

FAYE TOOGOOD
(TOM MANNION)

Watch This Space

FAYE TOOGOOD'S STYLE LEAPS
OFF THE PAGE. BY MONICA KHEMSUROV

For Faye Toogood, September's London Design Festival was a coming-out party of sorts. After spending nearly a decade styling for the British magazine *The World of Interiors* and developing her signature raw-meets-refined look, she started quietly building her own full-service creative studio in 2008, remaining under the radar despite redesigning Dover Street Market's shoe department and creating fanciful window displays for Liberty. But following two buzzed-about installations that she curated at the London festival and her high-profile work for Tom Dixon — which includes a catalog and a new London showroom — the design world is beginning to take notice



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of this multitalented 32-year-old. "There aren't many stylists who have decided to transcend disciplines," says Toogood, who studied fine art and art history. "It's been a natural course for me."

What motivated you to start Studio Toogood?

I was frustrated with the two-dimensional page and wanted to branch out. Now we're mainly a creative consultancy that helps companies visualize their brands, through photography or events, exhibitions and spaces. It felt too restrictive just to think about sets and photographs, and more exciting to think about the environment as a whole. We recently got our first interiors project, the home of Suzanne Sharp of the Rug Company. I'm hoping that through our work on interiors we'll be able to do rugs, textiles and furniture.

You're wearing so many hats now. How have you made that transition?

Traditionally, styling was about going to get the right sofa or vase and then letting the photographer get on with it, but in the last 10 years it's been much more about stylists working on the concept, too. At World of Interiors I would choose the photographer, come up with the idea and see the project all the way through, so when I left I was already doing creative direction. I think that if you're a designer, you can design a loo or a chair — Philippe Starck set that precedent. I apply





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the same approach whether it's an image or a physical space.

You curated two very different installations during the London Design Festival: "Corn Craft," a collaboration with Gallery Fumi in which designers used corn as a medium, and "The Hatch," a Memphis-inspired Technicolor playground. Why did you choose those themes?

Corn is sustainable, beautiful and versatile, and yet no one had addressed it. At the launch event the Modern Pantry designed a menu around corn, so people smelled the corn and ate it under a cornfield hanging from the ceiling. It wasn't about selling anything, but about making people feel inspired. "The Hatch" was the same idea — I had just read a book about Memphis, and I was so bored this year of everyone feeling depressed and the design world taking itself so seriously. The idea of silliness and humor made sense.

Would you say you have a personal aesthetic?

Definitely. Color is very important to me, and my work has always had a graphic element to it. I love things that are tactile and handmade, and the imperfections of objects attract me more than a perfect finish, like an old cracked plate that's been stapled back together.

Did you grow up in an old, quaint house?





I grew up in the countryside, and we were quite isolated. I had a normal upbringing, but I became obsessed with collecting things: birds' eggs, broken bits of plates. There was always a theme. In my bedroom I kept a table where I would display my found objects, not realizing that there was a job where you arranged things into collections — luckily I managed to find it!

