



Portrait: Supplied.

CHANTAL GAIQUI

As TOA Architects new head of interiors, Chantal Gaiqui has a passion for creating innovative and engaging spatial design solutions, connecting people to the land and the land to the people: piki-a-rangi, para-a-nuku.

What led you into the world of architecture and design?

Prior to settling on interior design, I started out as a performance pianist, studying BMus in Performance at Auckland Uni. I was also part-time modelling and acting at the time, and I took a few years out to focus on that fully. I then moved from music to study architecture – I loved the broad range and variety of skills, considerations and opportunities that designing spaces and places brought together. Music is so like architecture but expressed in a visual/spatial language as opposed to sound. The maths, patterns, harmonies, counterpoints, rhythms, proportions, ratios, colour, texture, timbre, light... these are all part of the fabric of both worlds. I've been involved in commercial interior projects from my start in architecture and this is where my passion lies.

Tell us about the use of colour in your work.

The senses and how we experience space is really important to me and colour plays a big part in that. Colour (or lack of) can heighten or reduce certain feelings and emotions, invoke memories, reference other things, indicate a mode or function, speak of a community, culture or brand – it's incredibly powerful. Colour reflects or works in with the context of the space, place or the people in it. I often use colours of the whenua in which the interior sits and its surroundings, so natural hues, layered, saturated, up or down. Colours that enhance what is inherent in the project, conceptually and physically.

What influences your work?

Everything and anything influences me, from film to fashion, travel, fabric and music, to the anime my son is watching at the moment. I love the patterns, textures and colours found in rocks, stone and the earth, I have a slight obsession photographing our beautiful coastline rocks using a macro lens. I love watching the latest runway shows and being drawn into the world the designer of each show creates. I love Sabine Marcellis' work with pure forms, glass and resin, textures and graduating colour.

What was the thinking behind your collab?

The collab brings together Aotearoa (Maungawhau Mount Eden and coastal rocks), Mauritius (Chameral and the seven colours of the earth) and Mallorca (Valdemossa and the music Chopin created there). I love watching the grasses on Maungawhau change through the seasons, listening to the wind through the grass and the natural rhythms of the land, soaking up the volcanic colours and hues. The collab also references the tones and variances in pigmentation within our coastal rocks. My father was from Mauritius; we went to Chameral together; a geological formation in the Riviere Noir with sand dunes called the seven colours of the earth where weathered layers of basalt, iron oxides and aluminium hydroxides have settled. From red to brown and blue to violet, the particles naturally repel each other and are swirled by the rain. I visited the beautiful village of Valdemossa in Spain where Chopin wrote some of my favourite music – 24 preludes, including the Raindrop Prelude Op28. No.15. I associate every key in music with a colour – with this piece it is Resene Mahogany. The beautiful stone that covered every street in Valdemossa was a blush tone. Walls were hand detailed, with small stones pressed into the blush-toned mortar punctuated by larger ones creating beautiful artworks. The tones of the tiled flooring of the monastery where Chopin lived were coral, peach and blush. His music could be heard playing throughout the monastery – it was a complete sensory delight.

Tell us about your colour choices.

The colour collab was so much fun. Thomas and I wanted to create something that expressed a sensory moment in time, with movement. Something that felt magical and otherworldly, rich in texture and colour saturated. With the backdrop of local rocks, the balls (raindrops or molecules of earth pigment) in Resene Soothe, Resene Harvest Gold, Resene Whiskey Sour and Resene Coral Tree, all work in a harmonious counterpoint. 🍷



THIS PAGE
Resene Harvest Gold, Resene Soothe, Resene Whiskey Sour and Resene Coral Tree. Art direction and Photography by Thomas Cannings.