

Arent & Pyke

The Sydney designers review 18 of their favourite projects in a new book titled *Interiors Beyond The Primary Palette*

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANSON SMART. ARTWORK: MITCH CAIRNS



Ahead of their book being published next month, we asked Juliette Arent and Sarah-Jane Pyke to elaborate a little more about colour in the context of creating authentic, meaningful spaces that lift the spirit and nurture the soul.



What is a primary palette?

The primary palette is what you have before embarking on the process of creating and combining to achieve complexity and depth, or subtlety and lightness. Literally beyond the primary palette, we find the moody blues and sludgy green-greys that play so beautifully with natural light, as well as the petal-kissed pink or yellow-tinged whites which imperceptibly lift the energy of a space. Metaphorically, we find the collaboration, inspiration, alchemy and understanding that help us create homes that are emotionally transformative for our clients. SJP

How do you know which colour is right for a room? Do you usually start with the room or the colour?

Our design process begins with the development of an overarching vision for the home. We determine the function of each space and establish how our clients want them to feel. Once we know what emotional impact we want to achieve for our clients, we look at the space, the level of natural light and the architecture, and engage with colour within the context of the whole scheme. JA

Are you making decisions about colour from instinct or experience – or both?

It's quite hard to separate the two. After 15 years working together, our instincts are no doubt influenced by our experience. We have a pretty great fan-deck in our heads. And we have the benefit of understanding how colour we have used feels in a space, which is not something you can immediately establish from looking at images. JA

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANSON SMART; STYLING: CLAIRE DELMAR (UNDER THE TREE); OLGA LEWIS (LAYER CAKE); ARTWORK: AMANDA WILLIAMS (LAYER CAKE)

THIS PAGE The formal living room of A&P's Layer Cake house features egg-yellow walls and a Persian rug tempered by white and cream furniture and an Aerin 'Benit' sculpted plaster pendant.

OPPOSITE (from top left) One of the beautiful coffee-table tableaux that A&P is famous for, at Darley House. The dining area of Under The Tree house, a redesign by Welsh + Major architects, with an art photograph by Christian Thompson. Sarah-Jane Pyke (left) and Juliette Arent understand the psychology of space and how a well-designed home can enrich your life.

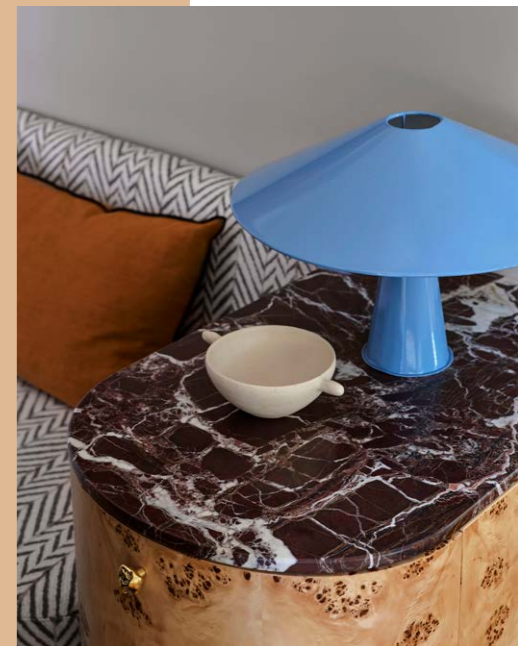


“Working with our clients over so many years, many on a second or third project, we know how significantly our design has contributed joy to their daily lives”

SARAH-JANE PYKE, INTERIOR DESIGNER



THIS PAGE (from left) Cheeky colour inside one of the kitchen cabinets at a home known as Amarelo Terrace. What A&P refer to as Hue House is a “celebration of colour and materiality”. A coastal home where an earthy, nuanced palette distinguishes the house and the bedhead fabrics play a pivotal role in the personality of each bedroom. **OPPOSITE** The front room of an 1880s terrace is a rhapsody in blue which, according to the designers, “entrances without being overpowering.”



Many love the idea of colour but find it hard to commit. How can one begin the process of developing greater colour at home?

Working with colours you love is a great starting point, rather than trying to replicate a ‘look’. The emotional impact of the colour is what you’ll live with. Rugs and soft furnishings bring colour into a space with less commitment. Ideally, source a rug that can be tried in the space and returned if it doesn’t feel right. For colour on walls, we always recommend taking home sample pots to brush out on the walls. You can see how the colour responds to light levels in the space as it changes throughout the day and, most importantly, how it affects your mood. JA

You’re working to create spaces that bring emotional connection and wellbeing – does this work in every space?

