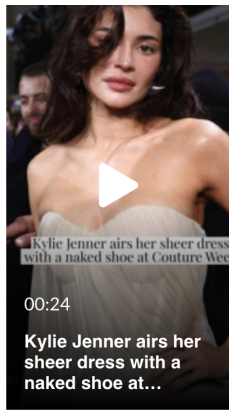
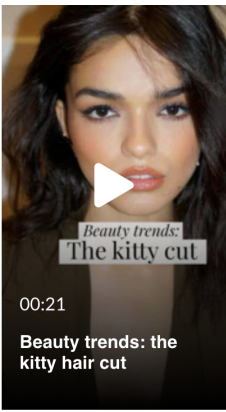


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In the study, Khalil Modern Classic desk from Kathy Kuo Home; After Postmodern Rope chair by Tom Dixon; custom pouf by Kelly Behun Studio upholstered in Kravet Tigers Eye fabric; Tessa Wolfe Murray vase; vintage stained-glass lamp from Ground One Six; antique Chinese rug; ZA artwork by Ramón Enrich.

The colour scheme resonated perfectly with the discerning mélange of bouclé, mohair and cotton velvet the designer chose for upholstering the cossetting sofas, armchairs and headboards. In turn, their curvaceousness works with the intricately sculpted feel of the chiselled-top walnut dining table by Belgian artist Benoit Viaene and the pair of hand-wrought torchiere bronze wall sconces by American artist Chris Wolston.

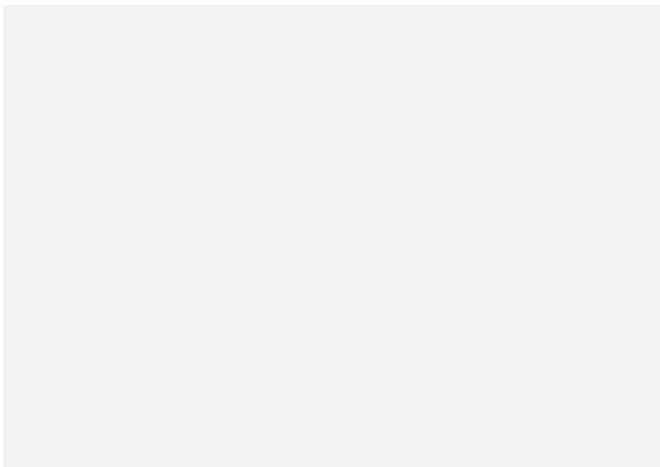




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In the kitchen, island and cabinetry by B&B Italia; hand-carved stools from Bali; vase from Pottery Barn; Leaf bowl (by sink) by Kelly Behun for L'Objet; timber floor from Havwoods; custom wicker pendant lights by Kelly Behun Studio.

Art, always playing a vital role in Behun's desire "to evoke an emotional connection to a space", comes to the fore in the Donald Judd-inspired wall-hung console in the dining room. It's also present in the deconstructed headboard and side table screen installation in the main bedroom, informed by the luminous edge paintings of the late Italian artist Ettore Spalletti, and the two magnificent works of art anchoring both ends of the main living space.

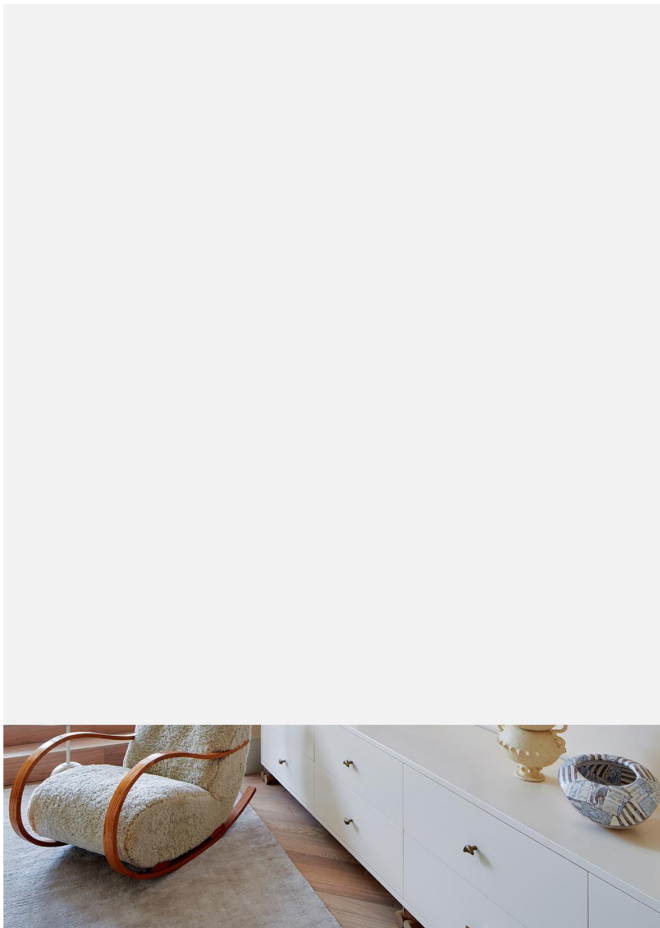




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In the main bedroom, custom upholstered bed frame, bedhead, oak nightstands, gold-leaf panels and silk pendant light by Kelly Behun Studio; vase (on nightstand, right) from Contemporary Ceramics; Willow throw pillow (centre) from Kevin O'Brien Studio; silk rug from The Rug Company; bronze and alabaster wall sconces from Allied Maker.

