

INTERIOR TALENT: WHERE IT'S AT

Our annual round-up of who's hot in the world of Irish interiors right now. Photography by **Tony Gavin**

KAREN MORGAN CERAMICS

In college, ceramicist Karen Morgan, below, won the Habitat House and Home Student Designer of the Year Award for her beautiful, poetic take on the humble pestle and mortar. Since graduating, two years ago, Karen has picked up a clutch of accolades for her fluid, kinetic, porcelain pieces. Morgan specialises in creating



everyday household objects which, in her hands, turn into decorative pieces of art. 'I like to create functional pieces that have a sculptural twist,' she explains. 'Bringing functionality into forms that, when people first look at them, they might not necessarily think that they are functional.'

Her designs share a clean simplicity of form. 'I don't know if it's from being by the river here [in Thomastown, Co Kilkenny], but

there is quite a flow in the forms. I try to capture a movement and an energy, something that may have been there in a piece when I was initially making it, that I try to retain once it has been fired.'

Her collection of kitchenware includes vases, serving dishes and bowls, jugs and teapots. Karen has been selected for *Breaking Out*, a collection of 30 new designers who together showcase a new generation of master craftsmen. *Breaking Out* has been chosen, curated by and is at the National Craft Gallery in Kilkenny. See www.colleegallery.ie. To see Morgan's work, www.karenmorganceramics.com

NEVILLE KNOTT

You may recognise him from *Showhouse* on RTE, or as the face of Crown Paints, for which he has designed a colour range. The accepted authority of Neville Knott, below, on all things interiors is fast making him a household name. When not overhauling the houses of the great and the good — he's well-known for his work on castles and stately homes — he's busy fostering the country's hot new design talent in his role as course head of interior design in DIT.

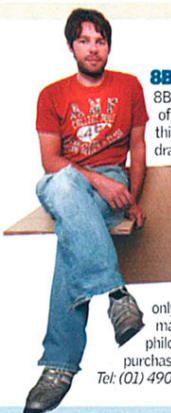
Much more than just a room stylist — 'It's kind of a given that the decor is something you have the ability to do' — Neville's architectural approach brings him right down to the fundamentals of a space, where he uses interior structures to transform a room. Creating a form or structure for a given area 'plays with light and defines a space. It keeps it open. It manipulates a space,' he says. He prides himself on working up an intelligent and original design for each project, one that communicates with the surroundings of a building or its geographical setting. For enquires, contact neville.knott@dit.ie



8BY4 FURNITURE

8BY4 was born when two hot young architects created some key pieces of design-led, yet affordable furniture for their own office space. To keep things simple, Eamon Peregrine, left, and Tom Maher used their skill as draughtsmen to work up single pieces cut from one piece of 8x4 material which interlock to create a sturdy, dramatic piece of furniture. The result confers on the owner a sculptural, directional aesthetic for a pretty low price. Fashioned originally in high-quality birch plywood, these pieces slot together like a 3-D jigsaw puzzle without glue, or screws. The bookcase, and chair (which can also double as a side table) are also available in Perspex or stainless steel. This range has only just been launched and, to cut out retailers' mark ups and maintain the pared-down philosophy behind the product, it can only be purchased directly from the designers.

Tel: (01) 490-6109 or (01) 492-4708. Right, bookcase, €575.



STERRIN O'SHEA

'I think it's wrong, in architecture, to have a signature look,' says Sterrin O'Shea, below, one of the hottest young prospects in the interiors industry. Having honed her skills with top architectural firms in Dublin and Sydney, she now practices under her own name, specialising in dynamic and lively designs for domestic spaces. One of her first projects was highly commended in the OPUS awards, and another was given special recognition by the judges at the Royal Institute of Architects Awards. O'Shea likes especially to work on one-off houses, as well as to create original, innovative interventions to existing structures. 'I enjoy the engagement with the client, and seeing how they live and how the building you are creating will change their quality of life,' she says. She prides herself on developing a bespoke aesthetic around the needs of her clients, rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all look. But in the interior of her spaces, she allows glimpses of her own taste and character. The rooms she creates are often 'uncluttered, clean and rationalised'. See www.sosa.ie



MARK KEAVENEY

Undoubtedly the most talked about new landmark on the Dublin design scene right now, the new Peter Mark salon on South William Street has dared to pull off something few others would have the panache to. It's a riot of colours that combine to create a truly original space, with a retro, Biba-esque, Sixties vibe. Even the man overseeing the design, head honcho Mark Keaveney, left, admits:

'If these colours were put together on a design table you would not think they would work well together.' Sometimes, it takes a bit of maverick nerve to pull off something truly remarkable, and that is certainly what they have achieved in the new premises. The salon, which represents a new concept for Peter Mark, and includes a tailored menu of services, is just one aspect of the brand new concept, which includes a college. It is to be a new centre of excellence in the industry and is open to already qualified Peter Mark staff who want to further their training: the hairdressing equivalent of a post-graduate college. Designed by New Yorker Garry Cohn who worked very closely with Mark, the priority was to create something really different, that optimised the existing space, revolutionising it into something unique within Ireland. Their brief to the designer? 'We gave him complete licence,' says Mark with a chuckle. See www.petermark.com