Creating homes that bring emotional connection and wellbeing is at the heart of what we do, and we’ve explored the elements that achieve this in our book. We undertake a very personal journey with each client to understand them and know their influences, desires and needs. Beyond that, we can anticipate how our clients’ lives can be transformed in ways they didn’t know they wanted or needed. To do this, we delve into their day-to-day experiences, so yes, it does apply to every space. A study nook in the family living area, an enjoyable laundry space or purpose-built joinery to store school bags all contribute to the experience of the home by eliminating the pain points and sparking joy. Colour and texture, pattern and detailing all combine with furnishings, lighting and art to do this. SJP

When you say you want to bring joy – what does that mean to you?

We see the transformative power of the work we do, and the impact daily enjoyment of one’s home can deliver from a nurturing and wellbeing perspective. The visceral joy that comes from having a strong connection to your home might range from the lively enjoyment of your kitchen filled with food and family gathering together for a celebration, to the restorative enjoyment of your serene bathroom at the end of a hectic day, or meditatively folding laundry while standing on warm terracotta tiles. JA



PHOTOGRAPHY: ANSON SMART; STYLING: STEVE CORDOBY (HUE HOUSE); ARTWORKS: CLARA ADOLFS (AMARELO TERRACE), PHILIP DRUMMOND (1880S HOME)

How do you work colour in with texture?

Colour and texture go hand in hand, whether it be working with stone, tile, timber or textile. Developing a scheme naturally weaves in the textural elements, which contribute to the emotional and sensory experience of a space. Texture determines the way light performs with colour too, so we're very aware of the variations we can achieve, even in subtle ways – choosing the high-gloss finish of a glazed handmade tile, for example, rather than a mosaic with a matt finish. SJP

Does lighting impact colour choice?

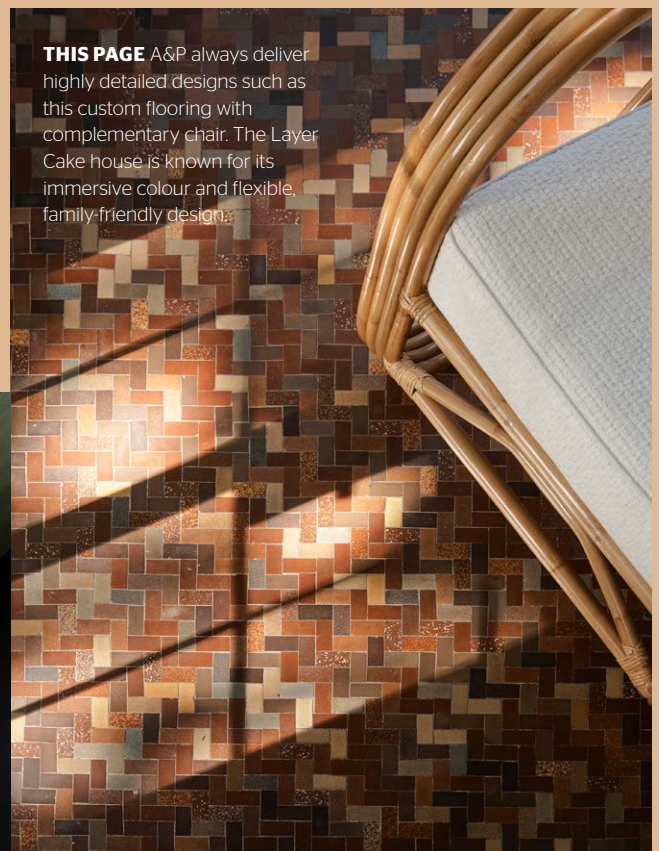
Lighting plays a huge role, be it for paint colours for walls or joinery, wet-area finishes, or for furnishings within a space. We consider the changing natural light throughout the day and work with, rather than against, that. If a room has low levels of natural light, we might lean in to make it moody and cosy. In other instances, a bright 'sunny' colour can add warmth where there is little from natural daylight. JA

What do you think of colour trends? Is that even a real thing?

Over time, we can see interiors generally moving towards or away from certain colours. We like to think we have made a contribution to the shift towards embracing colour. In many ways we are living in a 'post-trend' era because cycles come around so quickly and we can draw on such a wide range of influences – both contemporary and local, as well as from other design periods and places. Nevertheless, our aesthetic choices are rooted in more timeless design influences. SJP
Arent&Pyke is at arentpyke.com and [@arentpykestudio](https://www.instagram.com/arentpykestudio)

“We continue our love affair with deep dirty blues and greens. We're also loving buttery yellows, pale duck-egg blue and burnt orange”

JULIETTE ARENT, INTERIOR DESIGNER



THIS PAGE A&P always deliver highly detailed designs such as this custom flooring with complementary chair. The Layer Cake house is known for its immersive colour and flexible, family-friendly design.



Interiors Beyond The Primary Palette by Juliette Arent and Sarah-Jane Pyke is published by Thames & Hudson Australia, \$80 (hardback available online and in stores nationally after October 25).