

INTERIOR DESIGN YEARBOOK 2018

WRITERS INCLUDE

KELLY HOPPEN

BETHAN GRAY

NICKY DOBREE

LAURA HAMMETT

EDITED BY **JADE TILLEY**

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Home Office Design

By Simone Suss
Founder, Studio Suss

Studio Suss is an interior design practice that focuses on delivering contemporary yet timeless interiors. Simone Suss and her team work with a range of clients across the retail and commercial sectors as well as creating beautiful homes for both individuals and developers. Studio Suss collaborates with clients on creating bespoke spaces. Whether inspired by your unique brand DNA, a piece of art or architectural features, each project is different and tailored to the individual client. With unique access to the worlds of art, fashion and interiors, Studio Suss prides itself on delivering elegant interiors that are at the cutting edge of design. The studio philosophy is to balance functional design with exquisite finishes to create a sensory experience. Studio Suss is based in Tileyard Studios in Kings Cross, London and is a member of the British Institute of Interior Design. Here, Simone focuses on the specifics when designing a home office.

With flexible working conditions and technological advances, people can now work from anywhere. While it is always possible to work from a laptop in bed, there is something to be said for the state of mind that being at a desk has on productivity. Really, productivity is the key when looking at home office spaces. While it always needs to look great, at Studio Suss we focus on the end user and their experience. What does the client need to be productive? How can that productivity be enhanced through good design? What is the office used for and what can we create to make that experience amazing? Clients spend an increasing amount of time in their home



Photography by Studio Suss

office and its requirements will change throughout the day; it needs to be conducive to hard work and also to relaxing and possibly entertaining. These all need to be factored into the design. Our approach to home office space always centres on with the client. The Studio Suss approach starts with creating a brief with and for you. We'll spend time with you, working out the requirements for the home office and how it interacts with the rest of the house.

For example, we might ask: Where is the home office? Is this a separate room or part of a larger room? Who will be using the home office? Is it more than one person at different times of day? What are the requirements of the person working and how does the routine of other people in the house affect them? Is the room used for other things? If so, how to those functions affect the layout?

Home offices vary from kitchen tables to dedicated suites with their own gyms, bathrooms and other facilities so when considering the best approach, we consider both the client and the environment. When designing home office spaces, clients are sometimes braver than they would be when designing spaces that are shared by the whole family. Offices can be relatively private, and for families with children these can be very much 'adult' spaces that don't get cluttered with toys. This means that we can include collections of books, art and wine if required. Clients often want to be surrounded by their favourite items; whether its an office inspired by a television show (we've designed one inspired by *Mad Men*) or a favourite country or club; clients are often very sure about their design brief for the office.



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The office needs to be both comfortable and functional. Technological requirements and the architecture of the room will inform the layout and items such as printers should have good storage so that the functionality of the office doesn't detract from the design of it. It's a definite case of form and function working together. Good lighting is also key, as is privacy if the house is busy. We may need to include good sound and acoustic considerations so that the space is essentially comfortable and a pleasure to be in. The furniture needs to be ergonomically suitable for the clients needs, without looking too corporate. Clients generally love to add unique touches to their office so that it's their space. This might be an item of furniture with storage built in that is specific to

their exact requirements, or it might be a storage system so that they can appreciate their collection of rare books, for example. One of our first home offices includes a spiral cellar for the clients' fine wine collection. Clients are motivated by different visual stimuli so it's important to incorporate those into the office. Rugs and soft furnishings can really add to a home office and make it feel much more relaxed. There are some great new products coming out in the home office sector all the time. For example, mobile acoustic panels that can separate rooms. As a company we attend as many trade shows as we can so that we are up to date with the latest releases in terms of trends and technological advances. We travel internationally so that we can take a global view on the market innovation.

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Instagram is a particularly good source of inspiration as we can follow global product launches as they happen. We also have a great network of suppliers that specialise in bespoke furniture and joinery with whom we work closely to enhance the utility and beauty of each piece.

The start of our design process always starts with us asking the client many questions so that we can get an in-depth brief. With all clients, the first question is how long they intend on staying in the house and this is particularly relevant for the home office because it will dictate whether we specify built-in furniture or freestanding pieces. Whilst taking the brief, we include the following questions both now and for the next five years:

- Who is using the office?
- What are they using the office for? Will they be meeting colleagues? Clients?
- Who else lives in the house?
- If there are clients coming, how will they get into the office and do they need a separate entrance?
- What equipment is required and how do we factor in electrics

and other cable management?

• What does the job entail? If it's video conferencing then we always consider what is behind the desk and in view of the camera.

We would then map out the entire office in a way that takes all of these points into consideration, with design elements that are specifically tailored to the client so that the space is functional and enjoyable to be in. We'll add products and finishes that we know the client will love so that time spent in the home office is productive, enjoyable, comfortable and a delight to be in.

We would always advise clients to stay in their comfort zone whilst being bold in their design decisions for the home office. Of all the rooms in the house, the office can be relatively private so if the client loves a specific piece of art or colour that other household members don't appreciate, it's a great place to indulge their specific aesthetic. Personalisation is a very big idea for 2018. Whether this is furniture or accessories or floor or wall treatments, clients can

literally choose their favourite colours or inspiration and we will design around that. Literally, from floor tiles to wall treatments to wood stains and upholstery, so many things can be made bespoke and personalised that no two rooms are the same.

User experience is really key in design at the moment so we design with a holistic approach to that as well. We consider how all of the senses experience a space; not only how it looks but how it feels, sounds and smells as well. Video conferencing will no doubt increase in prominence for home offices so something on-brand and memorable as a backdrop is now a consideration.

There are many beautiful items that now enhance the function of a working environment such as lighting and furniture and with each year, products are created in different ways so that there are always new, exciting products to use. In 2018 we will continue to see the fusing of different materials in interesting ways such as marble and brass or wood and leather so that beautiful products will be created in totally unique and interesting ways.

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