

INSPIRED BY HISTORY...



Using a historical compilation of botanical prints and artefacts from the natural world, designer Amy Hardman has created a stunning collection of fabrics and wallpapers.
Photography: Zoie Carter-Ingham

Dynamic designer and mum of four Amy Hardman has launched her first ground-breaking collection of fabrics and wallpapers.

The Curator collection, which has been created under Amy's Tradescant & Son brand, has been highly acclaimed by leading designers in the British and international markets.

While Amy has stockists here in the Ribble Valley, London and throughout the UK, there are outlets throughout the world including New York, Moscow, Canada and New Zealand.

The Curator collection, which features 18 unusual designs, is inspired by the 16th century gardener and botanist John Tradescant, whose collections formed the beginnings of the world renowned Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

Tradescant gleaned botanical treasures, flora and fauna from around the globe and his connections with New World explorers also resulted in them sending him unusual artefacts to add to his growing collection. At one point he opened up his home to the public so they could see the historic rarities, which included the likes of a preserved salamander, a chameleon and a pelican, a bat as large as a pigeon, a Madagascan dodo and a small piece of wood from the cross of Christ.

Called Tradescant's Ark, the unsorted and unclassified collection was deemed to be a 'microcosm of the entire world'.









The Curator collection of fabrics and wallpapers, is inspired by Tradescant's collection of birds, bone, insects and botanical prints, as Amy explains: "We wanted to design a range that was unique, and very different to what other fabric houses were offering – something that had a strong story and a definite British heritage. This resulted in the Curator collection which has fulfilled a niche in the market.

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"Tradescant literally added anything and everything, the weird and the wonderful, to his collection. It has given me so much scope."

Selecting all the intricate designs herself, Amy commissions the artwork to hand-picked UK artists who work closely with Tradescant & Son.

"They are so talented," says Amy, who has insisted on using UK based manufacturing facilities for her wallpaper and fabrics.

Creating the collection was no mean feat for the busy mum of a four-year-old, two-year-old twins and a three month old baby, but as Amy admits: "A lot of it was trial and error and learning as I went along. I talked to a lot of my contacts in the interior design industry and asked for pointers.

"We wanted the collection to blend with both traditional and contemporary environments. The designs are intricate but not fussy and in spite of there not being a lot of colour, they are very striking and versatile."

Originally Amy selected a linen and cotton mix for the fabric, but after much deliberation she opted for a 100 per cent raw flax linen in its natural colour and an 'oyster' coloured linen.

"If I saw a fabric a liked I would ask our weaver to reproduce it," Amy recalls. "Eventually we opted for the natural flax linen and the oyster linen, which are both very versatile."

Choosing the actual colours to complement the intricate drawings was also a painstaking task: "Most of the colours are heritage in style, olive and sage greens, but some, like the yellow on the parakeet and teal blue and lime green on the blue tit are quite vibrant – but they still remain subtle.

"When I was choosing the colours I would sit on the office floor looking at colour chips. I would also take samples of colours that I liked to see if the manufacturers could reproduce them."

The resulting Curator collection from Tradescant & Son is a stunning triumph for this young interior designer, who first set up in business in 2005.

Still carrying out select interior projects in the Ribble Valley and beyond, Amy's foray into launching her own fabric and wallpaper collection has been an exciting journey.

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"As we are a small design studio, we can embark on bespoke work. If someone wanted a fabric in a totally unique colourway, we could do that with relatively small quantities as we are very versatile. We have already had enquiries about our custom colouring and we have been asked to re-scale a design, which shows how flexible we can be.

"Our next designs will be based on the flora and fauna in the Tradescant collection, which I am very excited about!" ■





The Curator collection can be seen and ordered via UK stockists or online. Samples are also available.

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