

## Episode 117 show notes and advice

### Episode description

This week, Sarah meets with textile designer and fellow business owner, Molly Mahon to talk about the artistic inspiration behind her iconic block print designs. Uniting over their shared love of colour, Molly and Sarah discuss Molly's background and her artistic process inspired by ancient Indian printing methods.

### In this episode, discover:

- The floral inspiration behind Molly's brand-new collection
- The wonder of traditional Dabu printing
- Molly's must-haves for a gorgeous spring and summer garden

## episode 116 advice sheet

### Molly Mahon: A background (1:24)

With an academic background, Molly always yearned for creativity, eventually running her own events company in London. Read more about Molly Mahon and her brand here:

<https://mollymahon.com/>

Don't forget to join Molly and Sarah for 'Floral inspired block printing at The Cutting Garden.' Following the launch of Molly's fabric collection 'Bloom', she will be teaching the craft of block printing using floral carved wooden blocks, at Perch Hill, this June.

To secure your place or find more information visit:

<https://www.sarahraven.com/products/molly-mahon-at-perch-hill>

### From Sussex to Jaipur (2:20)

Taking inspiration from British printers, Phyllis Barron, Dorothy Larcher, and Enid Marx, Molly began carving her own blocks in lino, which she explains was a self-taught artistic process and something that allowed her to engage with her own creativity.

After researching block printing across the world, Molly discovered the ancient art of Dabu printing and decided to visit India.

Visiting Bagru in Rajasthan, Molly learned from artisans that have passed down Dabu printing skills from generation to generation. This includes the use of traditional indigo, as opposed to chemical indigo, using giant vats of dye that are sunk into the ground. Molly explains that within the printing process, roles are shared amongst members of the community with the primary responsibility and artisanal skills steered by women.

### **Molly's inspiration (12:50)**

Molly says her ideas always come from places like the natural world, collecting leaves from Ashdown Forest and then playing with placement and scale, and the colours.

Molly then translates this into simple sketches, which would be carved into lino. In 2023, the majority of Molly's designs are printed in Delhi due to demand. Her incredible team of twelve block printers then masterfully carve blocks that replicate Molly's patterns. The team also adds their own touches to the block, with each one, uniquely different.

Molly says they print around 300 metres of fabric a day, which has its own energy and movement, that you couldn't replicate en masse.

### **Molly's new fabric collection (13:00)**

Molly's new collection, 'Bloom' took around 3 years to come to fruition and was very much inspired by her love of dahlias. Eventually, the collection grew to incorporate additional floral iconography which Molly adores.

When printing a flower motif, it's often a good idea to put something more geometric alongside it, which Molly explains is great for contrast. Molly continues to use her bold and bright colour palette which she finds joy-inducing and is inspired by the garden.

Printed on a variety of cotton and linens, they utilise more colours than she has ever used before. The designs are also more complicated, reflecting her increased confidence and her personal journey.

### **The role of nature in Molly's work (20:22)**

Molly explains that nature has always played a deeply significant role in her work, for its calming qualities and powerful symbolism.

Molly also takes inspiration from the Mughal artists and miniature painters, which studied flowers and botany in their work, and explains that flower motifs are commonplace in India.

Living in The Ashdown Forest, Molly says she often finds beautiful ferns, interesting leaves, and little flowers, which play a frequent role in her work.

### **Molly's favourite flowers (22:24)**

Molly says her garden is packed full of beautiful tulips from Sarah Raven, which she says look beautiful in the garden or in a vase.

She also loves the Rajasthan Dahlia Collection, which she says boasts the most beautiful and rich colours with large, blousy blooms.