

how to spend it

Wonder walls

Hand-drawn wallpaper designs that push style boundaries



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Wallpaper is a little like perfume. There are hundreds of sensory possibilities out there: some with immediate impact that fades too soon, some too overpowering for daily consumption, some so light they hardly make waves at all. But finding the perfect one for you, one that you can live with 24/7 for a number of years, can prove a problem that is anything but insignificant.

Kate Usher, creator of highly original, detailed, graphic and colour-loaded wallpapers, has a solution in the form of a new bespoke wallpaper service (from £550). Clients first have a one-on-one with her to talk through influences and inspirations. Then the designer – who trained at the Cleveland College of Art & Design, and consults for style forecasters such as Trend Bible, as well as the International Colour Authority (yes, such things exist) – puts together a mood board of chosen themes and hues, before finalising a hand-drawn design for approval, all within the space of three to four weeks. The final commission can be worked up in a number of finishes, from matte or pearlescent FSA-approved papers to Swarovski-crystal-sprinkled offerings, and is then digitally printed.

Despite being a committed colourist, and having designed the quirkiest of papers for her own off-the-peg collection (including a brilliantly out-there meerkat design for children's rooms), Usher's bespoke commissions vary hugely. Her work can include elements of illustration, digital design (example in second picture), watercolour and collage. A recent commission for a boutique bakery in Berlin featured hand-drawn macarons on a white background, and a new paper for a private client's bedroom included a subtle off-white design featuring grey roses with a hint of electric pink (first picture).

“Offering a bespoke design service is an exciting move for me,” says Kate. “Having the opportunity to work with clients on a one-to-one basis to produce unique wallpapers not only gives me great customer insight, but also gives me the opportunity to push design boundaries, which I love to do.”