

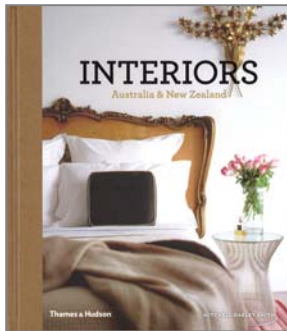


INTERIORS

Australia & New Zealand

Thames & Hudson

MITCHELL OAKLEY SMITH



RLD

RUTH LEVINE & ANDREA D'CRUZ
SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

RLD is a team of innovative and experienced interior designers led by Ruth Levine and Andrea D'Cruz. Levine established her practice in 1987 and D'Cruz began her career in 1994 with large commercial firms. Levine and D'Cruz began working together in 2001 and in 2005 formed their partnership RLD. The services offered include interior architectural planning, construction documentation, style and project marketing advice for single and multi-residential, commercial and hotel projects.

Levine believes the biggest change within the Australian design industry over the last few decades is the fact that interior design has become a recognised and respected trade, where in the past, little distinction existed between construction and decoration. She attributes this in part to the work of the irreverent and greatly respected Australian designer Marion Hall Best, known as one of Australia's most influential 20th-century interior designers.

Levine and D'Cruz describe their aesthetic as warm, but note functionalism is an important element in their work. According to the designers, they are not influenced by trends or specific design genres, but embark on a journey with each of their clients so as to learn about their personality, family and how they use their home. A process whereby they abstract information and distill it within their design.

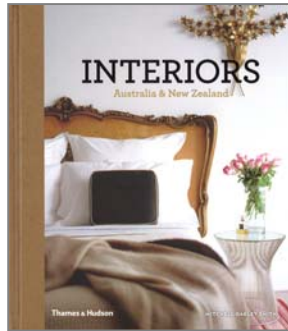
In Levine's opinion, Australians began to take notice of design with the rise of five-star hotels in the 1990s and the luxury experience they offered. Instead of homes merely being a space to live in, people now wanted to feel relaxed, pampered and revived when they were there. Interior design boomed as a result - the industry developed with many practices beginning during this period - and the taste of clients and designers alike became more sophisticated. This rise in the Australian design industry parallels that of the internet, which provided access to designers, products and information previously unattainable.

Since that time, the most significant shift in the industry is that people are becoming less conscious of trends and do not feel they must follow one particular style in order to be in vogue. In reaction to trends - and perhaps as a result of the cyclic nature of fashion, which re-uses and revisits past ideas on an increasingly sped-up basis - people are comfortable with fusing their favourite styles with pieces they already own. It is a bowerbird approach mirrored in the work of RLD. The practice's portfolio is as varied as its clients.

Inspired by styles as vast as Minimalism, tribal art and Chinoiserie, Levine and D'Cruz strive to find good design that is relevant to a particular client and their space, no matter the era or culture. RLD sources products from a range of local and international suppliers. In particular, Dedece, Space Furniture, Famuli Furniture, Corporate Culture and Poliform for their European signature brands. Also, Artduo (artwork consultants), for the principal consultants' abilities to source works from local and upcoming artists. RLD uses an array of local suppliers within the Paddington, Surry Hills, Alexandria and Waterloo areas of Sydney. Levine and D'Cruz also cite their trusted local craftspeople and trades people who work on their bespoke pieces (usually a large component of RLD's design solutions).

Levine and D'Cruz do not promote clutter for the sake of 'filling' or 'completing' a room. For a space to breathe, they explain, it must utilise the natural light inherent in the Australian environment, which is a defining element of local design. The products within a space should not be disposable, but rather embody quality texture, line, tone and construction - signs, they say, of good design. The directors describe their role as magicians: discovering what it is a client wants and needs when they do not possess the design language to articulate it.





RESIDENCE Refurbishment of a 1980s-built, high-rise, whole-floor apartment with three bedrooms.
LOCATION Sydney CBD, New South Wales.
CLIENT Travelling, semi-retired couple.
BRIEF The clients, who divide their time between Brisbane and Sydney, wanted an elegant, charismatic, modern and functional space, using the Art Deco style as a base.



PREVIOUS PAGE The vivid red of a Ball Italia Maschio side chair adds colour to the crisp, white-walled living room. **THIS PAGE** The Duane Fogwell artwork is the perfect addition to the living room.
OPPOSITE PAGE Ball Italia Maschio armchairs mirror the neutral tones of the Pella Picasso paint and deep-hued wall.

RESIDENCE 2008-built, penthouse apartment with four bedrooms.
LOCATION Brisbane CBD, Queensland.
CLIENT Family with children aged from two to 17 at the time of design.
ARCHITECT Cox Rayner of Cox Architecture.
BRIEF The family held great admiration for the simplicity and modernity of 1950s design, which formed their inspiration for the penthouse. They RLD to create a space that was child-friendly, and that the pieces within it durable. They also wanted seamless integration of practicalities, such as storage, televisions and hi-fi equipment.

THIS PAGE Ball Italia side chairs are backlit by the Brisbane sunset.

