

JET MCQUEEN
INTERIOR DESIGN

Preference Battle

Fighting our own aesthetic tendencies

The battle

My most recent projects have been fraught with clients who are in an epic battle struggling against their own preferences.

Strangely, it's not that uncommon to find people who want to work against their natural tendencies in life or at home.



I am very familiar with this point of view as I grew up with one such individual.

My brother is today an electrical engineer. In University he much preferred the subjects which would have led him towards a career specialising in mechanical engineering...however he decided on taking a path towards electrical engineering instead. I asked him once; why would you do that? Why would you deny yourself something you are good at and enjoy doing, over something that feels like a struggle? He replied that although it would have been gratifying and easy to lean towards mechanical, it wouldn't have challenged him on a daily basis in the same way electrical could. I have thought about this statement many times over the several years that have passed.

Although I understand the sense of achievement felt when you conquer something you've struggled at...When it applies to home it can be perplexing to understand why people would want to challenge themselves in such an uncomfortable way?



Recently a client called, and she seemed desperate for help. She wanted a new paint palette to work within her newly purchased home. She has lived in 6 different houses and has used the same palette in every single home. She only decided to give me a call when she'd already bought the same paint hues (once again) and couldn't bring herself to put the colours on the wall. While I don't think there is a problem with reusing the colours you like to surround yourself with, I understood from listening to her that she felt it was a "cop-out" to use these colours yet again. She felt that looking at them (however nice they were) would constantly remind her that she wasn't daring enough to pick something new.



She felt it made her boring, lacking in vision and creativity. She had made the selection of paint an assessment of her character and a failure of abilities; for me this issue was a much easier solve without any personal attributes associated with the problem. She isn't "an old dog who can't learn new tricks"; Her problem was that she liked the atmosphere these colours created, and although she wanted something new, she was afraid other hues wouldn't offer her a similar feeling environment. Because of this she always defaulted to what she knew; the safe bet. In doing so she was beating herself up and not enjoying the colours she was meant to .



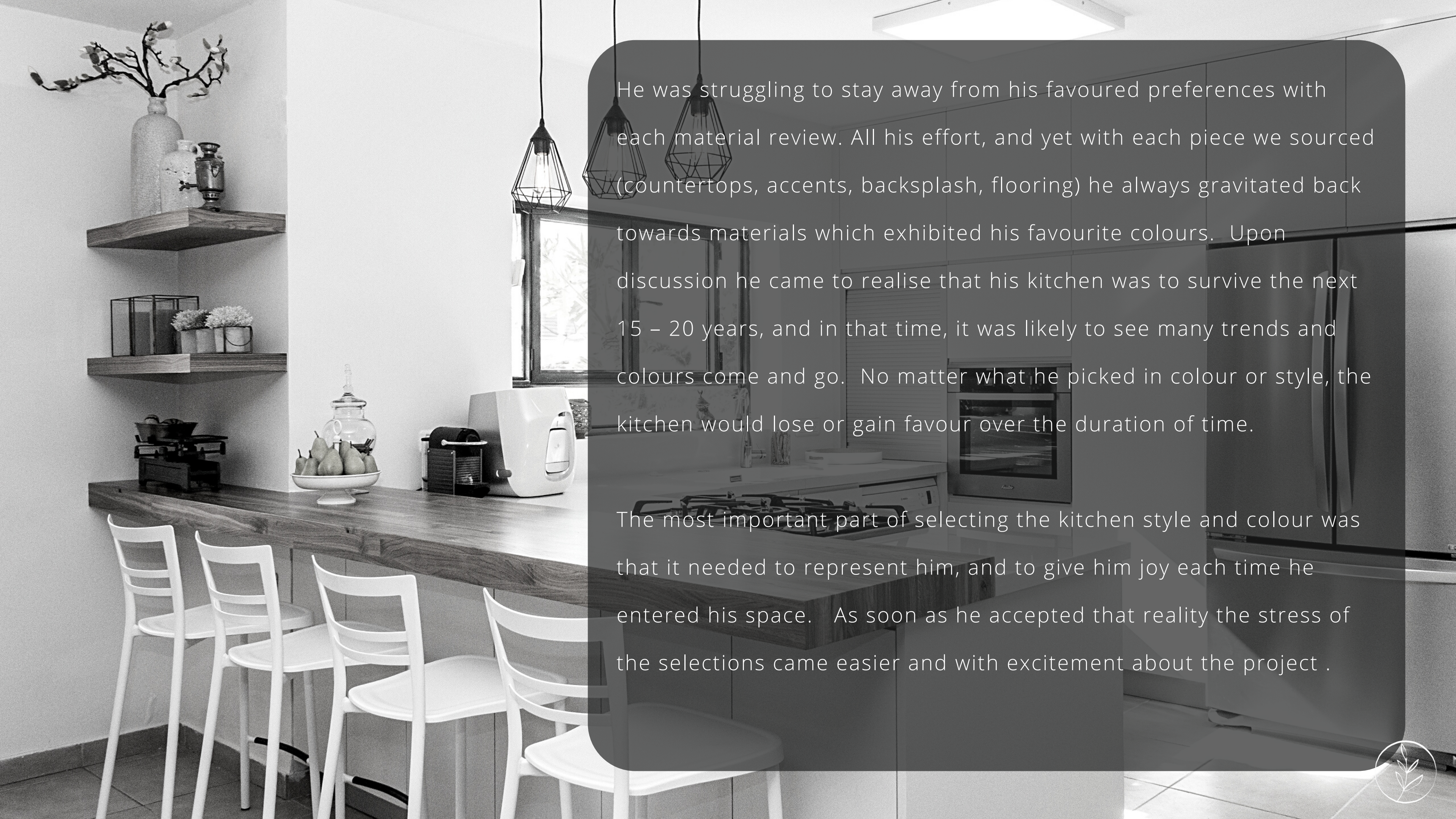
In another recent scenario, I have a client who was trying to push against the force of being trend-led. Not wanting to be a sheep in the heard, he wanted something different and unique for his kitchen with a bespoke touch. His brief was for the unexpected, but also classic with an edgy twist. He was worried selecting something that fell on trend would go out of style not long after installation and then the result would be outdated and a wasted investment.





