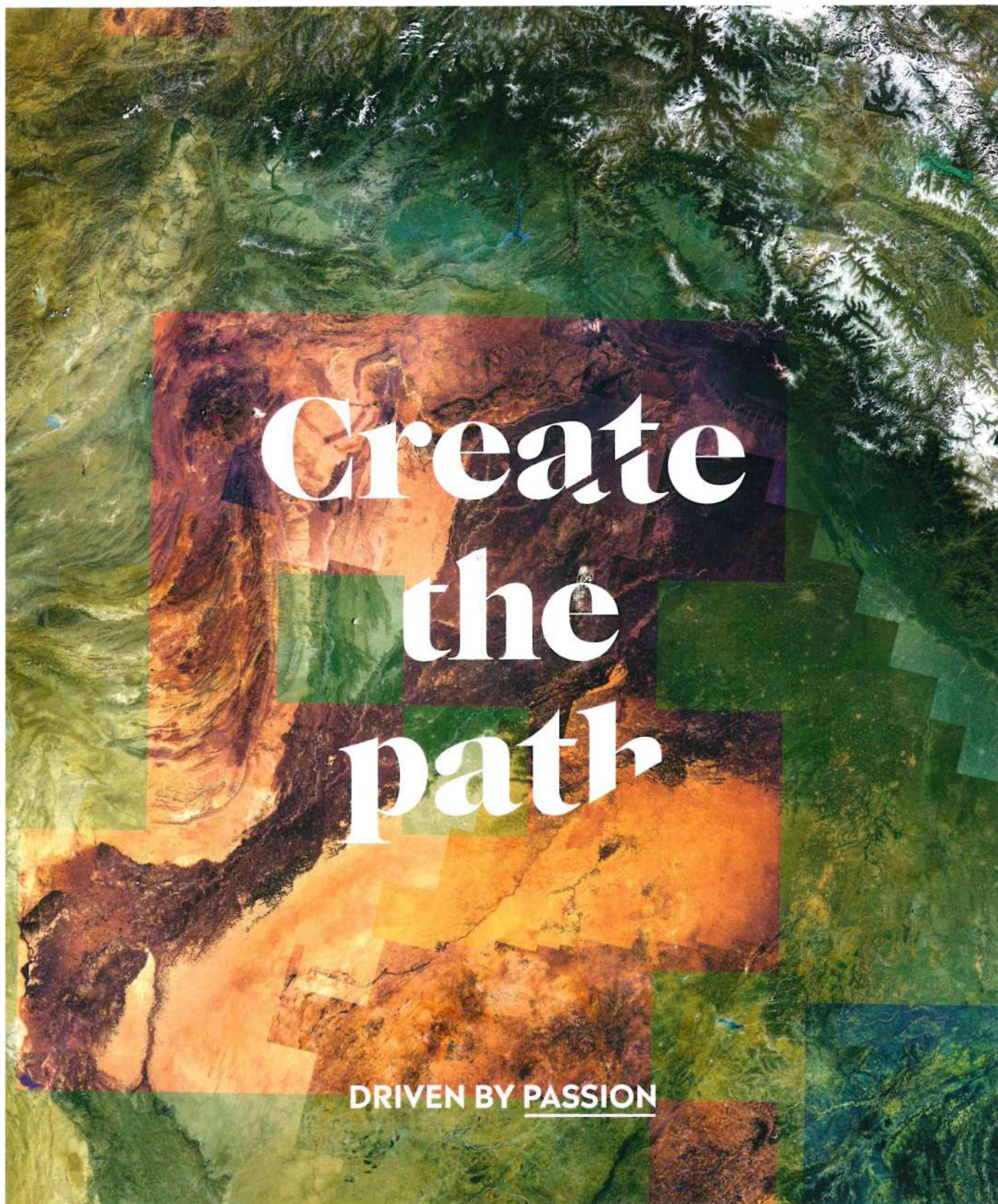


MODE

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Create the path

DRIVEN BY PASSION

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CUPRA



Picture: Keith Tobin

A KEEN EYE

Róisín Lafferty, above, is looking forward to creating more intimate spaces like Bolton Coach House, right



Picture: Barbara Corisico

Always start with the space...

Small is beautiful for KLD, **Róisín Lafferty's** ever-expanding Dublin design hub of creators

‘We are CREATIVES,’ proclaims the sign over the muted rear entrance to Kingston Lafferty Design, just around the corner from the faded grandeur of the old Baggot Street Hospital.

Inside the offices, which house the ever-growing collective of creatives that make up KLD, is a beautiful, labyrinthine mixture of styles and influences that all coalesce into a strangely alluring atmosphere. Indeed, it is this holistic approach that has cemented the reputation of one of Dublin’s most sought after architectural and interior design collectives.

The walls are adorned with quotes from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* and there is a sense of disappearing down a rabbit hole – although this one borrows upwards toward an elegant third-floor office, where the original sash windows overlook a sun-dappled corner of Baggot St.

Returning from London laden down with qualifications into the midst of a recession inspired Lafferty to set up Kingston Lafferty Design, which has steadily grown from the initial two (Kingston & Lafferty) to the current team of 12. The practice has flourished due to their unwavering commitment to some

core design principles.

"Design for me is a way of life, rather than a job. I live design in everything I do. I travel... I breathe it in. It's what I wear. It's where I choose to eat. It's how I like to spend my time. It's immersive. It's probably not for the fainthearted and I'd say naivety and stubbornness help achieve a career in it... but also very hard work".

Carving out her own corner of Ireland's design community meant installing authenticity as a key principle.

