

THE TASTEMAKERS AND GROUNDBREAKERS WHO SHAPE-SHIFT THE DESIGN WORLD

# PEOPLE

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Architectural partners Tina Engelen and Will Fung, of Potts Point-based Co-Ap Collaborative Architecture Practice, ascend the stairs at Sydney University.



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## SECOND WIND

*Spirited Sydney designer Tina Engelen reflects on lessons from the past and the intrigue of fresh challenges in a new collaborative partnership.*

AGE AND EXPERIENCE have seen interior designer Tina Engelen reassess the take-no-prisoners attitude with which she once approached her projects. She speaks with a hint of embarrassment when she recalls the adversarial, bristling-to-take-on-the-establishment attitude she and her former business partner, architect Ian Moore, had when they arrived on the Australian design scene in the mid-'90s. "We were those young people who were like, 'We want change!' and we would bang and bang and bang on until we got it. Ten years on, it leaves you exhausted!" >

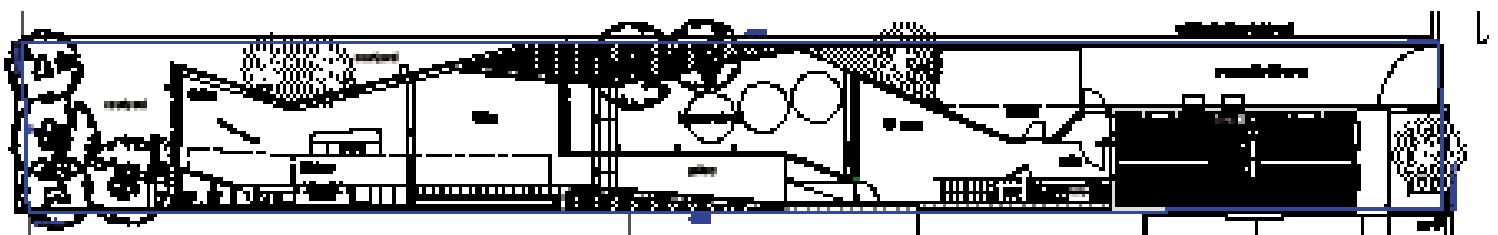
PHOTOGRAPHER: ROSS HONEYSETT TEXT: MADELEINE HINCHY





< In the eight years since interiors and architecture studio Engelen Moore was dissolved, the designer has stayed out of the limelight, keeping busy on projects with her new design partner, architect Will Fung. Their studio, Co-Ap Collaborative Architecture Practice, based in Sydney's Potts Point, is almost 'anti-brand', and perhaps the antithesis of the carefully marketed machine that was Engelen Moore. "You won't have read about us for five years. We've been quietly working away and figuring out what we believe in," says Engelen. "We've been brewing," adds Fung.

Time to reflect has given the duo renewed appreciation of beauty found in the meeting of old and new. "There's always going to be a purity to our work but we are more willing to layer and keep layering," says Engelen. This is shown in their recent extension and refurbishment of a two-storey terrace in Sydney's inner-west (pictured these pages). The owners asked for an Engelen Moore-like scheme – cuboid and ultra-minimal – but got something quite different. The new extension unfolds along the length of the site to take in a series of split-level spaces and pocket gardens. The twisting structure is a response to the challenging nature of the site, which is double length, narrow and has a natural topography that dips then rises at the back. "For us, the hardships are excitements," says Engelen. "We use the difficulties to inform the building and uniqueness comes from them." >





**Opposite:** the glazed loggia links the TV room to a larger pavilion with kitchen, dining and living areas, **this page.** The functional form is a response to the narrow, double-length site. **Opposite, below:** the classic, and deceptively simple, exterior of the early-1900s terrace.



PHOTOGRAPHER: ROSS HONEYSETT. TEXT: MADELEINE HINCHY



“OUR HOUSE HAD YELLOW DOORS, RED DOOR HANDLES AND MARIMEKKO CURTAINS, ALWAYS MIXED WITH SOLID MATERIALS, TIMBER AND CERAMICS. IT WAS LIKE GROWING UP IN A DERWENT PENCIL BOX”



Skylights run along the southern edge of the house above the living area, **left**. **This page:** the entrance to the new addition. The loggia, **below**, looks out onto a courtyard through a series of glass panels with bronze mesh roller blinds and burgundy doors.

< The largest complication stemmed from an eight-metre heritage wall along the site’s entire north boundary. It shadows the site year-round but also protects from harsh northern sun, prompting Fung and Engelen to explore European-style architecture. Where a series of fibro and metal outhouses stood is now a 10-metre glazed-glass gallery space, or loggia, linking the TV room to a second, larger pavilion with kitchen, dining and living areas. In the living area, full-height glass panels form the walls while hinged timber panels fold out to cover the giant windows. Skylights that run along the southern edge of the house above the living area capture the light all year round.

The use of colour, including a rich burgundy red, and textures of raw wood and heritage brick may surprise those familiar with Engelen Moore’s stark grey and white, but is indicative of Fung and Engelen’s desire to head in a different direction. Engelen’s strong design ethic is partly the result of a childhood spent shadowing her parents, founders of high-end furniture import business Dedece, on trips to Europe. Her family home was an Alvar Aalto-inspired Modernist house. “I soaked it up,” she says. “Our house had yellow doors, red door handles and Marimekko curtains, always mixed with solid materials, timber and ceramics. It was like growing up in a Derwent pencil box.”

As an interior design student in the mid-’80s, she was caught up in the fun and energy of Sydney’s early design push. Then, as part of Engelen Moore, she produced work that came to define an era of Sydney design. “We were building for our generation. It was like catching a great wave.” Almost three decades on, Engelen remains a pillar of the design community. “I used to be Miss Modern Milly; Miss new, new, new. I am glad now that there have been people who have fought against that. There have to be different expressions from different times. We learn from the past.” MADELEINE HINCHY