One is by local London painter Kathleen Mullaniff—"commissioned to capture the spirit of an English garden"—and the other, a large contemporary mural hung like a tapestry, was made by Brooklyn-based scenic backdrop painter Sarah Oliphant (who has worked with the likes of Annie Leibovitz and Steven Meisel) in collaboration with Behun's studio. "Having a mural at that scale acts almost like a window into that pastoral view. It provides a moment of calm and quiet, which just makes you feel very happy," Behun says. "I curated the artworks to tell a story that references the unique mix of old and new, traditional and contemporary, the spirit of London as an international hub and The Whiteley's rich history being refashioned for a modern world."





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In another view of the main bedroom, sheepskin rocking chair from Studio Designboard; custom cabinetry by Kelly Behun Studio; Lato LN8 side table by &Tradition, enquiries to Cult; vase from Les Collection; vessel from Contemporary Ceramics; In the Absence of Flesh artwork and The Exterior Beam artwork by Suzi Morris.

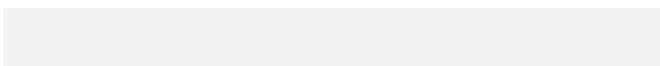
“The way I bring variety to a space is through layering and texture,” says the designer who cut her teeth working for hotelier Ian Schrager before founding her eponymous studio. This training appears in the most unexpected details—the watery pools of pattern swirling across the marble coffee tabletops, the quirky curve of a chair leg, the ‘earring’ that hangs from a side table’s leg (an homage to Alexander Calder’s famous mobiles), fluted millwork columns, recalibrated rugs by fashion designer Mary Katrantzou, and the wallpaper adorning the main bedroom, which Behun created with New York designers Calico Wallpaper and based on childhood memories of being in the snow.

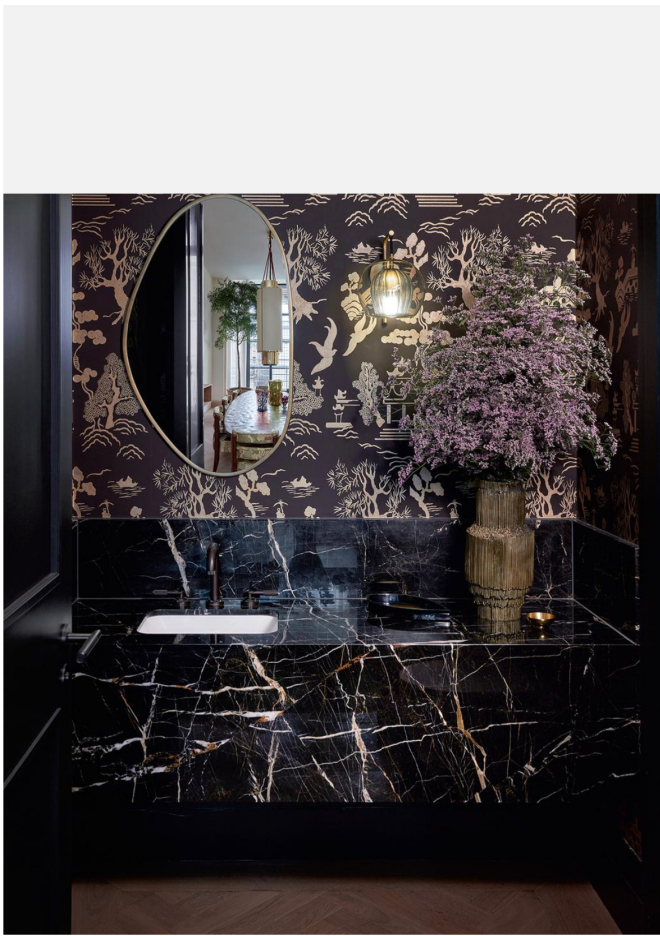


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In a guest bedroom, Little Petra chair by &Tradition, enquiries to Cult; Memory No. 1 side table by Jie Wu from Gallery Fumi; Plant Pod 2 planter by James Shaw from Side Gallery; Sylvan wallpaper by Kelly Behun for Calico Wallpaper; custom rug by Kelly Behun for The Rug Company.

“You’re touching, sitting on, eating from and illuminated by all these elements in a very intimate way so they should feel welcoming and organic, because so much of our lives are spent in our homes and so many of our memories are shaped there,” she muses. “Home should feel safe but invigorating, and most of all, life-affirming.”





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In the powder room, vanity in Noir Saint Laurent marble; mirror from Kathy Kuo Home; Paglia vase from Alexander Lamont; Twigs Chinoiserie wallpaper by John Rosselli & Associates; wall sconce from Marc Wood Studio.





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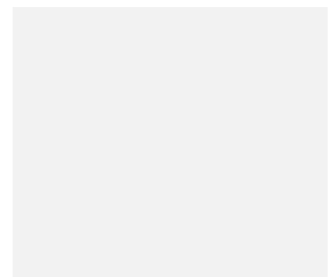
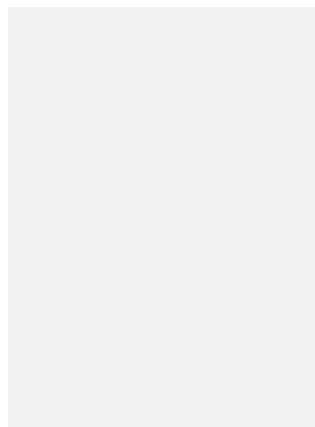
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