

# Celebrating women

It's been a long time coming, but the spotlight is finally shining bright on OUTSTANDING WOMEN in design. From New York to Milan and Sydney to Paris, *Vogue Living* CELEBRATES the world's most visionary and INFLUENTIAL FEMALE creatives.

By Freya Herring Photographed by Paul Barbera, Philip Sinden and Anthony Lycett

"It is still a male-dominated environment, and 70 per cent of the top *creative jobs* in this country are taken by men. This is under-representation. But I believe the *future* is bright and that gender difference is already being *blurred* in so many ways"

FAYE TOOGOOD

The designer at her showroom in London's Shoreditch.

FRENCH

**India Mahdavi**  
THE COLOURIST  
@indiamahdavi

**BEST KNOWN AS** the colour virtuoso and mastermind behind the dreamy London restaurant-gallery, Sketch.

There is a sense of magic in the work of India Mahdavi — a sincere understanding of colour that sets her apart from the throng. Sketch, which she refurbished in 2014 alongside artist David Shrigley, has become one of the most Instagrammed restaurants in the world — all sensuous form, fleshy pinks, and crisp, brass touches. She marks the design as pivotal to her career — “where I chose to celebrate pink in an unseen way”. Mahdavi feels that women “can assume all the contradictions — they invent their own reality through power, talent, intuition, sensibility”. And she’s excited, if cautious, on the future of design. “It will be a real challenge to learn to live with artificial intelligence and global warming,” she says. “I think designers like myself need to contribute to build this new future, where physical and visual comfort will be needed more than ever.”

There is a sense of magic in the work of India Mahdavi — a sincere understanding of colour that sets her apart from the throng. Sketch, which she refurbished in 2014 alongside artist David Shrigley, has become one of the most Instagrammed



Playtime – Spaghetti Junction tables by Bethan Laura Wood

BRITISH

**Bethan Laura Wood**  
THE WILD CARD  
@bethanlaurawood

**BEST KNOWN AS** a living, breathing embodiment of her flamboyant postmodern designs.

“I do everything from limited-edition furniture to production pieces, to sets, installations and collaborations with fashion houses,” says Bethan Laura Wood, whose fine art-meets-design practice is currently taking London — and the world — by storm. Working collaboratively is what the designer loves most: her collaborations run the gamut from

“I think design will be more interesting when there can be a MIXTURE of VOICES, cultures, and viewpoints that can come together and be HEARD on an equal level”  
BETHAN LAURA WOOD

Tolix to Kvadrat to Hermès. “The real joy is when I get to experience and work with different makers and producers,” she says, “and I get to learn something *with* them, or we develop a language together.” A multidisciplinary approach is at the core of what Wood does, so equality in the industry can only strengthen that conviction.

“I think design will be more interesting when there can be a mixture of voices of cultures, and viewpoints that can come together and be heard on an equal level.” With the vibrancy of Mexico a recent inspiration, she hopes to keep developing and changing: “More cross-pollination, more visits to other places.”



Valextra Toothpaste bags by Bethan Laura Wood



Bethan Laura Wood in London.



Guadalupe vase by Bethan Laura Wood

ITALIAN

**Nina Yashar**  
THE GALLERIST  
@nilufargallery

**BEST KNOWN AS** the founder of Milan’s Nilufar gallery, a temple of design and style.

Besides being one of the most stylish women in design (you can’t miss her at Salone del Mobile, decked out in her chic signature turban and oversized earrings), Nina Yashar also runs one of the world’s most venerated design galleries, Nilufar. Her life changed while venturing north. “I discovered the world of design on a trip across Scandinavia,” she says. “At the time I was focussed only on collecting and exhibiting antique and contemporary carpets, but instead of coming back to Milan with them, I brought back a lot of fine armchairs and sofas, which shocked everyone!” Alongside collaborating and supporting emerging designers at Nilufar, her current passion is vintage Italian, Brazilian and Mexican design. She believes successful design is about balance. “Everyone’s personality and vision is characterised by both feminine and male aspects, and the feminine side is sometimes underestimated. Finding the right combination between them is the way.”

FROM LEFT Nina Yashar and India Mahdavi at the Chez Nina installation, designed by Mahdavi, at Milan Design Week 2018.



PHOTOGRAPHER: ANTHONY LYCETT (PORTRAIT), BETHAN LAURA WOOD VALEXTRA TOOTHPASTE BAGS AVAILABLE AT HARRIOTS, HARRIOTS.COM.AU

PHOTOGRAPHER: PAUL BARBENA