"For me, it's always been very important to be authentic to what I believe in and that's what KLD is very much about; authentic creativity and pushing design boundaries, doing things that are unexpected and creating exciting spaces that are unexpected. And that's something I've been pretty uncompromising about from the start and my team are as excitable about that, so we try not to repeat ourselves".

It's all in service to creating an atmosphere – breathing life into an expanse, no matter what the size. This sense of creating theatre or drama is a consistent theme through KLD's work. "We don't just design interiors we design everything that relates to the spaces that we create. So, whether that is the furniture in them, the light fittings, the branding... every touch point within a space that we create."

Expounding on this thought, she continues "That's what sets us apart from other people; we're not trying to be corporate, we're not trying to have a distinct style because I think it's really important that what we do create is really unique for the client".

Lafferty cites the "Imaginariums" of eccentric Danish designer Verner Panton as a major influence on her own free-wheeling approach to creativity. Panton experimented with lighting, colours,

textiles and furniture to make people's surroundings "more exciting", something Lafferty tries to do with her own creations. "Always start with the space. The spatial layout is first and foremost. Never be distracted by the style of the finished aesthetic. How is the user going to circulate that space? Can you create something different and exciting?"

Each project is its own unique story that starts out with scribbles on a page, sketches, photographs, images bookmarked and references pulled from a diverse range of sources. "A lot of the best ideas come from playing around and not being too perfect".

"Especially in commercial work, it can be difficult to bring everybody along on the story of the creative idea... the thing that adds value to a brand, to a business to a company." Details have to be subservient to the overall vision.

Currently, a number of "extremely creatively led, exciting hospitality projects" and a complete reimagining of a student accommodation brand are keeping KLD busy – along with the myriad other small, medium or large long term builds that keep the designers on the third floor in a state of well-organised chaos.

And what does the future hold for someone who admits to being "always on" when it comes to recording potential stimuli? "Myself? I want to keep being inspired and do some more travelling... creative trips. So, the first one of 2019 is Cuba."

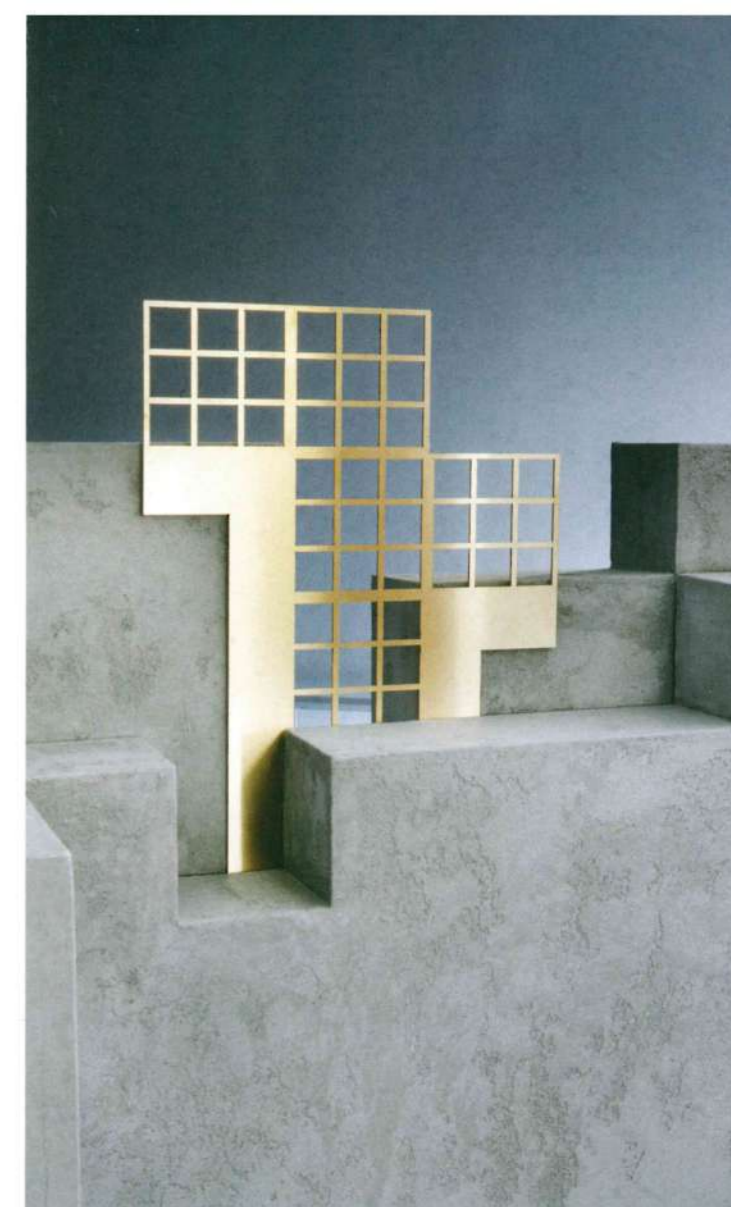
The vintage automobiles, flaking paintwork and colonial style palisades of Havana will, no doubt, become the latest visual motifs to be stored away in the filing cabinets of the mind, to be reinterpreted as a source of inspiration in some as yet undiscovered space.

kingstonlaffertydesign.com

"A lot of the best ideas come from playing around and not being too perfect."



Pictures: Ruth Maria Murphy



WORK AND REST
Iconic Offices: The Brickhouse, bottom left; Marianella Penthouse, left; Iconic Offices: Southpoint, above

"It's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then."

— Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*