With classic style cupboards...
this isn't so hard to deliver
upon except that his favourite
colours just happen to be very
“on trend” for kitchens. Black,
Cream, Navy Blue & Grey





He was struggling to stay away from his favoured preferences with each material review. All his effort, and yet with each piece we sourced (countertops, accents, backsplash, flooring) he always gravitated back towards materials which exhibited his favourite colours. Upon discussion he came to realise that his kitchen was to survive the next 15 – 20 years, and in that time, it was likely to see many trends and colours come and go. No matter what he picked in colour or style, the kitchen would lose or gain favour over the duration of time.

The most important part of selecting the kitchen style and colour was that it needed to represent him, and to give him joy each time he entered his space. As soon as he accepted that reality the stress of the selections came easier and with excitement about the project .



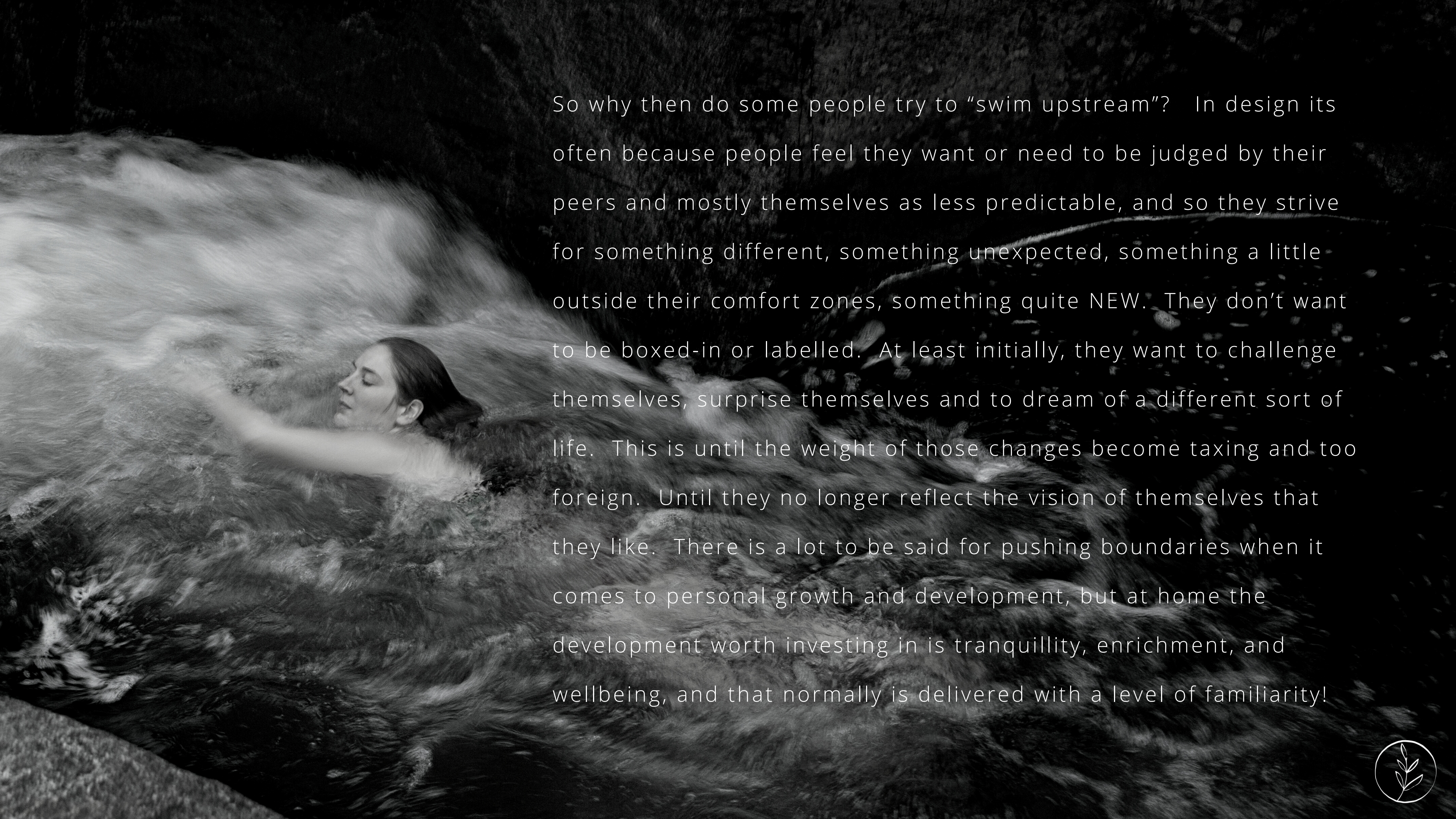
Trendy Schmends

Let's be honest; It's not that unique to want to be unique, but it is a strange human condition to fight against the predispositions that bring us personal contentment even when they are commonly held or popular. Our homes are not for magazines or for our friends. They are for us and our immediate family unit. "Trends schmends", I recommend you don't follow them unless they are what you wanted in the first place. And if they are, or if they are not in favour today, just stick to what you love, and you can't go wrong. It doesn't matter if orange is out today, or next year...If you love orange, you must go for orange at any time!



My Dad was the first to share with me the saying that “if you work at something you love, you’ll never work a day in your life”. I subscribe to this mentality whole heartedly. I subscribe to this saying in every part of life - both in work and personal. This approach is true for your career, environment, and home. It is wellbeing at its core. If you build a nest around yourself that is brimming with your personal taste, you will never feel out of place in your home. You will never struggle against yourself or deny yourself the adornments that are a part of who you are.





