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Colourfest: florals, rainbow shades and luxury fabrics pepper Emma Deterding's welcoming sitting/dining/kitchen space

Suddenly life is brighter

It takes the skill of an interiors expert to keep control of colour, discovers **Caroline Phillips**

Bright ideas: interior decorator Emma Deterding; left, pink and turquoise make a brave and beautiful statement together

THIS three-bedroom Chelsea flat, like the happiest hippy trip with only the cheeriest colours, belongs to interior decorator Emma Deterding of Kelling Designs. She and her husband bought the place nine years ago.

"I gutted it, put in all the joinery, took out the baths and fitted big showers," she says. "It was originally a dull cream box with faux fireplaces and nasty units." The 1,300sq ft flat in "a hideous Sixties block" is "so good inside, no corridors, so not an inch of wasted space". The mother of two uses it as her London base when she is not at home in Norfolk, where she refurbishes homes, starting at £75,000, and works with the Duchess of Cambridge raising money for East Anglia's Children's Hospices.

The open-plan sitting/dining/kitchen space has lime green tables, orange and ochre William Yeoward cushions and ombre velvet curtains in orange, purple and fuchsia. Lamp shades are turquoise or in Parisian purple feathers, and there are flowery Fifties tub chairs.

A DISPOSABLE RAINBOW

"My relationship with colour started when I came out of a dark period in my life," says Deterding, 52. "Everything suddenly became a lot brighter." Her vases are flower-filled, while artworks include a panel of rainbow stripes. An ottoman has a pink-and-blue felt base and multicoloured lid. Even the rubbish bin is pillar box red.

But the clever thing is, it's actually a grey space, bar the stair walls. Chuck out all the bright cushions, chairs and tables and you're left with 50 shades of grey: a grey velvet sofa, mouse carpet, Charleston grey polished plaster walls; Cole & Son faux-mirror greyish wallpaper; grey wooden and Corian worktops and varnished grey wooden unit doors in the kitchen area. "I wanted to be able to sell it if someone doesn't like colour," she says. Space is used to maximum effect. Every kitchen gadget is concealed. The console table opens up into a dining table. Go upstairs – past the Alcantara faux-suede aubergine wall and the multicoloured geometric shapes-painted wall – or downstairs past a turquoise wall, a silver leaf wall, and one in egg-yolk yellow, and you find an "office" in a bedroom cupboard, a laundry "room" in a hallway cupboard, and a slim, bespoke piece of bedroom furniture for "storing everything".

GRAFFITI in the hall echoes colours of the downstairs loo. Monochrome Chinoiserie wallpaper is coloured in, and Deterding's son's bedroom sports a mural of London.

Her philosophy is to mix cheap and expensive to stick to the budget. Her feather lamp shades cost £1,000 each but the rugs are Ikea and there are car boot finds. "Achingly expensive, about £300 a roll" Pierre Frey wallpaper is juxtaposed with Harlequin at "£30 a roll". In one bathroom she used all the leftover paint – adding another daub of joy to this life-affirming flat.

GET THE LOOK

Interior design: Emma Deterding (kellingdesigns.com)
Alcantara faux suede on sofa and walls: altfield.com
Lighting: allsquarelighting.co.uk
Professional picture hanging: bigsoda.co.uk
For decorative pieces and Fifties furniture: inhousejunkie.com
Quality paints: littlegreene.com
For designer kitchens and bathrooms: laurencepidgeon.com
Fabrics: Matthew Williamson (osborneandlittle.com)
Sofas: sofa.com
Graffiti artist: Tony Allen (thatvandal@yahoo.co.uk)
Spectrum painting: roselong.com
Wallpaper: Pierre Frey, Harlequin, Osborne & Little, Cole & Son
Lamp shades: copperandsilk.com
Ottoman and studded side tables: by KDLoves (at kellingdesigns.com)
Cushions: williamyeoward.com
Beds: vispring.com/en-uk/

Photographs: **Emma Lewis** and **Charles Hosea**

Bright nights: in the master bedroom the purple headboard is edged in pink, and monochrome Chinoiserie wallpaper is coloured in