

Extract from:

HOUSE & GARDEN

Deborah Gage: London

GENERALIST

What was your greatest discovery? One of the best discoveries was finding that a lovely but over-painted picture was an early Constable. When my intuition about it proved to be right, it was terribly exciting.

Do you have a childhood memory that inspired you to do what you do? I was born in Zambia and grew up in Kenya. My grandmother had assembled a small collection, and she encouraged me to handle her objects and read her art books, so this is where it all started. The most enduring influence has come from Firle Place, my family's ancestral home in East Sussex.

Describe a dream client. Describe a nightmare client. Dream clients understand that a real collection evolves over time. Nightmare clients are unintelligent and sure they know best.

Do you have a design hero/heroine? I'd have to say William Kent, who, with Lord Burlington, introduced the Palladian style to England. There is a symmetry to his work, a joy and exuberance that I love.

What's the new hot period for collecting? I would say objects from the Arts and Crafts period. You can still buy extraordinary pieces for a relatively small amount of money, and the best are still available.

In a past life, who/what were you? I'd have lived in the eighteenth century and would have loved to have been one of the great patrons of the arts, like Horace Walpole.

What is the object of your desire? I'm not at all acquisitive. Objects pass through my life; I engage with their spirit, and they touch my soul. We have a conversation and then I put them out in the world.

What is your personal motto? I make people's dreams come true.



Gage focuses on museum-quality objects with a pedigree: the Sèvres vases in her London gallery, above, were probably purchased by Louis XV. Landscape by Richard Wilson.

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