So why then do some people try to “swim upstream”? In design its often because people feel they want or need to be judged by their peers and mostly themselves as less predictable, and so they strive for something different, something unexpected, something a little outside their comfort zones, something quite NEW. They don’t want to be boxed-in or labelled. At least initially, they want to challenge themselves, surprise themselves and to dream of a different sort of life. This is until the weight of those changes become taxing and too foreign. Until they no longer reflect the vision of themselves that they like. There is a lot to be said for pushing boundaries when it comes to personal growth and development, but at home the development worth investing in is tranquillity, enrichment, and wellbeing, and that normally is delivered with a level of familiarity!



I believe that if you've come to a point in your life where you can easily recognize the aesthetic that you gravitate towards, you have already arrived at some level of life achievement and personal awareness whether you know how to execute that aesthetic or not. While repeating the same exact thing you have had in the past is not a recipe I'd necessarily subscribe to per se, I do believe that there is a reason why we navigate towards certain aesthetics and that's not something to fight against.

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To deny ourselves comforting pleasures at home is counterproductive to relaxation and personal happiness. Whether it is colour on the walls, the need for storage, or the shape of your sofa...what works for you will never be wrong. In this vein the assistance of an Interior Designer isn't meant to push you into something that is a misrepresentation of who you are, and what you like.

A designer is meant to uncover you and improve upon the preferences that represent how you like to surround yourself.





There are enough struggles in life without creating your own. Let life's challenges find you of their own accord, and in the meantime wait for them as you relax in your feather-made nest. (Whether your preferred feathers are white, beige or polka dotted, pheasant, cockatoo or goose).





Need some help with
your home?

Get in Touch!

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