

This month it is the turn of Dorothee Junkin, founder and director of architecture and interior design studio Architecta Ltd, to give us an insight into her busy life

Monday

It's 6.30am, but it somehow feels much earlier than that. Over a cup of coffee I scan through my overflowing inbox and answer the most pressing emails having just come back from a trip to Switzerland. At 9.30am I set off to hunt for some unique furniture pieces in my favourite antique and vintage showrooms. Especially when it comes to one-offs, I always prefer to see them in person. A potential new client has just bought a lovely country property just outside of London and asked for suggestions for a few additional key pieces to supplement the current set of absolutely exquisite furniture. With this type of client finding the right pieces could quickly turn into a more extensive redesign. My first stop is Pimlico Road. After a light lunch at Daylesford Organic I tour through more showrooms in Chelsea and Fulham, scribbling notes about new finds in my little black book and taking quick snaps with my iPhone to remind myself of special finds later.

I am back in the studio in the evening, scanning through data online and checking the stock of the international antique and vintage dealers I like to source from. My husband, an architect, has a big deadline coming up and is working late too. We both understand the nature and demands of the design profession and can relate to being passionate about what we do. Tonight we won't be able to, but most nights we have dinner together and talk about our day.



*A Week in
the Life of...
Dorothee Junkin*





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Tuesday

I spend the first half of the morning catching up with my emails. I have received two enquiries from potential residential clients and a follow-up from a commercial client with whom I've been discussing the redesign of a club, bar and restaurant project in Central London. As requested a meeting this afternoon was hastily arranged and luckily fitted in with my schedule as I already have another meeting later with a client for whom Architecta just finished a private residence in St. John's Wood. It's one of the last meetings for a wonderful apartment in a listed building bordering Regent's Park and I need to walk with the client and the

A recently completed residential project in Highgate

contractor through the property to check if the snagging list has been dealt with sufficiently. It's always the little things in the end that require particular attention. I hate the idea of a client walking away and being not 100% happy with the result. I really do try to exceed my clients' expectations as they could recommend Architecta to their friends or acquaintances and that's a great way to gain future projects.

Early evening I meet up with my husband at Bond Street and we go to an art exhibition in Cork Street. I like to be in-the-know about new artists and their work, as the London

art scene is very interesting and often inspiring too.

Wednesday

Yesterday's meeting regarding the commercial project went well. I sit down to go through my notes and try to get my head around the requirements while in the back of my head the first design ideas already start to take form. The phone rings. A favourite contractor of mine who completed stunning properties for celebrities in film and fashion, and with whom I recently worked on a large project in Highgate,





St John's Wood



Highgate

▲ North London, has a question regarding some last outstanding aspects. I drop what I have been doing, as I always try to look after the good contractors and suppliers I work with. It's paramount to be able to rely on them when dealing with demanding clients.

In the afternoon I call the photographer, with whom my PR has scheduled a portrait session for the next day, to confirm the details. At the very last minute we find out that the location for the shoot is unavailable the next day. We have to postpone the shoot to Friday. I make a few phone calls and adjust my schedule for the next two days accordingly.

Thursday

Today it's time to sit down and start working on a concept design proposal for the commercial project. Three floors of

club, bar and restaurant space need some thorough consideration. The morning flies by sketching, noting ideas and pulling material samples out of the material library. I end up sitting in the centre of a creative chaos, but I feel like I got a solid strategy in place. I could use more material options, I'm thinking something bold with a contemporary edge! I decide to make a spontaneous trip to my favourite showrooms. I love browsing through endless piles of materials hunting for treasures for current and upcoming projects and as I tend to design unique spaces for every client. I also source a lot internationally. Recently I went to New York for a client to coordinate a custom table made by a renown metal sculptor and on to Los Angeles to meet a specialist furniture manufacturer for a custom sideboard and side tables.

Friday

I get up early, gather my things for the

photo shoot and meet the photographer in London's East End. I am excited and a bit nervous as well. It turns out there was no need to be, as the photographer, who has worked with many celebrities, put me at ease straight away and I soon feel very confident posing for the shoot. It's actually quite fun and we get a lot of looks from passers-by.

After the photo shoot I am back in the studio. Time flies by again. I meant to look over the last tax quarter and to get the information to the tax office, but I got side-tracked by some last minute project coordination and all of a sudden it's 7pm. I need to rush for dinner with a friend from New York, who was in town for business and will fly back tomorrow. My husband and I take him for a lovely dinner at Modern Pantry in Clerkenwell and then for drinks at the Zetter Townhouse. It's early on Saturday morning, when we finally get back home.



The stunning living room in Highgate

Saturday

I usually try to carve out some free time on the weekends. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Today I head out around mid-morning to meet with a potential private client. I find most private clients are very busy, they travel a lot and have properties abroad. If their time doesn't allow, I have to have meetings early in the mornings, later in the evenings or any time at the weekend.

I meet the couple at their recently purchased property close to Kew Gardens. The property

definitely needs some refurbishment, but it has loads of character and could be turned into a real gem. Walking through the house and garden all three of us get more and more excited as we go along and conclude that I shall submit a first proposal and fee structure within a few days.

My husband has meanwhile met with friends at Borough Market and I manage to join them for a late lunch at 3pm. We enjoy a wonderful afternoon with friends we haven't seen in a while. In the evening

we meet with ex-colleagues at the hidden Experimental Cocktail Club in Chinatown. Design ideas seem to come to life so much easier when one takes breaks and is not trying too hard.

Sunday

I am up early again and start assembling a first layout concept for the mood boards for the commercial project while my husband sleeps in. I actually don't mind working right now, as I am very excited about my ideas and can't wait to show them to the ▼



St John's Wood

▲ client. Sometimes the week is so busy with coordination and site visits and clients, contractors and suppliers calling all day, that one doesn't get to actually do some proper design work until it's evening or weekend. When possible, Sunday is my day to recharge. My husband and I try to go for brunch, see exhibitions and visit friends outside of London, but while projects are bubbling I can't help getting stuck in now. I love what I do.

About Dorothee Junkin

After completing her preliminary Architectural degree in Germany, Dorothee gained her first professional experience in New York with Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates.

She returned to Europe in 2004 to continue with her studies and gain her Master degree in Switzerland. Attracted by the international design scene she moved to London in 2007 and joined Foster + Partners to work on the Abu Dhabi World Trade Centre 5 star hotel and Munich's Lenbachhaus Museum amongst other prestigious projects.

In 2009 Dorothee formed her own company Architecta. Since then she has worked on a number of large private residences in London's premier residential neighbourhoods.

Her aim is to create unique environments based on diverse narrative concepts and the client's individual needs and aspirations. She strongly believes that every detail matters as a part of the overall composition of materials and light and to give each and every space its deserved individuality.

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