
The Business Of The Creative

Ever wanted to be an interior designer? The Collective talks to Kate Kingston, owner of interior design firm, Kingston Shaw Interior Design, and specialist up market estate agency, Kingston Shaw Residential.

With offices all over the world, including Dubai and London, Kate talks us through the difficulties of entrepreneurialism and unveils the best way to make an impression in the creative industry. Forget mixing business with pleasure, this is all about business and creativity.



Style Collective —Interview

Last year you were named 'Entrepreneur of the Year' by The Liverpool Post, how did that feel?

Slightly overwhelming! There were so many incredible candidates. It was amazing just to be nominated and unbelievable to actually win. Winning has really raised my profile so I am very happy all round.

Why did you decided to study in London?

It was the only city in which to study interior design! We are talking of a time when interior design wasn't a university course - my options were limited.

You have worked and lived in some very glamorous locations, what made you want to set up an office in Merseyside?

I am originally from Wirral and I had come back up to visit my Mum for a few weeks. I hadn't been home for a while and I was so blown away by the changes that had happened up here! I just felt it was a really great place to live and set up a business.

Tell us more about Kingston Shaw Residential.

Kingston Shaw Residential is an estate agency that is very different from your usual estate agencies. We work exclusively in-house with developers selling new builds - we will work in one location with one developer at one time. We never have two projects in the same area, which means we can focus specifically upon marketing and quality management.

You seem to have a creative and business brain! How important is it to have both when trying to break into the creative industry?

It is not important, it is imperative. It is a very tough, tough industry to break. Any industry where you're creative and you have to charge for your time has a very fine line. You can be the most creative person in the world but you can't make a business out of it unless you have

a smart head or smart people around you. You have to be commercially aware. At the end of the day, creativity aside, you have a service that you're providing for people and you need to be able to charge appropriately. You really have to zone in on your business skills to ensure you succeed.

When designing in different countries is it important to capture their individual cultures or is good design universal?

Good design is universal but it is more important to capture what the client wants - it is almost irrelevant where the project is (unless of course you're in a riad in Morocco and the design brief is to keep in with the cultural heritage). It is really down to the client and what they want for their project and being able to deliver that.

Did you design your own office and if so what kind of atmosphere did you aim to create?

All our offices are work offices so they are not at all glamorous - they are very messy and certainly not designed! We rarely have clients over as we usually go and visit them on their premises. There have been odd occasions when a client has turned up at our office and they're always surprised at how incredibly bland it is! The only thing we do insist upon is a bright light as it helps with our design. Other than that, the offices resemble libraries, with lots of books and samples, large tables so that we can spread everything out on and a ridiculous amount of magazines and papers. It gets messy!

Aesthetically, where would you most like to live in the world and why?

If I could live anywhere in the world for the rest of my life I would choose Paris. I first went when I was 18 and it stole my heart, it has everything to offer.